Walker 831

Chapter 831 - The Grey Egg Desires!

The bluish gas in the air gave Lin Mu a strange, cold feeling. It felt both familiar yet unfamiliar to him, and he could not tell what it exactly was. But when he touched it, it wasn't just him that showed a reaction.

The Grey egg that had been calmly lying on a pillow in the ring's space suddenly started to shake the moment Lin Mu touched the bluish gas.

"Huh, what?" Lin Mu could feel the egg call out to him for the first time.

So far he didn't know if he had managed to make a taming link between him and the egg like he had done with Little Shrubby. The egg was mostly dormant and would only show an effect when he fed it beast Qi every day.

The process had become like breathing to him and he finished it in less than a minute. He did it at nearly the same time every day and didn't even realize that he was doing it most of the time because it had become habitual to him.

But the egg calling out to him was a very sharp feeling. It showed its emotions and made Lin Mu feel anxious at the same time.

"It... want's this bluish gas?" Lin Mu understood.

At that moment, Lin Mu made his decision.

"Can I take these crystals?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Uh, of course! You can have them senior!" Hu Yao immediately replied.

Lin Mu was the one who had incapacitated the beasts, so it wouldn't be unfair for him to take them. Plus, no one would mind if Lin Mu took some things from them. After all, they owed a lot to him anyway.

Lin Mu took the crystal and looked at them for a few seconds before speaking, "wait for me here. I'll be back in five minutes." Lin Mu spoke and blinked away.

He appeared in another room hidden behind the walls of the current hall. It was mostly empty other than some broken furniture and debris that was scattered in there. Lin Mu paid no attention to it and quickly took out the Grey egg from his ring.

Sitting down, he placed the egg in his lap and took out the two black blue crystals before activating them with his spirit sense.

~shua~

In the next moment, spirit Qi and the bluish gas started to leak out from the crystal. The movement it trembled and sucked all the spirit Qi and the bluish gas towards it. In less than a second, it had already absorbed it all and was pulling out more from the crystals.

Lin Mu too sped it up and decided to shatter both the crystals, releasing all of its stored energies.

~shua~

The egg absorbed all the contents released by the two crystals and went back to its dormant state. Though Lin Mu could still feel that the egg wanted more.

He touched the egg and felt that it felt a bit denser than before.

"Does this help in its growth?" Lin Mu guessed.

"This is rather strange..." Xukong suddenly said.

"What is it, senior? Do you know what this energy or bluish gas is?" Lin Mu questioned.

"That's the thing. I can't tell what it is either. It's definitely some derivative type of spirit Qi but it's hard to estimate due to it being impure." Xukong answered.

"Impure? It wouldn't cause harm to the egg, would it?" Lin Mu asked, feeling concerned.

"That's unlikely. If the egg managed to absorb it successfully and wanted it on its own, then it should be fine. Plus, even I can't tell just what kind of a beast is within that egg. At this point, we can safely confirm that fact.

That egg will certainly not birth a Fire Fang Snake or a Black Water snake. Its bloodline has certainly changed far too much for it to be the same." Xukong replied.

"Hmm... I see. Perhaps we should collect more of those crystals and see what happens." Lin Mu stated.

"You can try. There are a lot of those beasts here, anyway." Xukong replied.

"Very well." Lin Mu said before teleporting back to the place where everyone was waiting.

"I have something to say," Lin Mu said, pulling everyone's attention.

"I would like it if everyone gives me the crystals you get from those beasts. They are useful to me. Also, I will compensate you fairly, so you don't need to worry about that." Lin Mu announced.

"There's no need for that Junior Lin Mu. You can take those crystals if you want to. The disciples are already in your debt. If this helps in paying a fraction of that off, then it is the best." Elder Weimin stated and then looked at the disciples.

"I believe everyone is in agreement?" He asked.

"YES! We are fine with the arrangement." The disciples quickly replied.

"Alright. We'll continue onward then." Lin Mu said and took the lead again.

This time he was more excited as he had obtained another method to accelerate the growth of the Grey egg. He knew that while the beast Qi increased the power of the Grey egg and also improved the bloodline it had; the time needed for it to hatch also increased with that.

It had already been nearly two years since Lin Mu had gotten the egg and it had stayed the same, other than having absorbed a ton of beast Qi. If this could help speed up that process, Lin Mu would be pleased.

While Lin Mu was thinking about this, Jing Luo approached him.

"What's the use of the crystals? Did something happen?" He questioned.

"The Grey egg... it seems to like them. The crystals can help speed its growth." Lin Mu answered.

"That snake egg you've been carrying around all this time? It really is useful for it?" Jing Luo asked, feeling doubtful.

"Yeah. I'm surprised too. It has never acted like this." Lin Mu confirmed.

"Hmm... then it's good. Though I want to see what those crystals can do myself as well. They seem interesting.." Jing Luo replied.

Chapter 832 - Not Holding Back

With the new discovery, Lin Mu's drive in hunting down the beasts was now increased. Under his guidance, everyone started to hunt down the beasts as they encountered them.

The routine was simple. If it was an unknown beast, Lin Mu would be the first one to fight it and would figure out its abilities and weakness while letting the others know of it. As for the ones that were already known, the disciples would handle them.

So far, only two kinds of crystals had been found by Lin Mu in the beasts. The black-green and black-blue crystals. Both of them released the same bluish gas upon being broken, but the black-blue crystal had a higher amount of it.

They had now been fighting for over twelve hours now and had collector over a hundred such crystals. Lin Mu himself could kill them relatively easily, but the disciples struggled with the beasts that had black blue crystals.

Multiple disciples had to team up to kill them. It was mostly due to the fact that breaking their defenses was not easy, and some of them were very fast. The large variation in the beasts also made it a bit more complex for them to adapt to it.

~Clang~

~boom~

Lin Mu hit the carapace of a large bull like beast with this fist, sending it flying. The beast was about to attack a disciple and he had come to block it.

"Watch your backs!" Lin Mu warned before going to deal with the beast.

Blink!

Appearing directly on top of the beast, Lin Mu gripped the crystal that was embedded on its back and ripped it out directly.

~GUWAAAAAAAA!~

The bull like beast let out a pain filled cry as blood spilled out from the place where the crystal was ripped out. But after a few seconds, the beast fell silent and died.

~huu~

Lin Mu took a breath and looked back to see that most of the other beasts had been killed as well. Only a few were left, but the disciples were close to killing them.

"Where do you think Elder Liqiang is trapped?" Jing Luo asked Lin Mu.

"So far, we've had no clues to his location. This only makes me think that the malfunctioning formations may have directly pulled him into the deeper parts. Perhaps we will only see him on the next few floors." Lin Mu replied.

"Hmm... the Kushao Ruins are said to have five floors in total, and we are on the second one. We can only imagine what other things we will see on the other floors." Jing Luo muttered.

"At least they are getting some benefits here." Lin Mu said as he saw a few disciples plucking out a spirit herb that was growing in one of the areas.

These were spread around sporadically, and some of the herbs were rather valuable and hard to find in the world. There were even a few rooms that contained hidden treasures in them.

"While they are getting them, I fear the time when they find something that may be dangerous." Elder Weimin suddenly spoke.

"You're right elder. Plus, we haven't encountered the remains of the cultivators that failed to escape the ruins five hundred years ago. It means we aren't even close to that place." Lin Mu added.

"We can only keep on soldiering on. Plus, we don't know how long we have before the others that are waiting outside the ruins enter it. Once they do, we won't have as many opportunities to act." Elder Weimin said.

Lin Mu nodded his head and tried to think of what to do. Elder Weimin on the other hand seemed to want to say something but was hesitating.

"Junior Lin Mu, I know you've been holding yourself back here for the sake of the disciples. I do not want you to do that anymore. They've already gotten enough to learn in this time, it would be far more beneficial for us if we speed up our mission.

If the others manage to enter too, they will be able to reach our position very quickly since we have all but removed the obstacles that would have blocked them." Elder Weimin requested.

Lin Mu heard his words and thought over it before nodding his head.

"Alright... perhaps I should have done this from the start." Lin Mu replied.

He had already known the places where the beasts were and could have gone to kill them quickly. But he had not done so for the others as they were progressing together. But now he realized it was just wasting their time.

"I agree. If you can speed it up, perhaps we might be able to get to the bottom of this." Jing Luo stated.

"Very well. Take care of the disciples. I'll clear out the rest of the areas..." Lin Mu said before disappearing into thin air.

Once he was gone, Elder Weimin stared at the place where Lin Mu was at.

"How does he always do that?" He couldn't help but wonder.

"Trust me... I ask that myself every day as well." Jing Luo said as he got to work.

~shua~

Little Shrubby left as well and appeared next to Lin Mu, a few halls away.

"We kill?" He questioned.

"Yes... we kill. But save the crystals on their back." Lin Mu answered.

~ZING~

The moment Little shrubby heard this, he disappeared in a blur. Soon sounds of explosions and breaking were heard coming from the corridor.

~Crack~

Lin Mu cracked his knuckles as he stared down at the mass of beasts below him.

"Time to get to business..." Lin Mu muttered as he descended upon the beasts.

~BOOM~

~BANG~

~CLANG~

~DENG~

Various sounds of conflict were heard as Lin Mu fought the beasts with little restraint. Other than protecting the crystals from getting damaged, no other part of the beasts were left intact or while.

About a day passed while Jing Luo, Elder Weimin, and the disciples waited in one of the corridors for Lin Mu to return.

"Where is he?"

"Will he be fine?"

There were many questions in their mind, and they all wondered where Lin Mu was.

Chapter 833 - A Beast With A Navy Blue Crystal And Trap Entrance

~DENG~

~DENG~

"WHAT'S THAT?!" The disciples were startled upon hearing a noise coming from the depths of the corridors.

A while back, they had stopped hearing the cries and sounds of the beasts because Lin Mu had killed the ones that were around them first. Thus, they were in the dark about it all and thought it was just a normal thing.

But now there was a loud sound, as if someone was charging towards them.

~BANG~

~CRACK~

"GET BACK!" Jing Luo shouted as he pulled two of the disciples that were at the very front.

Elder Weimin got the others and they all retreated from the debris that was shooting towards them. The wall in front of them had been split apart by a great force, which then shattered it entirely.

"HALT!" Another voice was heard coming from the darkness.

~BANG~

~shua~

A flash of light was seen sparking from the shadows and moved towards the being that had just appeared in front of them.

"W-what is this beast?" The disciples were startled.

In front of them was a beast bigger than any that they had ever seen. It was at least thirty meters tall and towered over them greatly. It had the head of a wolf and the body of a goat.

Spiny scales were spread across its body and long fangs protruded from its mouth. It was in all senses a terrifying beast and the aura exuding from its body was also a proof of that. But that aura quickly changed when a word was heard.

"DEVASTATOR!"?

A pink ribbon of energy seemed to have materialized out of the darkness and went into the body of the beast. It entered from one end and come out the other, while taking away the life of the beast.

~thud~

With a loud thud, the beast collapsed in front of the disciples with a loud thud, knocking up a lot of dust. The blood and gore had unfortunately splattered over the bodies of the disciples and some of them had faces that were completely red now.

~step~step~step~

Finally, from the darkness appeared Lin Mu. Blood dripped from his fist and his robes seemed to be a bit damaged, but other than that, he was mostly fine.

"Sorry, it took me a little extra time dealing with this guy." Lin Mu said as he pointed to the beast.

"Just what was this beast?" Hu Yun couldn't help but ask.

Lin Mu walked to the neck of the beast in response and revealed the navy blue crystal that was hidden between the spiky scales.

~Crack~

Jamming his fingers in the gaps, Lin Mu ripped out the crystal before showing it to them.

"This is a different crystal? It's not like the ones we've seen till now." Hu Yun realized.

Jing Luo and Elder Weimin furrowed their brows and realized what Lin Mu was holding in his hands.

"This was a... Dao Shell realm beast?" Elder Weimin asked doubtfully.

"Well, it had the strength equivalent to one, but isn't exactly a Dao Shell realm beast. I've seen enough of them and now know that they have a different cultivation path than us. They don't cultivate the same way we do and don't have the same realms.

Their powers are mostly physical and so far I haven't seen any that can use anything like a Qi skill." Lin Mu explained.

Jing Luo furrowed his brows and checked up on the beast. A large hole was carved into the beast and not much of it was left. Lin Mu had used a low powered Devastator but even then it had managed to kill the beast and cause so much damage.

'Even five percent is pretty strong now...' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He looked at his fist, that was bleeding. There was a small cut on his knuckle from where the ribbon of energy had come out.

"This should be enough..." Lin Mu muttered as he popped a healing pill into his mouth.

"How many beasts did you exactly kill?" Jing Luo asked.

"All that I came across. There were about ninety eight beasts with a black blue crystal, four hundred, sixty nine with black green crystal, and then this one beast with a black and navy blue crystal." Lin Mu answered.

~Sssss~

The disciples that heard his words couldn't help but gasp in shock. Elder Weimin was also a bit taken aback. He had seen how the Dao Shell realm beast had died and he was sure that if it were him in the position, it would take him a while to even injure the beast.

'He just keeps on giving us more and more shocks, doesn't he?' Elder Weimin thought to himself.

While Elder Weimin was thinking this, Jing Luo looked around for someone in particular.

"Where's little shrubby?" He asked.

"Hmm, he should be on his way." Lin Mu said and looked in the distance.

~whoosh~

A few seconds later, the sound of wind blowing could be heard and a red blur became visible.

~SCREECH~

Little Shrubby's claws dug into the stone floor as he braked and slowed down.

"Did you get all of them?" Lin Mu asked.

"Yup!" Little shrubby replied with a nod.

"Good, we can head to the next floor now." Lin Mu said.

"Wait, isn't the entrance this way?" Elder Weimin asked.

"That's a trap." Lin Mu said and casually kicked a piece of the wall towards the entrance.

~BOOM~

The moment it entered it, scorching flames filled it, melting the stone almost instantly.

~gasp~

"How did we not see?" Jing Luo asked.

"You won't be able to see it unless you get close enough. The masking formations on it are rather good." Lin Mu replied.

The disciples couldn't help but feel a bit fearful. They had been waiting here because they were convinced this was the next entrance.

"Where is the real one, then?" Elder Weimin questioned.

"It's that way. This beast was guarding it." Lin Mu answered.

It now made sense to them that a strong beast would be guarding it and they followed after Lin Mu as he brought them to the next floor.

Chapter 834 - The Third Floor

Everyone was tense as they entered the third floor. They knew that the danger would only increase the more they went down. Lin Mu had already killed a beast that was equal to the Dao Shell realm and they only imagined more of them being here.

~snap~

"EEK!" A female disciple flinched as she heard something break.

~shua~ shua~

"What was that?" the others asked as different illumination techniques were used.

But the moment they saw the floor; they felt chills going down their backs.

"Are these..."

"Yes... they are the remains of the ones that failed to escape." Elder Weimin said in a grave tone.

The entire floor was seemingly littered with numerous bones and it was hard to tell who the bones belonged to. Some of them looked like normal human bones, and some of them were either too large or too long.

Some of them also had some strange shapes, which made them think that these may have belonged to beasts or some other creatures.

Lin Mu furrowed his brows and looked around, trying to see if he could find any clue or something like that here.

"Everyone stay close and keep an eye out on the remains on the floor. Pick up anything that looks like it's important." Lin Mu spoke.

"Yes, senior!" They all replied.

Lin Mu had already spread his spirit sense around, but realized that it was being suppressed again.

"Dammit, they got another formation array that restrains spirit Qi here." Lin Mu cursed.

"There wasn't one on the previous floor, though. It's rather strange... perhaps they are set on alternate floors?" Jing Luo guessed.

"That could be possible, but it only increases the danger even more as I won't be able to react quickly." Lin Mu replied.

"We'll try to stay as alert as possible." Jing Luo said, and took out a couple of spirit tools from his spatial storage ring.

The spirit tools looked like a pair of sticks and were rather normal. But on their surface, one could see several fine runes carved.

"What is this?" Lin Mu asked.

"Just wait and watch. This might be the perfect place to use them." Jing Luo said and held out the stick in his two hands.

He raised his hands and then hit the sticks perpendicular to each other.

~Humm~

Instead of the usual sound, a rather harmonious humming could be heard coming from it. Wang Xiong then took out a large piece of sheepskin and placed it on the ground before holding the sticks on it.

Lin Mu looked on in intrigue and wondered what Jing Luo was exactly doing.

"No way, are those... True Sound Dowsing Sticks?" Elder Weimin seemed to have recognized the spirit tools.

"Oh? Elder Weimin actually knows about them?" Jing Luo was a bit surprised.

"Yes, I do. I had the fortune of seeing a pair of them a long time ago when I was a junior. It was held by an elder of the Centennial sword sect and I saw it during one of the conferences back then.

The elder had organized a lecture on different spirit tools and I got to learn a bit about them." Elder Weimin replied.

"What are they?" Lin Mu asked.

He looked at the sticks and saw that they were moving on the sheepskin. It looked as if they were moving on their own and other than some spirit Qi fluctuation that were rather faint, nothing could be felt from them.

They were still humming and light vibrations could also be observed. The sticks moved on the sheepskin and a few markings started to appear on the sheepskin.

"This is a special kind of spirit tool called as a True Sound Dowsing rods. They are made with Sonorous Harmony Feather brass combined with a mixture of woods. They can create unique humming sounds and that spread around in the area and are then reflected back.

These combined with certain formations allow the sticks to translate that into an appropriate medium like this sheepskin. It is basically using sound to map out the area." Jing Luo explained.

"Oh? Isn't this how bats move around in darkness too?" Lin Mu remembered having learned this from Senior Xukong.

"Indeed. This spirit tool takes inspiration from their ability. Though its uses are rather limited. The special kind of brass used in its making gets damaged with just a few uses and makes it so that the spirit tool does not work again." Jing Luo replied.

"I see... no wonder you didn't use it on the first floor." Lin Mu stated.

"Yes. Even if I did, it wouldn't have helped much as the area was a labyrinth and the sound would not map out very well due to too many walls." Jing Luo said.

"I understand." Lin Mu said and observed as a map was etched out on the sheepskin.

About five minutes later, the sheepskin had turned into a sheepskin map instead. Lin Mu observed it along with Jing Luo and Elder Weimin trying to find their path ahead.

"Wait, what's this mark?" Lin Mu asked as he pointed to what looked like a circle that was a bit oblong.

"Huh... that can't be... that mark... it is for a person." Jing Luo answered.

"A person? Can it be Elder Liqiang?!" Elder Weimin asked hurriedly.

"No wait, that's not just him... there are more of those marks." Lin Mu soon pointed out the other such circles that were very faint.

In all, they could count at least twenty such markings on the map and it made the man bit confused.

"How are there so many people here? Did others manage to enter before us?" Hu Yun, who was watching from the side, spoke.

"Perhaps it might be the people that were pulled in along with Elder Liqiang?" Elder Weimin suggested.

"Whatever it may be, we need to be careful. For all we know, this could just be a trap instead." Lin Mu warned.

Elder Weimin and Jing Luo nodded in response before making a plan to act.

Chapter 835 - Northern Tribes

Carefully stepping out into the next area, Lin Mu spread his spirit sense as much as he could.

'At least they can't sense us either. Even if we might have made a little noise, it can still be attributed to the other beasts here.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

On the map, they could see several beasts here as well. Their sizes varied and Lin Mu could determine that they were mostly Black Blue crystal beasts with a couple of Black Navy blue crystal beasts spread around.

The only difference was that the humans that were in the area seemed to have set up a strange kind of a barrier that was hiding them from the beasts. Only because it was a solid barrier could the True Sound Dowsing rods even detect them.

Lin Mu and the rest didn't know if these people were friendly or not. For all they could know, it could be some other beast that might have a humanoid form and the spirit tool detected them as humans.

After all, the True Sound dowsing rods could only detect it based on the size and shape of the object, other than that they could not tell if the thing was alive or not. If there was a statue of the same size, they would have looked the same.

Though Jing Luo confirmed that it was indeed a living thing since the markings had moved a little during the making theft map, creating a slight blur effect.

Lin Mu was fully alert at this point and had his focus at the peak.

"Wait here," He whispered to the others.

Then in the next moment, he blinked to to the next room and Phased into one of the walls.

"Phasing here is difficult too... the walls are interfering with it." Lin Mu took note.

He went up the to ceiling and then peeked out below. There were several torches and some spirit tools burning in the hall. Lin Mu narrowed his eyes as he finally saw the people who were here.

"Who are they?" Lin Mu couldn't help but wonder upon seeing their attire.

They were wearing thick wool clothes and animal furs on their body. Their skin was also lighter than most of the people that Lin Mu had seen till now. Various ornaments were hanging on their clothes as well, and their hair was long.

Some of them kept their hair braided and had accessories in them as well, while some kept it in a simple ponytail. Their eyes were blue, unlike most of the people of the Great Zhou continent, and they were tall as well.

It didn't take Lin Mu more than a few seconds to recognize who they might be.

"The Northern Tribes..." Lin Mu whispered.

Lin Mu's fist clenched, and a vein popped up on his forehead. If it weren't for his mind telling him to stop, his body would have already descended and started a slaughter.

'I can't do that... need to find out why they are here first...' Lin Mu thought to himself and chanted the calming heart sutra silently.

A few seconds later, he felt the volatile thoughts fade and he could focus on the situation again. He noted the faint spirit Qi fluctuations that were coming from them and found that all of them were at the Nascent Soul realm.

'Twenty nascent soul realm cultivators... that's a lot and unusual.' Lin Mu thought.

The assumption they had till now was that Elder Liqiang had accidentally been pulled into the ruins. But now Lin Mu couldn't help but think otherwise. It was far less likely that all twenty of the men would be pulled into the ruins at once.

"Do they have something to do with the ruins?" Lin Mu wondered.

But this thought also gave him a little anxiety, as it would mean that the Northern tribes had more knowledge about this place than they did. And the one thing Lin Mu had learned from Senior Xukong the most was that knowledge was power.

It was why he learned everything he got his hands on and was always curious about new things.

Noting all of the men here, he moved to the other hall where more people were located. The True Sound Dowsing rods weren't fully accurate, and it was better for Lin Mu to check the area himself.

After all, the sound could get dampened by the multiple walls and barriers that came in the way. And in the next hall, his conjecture came out to be true. There were ten more Northern Tribe members here, though one of them was a woman this time.

She seemed to be far older than the rest of them and had while hair that was tied into multiple braids. But the most eye catching thing was the spirit Qi fluctuations that were emanating from her.

"Dao Shell realm... that too at the Shell completion stage at the very least." Lin Mu estimated.

The spirit Qi fluctuations coming from the woman were many times stronger than Elder Weimin's. The only one who could come close to it was perhaps Elder Liqiang himself, but he was at the Shell Genesis stage.

This made Lin Mu assume that she was definitely above him. He looked around and saw another man in the hall. He was greatly injured and was bleeding from all over his body. His legs seemed to be broken and he was slumped against the wall.

"Hehehe! Are you ready to speak now?" The old woman suddenly spoke.

The man who was lying on the ground opened his bloodshot eyes. Anger could be seen in them and perhaps if it were not for his injuries, he might have already killed the woman.

~BOOM~

Suddenly, the man moved and flew at great speed towards the old woman.

~CLANG~

But before he could reach halfway to her, a barrier sent him flying away and made him crash back into the wall.

~Cough~

The man spit out blood and struggled to look at the woman.

"NEVER!" He yelled.

Chapter 836 - The Secret Of Kushao

Lin Mu saw everything that happened with a cold expression on his face.

His eyes fists trembled lightly but he did not move. Instead, he looked towards the barrier that was trapping the man who was none other than Elder Liqiang.

"Hehehe! Seems like your stubbornness is still not broken." The old woman said as she waved her hand.

~shua~shua~shua~

With the wave of her hand a red energy manifested in the barrier's interior and spread into it before turning into several chains and whips.

~CLANG~

~WHACK~

The chains wrapped Elder Liqiang and pulled on his limbs, stringing him up like a dead animal carcass. The red whips then lashed on to this bare flesh, tearing it apart even more as the blood spurted out of it.

Elder Liqiang grunted in pain but did not cry out. He simply looked at the old woman in utter fury.

The whipping lasted for five minutes, after which Elder Liqiang had grown rather weary and his eyes were swollen.

"Will you speak now, little rat?" The old woman spoke.

"N-no..." Elder Liqiang muttered.

~BANG~

"What's that? I didn't hear you?" The Old Woman said out loud as another whip hit the back of the man.

~Hiss~

But he still did not speak.

"You know, the earlier you tell us where the Noon Grass sect is located, the earlier you will be able to face death. If not, I'll simply show you terrors you've never heard of," The old woman said in a cold tone.

But seeing that Elder Liqiang did not answer even now, the old woman simply harrumphed and turned to face the other men that were in the room.

"Hold him for the time being. Perhaps we might use him as the perfect sacrifice. His cultivation and soul should be enough to open up the fifth level of the ruins." The old woman ordered.

"Yes, chieftess!" The men replied.

"Mmm... also keep an eye out for the others. Our little carps are already here, ready to be caught. Make sure they don't get a whiff of anything." The old woman stated.

"We'll ensure nothing happens, Chieftess." One of the men replied.

"I'll be on the fourth floor working on the formation," The old woman said before leaving for the next floor.

Lin Mu followed her and soon found her entering one of the walls of the ruin. The wall spun open to show a stairwell, from where she descended. It closed behind her and Lin Mu continued staring at her for a few minutes.

"I'll show you..." he muttered before blinking to the men in the hall where elders Liqiang was caged.

The men seemed to be talking about something right now and Lin Mu decide to eavesdrop on them.

"... we should be done by tomorrow, right?"

"Perhaps... the formation arrays of the ruins while the same as our records have degraded a bit over time. If chieftess can get them repaired. We might not have to struggle the extra bit."

"But is it really true? Is there really the inheritance of an Immortal Ascension realm cultivator here?"

"Of course. Who do you think our Ku clan is? Ancestor Kushao was the top genius of his generation and managed to infiltrate the Great Zhou continent's people with his great intellect. He was our greatest spy and secretly killed so many experts back then.

He even bet his life on setting up the secret teleportation array here. This is the closest we've ever gotten to the Southern continent. This was the lifelong dream of our people and he was the man who put a lot of effort into making sure it came true."

Hearing the contents of their conversation, Lin Mu was astonished.

'What? Kushao is from the Northern Tribes?' Lin Mu was stunned.

He had never expected there to be this sort of a secret behind the ruins. All the information that they had about the man turned out to be false from the very root.

"Hmm... seems like this man Kushao managed to make an image as a reclusive expert in the Great Zhou Empire while he was a spy of the Northern tribes. I have to say that was a smart move.

People often respect cold and distant experts. That might have gotten him more reputation than excepted." Xukong suddenly spoke.

"This has changed everything now, though. Everyone that entered the ruins has basically entered a massive trap. They have baited us all with the ruins." Lin Mu said.

While Lin Mu was conversing with senior Xukong, the men were also conversing amongst themselves. But now Lin Mu could tell that while these were all from the Northern Tribes, they weren't from the very same tribe, but from different ones.

The man who was answering the questions was from the Ku tribe and Kushao belonged to this tribe as well.

Lin Mu tried to recall the information about the Ku tribe, but could not come up with much. He had learned about several important tribes of the Northern continent, but the Ku clan wasn't particularly impressive or eye catching.

'The Ku clan was a participant of many wars and had several Dao Shell realm experts along with a few Dao Treading realm experts as well. They held some territory in the eastern side of the continent for a while as well before being pushed back.' This was the information that Lin Mu could remember about them.

"Seems like the entire Ku clan was keeping their true ability hidden. Their strongest expert was here acting as a spy..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

This also made him wonder about the cultivation base of Kushao. From the conversation of the men, he knew that there was an Immortal Ascension realm cultivator's inheritance here. But he didn't know if it was Kushao's or someone else.

"How did Ancestor Kushao make this place, anyway? I don't think it would have been possible at that time with all the sect monitoring use of resources." One of the men asked.

"Haha, he didn't need to. He was smart enough to not do that. Instead, he found the tomb of an expert who had passed before that time and used that as an inheritance ground. Though he was sure that there was an immortal ascension realm experts remains here.." The Ku clan man answered.

Chapter 837 - A Silent Ambush

Lin Mu did not act immediately as he wanted to listen to more information from them. He had already waited for half an hour for what he had already gotten and decided to wait for a bit more.

His attention was also on Elder Liqiang and his condition. While he certainly was heavenly injured, he was not going to die anytime soon. He was, after all, a Dao Shell realm cultivator and would not die that easily.

The Northern tribe people had evidently taken away the spatial storage treasure of Elder Liqiang, otherwise, he would have been able to heal himself with the pills he had. He would have even been able to use his other spirit tools to breakthrough the barrier that restrained it.

After all, Elder Liqiang was a formation master himself. While he might have been able to dismantle a normal barrier formation without the use of any supportive spirit tools, the barrier that blocked him right now was nothing like that.

While Lin Mu had not taken a detailed look at it, even he could tell that there were more functions to it thane was apparent on the surface. Besides, if anything really happened, Lin Mu had the confidence that he could save Elder Liqiang immediately.

'Just wait for a bit more, Elder Liqiang. I need to get to the bottom of this. Once that is done, I assure you that they will pay deeply for it...' Lin Mu said in his heart.

While Lin Mu was thinking about this, the northern tribesmen were still conversing.

"Do we know whose remains are here?"

"No, that's why chieftess has come here herself. She's going to open the seal the contains it all and it will allow us to get it. And perhaps... this Noon Grass sect rat will serve as the fuel for it too."

"I see... but what about these weird beasts? I've never seen anything like them before nor read about them."

"We don't really know either. What we know is that they are mad for the most part and cannot be controlled directly. At most, we can control the formation arrays of this place and redirect them towards others."

"Oh? Haha! It will be fun when we get to see the Southerners squirm and die!"

The tribesmen laughed out loud.

Lin Mu listened to them silently and decided their fate at that moment.

"Time to finish this..." Lin Mu muttered and disappeared once again.

In the previous room, the twenty Nascent soul realm experts were doing their duty and keeping a guard on everything. Five of them were on each side of the wall and would patrol it, making sure that nothing approached the area.

Their gazes were sharp and alert, as if ready for everything. But all of a sudden, their gazes went dull and their faces blank. They stopped moving as a faint chant was heard in the hall.

The chant was strange and stirred one's mind before emptying it out entirely.

Twenty bladed weapons appeared in the hall and hovered behind the twenty men.

~shing~

~thud~

Then in one swift motion, twenty heads were lopped off. All of them fell to the ground at the same time and made a slightly higher noise than normal.

"Huh? Did you hear that?" Someone in the next room said.

"Did something fall?"

"Go check it out," The leader ordered.

"Yes!" one of the men said and started to move towards it.

"You fool, don't go alone. Take more people with you. Do you want to be ambushed?" The leader scolded.

His men looked at him apologetically for their mistake, but their expressions flipped entirely the next second.

"What?" The leader questioned, seeing the weird looks his men were giving him.

"T-That—" But before his men could say anything, he felt some grip his neck.

His breath was halted in that very second and he felt himself being lifted off the ground. His eyes bulged out, and he felt like his neck was put in a vice.

"You were correct about an ambush... but it was not them getting ambushed." Lin Mu said in a low voice.

"Lead—"

~Shing~

~thud~

The men were about to shout but could not as their heads suddenly rolled to the ground. The leader watched on in utter shock and his bulging eyes bulged out even more, making him look like a squished frog.

A faint glimmer of light could be seen rising from the headless bodies of the men that Lin Mu had just killed, but before the glimmer could increase anymore, the spirit weapons acted again.

Spirit Qi fluctuations emanated from the weapons, showing their power. Each and every one of them was a high grade spirit weapon, which was a bit surprising to the leader. He watched as the spirit weapons destroyed the Nascent souls of his men that were trying to escape.

"No... you... kill... can't... do... away..." The man struggled to speak, but it was all in vain.

His tongue tried to move, but the pressure on his neck only increased more.

"You don't need to move your tongue now. You will do it when I order you to do it later. For now... shut your mouth." Lin Mu said, his voice cold like the cellar of a tyrant's castle.

~swish~

Lin Mu's hand moved like the wind and struck the man in multiple places.

~CRACK~CRACK~CRACK~

~КАСНА~

In just a second, the man's bones were split apart, and his limbs were broken. His spine was shattered from the waist as well, leaving him crippled. The sudden pain was enough to knock him out, and Lin Mu let go of him.

~thud~

His body fell down like a rag doll and his legs were bent at some awkward angles. Lin Mu looked at it coldly before he disappeared. A minute later, he returned with the rest of his companions.

All of them had tense expressions on their face due to the aura that Lin Mu was emanating right now. He had only told them one thing, and it was to 'follow'.. And now they saw the reason for that, they were utterly taken aback.

Chapter 838 - Helping Elder Liqiang

"S-Senior Lin Mu... what is this?" The disciples asked nervously.

They could see the mass of dead bodies everywhere, and they did not look like they had a good end. All of them had been decapitated in one swift stroke and a bloody aura was spread in the room as well.

"Northern Tribes." Lin Mu answered simply.

The answer was like cold water pouring over their heads, and they understood the gravity of the situation. Jing Luo and Elder Weimin were quick to assess it and recognize the outfits that the men were wearing to be similar to the traditional outfits of the Northern Tribes.

"They're all from the Northern Tribes? But how?" Elder Weimin was confused.

"Come." Instead of answering that though, Lin Mu simply ordered them to follow them.

They went a little ahead and saw Lin Mu walking towards an empty area. A flame appeared on Lin Mu's hand and illuminated the area and the last injured person that was lying there.

The moment the people of the Noon Grass sect saw him, their eyes went wide.

"ELDER LIQIANG!" They all shouted out in unison and rushed towards him.

But their lunge was brought to a halt as Lin Mu raised his hand.

"Wait," He ordered.

Lin Mu extended his hand and touched the barrier that had faded away. It reappeared and showed its form, along with the chains that were trapping Elder Liqiang in place.

"I-I'll deal with—" Jing Luo was just about to offer some help but was interrupted by a loud noise.

~boom~

A gust of wind blew the hair off everyone in the room as Lin Mu destroyed the barrier in front of him. A single punch was all it took to absolutely break a barrier that had managed to hold a Dao Shell realm cultivator.

"Such... power..." one of the disciples muttered.

Even Elder Weimin could tell from the appearance of the barrier that it was nothing simple. And Jing Luo, who was the expert in this, knew exactly how complex the barrier was. But then Lin Mu destroyed it easily.

~step~step~step~

Lin Mu walked towards the injured man, who was held by the chains, and gripped his hands around the chain.

His biceps bulged as a massive power was exerted.

~КАСНА~

The chains snapped like they were made out of twigs and Lin Mu caught the injured Elder in his hands. He quickly took out a pill bottle from his ring and opened its cap. A fragrant aroma spread in the hall as a round yellow pill with spiral patterns appeared in his hands.

"The Four Vessels Restoration pill?" One of the Disciples recognized it.

Lin Mu fed the pill to the injured man first before laying him down on the ground and checking his condition. Elder Weimin and Jing Luo also arrived by his side during this time and did their own checks.

Elder Weimin took a breath of relief after having figured out Elder Liqiang's condition.

~Phew~

"His cultivation base is fine. It's just his body that is injured. We can fix that in some time." Elder Weimin spoke.

Even though Elder Liqiang had multiple broken bones and open wounds, the Four Vessels Restoration pill was already starting to fix him.

"Take care of him," Lin Mu said as he handed a box of pills to a disciple standing beside him.

He stood up and walked to the Leader of the Northern Tribesmen that was lying unconscious on the ground. The man had been ignored at the start, but then Lin Mu brought attention back to him.

Picking him up like a bag of trash, Lin Mu threw him towards Jing Luo.

"You know what to do." Lin Mu spoke.

Jing Luo's expression turned serious and nodded his head. He kicked the man and turned him over to see his face.

"I'll get everything out of him... every... little... thing." Jing Luo said with an ice cold glint in his eyes.

Elder Weimin and the disciples also looked towards the man and only anger could be seen in their eyes.

"They did this to Elder Liqiang?" someone asked.

"Not just them... there is one more." Lin Mu said before explaining the situation in short to them.

He knew that the old woman might find out that her people had died here, or that something had happened. Thus Lin Mu needed to act quickly.

"You get the woman, we'll take care of the rest here." Jing Luo replied.

"I'll come too!" Elder Weimin hurriedly said.

"No," Lin Mu interrupted. "We don't know if they have more people here or if they are hiding somewhere. You should protect them, I'll deal with the old woman." He stated.

Elder Weimin pursed his lips, but then nodded his head.

"Alright, be careful..." He said in a concerned tone.

Then without responding, Lin Mu Blinked away and disappeared. Everyone got to helping Elder Liqiang while Jing Luo pulled the one surveying Northern Tribesmen away.

"You will sing today... the final song of your life..." Jing Luo muttered as a few ideas appeared in his mind and a grin pulled on his lips.

Lin Mu's body phased through the wall, and he entered the stairwell that the old woman had taken. Making his way down, he realized just how deep it went. Skipping the stairs, he directly sank into the stairs.

~shua~

In five seconds, he had reached the bottom of the spiral stairwell and saw a wide open hall in front of him. This hall was vastly different from the ones he had seen before. It was smaller and was also a bit more circular in shape.

His spirit Qi was not restrained here, thus he let it wander freely, not caring that the old woman could probably do the same. The interior of the hall formed in his mind as his spirit sense observed everything.

And at the same time, it came in contact with some powerful spirit Qi waves. The moment Lin Mu's spirit Qi touched it, it was struck back.

Chapter 839 - Ku Waowen

Ku Waowen had come from a long line of Chieftains and had become the chieftess of her clan after her grandfather died. She was the first person from her clan who was ever acknowledged from the tribal alliance and had thus been chosen for the mission.

The mission was something she herself had been looking forward to a long item. Kushao was an ancestor of her Ku clan and was considered to be a legend in the northern tribes. Yet even then, his existence was kept a secret from the younger and weaker members.

This was to keep the information spreading to the Great Zhou Empire. After all, Kushao had sacrificed a lot to infiltrate it and make the ruins, along with the teleportation formation array.

He had made it with a long term goal. The one thing all sects liked was to get more resources and allow their disciples to gain experience from inheritance grounds. Thus, making the tomb of an old expert into his own and turning it into a trial ground was the best way he could have taken.

Of course, the cost to make it was really great, but in the face of his goals, it was nothing.

The Northern Tribes had used the ruins multiple times in the past to get the sects to sacrifice their disciples. They would only think that they died in the ruins of natural consequences, and would never find out what happened.

All that happened with no suspicion for a long time until five hundred years ago, when the sects have had enough of it. They mounted a secret mission to get to the bottom of it.

Of course, the Northern Tribes were already aware of it and decided to make use of it while turning it in their favor. They were already prepared at the ruins and managed to kill all those that had entered the tomb secretly.

And just as they had expected, the sects kept this loss a secret for the fear of losing face.

But it came at a cost and the formation arrays of the ruins ended up getting damaged.

Ku Waowen looked at the complex formation array in front of her and sighed.

"All these years we've waited to gain the secrets and it's finally here. Ancestor sealed the teleportation array along with the main inheritance of the tomb to protect it from the sects. We've waited such long and we finally have the opportunity..." Ku Waowen muttered to herself.

She stared into the Formation array and saw the hollow bottom. The hall was circular in shape and had a hole in the center of it. From this hole, one could look down into the fifth level of the ruins.

It was now that she felt something she had never expected. Her spirit sense was spread around in the hall and felt another spirit sense appearing. Her face turned stern, and she immediately intercepted it.

'Who? Did they have some problem?' Ku Waowen thought.

But then she looked in the direction and saw a young man standing near the staircase. She furrowed her brows and questioned herself if she was seeing correctly. But no matter how much she wanted to believe that this was one of their people she could not.

"Who are you and how did you get in here?" Ku Waowen questioned.

She already had a guess about what had happened up there, but she needed to buy some time to manage some things on her end. Her spirit sense secretly split and changed certain parts on the formation.

Lin Mu, who knew he had already been detected, calmly approached the woman.

"You don't need to know that. As for how I got here, you should already know." Lin Mu said in a cold tone.

"I see... looks like your head will have to pay the price for this... NOW DIE!" Ku Waowen shouted and waved her hand.

~shing~shing~shing~

Three small black spikes shot out of her fingers. They moved at a great speed and were almost invisible to the naked eye. Lin Mu though, simply blinked to the right ten meters away and dodged it with ease.

Ku Waowen kept a still face, but internally she was a bit surprised.

'Speed? No... even a Dao Treading realm expert might not be able to do that... then what...' she wondered.

Her mind worked at great speed, while Lin Mu continued to approach, she responded by sending out more spikes but Lin Mu dodged them with ease too.

"You done?" Lin Mu asked, "My turn then!"

~shua~

The short sword and several more spirit weapons appeared around Lin Mu. He clasped his hand around the short sword's handle and blinked ahead. In less than two seconds, he was already next to Ku Waowen.

She widened her eyes and pushed her palm out, creating a shield that looked like a bowl.

"Defense of the Chant bowl!" She recited.

~CLANG~

Lin Mu's short sword hit the bowl and created a loud noise. Ku Waowen felt the power exuding from him and finally understood what she was facing.

"Dao Shell realm?" She muttered.

Till now she had been unable to fully sense Lin Mu's cultivation base, but now she could. And the revelation was astounding to her. It was due to the fact how young Lin Mu looked. She knew for sure that even if Lin Mu had managed to maintain his youth, he would have to be at least a hundred years or more to have such an appearance.

But even then a Dao Shell realm expert might not necessarily achieve that. It was absolutely incomprehensible to her how such a person could exist.

"Who are you? A sect's chosen?" Ku Waowen immediately assumed.

To her, a person who could reach the Dao Shell realm at this young age must have been carefully nurtured from the very start. They would have to begin from before he was even born and was still in the womb.

They would have to provide great nutrition to the mother before that so that her child could have a great talent. Not to mention the parents would have to have good talent as well for the child to be talented.

It would take centuries of preparation and a ton of resources to even nurture a single person like this. To Ku Waowen, only the top three sects could do something like this. If it were any other sect, they would have already known about it.

"No." Lin Mu simply replied as she flipped back, neutralizing the recoil from the bowl like shield.

'Iron Thorn Spear!' Lin Mu activated its skill.

~shing~shing~shing~

Black blades shot out of the Iron thorn spear as it showed its power. The spear itself shot forward as well and attacked the bowl like shield.

~DENG~

The bowl started getting pushed back and the black blades tried to swerve around it.

"Oh no, you don't!" Ku Waowen as she brought her left hand's middle and index finger together before making a pattern in the air.

The pattern materialized and turned into a whip that flicked the black blades away. There were tens of black blades, yet the whip could block each and every one of them. It moved at a lightning speed and by the time it was done blocking all of the attacks, only a few fragments of it were left.

~tch~

"Seems like a kid like you has a lot of good things... the sects certainly didn't spare anything I see..." Ku Waowen stated.

She made a gesture with her hand and red mist spread in the area. Just like she had done with Elder Liqiang, the red mist turned into more whips and chains before they started attacking Lin Mu.

The chains morphed to have spikes on their ends while the whips had thorns along their length. Both of them looked fierce and gnarly.

"Humph! This won't work on me." Lin Mu said as he blocked the attacks one by one.

But the attacks only kept on increasing in speed and intensity. Lin Mu switched from his short sword to another long sword. Now his left hand held the short sword and his right held the long sword.

They moved around in complex trajectories, guided by his spirit sense, and clashed against the attacks.

"Let's see if you can handle double that..." Ku Waowen made a few hand seals and the whips and chains were divided into two.

The intensity of attacks on Lin Mu increased once more and he had to spend even more effort in blocking them. But at a certain point, he could not keep up and a few attacks managed to hit him.

~boom~

"Hahaha!" Ku Waowen laughed as she saw Lin Mu getting stuck by the spiked chain.

But her expression changed rather quickly upon seeing a brown armor appearing around Lin Mu. The mortal strengthening scripture worked to defend Lin Mu and he frowned.

"Seems like I'll need to put more effort... A Shell Expansion stage Dao Shell realm cultivator is certainly worth its title." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

That's right, Ku Waowen was at the Shell Expansion stage. The fact was confirmed now that Lin Mu was fighting with her.

"How?" Ku Waowen questioned.

To her, the technique that Lin Mu had just used seemed to have been activated almost instantly. Which was strange to her, as she should have seen Lin Mu do something for it at the very least.

'Is that a spirit tool?' Ku Waowen wondered.

Blink!

But then Lin Mu disappeared in front of her eyes. She looked around, but her spirit sense could not feel him anywhere in the hall.

~SLASH~

Chapter 840 - The Battle Heats Up

The whirring of a blade tearing through the air could be heard by Ku Waowen and her eyes went wide. She could feel goosebumps at the back of her head and immediately lunged forward while creating a scarf made out of the red mist around her head.

~Clack~

The short sword missed Ku Waowen's neck, but managed to hit the red scarf. It was as if made out of iron wires and managed to trap the short sword.

"You won't get me that easily, you're a few centuries too early!" Ku Waowen said as she quickly made a hand seal.

~Guga~

The red scarf moved like a snake and wrapped around the entire short sword before reaching Lin Mu's hand itself.

"Humph!" Lin Mu grunted and pulled on the Short sword, tearing it from the grip of the red scarf.

The old woman's eyes darted around in a few locations before a smirk appeared on her face.

"The sects spent such a large amount of time and resources in nurturing you, it would be a shame if you died here." Ku Waowen spoke.

But Lin Mu paid no attention to her words and curled his left hand.

~shua~

The Axe that had been floating in the corner, blocked by Ku Waowen's Red mist finally flew out and was clasped in his hand. The short sword went to float near his shoulder and started to attack the red mist on its own.

"Your talk is useless now... you will talk later when I want the things I desire." Lin Mu replied and jumped up.

The Axe was raised straight up before being curled back along with Lin Mu's hands. Spirit Qi swirled around the Axe before more of it was injected into it from Lin Mu's meridians.

It soon changed color and a red hue appeared around him.

"FLAME SPLITTER!" Lin Mu chanted as a Qi skill was activated.

Since Lin Mu had gotten fire attribute spirit Qi in his arsenal now, he could use some of the Qi skills and techniques that he had in his storage. There were many that he had obtained and they were memorized by him.

Using them now was the perfect opportunity.

The Axe suddenly grew two times in size as flames bloomed on it. The flaming Axe slashed down, creating a long arc of fire that was at least thirty meters in length.

~Sizzle~

The red mist seems to have been affected by it and was burned away. Both the Axe and the Qi skill were high grade and thus were able to cause quite a bit of damage. Ku Waowen narrowed her eyes and pulled out a bottle of transparent liquid from her storage.

Taking a large gulp and downing it all at once, she spat out a cloud of frost from her mouth.

~WHOOSH~

The cloud of frost was very cold and ice formed on the ground where it passed. The flames made by the Axe were suppressed by it easily while the red mist quickly retreated behind it.

Then something surprising happened that Lin Mu had not expected. The frost actually climbed over the Axe and reached the wooden handle. Lin Mu hurriedly let go of the Axe as he could still feel the chill from it despite the Mortal Strengthening scriptures armor.

'What is this?' Lin Mu wondered.

The Axe was fully covered in ice and fell to the ground lifelessly. Despite it being a spirit weapon, Lin Mu discovered that he could not control it. The ice was like a barrier that had forcefully disconnected his spirit sense link with the Axe.

If it were any normal person, they probably would have sustained some internal injuries due to this. But Lin Mu's spirit sense was far too refined to break so easily. Thus, it was simply disconnected rather than being torn.

~Shatter~

"How?!"

Lin Mu then saw the Axe shatter into pieces upon touching the ground.

"Eheheheeh! You think just because you have high grade spirit weapons, they are unbreakable. You are naive!" The old woman taunted.

Though it really was a bit surprising to Lin Mu. While the Axe wasn't particularly a very strong spirit weapon even in the High grade weapons and could not compare to the Short sword in durability, it was still stronger than most other weapons.

It breaking like this was astounding to Lin Mu, and made him think about the attack that had caused it to become like this.

"That frost cloud... it's not simple." Lin Mu muttered.

His eyes gazed at the frost cloud that was still floating around. Though its size had decreased by half now.

"Seems like I need to punish you a bit before you will be willing to listen," Ku Waowen said as she gestured with her hand and brought them towards her face.

~HUUUUUUUU~

Making an 'O' with her lips, she deeply breathed in the air. The red mist surged into her mouth while the frost cloud stayed as it is. Lin Mu put distance between him and the cloud just in case and tried to analyze what it could be.

'It only appeared after she drank that transparent liquid. So that liquid must have something to do with it.' Lin Mu thought.

When the red mist was fully inhaled by the old woman, her nails turned red and so did her hair.

~HONG~

She tapped her nails together and they made a metallic humming sound. The Frost cloud seemed to react to the sound and started to move. She then pulled on her hair and ripped out half of it in one go.

Ku Waowen moved her hands at a rapid speed, using her nails to weave the hair. The hair quickly stiffened in her hand and turned into red rods that looked like they were quite sturdy.

Her eyes glanced at the wary Lin Mu and a smile appeared on her face.

"I'll ask one last time, will you heed?" She questioned.

"No," Lin Mu replied.

With this response, Ku Waowen's expression turned fierce and she threw out the red rods.

"Xieye Yun Frost Cage!" Ku Waowen chanted.