

Immortality 1211

Chapter 1211: Banquet (4)

"Without any prospects, bringing such shoddy calligraphy and paintings as gifts, don't you feel ashamed..."

However, an elderly Elder Shangguan beside her drastically changed his expression and immediately rebuked her:

"Shut up!"

Above on the high platform, Shangguan Family Master and Patriarch Gu even slowly stood up.

The female elder looked bewildered, not understanding why.

An Elder of the Shangguan Family's brows furrowed tightly. After glancing at the characters, his eyes gradually filled with incredulity. Then, looking at Mo Hua, his tone unconsciously became much more respectful, "Young brother, this piece of writing is..."

Mo Hua said: "It was Elder Master Xun who asked me to deliver it!"

Elder Master Xun?

Everyone exchanged glances.

Then, several of the most senior elders, with a tremor in their hearts, spoke in a lowered voice, "Ancestor Xun from Taixu Gate."

"This piece of writing is... the handiwork of the Ancestor."

As soon as these words came out, everyone inhaled a breath of cold air, their eyes looking at Mo Hua filled with disbelief.

Ancestor Xun from Taixu Gate actually had this little cultivator deliver a gift?

What virtue and ability does this little cultivator have... to deliver a gift on behalf of the Ancestor?

What is his relationship with Ancestor Xun from Taixu Gate?

A multitude of cultivators, their hearts in turmoil.

Wenren Wan, who was by Mo Hua's side, was somewhat astonished.

She had been worried about him being bullied within the Sect, yet inexplicably, even the Ancestor was backing this child...

Gu Changhuai was even more stunned.

He knew that Mo Hua mingled well in Taixu Gate, but never thought he could do so well.

The Elder Master Xun, mentioned by Mo Hua, who taught him Formation, turned out to be Heaven Void Ancestor...

The mood suddenly became stagnant, and the room fell into a hush.

At this moment, a figure flickered. Shang Che and Gu Shouyan had already arrived by Mo Hua's side, looking at the characters in the box:

Profound good fortune.

The two of them looked astonished, their hearts slightly shocked.

"Profound good fortune?"

"Why did Ancestor Xun from Taixu Gate inscribe these four characters? What deeper meaning do they contain?"

Both men had a thousand thoughts racing through their minds, yet their expressions remained calm as water, revealing nothing, and they asked no further questions.

Gu Shouyan bowed to the writing and said in a deep voice, "Thank you, senior, for the gift of these characters."

Then he turned to look at Mo Hua, a slight smile appearing on his usually stern face, "Take good care of it, little child. When growing up, eat more."

Mo Hua was slightly stunned, then his eyes gleamed with a smile, and he politely said:

"Thank you, Family Master!"

After that, Shang Che and Gu Shouyan said nothing more.

The banquet proceeded as normal.

However, when they were serving dishes again, Gu Shouyan ordered someone:

"Add a seat at the top."

The expressions of everyone were a bit peculiar, but they also found it to be expected.

Thus, an extra seat was temporarily added among the upper seats.

It was out of respect for Elder Master Xun.

However, after all, it wasn't as if the Ancestor himself was present, so the seat was not placed at the very head.

Therefore, this seating position, just after the two Family Heads but above the general upper seats, could be considered a "higher top seat."

Gu Shouyan said: "Young brother, please."

Mo Hua's eyes brightened, tugged at Wenren Wan's sleeve, "Aunt Wan."

Wenren Wan was startled, then stood up somewhat reservedly.

Mo Hua also pulled Yu Er's hand, and the three of them walked proudly to the high platform and sat at the "higher top seat."

Higher top seat.

This was the prestige of Elder Master Xun.

Mo Hua knew that he was riding on the coattails of Elder Master Xun, taking advantage of his light.

But since Elder Master Xun had given him this piece of writing, he probably had it all figured out; therefore, Mo Hua was not being overly polite.

The spiritual meal at the higher top seat was somewhat better than the one below.

And now, even less so would anyone dare to intervene. Mo Hua could eat as he wished, how he wished.

Yu Er, enjoying the "indulgence" from Mo Hua, her originally fearful eyes gradually glimmered, and her demeanor lost its timidity, cheekily eating and drinking with Mo Hua.

Wenren Wan looked at the two children, her eyes filled with satisfaction as well as gratitude.

And that previously arrogant and domineering green-clothed female elder, now her seat was beneath Mo Hua's.

She could only watch with her eyes wide as Mo Hua sat above her head, eating and drinking without a care, her body trembling with anger, her face twisting, and the makeup on her face flaking off and falling...

Chapter 1212: Life Chart

After the family banquet ended, the guests dispersed.

Despite some twists and turns, everything ended peacefully, and one could barely say that "both guests and hosts enjoyed themselves."

Late at night, in the study of the Gu Family Master.

Shang Che and Gu Shouyan sat opposite each other sipping tea, engaging in candlelit conversations deep into the night.

The two grew up together, cultivated together, and aside from being family heads, they were also old friends.

Although the Shangguan Family was stronger than the Gu Family, the gap was not too significant.

Gu Shouyan was slightly older than Shang Che.

Both had lived for hundreds of years, weathered many storms, their relationship a mix of calculated interests and genuine affection.

Gu Shouyan was straightforward and always spoke his mind bluntly, he said in a deep voice:

"You intend to take all the Shangguan Family's business back?"

These businesses were located near the Qianxue State boundary, in various Tao Cultivation industries, originally managed by the Gu Family.

Shang Che nodded, "The Shen Family offered a high price. I transferred it to them, which earns our Shangguan Family twenty percent more profit than if we ran it ourselves."

Gu Shouyan sneered, "The Shen Family is that benevolent?"

Shang Che said, "Whether they are benevolent or not, the profit is clear."

"What profit?"

Shang Che shook his head, "I can't say."

Gu Shouyan scoffed, "What other profits can there be? Just Spirit Stones, Pills, network... oh, and quotas from the Four Great Sects?"

Shang Che remained silent.

Gu Shouyan busied himself with brewing tea, stirring the leaves in the teapot.

Shang Che's gaze became intense, he sighed, "The Shen Family must have also approached you, and you flatly refused?"

Gu Shouyan made an affirming sound.

Shang Che said, "This is an overture of goodwill, Mr. Gu. Even if you don't accept, you should at least leave some room for maneuver..."

Gu Shouyan's face was cold, "Those villains from the Shen Family are not worth dealing with."

Shang Che shook his head, "In the world of families, only profit is discussed, not virtues. In action, one must first put aside virtues, otherwise, it's easy to act rashly and hinder the development of the family."

"You don't talk about virtues, that's your business, but don't tell me how to act," Gu Shouyan said, his temper upright.

Shang Che tentatively said, "Then the business of the Shangguan Family..."

Gu Shouyan waved his hand, "Take it all. It was your Shangguan Family's daughter-in-law who managed it anyway. If you want it back, just tell her."

"Most of our Gu Family cultivators are from the Taoist Court. We are not adept at managing these cultivation industries, which only serve to bolster the household funds. It's tasteless to eat, yet a pity to waste, and it's troublesome for Wan'er to put in so much effort for it, not worth it."

Shang Che breathed a sigh of relief.

Gu Shouyan ignored him, focusing on brewing his tea, watching the vapors rise, clearly unmoved by these gains and losses.

The room fell into an oppressive silence for a time.

After a long while, Shang Che's gaze became somber, he sighed:

"The Gu Family... will encounter trouble."

Gu Shouyan was surprised and raised an eyebrow.

He and Shang Che had grown up together, and Gu Shouyan knew exactly what kind of person Shang Che was.

This man was self-centered, exquisite, and egotistical.

However, when his own interests or those of the Shangguan Family were not involved, he could be very sincere and candid in his dealings.

Despite disliking Shang Che for his cunning and calculating ways, Gu Shouyan still had a not-so-shallow camaraderie with him over the years.

After all, at their level of cultivation and status, there were not many cultivators left with whom he could speak a few words and share a few thoughts.

Gu Shouyan asked, "Who's troubling my Gu Family? The Shen Family?"

Shang Che still shook his head, "What I've mentioned, you know. What you don't know, I cannot say."

Gu Shouyan was very disappointed, poured himself a cup of tea, and leisurely began to drink.

He did not pour any for Shang Che.

Shang Che could only serve himself and poured a cup.

The tea tasted somewhat bitter and astringent, not of the best quality.

But that was the flavor Gu Shouyan liked.

Shang Che didn't like it as much, but didn't complain and silently drank it down, glanced at the white hairs at Gu Shouyan's temples, and sighed:

"Mr. Gu, a great man can bend and stretch..."

"So many families above are showcasing goodwill towards the Gu Family. If you gave them a little face, the Gu Family wouldn't have been stuck at the same rank... still unable to become a Fifth-grade."

Gu Shouyan glared, "Give what face? Do they really want me to give face? They want the power of my Gu Family to give them face! They want the Taoist Law to give them face!"

"Is the power mine to give away?"

"Is the Taoist Law mine to give away?"

"The power of the Taoist Court, the equity of the Taoist Law, drawn from both the Heavenly Dao and the common folk, what virtue or capability does my Gu Family have to claim as our own, to seek private gains through power?"

Shang Che felt a headache coming on, "Are there some things that others can do but the Gu Family can't? Is only the Gu Family noble?"

"We're not noble," Gu Shouyan looked defiant, "as I damn well please."

Shang Che suddenly lost his temper.

Gu Shouyan glanced at Shang Che, realizing that at this moment, his old friend was not overly scheming and was genuinely concerned about him, he sighed:

"You're obsessed with fame and fortune, you understand the world of fame and fortune better than I do, but this matter is not as simple as you think."

"Over the years, my Gu Family has produced the Heaven Void Ancestor, and we've long had the foundation of a Fifth-grade..."

"Among the families, although some despise my Gu Family to the bone, there are also those who have deep ties with us. Our relationships are not overly good, but we're not isolated and unsupported either."

"Even several times, we were one foot into the threshold of becoming a Fifth-grade, but due to various constraints, we couldn't take that next step."

Gu Shouyan said solemnly, "The true Fifth-grade families of the Taoist Court are not to be taken lightly."

"My Gu Family adheres to the Taoist Law, too many people do not wish for my Gu Family to advance this step forward."

Shang Che's brows furrowed slightly.

"Moreover," Gu Shouyan said with self-mockery, "do you think if I accepted those gestures of goodwill from those families, if I conspired with them, they would accept my Gu Family?"

Chapter 1213: Life Chart (2)

Gu Shouyan shook his head, took a sip of tea, and continued:

"If I don't accept their overtures of goodwill, then my Gu Family will be seen as a lone wild wolf."

"Even if they are tigers or leopards, eager to devour my Gu Family, they'll have to worry about us desperately fighting back, tearing off chunks of their flesh."

"But if I accepted their favors, my Gu Family would become a dog!"

"On the surface, they may appear courteous, but behind the scenes, they'll despise me even more."

"Faced with some dirty and unsightly matters, they would throw us a bone, and I would have to bite, to clean up their messes."

Gu Shouyan's expression was stern, his gaze like a sword, as he snorted coldly:

"These worms, do they really think they are worthy?"

"Even if my Gu Family has to risk our lives to bite flesh off them, we will not grovel or lick the bones they throw away!"

Shang Che pondered for a moment, but still shook his head, sighing:

"Mr. Gu, you're still being too impulsive. My Shangguan Family is willing to advance and retreat together with the Gu Family, they also..."

Gu Shouyan said with an unyielding expression: "You, Shang Che, by accepting the Shen Family's overtures, can build a good relationship with the Shen Family because you both are fundamentally the same kind of people."

"But I am not."

"I have never been the same kind of person as you all."

Shang Che was momentarily stunned, his eyes slightly cold, but he did not show any annoyance.

Gu Shouyan continued:

"Just as with the Family Head, the family is the same."

"Your Shangguan Family and the Shen Family, with thriving businesses, were built on interests. But my Gu Family, serving at the Taoist Court, ultimately relies on 'core quality' to establish itself."

"If the Shangguan Family were to suddenly talk about 'core quality', I fear they would be gone in the blink of an eye."

"Similarly, if my Gu Family doesn't abide by 'core quality', even if we are temporarily strong, our downfall would also come just as quickly."

Shang Che was slightly taken aback.

He had always thought that his Big Brother was stubborn, rigid in action, and lacked flexibility.

But it turned out that he wasn't just obstinately stubborn on the surface.

He understood many things.

And perhaps, he even saw things a bit clearer than himself.

Shang Che sighed inwardly, truly, one can't judge a book by its cover.

He poured a cup of tea for Gu Shouyan and said indifferently:

"Mr. Gu, take care of yourself."

"I hope that in the future, the Shangguan Family and the Gu Family will not walk down a path where they are at each other's throats."

Gu Shouyan grunted in acknowledgment and took the tea to drink.

With that, pretty much everything that needed to be said had been said.

The two drank their tea in silence, and though they did not speak, the atmosphere without any scheming between them was much more relaxed.

Suddenly, Gu Shouyan remembered something, curiously glancing at Shang Che but did not ask aloud.

Feeling this, Shang Che put down his tea cup and said slowly:

"Mr. Gu, if you have something to say, just say it."

Gu Shouyan nodded, without any avoidance, and spoke frankly:

"There's something I don't understand. How could a person like you, who only talks about interests, harbor such deep prejudices? Harbor such deep resentment towards the Wenren Family?"

"Tonight at the banquet, that Shen Family Elder was so difficult towards Wan'er, it was disgraceful, and you didn't say a word?"

Shang Che was silent, "Just a fool, that's all..."

He took a sip of tea, picked out the tea leaves, and said in an even tone, "The Shen Family marrying her into our family is a way to test the Shangguan Family's stance."

"The Shen Family has shown us goodwill, and we also have to demonstrate our attitude."

"Even if she's being unreasonable, we need to be courteous. After all, we've just profited from the Shen Family's Spirit Stone, the eater's mouth is soft."

"Other branches of the Shangguan Family are also using her as a tool against Yier, pressuring her..."

"The other lines of the Shangguan Family have long been coveting the position of Family Head, unable to snatch it from me, they turn their sights on Yier."

"Such things will not be rare in the future, and I will not intervene."

"I am the Family Head, but I am only the Family Head. The real power is in the hands of our old ancestor, and many things are beyond my decision."

"If Yier has the ability to win the hearts of the people, naturally he will be able to become the Family Head. But if he can't suppress others, it's better to give up his position sooner rather than later. It saves him from being indecisive and harming the family's foundation."

"As for Wan'er..." Shang Che's expression darkened slightly, "She has been dragged down by Yier."

"Anyone with clear eyes can see that Yier is too emotional, his fondness for Wan'er too strong, naturally making her his Achilles' heel."

"The husband and wife are one entity. If Wan'er makes a mistake, it means Yier has made a mistake."

Shang Che sighed slightly: "If Yier were just an ordinary son of a noble family, not my son, the Family Head, not involved in the struggle for the position of Family Head, naturally no one would think of troubling Wan'er."

"The two of them would just need to live peacefully day by day."

"Unfortunately, their statuses are not ordinary..."

Gu Shouyan nodded.

"As for the Wenren Family..."

Shang Che fell into thought, his gaze complicated, "The Shangguan Family and the Wenren Family, despite their grievances, do not intermarry for generations, but it's not a deep-seated hatred."

"Otherwise, the marriage between Yier and Wan'er would have been stopped from the beginning, no matter how desperately Yier begged, it would have been impossible."

Shang Che looked at Gu Shouyan, speaking frankly: "But indeed, from beginning to end, I have never been optimistic about this marriage."

"The Wenren Family is just one aspect of it. I do not hate the Wenren Family, but marrying into the Wenren Family, truthfully, doesn't bring much benefit to the Shangguan Family..."

"Or rather, the benefits are not significant enough."

"Yier comes from a good background, has great talent, looks excellent, and although he's a bit sentimental and indecisive, this actually makes him more attractive to women."

"During the marriage proposal, I had several matches in hand. These women, from direct lineages, all high-ranking, with both appearance and virtue, accompanied by dowries of Spiritual mines, were all very powerful."

"Marrying them would greatly benefit the Shangguan Family, to me as the Family Head, and also to Yier's future succession to the position of Family Head."

"Yier's path forward would surely be smooth."

"But..."

Chapter 1214: Life Chart (3)

Shang Che deeply sighed, "Yier is too disappointing. He rejects all the fine marriage proposals, single-mindedly obsessed with 'marrying none but her', insisting on bringing that girl Wan'er into our family." f

"Wan'er, this child, is not bad either. Like Yier, she values love and loyalty, and though headstrong, she has a good heart."

"But as a future wife of the Shangguan Family Head, she is far from qualified."

"Moreover, this is the first time Yier has been so defiant towards me."

"The match-making for him had such benefits to offer, and my Shangguan Family's status could have been advanced towards that seemingly unattainable Sixth Grade. However, everything went contrary to our desires, and all the planning has come to naught..."

Even with his profound sensibilities, Shang Che couldn't help showing a slight frown and a look of anger.

Gu Shouyan probably understood then.

Sitting in the position of Family Head, many things are not as simple as they appear on the surface.

He understood Shang Che's feelings.

"But what about," Gu Shouyan furrowed his brows, "Yu Er? Let alone Wan'er, after all, Yu Er is your only direct grandson. You wouldn't alienate your own grandson just because of that girl Wan'er, would you..."

Shang Che's gaze turned serious, his expression changing, as if hiding some unspeakable secret.

"It's alright if it's inconvenient to talk about."

Gu Shouyan was just asking casually and didn't insist on an answer from Shang Che.

After all, it was an internal matter of the Shangguan Family.

Gu Shouyan poured himself another cup of tea and slowly savored it.

Shang Che's face shaded with a layer of gloom, and after a long silence, he finally let out a sigh and slowly began to speak:

"When Yu Er was born... I asked an Elder of the Heavenly Observatory to calculate his Life Chart."

Gu Shouyan was startled, his eyebrows slightly furrowing.

Shang Che continued, "Yu Er, he..."

He paused for a moment, deeply closing his eyes, and then slowly opening them, his tone chilling, "Yu Er since his birth, his innate Life Chart, is that of a 'dead man', a flawed vessel, not a living person..."

Gu Shouyan's hand trembled, his face showing shock.

He then looked more serious, "The matter of Life Charts doesn't necessarily reflect reality..."

Shang Che shook his head, "You don't know the Elder's status. His calculated Life Charts are never wrong."

"And... I can see it as well."

"This child Yu Er, since he was little, he has been different from others. Though seemingly fine, he has innate Divine Sense weakness, as if he has an incomplete soul, and he occasionally sees things that ordinary cultivators can't, experiencing inexplicable nightmares, like... a baby with one foot in the Underworld..."

Shang Che's eyes filled with pain, "So every time I see Yu Er, it's as if there's a thorn in my heart."

"He is my hard-won, only grandson, yet fate has decreed that he is a 'dead man' doomed to die young, someone who can't be raised..."

Gu Shouyan's expression wavered for a long while, then he looked at Shang Che, unrelentingly sneered:

"When young, you were too dissolute, now old, childless; you deserve it."

Shang Che's face turned ugly, but he was powerless to refute.

Seeing his expression, Gu Shouyan sighed, his tone eventually softening, "Can't he be saved?"

Shang Che's expression was bitter, "Such things as Life Charts cannot be changed by anyone."

"Nonsense!" Gu Shouyan's face turned dark, "If it really can't be changed, then there wouldn't be the phrase 'defying the heavens to change fate'!"

Shang Che said with a sigh: "These are the Elder's very words. He once said that Yu Er's Life Chart is innately formed, the Heavenly secret too profound, the karma too great, beyond the power of humans to reverse..."

Gu Shouyan asked in a low voice, "What is the Elder's Cultivation?"

Shang Che pointed to the sky.

Gu Shouyan's heart tensed, no longer speaking, yet aware of the weight behind that sentence.

After finishing the tea, once Shang Che had left.

Gu Shouyan sat alone at the table, not drinking tea, just sitting silently, and the innocent and well-behaved image of Yu Er emerged in his mind.

Gu Shouyan's weathered heart couldn't help but ache, and he whispered to himself:

"A good child, but without a good fate..."

...

Mo Hua had a feast and stayed at the Gu Family for one night. The next morning, he was due to return to the Taixu Gate.

The words "profound good fortune" written by Elder Master Xun were given by Mo Hua to Wenren Wan.

Although Elder Master Xun did not explicitly say whom to give it to, Mo Hua faintly guessed that the old man intended it for Aunt Wan.

Wenren Wan accepted the calligraphy, and couldn't help feeling flattered.

In any family of the Qian State, the Heaven Void Ancestor was a supreme figure; ordinary disciples could never hope to meet him, let alone receive a piece of his calligraphy.

Wenren Wan wanted to reciprocate the gift to Elder Master Xun, but figured that the elder would not care for such trivial gifts.

So she packed up a large amount of food and drink, along with some Second Grade Formation Books and Diagrams, all bundled and given to Mo Hua.

All were things that Mo Hua liked.

Mo Hua symbolically refused a few times, then happily and contentedly accepted them.

Before departing, Gu Changhuai also sought out Mo Hua.

The two sat on the steps at the doorway, chatting briefly.

"There's something I need to tell you," Gu Changhuai deliberated a moment before speaking, "Some time ago, a group of Demon Cultivators of unknown origins infiltrated the outskirts of Qianxue State Boundary."

"Demon Cultivators?" Mo Hua was taken aback.

Gu Changhuai nodded, "Their origins are still unclear; how many there are and what their Cultivation levels are, remains unknown as well."

"Their activities are confined to the Second and Third Grade small state boundaries near the Qianxue State Boundary, their motives unknown, but certainly harboring ill intentions."

"The Taoist Court has already begun to take action to capture them, but the current situation is still uncertain..."

Gu Changhuai took another look at Mo Hua and reminded him:

"Although you have been 'confined' and cannot leave the Qianxue State Boundary, so it's unlikely you'll encounter them, you should still be cautious, just in case."

"Mhm mhm." Mo Hua nodded.

Chapter 1215: Simplified Calculation

After sending Mo Hua away, it was past noon when Wenren Wan decided to take Yu Er back to the Shangguan Family to celebrate the New Year and pay homage to their ancestors.

In the carriage, Yu Er read for a while and, feeling tired, took a rest.

Wenren Wan, on the other hand, sat beside him, playfully teasing him with a smile in her beautiful eyes.

Shangguan Yi watched the two of them, feeling a great sense of relief but also a deep sense of debt.

If it wasn't for his unique status in the Shangguan Family, which made him the target of many covetous eyes, he should have been enjoying peaceful cultivation days with his happy family of three.

But now, he found himself in a difficult position, constantly caught between the interests of his family, his father, and his wife and son.

Wenren Wan understood the difficulties he faced and didn't say anything.

As long as Yu Er was healthy and safe, that was all that mattered.

As the carriage rolled along, Shangguan Yi suddenly asked, "I wonder what Mo Hua likes..."

Wenren Wan was taken aback.

Shangguan Yi sighed, "This time at the family banquet, we owe him a big favor; we should at least give something in return."

Wenren Wan said, "I have returned the favor."

Shangguan Yi shook his head, "Elder Ancestor's autograph is a precious gift that many seek but cannot obtain. No matter what, I must give some more presents to express my gratitude."

"Moreover..." Shangguan Yi glanced at Yu Er, his expression full of satisfaction.

"Yu Er's spirit has been getting better day by day; he hardly has nightmares anymore, and this is all thanks to Mo Hua's care at the Taixu Gate."

Wenren Wan nodded her head.

That was true indeed.

Initially, when she sent Yu Er to the Taixu Gate, it was to seek Mo Hua's help in dispelling Yu Er's nightmares.

Not expecting a complete cure but hoping to ease it.

So Yu Er, at such a young age, would not be tormented by nightmares, afraid to fall asleep night after night.

In this matter, Wenren Wan had held out hope but did not expect her wish to come true.

Now Yu Er was lively and adorable, a far cry from his previous distressed and pitiable state, improved by who knows how many times.

"As for the gift..."

Wenren Wan pondered, "Although Mo Hua is young, he is of noble character; he probably wouldn't care for Spirit Stones..."

Wenren Wan clearly had a slight misunderstanding about Mo Hua when it came to Spirit Stones...

Then she continued:

"In terms of Spiritual Artifacts, as much as it's not nice to say, his aptitude is indeed... lacking some, with low Blood Qi and Spiritual Power. He might not be able to use some Top-Grade Spiritual Artifacts..."

"Good Pills might also not be of any use to him now."

"Why not give him some Formations again."

Wenren Wan listed her suggestions one by one.

Shangguan Yi also nodded slightly.

Giving Formations was a gift both precious and refined; it not only avoided vulgarity but also encouraged his Cultivation practice, which was the most suitable.

"What Formations should I give?" Shangguan Yi asked.

Wenren Wan thought for a moment, "Does the Shangguan Family have any treasured Formation records?"

Shangguan Yi silently mumbled to himself.

You are now a daughter-in-law of the Shangguan Family as well...

But he didn't dare say it out loud and instead pondered for a moment before speaking slowly: "We do have some, but those are secret traditions not to be given out lightly..."

"What about those that aren't that secretive?"

"There are some, but they are too difficult. Giving them might not allow him to learn at all but instead could lead to the depletion of his Divine Sense and waste his time."

Wenren Wan thought for a bit and said, "That's not a problem; with Elder Master Xun's guidance, if there are unsuitable Formation methods, Elder Master Xun will not let him learn them."

"That is true..." Shangguan Yi nodded, "I'll pick out a few when I return to our clan."

"Hmm." Wenren Wan gave a slight hum, then her eyes lit up, and she whispered, "You should bring over a few of the Shangguan Family's Secret Formation Methods as well..."

Shangguan Yi hesitated, expressing his concern:

"That might not be a good idea. If word gets out, it could also cause trouble for Mo Hua."

"You're such a blockhead..."

Wenren Wan frowned, "Not asking you to give out our Family's unique inheritance."

"Pick some that are secret, but not unique to the Shangguan Family, formations that other families also possess. Even if Mo Hua learns them, it won't matter. Who knows where he learned them from? If others ask, he doesn't tell, so no one can verify. If we don't speak of it, it has nothing to do with our Shangguan Family..."

Shangguan Yi nodded uncontrollably, finding it quite reasonable.

Especially the phrase "our Shangguan Family" from Wenren Wan's mouth, it sounded very soothing to his ears.

"Then, I will go and have a look when I'm back," Shangguan Yi said.

The Cultivation of disciples from prominent families is demanding. They should dabble in Pills, Formations, Talismans, and Instruments, not requiring too much expertise.

Although he also studied Formations, he only learned the general ones.

The ones that are too profound, too complicated, or truly secret Formation Methods—which are extremely hard to study and not efficient to learn—are not eagerly pursued unless one decides to follow the path of Formations in the future.

Therefore, which Secret Formation Methods exactly the Shangguan Family has in its collection, he will need to go to the Formation Pavilion after returning to the clan to find out.

"Then, which grade should I give?" Shangguan Yi asked Wenren Wan again.

"Give him something he can use now..." Wenren Wan thought about it, "Starting from Basic First Grade to Second Grade Middle Stage... up to High-level Second Grade."

Shangguan Yi was startled, "High-level Second Grade? Isn't that too difficult, can he learn it now?"

Wenren Wan shot Shangguan Yi an annoyed look, "What are you thinking? He's only at the Foundation Establishment Early Stage, how could he possibly learn High-level Second Grade Formations?"

"This is called preparing for a rainy day!" Wenren Wan continued.

"If you only give him Primary Rank Second Grade Formations, then when he reaches Foundation Building Middle Stage, Foundation Establishment Late Stage, does he have to beg you again for Middle and High-Rank Formations?"

"So just give all of Second Grade at once."

"As for Third Grade Formations, those require Core Formation; it's still early days for that."

Shangguan Yi smiled faintly, speaking warmly, "Wan'er really considers things thoroughly."

Chapter 1216: Simplified Calculation

"So it's settled," Wenren Wan smiled lightly, "You search the Shangguan Family, and I'll have someone go back to the Wenren Family to look for a few pairs too. We should find some good ones, then present them as our thanks and send them altogether to Mo Hua."

"Hmm," Shangguan Yi agreed.

After that, the family of three enjoyed a harmonious atmosphere.

The entourage from the Shangguan Family, with their luxurious carriages and respectable ceremonies, majestically left Qingzhou City and traveled all the way to the Shangguan Family's mansion at the boundary of the Fifth Grade of Qian State.

In front of the grand doors of the Shangguan Family, people lined up to welcome them.

Shang Che went first, followed by a group of Elders.

Shangguan Yi and Wenren Wan, holding hands with Yu Er on either side, alighted from the carriage and walked into the Shangguan Family's prestigious and luxurious mansion.

Shang Che looked calm, his eyes unnoticeably swept through the crowd, glancing at Shangguan Yi and Wenren Wan, and also looked at Yu Er, somewhat absent-minded.

Yu Er...

Shang Guanyu.

A dashing gentleman, as outstanding as fine jade.

This name, painstakingly chosen by Shang Che himself, contained his hopes and expectations.

But this name was chosen before Yu Er was born, before the old ancestors of the Heavenly Observatory divined his inevitable fate of an early death.

Shang Che looked at Yu Er again.

This was his grandson.

He didn't know whether he would be the only grandson he would ever have in this lifetime...

Bitterness filled Shang Che's heart.

On the other side, Yu Er seemed to have said something to his mother, his little face filled with joy and contentment.

Shang Che watched, his heart filled with indescribable emotions.

"Destined to die young, a life chart with certain death..."

Shang Che sighed softly, a pang of pain in his heart.

But he was a man of deep slyness; his joy and anger never showed on his face, and he still wore an aura of dignified authority, expressionless.

...

Upon entering the Shangguan Family's residence, Shang Che returned to his study.

His study was luxurious and elegant, with a Compass placed in the center as well.

"If one cannot understand the Heavenly Mechanism, cannot see through causality, even with a high cultivation realm, one can only be reduced to a plaything for others."

The older he got, the more he experienced, the stronger his cultivation became, the higher levels he reached, the deeper Shang Che felt about this saying.

Regrettably, the art of the Heavenly Mechanism had long been in decline.

Shang Che went to great lengths, but only managed to grasp the mere surface of the Heavenly Mechanism Skill's inheritance.

The Heavenly Mechanism Skill was an extremely profound art of Tao Cultivation. It could not be achieved overnight. It needed to be approached from the surface to the depth, from the shallow to the deep, gradually comprehended bit by bit.

Shang Che understood this.

He didn't strive to master it, but to have a little knowledge was enough.

But whether it was because of his excessive self-interest, no matter how he learned it, he could not comprehend it, and whatever he saw was shrouded in fog.

As if his eyes were covered by something.

What he saw was merely the superficial appearance of his personal selfish desires and not the essence of Heavenly Mechanism Causality.

Nevertheless, one must always be brave enough to try.

Shang Che decided to start with something simpler, for example...

The child called "Mo Hua."

This thought had already occurred to him during his time at the Gu Family.

The name "Mo Hua" was not new to him.

He had long been aware of the situation with Yu Er.

But this time at the Gu Family, he saw Mo Hua for the first time, and at the same time, he had an indescribable subtle feeling.

The child seemed naive, yet he was astute and thoughtful.

He seemed simple, yet he had the depth of heart.

Although his outward appearance and temperament were completely different, Shang Che always felt that this child bore some resemblance to Gu Shouyan, the Gu Family Master whom he had dealt with all his life.

Both had a certain quirky steadfastness in their actions.

What's even stranger was, this child named Mo Hua, apparently just a Loose Cultivator with an ordinary appearance, managed to gain the favor of Elder Ancestor Xun of the Taixu Gate?

Shang Che couldn't fathom.

He wanted to calculate.

Heaven Void was not his to divinate, Feather Transformation was beyond his reach, Golden Core was strenuous to calculate, but a little cultivator at the Early Stage of Foundation Establishment, a simple calculation shouldn't be an issue.

Not to delve too deep, just understanding his origins would do...

Shang Che began to play with the Compass.

The Compass swayed with causality, the flow of qi changing directions.

But after just one scale rotated, the Compass suddenly trembled violently as if it had malfunctioned.

At the same time, Shang Che felt a surge of blood appear before him.

Shang Che felt his hairs stand on end with a shuddering heart, he promptly dropped the Compass, sealed his thoughts, and dared not peer into any more causality.

Moments later, it all dissipated.

Looking down, Shang Che saw cracks on the Compass, his eyes widened slightly with a trace of shock within.

"Is the Heavenly secret so perilous?"

He had only picked the simplest child to calculate, and yet he encountered such grave danger?

Even...

He didn't even see what that "grave danger" was...

His skill in the Heavenly Mechanism was indeed too shallow; by only grazing the edge, he failed to see the true nature of the peril but thereby escaped a disaster.

Even so, Shang Che's mood was hard to calm for a long time.

The image of Mo Hua resurfaced in his mind.

"Is it this child's natural life chart that is so ominous? Or is it someone has laid a scheme to protect his causality?"

"Coming from a Loose Cultivator, he couldn't naturally have such a life chart."

"Then is it... Elder Master Xun's scheme?"

Shang Che frowned, "But since when did the Taixu Gate possess such a sublime Heavenly Mechanism technique?"

"And what is so special about this child that warrants Elder Master Xun to go to such lengths to protect him so diligently?"

Shang Che pondered without an answer, eventually silently looking towards the Compass on his desk.

The Compass was cracked.

This was the backlash of causality.

Shang Che sighed in his heart.

Perhaps everyone had underestimated this Elder Master Xun.

It was Elder Master Xun's way of hinting to him, no, rather to anyone who tried to deduce the child's causality...

Chapter 1217: Simplified Calculation

Do not look upon what should not be seen; Do not conjecture what should not be guessed.

Shang Che's expression was wooden, and in the end, he shook his head helplessly.

Enough said.

The Heavenly secret arithmetic is insufficient; one must not forcefully deduce, otherwise misfortune will surely ensue.

This time was lucky, next time Elder Master Xun may not be so amiable.

One learns from their mistakes.

Behind this child stands Elder Master Xun of Heaven Void cultivation, a man of great virtue and high esteem, which in other words, is akin to standing before the extensive Taixu Gate itself.

Unless there is a complete fallout, one must absolutely not offend again.

Shang Che silently etched the name "Mo Hua" deep into his heart and then temporarily refrained from delving further.

...

On the other side, Mo Hua had already returned to the Sect.

Having visited Gu Family, played and eaten, he decided not to go anywhere this year and would earnestly practice Formation within the Disciple's Residence.

Although it was a bit lonely, it was fulfilling.

Mo Hua's level of Formation was also gradually improving.

Most of the Seventeen Patterns Second-grade Arrays passed on by Elder Master Xun, he had learned to the point of complete mastery.

And the festive period passed quickly.

In the blink of an eye, it was the start of a new year.

This was his third year at Taixu Gate.

Within this year's time, he must solve the Mystery Formation, break through the bottleneck, advance to the Foundation Building Middle Stage, and then prepare for the subsequent cultivation.

He also needed to learn more about Seventeen Patterns Arrays.

Inside the Sea of Consciousness, the Heavenly Dao Laws that constantly nibbled at his Divine Sense were also something to be sated or somehow repaired.

Additionally, it was necessary to see if there could be improvements made to the Gu Family's industry.

Gu Family's banquet before the New Year made Mo Hua realize that the seemingly prosperous Gu Family was also facing ostracism from other families, and life was not necessarily easy.

And Uncle Gu belongs to the Gu Family; the Cultivators of Gu Family have been quite kind to him. Even in his possession is a secret order from the Gu Family.

In other words, Gu Family can also be considered as his "backing".

If the Gu Family prospers, he can frequently visit for meals.

If he encounters difficulties in the future, the Gu Family will also have the surplus strength to assist him.

If the Gu Family truly falls into hardship and cannot even take care of themselves, let alone help during critical times, there would likely not even be a table left to freeload a meal from.

Therefore, the decline of the Gu Family must be prevented at all costs!

Mo Hua silently vowed in his heart.

Yet, such affairs were complex and necessitated long-term planning and careful consideration...

...

Afterward, Mo Hua cultivated while slowly overcoming his bottlenecks, all the while contemplating about the Gu Family's Tao Cultivation industry.

But before he could settle on a plan for the cultivation industry, other matters came knocking at his door.

One noon, Mo Hua, accompanied by Yu Er, was having lunch at the Disciple's Residence dining hall.

Cheng Mo came running over in a hurry.

"Mo Hua,"

Mo Hua looked up at him with a faint expression.

Cheng Mo smiled and said, "Junior Brother."

Only then did Mo Hua nod in acknowledgment, signaling for him to continue.

Cheng Mo then said, "I have a favor to ask of you..."

Mo Hua was somewhat surprised and after thinking briefly, said, "Is it related to Formation?"

Cheng Mo came to me for help, which must mean it's something he doesn't understand but I do.

Mo Hua pondered and could only think of Formations.

As soon as Formations were mentioned, Cheng Mo's head began to ache, "Sort of, but not really..."

Mo Hua took a bite of the chicken leg.

Yu Er next to him also took a bite of her chicken leg.

Then both of them silently watched Cheng Mo.

Cheng Mo sighed: "It's about the Taoist Court's rewards offer."

Mo Hua was taken aback and shook his head: "Elder Master Xun has grounded me, and I'm not allowed to go out, so I can't join you for the bounty hunts."

Upon hearing this, Cheng Mo also showed disappointment.

He really wanted to have Mo Hua join them.

Mo Hua was smart, knew about Formations, was good at scouting, could cast Spells, was experienced, and had a wide network...

In short, it was always a good idea to bring Mo Hua along for any bounty hunt.

Cheng Mo had even considered clinging to his 'Junior Brother's' coattails.

But unexpectedly, Elder Master Xun, to make Mo Hua focus on learning Formations, issued a direct "grounding order."

Without Mo Hua, their bounty hunting would slow down again.

Seeing Cheng Mo with a frustrated and worried face, Mo Hua said:

"Tell me about the bounty hunt situation; maybe I can give you some advice."

Cheng Mo pondered for a moment and then nodded: "Alright."

Since he had nothing else to do, he ordered some food, sat next to Mo Hua, and chatted while eating.

But as usual, he ordered two more drumsticks, a big one and a small one. The big one was offered to his 'Junior Brother' Mo Hua, and the small one was given to Yu Er next to him.

"I took on a bounty to catch a flying thief. This thief is at the Foundation Establishment Middle Stage, average in strength, but with exceptional movement techniques, and he lurks near the Second Grade state boundary."

"Situ Jian and I found some clues and have been staking out for a long time, but we've failed to catch him."

"Sometimes we don't encounter him; other times we do, but he's alerted beforehand and escapes; or, when we do corner him, his movement technique is so good that we can't capture him..."

Cheng Mo took a big bite of meat, "These days I've been driven to distraction, lost interest in food, and have slimmed down..."

"For such a small amount of Merit Points, I'm at a deficit, but to give up now would be too embarrassing. I just can't swallow my pride."

Cheng Mo looked towards Mo Hua again, regretfully saying: "It would be great if you were there, even without using Spells, you could set up a Formation to trap that flying thief."

Mo Hua asked in confusion: "Don't you all know how to set up Formations? We all learned them in the Formation class, didn't we?"

Cheng Mo gestured with his hand and said helplessly:

"It's no good; it's too conventional. That flying thief is experienced, he can spot whatever Formation media and their placement at a glance."

"Moreover, if the Formation's effectiveness isn't up to par, there's no guarantee it can really trap him..."

Mo Hua nodded slightly, then suddenly paused, as if he remembered something, and looked at Cheng Mo with a somewhat strange expression.

Feeling uneasy under Mo Hua's gaze, Cheng Mo asked, "What's up...?"

After thinking for a bit, Mo Hua inquired:

"Are you financially comfortable?"

Cheng Mo immediately looked troubled, "I have very few Merit Points."

"Not Merit Points," Mo Hua said, "I'm talking about your Spirit Stones."

"Spirit Stones?"

"Yes, Spirit Stones."

When Spirit Stones were mentioned, Cheng Mo immediately puffed up again:

"I've got plenty of Spirit Stones!"

Mo Hua nodded thoughtfully, looking at Cheng Mo with bright eyes, as if seeing a very fat, juicy sheep.

Chapter 1218: Customization

"Although I can't leave the Sect and join you, I can help you draw Formations," Mo Hua said.

Cheng Mo's expression brightened, but then he seemed uncertain:

"If you draw the Formation and we use it, is it the same as if we bought a Formation and used it ourselves..."

"We also set up Formations before, but we still didn't catch that flying thief..."

Mo Hua said: "No worries, I will draw some different ones."

"Since ordinary Formation media are easily detected by them, let's use the extraordinary ones."

"If Formation media don't work, we can use customized spiritual tools."

"Customized spiritual tools," Cheng Mo was slightly startled, "These things are complicated to make, where can we get them customized?"

"Don't worry about that, I'll figure something out," Mo Hua assured comprehensively.

Cheng Mo was sincerely respectful and couldn't help but praise: "Junior Brother, you have so many connections!"

At this point, Mo Hua, curious, asked Cheng Mo, "Do you usually use customized spiritual tools?"

Cheng Mo shook his head, "Rarely used."

Mo Hua didn't quite understand.

Cheng Mo tried to explain a few things to Mo Hua, but he was not good at articulating.

Even the issue about the specialization within the Artifact Refining industry like customized spiritual tools, he himself hadn't thought thoroughly about it.

He only knew how to swing his axe, chopping wildly, sometimes not even caring what axe he was swinging...

As Cheng Mo was worrying, he glanced over and saw Situ Jian who seemed to have just completed his assignments and was also entering the dining hall.

Cheng Mo immediately stood up and called out:

"Situ! Over here!"

Situ Jian walked over with a puzzled face.

Cheng Mo pushed him into a seat and said to Mo Hua:

"Junior Brother, ask Situ! He is a Sword Cultivator. Sword Cultivators are meticulous, not - they are detail-oriented and particular about Sword Weapons, and he knows more about the intricacies of Artifact Refining, he will definitely have the right answer."

Mo Hua had no choice but to ask Situ Jian.

Situ Jian proved indeed to be more reliable, as he pondered for a moment and explained:

"We noble family's sons usually have hereditary spiritual tools, my Li Fire Sword, Cheng Mo's Mountain Splitting Axe, Yang Qianjun's Break Army Spear, they are all inherited spiritual tools."

"Hao Xuan's sword is also ancestral, but now he doesn't like using swords, he prefers using a staff instead..."

"These hereditary spiritual tools, made from precious materials, specially crafted, and harmonize with the family's own Cultivation Skills, when fully activated, are very powerful."

"In a way, it's also a symbol of a noble family's status and position."

"Hmm hmm!"

Cheng Mo nodded on the side, his face beaming with pride.

The pair of Mountain Splitting Axes he owned were ancestral and very precious, naturally also very formidable.

Situ Jian then sighed: "However, these kinds of spiritual tools can sometimes be hard to use..."

"Hereditary spiritual tools, being incredibly valuable, any slight damage causes heartache, and repairs are troublesome."

"Moreover, using them consumes a huge amount of Spiritual Power. Without sufficient Cultivation or a high enough realm, it's difficult to unleash the full power of hereditary spiritual tools."

"If you're not sufficiently Cultivated and force it, your Spiritual Power will quickly be depleted."

"In a life-and-death battle, this can be deadly."

"Moreover, hereditary spiritual tools have a fixed shape, and the internal Formation cannot be changed. Although they are powerful, they are not versatile enough to handle various circumstances."

"After all, the Cultivation World is vast, and Cultivators are of every kind, practicing various Cultivation Techniques, using various spiritual tools."

"If your hereditary spiritual tool is countered by an enemy, and you don't have alternative means, you can be very passive..."

"So in my view, while it's essential to have hereditary spiritual tools, one must not depend too much on them, lest they become a hindrance."

Mo Hua nodded slightly.

Situ Jian's thoughts were much more meticulous than Cheng Mo, the dunce, with deeper learning and more thorough consideration.

Cheng Mo on the side couldn't help but nod along.

"Aside from ancestral hereditary spiritual tools," Situ Jian continued, "ordinary Cultivators also keep some standard spiritual weapons."

"These standard spiritual weapons are generally widespread."

"Standard spiritual weapons are mass-produced, cheap to make, not a concern if broken, and they come in various types, making them quite versatile."

And when it comes to doing bad deeds, they also don't make it easy to trace back...

Mo Hua thought to himself.

He considered the human traffickers in black robes.

Those traffickers, engaging in kidnapping and silencing witnesses, use these widespread standard spiritual weapons.

So as not to leave behind any clues.

Otherwise, if they used their family's hereditary spiritual tools to commit crimes, as soon as they made their move, astute bystanders might trace their actions and unravel their identities.

"Using standard spiritual weapons for wrongdoing..."

Mo Hua blinked, mentally taking note.

On the side, Situ Jian, clearly not as cunning as Mo Hua, continued earnestly explaining:

"Though standard spiritual weapons are great, the problem lies in that these tools are too crudely made."

"From materials, to design, to craftsmanship, to Formation patterns, everything is cheap and quality varies greatly."

"Some good standard spiritual weapons are actually not cheap, due to high production costs, making mass production difficult, and thus, they are sold at inflated prices, attracting fewer buyers."

"Oh..." Mo Hua nodded, then asked, "What about customized spiritual tools?"

Situ Jian said: "The biggest issue with customized spiritual tools is that they are too troublesome."

"Crafting customized spiritual tools requires a Formation Master who is experienced with Formation Principles, profound in Formation Knowledge, skilled in drawing Formation Patterns, and must be adept in practical Formations."

"Such a Formation Master is hard to find."

"Some Formation Masters, while understanding theoretical Formation Principles, when actually drawing the Formations, show awkward and clumsy brushwork..."

"Some Formation Masters, although they draw good Formations and their technique isn't bad, draw too slowly, which is also problematic."

Chapter 1219: Customized (2)

"Some Formation Masters are stuck in rigid thinking, only familiar with the standard paradigms, not flexible..."

"There are already few Formation Masters, and when you add these strict requirements to the selection process, there are hardly any who meet the criteria."

"They must be well-versed in Formation Studies, have broad knowledge, and be adaptable, practical, quick to draw, and draw well..."

Situ Jian sighed, "Such Formation Masters are as rare as phoenix feathers and unicorn horns and very hard to enlist."

"Mmm-hmm!"

Mo Hua nodded repeatedly.

Cheng Mo also nodded, but halfway through, he suddenly felt something was amiss and looked suspiciously at Situ Jian, "Why do I feel like you're beating around the bush and flattering Mo Hua?"

The more Cheng Mo thought about it, the more likely it seemed.

You sly, big-browed Situ Jian!

So you're that kind of person too!

Situ Jian glanced at Cheng Mo, "I'm telling the truth, do you think I'm like you?"

Cheng Mo proudly claimed, "When I flatter, I never beat around the bush!"

Mo Hua looked somewhat helpless and asked Situ Jian, "And then?"

This interruption by Cheng Mo had caught Situ Jian off guard; he took a moment to gather his thoughts before continuing:

"Besides Formation Masters, there are also Artifact Refiners."

"Artifact Refiners must be skilled and experienced, and their thinking also needs to be flexible but not too eccentric. They must still adhere to the necessary standards..."

"Customizing spiritual tools doesn't follow a fixed format, yet it must adhere to certain rules."

"Moreover, there are problems across the Tao Cultivation industry, such as Refining Furnaces, refining materials, and various artifact crafting processes... "

"In short, it's very troublesome..."

Situ Jian sighed, "Our Situ Family once hired some Formation Masters to collaborate with our family's Artifact Refiners to craft a batch of customized Armor-breaking Spirit Swords."

"But the Formation Masters found the Artifact Refiners crude, and the Artifact Refiners thought the Formation Masters were arrogant, neither could see eye to eye."

"In practice, the Artifact Refiners felt that the Formation Diagrams created by the Formation Masters were problematic here and there and didn't match the spiritual artifacts at all."

"The Formation Masters felt that nothing is bigger than the Formation Diagram. The diagrams couldn't be changed, as any alteration would weaken their effectiveness. If the spiritual artifacts didn't match the formations, that was the problem with the artifacts themselves, and Artifact Refiners had to figure out a solution on their own."

"With both sides passing the buck back and forth, workflow changes, and countless Spirit Stones and Formation Spiritual Ink wasted..."

Situ Jian bitterly smiled, "In the end, after spending a significant amount of money, the batch of Spirit Swords was forged, but most of them were defective, and only a few were usable..."

Mo Hua was shocked to hear this.

He knew there would be issues, but didn't expect it to be this troublesome...

Understanding Mo Hua's sudden question about customized spiritual tools, Situ Jian realized that this was indeed a problem.

Mo Hua pondered for a while and then said:

"Well then, for this rest period, you go ahead and try to catch the thief as planned. If you can catch him, great. If not, let him go for now. Next time, I'll prepare some Array Plates and spiritual tools for you to bring along."

"Okay." Cheng Mo nodded, then thumped his chest and declared, "As long as we catch that damned thief, I'll pay double for the Formation and spiritual tools!"

Having said that, Cheng Mo added in a weaker voice, "Spirit Stones only..."

"Deal!"

Mo Hua squinted and smiled.

Afterwards, Mo Hua wrote a letter and had it sent to Solitary Mountain City, briefly explaining the situation to Master Gu in advance.

At the time of the rest period, Mo Hua made another visit to the Gu Family.

Master Gu was already waiting for Mo Hua at the Gu residence early on.

Compared to usual, Master Gu maintained his usual steadiness, but there was a hint of anticipation in his eyes.

The two found a teahouse in the city.

Mo Hua handed several special Formation Diagrams to Master Gu.

These diagrams included not just the layout of the formations but also illustrations for artifact crafting, a type of Refinement Array Map that integrates both formations and forging.

"Master Gu, I'd like to ask you to refine a few items... "

"These are two simple spiritual tools, one is a stone needle, and the other is a silver needle, along with two types of special Array Plates..."

Mo Hua spread out the Refinement Array Maps and explained each one to Master Gu.

After Mo Hua finished explaining, Master Gu took the diagrams and studied them carefully, raising some cautious questions.

Such as what materials would be used for refining, and the dimensions required.

Some artifact shapes, while fitting the formations, were very complex in the production process, which would increase costs.

Mo Hua answered all these concerns one by one.

Regarding issues with some artifact production steps and the structure of the diagrams, Mo Hua just pondered for a moment and then quickly revised them with a pen on the spot.

After spending more than an hour, the Refinement Array Maps were preliminarily finalized.

Although it was just a preliminary draft, since these Array Plates and spiritual tools were not complex, it was almost ready to be definitive.

Back at home, he could use the Refining Furnace to create a batch and see how they turned out.

After the discussion, Mo Hua said:

"Master Gu, when you go back, calculate the total cost for the refining materials and labor."

Master Gu hesitated for a moment, then smiled and said:

Chapter 1220: Custom (3)

"Although these are customized, they are low-cost spiritual artifacts with simple processes and not worth many Spirit Stones, young master need not be polite."

Mo Hua shook his head, "These are not for my use."

Master Gu was slightly stunned.

Mo Hua then smiled and said: "They are for my fellow disciples, they are not short of Spirit Stones, no need to save on their behalf."

Master Gu's gaze flickered and he gradually understood, nodding with a smile:

"Alright."

Mo Hua also smiled.

The life of Artifact Refiners in Solitary Mountain City is inherently tough.

Although Master Gu is a Golden Core, managing such a large Refinery Shop and numerous disciples underneath, his hands are not that loose financially.

Hence, Mo Hua thought of starting with customized spiritual tools.

This would not only help Cheng Mo and other fellow disciples capture Sin Cultivators and earn Merit Points but also improve the business of Gu Family Refinery Shop.

At the same time, it would allow him to solidify and apply formations more profoundly, using this as a foundation to gain experience, and eventually promote the usage of formations more broadly in the future.

Of course, the goal is still far away.

For now, he needs to start small and try step by step.

After finishing the talk about customized spiritual tools, Mo Hua stood up to take his leave.

Master Gu personally stood up and escorted Mo Hua to the door, watching as Mo Hua's carriage gradually left, a heavy stone in his heart finally slowly settled.

This young master, indeed is a 'noble' person."

In the near future, the Loose Cultivators of Solitary Mountain City might also be able to live a few good days peacefully...

Master Gu then glanced at the Refinement Array Map in his hand, valuing it greatly.

The map only shows a few simple spiritual tools.

But this, is an important beginning...

...

Before the rest period ended, Mo Hua returned to the Sect, waiting for news of Cheng Mo and the others capturing the flying thieves.

If they had not caught them, then the customized spiritual tools made by Master Gu could be put to use next rest period.

If Cheng Mo and the others have already captured the flying thieves, it doesn't matter.

Successfully capturing Sin Cultivators is always a good thing.

These spiritual tools will definitely be useful in the future, no need to rush for now.

Probably by the evening, Cheng Mo and the others returned dejectedly.

Mo Hua, without asking, could tell from their faces that they had definitely failed.

"That bastard!"

"We've been watching him for a whole day and night, we were close to capturing him, but his Wind-System Movement Skill is just too fast, and he managed to escape from the crowd."

"When we went to chase again, there was no trace..."

Cheng Mo sat next to Mo Hua, eating a spiritual meal, and spoke grievously to Mo Hua, then looked at him with eager eyes.

According to the usual practice, at this point, they should let go.

Continuing like this is not a solution.

It wastes time and no Merit Points can be earned.

But the more Cheng Mo thought about it, the angrier he became, especially remembering the disdainful look the thief gave them while escaping, he could not tolerate it anymore.

Mo Hua nodded and said: "I've already asked Master to help refine them, they should be ready before the next rest period."

Cheng Mo was overjoyed.

Seven days later, Master Gu sent someone to bring a Storage Bag to Taixu Gate, which was handed over to Mo Hua.

In the Storage Bag, there were two types of spiritual artifacts, two types of Array Plates.

Mo Hua took out some time and drew Formation Diagrams on them, then handed them over to Cheng Mo and the others, while explaining:

"That flying thief is experienced, obviously quite used to having people set formations to trap him. Therefore, ordinary array plates and conspicuous formation flags can no longer be used. We need a more covert method..."

"Here, there are two types of spiritual tools; one type is stone needles, the other is silver needles."

"Both are drawn with fine engraving techniques."

"Stone needles are for detection, the Formation on them is the Small Yuan Magnetic Formation. They can be stuck in the soil, thrown among rubble, or nailed into rocks, making them hard to detect."

"Silver needles are for tracking; they are inscribed with the Compass Parent-Child Formation. When he is unprepared, you stab the silver needle into the thief's flesh, clothes, or hair and then use a compass to locate him, making it hard for him to escape."

"Next, there are two types of array plates."

"Since they are for large-scale Quicksand Formation and Wood Binding Formation, using array plates is unavoidable."

"However, these array plates are specially refined, selecting only materials that are friendly with soil. Although they are not durable, they are equally concealed, buried in the ground, and hard to be detected."

Later, Mo Hua told Cheng Mo and the others all the methods Monster Hunters commonly use to set traps with formations.

"Did you get it?"

Cheng Mo nodded, and then shook his head.

He is only suited for swinging an axe, not for such brain-racking tasks.

On the contrary, Hao Xuan was serious and remembered everything clearly.

Mo Hua then reminded them of some precautions.

A few days later, during their period of rest, Cheng Mo and the others set out again.

This time Mo Hua stayed in the Sect, cultivating and drawing Formations, waiting for news from Cheng Mo and the others.

Two days later, Cheng Mo and the others returned.

The group looked relaxed, and Cheng Mo especially, puffing out his chest and strutting about with a proud and triumphant air.

"In the mountains, we set stone needles inscribed with the Small Yuan Magnetic Formation. Any slight disturbance, and we'd know everything."

"The flying thief was no exception."

"As soon as he showed up, we caught him."

"But his movement technique was good, he ran fast, fortunately, Yang Qianjun's shooting was accurate, a shot landed on his back, and Situ Jian, quick with his hands, immediately stabbed a silver needle into the thief's wound."

"With the silver needle in his body, like a fish that swallowed a hook, no matter how much he swam, there was always a line tugging on him."

"Like cats catching a mouse, we chased him around the mountains."

"Eventually, when he was utterly exhausted, we set the formations in advance and finally caught this damned thief."

"When caught, the thief still had a look of disbelief on his face, constantly asking 'How on earth did you guys catch me?'"

"Without a word, I gave him a good beating..."

Cheng Mo described the encounter vividly, feeling very exhilarated.

After finishing his story, Cheng Mo also offered a big chicken leg to Mo Hua, praising, "As expected of Junior Brother!"

Mo Hua took the chicken leg, took a bite, and nodded in satisfaction.

From then on, Cheng Mo would undertake rewards, and whenever there was an issue, he would seek advice from Mo Hua.

He would also often buy stone needles, spirit needles, or array plates for scouting, tracking, or setting ambushes from Mo Hua.

With these specially made spiritual tools and formation media, capturing Sin Cultivators was virtually twice as effective with half the effort.

One day, while Mo Hua was eating in the dining hall,

The tall and robust Cheng Mo came over with a Disciple, walking up to Mo Hua.

Cheng Mo told the Disciple, "Call him Junior Brother!"

The Disciple respectfully called out to Mo Hua, "Junior Brother."

Mo Hua was momentarily startled.

For a moment, he had an illusion as if he had become the "gang leader" with others coming to "pay tribute" to him.