

Walker 611

Chapter 611 - The Cautious Ripple Mist Sect

Lin Mu and Jing Luo continued onwards after the short incident before.

"That was rather unexpected," Lin Mu spoke.

"Indeed. I don't know if that disciple was truly mistaken or guessed what we were going to do." Jing Luo replied.

"Hmm... if he was mistaken, that it would be fine. But if he was able to guess that they would not meet a good end if we conflicted, then I would have to reassess the disciple's intelligence." Lin Mu said with a serious tone.

If there were disciples with this level of foresight in the sect, then the elders were bound to be even better. Or so Lin Mu thought. Meanwhile, the disciples and the elders were unaware that the little incident had increased their image in Lin Mu's mind and he had become far more alert.

"To be on the safer side, I think we should expect some resistance soon. There is no way the sect does not know about us by now. There may be some people waiting for us." Lin Mu stated.

"I think so too. Though as long as it is no one in the Dao Shell realm, I'm confident of dealing with them." Jing Luo spoke.

"Yes, that would be good. As far as I know, the Ripple Mist sect's High elders are at the Dao shell realm and only the patriarch should be at the Dao Treading realm. There may be some hidden experts, but I doubt they would appear at this time.

Especially since Gu Yao must be controlling them as well... or suppressing them till he gains full control." Lin Mu replied.

"That would be for the best." Jing Luo said as he gazed ahead.

The three were now passive over the Ripple Mist sect's Spirit tool pavilion. Below them Lin Mu could see countless smaller buildings and what looked to be forges. Black smoke rose up from the chimneys, along with fumes of different colors.

Disciples moved around like busy ants as they went about their tasks. Overall, everyone seemed to be focused and even though they saw Lin Mu and Jing Luo along with Little Shrubby, they did not pay attention.

"I can't help but feel strange that they haven't alarmed the entire sect." Lin Mu said after assessing the unnerving calmness.

"Hmm... perhaps they know that alarming the sect may do more harm than good and thus they haven't done that. If they do, we will probably end up fighting the elders and disciples, many of them who would not be our match. This would cause damage to the sect and its members." Jing Luo hypothesized.

"That is a smart choice. Though if they can think this far, then they must be deliberately waiting for us to reach a suitable location that would not impact the rest of the sect." Lin Mu spoke.

Jing Luo raised his brows and spoke, "Do you have any idea where that might be? Comparing the last time I came here, I never entered the sect itself and even then I can see that several parts have been changed, so I can't really tell."

"Indeed, the forest of the Ripple mist sect. That is the only place they can fight without impacting the rest of the sect. That is actually from where I entered the minor plane." Lin Mu replied.

"Hmm, if that is true, then it would be good for us too. More open space would allow us to fight better." Jing Luo said as a spark of battle arose in his eyes.

Lin Mu saw this and secretly sighed to himself.

"Don't forget, our first priority is to escape. We shall only battle if there is no other choice. Besides, once we reach that point, Little Shrubby will be able to use his full speed, and no one will be able to stop me. But you... you'll need to find a way to speed up as well." Lin Mu explained.

"Hahah! You don't need to worry about that. I've prepared well in advance for that. I assure you that my speed will be no less than our little kitten's," Jing Luo chuckled.

"GRRR~!" Little Shrubby let out a low growl, feeling offended by Jing Luo's comments.

Jing Luo heard it and only chuckled more to himself. And just like this, they crossed over to the next area that was the residences of the many disciples of the Ripple Mist sect.

"We are close. Once we cross this, we will reach the forest. We will need to deal with the barrier here too." Lin Mu informed.

Jing Luo simply nodded his head and continued.

~HONG~

Lin Mu and Jing Luo could hear the sound of a bell echoing from afar. They instantly became alert and knew that their time of ease had come to an end.

"Seems like the sect finally reacted." Lin Mu said and looked around, his gaze sharp.

Jing Luo had a similar expression, and they looked below to see a strange scene.

"Huh? The Elders have called for a gathering?" the disciples who heard the bell came out of their residences.

They then hurried to the gathering ground in the central area of the sect without questioning why the bell had been rung. Lin Mu and Jing Luo clearly heard the words of the disciples and narrowed their eyes.

This was not what they expected for the bell to be for.

"I don't feel so sure about this..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

A gut feeling arose within Lin Mu and he instinctively used spatial perception. His eyes scanned the entire area along with his spirit sense. The spirit sense was unable to find anything, but with his spatial perception, Lin Mu found several spatial disturbances.

They were small and unnoticeable to most cultivators. Only someone with spatial perception might be able to see them. Lin Mu focused on the spatial disturbances and saw that they moved in a rather unique pattern.

"So it really is a trap." Lin Mu said.

"What?" Jing Luo questioned.

"There are several Nascent Soul realm cultivators surrounding us. They intentionally rang the bell to clear out the area."

Chapter 612 - A Trap Of Ten

Hearing Lin Mu's words, Jing Luo was surprised. He tried to sense the area with his spirit sense, but didn't really have much luck. But Jing Luo knew that Lin Mu was proficient with the Spatial element and he probably saw something he could not.

"They are probably hiding with the help of Mist Veil talismans. They are one of the specialties of the Ripple Mist sect." Jing Luo spoke.

"Looks like it. They are unable to be found with spirit sense and I can only tell that they are there due to the faint spatial fluctuation they are emitting." Lin Mu replied.

"If that is true then, I think we will need to battle soon. Previously, we thought that they may choose the forest for battle as it would be empty and would not endanger the disciples and the sect's property.

But now that they have gotten the disciples to leave cleverly, they are free to act. As for these residences, they aren't really valuable and the sect can easily afford to rebuild them. It would be their best option as it would take us some effort to get past the barrier here." Jing Luo analyzed.

Lin Mu did not reply and simply nodded his head. He knew that they must act as before and not let the enemies know they have found out about them.

~shua~shua~shua~

And just as Lin Mu had expected, the moment all the disciples were gone, the hidden foes revealed themselves. Ten elders appeared in front of Lin Mu and Jing Luo, while the barrier that was past them started to glow as well.

"HALT RIGHT THERE, CRIMINAL SCUM!" The elder who was standing in the very center yelled.

Lin Mu paid no attention to him and instead scanned their cultivation bases.

"Three elders at the Adult Soul stage of the Nascent Soul realm, four at the Adolescent Soul Stage and three more at the Child Soul stage of the Nascent Soul realm." Lin Mu informed.

"Seems like all the stronger elders of the Ripple mist sect below the Dao Shell realm are here." Jing Luo spoke as a smile appeared on his face.

"Indeed, how do you want to do this?" Lin Mu asked as ideas instantly appeared in his mind.

"Since we've already been detected, we may as well directly shatter that barrier. I believe you have something for that." Jing Luo said.

Lin Mu nodded his head, understanding what Jing Luo was referring to.

"But before that, we'll need to get rid of these elders, the barrier is unlikely to fail as long as they are here plus, I think it'll take me a couple of continuous attempts to break the barrier, or it will simply recover." Lin Mu spoke.

"Alright, then we shall get rid of the elders first." Jing Luo said as he withdrew the weapons from his spatial storage treasures.

Seven spears appeared behind his back, then a broad Axe appeared in his right hand along with a slim dagger in his left. His equipment type seemed similar to when he fought Lin Mu previously but the quality was much higher.

Now that Jing Luo had been able to get high quality and valuable materials from the mines, he splurged as much as he could to make the best weapons and spirit tools he could. And it would be an understatement to say that he was not urging to test it out.

Jing Luo was a Spirit weapon forger at heart, and it would be the best feeling for him when he tested out his weapons himself. That is the thing that would give him the most joy in the world, if he excluded his family from the list.

Lin Mu saw this and couldn't help but be impressed.

'He truly did prepare a lot for this.' Lin Mu thought.

"I'll take the three Adult Soul Stage Nascent Soul realm cultivators, you take the four Adolescence soul stage one." Lin Mu spoke.

"Do I Kill?" Little Shrubby also asked.

"You can kill the rest." Lin Mu said with a chuckle.

"ROAR!" Little Shrubby let out a deafening roar in response.

The roar traveled across the sect, striking fear into the hearts of the weaker disciples. The three finally came to a halt a short distance from the elders and gazed at them.

"How dare you three enter our sect! Surrender now and perhaps we will leave your bodies whole for a burial." The elder in front spoke.

The elders were infuriated upon seeing that Lin Mu and Jing Luo weren't really putting them in their eyes and causally talked despite the tense atmosphere.

"And that beast! Muzzle it, perhaps we will have a feast!" Another elder said, eyeing Little Shrubby.

Hearing this, Little Shrubby's eyes locked onto the man.

"He dies first!" Little Shrubby declared, though to the elders and Jing Luo, all they could hear was a growl.

Lin Mu unhooked from the harness and let Little Shrubby free. The short sword came to float beside him along with the Iron Thorn spear, then two more slim swords appeared in his hands. These were taken from the Tri Cauldron peony sect and didn't really match each other fully, but were of the same size, thus being suitable to be used like this.

~BOOM!~

Little Shrubby was the first to make his move as he moved at a blinding speed and rushed the man who had taunted him. His flaming red claws exploded with a blinding light, impacting the elder.

All the elders were stunned to see this speed, as they realized they were unable to keep up with it. Their vision was simply lacking.

~Shing~

"Big mistake taking your eyes off a foe," Jing Luo said as three of the seven spears soared through the air like javelins thrown by an Olympian.

"ARGH!" One of the elders who was at the Adolescent Soul stage of the Nascent Souls realm was stuck in his arm and grunted with pain.

The other two managed to dodge the spears but were now alert.

"Careful! These men are not weak." The leading elder cautioned.

Chapter 613 - Three Against Ten

The warning of the elder was soon confirmed a few seconds later.

~shua~

The smoke created by the explosion cleared up and everyone could finally see the scene. Little Shrubby's claws were pierced through the chest of the elder as his blood boiled over. The bubbling blood spilled from his seven apertures as Little Shrubby boiled him from the inside.

~Woo~

The sound of boiling water came from the elder as more and more blood spilled out from his seven apertures. The elder could not speak anything at all and felt like his entire body had become just one big pot of boiling blood.

The pain was simply underwhelming his sense and made him unable to act.

~Boom~

The body of the elder could no longer hold the pressure in and finally exploded. The boiling blood made steam, which was being suppressed by the body of the elder. When it reached the peak, the elder ceased to exist.

But then...

~Whoosh~

"You'll never catch me!" The Nascent Soul of the elder flew out from the bloody mess and went towards the other elders for protection.

~ROAR~

Little Shrubby roared once again, stunning the people around. Even the Nascent Soul was frozen for a second, but that was all that was needed for Little Shrubby to reach it. His mouth opened wide and bit the entire Nascent Soul whole.

"NOOO!!!!!!!" The Nascent Soul screamed but could not escape.

Little Shrubby's mouth closed and the Nascent Soul was crushed to death, dissipating into spirit Qi.

"This tastes GOOD!" Little Shrubby suddenly said.

His words were only understood by Lin Mu though, while Jing Luo could sense the emotions in it a little bit. But to the other elders, all they could hear was another loud roar and the terrifying scene of a beast eating their fellow elder's Nascent Soul.

Some of the elders were scared, but most of them were also angry.

"YOU WRETCHED BEAST! YOU SHALL NEVER LIVE A DAY WITHOUT PAIN AGAIN!" The elders yelled in rage.

~GRRR~

Little Shrubby simply growled at them, as if inviting them for a challenge. But the look that he had in his eyes was quite different from before. The elders felt like they were being gazed at by a predator and the desire in Little Shrubby's eyes was also quite visible.

To little Shrubby, they were now reduced to treats that Little Shrubby could eat as he pleased. Lin Mu saw the ease with which Little Shrubby killed the elder and nodded his head.

"His strength has undergone a qualitative increase." Lin Mu muttered as he looked in the front at his target.

"I'll kill you beast!" The elder in the center shouted and went towards Little Shrubby, ignoring Lin Mu that was in front of him.

~shing~

"And where do you think you are going?" Lin Mu said as the short sword flew towards the elder.

The short sword was aimed directly towards the man's heart and if he had not blocked, it would have directly pierced into it.

"YOU!!!" The elder shouted upon blocking the short sword with a Qi skill.

~shua~

But Lin Mu gave him no chance to speak as he suddenly appeared at his side. His body spun like a top as the slim swords slashed at the elder's back.

~Deng~deng~deng~

The outer robes of the elder were directly torn apart and the inner armor hidden beneath was revealed. This was the armor that had managed to save the life of the elder. The elder was more than just shocked, as he had not seen Lin Mu approach him.

One moment he was in the front and in the next moment he was at his side.

'How? If I did not have the armor, I would have already died. These men... who are they?' The elder couldn't help but think.

"Elder Ko, we are coming!" The other two Adult Soul Stage Nascent Soul realm elders said as they flew to support him.

While Lin Mu was fighting here, Jing Luo was overwhelming his opponents. His first volley of spears had already made the four Adolescent Soul Stage Nascent Soul realm elders wary, but his attacks were just the beginning.

~shua~~shua~shua~

The spears flew back to his back and three more were shot out instead.

"HAAA!" Jing Luo didn't stand back either, and he jumped into the fray himself.

The Axe in his right hand slashed out an arc of Qi that moved like a scythe through weeds.

~slick~

"AHH!" One of the four elders was slower than the others and managed to get his arm chopped off in one clean cut.

The three spears that had shot were blocked, but this had slowed down the elders once again.

"HAHAHA! You are far too weak for me!" Jing Luo taunted as he shoved the dagger into the chest of the elder whose hand he had just cut off.

And just like that, the second elder from the ten elders was killed. His Nascent Soul didn't even get a chance to escape as the dagger glowed with a Grey light, decimating the Nascent Soul right within the elder's body.

~shing~

Jing Luo withdrew the dagger from the chest of the dead Adolescent Soul stage elder and looked at the rest.

"Who wants to be next?" He asked with a chuckle.

"You fiend! How dare you kill our elder!" Two of the elders flew towards Jing Luo, enraged by his actions.

The third elder was slowed down due to his arm and leg being injured. He was the first elder who was injured due to the spears that Jing Luo had thrown at the start.

~clang~clang~clang~

Blow after blow was exchanged as Jing Luo battled like a beast. Each of his attacks was decisive and if the elders lost focus even for a second, they would meet their end.

~ROAR~

On the end of Little Shrubby, the elders were having a hard time catching up to him. Little Shrubby was just leading them around the area and would then sneak in a few strikes every now and then.

Chapter 614 - Three Against Five

The elders felt like they were being exhausted just from running around. In their case they didn't even realize that Little Shrubby had brought them quite far from the other elders.

"Huh? Where are the others?" The two Child Soul stage Nascent Soul realm elders said.

~ROAR~

But what greeted them was a thundering roar coming from the top. Their eyes went wide as they saw Little Shrubby falling like a flaming meteor from the sky. His speed was something they could barely comprehend, and right now he looked mostly like a blur.

If it were not for his roar, they would have just thorough that it really was a meteor that was falling from the sky. The two elders knew that if they did not move, they would be instantly squashed to death.

Thus, they decided to split apart to escape.

"You think it will be this easy?" one of the elders said.

But then...

~slap~

A metallic hand suddenly slapped his face. He felt the breath leave his lungs as his cheek ached. This slap was enough to stun him and stop him from moving. The other elder heard the loud slap and couldn't help but look.

But as soon as he turned, he was met with the same fate.

~SLAP~

This time two hands slapped him at the same time, making his ears ring non stop.

~BOOM~

The stunned elders were then hit with the falling meteor, which was none other than Little Shrubby. His claws were spread apart and slashed the two elders from the back of their head to the bottom of their spine.

The two didn't even have a chance to scream before their death was assured. Little Shrubby's claws had pierced from the back of their skull and ripped it out along with their entire spine.

It was as if someone had scooped out the seeds of a cucumber using a spoon. Except the cucumber was a human and the spoon, Little Shrubby's claws. The smell of burnt meat could also be felt as his hot claws seared the flesh and blood.

"AHHHHHH!!!!" A delayed scream came from the Nascent Souls that had left their bodies.

Seeing the Nascent Souls appear, Little Shrubby got even more excited.

"There's the yummy bits," He said with a growl before chasing after them like a cat behind a butterfly.

Back at the place where Lin Mu and Jing Luo were fighting, the elders barely saw red flash falling from the sky before sensing the loss of the two Child Soul Stage Nascent Soul realm elders.

"Heavens! The eleventh, twelfth, and the thirteenth elder were killed!" The reexamining elders couldn't help but say.

~DENG~

"You should focus on the fight in front of you." Lin Mu said as he switched the slim sword mid way and withdrew a large battle axe from his ring.

Taking a lesson from Jing Luo's book, he shot out the Iron Thorn Spear along with the short sword and then swung the Axe with his own hands.

~shing~

The short sword slashed at one of the elders while the Iron Thorn Spear activated the Qi skill that was contained within it.

~shua~

~deng~deng~deng~

Tens of black blades shot out from the Iron Thorn Spear as they burst apart slashing the three elders. They were having a difficult time blocking so many attacks and barely managed to do so at the cost of bearing some cuts on their body.

The short sword though, managed to cut the Achilles tendon of the second elder who had come to help elder Ko.

"AH! My leg!" He shouted and tried to retreat.

But then Lin Mu blinked to his back and the Axe, which was originally coming towards Elder Ko, was now slashing at the second elder.

~splatter~

The Axe fully cleaved the elder in half diagonally from the top of his right shoulder to the left side of his waist.

"SECOND ELDER!" Elder Ko shouted, his eyes bloodshot.

But Lin Mu didn't stay in the same place for more than a second and reached the third elder, who was currently occupied by the black blades that had been released by the Iron Thorn Spear.

"YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS!" Elder Ko stated before strong spirit Qi fluctuations arose from his body.

Mist wrapped around his hands and torso as his aura started to rise.

~WEENG~

Elder Ko flicked his hand, which caused the mist to turn into a whip and attack Lin Mu. The Nascent Soul of the second elder had managed to survive and was now taking refuge behind Elder Ko.

"Oh? Your Nascent Soul is still alive? I was sure that attack should have destroyed it." Lin Mu said casually, though he really was surprised.

The attack with the Axe was infused with spirit Qi and should have also destroyed the Nascent Soul along with cleaving the elder in half.

"You aren't the only one who has some tricks under his belt." The second elder, who was in the form of a Nascent Soul spoke, his face was like that of a vengeful ghost.

The third elder finally managed to block all of the black blade attacks of the Iron Thorn Spear and looked at Lin Mu with shock on his face.

'It hasn't even been ten minutes and half of our people are already dead.' The third elder thought.

His spirit sense spread around and saw the dead bodies of the rest. Three were killed by Little Shrubby and one each by Lin Mu and Jing Luo.

"Who are you! There is no way someone like you would enter the sect for no reason." The third elder couldn't help but ask.

"That is none of your concern..." Lin Mu said as he clenched his right fist.

The Axe had been stored away and Lin Mu was now unarmed, rest for the Iron Thorn Spear and the short sword that floated at his sides. The two elders did not sense the spirit of Qi spinning within Lin Mu's arm or they would have long since interrupted him.

"Who sent you? Is it the Long Cloud Alliance?"

Chapter 615 - The Conflict Of Alliances

Lin Mu raised his brow upon hearing the name of the Long Cloud Alliance from the elder's mouth. He knew the Long cloud alliance was the second alliance that was formed when Gu Yao created the Zither wind alliance.

The Long Cloud Alliance was a product of circumstance and the sects within it only reunited only because of the threat of the Zither Wind Alliance. Plus, it allowed them to compete against the top three sects due to this.

The alliances had powers that were comparable to each of the top sects alone. While this meant that the top three sects could join up to easily eliminate them all, they knew that it was impossible to happen.

The top three sects had long legacies and they certainly would not join up together as it would mean sully the honor of their ancestors. But while they might not join up together, they could pull in other smaller powers.

There was already news about the Rainbow Pill sect thinking about pulling in the entire Great Zhou Empire under their wing. Until now, the sects and the empire were in a delicate balance.

While the sects were ultimately located within the territory of the entire Great Zhou Empire, which represented the Secular world, they still had their independent territories within them.

Many sect's territories were bigger than that of kingdoms of the Great Zhou Empire. Thus, one could understand just how much power the sects held. The only reason why the Great Zhou Empire was able to stand was that they represented the secular world and the people who were recruited into the sects ultimately came from there.

If there was no Great Zhou Empire, the commoners would have a hard time flourishing. And if there were no commoners left, how would the sects get their disciples. One must know that only a few among the commoner were able to cultivate, not to mention reach a sufficient cultivation base.

Thus, if the sects wanted a decent number of people with a talent for cultivation, they would need an even large number of commoners.

Some people wondered if the sects were so strong, why do they not take over the Great Zhou kingdom?

The answer to this was rather simple... logistics and administration.

The exact population of the entire Great Zhou Empire was still unknown to everyone, but they could easily estimate that it was in the tens of billions. With these many people, there were many difficulties such as providing them shelter, security, food and clothing.

Even the Great Zhou Empire could not do all this on their own and thus allowed the existence of Vassal states. That was the reason why the Kingdoms still existed within the banner of the empire.

This allowed the empire to distribute the workload according to different regions. This also took care of the region specific problems and needs that varied from time to time. If the cultivation sects were to take over the entire Great Zhou empire, their workload would become massive.

They were supposed to be cultivators detached from the secular world; if they controlled the empire, they would have no time to cultivate at all. Plus, the headache of handling the needs and complaints of billions of people would probably lead them to Qi deviation instead.

Thus as a wise man once said, 'why do something that exhausts you when others can do it for free.' The cultivation sects never took over the great Zhou empire and let them proceed on their own.

But now what the Rainbow Pill sect was doing was rather different. Instead of taking over the entire empire, they were forming an alliance. This would allow them priority to choose the talented people and treasures that occasionally turned up in the world.

The implications of this were simply massive and if the emperor were not sick, even the Great Zhou empire would not have thought of ever doing it.

Lin Mu had thought about all this and knew that the conflicts between the alliances were conducive to Gu Yao's plan. The man did not really care if the people of the sects perused in the conflict as long as he got to enjoy the resources.

But now that he heard the elders' words, Lin Mu suspected if the Long Cloud Alliance had already started to target the Zither wind alliance or not. From the tone of the elder, it did seem like they had been concerned about this for a long time.

"So what if I am?" Lin Mu commented casually.

Hearing his words, the elder's eyes went wide.

"I knew it. You truly are from the Long Cloud Alliance, aren't you?" The Elder said as anger appeared on his face.

Lin Mu did not respond to the man and simply kept his silence, not solving the misunderstanding. The other elders also heard the conversation and got wary.

"Dammit! The Long Cloud Alliance managed to do a preemptive strike! It should have been us who did it first." The third elder cursed.

The extra time that these elders had taken in the conventions was exactly what Lin Mu had wanted, and a smile appeared on his face. If it were not for the mask he was wearing, the elders would have definitely become alert.

While the elders were cursing their luck, Lin Mu suddenly raised his right hand and punched out.

Boulder Collapsing Fist- Second Form: Piercer!

~Zoom~

The first elder felt all the hair on his skin stand, as a sense of danger encompassed him. His gut was telling him that if he was hit by this attack, he would absolutely meet his demise.

~shua~

He moved his legs and the mist on his body propelled him to the side like a rocket. The speed at which he had moved was nearly comparable to that of Little Shrubby.

~pew~

"I almost got hit..." The first elder muttered to himself.

The man saw Lin Mu's attack missing and going past the location he was standing on. But then his face fell, as he saw its target.

Chapter 616 - Blood Will Ignition Pill

The needle made out of compressed spirit Qi traveled like lightning across the sky and hit the barrier in the distance.

~shung~

A rather strange sound was heard upon the impact, which was neither too loud neither too low. The barrier flickered and looked like it had absorbed all the force of the attack that Lin Mu had just sent out.

~Phew~

"YOU BASTARD! YOU DARE TRY TO ESCAPE!" The first elder who had barely managed to dodge the attack thundered.

But just as he said this.

~CRACK~

A loud audible crack could be heard coming from the barrier and all the runes that were present on it started to split apart.

"H-HOW! HOW CAN THIS BE POSSIBLE!?" The first elder exclaimed in utter shock.

The other elders who heard it were stunned as well and couldn't help but turn to look at it. But that was a huge mistake on their end.

~SLASH~

~splat~

The Adolescent Soul Stage Nascent Soul realm elders who had been fighting Jing Luo were caught off guard and instantly killed. One of them was decapitated, while the other two were cut in half at the waist.

"AHAHAHA! Look at these dumb elders, can't even focus on a battle!" Jing Luo roared.

He flicked his hand and threw out a black talisman that seemed to be rather eerie. The Nascent Souls of the three elders that were just leaving their dead bodies were struck by the talisman and yelled in pain.

"WHAT IS THIS! WHAT FIENDISH THING IS THIS?" The Nascent Souls cried.

Jing Luo made a clasping gesture and all three Nascent Souls exploded at once, along with the talisman.

~BOOM~

The detonation caused by these nascent Souls was not as strong as when a Nascent Soul self detonated, but it was still powerful enough to push away the other elders who had been fighting Lin Mu.

Lin Mu himself though was completely fine, his Mortal Strengthening Scripture easily bearing the damage as if it was nothing. The brown armor faintly glimmered on his body but was unnoticed by the elder, as they were currently trying to resist the explosion.

"ARGH!" The third elder cried in pain as a part of his torso was injured in the explosion.

The first elder had managed to dodge it again using his mist, but only barely. He looked around at the damage and gulped in fear.

'What kind of cultivators are even they? How can they fight so many of us at once and even kill? Are they geniuses of their sects or something?' The first elder thought.

"YES! That's right! They must be the hidden trump cards of their sects!" The first elder said as flames of determination burned in his eyes.

A dangerous thought appeared in his mind and he gritted his teeth before taking out a pill from his spatial storage treasures. Lin Mu noticed this strange action and immediately used his spirit sense to see what kind of a pill it was.

But before he could do that, the first elder swallowed it.

~Gulp~

After swallowing it, the first elder looked at Lin Mu and Jing Luo with a crazed look.

"YOU TWO WILL NEVER ESCAPE! EVEN IF I HAVE TO PAY MY LIFE IN EXCHANGE!" The first elder declared.

Lin Mu was frankly stunned by this dedication.

'The man can very well escape right now and get back up, but he still does not want to? What kind of loyalty is even this? This isn't even smart...' Lin Mu thought.

"I don't think it's just loyalty that is causing him to act like this. No cultivator who had cultivated as long as him would act so stupidly. The better option would certainly be to get reinforcements and yet this man does not seem to want to do that.

I think the cause behind it is not loyalty, but rather... servitude." Xukong suddenly said.

A thought appeared in Lin Mu's mind and he immediately understood.

"So Gu Yao, huh... that skill of his is terrifying, even changing the basic personalities of a being..." Lin Mu muttered, but a hint of anger could also be seen in his eyes.

He reckoned had it not been for Gu Yao, this man and many others would not have died this day.

"GAH!" The first elder suddenly grunted in pain and coughed out a mouthful of blood.

The blood seemed to be a dark red and the elder's complexion also seemed to be changing. Soon his wrinkled skin start to get stretched as his body started to grow in size.

"What's happening to him?" Lin Mu said.

"QUICK! KILL HIM! He used a Blood Will Ignition pill!" Jing Luo's voice entered Lin Mu's ears.

Upon hearing the name of the pill, Lin Mu recalled its effect. The Blood Will Ignition pill was another alchemical pill that fell into the category of potential igniting pills. They could increase the strength and cultivation of a person at the cost of their longevity.

It was a high grade pill that was effective even on Dao Shell realm cultivators, not to mention Nascent Soul realm ones. It could very well double or even triple one's power, depending on the amount of longevity one was willing to burn.

~whoosh~

~whoosh~

~whoosh~

Jing Luo had already acted upon seeing the pill and send out all seven spears at the first elder.

~DENG~

But before they could reach him, the third elder withdrew what looked like a plain Grey shawl from his spatial storage treasure. The shawl expanded to a size of over fifty meters and covered the seven spears that were coming here.

"I won't let the first elder's sacrifice go in vain!" The third elder said, his eyes bloodshot as well.

Blood spilled out from his nose and the corner of his lips, but the man still held on. The shawl trembled as it struggled to hold the seven spears.

"If seven are not enough, then take more!" Jing Luo yelled as the Axe and dagger were thrown out as well.

But just as they were about to injure the third elder...

~KABOOM~

Chapter 617 - Weapon Mist Domain

An explosion suddenly occurred but it was not bright and neither were there any flames in it. Rather, it was just made out of a mist that continuously spread around.

~DENG~

~DENG~

The explosion's force also managed to knock away all the weapons away that were coming towards the third elder. He, who was bleeding from his mouth and nose, finally took a breath of relief.

"Show them the true power of the Ripple Mist sect, First Elder!" The third elder exclaimed.

Jing Luo had retreated upon sensing the explosion and tried to recall the weapons that had been sent flying away. But then he found out that it was a bit difficult for him to do so.

"Huh? How is this happening?" Jing Luo wondered.

His spirit sense suddenly became sluggish and commanding the spirit weapons was like sending a message with a pigeon. The time difference between the transmission and reception was far too much for the weapons to be useful.

A few seconds later, Jing Luo realized why it was happening. The mist that had spread around in the area was the cause behind it. Jing Luo's eyes narrowed as he tried to find the source of the mist.

Since his spirit sense was useless right now, he could only use his eyesight to find where it was. But seeing anything was only getting difficult by the second as more and more mist spread and became denser.

Jing Luo immediately took out a jade slip and contacted Lin Mu.

"Can you see what's causing this?" Jing Luo asked.

Lin Mu, who had gone through the same realization as Jing Luo, sensed the Jade slip humming. Finding Jing Luo's message on the jade slip.

'So he's having a problem too... this mist is troublesome.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Unlike Jing Luo, he had a hunch about what this mist was.

"This is caused due to that elder," Lin Mu said.

Jing Luo wondered what kind of a technique was it that the first elder had used. Since the man had eaten the Blood Will Ignition pill, whatever Qi skill he used would become much more powerful than before.

"We need to be careful, seeing the attacks in this place will be difficult." Jing Luo warned.

"Yes, I'll try to take out the third elder first. He should still be close by." Lin Mu said before searching for the third elder.

~shua~

But just as he moved a short distance from where he was a sword made out of mist shot out.

~DENG~

Lin Mu crossed his hands in front of him and blocked the mist sword at the last moment. Due to the Mortal Strengthening scripture, while Lin Mu would not have been injured by the mist sword even if he did not defend, he would still have been knocked away.

And he did not want that to happen, as it would only become harder for him to find his location in this mist. He looked around and saw that the mist had now completely filled the entire area and nothing else could be seen; neither the sky neither the ground.

~shua~

~shua~

~shua~

One after the other, more weapons made out of the mist came out from nowhere, forcing Lin Mu to dodge.

"HAHAHA! Behold my Weapon Mist Domain!" The voice of the first elder echoed from everywhere.

Lin Mu heard the name and remembered that he had heard about this before.

"Isn't this one of the core skills of the Ripple Mist Sect?" Lin Mu muttered.

He had heard a few disciples talk about this before when he was wandering in the sect. The Ripple mist sect cultivated using many cultivation techniques, but their core technique was called as the Misty Depths Technique.

There were many levels in the Misty Depths Technique and the highest ranked level within that technique allowed one to use the Weapon Mist Domain. Lin Mu had only heard this because the disciples of the sect were talking about it animatedly after a lesson from an elder.

Fortunately, Lin Mu had also gotten to hear about the different abilities of the technique.

The first ability was that the Weapon Mist Domain could shroud a vast area in a thick mist that stopped one from seeing far and also dulled their spirit sense. If someone was more proficient in this technique then they might even be able to completely prevent someone from using their spirit sense.

And if a cultivator's spirit sense was suppressed, then they were not different from being rendered blind and lame. They wouldn't even be able to use their spirit weapon to attack and with nothing to see, they wouldn't be able to use their offensive Qi skills, either.

The second ability was that the Weapon Mist Domain could create weapons from the mist that could appear and disappear at any time. They were quite hard to dodge for many people and if they did not have storage defenses, they would be impaled rather quickly.

Though the third ability was what made it the most deadly. The mist could eventually block out all spirit Qi and make the cultivator unable to absorb it. And since the mist was spread out in the vast area, they would have a hard time finding a way out and get lost.

Then the user of the Weapons Mist Domain only needed to continue attacking the cultivator till they ran out of spirit Qi. Once they were drained out of spirit Qi, they would be unable to do much and would be easily killed.

But Lin Mu knew that using the Weapon Mist Domain must have come at a great cost. From what he had heard from the disciples, the Weapon Mist Domain was only able to be used by a cultivator that reached the highest level in the Misty Depths technique and was at the Dao Shell realm.

From this, Lin Mu surmised the first elder now had power comparable to that of a Dao Shell realm cultivator. Lin Mu informed Jing Luo of this as well and tried to think of a few solutions.

Chapter 618 - A Tricky Technique

Upon being informed by Lin Mu, Jing Luo became even more alert and watched out for any sneak attacks. His wariness turned out to be right, as just after a few seconds, he could hear something approaching him at great speed.

~whoosh~

"You can't attack me that easily!" Jing Luo said before withdrawing a shield from his spatial storage.

~DENG~

The shield vibrated as it defended against the mist sword that had just attacked him. The shield was also a spirit weapon and was of high grade. Jing Luo had spent quite a few resources in making this particular shield after witnessing the power of Lin Mu's attacks.

He reckoned that he needed better ways to defend himself than the ones he had before. Back then, Jing Luo did not have the access to the resources below the mountain due to the Earthen Depths Obsidian blocking his way.

But once he got them, he basically had a free rein over what he wanted to make. Thus, Jing Luo took all liberties and built the best shield his current skill and materials allowed. He was even sure that this shield could block Lin Mu's Boulder collapsing fist's second form: Piercer.

Though he had not tested it out against that yet. Still, compared to that level of an attack, the shield had no problem blocking the mist sword. The mist sword dissipated after being blocked and Jing Luo watched out for more.

~whoosh~

~whoosh~

~whoosh~

One after the other, more and more mist weapons appeared from the mist and attacked Jing Luo. Lin Mu was having the same problem, but he was able to dodge most of them using just his speed.

And the ones that he was unable to dodge were taken care of by using Flicker and blink.

"You won't be able to dodge for long! Sooner or later you two will run out of spirit Qi and become fish on my chopping block!" The first elder taunted.

Lin Mu focused on his voice and tried to sense where it came from, but could not do so. The voice was too scattered and even echoed, making it hard to distinguish its source.

"Dammit, without spirit Qi it will be very hard..." Lin Mu cursed.

But soon a solution appeared in his mind. He did not know if it would be effective, but he decided to try it nonetheless. Lin Mu closed his eyes for a moment and then opened them. This time, his spatial perception was in full effect and he was doing his best.

Slowly, the mist started to fade in front of Lin Mu and an empty space appeared around him. His eyes wandered around searching for the location of the first elder, but his body stayed in the same place.

~thud~

~thud~

~thud~

Lin Mu could not move or use any of his skills as that would cause disturbance in the space which would prevent him from finding the first elder. Thus, all he could do now was let the armor made by the Mortal Strengthening Scripture bear it all.

Now he did not care about being knocked around and simply focused on using the spatial perception.

"HAHAHA! Seems like you have given up, good good! Just wait and die for me!" The first elder's voice echoed once again.

"THERE!" Lin Mu suddenly said as he discovered some difference in the spatial fabric in this area.

While most of it was empty and stable, minor spatial fluctuation could be perceived from the distance which could only be caused by another person.

~Huala~

Lin Mu locked onto the location and used blink multiple times in succession. In less than two seconds, he was near the location of the First elder.

~DENG~

But just when he was within the hundred meter radius of the man, he slammed into what was a wall made out of mist.

"Ah!" Lin Mu reeled from the impact.

Even if he had not suffered from any injuries right now, the force of the impact was quite high due to him using blink. When his spatial skills met an obstacle they could not overcome, Lin Mu could potentially receive quite a lot of damage.

He had witnessed it when he used fade at the Tri cauldron peony sect while escaping and crashed into a random disciples' house. That was one of the few things that could injure him right now.

Lin Mu gritted his teeth and looked at the solid wall of mist.

"How did you find me!?" The sound of the first elder came from the wall, confirming that he was indeed there.

The first elder was shocked that someone could find their way to him when they were in the weapon mist domain. One had to know that this technique had once succeeded in killing an Immortal Ascension cultivator in the past.

If even they could not find their way in here, Lin Mu who was many times weaker than that, should not have been either. But the contradiction was literally in front of him now. Even though the first elder knew that his power was much less than that of the real cultivator who had accomplished the feat of killing an Immortal Ascension realm cultivator using Weapon Mist Domain, he should have still been able to trap Lin Mu.

"It doesn't matter! You won't be able to break the defense of my mist fortress!" The first elder laughed out loud. "Taste the barrage of ten thousand mist weapons! Hahahaha!"

~shua~

~shua~

~shua~

From the walls of the mist, which the first elder called as Mist fortress, thousands and thousands of mist weapons shot out. They were in various forms, such as that of arrows, swords, daggers, axes, spears, javelins, hammers, needles, and many more.

They all attacked Lin Mu and knocked him about half a kilometer away from the combined attack. While the brown armor was able to bear all of the hits with little to no loss of durability, Lin Mu had still lost his direction now.

"Drat! Gonna have to find another way..."

Chapter 619 - The Misty Fortress

Lin Mu looked at the swirling mass of mist, which was nothing but the Mist fortress. He did not know about this ability of the Misty Depths Scripture.

"Must have not been taught to those disciples back then. Maybe a stronger application of the technique..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

Lin Mu flew towards the fortress again, wanting to see if he could break through its walls.

~shua~

The walls of the fortress swirled as hundred of mist weapons sprouted from them. The weapons moved their heads towards Lin Mu before shooting out.

Flicker... Blink... Phase... Flicker

Lin Mu dodged the attacks using his skills and techniques, trying to get as close as he could to the edges of the fortress as he could. Yet the sheer number of attacks were getting hard to dodge.

He kept on getting halted at every few meters by the weapons and struggled to proceed. Gritting his teeth, Lin Mu used Fade and appeared in the parallel world. The parallel world was as plain as always and Lin Mu was free from the attacks here.

He grasped the approximate location of the fortress and moved there. Once he was sure that he was in the right place, he deactivated Fade and reappeared in the real world.

"Huh?" Lin Mu said in surprise.

But what he had expected was not there. Instead of appearing inside the mist fortress, Lin Mu was out in the open. He moved his eyes around and saw that the mist fortress was actually in a different direction.

"Did I misjudge?" Lin Mu wondered.

He squinted his eyes and checked the fluctuations in the spatial fabric, seeing that the mist fortress was actually moving around. Because he was constantly being attacked and there were mist walls around, sensing the location of the mist fortress was difficult.

It was always moving, but perceiving was difficult due to these multiple factors.

'Dammit! As long as the fortress keeps moving, it will be difficult for me to enter it, even while using fade. I don't have spirit sense either to help guide me.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"Will have to find another way..." Lin Mu muttered and decided to observe the mist fortress and how it moved.

He hoped to find a way that would allow him to enter the fortress.

"Looks like you have finally learned your lesson and have given up! No one can enter my mist fortress!" The voice of the first elder echoed from the fortress.

Lin Mu's eyes twitched as he felt infuriated by the first elder's words.

"If I really want to I can just prolong this till the first elder runs out of spirit Qi. I'm pretty sure the first elder can't maintain this state indefinitely, after all, he used a potential burning pill." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

"Don't forget that the longer you prolong this the higher the chance for the other higher ups of the sect from coming here." Xukong reminded Lin Mu.

"Ah, that's right! Can't do that either..." Lin Mu replied.

He could only continue to observe the fortress from afar while dodging the attacks of the mist weapons. He even asked Jing Luo about the mist fortress but the man was helpless as well. He had as much knowledge about mist fortress as Lin Mu, which was nothing.

Besides he was having a hard time doing anything other than blocking and dodging the attacks of the mist weapons. Unlike Lin Mu he did not have a technique that passively defended him nor did he have skills that allowed him to effortlessly dodge the attacks.

Thus Lin Mu could not expect much hesitance from the man currently either. But then Lin Mu's mind went to the only other person, or rather beast that could help him.

"Little Shrubby, where are you?" Lin Mu called out through his link.

Out of the misty area, Little Shrubby was chasing the two Nascent Souls of the Child Soul Stage Nascent Soul realm elders that he had killed.

~Whoosh~

"Ahhh!" one of the Nascent Souls screamed in pain as it was eaten up by Little Shrubby.

The destruction of the Nascent Soul led to it releasing all of the spirit Qi that was contained within it and Little Shrubby enjoyed it thoroughly.

'Yummy!' He thought to himself.

He continued his chase after the last remaining Nascent Soul for a few minutes. The Nascent Soul was evidently using some kind of a technique to speed up or little Shrubby would have been able to catch it rather easily.

Plus the Nascent soul had figured out that there was a limit to Little Shrubby's speed at short distances. The nascent Soul discovered that as long as he could change his direction constantly, Little Shrubby would not be able to catch him.

Thus the cat and mouse chase continued round and round the area. Little Shrubby also saw the appearance of the Mist but did not mind it right now as Lin Mu seemed to be fine to him. The connection was also stable so he was not worried.

They were running around in circles and it was now that Little Shrubby heard Lin Mu's voice in his head asking him where he was.

"I'm chasing after the last Nascent Soul." Little Shrubby said.

"Finish it up quickly and come help me, I need your speed." Lin Mu said.

"Okay!" Little Shrubby said as his expression turned serious.

Now that Lin Mu had asked for his help, he would not slack off anymore.

~BOOM~

Flames exploded from Little Shrubby's body, making him shoot forward like a rocket. In less than a second, he was right next to the Nascent Soul.

"H-How?!" The Nascent Soul said in shock.

The truth was that ever since getting stronger, and his speed increasing, Little Shrubby had not had the time to practice his skills. He needed practice with his short bursts of speed and controlling directions. And now this Nascent Soul was turning out to be the perfect test dummy.

But all that was over as Little Shrubby's fangs sank into the Nascent Soul, ending its existence.

Chapter 620 - Assistance From Little Shrubby

Little Shrubby flipped mid air and looked at the mist in the distance.

"Where is master?" Little Shrubby questioned, unable to see anything.

"Use our connection to find me, it should still be working." Lin Mu replied.

Little Shrubby nodded his head and closed his eyes, using the connection to sense Lin Mu's location. It didn't take him long to sense where he was.

"I'm coming!" Little Shrubby said with a roar.

~Boom~

He burst forward and disappeared into the mist, sending it roiling to the edges. The winds generated by his speed were splitting apart the mist while the heat from his body was also making the mist evaporate.

The path that he had traveled had cleaved open the mist.

~whoosh~

Lin Mu heard a sound and saw Little Shrubby appear from the distance. But that was not all, as he could see the outer area of the sect from the path that Little Shrubby had unintentionally created.

Lin Mu raised his brows and wondered if this was a valid method of navigating, but then the mist started to move and covered the path that had appeared. Still, now that Lin Mu knew that it was possible to do so, he had more hope.

"What do we need to do?" Little Shrubby asked.

~swoosh~

But just as he spoke, a mist weapon came flying toward it.

"DIE, VILE BEAST!" The First elder thundered.

~GRRR~

Little Shrubby growled in irritation and spat out a fireball that met the mist weapon, destroying it instantly.

"If one doesn't work, take a hundred more! AHAHAHA!" The first elder laughed as more and more mist weapons shot out from the mist fortress.

~boom~

~boom~

~boom~

Little Shrubby dodged a majority of the mist weapons with his speed while the rest he destroyed with fire.

"What I want you to do is to throw me towards the mist fortress." Lin Mu said, while dodging the mist weapons.

Little Shrubby nodded his head and got closer to Lin Mu, so that he could get on his back.

~ROAR~

Little Shrubby circled around the barrage of the mist weapons and got a sufficient distance away from the fortress. Lin Mu was on his back, but this time he was not strapped into the harness. They two continued to move at a great speed and once they were two kilometers away from the fortress, they turned around.

"Now follow my direction and run," Lin Mu said as he instructed little Shrubby through his mind.

Little Shrubby started to run toward the mist fortress according to Lin Mu's direction. Whenever the fortress moved, Lin Mu told Little Shrubby so that it could make adjustments accordingly. The more little Shrubby ran, the greater his speed got.

But even now he was not at his full speed, it was only at perhaps fifty percent. The mist weapons were unable to keep up with little shrubby's speed and kept on missing, despite getting closer to him.

Lin Mu kept his eyes trained on the mist fortress, tracking its every move.

"NOW!" Lin Mu yelled.

Little Shrubby stopped at that very moment, and Lin Mu was shot forward due to momentum. But this was exactly what Lin Mu wanted, and he used the moment he was sent flying. The momentum he had was carried over to the parallel world and just when Lin Mu estimated that he should be in the mist fortress, he deactivated the skill.

~shua~

Lin Mu suddenly felt a constricting force around him when he reappeared in the real world. It felt like there were restraints wrapping around him, slowing his ability to move. He looked around and saw that the mist here was even denser.

"HOW DID YOU ENTER MY MIST FORTRESS! NOOO! THIS CANNOT HAPPEN!" The First elder was shocked at first, but then got furious. "Be crushed under the misty depths!."

'Where is he?' Lin Mu thought as he used his spatial perception.

But despite using that, he was unable to tell the exact location of the first elder.

"Of course, if he's not moving, I won't be able to see the faint disturbances in the spatial fabric," Lin Mu understood.

He gritted his teeth and wondered if he had now been trapped.

"No! I need to think calmly, there must be a way." Lin Mu said to himself.

He continued using spatial perception to look around and soon found a difference.

"There is an... outline?" Lin Mu muttered.

Lin Mu could see that there was a demarcation of the spatial fabric around the area. He had previously been unable to see it as he had not observed till that far. But now that he saw it, the demarcation was rather smooth and in a circle.

After analyzing it, Lin Mu guessed that it must be the area that the mist fortress was located in.

"The mist fortress isn't that large and seeing the location that I'm in is quite deep... that should work." Lin Mu muttered as his eyes flashed with the spark of an idea.

He moved his hands with difficulty as the mist bound around his body like mud, but still managed to extend it to the front.

~huu~

Then taking a deep breath, Lin Mu felt the space around him before muttering, "Meld."

~HONG~

In the next moment, everything around him freezes. The mist didn't move, and neither did it swirl. The restraints that were around him were torn off and he could now move his body freely. Meld had fully frozen the space around him.

"Where are you, first elder!" Lin Mu shouted with a smirk.

But he received no answer.

"Perfect..." Lin Mu muttered, seeing that he got no response.

Lin Mu then flipped his hands and made a grasping motion in the air, before parting his hands. It was the same as moving apart two curtains to walk into a room.

~shua~

The mist fortress started to move and parted.

With the flick of a hand, Lin Mu split apart the fortress in two!