

Immortality 1201

Chapter 1201: Junior Brother (3)

Elder Master Xun deliberately sighed, "There's no deeper meaning, it's just that I'm getting old and inevitably lack energy. Lately, I've been delving into the Heavenly Secret, and my Divine Sense has been depleted, leaving me feeling somewhat weary."

"There are too many classes on Formation, no time to cover everything, so I might as well combine them into one big class and teach it all at once."

Upon hearing this, the Taixu Sect Master felt somewhat distressed.

Elder Master Xun has truly devoted his life to Taixu Gate, sparing no effort.

The Taixu Sect Master softly said, "Why not let the Elders and Instructors within our sect handle the teaching of Tao? Elder, your status is revered, there's no need for you to personally teach and lower yourself..."

"No!"

Elder Master Xun said sternly:

"Teaching and educating are the foundation of our Taixu Gate, whether it's Foundation Establishment or Feather Transformation, Instructor or Elder, regardless of the depth of Cultivation or the height of the position, everyone should focus primarily on teaching and take pride in educating. That is the duty of the Sect!"

"Even though I am old now, under no circumstances can this principle be compromised!"

Upon hearing this, the Taixu Sect Master felt a deep respect, immediately stood up, and bowed ceremoniously, saying:

"Junior, respectfully adhering to the Elder's teachings."

Elder Master Xun stroked his beard, nodding in satisfaction.

After the matter was settled, Elder Master Xun left. But his words still echoed in the ears of the Taixu Sect Master.

The Taixu Sect Master pondered for a long time, his emotions complex, sighing to himself:

"In today's Cultivation World, whether it's families or Sects, there are fewer and fewer people like Elder Master Xun with an open heart and a spirit of integrity..."

The Taixu Sect Master sighed, took a sip of tea, and suddenly paused, thought carefully, and then felt something strange.

This big class on Formation, why start it now and not earlier or later?

Although it's for the purpose of teaching and educating, he always felt that Elder Master Xun might have a bit of personal motive.

But, Elder Master Xun being upright and possessing a clear conscience, what personal motive could he have?

The Taixu Sect Master shook his head after thinking about it.

It must be his own overthinking.

Elder Master Xun, being highly respected, wouldn't deceive him.

...

After discussing with the Taixu Sect Master, the regulations for the Formation class were thus changed.

The next Formation class would start with a big class.

The location of the course was set in the largest Tao Teaching Room in the Tao Teaching Pavilion.

Elder Master Xun stood on the stage, and below him sat densely packed disciples, all from the same cohort as Mo Hua, numbering over a thousand.

Elder Master Xun swept his gaze over the audience, speaking succinctly:

"From now on, the teaching of Formation will be conducted uniformly, with me leading and Instructors assisting, and also..."

Elder Master Xun looked down, pointed with his hand, and said:

"Mo Hua."

Mo Hua was taken aback.

Elder Master Xun continued: "...you will be the 'Junior Brother' for the Formation class! On regular days, when I'm not here, and Instructors aren't here, you're in charge."

Mo Hua was caught off guard, a bit dazed.

Then he realized, at the same time, a thousand gazes, like arrows shot simultaneously, were all directed at him.

These gazes, some familiar, some unfamiliar, some shocked, some puzzled, some admiring, some skeptical, and many somewhat hostile.

They were all the true prodigies of the Taixu Gate, even though they were in the same cohort, many were not familiar with Mo Hua.

With a "Junior Brother" suddenly appointed, how could they, with their proud temperaments, endure it.

Mo Hua felt his scalp tingle under those gazes, his whole body uncomfortable.

Elder Master Xun ignored it and said to Mo Hua:

"Mo Hua, come up here."

In front of everyone, Mo Hua felt immense pressure, but still braced himself and stepped onto the stage, standing next to Elder Master Xun.

Elder Master Xun, with his white hair, gently patted Mo Hua's shoulders and nodded slightly before pointing at Mo Hua and addressing the disciples below:

"From now on, he will be your 'Junior Brother'."

Before Mo Hua could speak, a disciple below could no longer restrain himself, stood up, and although still respectful, asked with a hint of anger:

"May I ask, Elder Master, is this an 'inside decision'?"

Elder Master Xun nodded and said openly:

"Yes."

The disciple was taken aback.

Seeing Elder Master Xun so frank, he didn't know what to say anymore.

Another disciple stood up and said, "Elder Master, you are being 'partial', I cannot accept this!"

Elder Master Xun glanced at him lightly and said, "And then?"

"I..." The disciple hesitated and then with some pride said, "My great-grandfather is the Chief Elder of the Taixu Gate. I will report everything to him, informing him that you act unjustly, are partial and corrupt, misuse your authority, and disregard the rules..."

Elder Master Xun's expression subtly changed, and he nodded slightly:

"Fine, go back and tell him, and have your Chief Elder great-grandfather come see me tomorrow. We need to have a chat about what 'rules' are..."

The disciple faltered, then his mind started to doubt.

This Elder Master Xun, why isn't he afraid at all...

Is he truly fearless, or is it a pretense, or is his seniority so extensive that even the great-grandfather dares not act against him?

It's a pity, the great-grandfather never mentioned this Elder Master Xun before.

He also doesn't know exactly what status Elder Master Xun holds within the Sect.

But he isn't foolish, from the tone of Elder Master Xun, it's obvious he doesn't put his great-grandfather in his eyes, what if his real status is extremely high...

The disciple felt somewhat trembling inside.

I won't... cause trouble for my great-grandfather, will I...

My great-grandfather won't punish me, will he...

The disciple lost his confidence and sat down obediently.

The other disciples also started to notice something amiss.

This usually meticulous Elder Master Xun, who only focused on teaching, might hold a far more esteemed status than they had thought.

Everyone dared not speak anymore.

Elder Master Xun looked solemn, but internally, he sighed silently.

If it were a normal day, he would have taken his time and carefully handled it.

But now with the Heavenly secret being obscure, the situation is special, and a quick decision is necessary.

Even if he has to forcefully promote, he must elevate Mo Hua to be the Junior Brother of the Taixu Gate.

This matter concerns the fate of the Taixu Gate.

There is no time to delay, and no room for doubt!

Such a major issue related to the Heavenly secret, any hesitation, and the consequences will reverse.

Therefore, once even a trace of the Heavenly secret is glimpsed, even if it means making a unilateral decision, there can be no hesitation!

Elder Master Xun surveyed the disciples sitting below.

The group of disciples had various expressions; though silent, they were clearly not 'convinced'.

Whether they are 'convinced' or not doesn't matter, but at least they must first be 'verbally compliant'!

Elder Master Xun then said in a commanding tone:

"This matter is settled thus, you all first call him 'Junior Brother'."

They were clearly reluctant, but under the pressure from Elder Master Xun, they had no choice but to comply.

Thus, all of this generation's Heavenly Pride of the Taixu Gate, except for a small number of disciples familiar with Mo Hua, most unwillingly and in a subdued voice, called out to the slightly younger Mo Hua:

"Junior Brother."

Chapter 1202: Grounded

Thus, in name, Mo Hua became the "Junior Brother" to all Taixu Sect Disciples of this session.

The disciples felt a mixture of emotions, each displaying different expressions.

Mo Hua, who always kept a low profile, also felt like he was being grilled over a fire, feeling a bit uneasy and somewhat confused.

At that moment, he really began to doubt.

Could it be that his father, or perhaps his mother, was a lost relative of Elder Master Xun?

Was he one of the countless generations of descendants of Elder Master Xun?

Otherwise, why would Elder Master Xun treat him so well?

Mo Hua was somewhat baffled.

After class, Elder Master Xun added, "Mo Hua, stay behind."

A thousand pairs of eyes, like a barrage of arrows, all turned towards Mo Hua simultaneously.

Mo Hua sighed.

The disciples gradually left, leaving only Elder Master Xun and Mo Hua in the vast Tao Teaching Room.

Mo Hua whispered, "Elder Master, me being 'Junior Brother', is it really good..."

Elder Master Xun's expression turned stern, "What's wrong with that? In the way of the Dao, order does not matter, the capable are revered. The position of 'Junior Brother' is occupied by those who are worthy. With your Formation skills, this title of 'Junior Brother' is undoubtedly deserved..."

"Besides, I didn't ask them to call you 'Big Senior Brother', just 'Junior Brother', what's the problem..."

Foundation Establishment Early Stage Cultivation, Seventeen Patterns Foundation Establishment Late Stage Divine Sense, able to study High-level Second Grade Formation, this kind of unbelievable talent, being a Formation Junior Brother is more than sufficient.

Elder Master Xun thought silently to himself.

Mo Hua murmured, "But..."

Elder Master Xun seemed to see Mo Hua's concerns and said:

"Only the mediocre are free from envy. Keeping a low profile is good, but you must show your capabilities when necessary and strive for the positions you deserve."

"If you have the ability, why should you let those less capable than you suppress you?"

After some contemplation, Mo Hua slowly nodded his head.

Seeing that Mo Hua had understood, Elder Master Xun reassured him:

"Rest assured, although your other talents are lacking, in the realm of Formations, you are unparalleled!"

"Remember, you are a disciple of Taixu, one of the Qianxue Eight Great Gates. From now on, you are also the entire session's 'Junior Brother'..."

Elder Master Xun emphasized the words "Junior Brother" heavily, reinforcing this identity for Mo Hua.

"...Being modest and amicable is good, but you should also possess a broad and unparalleled demeanor, the stature of a 'Junior Brother'!"

Elder Master Xun emphasized "Junior Brother" once again.

Mo Hua indeed puffed out his chest and lifted his head, brimming with confidence.

"There's another matter..." Elder Master Xun looked at Mo Hua and suddenly added, "I know about the Fire Buddha matter."

Mo Hua was taken aback.

In a flash of lightning, he finally understood why Elder Master Xun was so angry before, and appeared as if he wanted to trouble him.

Mo Hua felt slightly guilty.

Elder Master Xun glanced at Mo Hua, sighed, and spoke in a soft tone:

"Hating evil as if it's personal and defending the Dao are commendable, but after all, you are still young and there's no need to rush into such dangerous matters."

"The priority now is to improve your Cultivation and learn Formations."

"The higher your Cultivation, the more exquisite your Formations, the stronger your abilities, the more you can accomplish in the future."

"The Kunpeng accumulates energy and waits for destiny, only then to soar into the skies, carry the heavens on its back, and break through the nine heavens."

"Changing the structure of the world, reversing the fate of life, and not merely killing a few Sin Cultivators and Demon Cultivators..."

Mo Hua's eyes vibrated, deep in thought.

Seeing that Mo Hua had clearly taken his words to heart, Elder Master Xun nodded slightly and continued:

"So, from now on, you focus on Cultivation, study Formations, and you are not allowed to leave the Qianxue State Boundary."

Mo Hua was immediately stunned, his mouth agape.

Elder Master Xun firmly stated without room for doubt:

"Your Cultivation is still too low... at least until you reach the Foundation Building Middle Stage."

"Your Formation skills are good, but not enough; you need to learn more and practice more, the more the better, and the more solid the better."

"Don't run around outside for no reason, it's easy to get distracted."

And it's also very dangerous...

Elder Master Xun's gaze slightly hardened.

"But..." Mo Hua weakly said, "I need to earn Merit Points..."

Elder Master Xun's gaze turned cold, "I've checked at the Merit Pavilion, most of your Merit Points up to now have been earned from Drawing Formations."

"You draw Formations quickly; even going outside to complete rewards won't earn you more Merit Points than just drawing a few more Formations..."

Mo Hua's expression became stagnant.

His secrets have been completely uncovered.

Seeing that Mo Hua was hesitant, Elder Master Xun thought not only of imposing a "house arrest" but also of offering some benefits to prevent the youngster from feeling resentful. He made an exception:

"Here's the deal, you stay at the Sect and focus on studying Formations and Formation Diagrams... I'll give them to you and you won't need to spend Merit Points to buy them anymore."

Mo Hua was somewhat incredulous, "High-level Second Grade Formation Diagrams?"

Elder Master Xun nodded, "Yes."

Mo Hua was utterly shocked.

To not spend Merit Points and yet be able to study Formations!

A huge pie just fell from the sky!

Mo Hua, fearing Elder Master Xun might change his mind, immediately agreed wholeheartedly:

"Yes, yes, I'll stay at the Sect to study Formations, I'm not going anywhere else!"

Seeing Mo Hua's earnest little face and his straightforward agreement, Elder Master Xun finally felt reassured and nodded slightly.

Thereafter, Mo Hua was officially "grounded" by Elder Master Xun.

His range of activities was limited only within the Qianxue State Boundary.

Focusing on the Taixu Gate, at most he could venture as far as Qingzhou City at the edge of the Qianxue State Boundary.

Going out for rewards was utterly impossible.

Mo Hua could only practice Formations every day, and the rest of the time, he devoted himself to Cultivation.

Through this period of cultivation, he could feel his Cultivation slowly improving.

Chapter 1203: House Arrest (2)

The bottleneck in advancing to the Middle Stage of Foundation Establishment is now within reach.

Elder Master Xun did not go back on his word either, having provided Mo Hua with ten Second Grade Formation Paintings with Seventeen Patterns related to the Five Elements Eight Trigrams Array Formation in one go.

Calculated in terms of merit points, it is nearly four to five thousand.

Mo Hua was over the moon and felt even more grateful towards Elder Master Xun.

With such a rare opportunity, Mo Hua studied even more diligently.

Whenever Elder Master Xun was free, he would call Mo Hua over to instruct him on some Formation principles of the Five Elements and Eight Trigrams, and to check on his proficiency in Formation practice.

With complete focus, Mo Hua not only learned quickly but also practiced very solidly.

Elder Master Xun did not say much, but he was frequently amazed inwardly.

Young in age, high in comprehension, extremely talented, and very hardworking.

Plus, every Formation, despite having only been studied for a day and practiced a few times, seemed as if it had been practiced ten more days after one night. His writing was as smooth as flowing clouds and streaming water, and his Formation Patterns were profound and thoroughly mastered.

He grasped concepts extremely fast, while his foundation was also exceptionally solid.

If he continues to study for a few decades or even a hundred years, when Mo Hua fully matures, and his cultivation increases, how profound will his Formation skills become...

Elder Master Xun hardly dared to imagine.

This is a disciple of Taixu Gate...

Elder Master Xun's heart, having experienced the vicissitudes of hundreds of years and was normally as calm as a still well, now surged with emotion and brimmed with high hopes.

To Elder Master Xun's eyes, Mo Hua, who painstakingly studied Formation, shone like an incomparable treasure from head to toe, even his pores glittered brightly.

Mo Hua himself had no other thoughts but to single-mindedly focus on learning Formation.

Every day was filled with cultivation, attending classes, and outside of class, it was learning Formation Diagrams and practicing Formation.

Once finished, he would go ask Elder Master Xun for more Formation Diagrams.

Although it was monotonous, Mo Hua was content with continuously having new Formations to learn.

Unable to leave the Qianxue State Boundary and unable to undertake rewards.

In the placid Sect life, the only thing that was not dull was the cohort of disciples who intentionally caused trouble because they were dissatisfied with him being the "Junior Brother."

Usually, Mo Hua couldn't be bothered with them.

Like suddenly blocking the way, trying to provoke him with words to compete in this and that, where if he lost, he could no longer be the Junior Brother - those kinds of situations.

It was truly childish.

Mo Hua didn't spare them a glance.

His time was precious, and he needed to devote his limited time into the limitless process of grasping Formations.

Besides, regardless of win or lose, he was still the Junior Brother; there was no need to compete with them, a waste of effort and thankless.

This is what Elder Master Xun said, being the Junior Brother requires displaying a demeanor and broad-mindedness that "overlooks all mountains."

Mo Hua silently agreed in his heart.

And as for Mo Hua, impassive to all sorts of provocation, the words entered his left ear and exited his right without affecting him in the least.

These disciples were helpless then.

They did not dare to speak too harshly to Mo Hua. This was considered insulting a fellow Sect member, and penalties would apply.

Nor did they dare to physically attack Mo Hua within the Sect.

It was strictly prohibited within the Sect for disciples to fiercely compete and privately battle each other.

Should they dare to make a move, Mo Hua would report them on the spot.

With Elder Master Xun administering justice, those disciples, every single one of them, would be in hot water.

The only other method was to make things difficult during the Formation class.

When Elder Master Xun was present, they did not dare to cause trouble for Mo Hua.

Nor would they dare when instructors were present.

Only when both Elder Master Xun and the instructors were absent and Mo Hua was helping with teaching or explaining some Primary Rank Second Grade Formations did they dare to show their faces and pick at him.

But these disciples forgot what Elder Master Xun had already declared:

When he was not present, or the instructor was not present, the entire Tao Teaching Room was under Mo Hua's control.

Any troublemaker, Mo Hua would "privately retaliate," treating them differently on the spot, assigning them double the formation coursework.

If double wasn't enough, then triple.

If they couldn't complete the coursework, their Formation assessment would naturally receive a poor evaluation, which would affect their annual evaluations and further impact their status within their families.

The disciples were shocked.

Such behavior of Mo Hua, clearly an abuse of power, wielding power like a wild assertion, this was truly preposterous!

You are just a "Junior Brother," not an instructor, and certainly not an Elder, where did such authority come from?!

Thus, some disciples reported this matter to Elder Master Xun.

What shocked them even more was that Elder Master Xun actually condoned Mo Hua's actions.

Using power for personal reasons, Mo Hua dares to do it, and critically, Elder Master Xun actually shields him.

This is simply unthinkable.

Not to mention that Mo Hua is supposedly from Loose Cultivator origins, even if he really were a direct grandson of some great ancestor, he probably wouldn't have received such treatment.

With Elder Master Xun backing him, everyone else could only reluctantly accept it.

And Mo Hua was indeed a bit petty.

Anyone who showed themselves, provoked, or challenged him, although he didn't regard them highly, he also silently noted them down in his little notebook.

Mo Hua also found that whoever troubled him were the ones who were poor in learning Formation.

Those disciples who were proficient in Formation, whenever Mo Hua casually mentioned some Formation principles, they would have an understanding and realize Mo Hua's extraordinary Formation skills, not daring to act rashly.

Instead, it was those who were poor in their studies, the more ignorant they were, the more belligerent they became.

Because they were poor in studies, they could not recognize the gap and were blind to their own Formation prowess.

Feeling that everyone was of similar age, and Mo Hua even younger than them, and no matter how high Mo Hua's skill in Formation could be, they didn't consider Mo Hua highly.

As the proverb goes, "a gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a Formation learned without understanding its principles."

Upkeeping his role as the Junior Brother, Mo Hua secretly took care, being a bit stricter, made their assigned coursework harder and slightly more extensive.

Chapter 1204: Grounded (3)

They found themselves utterly baffled by the studies and even more confounded when attempting to draw formations.

After being tormented by this for a while, they gradually got the hang of things.

The path of Formation is profound and complex.

Even though students may look similar on the surface in their study of Formation, their level of knowledge could be as different as heaven and earth, with an immense disparity.

And some, let alone catching up, can't even perceive this "disparity".

For this reason, these disciples became much more humble.

At the same time, they came to understand another principle.

This "Junior Brother" surnamed Mo and named Hua, might appear gentle, weak, and pure on the outside and easily bullied.

But in truth, he's a covert schemer.

He traps others without lifting a finger himself.

Once he takes a disliking to someone, they are certain to suffer.

They learned their lesson and eventually calmed down.

The atmosphere between Mo Hua and this group of "Junior Brothers" and "Junior Sisters" also became much more harmonious, and barely anyone dared to "find fault" with him, be it during or after classes.

Everyone maintained a "live and let live" balance with each other.

Although they did not truly regard Mo Hua as a "Junior Brother" in their hearts, at least they showed politeness on the surface and the attitude was still acceptable.

This was just fine for Mo Hua, and he was quite satisfied.

On normal days, he was also busy studying High-level Second Grade Formation and didn't have much time or desire to entertain these "Junior Brothers" and "Junior Sisters".

...

In this manner, the standard of Mo Hua's Formation knowledge progressed rapidly and quietly.

And Mo Hua did not forget the lesson from his master "to apply what one has learned".

During his breaks, Mo Hua would make a trip to Qingzhou City to pay respects to Aunt Wan and if possible, see Master Gu again to discuss matters of Formation media.

If Master Gu was available, he would also return to the Gu family in Solitary Mountain City from Qingzhou City.

Whenever Mo Hua had questions about Formation media, Master Gu would patiently explain everything without reserve and fulfill any requests that Mo Hua had.

However, Formation media is a craft after all, focusing on practical use.

Currently confined to the Sect, Mo Hua hardly needed to use Formation, so many of his ideas were only theoretical and impossible to implement.

Nevertheless, having chatted a lot with Master Gu, Mo Hua gained much, but it also led to a certain doubt forming in his mind.

"Master Gu, from a certain perspective, since Formation media is crafted using Artifact Refining techniques and essentially can be seen as a 'Spiritual Artifact', and since Spiritual Artifacts require additional formations, aren't they essentially 'Formation media' as well?"

"So to say, Formation media is a Spiritual Artifact, and a Spiritual Artifact is Formation media?"

"The young master is indeed quick-witted and detailed in thought..." Master Gu began with the customary praise, slightly contrived for Mo Hua, before continuing:

"Formation media or Spiritual Artifacts, they are but standards customized by Cultivators for the development of Tao Cultivation..."

Upon hearing this, Mo Hua had an epiphany, "Essentially, both are using 'objects' as a medium to draw formations? It's just that people have made distinctions for convenience?"

Master Gu was taken aback for a moment, and now sincerely said:

"The young master is indeed extraordinarily intelligent."

He further explained, "Formation media and Spiritual Artifacts are very similar, but if you delve into the details, there are many intricacies, with the main point being related to the Tao Cultivation industry."

"Industry?" asked Mo Hua.

"Yes." Master Gu nodded, "The usual Spiritual Artifacts in the Cultivation World are 'Standard Spiritual Weapons'. These Spiritual Artifacts have a fixed set of Refining Materials, dimensions, processes, and compatible formations, all with their own standards."

"This is to increase the efficiency of Artifact Refining, expand the industry scale, and increase the output of Spiritual Artifacts."

"Formation serves the Spiritual Artifact, and the function of the Formation is led by the Spiritual Artifact."

"Formation media is different, as it serves the Formation. Various different Formations can be drawn on the Formation media, thus the function of the Formation media is directed by the Formation."

Mo Hua suddenly saw the light and asked:

"Then, is there any Spiritual Artifact that specifically serves the Formation?"

"Yes!" Master Gu nodded and said, "Although Formation media are versatile, they can't perfectly fit all Formations and can't fully utilize the functions of the Formations."

"In this case, it is necessary to use specific materials, dimensions, forms, and processes to perfectly match the Formation."

"Such Spiritual Artifacts are generally 'customized spiritual tools'."

"The most representative are Spirit Swords."

"Spirit Sword?" Mo Hua's eyes lit up, pondering.

Master Gu nodded: "Putting aside low-end standard Spirit Swords, the real top-grade Spirit Swords, and even some personal Magical Treasure Spirit Swords, their refining methods are top-secret and passed down generation to generation."

"The material and form of the Spirit Sword must completely match the inherent 'Sword Array' to fully exhibit the power of the sword."

Sword Array!

Mo Hua's heart skipped a beat and asked:

"Master Gu, have you ever seen a Sword Array?"

Master Gu gave a wry smile, "A Sword Array is an extremely special Formation, and it is the core heritage of swordsmanship families. As an Artifact Refiner, where would I have the qualifications to see it..."

Mo Hua sighed, somewhat disappointed.

Master Gu continued: "Apart from Sword Weapons, other customized spiritual tools also need to match with high-end Formations."

Mo Hua realized a problem:

"Speaking of customized spiritual tools, if they were to be mass-produced, wouldn't they simply become 'standard' Spiritual Weapons?"

Master Gu seemed surprised and nodded:

"Correct, but as customized spiritual tools generally can't be mass-produced, that's why they are called 'customized spiritual tools', to differentiate them from 'standard Spiritual Weapons'."

Mo Hua frowned, "Because of the issues with the Tao Cultivation industry?"

"Yes." Master Gu nodded and started to explain to Mo Hua:

"Standard Spiritual Weapons that are mass-produced must be versatile in function, made with common materials, and be inexpensive. The Formations on them must also be simple and applicable."

"Spiritual Artifacts have to be versatile to sell well; common materials mean less restriction on sourcing; cheap materials mean lower cost; simple Formations mean any Formation Master can draw them, or even without experience, one can learn it in half a month and handle it with ease."

"This way, they are suitable for mass production."

"However, customized spiritual tools are different; they are expensive to manufacture, have special forms, and have special functions. The Formations on them are also too complex for an ordinary Formation Master, making them almost impossible to mass produce."

"Especially the Formations," Master Gu shook his head and sighed:

"Think about it, if the Formation on the customized spiritual tool can only be drawn by a handful of Formation Masters, or even just one or two, how can it be mass-produced?"

"A Formation Master can't draw many Formations in one day."

"And if this Formation Master stops drawing, finding another one to replace them is as difficult as reaching the sky."

"So although generally speaking, once customized spiritual tools are mass-produced, they would become standard Spiritual Weapons."

"But from a practical Cultivation industry perspective, customized spiritual tools have many unsolvable problems due to cost, form, and especially the Formations, making them utterly unfeasible for mass production..."

Master Gu said somewhat emotionally.

"Oh..."

Mo Hua gave a noncommittal nod.

Chapter 1205: Bottleneck

After returning to the Sect, Mo Hua pondered over Master Gu's words once more.

Without delving into the intricate divisions of the Tao Cultivation industry, in a certain sense, Formation media is a Spiritual Artifact, and a Spiritual Artifact is also Formation media.

As his own Cultivation advanced and his Divine Sense grew stronger, his understanding of Formations deepened, and the technique of Drawing Ground into Formation using "earth" as the medium became increasingly skillful.

The reliance on common "Formation media" wasn't that great.

Spiritual Artifacts are such that if you have them, you use them; if not, it doesn't really matter.

Mo Hua was not particularly dependent on them either.

However, if one wishes to broadly expand the use of Formations, or to bring out the utmost function of Formations, one has to consider the compatibility between Formations and external "media."

The scope of this is quite broad.

It encompasses common Formation media, includes Standard Spiritual Weapons, and naturally, most importantly, customized spiritual tools.

Mo Hua recalled the small fishing village.

The Fish Cultivators of the small fishing village lived in hardship, eking out a difficult existence, using crudely crafted boats, nets, and harpoons, to say nothing of Formations.

Although the Cultivation World has proliferated for over twenty thousand years, and the skills of Artifact Refining and Formations are both very mature.

Yet, of these cultivational skills, less than one or two in ten could truly be employed by these grassroots Cultivators.

The Cultivation World has developed, but the inheritance has been monopolized.

The skills have been updated, but only to be used for exploitation.

Not only in the small fishing village, but this is also the general situation in Tongxian City, South Yue City, and the conditions of the lower class in various Immortal Cities that Mo Hua saw during his itinerant travels.

Mo Hua's expression was complex, touched by deep feelings.

Cultivators perceive the Heavenly Dao to benefit all living beings.

Formations are a manifestation of the Heavenly Dao.

Coming from humble origins and having gained so much opportunity along the way, comprehending so many Formations, naturally, I should also uphold the will of the Heavenly Dao, using my learned knowledge to benefit all living creatures of the world.

This is the "Dao" that I've currently grasped.

It is the Dao of Cultivation, as well as the Dao of Formations.

Mo Hua looked up at the sky.

The sky is vast, encompassing all things, breeding life, infinite and ceaseless in its pursuit of self-improvement.

In the midst of obscurity, Mo Hua feels that this too should be the Dao of "Longevity."

But this is just a faint enlightenment I have, whether it is truly so still requires my own active verification.

One must personally practice the Great Dao.

This too is what Master has taught me.

To comprehend the Dao without practicing it is the same as not comprehending it at all.

Only by personally practicing the "Dao" that one has comprehended can one know whether one's "Dao" is correct or not.

If it's right, persist; if it's wrong, correct it.

By proceeding step by step in this manner, continuously gaining insight and putting it into practice, can one ultimately aspire to the true Longevity Road.

Mo Hua's gaze was clear, his Taoist Heart suddenly became enlightened.

Whenever he had some free time, he began to consider in his heart the issue of compatibility between Formations and Formation media.

Thinking about how to broadly apply Formations to Standard Spiritual Weapons, and how to maximize the power of Formations through customized spiritual tools...

Mo Hua made many drafts of Formation Diagrams, but unfortunately, he can't leave the Qianxue State Boundary for now and needs to concentrate on learning Formations.

Therefore, these drafts of Formation Diagrams can only stay at the conceptual level, without a chance to try them out in practice.

Mo Hua felt a bit regretful.

And as time gradually passed, a few more months quickly went by.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense had not grown in the slightest.

This was because the Heavenly Dao Laws loomed in his Sea of Consciousness, continuously "taxing," keeping his Divine Sense Realm below the Eighteen Patterns, preventing his Divine Thought from growing limitlessly and breaching some kind of threshold.

Mo Hua felt somewhat helpless.

When he had the time, he also studied this crevice of Law within the Sea of Consciousness, but it was so profound, unseen and unheard of by Mo Hua, that he couldn't unravel anything in a short time and could only let it be for the time being.

There's a long time ahead, and rushing to exploit the Heavenly Dao's loopholes isn't urgent.

While Divine Sense was stuck, his Cultivation had clearly progressed.

Mo Hua could distinctly feel that his Spiritual Power was gradually becoming saturated, reaching a bottleneck period of an intermediate Realm.

A few days later, one morning while Mo Hua was meditating and cultivating, his Qi Sea suddenly trembled, and an extraordinary phenomenon abruptly occurred.

Just like the initial time, with the Qi Sea saturated, Spiritual Power suddenly transformed into threads like quicksilver, overflowed through the meridians, traveled along the collateral channels, and gathered towards the Bahui Meridian at the top of his head.

When passing through the Heavenly Gate Point, the threads of Spiritual Power stitched through, permeating into the Sea of Consciousness of Mo Hua, and eventually, within the Sea of Consciousness, a Spirit Screen was woven.

This time, the Spirit Screen was more condensed than during the Qi-refining Realm.

In the Qi-refining Realm, the Spirit Screen was like a mist; this time, it was like a curtain of water.

Within the Spirit Screen, Formation Patterns circulated.

These Patterns were all Second Grade, with a faint luminosity, intricate and complex, forming an extensive Mystery Formation.

Mo Hua was very familiar with this process.

It is the ordinary process of reaching the Mystery Formation bottleneck produced by Heaven Yan Jue.

However, Mo Hua noticed that this time the Spiritual Power in his Sea of Consciousness displayed a faint silvery-white color, just like real mercury.

This was an indication of a Quality Change in Divine Thought.

Mo Hua recalled Lord Yellow Mountain saying that the color of Divine Marrow signifying Divine Rank begins with silver.

Mo Hua breathed a sigh of relief and felt somewhat fortunate.

I guessed correctly; at the Foundation Establishment Realm, to break through the bottleneck of Heaven Yan Jue not only requires the Realm of Divine Sense as the foundation, the mastery of Formations as the means but also the level of Divine Thought as qualification.

The Mystery Formation before me, completely formed by silvery Divine Marrow-like Telekinesis, is resplendent like pouring silver, dazzling in its brilliance and mysteriously profound within.

Without a sufficient Divine Rank, one has no qualifications to unravel the Mystery Formation.

If one's mastery in Formations is not high, the Mystery Formation cannot be unlocked.

Without an adequate Divine Sense Realm, one might not even have the power to face this bottleneck.

All these requirements are somewhat bizarre and extraordinary.

Chapter 1206: Bottleneck (2)

Mo Hua couldn't help but sigh:

"What kind of Cultivation Technique did I learn, after all..."

The requirements of this technique are too harsh, and don't seem meant for humans.

But it seems impossible that it's meant for "divine beings" either.

Deities are created from the Dao and know it instinctively. Mo Hua has never heard of deities needing to learn cultivation techniques.

Then for whom is this technique intended...?

Mo Hua frowned.

Demon? Demon?

No matter how he thought about it, Mo Hua found it unlikely, so he simply gave up.

"Well, since I'm already aboard this pirate ship, it's impossible to change course now. I can only practice with my eyes closed."

Mo Hua had long been prepared for breaking through bottlenecks.

Solving formations was second nature to him.

He had also met the conditions for Divine Rank.

He just needed some time, proceed step by step, solve the Mystery Formations one by one, and the bottleneck would naturally break.

However, Mo Hua was somewhat surprised that the color of the Mystery Formation was silver...

Silver is the color of Divine Marrow, symbolizing Divine Rank.

Mo Hua has devoured a vast amount of Divine Marrow. A large portion of his Divine Thought has fused into his pale golden blood, with specks of pure gold.

Compared to silver, it's far ahead.

The Divine Rank requirement for the Heaven Yan Jue's bottleneck seems absurd, but for the current Mo Hua, it seems a bit low.

Mo Hua felt slightly disappointed.

Mere silver...

If he had known this, he wouldn't have had to make so much effort exploring dry wells, entering fishing villages, venturing into the River God Temple, and killing the River God, or "consuming" the Evil God.

All that worry was for nothing.

His precautions were a bit too ahead of need.

But this is just the beginning of the transformation of his Divine Thought. It seems normal to use the power of silver as a threshold.

The next stages are likely not to be so simple.

"Next..."

Mo Hua mused for a moment, his heart chilled.

The next bottlenecks, the Divine Rank requirement might not just be pale gold, pure gold, but even more advanced jade-color and glazed glass, right?

What level of Divine Essence would that be?

Where could he find such high-quality Divine Essence to consume?

And even more importantly, could he defeat those formidable deities?

Mo Hua's scalp tingled.

"It seems I still need to consume more Divine Marrow. If I can't find good ones, just eat more of the ordinary ones, accumulate little by little, otherwise, the future bottlenecks will really become troublesome..."

Mo Hua sighed internally.

However, for now, the bottleneck at the Foundation Building Middle Stage is not difficult.

With some time, solving the Sea of Consciousness Mystery Formations, once he breaks through the bottleneck, his cultivation will successfully advance to the Foundation Building Middle Stage.

In the Foundation Building Middle Stage, he could keep up with the pace of his Sect mates and wouldn't have to repeat a grade.

Otherwise, if his cultivation couldn't keep up, he'd have to repeat a grade. If that happens, he would forever become a junior, just when he had only been a Junior Brother for a little more than a year.

Thankfully, his cultivation is keeping up for now...

Mo Hua slowly exhaled a breath of relief.

Afterward, Mo Hua continued his cultivation steadily, breaking through bottlenecks little by little, with his progress well under control.

Soon, the New Year was approaching.

Mo Hua's second year at the Taixu Gate was also coming to an end.

After the annual year-end assessment, Taixu Gate would close for the New Year vacation.

Mo Hua's results were stable as last year, one Grade A and six Grade Cs in Formation, consistently performing stable.

In other courses like Alchemy, or Artifact Refining, apart from Grade C, he couldn't attain any other grades.

This report card held no surprises and naturally no anticipations.

Mo Hua had anticipated this, his heart as calm as still water. .c

During the vacation, most disciples go back home for the New Year.

Mo Hua, however, stayed at the Taixu Gate.

Li State was far away, surrounded by mountains and rivers, covered by clouds and mist, he couldn't go back even if he wanted to; he could only stay at the Sect, read Formation Books every day, learn Formations, and break through bottlenecks.

Though lonely, it was fulfilling.

Still, he gave himself two days off.

On the 28th, just before the New Year, the Gu Family had a family feast.

Aunt Wan invited him to come over, to relax, see some lanterns, and have some good food.

Mo Hua hesitated a bit.

Attending the Gu Family's feast, he wasn't sure if it was appropriate.

But Yu Er, standing beside him, tugged at his sleeve, her eyes watery, expectantly looking at him.

Mo Hua's heart softened, and he agreed.

Soon it was the 28th, and Mo Hua prepared to leave the Sect and head to the Gu Family, so he went to bid farewell to Elder Master Xun.

Elder Master Xun, hearing that Mo Hua was going to attend a family feast at the Gu's surprised him a little.

He knew Mo Hua had relations with the Gu Family, but he hadn't expected that the relationship was so deep that he was even going to their New Year's feast.

Gu Family, Wenren Family, Shangguan Family...

Elder Master Xun thought for a moment, then looked up at Mo Hua, who was empty-handed, and asked:

"You're going to the feast just like this?"

Mo Hua scratched his head.

It wasn't that he didn't want to bring a gift.

The point was, he had nothing appropriate to offer.

The Gu Family, Wenren Family, all came from Great Families with deep roots and vast wealth, mountains of Spirit Stones, lacking nothing.

His modest family wealth didn't have anything noteworthy to offer.

Previously, he did gift Aunt Wan a golden lotus-colored tri-colored carp, but that was a fluke, hard to come by and expensive.

Moreover, in the end, half of that tri-colored carp ended up in his own stomach, the other half was eaten by Yu Er; Aunt Wan had only a sip of the soup...

Elder Master Xun nodded slightly, "Wait here."

After saying that, he stood up, took out some paper and pen, and personally wrote down a few words, handing them to Mo Hua.

"Take this with you as a gift."

Mo Hua was stunned, pleasantly surprised.

Over these days, he had understood that Elder Master Xun, though seemingly just an "Instructor", possessed a perception, breadth of mind, stature, and an indignant authority that were no ordinary Cultivator's.

It seemed to be just a few simple words, but they must be incredibly valuable.

Chapter 1207: Bottleneck (3)

"Elder Master..."

Mo Hua felt somewhat embarrassed to accept it.

"No worries," Elder Master Xun's expression was reassuring, even accompanied by a gentle smile, as he looked at Mo Hua and hinted, "Speaking of which, Taixu Gate truly owes them a huge favor."

A huge favor...

Mo Hua nodded.

So that was the reason... There was such a connection involved.

It is said that the two great families of Shangguan Wenren, along with Taia Chongxu and Taixu Gate, had some old ties. It was quite normal for them to have some exchanges of favors.

It was just unknown what kind of matter could make Taixu Gate owe a favor...

Mo Hua was very curious in his heart.

But such exchanges of favors at the level of sects and great families were not something he could investigate.

Mo Hua respectfully accepted the calligraphy and said with a smile:

"Thank you, Elder Master!"

Elder Master Xun stroked his beard, nodding with satisfaction.

Afterward, Mo Hua took a ride, left Taixu Gate, and went to the Gu Family.

The Gu Family house was adorned with lights and colors, festive but not ostentatious, lively and celebratory.

Gu Changhuai was still busy with the affairs of the Taoist Court and seemed only able to return in the evening.

With the year-end approaching, Wenren Wan was also occupied with many matters, and Mo Hua did not get to see her.

Instead, it was Yu Er who, upon seeing Mo Hua, cheered joyfully and threw himself into Mo Hua's embrace.

Wenren Wei then said:

"Miss Wan is held up by some matters and will only be free during the evening banquet. Young Master Mo, why not take Master Yu Er around for a stroll? Qingzhou City is quite lively during the festive season."

Yu Er looked at Mo Hua cheerfully.

Mo Hua also smiled and nodded.

With New Year's just a few days away, Qingzhou City was indeed bustling with festive spirit.

Always occupied with formation painting, Mo Hua, who hadn't had a break for a long time, also felt playful.

He took Yu Er and strolled through the bustling Qingzhou City for the entire day.

Along the way, there were streams of carriages and horses, people flowed like water, market towns were compact and closely stacked, and red lanterns hung from the street heads to the corners.

Occasionally, there were eye-catching fireworks, a myriad of toys, and snacks with various flavors.

As Mo Hua browsed, seeing the lively scenes all around, his mood momentarily dipped.

Amid the noisy crowd, he was reminded of his days in Tongxian City.

He thought of his parents, his little friends, the irrepressible Uncle Zhang.

And of his caring master, the mysterious Grandpa Gui, his silly Junior Brother, and his beautiful Junior Sister...

Cultivation is long and arduous, as life's fortunes rise and fall.

He didn't know when he could see everyone again.

Mo Hua couldn't help but sigh, and amidst a forlorn expression, suddenly found a string of candied hawthorns in front of him.

Turning his head, Mo Hua saw Yu Er, one small hand clutching a long string of candied hawthorns, nibbling on them, and with his other small hand, he presented another string of crystal-clear, sweet-and-sour candied hawthorns in front of Mo Hua, offering it like treasuring it, and said in a milky voice:

"Brother Mo, candied hawthorns!"

Yu Er had taken two strings, ate one himself, and shared one with Mo Hua.

Mo Hua laughed, patted Yu Er's little head, and then took the candied hawthorns, took a bite, indeed both sour and sweet, very delicious.

After eating the candied hawthorns, Mo Hua's mood inexplicably improved a lot.

"Let's go, I'll take you out to play."

Mo Hua then held Yu Er's small hand, strolling along the streets for the entire day.

Not until night fell, the lamps lit up, and the family banquet was about to start did Mo Hua lead Yu Er back to the Gu Family.

The journey was crowded, delaying us slightly.

Upon arrival at the Gu Family, Mo Hua suddenly realized something was amiss in the atmosphere.

What was filled with laughter and joy during the day had become much more solemn by night. The cultivators coming and going were also much more restrained, daring not to speak loudly.

Mo Hua found it strange, and upon spotting Gu An passing by, his eyes lit up and he hurriedly waved, "Little Brother An."

Gu An was startled, but upon seeing Mo Hua, he came over and greeted him.

Mo Hua asked in a low voice, "Has something happened?"

"Not exactly," Gu An glanced around and also lowered his voice, "A visitor from the Shangguan Family has arrived."

"The Shangguan Family?" Mo Hua was stunned, looked down at the confused Yu Er, and asked Gu An puzzledly, "So what if the Shangguan Family has arrived? Aren't the relations between the Gu Family and the Shangguan Family quite good..."

Why is the atmosphere so tense.

Gu An shook his head, "I'm not sure either, but the person from the Shangguan Family this time seems to be of high status and must not be offended, so the Family Head has requested the family disciples to be cautious in their speech and conduct."

"Oh." Mo Hua nodded.

But it seemed like it had nothing to do with him.

He was just there for a meal.

Besides, being just a little Foundation Establishment cultivator, the Shangguan Family might not even take him into consideration.

Soon, the family banquet began.

Most of the attendees were from the Gu Family, whether they were Elders, Supervisors, Enforcement Leaders, or just ordinary disciples.

Mo Hua often visited the Gu Family, and most of them were quite familiar to him.

Some Elders, like Aunt Gu Hong, Elder Gu, would chat with Mo Hua as they found him adorable and courteous.

Other Elders also mostly knew Mo Hua.

Ordinary disciples, many of them were quite familiar with Mo Hua as well.

Most of them held positions at the Taoist Court, and some had even "fought side by side" with Mo Hua.

Along the way, many people greeted him, whether by saying hello, exchanging pleasantries, or having a casual chat.

Mo Hua felt as though he had come back to his own home...

Gu Changhuai, who had just finished his official duties and hurried back home, sat beside and watched with a complex expression.

Even he almost forgot that this child, Mo Hua, bears the surname "Mo" and not "Gu"...

From a distance, Wenren Wan smiled and waved at Mo Hua.

Mo Hua, along with Yu Er, walked over to Wenren Wan.

Yu Er then threw herself into Wenren Wan's embrace, affectionately calling out, "Mom."

Wenren Wan's face was full of smiles as she pinched Yu Er's cheek, then turned her head and warmly said to Mo Hua:

"You sit here later, there's good food."

"Mhm, mhm!"

Mo Hua nodded repeatedly.

Wenren Wan looked at Mo Hua's face again and softly said: f

"You seem thinner than before, probably due to rigorous cultivation. Later, I'll ask them to stew some soup to nourish you."

Mo Hua smiled and said, "Thank you, Aunt Wan."

Wenren Wan smiled gently, pulled Mo Hua to sit down, and offered him some fresh Spirit Melons and Spirit Fruits.

Mo Hua comfortably sat down, took a bite of the melon, and looked up at the high platform not far away, where two people were seated.

One was the Master of the Gu Family.

Mo Hua had seen him but had never spoken to him.

The other, radiant in appearance, full of dignity, still strikingly handsome despite his age and slightly graying temples, was seated with a subtle sign of wrinkles at the corner of his eyes.

Mo Hua guessed that this person was Yu Er's grandfather.

That is, the current head of the Shangguan Family, Shang Che.

Chapter 1208: Banquet

While Mo Hua was surreptitiously assessing Shang Che, Shang Che didn't spare Mo Hua a single glance.

This was the Gu Family's family banquet, with many disciples and quite a few children present.

Shang Che, holding a high position and significant power, naturally would not inquire about each and every one.

He was whispering something to the Gu Family Master by his side.

The Gu Family Master, named Gu Shouyan, looked somewhat older, with thick eyebrows and sharp eyes, and his expression was very strong and stubborn.

He once served as the Court Leader of the Taoist Court within the Qianxue State Boundary, possessing great power and formidable prestige.

Shang Che and Gu Shouyan, the two Family Masters, wore solemn expressions, and it was unclear what they were discussing.

Because a Sound Isolation Formation was employed, Mo Hua could not hear them.

Not only around the high platform where the two Family Masters were seated but even at the banquet table where he was, there were at least Third Grade Sound Isolation Formations set up.

These formations separated the Gu Family's direct lineage, Elders, and Honored Guests from the ordinary disciples outside.

Mo Hua couldn't hear the noise outside.

The outside disciples couldn't hear what these Elders were discussing either.

Enjoying the company of clan members while also not disturbing each other.

Mo Hua surveyed the other attendees and noticed that in addition to Gu Family cultivators, there were also many unfamiliar faces.

These cultivators, one and all with haughty faces and privileged bearings, also had extraordinary cultivation levels.

They were likely the "Honored Guests" of the Gu Family, and most were probably Elders of the Shangguan Family.

They were seated according to their status and cultivation levels, organized in an orderly manner.

Mo Hua scanned the seating arrangement from top to bottom, muttering to himself.

The greater the family, the more customs mattered; what seemed to be a common family feast had many intricacies in seating arrangements, not allowing for the slightest negligence.

With the family Patriarch absent, the highest seats naturally belonged to the two Family Masters.

Below them were the Powerful Elders with deep cultivation.

Next were the core disciples of the direct lineage, or in other words, the candidates for the next Family Master.

Afterward, based on bloodline, status, cultivation, and so forth, seats were arranged sequentially, probably also considering the relationships among the guests.

Those with good relations would be seated together to ensure both hosts and guests enjoyed the banquet to the fullest.

Those with feuds were seated apart to prevent trouble from arising.

Mo Hua spotted Shangguan Yi.

Shangguan Yi was seated in an upstream position, close to the Family Masters, because he was from the direct lineage of the Shangguan Family and also a candidate for the next Family Master.

On the Gu Family side, Elder Gu Hong who often shared sweets with Mo Hua also occupied an upper seat.

As a direct lineage Elder, she had a high status, venerable experience, and her cultivation level was also quite remarkable.

Mo Hua glanced down further and saw Gu Changhuai.

Uncle Gu sat in a middle upstream position.

Although he was from the direct lineage, his parents had passed away early, and he had no support within the clan. Even though his talents were good, his character was too aloof, thus his seat was only slightly above average.

However, this was still quite good.

There were many not as fortunate as him.

For example, Mo Hua himself.

Mo Hua looked down and realized his own seat was in a middle downstream position.

This was quite normal.

After all, he was here to scrounge a meal.

Being a Loose Cultivator with no power, no backing, and a substandard Spiritual Root, he had not a sliver of kinship with the Gu Family, and couldn't connect even if he tried.

To have a seat at such a family banquet was already good fortune; one could not be choosy.

But...

Mo Hua turned his head to glance at Yu Er and Aunt Wan beside him, his brows slightly furrowed.

His attendance at the family banquet was, on one hand, due to his decent relationship with the Gu Family, but most importantly, it was probably because of Aunt Wan and Yu Er's influence.

But why, in such an important family banquet, were Aunt Wan and Yu Er's seats only slightly above average in quality?

Something was amiss here.

Aunt Wan was from the Wenren Family's direct lineage and was the wife of Uncle Shangguan Yi, married through a proper and honored match.

And Yu Er was the direct descendant and grandson of the Shangguan Family Master.

In such a family banquet, their seating so far to the rear was quite curious...

Mo Hua turned his head to look around again.

Yu Er, being young, knew nothing of the clan's status distinctions and the banquet's seating specifics, merely holding his chopsticks with excitement, eagerly waiting for the feast to begin.

Aunt Wan probably understood the situation, but her eyes were filled only with her child.

As long as Yu Er could be safe and happy by her side, she did not mind the rankings and seatings of the family.

Mo Hua frowned in thought, when suddenly his Divine Sense stirred, detecting several gazes.

"Is someone watching me?"

Mo Hua looked back discreetly and realised it was not so.

These gazes were all directed towards Aunt Wan and Yu Er beside him.

One of those gazes belonged to Shangguan Yi.

Shangguan Yi, despite sitting at an upper seat, was obviously somewhat preoccupied, intermittently glancing downward, gazing at his beloved wife and son, his eyes filled with longing and a touch of melancholy.

For a grown man, he looked somewhat pitiful...

Mo Hua shook his head.

Another was Uncle Gu.

His gaze towards Aunt Wan and Yu Er was mostly one of concern.

Of course, he also noticed Mo Hua, sitting beside Yu Er.

Mo Hua winked at him.

Gu Changhuai snorted lightly and turned away, raising his wine cup to drink on his own.

These two gazes were well-intentioned.

The rest of the gazes came from the group of Elders from the Shangguan Family.

Their gazes, though not malicious, were certainly lacking in warmth; they were cold, indifferent, filled with scrutiny and criticism, accompanied by hushed whispers.

Mo Hua sighed softly.

There is no feast without end.

The machinations and scheming within a family clan really were too troublesome.

But soon, the family banquet began, and Mo Hua cast these thoughts aside.

Delicacies upon delicacies were brought to the table.

Flying fowls and Spirit Beasts, exotic fruits and fine dishes.

Fish, shrimp, pork, and jiaolong, chicken, goose, luan birds.

Alluring in color, aroma, and flavor, they whetted one's appetite.

Although the Gu Family was not of Fifth Grade, it was still a prestigious Great Family, and the family's annual banquet, though not overly extravagant, was definitely bountiful.

Chapter 1209: Banquet (2)

Especially for Mo Hua, who came from a Loose Cultivator background.

The world is vast, but eating is paramount.

Since it was a banquet, he thought it best to enjoy the meal in peace.

Sons of noble families paid attention to etiquette, conversing while exchanging pleasantries with feigned sincerity.

Mo Hua and Yu Er, however, focused solely on the feast, eating heartily.

But as they ate, Mo Hua suddenly sensed another gaze aimed towards them.

It was quite harsh and filled with discontent.

When Mo Hua looked, he noticed in the seat of honor a female Elder, dressed in green, her face heavily made up, gazing malevolently at Aunt Wan, lost in thought about something.

Mo Hua continued chewing on his chicken leg, silently keeping an eye on her.

The family banquet continued. The dishes were delicious and the clinking of cups could be heard; outwardly, everything appeared harmonious, but there was an underlying sense of estrangement.

Finally, after an unknown length of time, as Mo Hua drank fruit wine, he felt an aversion arise, followed by the female Elder asking the person next to her:

"I've heard that Miss Wan of the Wenren family is also here at the Gu Family. Forgive my poor eyesight, but who might she be?"

Her voice was perfectly moderated, neither too loud to appear rude, nor too soft, ensuring everyone could hear.

It was clearly a question asked with ulterior motives.

Wenren Wan set Yu Er down, rose gracefully, and greeted the female Elder with courtesy.

The green-dressed female Elder feigned surprise, remained seated, and pretended to speak warmly:

"I come from a great family in Qian State, the legitimate daughter of the Shen Family, married to the Shangguan Family not long ago. I have often heard of Miss Wan, but have never met her, so curiosity got the better of me. I hope you won't mind my rudeness."

Wenren Wan nodded slightly.

The female Elder then reined in her smile slightly and put on airs, "By lineage, I should be your aunt."

Wenren Wan was already slightly displeased but managed to restrain herself and respectfully said:

"Aunt."

"Hmm." The female Elder agreed with a smile, then sighed, "Don't blame your aunt. You've seldom been home, making it hard for us to meet, thus breeding unfamiliarity."

"But speaking of which..." The female Elder gave Wenren Wan a slight glance and bluntly said, "Mr. Yi, after all, is the next Family Head, and you, the Family Head's wife. Staying at the Gu Family all the time, what does that signify? Could it be... you hold the Shangguan Family in disregard?"

Wenren Wan's face turned slightly pale.

The atmosphere in the room cooled a bit.

Just as Wenren Wan was about to speak, Shangguan Yi stood up, speaking warmly:

"Wan'er stays at the Gu Family to take care of Yu Er."

"Yu Er has been frail since childhood. To strengthen his body and nurture his root, he was sent to Taixu Gate for cultivation at a very young age."

"Mother and Son are connected, and worried about Yu Er's dedication to cultivation, Wan'er remained here, both to care for and supervise him."

"Moreover, near the Qian Learning State Boundary, the Shangguan Family, Gu Family, and Wenren Family all have many Tao Cultivation industries, which Wan'er manages..."

The female Elder saw the couple's affection and gave Wenren Wan a critical once-over, maliciously smiling and saying:

"With such a gentle appearance and inner wisdom, you indeed are a great beauty. No wonder Mr. Yi is so devoted, speaking for you wherever possible, and yielding to your every wish. It's truly enviable."

With these words, the expressions of everyone present changed.

It was an insinuation that Shangguan Yi, as the young master of the Shangguan Family, was blinded by beauty and unable to be a capable leader due to his wife's influence.

Shangguan Yi's expression changed slightly.

Some people secretly glanced at Shang Che, the Family Head, at the head seat.

After all, Shangguan Yi was Shang Che's only son.

However, Shang Che's expression remained calm, seeming indifferent to his son's criticism.

Gu Changhuai frowned, seeing Wenren Wan standing alone, facing the criticisms of the Shangguan Family, and immediately wanted to stand.

But in the blink of an eye, a sharp gaze turned towards him.

It was Gu Shouyan, the Master of the Gu Family.

Gu Changhuai's expression was stubborn, repeatedly wanting to speak but ultimately unable to defy the Family Master, could only sit down with resignation.

Gu Changhuai also understood that speaking up would be futile and only worsen the situation.

Meanwhile, Shangguan Yi feigned composure, but his heart sank.

He realized that the more he defended Wan'er and Yu Er, the more they might be criticized.

And it seemed he was too emotionally attached and indecisive.

Though he indeed was emotionally attached, others' opinions mattered little.

But he couldn't bear his wife and children being implicated.

The female Elder from the Shen Family, seeing the situation, showed a faint smile and turned her gaze to Yu Er, shaking her head and saying:

"Noble family's son should practice etiquette by age three, maintaining decorum in all actions, not overstepping the bounds."

"How can there be a child like this one, acting so cheerfully without restraint before elders, running about recklessly without any decorum, who attends family banquets only to eat and drink..."

The female Elder regrettably said, "With this, I fear this good child might be led astray."

Yu Er, being scolded in front of everyone, suddenly felt at a loss, shrinking behind his mother's back.

Seeing this, Wenren Wan's heart ached, and she became furious, her gaze cooling. Just as she was about to retort, she noticed Shangguan Yi's concerned look.

She immediately understood.

The female Elder from the Shen Family, as an elder, said these sly words as if they were guidance.

As a junior, it was better to tolerate it.

If she couldn't bear it and retorted, the consequences would be more severe, not only branding her as 'disrespectful to elders' but also implicating Yu Er, branding him as 'ill-mannered.'

Because she was the mother, and Yu Er was raised by her.

Chapter 1210: Banquet (3)

Wenren Wan's eyes were slightly red, her delicate hands clenched until they turned white.

Mo Hua looked very angry. Just as he was about to say something, he found that the female elder, full of triumph, had already turned her gaze towards him at some point.

"This young master, may I ask which family you belong to?"

Mo Hua was taken aback.

Without waiting for Mo Hua to answer, the female elder mocked, "With such an inferior Spiritual Root, I see, you must not be a son of a noble family. You're probably just some wild kid from nowhere."

Then, she turned her gaze back to Wenren Wan and sighed, "This is where you're wrong. A Cultivator seeks Tao Cultivation with law, wealth, companions, and land. The 'companion' here refers to Taoist Friends of like mind."

"Members of noble families, since childhood, should be very selective about the friends they make."

"Of humble origins, low status, unremarkable Bloodline, and inferior Spiritual Roots, such people do not only have no value, they are also unworthy of a seat at the table."

"What's more, this child has even cruder manners than Yu Er, lacks upbringing—aren't you afraid that the Direct Lineage of the prestigious Shangguan Family will be led astray by this youngster?"

Although Yu Er did not fully understand, she knew that her Brother Mo was being slandered, and her little face turned pale with anger.

Wenren Wan could not hold back either.

If it were her own matter, she would endure it.

But Mo Hua was Yu Er's benefactor.

When Yu Er was kidnapped, it was Mo Hua who rescued her, and it was entirely thanks to Mo Hua that her nightmares were relieved.

Wenren Wan's gaze turned icy, and she immediately said, "You..."

But before she could finish, she found that Mo Hua was tugging at her sleeve.

Wenren Wan was taken aback, looked down, and saw Mo Hua taking a sip of fruit wine, moistening his throat, then wiping his mouth and slowly standing up.

Wenren Wan did not know what Mo Hua intended to do.

Mo Hua put on an innocent face and secretly pointed at the female elder, whispering to Wenren Wan,

"Aunt Wan, who is this scary old lady..."

He deliberately lowered his voice.

But merely lowering his voice, without covering it with his Divine Sense.

Every Cultivator present had formidable Cultivation, how could they not hear what he said?

"Scary old lady..."

The expressions of everyone present immediately became subtly charged.

The female elder was taken aback and then immediately glared furiously.

In all her life, now over two hundred years, she had only heard people flatter her as "beauty that topples cities," "as exquisite as a painting," "with charm undiminished from her youth"...

She also considered herself no less beautiful than anyone.

But she never expected this little brat!

To actually call her "old lady"!

She pointed at Mo Hua and demanded, "Who is the scary old lady?!"

Her fierce question spoke volumes.

Mo Hua seemed to be startled and weakly replied: "Aunt Wan called you 'auntie'; if you're not an old lady, then what are you?"

The female elder's eyes were shooting fire.

Wenren Wan felt somewhat amused, yet she couldn't help but be torn between laughter and tears, "Although she is an 'auntie,' she is only a little over a hundred years older than me, not old enough to be called 'old lady'..."

Mo Hua mumbled, "How would I know; she has too much powder on her face, as thick as a wall—I couldn't tell..."

The female elder almost ground her teeth to pieces.

Mo Hua then asked Wenren Wan, "If not 'old lady,' then should I call her... 'old auntie'?"

Finally, someone at the table couldn't hold back and let out a laugh.

Soon, more and more people started to chuckle quietly.

Provoked by the laughter, the female elder born of the Shen Family could no longer contain her fury. With a slap of her palm, she shattered a whole table of bowls and dishes, and food and soup scattered everywhere.

Mo Hua shook his head and said steadily, "This 'old auntie' with her throwing tantrums, how impolite."

"One must maintain proper etiquette in all actions, seating, eating, and sleeping."

"Isn't it said that one begins learning at the age of three? How come some people, even over two hundred years old, still haven't learned?"

Mo Hua whispered again, "Look, she hasn't learned herself and yet she thinks of teaching others..."

The female elder's face, coated in "white" powder, turned as black as the bottom of a pot, her features beginning to contort.

After a long while, she managed to suppress the rage in her heart and said through gritted teeth:

"You have no respect for your elders! The Gu Family really... What kind of brat are you that you dare to speak insolently at the table... Who are your parents? What status do you actually have?"

"If you don't reveal your origin, both the Shangguan Family and the Shen Family will not let this go!"

With these words, everyone frowned.

Despite being from the distinguished Shen Family and now married into the Shangguan Family, holding the position of an Elder, her mind was so narrow, so lacking in demeanor, to trouble a child and threaten him in public...

Then everyone looked at Mo Hua with some concern.

Several Elders from the Gu Family who knew Mo Hua stood up to smooth things over.

"The words of a child should not be taken seriously; why get angry..."

Elder Gu Hong also made an indifferent comment:

"The holiday season is approaching, it's not good to get worked up, after all, it's a family banquet, and it's best to be harmonious. I will talk to this child afterwards..." .c

The female elder, however, would not let it go and sneered:

"This little ghost, he's not from your Gu Family, is he?"

The Elders were stunned and looked at each other.

Of course, Mo Hua was not from the Gu Family.

Under such circumstances, they naturally couldn't lie.

The female elder then said coldly, "Then why is this brat attending your Gu Family's banquet, and dare to speak to me so rudely? Your Gu Family better provide me with an explanation!"

These words were unpleasant to the ear.

The Elders of the Gu Family all looked displeased.

We advised you earlier to give face to the Shen Family and the Shangguan Family.

Better to have fewer issues.

But to be so immoderate, so arrogantly overbearing, meant that she did not take the Gu Family into consideration.

Although the Gu Family was not as prominent as the Shen Family, it was not a small family to be easily suppressed.

With the atmosphere becoming somewhat tense, Mo Hua finally took out a wooden case, slowly placed it on the table, and crisply declared:

"I am here to give a gift!"

The female elder glanced down and saw that within Mo Hua's wooden case lay only a simple and ordinary unmounted calligraphy, devoid of any lavish or elegant aura. She then mocked: