

Walker 391

Chapter 391 - The Flipped Scenario

A pin drop silence was spread in the entire area and no one dared to speak. They were even careful about their breathing and felt as if a mountain had been placed on their chests. Such was the pressure exuded by a Nascent soul realm expert.

Lin Mu had a bit of difficulty to bear it at first, but after about thirty seconds his body adapted to it and it no longer felt as heavy to him. He had borne the full force of old Man Jing's spirit sense and even sword intent. This was nothing compared to that.

Though Lin Mu was still a bit anxious about the fact that he could have left some traces or clues that he was the one that had killed Fa Shiu. Besides, from what he knew, from Nascent soul realm onward the cultivators could sense the spatial fluctuations in the environment better.

He didn't know, but it didn't seem like Yi Deng has sensed it yet. But Lin Mu knew for sure that the spatial traces would still be there in the area for a while. After all, he had basically torn through the fabric of this world to enter the Parallel space, which wasn't even supposed to be possible.

From what he had learned from Senior Xukong, the place that he entered when using fade was something that was different than normal layers of the void. Xukong himself didn't know that it existed until Lin Mu entered it. But from what he could tell, that parallel space was absolute and existed everywhere.

"Disciples!" Yi Deng uttered.

"Yes, peak master!" all of the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect stood yup and saluted the Peak master.

"Seal the area, and contact the sect. Tell the patriarch to send the supreme elder!" Peak master Yi Deng said with fury in his eyes.

Hearing the order, everyone's eyes went wide as their expressions turned serious. They knew that if the peak master was willing to contact the supreme elder, then it meant that the matter was of a grave danger. This was the first time they had seen peak master act like this, and from their experience with him they thought of him as a calm and composed man.

"YES PEAK MASTER!" Everyone replied in unison.

"I'll inform the sect." Hong Quan stated and left hurriedly.

"I'll set up the seal." Fa Lao said with a straight expression.

He now realized that perhaps his elder brother had been in much bigger trouble than anyone else had expected. He tried to remember what his elder brother was going to do before he came here.

According to what they had discussed, his elder brother was going to accompany the juniors to hunt and obtain a gift for sister Yi Zi Jin. They didn't really explain where they were going to hunt, but from what he knew it must have been either the Northern forest or the sect's own lands.

'They shouldn't have had any problem at the sect's land as they would have been able to call for help instantly there. That means whatever happened it must have been at the northern forest... don't tell me... did they perhaps go too deep?' Fa Lao wondered.

"You all come with me," Fa Lao said to his fellow disciples, and they were about to walk forward when they were stopped.

"And what gives you the authority to act like this in my house," Said Wu Teng as he blocked their path.

"Teng! You cannot speak like that!" Zhen Sui said as she felt anxious.

"No, brother is right this time," Wu Hei agreed. "The Tri cauldron peony sect cannot do anything till they explain to us what this is about." He added.

Lin Mu looked on in silence and kept standing there. He didn't want to act until there was a problem.

Yi Deng turned his head towards the two Wu brothers and a scowl appeared on his face.

"Let me tell you what has happened and then you tell me if it's worth it. My former chief disciple and one of the junior elders of the Tri cauldron sect, Fa Shiu had been missing for the past few weeks. There was utterly no news of him and the disciples that accompanied him in the task that they were doing.

We waited and waited but received no news or message from them, until today. Fa Shiu appeared at our courtyard alone and explained to me what had happened. There is a large conspiracy being committed against our sect and its disciples.

The accompanying junior disciples didn't go missing, they were killed!" Yi Deng explained.

~gasp~

A collective gasp spread in the audience as they had not thought someone would have the gall to do something like this.

"But if both Fa Shiu and the Juniors went missing, why did only he return?" Wu Hei asked.

"He was the only one that was able to escape. He told me that a group of strong Core condensation realm cultivators had hunted them at that time and wanted to rob them. They killed the juniors and Fa Shiu barely escaped by the skin of his teeth.

Even after escaping, he was continued to be hunted down and had to hide many times. He was being spied on constantly even in the southern town and was able to give them a slip due to using a precious talisman." Yi Deng answered.

Confused expressions appeared on both Lin Mu's and Wu Hei's faces. But Wu Hei's masked his rather quickly and nodded his head to show as if he had understood.

"Alright then peak master, this is quite reasonable." Wu Hei replied and looked at Wu Teng. "Let them go, elder brother." He added.

"Fine. If you say so." Wu Teng said in an unwilling tone and let the disciples do their task.

Lin Mu on the other hand was trying to figure out how the story had changed like this.

'How did it become from me killing them to a group of strong core condensation realm cultivators hunting them?' Lin Mu wondered.

"I think I can tell why." Xukong suddenly spoke.

"Oh? Please do tell senior." Lin Mu replied.

"It seems like the junior elder Fa Shiu tried to save face by twisting the story. This way not only would the sect take his words more seriously, but they would not lose their reputation in the sect that way. If he was not able to defeat even a qi refining realm cultivator with his cultivation base at the core condensation realm, I believe he may have even been punished.

Besides, his lie actually seems more plausible than you killing all of them single-handedly and chasing the junior elder for his life. Even the sect would have doubted them if he said that he was hunted by you, I think." Xukong explained.

"Wait, so that means... I'm pretty much free from suspicion?" Lin Mu asked.

"For now, yes. But if he had truly seen your face during the fight, I'm pretty sure he would have accused you. Thankfully, your swift action has not only prevented that but even saved you from suspicion." Xukong replied.

Lin Mu nodded his head in acknowledgment as he now found the entire thing a bit ridiculous.

Wu Hei was also laughing internally, as he was able to guess the entire premise too. After all, the people that were hunting and spying on Fa Shiu were the Hei corps. And of course, he knew the 'group of core condensation realm cultivators' was none other than Lin Mu.

'Seems like this junior elder made a grave mistake by not admitting the truth to the peak master. Had he told him that, even if he had disappeared, the Tri cauldron peony sect would have been looking for the culprit. But now his disappearance has sealed the fact.' Wu Hei thought.

He then turned his gaze towards Lin Mu and wondered, 'still... how did he disappear right in front of everyone?'

Wu Hei tried to recall the sequence of events and realized that the time of Fa Shi's disappearance and Lin Mu's punch that destroyed the ring coincided.

'Did he do it somehow? But how? I'm pretty sure he never left the ring... no wait... could it be?' Wu Hei pondered as a few names appeared in his mind.

The more Wu Hei thought about it, the more fear he felt. For the cultivator that could manage to make someone disappear like that, right under the nose of a Nascent soul realm cultivator along with more than a hundred others would be a Herculean task.

There were only a few people that could do it according to his understanding, and everyone on that specific list was a terrifying person that even the patriarch of the Tri Cauldron peony sect would not dare to slight.

~sigh~

A sign escaped his lips as he muttered to himself, "the sect has either dropped the Axe on their own foot or is about to do that."

Chapter 392 - A Private Talk

The disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect were rather quick and swiftly set up some restrictions to stop people from escaping. Though this wasn't actually for the people that were sitting in the audience, no rather it was for the people who might have been hiding here.

The restrictions would stop anyone from leaving, and the spirit sense of Yi Deng had also scanned for people that might have been hiding. If they could not be found by him, the restriction formation will scan everyone, even small insects.

The people that were in attendance were a bit upset but did not dare to protest or complain. They knew better than to do that, and it was obvious who the more powerful party was here. With that in mind, the people stood there calmly.

The disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect went around asking the people questions about everything. But they already knew that there wouldn't be any results. The identities of these people here were verified, and they were well known.

"Peak master, I've talked with the people in the audience and they are definitely fine. We were sitting there too, and we didn't see anyone moving. Junior Elder Fa Shiu somehow disappeared into thin air." One of the disciples said.

"We also talked with the guards and no one was seen leaving the area. Neither a suspect nor, junior elder Fa Shiu." Fa Lao said with a straight face.

"Hmm... it is indeed as I expected. We'll have to wait for the supreme elder to investigate this... I don't have the skill required." Yi Deng spoke.

The disciples were confused about what the peak master was talking about. They had thought that the peak master was calling the supreme elder for his authority. But now the peak master admitted that he had called him because he himself was inadequate to handle it.

"Peak master, if it is fine with you. Why would the supreme elder be needed here? What skill are you talking about?" Quan Hong who had returned a minute ago questioned in a low voice.

Yi Deng stroked his beard but did not answer.

"What do you think could be something that can cause a problem for even a nascent soul realm cultivator?" Yi Zi Jin suddenly asked.

During the entire thing, she was the only one who was calmly sitting and did not act. It was as if she cared the least about everything and did not want to be bothered. The other disciples also did not disturb her and left her to do her own thing.

"Sister Yi Zi Jin, may I answer?" one of the junior disciples said.

Yi Zi Jin looked at the young looking boy who was probably in his teens and nodded her head.

"Go ahead," She replied.

"I believe only a nascent soul realm cultivator can threaten another Nascent soul realm cultivator. So if the venerable supreme elder is being called then that means the other part must be that strong or above it." The junior disciple said in a respectful tone.

"Indeed. You are correct." Yi Zi Jin replied.

The face of the junior disciple lit up, seeing that he had received the approval of Senior sister Yi Zi Jin.

"What? Really? Why would a Nascent soul realm cultivator target one of our disciples like that?" Pei Lao asked.

~Sigh~

"That is what we need to find out..." Peak master Yi Deng said while sighing.

Seeing the change in the mood of Peak master, the disciples understood that this was going to be difficult.

"Peak master Yi Deng, I believe everyone has been vetted? So it should be fine to allow them to return now." Wu Hei said.

"Alright then... tell them they are free to go. But be ready to report as soon as the supreme elder comes here." Yi Deng spoke.

"WAIT!" Fa Lao suddenly said.

"Is there a problem?" Wu Hei questioned.

"There are two people we haven't asked." Fa Shiu said as he pointed at Lin Mu and Qing Yuan Tiu.

Wu Hei furrowed his brows as he said, "Them? They were fighting and were in front of us the entire time. It's more likely for someone else to be the suspect."

"We still want to question them." Yi Deng said.

He thought about the two contestants and realized that he actually didn't know about them. He only knew about Qing Yuan Tiu, and even that was due to the letter of confirmation he had received from the sect. He knew that letters like that could be forged. It would be difficult, but it could be done.

He wondered if this really was that case. He pondered more and realized that a small sect like Autumn valley sect having a core condensation realm seemed unusual. Even in medium size sect like the Tri cauldron peony sect, the core condensation realm disciples would become Junior elders.

For a Small sect like Autumn valley sect, they were already enough to become full fledged elders.

"Bring them to me. I want to talk with them in private." Peak master Yi Deng declared.

Wu Hei looked at him for a moment before nodding his head.

"Alright, Lord Mu Lin shouldn't mind this, and I don't think Sister Qing Yuan Tiu would do either." Wu Hei said before going towards the two.

Lin Mu saw him approaching and already knew what was going to happen. He had been listening to their conversation with his enhanced hearing and knew exactly what was going to happen.

Wu Hei approached Lin Mu and spoke in a low voice.

"The peak master is..." but before he could continue, Lin Mu interrupted him.

"I heard. I think we can use this to our advantage." He replied.

"We can?" Wu Hei questioned.

"Yes, just let me talk and see if it can work." Lin Mu answered.

"If Brother Lin Mu is affirmative then, please go ahead." Wu Hei agreed and went to talk with Qing Yuan Tiu.

Wu Hei informed Qing Yuan Tiu of what the Peak master wanted and she agreed without saying anything. To her, this was nothing of much importance and all she wanted was for it to end so that she could go on her way.

Chapter 393 - Flipping The Scapegoat

Soon Lin Mu and Qing Yuan Tiu were brought to the manor and were taken to a room.

In there, Peak master Yi Deng, Senior disciple Fa Lao and Quan Hong were waiting. Whereas Wu Hei was accompanying Lin Mu and Qing Yuan Tiu.

"As you asked Peak master," Wu Hei said.

"Please take a seat, lord Mu Lin and junior Qing Yuan Tiu." The peak master said.

Lin Mu could sense the faint threat in his tone of voice and knew that this was more of an order rather than a request or invitation.

"It is nice to formally meet you Peak master." Lin Mu greeted in a respectful tone.

Lin Mu knew that they were not the enemy here. For what he was planning, it was better if they had a good impression of him and would be a bit more approving.

"Greetings peak master, Yi Deng. My master sends you his regards." Qing Yuan Tiu greeted.

"Oh, your master? How is he, I haven't seen him in years now?" Yi Deng questioned.

"Master has been in seclusion lately. Though he did leave some instructions on what was to be done if certain situations arised. Someone from our sect meeting you was one of them." Qing Yuan Tiu answered.

"Ah, I see." Yi Deng nodded his head and turned to look at Lin Mu.

He hadn't had the chance to take a good look at Lin Mu, and now that he did he realized that he seemed to be rather unique. His spirit qi fluctuations could barely be felt and he seemed to have almost no vital energy in his body. It seemed as if everything was concealed.

This struck a chord with him, and he couldn't help but relate to how Fa Shiu had disappeared without a trace.

'No, it cannot be him. His cultivation base is too low and that cannot be a lie.' Yi Deng thought to himself.

"So I believe we are here because of the disappearance of Junior elder Fa Shiu?" Lin Mu initiated the conversation.

"Yes, that is correct. So tell me have any of you heard or seen anything. Or perhaps you have suspicions on someone?" Yi Deng questioned while Fa Lao and Quan Hong watched.

"I do not really know much about this peak master Yi Deng. I only came here to fulfill the task that was assigned to me, which was to represent my sect." Qing Yuan Tiu replied.

Yi Deng nodded his head as he had a bit of an idea about how the Autumn valley sect operated. He had only met the elder who was the master of Qing Yuan Tiu once before during a sect meeting. He had spoken to him as a courtesy that they could ask them of a request in the future as an excuse to foster good ties.

But he had not expected that five years later they really would request something of him. But that something was giving an identity reference to one of their core disciples. He didn't mind much and accepted it as they were coming for his daughter's wedding anyway and allowed it.

"Peak master, although I do not know how Junior elder Fa Shiu disappeared, I do know of a few similar incidents that have happened a while ago." Lin Mu spoke.

"Oh? Do tell." Yi Deng said as his brows rose.

"I sure peak master Yi Deng has heard about the Gu Legion," Lin Mu replied.

The expression of Yi Deng and the other two disciples straightened upon hearing that name. Wu Hei observed their expression closely but did not interfere or speak anything. He already understood where Lin Mu was trying to take this.

"Unfortunately, I do know of them. But what is their relation to this?" Yi Deng questioned.

"Well, I believe that they may be behind this all. My master had a conflict with them too and from what I've seen they've cause some incidents in this county too." Lin Mu answered.

"I understand that, but why are you so sure?" Yi Deng asked.

"Because I know the reason behind why they would try to kill or kidnap Junior elder Fa Shiu." Lin Mu replied.

"And what would be that?" Yi Deng asked.

"A blood sacrifice..." Lin Mu revealed.

The eyes of the elder went wide and so did Fa Lao, Quan Hong, and Qing Yuan Tiu.

"BLOOD SACRIFICE?!" Quan Hong exclaimed.

"Yes," Lin Mu nodded. "A blood sacrifice. From what investigations I've done along with Lord Wu Hei, we know that this is the reason why they have been kidnapping cultivators. It makes sense that they would do the same to Junior Elder Fa Shiu since he had seen their faces."

"Do you have proof of this?" Yi Deng asked after a minute of thinking.

Lin Mu turned his head towards Wu Hei. Wu Hei understood what he meant and nodded in acknowledgment.

'Seems like father is doomed now...' Wu Hei thought with a bit of a smile.

"We do. We found some old documents that showed that there were a lot of caves below. They were spread all around the area and there is a network of them below the city too. While we haven't explored it yet, I believe it may be a good start." Lin Mu explained.

Yi Deng's eyes went wide as a pressure exuded from him. Lin Mu could feel that he had launched his spirit sense probe, and it was now heading deep towards the ground. A few seconds later, a tinge of rage appeared on his face as he stood up.

"Seems like there is merit to this." Yi Deng agreed.

"What do we do now Peak master?" Fa Lao questioned.

"We wait for the supreme elder. He is an expert in formations and investigations. He should be able to see what happened. And once he comes, we will investigate these tunnels that they are speaking of." Yi Deng answered.

A smile appeared on Lin Mu's face briefly as he knew it had worked.

'Now to wait and see...'

Chapter 394 - The Nascent Soul Realm

It was night time and the guests that had been in attendance at the tournament were still at the Manor. After hearing that the supreme elder of the Tri cauldron peony sect will be coming, nearly all of them changed their mind willingly.

While the ones that were unwilling still stayed due to the peer pressure. They knew that if they were the only ones missing from the list, the supreme elder may find it disrespectful. Thankfully, their time wasn't wasted as Zhen Sui and Wu Hei did their best to entertain them.

They already had some plans set up for the celebratory dinner banquet that was going to happen at night, and thus they just accelerated the plans and had the servants set up everything quickly. Though the people of the Tri cauldron peony sect were in no mood to take part in the festivities. Perhaps only Yi Zi Jin was involved in it, and even then she was merely sitting in one place giving short responses to the well-wishers that came to meet her.

Lin Mu was currently sitting at a table with Wu Hei alone. Zhen Sui was busy directing the servants while Wu Teng had finally taken up a task and was talking with the guests. This was a task that he had no problem doing and with his boisterous personality, one could even say it was easy.

Though a few hours ago when he learned that the Gu Legion had a secret hideout in the city, right below their noses, he was angry. But when he heard that they were doing Blood sacrifices he was absolutely furious and swear to kill them himself.

Lin Mu watched it from the sidelines as the secret of the Gu legion was being revealed to everyone. He felt a bit comfortable now that they had the power on the Numbers on their side. But at the same time, he felt as if he was missing something, and a strange sense of anxiety settled in him.

Now the main trump card they had against whoever that was being served by the Gu Legion was the supreme elder of the Tri cauldron Peony sect along with the peak master Yi Deng.

"What do you know about the Supreme elder of the Tri cauldron peony sect?" Lin Mu questioned Wu Hei, who was sitting with him at the table.

"The supreme elder is perhaps the strongest cultivator of the Tri Cauldron peony sect and is at the Adult stage of the Nascent Soul realm. Even the sect patriarch is only at the adolescent stage of the Nascent Soul realm. Another thing is, while the Tri Cauldron peony sect specializes in alchemical pill refinement, they have different peaks.

The peak headed by the peak master Yi Deng is the second cauldron peak and takes care of the sale of pills as well as refinement of some of the pills. Whereas the supreme elder heads the peony peak, which is the sect's sacred land. That is where they keep their inheritance and precious treasures.

Because of this, the specialization of the supreme elder is more towards qi skills rather than the refinement of pills." Wu Hei answered.

Lin Mu was interested in this and while he had learned some things from the records that he had received from Jing Wei, there weren't finer details like these in them. From what he knew the Tri cauldron peony sect had four peaks; the first cauldron peak that completely specialized in alchemical pill refinement, the second cuddling peak that did sales, the third cauldron peak that grew spirit herbs, and the peony peak.

The records only told that peony peak was a sacred land but did not mention more details about it. Another thing that surprised Lin Mu was that the Supreme elder was at the Adult stage of the nascent soul realm.

Lin Mu had already learned about the Nascent Soul realm from senior Xukong and had an idea of its power.

Reaching the nascent soul realm was incredibly difficult, as a cultivator had to overcome the heavenly tribulation.

When a cultivator reached the absolute peak of the core condensation realm, they would start to get an idea of when their heavenly tribulation would be coming.

During this period they were called as pseudo nascent soul realm cultivators as their understanding of the spirit qi had exceeded that of a normal cultivator and were close to that of a nascent soul realm cultivator.

A cultivator would usually suppress the heavenly tribulation until he or she found a proper opportunity. One needed a lot of preparation if they wanted to reach the nascent soul realm, as the heavenly tribulation could very easily kill them if they were not careful and well prepared.

Once the cultivator became ready to undergo the heavenly tribulation, tribulation clouds would gather and heavenly lightning would strike their body. The goal of the cultivator was to endure this heavenly lightning and use it to hatch their nascent soul.

Their core would act as the egg, and from it, the nascent soul would be born. Once the nascent soul was successfully born, the cultivator was said to have successfully reached the first stage of the nascent soul realm.

The first stage was called as the infant soul stage as the nascent soul was in the form of an infant. This infant would look the same as the cultivator when they were of that age.

There were three more stages in the nascent soul realm, which were the child soul, adolescent soul, and adult soul stages, for a total of four stages.

The cultivator would be able to freely able to wield the spirit qi in the environment and would have to nourish his or her nascent soul in order to make it grow and reach the next stage. It was also this stage during which the appearance of a cultivator was fixed.

If a cultivator reached the adult stage of the nascent soul realm at the age of twenty, his appearance would be fixed at that age until he reaches the very end of his or her lifespan. At that point, they would rapidly age hundreds of years in the span of a few minutes and then die.

Reaching the nascent soul realm increased the cultivator's life span to a thousand years and made them worthy of starting their own cultivation sects.

Chapter 395 - The Supreme Elder Arrives

It was a little past midnight when a booming sound was heard. It was as if thunder had torn through the clouds to strike the ground.

The people in the hall became alert and knew that something had happened. Peak Master Yi Deng who had been sitting in mediation all this time opened his eyes as they flickered under the light of the lamps.

"He's here..." He uttered.

All of the disciples of the Tri Cauldron peony sect stood up and walked out of the manor. Even Yi Zi Jin was rather tense and kept her demeanor.

"Looks like the supreme elder has arrived." Wu Hei stated.

Lin Mu raised his brows as he felt the spatial qi fluctuations in the air. They were abnormally disturbed and it was as if someone had dropped a large stone in a pool of water. Waves and ripples were created as Lin Mu sensed them.

'An Adult stage Nascent Soul realm cultivator is indeed powerful...' Lin Mu thought to himself as he also stood up along with Wu Hei.

Zhen Sui was already prodding Wu Teng to wake up as he had fallen asleep after having a few pots of wine. Thankfully, the man woke up after getting a few slaps from his mother and didn't even flinch. Rather it was Zhen Sui who had to nurse her hand after that.

Lin Mu looked up at the sky and saw the clouds that were being split apart. Once the clouds were gone, he could see an old man floating up in the air. The man was dressed in white and blue robes with the motif of the Tri cauldron peony sect on his chest. On his back, one could see an embroidered peony flower that was placed over the pattern of a mountain.

The old man exuded a sense of dignity from him, and just from looking at him one would feel pressure.

While others were having a hard time looking at the old man, Lin Mu had already adapted to it. He looked closely at the supreme elder of the Tri cauldron peony sect who seemed to be in his ninties. This man looked even older than Jing Wei, which told Lin Mu that he was probably much less talented than him.

"No, that's not it." Xukong suddenly spoke.

"Oh? What's the problem senior?" Lin Mu questioned.

"That man isn't old because he reached the Nascent soul realm late, but rather because he has lost a significant portion of his longevity," Xukong answered.

"What? Why would he lose his longevity?" Lin Mu questioned.

"There can be many reasons for it. But the most common one seems to be due to battles and fights. He burned his longevity to increase his strength exponentially during battles to defeat his enemies. Another thing can be that he used his longevity as fuel to create a special type of alchemical fire and used it to refine pills, seeing as he is from a sect that specializes in alchemical pills." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu nodded his head in understanding as he suddenly remembered a thing, that he had discussed with senior Xukong a while ago.

"Wait, Senior now that I'm in the peak stage of the Qi refining realm, can't I ignite a qi flame now?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yes, you can attempt that now. Though for your first attempt you would need special conditions as there can be a backlash if you make a mistake." Xukong replied.

"Ah, I understand senior." Lin Mu replied and focused back on the Supreme elder who was gazing down at everyone.

"Greetings Supreme elder!" Yi Deng greeted while cupping his hands.

Even if he and the supreme elder were both at the Nascent soul realm, the difference between them was vast. He was merely at the Child stage of the Nascent soul realm, while the Supreme elder was two stages above at the adult stage.

But that wasn't the only reason behind his respect, no rather it was because of their age difference too. From what Yi Deng knew, the supreme elder has been holding his position since before he was a peak

master. In fact, the supreme elder had been in the Nascent soul stage even before he was a cultivator himself.

One could compare from this, how difficult cultivation was. Even he who had lived for over three hundred years was at the nascent soul realm, and the supreme elder who was over six hundred years old was also at the Nascent Soul realm.

The higher one climbed, the more difficult and slow the cultivation got. One could even say that they progressed at a snail's pace.

"THESE DISCIPLES PAY RESPECTS TO THE VENERABLE SUPREME ELDER!" All of the disciples greeted out loud.

Lin Mu broke out of his thoughts due to their shouts and saw the supreme elder descending on to the ground. This was another one of the basic abilities of the Nascent soul realm cultivators. They could fly without the use of a spirit weapon.

Still, the ones that were in the infant and child stage of the nascent soul realm couldn't fly for long. Only after reaching the very peak of the nascent soul realm could one do what the supreme elder was doing. He had flown to the Wu Lim city all the way from the Tri cauldron peony sect, which was more than a thousand kilometers away.

All this distance had only taken him six hours to complete by flying.

"Take me to the site of the incident," The supreme elder spoke directly.

"Please follow me, supreme elder," The peak master replied and took him to the tournament area.

"We had just arrived here when a minute later, the junior elder Fa Shiu disappeared. No one saw what happened, and we couldn't find any suspects either. But we do have a good idea of where they are hiding and need your help for that." The peak master explained.

The supreme elder's brows furrowed when he saw the area though and then a frown appeared on his face.

"I sense traces of spatial disturbance here..."

Chapter 396 - The Supreme Elder's Praise

Peak master Yi Deng's expression turned serious as he heard the words of the supreme elder.

"I had guessed that it could have been something like that, but now this..." Yi Deng said and trailed off.

"Indeed... this is much worse than we thought. Seems like the disciples offended a power that has a nascent soul realm cultivator backing it. And not only that but one that has a spatial treasure." The supreme elder acknowledged.

Yi Deng looked around and tried to sense the spatial disturbance on his own, but barely could.

"Supreme elder, can you pinpoint where the spatial disturbance came from? Perhaps we can track it?" Yi Deng questioned.

Just as this question was asked, Lin Mu and the others had also reached the area and heard these words. Lin Mu tensed up slightly and was ready to use Fade at any moment. The others also listened on with sharp ears, not willing to miss even a single word.

"Unfortunately, the traces are far too faint for me to tell where they existed from. They could be from right where I'm standing at, the stage, the audience, the manor or even someplace outside the city. The degree of its accuracy is too low." The supreme elder shook his head.

"I understand. But if they were able to do something like this then they must have some reason, right? I mean kidnapping a core condensation realm cultivator right under the noses of us all, wouldn't it have been better to do it someplace else?" Yi Deng questioned.

"Hmm... this is not what they intend, I think. Rather, this was a warning to us." The supreme elder replied.

"A warning? To the Tri cauldron peony sect? What kind of power do they have that they think they can do this? Even the top sects wouldn't do something like this sneakily." Yi Deng scoffed.

"Whoever they are, one thing is sure; Fa Shiu saw something he should not have and survived. You should know this, didn't you speak with him?" The supreme elder asked with his brows raised.

"He told me everything, how they were looking for a gift for Yi Zi Jin and obtained a beast core. Then they were discovered by some cultivators who wanted to rob them, but then when they resisted they were attacked instead and the juniors were killed.

Fa Shiu said that it was a group of five core condensation realm cultivators." The supreme elder spoke.

The supreme elder scratched his beard and thought for a minute before speaking.

"Then that must be it. He saw their faces." The supreme leader concluded.

"He said that he didn't know them, and this was the first time he was seeing them. But if they were core condensation realm cultivators, then they should have been well known. Even wandering core condensation realm cultivators have a reputation." Yi Deng replied.

"Hmm... We'll know once we investigate these culprits you were speaking of, you said they're here in the city, right?" The supreme elder asked.

"Yes, Lord Wu Hei and Mu Lin informed us about their suspicions. I compared the incidents they described and they seem to match rather well." Yi Deng answered.

"And who is Lord Wu Hei and Mu Lin?" The supreme elder asked as he turned his gaze towards the people who had been staring at them all this time.

"This is my future son-in-law's brother, Lord Wu Hei." Yi Deng said as he gestured.

"Greetings Supreme elder, this junior hopes for your grace." Wu Hei said in a respectful tone.

The supreme elder looked at Wu Hei for a few seconds and nodded.

"Low cultivation but the demeanor is good." He said in a straightforward manner. "And who's Mu Lin?"

"I am supreme elder," Lin Mu stepped forwards and greeted with cupped hands.

Looking at Lin Mu, the supreme elder's expression went from straight, to that of interest, to slight surprise and then back to calm.

"Oh? Interesting... reaching the peak stage of the qi refining realm at the young age of sixteen, good talent. Also... a rather unique cultivation technique you have there. If it weren't for my years of experience I would have thought of you to be a commoner." The supreme elder said with a slight smile.

'He could see my cultivation, huh? So they need to be at the Adult stage of nascent soul realm to be able to detect mine, that's good to know.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"It's likely that he just guessed it. He could perceive your bone age and the faint spirit qi fluctuations coming from you, even though hidden to most are still visible to a person like him. It is likely that he is pretty close to the Dao Shell realm, thus the heightened sensitivity." Xukong explained.

Lin Mu was happy that this happened right now as he would now have an estimate for the future and would be able to plan accordingly. Thankfully, there weren't that many cultivators who were at the adult stage of the Nascent Soul realm and him meeting them would be very rare too.

Lin Mu couldn't think of many places where he would have the chance to encounter them either, except for the cultivation sects.

"I thank the supreme elder for his praise, but I cannot claim it completely as it is the grace of my master." Lin Mu replied.

"Oh? You have a master? That's a shame... I would have accepted you otherwise." The supreme elder said in a nonchalant tone.

As soon as these words dropped, the jaws of the people who were listening in fell wide open as well. Even Peak master Yi Deng was rather surprised and took another look at the boy who he had won the tournament. He had not paid much attention to him even if he had defeated a core condensation realm cultivator while being lower than that because he had seen plenty of disciples in his sect that could do the same.

But since even the supreme elder expressed his desire in taking him in, the peak master couldn't help but think again.

Chapter 397 - A Team Is Formed

Perhaps in the entire crowd, only Wu Hei was the one who had expected something like this and was not shocked that the supreme leader showed his interest in taking Lin Mu as his disciple.

'Perhaps even that boy has no idea what kind of master he has. He hasn't experienced the life in a sect and neither has he seen the true circles of the high society. If he had, then I can't imagine what kind of a monster he would be right now.' Wu Hei thought to himself.

"I am flattered supreme elder, but perhaps we should talk about this at a later time." Lin Mu said in a humble tone.

"Ah yes, the situation is more important right now. Well then, can you show us what you meant?" The supreme elder replied.

"Of course, but I believe we should make a plan first." Lin Mu said before turning his head. Lord Wu Hei, would you please explain to them?" He asked.

"Sure," Wu Hei said, "Would the supreme elder mind if we get some privacy?" he added.

The supreme elder didn't even respond before waving his hand and instantly setting up an isolating formation. One could tell from this how proficient he must be at formations and also his experience in them. The people that were meant to hear the plan were only the Tri cauldron peony sect disciples, the Wu family, Qing Yuan Tiu and Lin Mu.

Wu Hei nodded his head in approbate before speaking. Finally, after fifteen minutes a plan was made such that only the stronger people that were willing would be going to the tunnels beneath. The candidates that were chosen were Quan Hong, Fa Lao, Qing Yuan Tiu, Wu Hei, Wu Teng, Lin Mu, and the two elders of the Tri cauldron peony sect.

They reckoned that this many people would be better to stay on the side of caution. They did not want to take too many weak people and risk them succumbing to danger if it so occurred. While the elders may be able to protect them in the face of open danger, it was not the same here.

If the culprit could take a core condensation realm cultivator right from under their noses, then they would be sitting ducks even with the elders there. Thus even the weaker cultivators like Quan Hong and Lin Mu were asked twice if they really wanted to come, as they only wanted core condensation realm cultivators at the minimum.

But Lin Mu insisted, and thus they allowed him to come. As for Wu Hei, he was the one that was going to guide them and thus there wasn't much they could do there.

"Well then, now that we have this done, let's go ahead." Wu Hei said.

"Yes, we should be as quick as possible." The supreme elder agreed.

"I can't wait to get my hands on those pieces of trash, I want to stare them in their eyes as I break their necks." Wu Teng said with rage in his eyes.

The peak master Yi Deng also seemed to be angry, but he was suppressing it for the time being knowing that this was not the right time to show it. The supreme elder was calm on the outside, but internally a lot of thoughts were going through his mind.

Unlike the rest of them, he wasn't as worried about the blood sacrifice as he was about the spatial disturbance. It had been a year since the sky precepts sect had sent out a warning and told the other sects to keep an eye on any spatial disturbances.

They had disappeared a while ago, but now they seemed to have reappeared somehow. And that combining with the blood sacrifice gave him a bad feeling.

"Please follow me," Wu Hei said before taking out a spirit sword and flying out.

The others followed him on their respective spirit swords, except for the supreme elder who just flew on his own. Lin Mu was following behind closely and wondered where Wu Hei was taking them all to. The closest entrance to the tunnels was close to them being the well in the manor's yard.

'Hmm, perhaps he doesn't want to abruptly throw the suspicion towards his family. While his father is involved, it wouldn't be fair to involve his mother and brother in this.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu's guess turned out to be true as Wu Hei took them to another one of the city wells. This well was much larger than the other ones, as it was located in the main residential area of the city. Multiple people could draw water from it at once, which made it sensible to be this large.

The well had a diameter of about five meters and had a wall of one and a half meters surrounding it. There were multiple beams set up above it, attached to which were pulleys. In total, there were about twenty pulleys, which meant that twenty people could draw water at once.

All of them descended into the well one by one with Wu Hei talking the lead. There was darkness everywhere, which was soon dispelled by the people. Some used illumination techniques, some lit up fire on their hands while some like Wu Hei took out spirit tools.

Lin Mu looked below and saw the large body of water. He looked at its two ends and saw the river that flowed into it. There was apparently a depression in the ground here which accumulated the water from the river, and once it reached a certain level, it would flow out and continue from the other end.

"This way," Wu Hei spoke and took them to land near the edge of the water. One could see the tunnels that extend from there and all the faded runes that were carved on the walls.

"This..." Fa Lao muttered in surprise, seeing the runes.

"Supreme elder, you don't think they..." Yi Deng said.

"Yes... they are from that time."

Chapter 398 - Former Mayor?

The disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect heard the peak master Yi Deng and supreme elders' words but didn't understand what they meant. But Lin Mu on the other hand had an idea of what they were talking about.

"Seems like the Empire missed this one..." The supreme elder spoke.

"Indeed... looks like it will be the time to inform the sects and the empire after this." The peak master said in a cold tone.

Wu Hei and Lin Mu were now getting a bit anxious about their statements and had a bad feeling.

"What are you talking about elder?" Quan Hong questioned.

"Yes elder, what are these runes?" Fa Lao questioned.

"They are of an olden time, long before I was even born. It was a time of great strife, it was the time when the northern tribes invaded the empire." Peak master Yi Deng answered.

Fa Lao and Quan Hong had not expected to hear something like this. Even Wu Teng was a bit surprised, but not as much as them. He was once part of the vermilion legion and had thus worked at the pear's belt. Because of this, he knew the history of the Continent and what had happened back then.

"They are even older than I am... perhaps older than the entire Tri cauldron peony sect." The supreme elder added.

Hearing this, Yi Deng raised his brows in question. "Supreme elder, you mean... this is one of the original ruins of the Grand northern alliance?"

"I'm afraid, yes. I do not know how this one stayed hidden for so long though..." The supreme elder replied.

Hearing the words Grand northern alliance finally enlightened the two disciples, Quan Hong and Fa Lao. Even Qing Yuan Tiu showed an interested expression.

"It would not have been able to stay hidden for so long unless..." Yi Deng muttered.

~Shing~

"Unless it was hidden intentionally by someone," Fa Lao said before drawing his sword and pointing it towards Wu Hei and Wu Teng.

Quan Hong did the same and entered an offensive stance. Wu Hei was not fazed by this and maintained his composure. Wu Teng though had anger on his face.

"Where do you think you're pointing your swords? Lower them or you'll have no hands to do that." Wu Teng threatened without the fear of the two elders.

"YOU..." Fa Lao was about to pretest when the supreme elder interrupted.

"Stop! It cannot be them or the Wu clan. The Wu clan did not even exist that long ago and only came to power in the recent hundred years." The supreme elder spoke.

Fa Lao and Quan Hong lowered their swords but still felt a bit apprehensive.

"But if it wasn't the Wu clan then it must have been the predecessor, right? Which clan had authority over the Wu Lim city before them?" Quan Hong questioned.

Now, this was a question that interested even Lin Mu and he had wondered about it as well before.

"Before the Wu clan rose up under the influence of Wu Xun, the Zhen Clan was the one who had the city as one of their branches." Yi Deng answered.

'Zhen clan? Does he mean Wu Hei's mother Zhen Sui's clan?' Lin Mu wondered.

"The Zhen clan? But didn't most of them perish over the years? I remember reading that their clan was one of the clans that suffered the worst after the war. Are there even people left from that clan?" Fa Lao questioned.

"Of course there are..." Yi Deng replied.

Wu Teng seemed to be rather surprised by this, as his face showed it all.

"Mother..." He muttered.

"Madam Zhen Sui is the last remaining member of the Zhen clan as far as I know." Yi Deng confirmed.

Fa Lao gripped his sword handle again as he spoke, "but doesn't that mean that it still involves the Wu clan?"

"It is quite unlikely... even Zhen Sui hadn't been born back then. Only the former mayor Zhen Hao and his wife Zhen Mei were left. So if there was any chance, then those two are the only ones who could have been involved in it." The supreme elder explained.

"It cannot be..." Wu Teng muttered in shock.

"There is nothing we could have done. Grandfather and grandmother passed away soon after mother was born and she was raised by the servants of the clan. Even I only found out about these ruins after finding some old documents during my travels in earlier years." Wu Hei explained.

Seeing that the situation could get bad, Lin Mu decided to interrupt.

"I think we should complete what we have come here for, first. The other things can be discussed later." Lin Mu said in a calm tone.

"The boy is correct, we should follow the goal we came here for." The supreme elder agreed.

Fa Lao and Quan Hong nodded their heads to show their agreement as well, and all of them continued onward.

It didn't take them long to reach the tunnels, and they encountered the split there. They didn't have to guess which tunnel to choose as peak master Yi Deng easily scanned the area ahead with his spirit sense and chose the path.

"Supreme elder... it is as they said... there is a blood pool..." Yi Deng confirmed as his hands trembled slightly.

A stern look appeared on the supreme elder's face as he spoke, "I want to take a look with my own two eyes."

They thus chose the second fork in the tunnel and reached the location of the blood pool.

"Careful! There is inflammable gas here that is also toxic." Lin Mu warned.

"Humph!" Peak master Yi Deng harrumphed and waved his hand.

~Weng~

A pale white shield appeared in front of them and blocked the path that was in front of them. Yi Deng then flicked his finger and a small fireball shot forward.

~Zoom~

~BOOM~

The fireball traveled for a short distance before exploding and igniting all of the gas that was spread in the tunnel and in the chamber where the blood pool was located in.

Chapter 399 - Visitors

Lin Mu was bracing for the impact for the explosion but it was completely stopped by the shield and thus he didn't have to do anything. The peak master waved his hand again, and the shield disappeared.

"Let's continue," Yi Deng said.

Everyone walked ahead and finally arrived in a large chamber that had the blood sludge pool. They could sense the pungent and foul smell even after the explosion Had wiped out most of it.

The supreme elder had a frown on his face as he looked at the blood sludge pool.

"This is even worse than I thought... the number of sacrifices this must have required..." The supreme elder muttered.

"Umm... this is just one of the blood sludge pools." Lin Mu spoke.

The supreme elder's eyes went wide as he capped his head back to look at Lin Mu.

"What did you say?" The supreme elder asked again.

"There are more of them... ten more." Lin Mu answered.

"Heavens! This..." Peak master had an utterly horrified expression on his face.

Wu Hei and Lin Mu realized that this must have been even worse than they had thought before. Perhaps their perception was skewed from the very start and they were severely underestimating what the implications of this were.

"Senior... I don't feel good about this..." Lin Mu spoke to Xukong.

"Just be ready for anything..." was all Xukong could say to him for now.

While Xukong could tell that Lin Mu was anxious he knew that the boy had enough abilities to save himself. And if push came to shove, there was still the final gambit that they could play. But it was not something they wanted to waste here.

Lin Mu internally nodded his head and observed the two elders.

"Ten more blood sludge pools like these... how many beasts and humans were sacrificed for this? And how many years has this continued for?" Yi Deng muttered with shock.

The supreme elder looked at the small troughs that were coming from the wall and went to the blood sludge pool. He walked up to the wall that they came from and touched them.

"There is a barrier behind it from what we've seen before. The 'gate' to what we think is the main room is in the other tunnel." Wu Hei said in a straight tone.

He was trying his best to maintain a calm look but even he was getting a bit overwhelmed by the Revelation. Wu Teng was the same while Qing Yuan Tiu also had a serious expression on her face. The two disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect were just watching on looking shook.

"That's it no more waiting, we're heading there right now!" The Supreme elder declared.

The others nodded in agreement and they went back to the location where the path split and chose the other tunnel. The path was heading lower into the ground and the two elders could sense it clearly.

"No wonder it stayed hidden for such a long time... it is located over a hundred meters underground." Yi Deng said after assessing the depth.

Their progress was halted by the gate that had finally appeared in front of them.

"This was the farthest we ever went, and could not do anything to the barrier that is placed on it." Wu Hei spoke.

"I take care of it, you all stand back. Yi Deng protect them." The supreme elder ordered.

He then walked up to the gate and placed both of his palms on the door. Closing his eyes he focused on the gate and waves of spirit qi started coming from him.

Lin Mu was closely watching him and wanted to perceive it better using his spirit sense but knew that it could be problematic and thus avoided doing that. He could still feel the spirit qi fluctuations coming from the supreme elder and knew that he was working hard at finding a solution.

About ten minutes passed and nothing had happened till now.

"Supreme elder should we-" Yi Deng was about to suggest something seeing that nothing was happening but was interrupted by a wave of energy that shook everyone.

~WEENG~

~HONG~

Multiple formation runes appeared on the gates as they started to crumble and fade away one by one.

"It worked! He did it!" Fa Lao said with excitement.

"So we would have really needed a nascent soul realm cultivator to open this in the end..." Wu Hei muttered to himself.

~crackle~

~Deng~

After all of the runes had disappeared, the gate split from the middle and finally started to open. The dust that had been covering it all these years started to fall from it and clouded the vision of the people who were here.

The supreme elder opened his eyes as a few beads of sweat appeared on his forehead.

'That formation array is terrifying! Never would I have thought I would see one like that here, the formation arrays of the Yao clan were indeed powerful.' The supreme elder thought to himself.

Lin Mu and the others finally got a clear look at the large chamber that had a bloody scent spread through it. The roof of the chamber was very tall, being above hundred meters, and they could see that it was at least five hundred meters wide as well.

There were multiple tunnels arising from the chamber, and no one could tell where they all lead to. But the most eye catching thing was none other than the massive blood pool in the center of the chamber. It was a hundred meters in radius and multiple troughs connected to it.

One could see that these troughs came from the walls and fresh blood trickled from them. Looking at the bloodstains that have covered the sides of the troughs, one could tell that there was a time when they were overflowing with blood.

The blood pool in the center was about ten meters deep, but only a quarter of it seemed to be filled as of now. In the very center of the blood pool though was a man sitting in a cross legged posture, floating over the blood as if it was solid.

"Seems like I finally have some visitors..."

Chapter 400 - Betrayal

Lin Mu could instantly feel the aura of the man that was sitting on the blood pool was dangerous. There was a malevolent energy thrumming from his body and everyone shuddered due to it. But that wasn't what shocked Lin Mu the most, rather it was something else.

"The invader... it's not... him..." Lin Mu muttered with shock.

"You sure!?" Xukong immediately asked.

"Yes... but he still does have some traces of the invaders aura. Which means..." Lin Mu replied.

"He was able to banish the invader from his body... but that shouldn't be possible for someone like him." Xukong said.

"Yes, wasn't the Great slumber bear only able to do that because of his bloodline?..." Lin Mu questioned but then realized the answer on his own.

"THE BLOODLINE! He's been using the blood sacrifice to remove the invader from his body!" Lin Mu understood.

While Lin Mu was reeling from the shock, the peak master Yi Deng and Supreme elder were going through something similar. While the others couldn't tell what Cultivation base the man in front of them was, they could very well do.

"Pseudo Dao Shell realm... he's at the Pseudo Dao Shell realm..." The Supreme elder muttered in shock.

The man who was sitting on the blood pool was shirtless and was only wearing a pair of pants. There were tattoos over his body and the blood from the blood pool was flowing along his skin, like snakes slithering on a tree.

The small streams of blood would climb up from his legs and spread all over his body, slowly being absorbed by it. The man's pupils were also a shade of deep red and his black hair was long, extending all the way to his waist.

If one looked at his one would think that he was in his thirties but his voice which contained the vicissitudes of life told otherwise.

~sigh~

"Looks like my brother failed in his endeavor and was too late..." The man spoke.

"You! Who are you?" Yi Deng questioned.

This was a question that each and every person had in this room and they were all wondering what kind of a person could do something like this.

"Me? I am a forgotten man... a nobody..." The man spoke in a calm tone.

"A nobody? You do all this and you say you are a nobody?" the peak master asked, anger tainting his voice.

"Hahaha!" The man laughed and stood up.

The other people became tense and became ready to act if anything happened.

"Why Yi Deng, have you forgotten me? Those were your very own words that you used to call me... I remember correctly, you said that to the elder of the Rainbow pills sect a few years ago." The man spoke.

Yi Deng's eyes went wide as the man said that. His mind ran at the speed of lightning trying to remember and see if what he said was indeed true.

"Nobody... that was... YOU! You're sect master Gu Yao!" Yi Deng remembered.

Lin Mu and the rest had a confused expression on their faces as they tried to identify that name, but couldn't. Lin Mu cross referenced with the records that he had read before but couldn't particularly remember which sect he belonged to.

"AH! Now that was a memorable time... but for now, seems like its time to do some work." Gu Yao said as he lightly stretched his fingers. "I've been in seclusion for far too long it seems..."

Gu Yao's eyes scanned over everyone but particularly focused on three people; Lin Mu, Wu Hei and Wu Teng.

"I didn't think we would meet like this one day... nephews. Did your father tell you about me yet?" Gu Yao spoke looking at the two Wu brothers.

The frown appeared on Wu Hei's face while Wu Teng's gritted his teeth.

"LIES!" Wu Teng shouted and without thinking much lunged at Gu Yao.

"NO! Brother Stop!" Wu Hei shouted.

Wu Hei could clearly tell the man in front of them was stronger than all of them combined and it would be nearly impossible for them to act against him. He was about to go ahead and stop him but saw something that horrified him even more.

~Shing~

~Shua~

"AARGH!" Wu Teng yelled in pain as he was bashed into the wall by a green pillar of wind.

The people all snapped to look at the source of the attack and were astounded to find who attacked Wu Teng.

"Qing Yuan Tiu! Why would you do this?!" Lin Mu questioned with anger.

Qing Yuan Tiu was standing there with her bulky clothes torn apart. Now that they had been removed, one could see the metallic armor that she was wearing underneath it. There were multiple small plates and spines that joined to gather to form an intricate set of armor.

Underneath that armor she was wearing skin tight clothes that highlighted her curves, and the armor protected them. It was this armor from where the six metal rods that anchored her to the ground came from. The armor extended from her torso onto her arms and legs.

Qing Yuan Tiu didn't answer the astounded Lin Mu but instead looked at Gu Yao with a glint in her eyes. Gu Yao too looked at her with interest in his eyes.

"Junior Qing Yuan Tiu greets the ancestor!" She said with extreme respect in her voice.

"ANCESTOR? He's the ancestor of the Autumn Valley sect?" Hong Quan asked out loud in a surprised tone.

"But isn't Autumn Valley sect a new sect that only had a nascent soul realm patriarch?" Fa Lao questioned, feeling confused.

A bitter expression appeared on Yi Deng's face as he linked all the points together.

"We were wrong..." He said.

"No, no, no..." Gu Yao said in a chiding tone. "It wasn't you that was wrong, it's just that the Autumn Valley sect never existed." He revealed.

"Bu-but how? How did you even fool all of the sects?" Yi Deng spoke, feeling bewildered.