

## Walker 961

### [Chapter 961 - A Volunteer Dao Treading Realm Prisoner?](#)

Lin Mu's words were like daggers, and its intent was sharp like one too. Tie Niu couldn't help but regret all that he had done. He went silent and didn't speak anything until Lin Mu ordered him again.

"SPEAK!" Lin Mu yelled and stomped his foot on the ground.

*~THUD~*

Another crater was created on the ground, while a foot imprint was left at the center of it. Seeing the force of the stomp, Tie Niu quickly started speaking for the fear that the next thing getting stomped might just be him instead.

"Yes... at first I just had some suspicions. But later I got to know that all of them were being sacrificed. They were how the pills were made..." Tie Niu accepted.

"What did you do next?" Lin Mu asked further.

"We... we continued what we did. But we came across several obstacles. A lot of my subordinates and the people of the city didn't want to go along with my plan. They wanted to rebel against me.

Thus... I killed them and sent them to be sacrificed as well. But this meant that I would not have enough people under me, for which my son gave me a suggestion. He told me to make use of others that were in the same condition as us; those stuck at bottlenecks.

And thus I called some people who would be willing to follow us with no problems. They were desperate for straws, drowning in the sea of despair, and we would be giving them an entire ship.

They quickly accepted our offer, and we gave them the pills." Tie Niu spoke.

"But these pills weren't the same, were they?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No... they were made slightly differential and had some other effects." Tie Niu admitted hesitatingly.

"What were those effects?" Lin Mu inquired.

"In addition to increasing the cultivation base, these pills also made the consumer subservient to others that used a certain technique." Tie Niu answered, surprising Lin Mu.

The cogs in Lin Mu's mind turned as ideas started to appear in his mind.

'It can't be... did Gu Yao find a way to make other's control people for him? That too without the Human controlling blood curse?' Lin Mu wondered.

"How does this technique work, exactly?" Lin Mu questioned, his voice deeper.

"For the technique to work, I need to inject a wisp of my spirit sense into the person who had just consumed the pill. Once they consume the pill, their cultivation base enters a vulnerable state, and we make use of that.

They don't even realize that all this has happened and that our spirit sense has entered their dantian. Once that is done, we can give them orders through our spirit sense. Though it is not fully accurate.

Many times, the orders just work as suggestions. Because of this, I needed to make use of other methods so that they followed me. Giving them some more benefits, like a proper position in the city, was enough to do that.

Plus, the greed for more pills was also good enough of a motivator. Most of them had no scruples with what we did and more people joined us later on; some of them even being sent by the elder of the Blue Ribbon Sect." Tie Niu answered hurriedly.

"This elder? What is his name?" Lin Mu asked next.

"I don't know. My son simply calls him master, and since his cultivation base is far higher than me, I didn't dare to ask either." Tie Niu replied.

"Did you even meet him face to face before?" Lin Mu asked, feeling doubtful.

"No... I've never seen him directly. I've only heard him talk with the communication jade slips." Tie Niu replied.

"For a man who held such a position as yours, you are incredibly stupid..." Lin Mu said straightforwardly.

Lin Mu did know about the Blue Ribbon sect, but didn't know that they were under the influence of Gu Yao as well. It was a mid-level sect as well and was located some distance away from the border of the Iron Bull city.

'Seems like we need to add another sect to the list... though it might just be me being unaware. The others might have known of this already.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

He looked at Tie Niu and asked him something else this time.

"Do you know of Gu Yao and the Gu legion?" Lin Mu asked.

"I do... I've heard that he is an even greater senior than the elder from the Blue Ribbon sect follows." Tie Niu replied.

"Dammit... just as I thought." Lin Mu cursed.

Tie Niu could see the anger in Lin Mu's eyes. It was even stronger than when he fought him and was bordering on murderous.

"I... I-I... I've spoken to him." Tie Niu said, while stuttering.

"You do?!" Lin Mu raised his voice in question.

"Y-yes... you see, in addition to the elder from the Blue Ribbon sect, Gu Yao also gave us some orders. These only came after we had gathered enough of manpower. He was the one that asked us to start capturing other cultivators and experts.

It didn't matter how we did it, whether it be by abusing the laws or just falsely implicating someone. We just captured every strong cultivator that passed within ten kilometers of the Iron bull city." Tie Niu answered quickly.

"And how many have you captured till now?" Lin Mu asked, his face darkening.

"A-about ninety..." Tie Niu spoke and took a pause before continuing. "Of those ninety, eighty one were Nascent soul realm cultivators, nine were Dao Shell realm cultivators and one... was a Dao Treading realm cultivator."

"You captured a Dao Treading Realm cultivator too? Who and how was that even possible?" Lin Mu asked, finding it to be a bit absurd.

A Dao Treading realm cultivator was very rare and each of them would be a well known powerhouse.

"Well... we didn't exactly capture him... more like he came to us on his own.." Tie Niu spoke.

### [Chapter 962 - Daoist Yulong](#)

Lin Mu felt strange that some Dao Treading realm cultivator would walk into a trap like this.

'No... even if one did, they would be able to escape or at least create enough of a commotion that others would find out. Plus, no Dao Treading realm cultivator would be without a background here.' Lin Mu pondered.

"And what was his name? Who was he?" Lin Mu asked impatiently.

"He called himself Daoist Yulong. As for who he was, I don't know. I've never heard of any Dao Treading realm expert of his name and don't know of any sect that has anyone of that name." Tie Niu replied.

"Daoist Yulong?" Lin Mu repeated, finding the name familiar.

'It can't be that Yulong... he was a former elder of the Zither Wind sect. But he has been dead for a long time now. No... it must be someone else.' Lin Mu thought.

Lin Mu had seen the number of Dao Treading realm experts in the World Nexus and knew that other than the ones that were openly known by the world and were members of the sects, there were still a few others hidden away.

'And it can be some rouge cultivator too... after all, if they find an inheritance ground that is in a minor plane, they can hide away there for a long time.' Lin Mu concluded.

Having thought of this, Lin Mu had another questioned.

"What happened to that Daoist Yulong? Did you kill him too?" Lin Mu questioned.

"No... we aren't technically supposed to kill the ones we capture. Gu Yao prefers them to be alive. And since Daoist Yulong went along calmly with it all, even when the people of the Gu Legion came to take him, there was no conflict." Tie Niu answered.

"Huh? Didn't you find that strange? Why will a Dao Treading realm expert be so casual with it all?" Lin Mu asked, finding it clearly suspicious.

"I did indeed, and so did the people of the Gu Legion. But then the man said something to them, after which they changed their attitudes and were accepting of his words." Tie Niu clarified.

"Is that so..." Lin Mu furrowed his brows as he thought over it.

This Daoist Yulong was another new card on the battlefield that Lin Mu had no idea about. He was at the Dao Treading realm thus could have significant effects on the entire situation. Plus, each person going towards Gu Yao was another one they would have to kill.

'No, wait... could it be someone from the Northern Tribes? It would make sense that they would not do anything to him if he was from there.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

While the old woman Ku Waowen had revealed the names of the Dao Treading realm cultivator the Northern Tribes had, there was no assurance that they would use the same name here.

'Yes, it would make sense that they were just using a fake name when they were here on the continent. There must be a reason why they came to the Iron Bull city into an obvious trap rather than going to Gu Yao directly.' Lin Mu analyzed.

Knowing that not much would come out of thinking about this needlessly, Lin Mu decided to continue the interrogation.

"And when did this Daoist Yulong come to get captured?" Lin Mu asked.

"About eight months ago. It was a surprise to us too, as before that the highest level cultivator we had captured was a Shell Genesis stage Dao Shell realm cultivator. And even then there were just two that we had captured.

The people from the Gu Legion were seemingly pleased with this and gave us a lot of resources in addition to those pills." Tie Niu replied detail.

Lin Mu made a rough timeline of events in his mind and asked more questions from Tie Niu about all that had happened in the past two years.

'May as well take this opportunity to find out more.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Tie Niu then started to speak and Lin Mu learned quite a lot of things, many of which were shocking.

Soon after he practiced the third stage of the True Gold body forging arts, the Gu Legion had intensified their efforts. Apparently Jingming Shang's efforts had come to fruition, and he had discovered several of Gu Yao's supply points.

The Long Cloud alliance quickly mounted an offense against these places which turned out to be none other than locations that were controlled by either the Zither Wind alliance's people or some smaller powers that were in the same fold.

They of course, didn't back down and it ended up in a full blown battle. While the Long Cloud alliance had a victory in this, and it was even known widely due to the nature of conflict where tens of thousands of people had died, it was also the spark that lit the fuse.

An official war between the Long Cloud alliance and the Zither wind alliance broke out. Earlier, while they were clashing, no official decree of war was given. But now, both parties had openly announced this to the world.

And once this happened, all hell broke loose. All bets were off and both parties started their propaganda with the Long Cloud alliance, exposing Zither Wind alliances' links to the northern tribes through Gu legion.

The Zither Wind alliance of course, denied this in the open since they didn't want the top three sects dropping their stance and attacking them outright. Plus, the top three sects were still reluctant in believing that the Northern Tribes could still mount an offense after so many defeats.

The Zither Wind alliance instead proclaimed the Gu Legion as an orthodox force and supported it, acting on its behalf as allies and saying to the world that they were simply ensuring justice won.

There was no limit to the lies and hypocrisy that were said that day, after all everything was fair in love and war.

The empire took a neutral stance in this as long as its interests were not damaged and commoners were not affected.

#### [Chapter 963 - Unintentional Good And Intentional Bad](#)

Lin Mu continued to listen to Tie Niu and learned more of the happenings of the empire.

The emperor continued to get sick, and now he was in a critical state. The empress was pushing for her son, the crown prince, to be made the emperor as soon as possible while the other concubines tried to put obstacles.

The biggest claim they had was the fact that the current crown prince was weak and only had a cultivation base at the peak stage of the core condensation realm.

'Oh, I remember him... back then he was the youngest person to have broken through to the Core condensation realm at twenty.' Lin Mu recalled.

Since that day, about nine years had passed and with the crown prince had reached the peak stage of the core condensation realm. This was a great increase compared to even a lot of top sect disciples.

But at the same time, Lin Mu could only imagine how many resources it would have needed for him to speed ahead of others.

'Though he is a crown prince, so has no lack of fortune.' Lin Mu thought to himself, completely forgetting how much he had consumed or how fast he had progressed.

The crown prince had recently turned thirty years old and if he became the emperor, he would be the youngest one to have become an emperor. While there had been a few emperors before him, the youngest one to become an emperor was still over one fifty years old.

The crown prince was breaking that record, and if he truly became an emperor, he would also be the one with the lowest cultivation base. Earlier, the weakest one to become an emperor was at the Child soul stage of the nascent soul realm.

The current emperor who was sick, was said to be at the Dao Shell realm, but only at the shell initiation stage. Compared to the earlier emperors, he was said to be the weakest ones, but now his son might take that stage.

Though Lin Mu still found it strange that they never managed to stop the emperor from being poisoned.

"Doesn't the imperial family have support from the rainbow pill sect? Then how is the emperor still so sick?" Lin Mu questioned Tie Niu.

"You don't know what happened?" Tie Niu questioned, feeling bewildered.

"What?" Lin Mu asked, having a bad feeling.

"The Rainbow pill sect and the Emperor had a falling out. The emperor found out that he was being poisoned and accused the rainbow pill sect of that. The empress was very upset with it all and tried to plead to the sect, but they did not accept it all.

They ended up cutting off contact. Though the empress is still said to be in contact with them." Tie Niu answered.

"Dammit... seems like the Long Cloud sect couldn't get the information to the emperor on time." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

"Or it could be that the emperor is already too deranged to understand. It would make sense if the poison wasn't just affecting his body, but his mind too. That would be a smart move to do too.

After all, if your mind is still functioning well, you can think of ways to heal, but if that is sick too then even with a good body you are nothing." Xukong chimed in.

Listening to this, Lin Mu found senior Xukong's words to be logical. Though he still wondered why the Long Cloud alliance was unable to rectify the situation. If it was between Gu Yao and the Rainbow Pill sect having an influence on the Imperial court, Lin Mu would much rather have it be the Rainbow Pill sect.

An hour passed like this as Tie Niu continued to tell Lin Mu whatever he asked about. And when he was finally finished, Lin Mu had another question.

"What about the babies? Why are there so many of them in the city?" Lin Mu questioned.

He had already understood the reason for less number of cultivators in the city, since Tie Niu and his people had sent quite a lot to be sacrificed under the guise of being recruited for many jobs.

It was a clever way to keep the masses calm and yet make use of them. And when they asked where they were after a few months or years, Tie Niu could simply make up a conflict and tell the families that they died there.

It wasn't like there was a lack of conflicts these days anyway.

"Oh, the infants... yeah that has nothing to do with me." Tie Niu answered, surprising Lin Mu.

"Huh? They why is it so that nearly every woman that can give birth has given birth in the recent time in your city?" Lin Mu asked, finding it strange.

"That... might just be due to the increased rations and lesser taxes." Tie Niu replied.

"What do you mean by that?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Well... since the number of cultivators we had on our payroll decreased by over 90% we had a lot of fortune saved up. Then there was the additional profits coming from the businesses and Lord Gu Yao.

I also knew that since a lot of families will lose their members that were cultivators, their income might reduce. This would lead them to be displeased and they may ask unpleasant questions in the future.

Thus, I just reduced the tax while increasing the rations that were sold. Also, the price of goods went down recently since we started hunting down cultivators, which included a lot of the bandits in the nearby regions.

This allowed more merchants to come here safely, with lesser losses. This then reduced their prices even more." Tie Niu explained.

Hearing this, Lin Mu was truly dumbstruck.

'This man he... he fixed the lives for commoners in a really roundabout way... a bad way but still it fixed it.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

"Plus, I still needed more people in the future so the commoners will continue to fill the ranks." Tie Niu added.

Lin Mu didn't know what to think of Tie Niu for what he had done. Overall, he really was a bad man, but he had done something good unintentional.. Though it could also be said that it was to serve his own goals in the end.

#### [Chapter 964 - Spatial Block And Tie Niu's Fate](#)

Tie Niu too stared at Lin Mu, wondering who this man was as well. So far, Tie Niu had no idea at all. The battle earlier had happened far too quickly, and even the one outside was fast.

He neither had the time to ask others about it, and neither did he have enough time to check up on any other records he may have had. To him, Lin Mu was an enigma that there was no information about.

'With the power he has shown, he has to be some well known expert... but I don't think I've ever heard of him.' Tie Niu thought. 'It is the same as that time with Daoist Yulong. Both of them being strong, yet unknown.'

Time passed and now Lin Mu had been silent for about ten minutes. Tie Niu was getting uncomfortable even though the pain had been somewhat numbed for him. Since Lin Mu hadn't actually crippled his cultivation base, his body had started the healing, and the pain had reduced.

But that didn't mean that Tie Niu was in any shape or form to resist right now or even in the coming few days. Even with the help of some strong healing pills, it would take him at least an hour to recover to his normal state.

Tie Niu did have a lot of such healing pills and had even tried to use them before, but as a massive surprise to him, the spatial storage ring that he had didn't respond to him. Or more like the communication between him and the ring had been blocked off.

He could tell that it was not cut, or he would have felt it; it was simply 'blocked'. It was like the things he stored inside were behind a glass wall. He could see them, but not get them.

And if he wanted to break that 'glass wall', he needed to be strong enough to attack it, which he had no strength to do.

Of course, Tie Niu didn't know that Lin Mu had blocked off his access to the spatial storage ring the moment Lin Mu had crippled him. It was an easy task for Lin Mu, especially when Tie Niu's spirit sense was so weak.

Lin Mu had remembered to use this move in his mind for a while now. Blocking off the enemies' access to their spatial storage treasure could cut off their only means of survival or perhaps even offense and defense.

After all, many cultivators kept their spirit tools and spirit weapons in their spatial storage treasures. And without them, a major portion of their power would be removed. This also included the spirit stones they might have used to recover themselves.

Though this tactic had a restriction too.

For Lin Mu to be able to lock down someone's spatial storage treasure, three conditions needed to be fulfilled.

First of all, the spatial storage treasure needed to be of a low enough level. So far, Lin Mu was sure that even if it was a peak grade spatial storage treasure, he would be able to block it off. And since there were rarely any spatial storage treasures of that level in Xiaofan world, Lin Mu was mostly covered for this condition.

The second condition was that the spirit sense of the cultivator that owned the spatial storage treasure needed to be weaker than that of Lin Mu. At Lin Mu's current level, this was a condition that would be fulfilled for most of the cultivators, with only the exceptional ones at the Dao Treading realm and Immortal Ascension realm his match.

Then the third and the final condition was that they needed to be within Lin Mu's range too; or more accurately, the range of his spirit sense, which was already over a hundred kilometer right now. Thus, unless the enemy was able to escape past that limit, they would still be unable to use their spatial storage tool.

Of course, these were the only three conditions that were mostly applicable that Lin Mu knew of right now. There could be other unknown situations that might arise in the future that he would have to watch out for and adjust accordingly.

Considering all those, this skill was rather useful and Lin Mu had mostly grasped it on his own with a few pointers from Senior Xukong.



With his proficiency with spatial element increasing, the number of things he could do increased as well. With this skill being one of them. Xukong had told him that this was one of the more common spatial abilities that cultivators who specialized in the spatial element used.

The name of it being rather simple: 'Spatial Block'.

This could be considered being one of the first active Spatial elemental skills Lin Mu had learned on his own and was not given by the ring.

"What happens to me now?" Tie Niu questioned, seeing that Lin Mu had not spoken even after an hour and was now just sitting on the side.

Lin Mu broke out of his thoughts and looked at the man.

"Your fate is decided, but the flow of it may change depending on what you can provide me with." Lin Mu spoke.

"What do you want? I already told you all that I know." Tie Niu replied.

"I want the location of Gu Yao... or anything related to him, his people, his plans, anything you know." Lin Mu said.

He knew that while Tie Niu had spoken a lot of things and had explained to him about the situation of empire in the past two years, the recent events were yet to be covered.

"I... I don't know the location of Gu Yao. He's never appeared in person and nor have I gone to meet him." Tie Niu said, but shivered upon seeing Lin Mu's cold face. "But I do know where some of his subordinates are! They are the ones who take the cultivators we capture!"

Hearing this, Lin Mu felt a bit pleased, but no change was seen on his face.

### [Chapter 965 - Tie Niu's End](#)

Lin Mu knew he could not let go of this information and wanted it at any cost.

"Tell me where they are." Lin Mu stated, with no option of being denied.

"T-they're... they're in a village to the west, about two hundred kilometer from here. Its called as Coal Fall village. There is an old coal mine nearby, they use that as their hideout." Tie Niu quickly spat out.

Lin Mu's mind quickly worked to remember the map and could recall seeing a village there. While he didn't know the name exactly, there was only one village that had a coal mine nearby.

Tie Niu wondered what will happen to him now. He knew that death was the most likely option and will probably come for him. But Lin Mu's earlier words had also made him a bit confused.

Lin Mu glanced at the man for a second as he waved his hand.

~shua~

Tie Niu felt a strong spatial fluctuation around him. Stronger than he had ever felt before...

"Wha—" But before he could understand what it was, his consciousness faded away.

*~thud~*

*~splatter~*

A couple of seconds later, his body fell apart in two sections. It was equally split right down from the middle of the head, with his Dantian, nascent soul and Dao Shell being cut apart as well.

"You may have done some good, but the sacrifice that you did for that deems you unworthy of life..." Lin Mu muttered and waved his hand once more, storing his corpse into the ring.

He wanted to see if more information could be gathered from the man's remains, considering how the effects of the pills were. There were still some mysteries about the pill and Lin Mu had not learned about that from Tie Niu since he himself didn't know about it.

'The elder of the Blue Ribbon sect and those at the Coal Fell town might be the only ones who'll have an idea.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

*~shua~*

His spirit sense spread in the entire area and quickly searched every nook and cranny of the residence. Finding a few spots of interest, Lin Mu blinked to them and passed through the walls and locks using Phase.

He collected all the resources and pills that were left in the vaults and safes before leaving the residence. Though he still left behind the things that the commoners will need to live in the city.

Lin Mu appeared above the residence and gazed upon the vast city. If he could compare the size of the Iron Bull city, he would say that it was just slightly smaller than the capital city of the Shuang Qian kingdom.

It was a shocking thing for a commoner to see that a non-capital city of the empire was as big as that of the capital of a kingdom. But Lin Mu didn't mind that as much. What he was worried about was the people of the city.

The barrier that was protecting the city like a dome had already faded away due to the death of Tie Niu. With him gone, there was nothing running it as the owner and the other sub-controllers were dead under Lin Mu's hands, too.

His spirit sense spread all over the city and scanned every person that was in the city.

"Hmmm... so a few of them are still hidden here, huh." Lin Wu muttered before disappearing.

*~shua~*

A few seconds later, he appeared in front of a common looking house. It was two stories tall and had a shop on the bottom.

*~Creak~*

Lin Mu pushed open the door and stepped in.

"Oh! A customer!" A man hurriedly greeted.

In front of Lin Mu was an average looking man. He wasn't even a cultivator and was barely at the fifth stage of the body tempering realm.

"Did the emergency end already? I was taking a nap and didn't realize." The man spoke while peeking out of the window and looking up at the sky.

"Yes, it has ended." Lin Mu replied as he looked around the shop.

"That's good. These days have been tough for us. Every couple of weeks there is something like this, though the mayor and his guards are good at keeping the troublemakers away." The shopkeeper said in a relieved tone.

"Mmm..." Lin Mu simply hummed in response and kept on looking around.

"Uh, so what is it that customer needs?" The shopkeeper asked. "We have a lot of things that a warrior or even a cultivator might need. We have weapons, healing salves, herbs, spirit fruits, pills, and even some spirit tools." He introduced.

It was a bit surprising to see the difference of standard between the kingdoms for Lin Mu. In the Shuang Qian kingdom, even the capital only had a few shops run by cultivators that could sell such things.

But here, even a normal shop was able to sell things related to cultivators.

The shopkeep kept on speaking about his wares, but noticed that Lin Mu's eyes were locked on to the floor for some reason.

"Umm, sir customer are my wares not up to the mark?" The Shopkeeper asked.

"I just need a different thing. I wonder if you are willing to sell it?" Lin Mu replied.

"As long as it is in this shop, I'll be willing to sell it." The shopkeeper replied.

"Then how about the entire shop." Lin Mu stated.

Hearing this, the shopkeeper was stunned and wondered if he had thought wrong.

"You want all my wares?" The shopkeeper asked doubtfully.

"No... I want the entire shop, including the building." Lin Mu clarified.

"That... I don't know how I can do that, sir. Even if I do want to do that, we still need approval from the city's administrative department. All sale of property within the city needs to be regulated by them and registered with them." The shopkeep explained, still finding it unusual.

He could see that Lin Mu was dressed in rather good clothes and was also very handsome.

'He doesn't look like a crook at least...' the shopkeeper thought.

### [Chapter 966 - A Surprise Under A Shop](#)

Seeing that the shopkeeper was still wavy, Lin Mu took out something from his ring.

*~clang~ clang ~clang~*

A circular object flew and fell on the counter, making a sonorous sound.

"That should be enough to supersede the requirement of the city administration, I believe." Lin Mu stated calmly.

The shopkeep was a bit surprised by seeing Lin Mu toss the object, but when he saw what it was he was absolutely stunned.

"L-lord mayor's token?!" The shopkeep was absolutely stunned.

Every person in the city knew what the authority of the person holding this token meant, and they were taught this very well. After all, there was more than one incident when someone had made use of the token to issue certain commands.

'If he has the token then... he works for lord mayor?' The shopkeeper understood.

He immediately bowed down and spoke, "Forgive me for not recognizing you my lord."

"You can buy my property surely, my lord." The shopkeeper added.

"Mmm... this should be enough I suppose." Lin Mu said as he placed something on the counter again.

*~DENG~ DENG~*

A golden reflection could be seen in the eyes of the shopkeeper as an entranced look appeared on his face.

"O-of course! This is more than plenty! Thank you for your generosity, my lord!" The shopkeeper said before taking a look at Lin Mu and his still expression.

"Umm... when do you want me to leave?" The shopkeeper asked.

"Right this moment." Lin Mu said, with no option of negotiating.

Seeing the firmness in Lin Mu's voice, the shopkeeper knew that there was more to this than he knew.

'Fuck that! I don't wanna put my head on the line for something I don't need to deal with.' He thought to himself.

"I'll leave right away!" The shopkeeper hurriedly replied before picking up the two gold bricks that were kept on the counter.

The man stumbled slightly from the weight and realized that it was worth even more than he had originally thought. He slid them into a leather bag and slung it across his back before moving towards the door.

Lin Mu followed behind him and the two of them came to stand outside.

"Is someone else going to come to possess this property my lord?" the man asked, feeling curious.

But Lin Mu didn't speak anything. Instead, he extended his right hand forward as the air around him shook.

Then, a word was lightly spoken...

"Meld,"

~shua~

The Shopkeeper felt a chill go down his spine and gulped his saliva. Then under his stunned gaze, the building that he used to own started to rise up into the air.

"The building... it's flying?" The shopkeeper was absolutely shocked.

He couldn't help but take another look at Lin Mu as realization struck him.

'What kind of an expert did I get to meet today?' the shopkeeper wondered.

Since he sold spirit tools and other things that cultivators used, he was informed about them and knew about the cultivation realms up to the nascent soul realm. While he didn't know of Dao Shell realm, he did know that there were some realms above the Nascent soul realm.

It was something way beyond them, thus he never thought much about it, but he did wonder about it from time to time. And now today he was finally getting to see the power of one of them.

He had seen the power of Nascent soul realm experts on more than one occasion since the fights happened nearly every week outside the city and above it, but such power and skill wasn't shown by any other cultivator, which only made him wonder how strong Lin Mu truly was.

But this was not the end of his shock, as what he saw after the building was lifted up was even more shocking to him.

"WHAT IN THE HOLY NAME OF HEAVENS IS THAT?!" the shopkeeper shouted before falling to the ground, utterly terrified.

"Seems like their method of controlling has gotten better..." Lin Mu muttered as he starred at the mutated being that was revealed.

Below the building, there was a wide open underground area. It was clearly man made and there were chiseled stone tiles on the walls as well as the floors. But that was not all as there were fine runes carved everywhere.

But that was not all, as there were more things in the underground room.

At the very center of it was what looked like a black stone pool. It was filled with red and Grey liquid that seemed to be stirring. The pool was about five meters wide and had six pillars around it.

Each pillar had runes carved onto it as well and chains extended from them. These chains were attached to a certain creature that was slumbering in the pool. It looked humanoid, but had gnarly skin with warts and postures.

There were bone spurs protruding from its back, head, and arms. There might have been more of them on the legs and lower part of his body, but Lin Mu could not see them under the liquid.

The creature seemed to be asleep, but a malevolent aura was stirring around it. Lin Mu could feel a strange kind of contaminated energy exuding from it that he had felt only in one place before.

'He even made use of the Kushao ruins...' Lin Mu realized.

It was an energy similar to that of the crystal that Lin Mu had destroyed at the Kushao ruins, along with the beasts that had appeared from there.

Lin Mu's spirit Qi, extended and probed the mutated creature. But when he did that, it suddenly opened its eyes. They were pitch black, with no pupils in them.

*~hiss~*

A breath was let out from its nose that seemed to be rather pointed.

It raised its head and looked towards Lin Mu, who was descending towards him.

"Cultivator... Food... Kill... Master... need..." The mutated being said in a hoarse tone.

Lin Mu could tell that the being in front of him was not weak.

"Already at the Dao Shell realm? What has Gu Yao made now?"

#### [Chapter 967 - A Humanoid Mutant](#)

Lin Mu gazed at the being in front of him and knew that it was not natural in any way.

"There are even the traces of an invader in it?" Lin Mu sensed.

His instincts were telling him to end this being as soon as possible, and that was exactly what he was going to do.

*~CLANG~*

The humanoid mutant flexed his hands and the chains were stretched taught.

"GRAAAA!" The humanoid mutant shouted.

His cry was heard across the entire Iron bull city, shocking most of the commoners that were there. But those that were cultivators felt something more. They could sense the cultivation base of the being in its cry.

A few of them directly fainted while some of them coughed out blood.

Lin Mu's spirit sense captured everything and he knew that this was not good.

'Gu Yao has certainly reached a different level in manufacturing such beings...' Lin Mu thought to himself as he used blink and appeared at the back of the mutant humanoid.

Clasping both his fists, Lin Mu raised them high before bringing them down like a hammer.

*~DENG~*

*~SPLAT~*

The head of the humanoid mutant burst apart like a watermelon and its contents splashed over Lin Mu and his surroundings. Thankfully, there was the Mortal Strengthening scripture's armor which prevented the disgusting fluids from touching his clothes and skin.

*~Clink~*

The chains were rattled once more, as the body fell forward.

*~SPLASH~*

Then with a splash it laid flat in the red and Grey fluid that was in the pool. A serious expression appeared on Lin Mu's face as he saw something even more shocking.

*~HISS~*

The red and Grey fluid started to move on its own and started to pour into the neck of the humanoid mutant. Under the surprised look of Lin Mu, the injury of the humanoid mutant which was life-ending, started to heal!

The flesh started to regrow and the bones started to mend. First, the veins extended before the bone rose from its spine. More flesh started to bud and grow from the base before the skull started to form as well.

Lin Mu continued to watch, feeling that this was important and saw the head being reformed in about five minutes.

"This... this is beyond normal..." Lin Mu muttered.

"Such vitality is truly abnormal for a being of this cultivation base... the things that compose this humanoid mutant are not normal. It seems like Gu Yao has used the impure Yin Qi and the invaders remnant to form this being..." Xukong said.

Once the head was fully formed, its eyes opened up and it looked at Lin Mu again. This time, though, it didn't have the slight hint of intelligence that it used to before. This time, it looked completely feral.

"GFRAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!"

The humanoid mutant let out a head shaking roar and terrified the commoners even more. The shopkeeper who had seen it first, was now completely unconscious and was just some distance from his former property.

Lin Mu had felt the presence of something unusual in the city and had come here. His spirit sense could only tell that it was some kind of a human, but couldn't fully perceive it due to the strange energy muddling it.

But now that he had seen it, Lin Mu knew for sure that this was an experiment that was unknown by most.

"Tie Niu probably was never informed of this... why is this thing kept here, then?" Lin Mu couldn't help but question.

*~CLANG~*

The humanoid mutant pulled on the chains which restrained it again and this time they got weaker.

*~KACHA~*

The chains's finally snapped under the strength of the being and the runes surrounding them glowed.

~SHUA~

A formation array suddenly materialized as the spirit Qi in the area started to churn.

~WHOOSH~

A vortex formed above the large hole and spirit Qi started to pour downwards into the humanoid mutant.

"A spirit Qi gathering array?" Lin Mu recognized and was surprised.

~Shua~

Lin Mu disappeared in that moment and reappeared above the humanoid mutant's head. His legs were pulled up high, ready to kick the creature below. Spirit Qi gathered in his legs, amplifying his great strength even more.

Lin Mu then stopped controlling the weight of his body, and let it fall down while kicking as well.

~BOOM~

The sudden force generated from it was enough to compress the air and rip it apart, creating a sonic boom. The liquid below was directly blown away before the humanoid mutant was even touched.

Even then, the air pressure was enough to break part of its tough skin and create tears in it. Lin Mu's leg shone with a golden sheen that was masked by the brown armor of the mortal strengthening scripture.

The clash of the two skill colors made it look rather strange, but it did little to hide the true power *that was contained within it*.

~CRASH~

Finally, Lin Mu's heel touched the humanoid beast's head, shattering it into fragments of bone and flesh before continuing downwards to its neck. It didn't stop at all and shattered the collarbones, the spine and the ribs along with the sternum, all the while tearing all the organs in its body to mush.

~SPLATTER~

~BOOM~

Lin Mu's leg went all the way through the body of the humanoid mutant fully breaking it apart and finally struck the empty pool below. There it broke the stone floor and directly created an oblong crater that was five meters deep.

~SHUA~

The runes were also working at the same time, forming into a reinforcing formation. But even then, they could barely reduce the damage that was done to the hall.

~kacha~



And in the end, the formations broke apart from the force as well, letting the remaining power dissipate in the surrounding area.

The walls crumbled like they were made of chalk while the nearby houses and buildings developed cracks.

"AHH!!!"

"MY HOUSE!!! ITS BREAKING!!!"

Many commoners ran out for the fear of their lives, even though they had heard some terrifying cries outside.

### [Chapter 968 - A Swift End](#)

Once the commoners were out, they couldn't help but notice the large hole near their houses.

"What the hell? When did that appear?"

"And what was that cry?"

"Forget that. Why did our houses crack?"

There were many questions they had, and they didn't know if they were ever going to get any answers.

"Do you think we should check what's there?"

"Are you crazy? There's still some weird sounds coming from there."

"Hang on! That's old Lu's shop!"

"Fuck, that's Old Lu lying there too!"

A few people went to the unconscious shopkeeper that was lying nearby. They check to see if he was alive first and finding him breathing, they took breaths of relief.

"What the hell is going on today in our city?"

"I know, right? First, the barrier and fight happens, and now this..."

Many were lost and didn't know what to do. They could only wait for the guards to appear, which they still hadn't.

"Why are the guards not out yet? They usually come with one of the elders, right?" someone wondered.

His question made everyone's curiosity peak, and they looked around, to not find any guard.

While the commoners were talking amongst themselves nervously, Lin Mu was checking to see what had happened to the humanoid mutant.

'The attack certainly should have killed him and yet... I can sense some vitality.' Lin Mu thought as he spread his spirit sense around.

The body of the humanoid mutant was broken apart into several fragments and pieces of flesh. Lin Mu looked around and found that the pieces that had landed in a puddle of the red and Grey liquid were still wiggling slightly.

Some of the larger ones were even absorbing the liquid and growing.

"It really is very resilient." Lin Mu muttered.

*~shua~*

A flame ignited in Lin Mu's hand before he threw out several fireballs.

*~poof~*

The intense heat of the fire burned all that it touched and the pieces of the humanoid mutant were burned. One by one, more of the fragments were reduced to ashes until one final one was left.

Lin Mu didn't burn this thought. Instead, he picked it up and scooped up some of the red and Grey fluid into the box. Having put both inside it, he closed it and chanted a few words. His finger then moved on the box, drawing several runes on it.

About a minute later, he was done and the box shone with the glow of runes.

"That should keep it sealed." Lin Mu muttered.

"That's a good choice. As much as we have to eliminate the invader, we do need to know what Gu Yao has come up with." Xukong chimed in.

"Yes, I hope that the others can figure out some things." Lin Mu replied before storing it in the ring.

The seal was actually not to keep the fragment of the humanoid mutant contained, but rather to protect it from the environment of the ring. There was a great choice: it would die before they could test it, thus Lin Mu chose to seal it first.

There were many ideas that came to Lin Mu's mind, the worst of which making him think that this was just a failed experiment.

'If Gu Yao made something like this, there would be some benefit to him rather than just having an extra servant.' Lin Mu reckoned.

Done with his work here, Lin Mu floated up and appeared in the vision of all the commoners.

"Look! Who's that?" The commoners spotted Lin Mu.

Lin Mu saw the confusion, fear and anxiety in their eyes, understanding their thoughts. He took out a token from his ring and flashed it to the commoners.

"GUARDS!" Lin Mu called out.

The token shone with a faint light and just in a minute, several guards came rushing to the area. They were clearly shocked and scared and were not that dissimilar to the commoners.

At least in the case of the guards, there were several cultivators.

"Who among you has the highest rank?" Lin Mu questioned in an authoritative tone.

From the guards came forward a man. He was wearing a different helmet than others and had a cultivation base at the early stage of the core condensation realm. Lin Mu understood that he might be a captain or something.

He gazed at the guard, making him shiver.

'Who is he? He can fly... and the pressure from him... plus the command token of the mayor...' the guard had several questions, but he didn't dare ask.

He could tell that Lin Mu was way stronger than him, not just him, but the commoners knew that very well too.

Though he was also confused about why no other official under mayor Tie Niu had appeared. Usually they should have been the ones to give them commands, but now there was not one of them here despite the fact that something big had happened.

Lin Mu's spirit sense probed the guard, checking him to see if he was one of Gu Yao's or if he had some influence on him, too. Even though Tie Niu had told him about all that he knew, it was obvious that Gu Yao and his people had kept more secrets from

The humanoid mutant was the best example of this. So Lin Mu wanted to be sure of it.

'Hmm... he's clean. And the others are too...' Lin Mu confirmed.

"You are to maintain peace in the city for the time being. Someone else will come over to take over in a while. Till then just keep things running." Lin Mu ordered.

The guard captain had several questions, but seeing the look on Lin Mu's face made him not ask.

"A-as you command, lord!" The guard captain said while quickly kneeling on one knee.

"AS YOU COMMAND!" the other guards joined in as well, kneeling on one knee.

The commoners bowed their heads in respect as well, knowing it was for the best.. Them offending someone powerful just because they didn't know them would never end well.

#### [Chapter 969 - Reaching The Coal Fell Town](#)

Having dealt with the situation at the Iron Bull city, Lin Mu headed to the Fell Coal Village immediately. As much as he wanted to help them a bit more in calming the chaos, he knew that he didn't have the time for it.

'I'll have to let the alliance handle them later. Thankfully, Tie Niu told me about the token and its uses.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Lin Mu had taken the command tokens from Tie Niu's ring. There were several of them with a different level of authority. The one that was the highest one gave one the same authority as that of Tie Niu and would be considered the mayor.

Other than Tie Niu, no one could hold it unless the current mayor was dead. And since Lin Mu was holding it back then, the guards all considered him on the same level as Tie Niu.

As for the one that he had shown the shopkeeper: Old Lu, that was a rank below the highest one. It was the highest ranked token that could be given to others, and only a couple of Tie Niu's trusted people had that.

And both of those people were killed by Lin Mu's hand, giving him those as well. He had gotten a sufficient amount of fortune from the people he killed today here and it would seem that they were getting a lot of resources from Gu Yao, considering their position.

Though Lin Mu was only that much anxious about it.

'If Gu Yao can continue to provide these many resources, then there must be a source. Did their crippling their supply lines not work?' Lin Mu wondered.

He continued to fly according to the location he had gotten and reached the Coal Fell village soon.

"So this is Coal Fell Village..." Lin Mu gazed upon the village from far up, not finding anything unique about it.

His spirit sense swept the village and checked for anything suspicious.

"Nothing here... the people are all commoners, with just a couple of warriors reaching the sixth stage of the Body tempering realm." Lin Mu confirmed.

Having checked this, Lin Mu went to look for the location that was more important, the old coal mine.

Lin Mu found the coal mine about twenty kilometers away, tucked away in a barren patch of land. This coal mine was directly on the ground, with no hill or mountain attached to it.

From what Lin Mu could see, it went down in a spiral pattern, and any coal that was dug from it was brought up on these spiral paths. Though there was also a pulley tripod in the middle of the hole which was broken for a long time.

The coal mine had been depleted for the most part, and the empire had stopped mining here. Now only the nearby villagers mined there for coal that they needed for their daily use. Which also made it the perfect place for someone to hide.

Till a few years ago, there were bandits that would make this place their hideout, but the empire would regularly wipe them out. But now, it seemed like Gu Yao had done his magic and no one checked there.

'Though it might also be the stronger cultivators... those bandits would never hold a candle to these experts.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

Lin Mu's spirit sense scanned the coal mine and felt the formation array that was protecting it.

"Two illusory formations, one to mask and one to misguide, one defensive formation array and one... self-destructing formation?" Lin Mu identified.

Seeing the presence of the self destructing formation made Lin Mu a bit cautious. Not because he was afraid of getting harmed, but because it meant that whatever was hidden in the mine was worthy of being destroyed rather than being revealed.

His spirit sense couldn't go into the mine either due to the defenses of the formation array, but Lin Mu quickly got to fixing that.

"Let's see... shouldn't be that hard." Lin Mu muttered as he gazed upon the invisible formations.

His spirit sense touched them and revealed the hidden runes. Lin Mu closed his eyes and chanted the calming heart sutra, increasing his concentration to the peak as his fingers started to move.

The touched, they tapped, they dragged, and they tore...

Fifteen minutes later, a faint flicker wave spread across the formation array and a hole two meters wide appeared in front of Lin Mu.

"Perfect." Lin Mu said before he descended down the hole.

He didn't set foot on the ground, sensing the alarming formations that were laid there. He kept on floating in the air as he continued onwards. He wanted to catch the Gu legions people unaware and also learn what was actually being done here.

His spirit sense split apart into tens of tendrils and went into all the tunnels of the mine. In just a few seconds, Lin Mu grasped the layout of the mine as well as learning where everyone was.

"Huh? The people here... they're not that strong." Lin Mu muttered with furrowed brows.

While there were over a hundred Gu legion members here, there were only three that were even at the Nascent soul realm, and even from them, two were at the Infant Soul stage and one at the Child soul stage of the Nascent soul realm.

To current Lin Mu, they were no different from dry grass that could be ripped and burned as desired. His spirit sense kept exploring and discovered a couple of areas that were blocked off for it.

"That must be what they are keeping hidden here. If there are specific isolating formations here for them, then they should be rather important." Lin Mu reckoned.

*~shua~*

He then waved his hands and summoned thirty three spirit weapons. They were nothing special and weren't ones that Lin Mu usually used. It wasn't like Lin Mu needed great power here anyway. What he needed was swift and concise action.

"Go!" Lin Mu said before the spirit weapons were sent forth to slaughter.

[Chapter 970 - Spilling Blood And Answers](#)

*~kacha~*

*~poosh~*

*~Slick~*

*~Shing~*

A mix of low noises were heard echoing through the tunnels as a silent slaughter was initiated. The victims didn't even get a chance to let out a cry before their lives were ended. Lin Mu would never give them time to speak their last words, for he didn't think they were worthy of that mercy.

"Now to check on the ones that can actually speak..." Lin Mu said as he flew toward one of the tunnels.

He weaved through the many tunnels that crisscrossed and forked, before finally reaching a wide open cave.

*~Cough~*

*~cough~*

"W-who..."

In this cave laid three men. Two of them had their throats slit and only one was somewhat alive. But even then, his life was hanging by a thread and he would die any time now.

The way the man was lying on the ground, he couldn't see Lin Mu, but he could very well feel the wind blowing. This was strange since there shouldn't be any wind in the tunnels deep down.

Finally, Lin Mu came to stand in front of the half-dead man.

"Do you want to live?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Y... y-yes..." The man barely spoke as blood continued to gurgle from his throat.

He couldn't understand how all this had happened. It was very quick, and he didn't even realize that he was attacked. And by the time he did, it was too late and he was already lying on the ground.

His tendons had been severed in all of his limbs, leaving him like a worm... wriggling on the ground. If not for the fact that the spirit weapon that slit the throats of his companions didn't go deeper, he would have already had his head lopped off.

Even then, he didn't lose hope and tried to use his healing pills. But it was then that despair settled in for him... he couldn't even feel the presence of his spatial storage treasure.

Besides, his hands couldn't move very well now either way.

Lin Mu had used Spatial block the moment he had spread his spirit sense inside the mines.

Gazing at the bleeding man as if he were a bug, Lin Mu picked him up by his hair before shoving a healing pill inside his mouth.

*~shua~*

The effect of a high grade healing pill was very quick and in just five seconds, the bleeding stopped. Lin Mu held him mid air for a few seconds until his injuries were sufficiently healed.

Then when the man tried to stimulate his cultivation base, he felt intense pain again.

*~SPLAT~*

"Not so fast..." Lin Mu said as he pulled back his hand from the man's abdomen.

*~drip~ drip~*

More blood spilled from the man's abdomen as he felt his dantian breaking apart.

"W-why...?" the man didn't even have energy to scream and could only utter a few words.

"You are not worthy of an answer. You will only speak when spoken to, and only answer when questioned." Lin Mu stated in a firm voice.

His tone was cold and felt like daggers in the ears of the Man.

*~shua~*

"ARGHHHH!" The man cried out in pain as a hot flame scorched his flesh, stopping the bleeding abdomen.

"That should make you hold out for a bit." Lin Mu said before he dropped the man on the ground.

*~THUD~*

Dust was knocked up as the man weakly gazed at Lin Mu, fear flowing through his eyes.

"Now then... where was I?" Lin Mu said before taking a look at the blue sphere of runes in one of the corners of the cave.

It seemed to be hiding something inside it and it couldn't be seen from the outside.

"The first question I have is... what is the Gu legion doing here?" Lin Mu asked.

The man didn't speak and seemed to be lost at first, but then he felt pain again.

*~KACHA~*

"AHHHHHH!!!!" the man screamed in pain as his foot was shattered.

Lin Mu made sure not to break skin and flesh so that the blood would not leak out. This way the man would stay alive longer.

'Besides, he's a Nascent soul realm cultivator, he should have enough vitality to hold on. Those elders of the Long Cloud sect were in a much worse state and yet they were battling at full force...' Lin Mu thought to himself, as the coldness in his eyes increased.

"You avoid a question or say something wrong, you'll feel pain. You answer right and I'll give you a healing pill... understand?" Lin Mu stated.

"Y-yes..." The man said while stammering.

"Good... now answer my previous question if you don't want more of your bones shattered." Lin Mu said.

Hearing this, the man felt a burst of fearful energy and quickly started speaking.

"We were here doing our duties as assigned by lord Gu Yao. We are to gather the sacrifices from nearby regions to be prepared for refinement." The man said hurriedly spoke.

"Sacrifices? What exactly are these and what do you mean by refinement?" Lin Mu questioned.

"We refine the sacrifices, which are the human cultivators, into the Rebirth blood. This is all done by lord Gu Yao's refinement arrays." The man answered while coughing a few times.

Lin Mu's spirit sense could tell that something had changed in the man. His vitality had suddenly dipped before rising back up. But it seemed like the man was unaware of it.

Keeping this in mind, Lin Mu continued asking the man questions.

"And what is the use of this... Rebirth blood?" Lin Mu asked.

"The Rebirth blood is used to make the Reborn... Only Lord Gu Yao knows how to make those though. They need a Rebirth Seed in addition to the Rebirth blood to be made. Though there aren't many that survive that.

Though even the waste and failed products have uses." The man said, giving Lin Mu a bad feeling.

"What happens to the ones that failed?" Lin Mu questioned.

"They get recycled into cultivation base boosting pills.." The man said, infuriating Lin Mu.