

Immortality 1241

Chapter 1241: Breakthrough (3)

He is a Body Cultivator and dreams of participating in the Sword Discussion Conference.

The Sword Discussion Conference is held in a specially designated area on Mount of Tao.

The terrain is varied, with mountains and waters, and complex landscapes. It is purposefully constructed to allow teams of five disciples to engage in martial arts competition.

Above the arena, there are also Formations.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense swept across briefly, his gaze shook, and he seemed a bit absent-minded.

"Fifth grade..."

These Formations are indeed genuine Fifth Grade Arrays, and not just any ordinary kind.

They are Fifth Grade Void Formations!

Encompassing Spatial Power, Fifth Grade Void Formations!

But just...

Mo Hua frowned, somewhat puzzled, "Why would Fifth Grade Formations be needed here?"

Cheng Mo naturally did not know, and Hao Xuan also shook his head.

Situ Jian then explained to Mo Hua: "These Formations are used to protect the disciples participating in the sword competition."

He may not understand much about Fifth Grade Formations, but Situ Jian is very familiar with the facilities related to the Sword Discussion Conference.

In the entire Qianxue State Boundary, there isn't a single disciple who doesn't long to participate in the Sword Discussion Conference.

Situ Jian is no exception.

More so because he is a Sword Cultivator, and his name even contains the character "Sword."

If he could secure a good ranking in the Sword Discussion Conference, not only would he be highly valued by the elders in his Sect, but even upon returning to his family, he would be celebrated as bringing honor to his ancestors and would have boundless prospects.

Situ Jian continued, "The Sword Discussion Conference is merely for sparring, not for disciples to fight to the death."

"But everyone is a Foundation Establishment Disciple, with comparable Cultivation. Once they go all out, nobody can really pull their punches."

"Therefore, some old seniors of Qianxue State Boundary have joined hands in constructing these Fifth Grade Void Formations, to ensure the safety of the disciples."

"After all, those who can enter a Sect of Qian State either possess excellent talent, come from a distinguished background, or both. Should anything untoward happen, it would be difficult to explain."

Mo Hua was a bit unclear, "How does this ensure safety?"

The real competitions of the Sword Discussion Conference are very complex.

With his current understanding of Formation principles, he couldn't quite grasp how it was possible to protect the disciples' safety under the sword competition's rules.

Situ Jian pointed towards the disciples participating in the sword competition, "Before entering the arena, each person will have a 'Life Rune'."

"The Life Rune is integrated with the Fifth Grade Formation, and it will take injuries instead of the disciple. Once the damage exceeds a certain threshold, the Life Rune will shatter, and the disciple will be deemed defeated."

"At the same time, the Fifth Grade Formation will forcefully activate, using the power of the Void to forcibly transport the defeated disciple out of the competition arena, ensuring their safety..."

Mo Hua was startled and then suddenly understood.

So that's how Fifth Grade Void Formations are used.

"Then, is this 'Life Rune' somewhat similar to the special Eternal Life Rune?" Mo Hua asked.

"Indeed it is similar, but actually, it's quite different," Situ Jian said seriously. "Although this kind of Life Rune also involves Fifth Grade Void Power, it cannot be compared to the special Eternal Life Rune at all."

"In the entire Qianxue State Boundary, only a few of the top direct lineage prodigies from the pinnacle families are qualified to receive an Eternal Life Rune planted by the Heaven Void Ancestor, even at the cost of depleting their origin."

"And such disciples are mainly concentrated in the Four Great Sects."

"Our Situ Family, while barely touching the threshold of the Fifth Grade, is still not qualified to plant such a special Eternal Life Rune..."

Situ Jian sighed.

Mo Hua's brow furrowed slightly.

Eternal Life Rune...

Before he could contemplate further, Cheng Mo already yelled out, "It's starting, it's starting, Mo Hua, Junior Brother, look quickly!"

Mo Hua looked in the direction of the sound, and saw that in an arena separated and protected by Formations, two teams of disciples had already begun their battle.

This kind of five-on-five confrontation is quite complex.

It requires not only personal Cultivation and Taoist Skill but also coordination, cooperation, and tactical strategy, among others.

Once the fight happens, the situation becomes complicated, and the developments are ever-changing.

As Mo Hua watched for the first time, he couldn't fully understand many of the rules.

He could only watch and try to remember.

But, to be honest, it was indeed more exciting than the previous discussions on pills, devices, and runes, among others.

Especially when it came to the confrontations involving disciples of Taixu Gate with those from other Sects.

Due to vested interests, there's a natural sense of anticipation.

No one doesn't wish for their own Sect to win.

Thus, the two teams crisscrossed, grappling in close combat; Body Cultivators with their sharp swords and blades, as fierce as tigers, relentlessly advanced on the Spiritual Cultivators.

The Spiritual Cultivators retreated while casting spells.

The decisive moment of battle hinged on the thinnest of margins, coming and going in a flash.

A moment's negligence could lead to a series of unforeseen events, extremely perilous, causing one's emotions to fluctuate unpredictably.

Mo Hua quickly became engrossed in the spectacle.

In the blink of an eye, it had already turned dark.

Unbeknownst to him, he had been watching for an entire day.

Mo Hua sighed.

This Sword Discussion Conference was indeed exhilarating.

Time flew by swiftly.

However, considering the event only came once every three years and the opportunity was rare, Mo Hua found it acceptable to "indulge" himself and joined Cheng Mo to watch the sword duels when he was free.

As he watched, Mo Hua began to notice some subtleties.

Although it was supposed to rely on cooperation between fellow Sect members, many Sects did not exhibit much "tacit understanding" amongst themselves.

In most cases, each fighter acted independently.

Then, they would seize opportunities to gang up on the few.

This became a form of tactic.

The main purpose of team cooperation was to "outnumber the enemy."

The goal of tactics was also most often to "outnumber the enemy."

Although the fights were spectacular, there was indeed a lack of variety, with tactics being too simplistic.

These strategies were even less sophisticated than those of the Monster Hunter uncles in Tongxian City, who would work together to hunt monsters, luring enemies deep into traps and combining long-range and close-quarter combat to encircle and eradicate their prey.

Mo Hua furrowed his brows in thought and gradually came to an understanding.

Monster Hunters hunted monsters in a fight of life and death, prioritizing practicality and using all means necessary.

Whereas the Sword Discussion Conference was essentially a form of "competition."

Even among fellow Sect disciples, not all had the same intentions, and there was competition among them.

Moreover, it seemed that some Great Sects were intentionally allowing one or two of their core disciples to stand out.

During the grand battle, they would have other Sect members wear out the opponent first.

After the opponent's spiritual power and physical strength had been significantly depleted, these core disciples would then take action, accomplishing the "feat" of fighting two or even three opponents at once, reaping victory and earning the admiration and praise of other disciples.

Mo Hua felt disdainful.

Using the Sword Discussion Conference as a stage to promote core disciples.

But the key point was that since the Conference was all about sparring, such tactics weren't too much of an issue.

But what about in the future? When facing malicious Evil Cultivators or fierce Demon Cultivators, would they still employ the same tactics?

Those Evil Demon Cultivators were like centipedes, never dying even when cut in half.

By playing this way, weren't they just giving their enemies a chance for a counter-kill?

Or could it be that these core disciples would later directly enter the high ranks of the Taoist Court or noble families, never having to face Evil Demons on the front line?

Mo Hua shook his head.

However, all this had nothing to do with him.

He was merely an observer for the time being.

With the philosophy of knowing oneself and one's opponent, Mo Hua would still frequently attend the Sword Discussion Conference.

To learn what kind of Cultivation Techniques and Taoist Skills other Sects practiced, what tactics they favored.

To see what the atmosphere of the Sect was like.

To observe whether the disciples were harmonious only on the surface while scheming against each other in secret.

At the same time, Mo Hua pondered in his mind.

If he were to fight up there, what should he do? What tactics could he use?

Mo Hua cataloged all this, thinking that it might come in handy someday if the opportunity arose.

In addition to watching the Sword Discussion Conference, Mo Hua also diligently continued his own cultivation.

After tireless efforts day and night, the Mystery Formation within Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness was finally completely unraveled, the bottleneck was broken, and everything fell into place naturally.

As the Sword Discussion Conference neared its end, Mo Hua's cultivation finally broke through.

Moving past the early stage and stepping into the middle phase.

His spiritual power flowed like mercury, becoming ever more profound.

From then on, he became a young Cultivator in the middle stage of Foundation Establishment.

Chapter 1242: The Curtain Falls

Breaking through the bottleneck and reaching the middle stage of Foundation Establishment, Mo Hua's Blood Qi has become more profound.

However, his constitution was innately weak, and he did not cultivate his physical body, so even though his Blood Qi has increased, his physical strength hasn't significantly improved.

His Spiritual Power has also become more vigorous.

Various Spells are now more effortlessly deployed with greater might and speed.

Mo Hua felt that he had grown stronger!

But after giving it some thought and comparing himself to Cheng Mo and Situ Jian, he suddenly realized a problem:

Even though his Cultivation had broken through and his strength increased, the gap between him and his Sect peers seemed to have widened...

His Spiritual Root was of mid-to-lower Grade. novel.com

The Spiritual Roots of other Taixu Sect Disciples were at least upper-to-lower Grade.

Many, like Cheng Mo and Situ Jian, had upper-middle to Superior-Grade Spiritual Roots.
Even Hao Xuan turned out to possess Superior-Grade Spiritual Roots!

His Spiritual Root Grade was nearly a whole rank and more lower than theirs.

The Grade of his Cultivation Technique was also similar.

Although Heaven Yan Jue was special, it did not enhance Spiritual Power; fundamentally, like his Spiritual Root Grade, it was a mid-to-lower Grade Cultivation Technique.

In the early stage of Foundation Establishment, his Spiritual Power was already inferior to others.

Reaching the middle stage, although his own Spiritual Power has increased, others have grown even stronger, thereby widening the gap even more.

Mo Hua sighed.

For a moment, his emotions were complex.

Yet, originally being a Loose Cultivator, it was normal for him to fall short in terms of Spiritual Root, foundation, heritage, Spiritual Power, and Blood Qi compared to others.

With exceptionally talented Junior Brothers and Sisters like shining gems ahead of him, Mo Hua wasn't unable to accept this disparity.

Mo Hua quickly adjusted his mindset.

No matter what, he is now a Cultivator at the middle stage of Foundation Establishment!

The next step is the late stage of Foundation Establishment.

After that, it's the Golden Core!

Mo Hua's eyes sparkled like stars, and a bright smile appeared on his handsome face.

The sky was gradually brightening, and the dawn was breaking.

Mo Hua ended his Cultivation and slowly stood up, stretching his body.

It has been three years since joining Taixu Sect. Without realizing it, Mo Hua has grown taller, now appearing as a graceful and handsome young man with striking features.

He continued his usual routine of reviewing Formation Books, followed by practicing Formations.

Regrettably, his Divine Sense remained at Seventeen Patterns.

The restrictions of the Heavenly Dao Laws still persisted.

After breaking through to the middle stage of Foundation Establishment, Mo Hua could feel his Divine Sense strengthening, but the strengthened part was "taken away" by the Law.

After absorbing Divine Sense, the Void Law also loosened slightly, apparently having been "sated" somewhat.

It seems his guesses were not wrong.

Next, he must find a way to completely satiate it.

Only by lifting the restrictions of the Heavenly Dao Laws can his Divine Sense advance further.

Then he would be able to learn those higher-level, High-Rank Second Grade Formations, including the Second-Born Thunder Flow Ultimate Formation with Second Grade Twenty Patterns.

Mo Hua quietly contemplated his plans.

To satiate this Law, it seems insufficient to slowly refine his Divine Sense by himself.

He needs to "supplement" it.

But to enhance Divine Sense, one must inevitably venture beyond the Qianxue State Boundary.

This year, it's unthinkable; at least, he has to wait until this year is over, to get accustomed to and stabilize in the middle stage of Foundation Establishment before considering the "supplementation" of Divine Sense.

It's just uncertain whether Elder Master Xun will agree to lift his "house arrest" next year.

Mo Hua pondered in his heart.

But there's no rush for now; he still wants to see the conclusion of the Sword Discussion Conference.

...

The Sword Discussion Conference was still underway and reaching its climax.

Those who have persisted until now are all the elites among the Heaven's Prides within their Sects, with terrifyingly profound Cultivation and foundations.

Especially the elites of the Four Great Sects.

Each one's Spiritual Power was surging, vast like the ocean, causing Mo Hua to watch in awe.

Although not as extraordinary as the Fire Buddha, they weren't far behind.

But there's only one Fire Buddha.

However, at the Sword Discussion Conference, each of the Four Great Sects, including the Qian Dao Sect, had at least five such Disciples.

In terms of schemes, tactics, means, and Taoist Skills, they fall short of the Fire Buddha.

But in terms of Spiritual Root quality and Cultivation Techniques practiced, they were even more superior.

Mo Hua inwardly exclaimed.

Deserving of the Qianxue State Boundary and the Four Great Sects, the deep foundations are terrifying indeed; Sect Disciples, at least in terms of Cultivation level, were truly outstanding.

Much stronger than himself, anyway...

As the Sword Discussion Conference progressed, the competitions were almost entirely among the Disciples of the Four Great Sects.

Especially the semifinals and quarterfinals before the final match.

The rest of the Qianxue Hundred Gates were almost entirely eliminated.

Very few of the Twelve Streams Sects remained.

The Eight Great Gates had some presence, but not much.

Taixu Sect did have Senior Brothers and Sisters who made it to the top sixteen, but in the end, they only achieved the eleventh place and got no further.

Unlike Taixu Sect, Chongxu Sect made steady progress, taking the eighth place.

Tai'a Sect, relying on solid Swordsmanship and sharp Spirit Swords, advanced triumphantly, only narrowly losing to the Four Great Sects.

In the end, they were only one step away from the finals but fell slightly short on luck, finishing fifth after being narrowly defeated by a Heavenly Pride of Longding Sect.

This was the best result outside of the Four Great Sects.

At this point, the semifinal and final matches were wholly among the Disciples of the Four Great Sects, including the Qian Dao Sect.

The semifinal and the final matches were the main events.

On the day of the semifinals, Mo Hua arrived early at Dao Mountain, ready to enjoy the show, but unexpectedly ran into Ouyang Feng.

Mo Hua was delighted and promptly greeted:

"Senior Brother Feng!"

Upon hearing this, Ouyang Feng turned around, took a glance, and saw a fair-faced and handsome young man calling him Senior Brother, momentarily puzzled.

Upon closer inspection, he recognized Mo Hua.

Chapter 1243: Curtain Falls (2)

Ouyang Feng gently smiled and said, "Long time no see, Junior Brother Mo."

Mo Hua also nodded repeatedly, "Long time no see."

When he first enrolled, he always followed Senior Brother Ouyang Feng on missions.

Later, when Senior Brother Feng and the others went to Refining Demon Mountain, he couldn't go, so he had to mix in alone.

After that, he was grounded.

All in all, it had been over a year since they last met.

Mo Hua looked around and noticed that Ouyang Feng was all by himself, puzzled, he asked:
"Senior Brother Feng, did you come to watch the Sword Discussion Conference alone?"

Ouyang Feng spoke softly, "I have sect mates joining me, I just arrived early, they will come later."

"Oh." Mo Hua nodded.

"By the way," Mo Hua said with some regret, "I watched the competition between Tai'a Sect and Heavenly Sword Sect, it was so close, just a bit more and Tai'a Sect could have won, and advanced to the top four."

Ouyang Feng's expression turned complicated, with a faint bittersweet smile on his lips, "It's not that simple, it seems close, but in fact, we... could never have won."

Mo Hua was slightly startled, looking at Ouyang Feng with suspicion.

Ouyang Feng caught Mo Hua's keen gaze, suddenly snapped back to reality, smiled warmly again, and explained to Mo Hua:

"Our Tai'a Sect is only one of the Eight Great Gates, compared to the Four Great Sects, we still lack depth. Although it seemed a little more would lead to victory, in reality, we are lacking many years of accumulation, something that cannot be made up in a short time. Winning would certainly be good, but even if we lose, it's to be expected, no need to be discouraged..."

Mo Hua slowly nodded, "Senior Brother Feng makes sense."

He looked at Ouyang Feng again and asked, "Senior Brother Feng, in the next Sword Discussion Conference, it will be your turn to compete, right?"

"Yes."

Ouyang Feng said indifferently, with a fleeting shadow in his eyes, devoid of any joy or anticipation.

Mo Hua's brow slightly furrowed.

He wanted to ask more, but there were already several disciples dressed in Tai'a Sect Taoist Robes walking over, respectfully saying, "Senior Brother Feng, the Elder is calling for you."

Ouyang Feng nodded slightly, "Understood."

Then he smiled at Mo Hua, apologizing:

"Junior Brother Mo, please excuse me."

"Mhm mhm," Mo Hua nodded, waving his hand, "Goodbye, Senior Brother Feng."

As Ouyang Feng turned to leave, and as their paths crossed, his demeanor no longer carried warmth, and a hint of darkness flashed in his eyes.

This hint of darkness was keenly caught by Mo Hua.

He stood in place, staring blankly as Ouyang Feng and the other Tai'a Sect disciples walked away, his gaze slightly fixed.

Senior Brother Feng, he seemed a bit different from the impression he had before.

Wondering if something had happened...

Mo Hua frowned slightly.

Latter, a big group including Cheng Mo also arrived.

They approached Mo Hua, all calling out, "Junior Brother."

Mo Hua too, greeted them with a smile.

Cheng Mo said, "Mo Hua, I've found a good spot with the best view, let me take you there."

"Okay." Mo Hua nodded.

The group then set off towards the southeast corner of the Sword Discussion Conference venue.

Along the way, someone sighed:

"Our Taixu Gate, who knows when we can make it to the finals..."

"Forget the finals, making it to the top four would be great."

"With the ranking of being in the top four sects, we would get a larger share of the spirit mines in Mount Qianlong, a sizeable amount of Spirit Stones, as well as rewards from the Taoist Court."

"Rewards from the Taoist Court?" Mo Hua was taken aback.

"Yes," a disciple explained, "For grand events like the Qianxue State Boundary Sword Discussion Conference, the Taoist Court always offers extra rewards."

"These rewards vary with each session."

"There are Superior Daoist Magic, rare Pills, treasured items for Tao Cultivation from the Taoist Court's collection, as well as various Formations and Runes."

Mo Hua became curious, "What kind of Formations are there?"

That disciple shook his head, "I'm not sure about that..."

"It seems this year there are no Formation rewards."

"The same as the last one."

"Thinking about it, there seems to be many sessions without Formation rewards."

"Formations have the least use, unless one is a Formation Master, getting a Formation is useless, one can only trade it with others or submit it to their own family in exchange for Merit Points."

"Indeed, it's far less tangible than spiritual treasures, Daoist Magic, and Pills, which ordinary cultivators can use..."

...

The disciples continued discussing among themselves.

Mo Hua nodded, curious in his heart.

Wondering what kind of Formations the Sword Discussion Conference could possibly reward.

Afterward, the Sword Discussion Conference proceeded as planned.

From the top four to the final competition, Mo Hua didn't miss a single match, he watched them all.

The Heavenly Prides of the Four Great Sects were indeed each extraordinary, with no weaknesses in Cultivation, Daoist Magic, or Spiritual Artifacts.

Within the Void Formation, they fought against each other, and with their full strength, the tremendous Spiritual Power and the use of Superior Daoist Magic, bolstered by top-grade Spiritual Artifacts, the might displayed was extremely astonishing.

All the disciples around wore shocked expressions.

The Elders and even the upper echelons of the Taoist Court and other powers also showed appreciation.

Mo Hua also witnessed the Heaven's Chosen Sons who stood at the very top of the Sword Discussion Conference.

These Heaven's Chosen Sons, in the full view of the public, vied in the Debating Sword event, fully demonstrating the style of Heavenly Prides, eliciting astonishment and admiration from countless onlookers.

And at this moment, Mo Hua was just quietly watching from below.

Although he is the "Junior Brother" of Taixu Gate, within the entire Sword Discussion Conference, and even the greater Taoist discussions, he was still just an unknown small disciple.

Aside from Taixu Gate, almost no one knew him.

In the vast sea of disciples, he was like a drop in the ocean, unnoticed by others.

In the vast crowd, the inconspicuous Mo Hua watched silently, his thoughts unclear, but his clear eyes shining with a luster that was hard for others to detect.

Eventually, after a series of brilliant battles.

One of the Four Great Sects, the Heavenly Sword Sect, became the Leader of the Sword Discussion Conference.

Qian Taoist Sect took second place.

Longding Sect was third.

Wanxiao Sect ranked fourth.

Chapter 1244: Conclusion (3)

At this point, the current Debating Dao Conference has completely concluded.

And behind the scenes, the higher-ups of various Sects wrap themselves in open strategies and covert manipulations around the rank order of the Conference, all vying to secure the greatest benefits for their own Sects...

...

Inside the Taixu Gate, in the Sect Leader Residence.

Elder Master Xun and the Taixu Sect Master sit opposite each other, drinking tea.

The room is serene and filled with the fragrance of tea.

Both of them appear calm, but their eyes reveal deep contemplation.

"In this Debating Dao Conference, the Tai'a Sect placed first among the Eight Great Gates, only slightly behind the Four Great Sects..."

"The Rushing Void Sect progressed to the middle ranks."

"Only our Taixu Gate lingered at the edges of the lower ranks, neither advancing nor retreating."

"But as the other two have moved forward, our lack of advancement actually means 'retreat'..."

The Taixu Sect Master sipped his tea, speaking indifferently.

The tea is refreshing, but the aftertaste is slightly bitter.

The Taixu Sect Master raised his eyes, looking at Elder Master Xun, seeing the elder's composed demeanor, he couldn't help but ask:

"Elder Master... This seems a bit inappropriate..."

Elder Master Xun responded indifferently: "You are the Sect Leader."

The Taixu Sect Master gave a bitter smile.

The Sect Leader is indeed the Sect Leader, but in front of an old ancestor, what does the Sect Leader account for.

Elder Master Xun slightly lifted his gaze, looked at the Taixu Sect Master, put down his teacup, flicked his sleeve, and frowned saying:

"Have you heard some rumors?"

The Taixu Sect Master pondered for a moment, then carefully said:

"You know, the power of my family is not small..."

Elder Master Xun glanced at him, saying: "No need to be so modest."

The Taixu Sect Master smiled slightly, then his expression turned solemn as he said:

"I have some connections within the clan, and I've heard from the Taoist Court side that the Shen Family of Qian Daoist Sect, in alliance with the Heavenly Sword Sect and other Four Sects, have petitioned the Taoist Court proposing the... "

The Taixu Sect Master's eyes turned cold, as he said in a deep voice: "Sect system reform."

Elder Master Xun raised his eyebrows, somewhat surprised, and asked gravely:

"How do they want to change it?"

The Taixu Sect Master shook his head, "That I do not know..."

He played with the celadon jade-inlaid cup in his hand, continuing, "But no matter how it changes, it seems to be no good news for us..."

"Our Taixu Gate is currently declining, with the Divine Thought into Sword technique lost, like cutting off our own arms, we can't compete with them. Maintaining our current position would be considered good."

"Once the Four Great Sects, in conjunction with the Taoist Court, strongly push for Sect reform, in the midst of such treacherous and unpredictable changes, our Taixu Gate will inevitably face turbulence, and even..."

The voice of the Taixu Sect Master grew colder, "...it's possible to fall out of the Eight Great Gates."

Elder Master Xun's expression turned grave, and he fell silent in thought.

The Taixu Sect Master read his expression but couldn't discern anything, knowing his own cultivation was shallow and couldn't penetrate Elder Master Xun's thoughts, he could only sigh and voice his concerns:

"On the surface, it's the Four Great Sects, in alliance with other Sects, pushing for the reform of the Sect system to grab more benefits for themselves..."

"But I faintly feel, they seem to be targeting our Taixu Gate..."

The eyebrows of the Taixu Sect Master slightly furrowed.

"But why?"

"If it's about grievances, I could list a few, if it's for reasons, I could guess a few."

"But I always feel, these are not the real reasons..."

"There must be hidden secrets behind this!"

Elder Master Xun looked slightly surprised, gazing deeply at the Taixu Sect Master.

That family of Cultivators, indeed no easy feat...

Elder Master Xun slightly nodded, "I understand..."

The Taixu Sect Master waited for Elder Master Xun to continue, but his words stopped abruptly there.

What next?

The Taixu Sect Master looked puzzled at Elder Master Xun.

Elder Master Xun indifferently took another sip of tea, "I have my plans."

What plans?

The Taixu Sect Master wanted to ask, but seeing Elder Master Xun's demeanor, he felt that even if he did ask, the elder would surely not disclose anything.

The expression of the Taixu Sect Master grew serious.

Seeing his expression, Elder Master Xun slightly nodded inwardly.

Although coming from a family background, not of the Taixu Gate lineage, since he occupies this position, he considers its politics, truly concerned for the safety of the Taixu Gate.

Elder Master Xun, unprecedentedly, poured him a cup of tea, and with an aged voice, slowly said:

"As the mountain rain is about to come, respond to changes with constancy."

The Taixu Sect Master drank this cup of tea feeling rather flattered.

But his doubts didn't decrease but instead increased.

When the mountain rain comes, what kind of "constancy" should be used to cope with these changes...

...

The Sword Discussion Conference concluded.

The disciples were still eager for more, and there were still follow-up events, but these no longer concerned Mo Hua.

He saw what he needed to see, other matters had nothing to do with him. If it truly involved significant interests of the Sect, it wouldn't be his place to intervene.

Fame and gain are ultimately external things.

The path of Tao Cultivation is long, requiring one to quiet the heart and earnestly seek knowledge.

Mo Hua returned to the Sect, continuing his cultivation as persistently as water droplets wearing down stone.

His next target is the Late Stage of Foundation Establishment.

The rest of his time was spent studying formations.

Mo Hua tried to integrate the Five Elements and Eight Trigrams Formation System, taught to him by Elder Master Xun, with the Five Elements Eight Trigrams Formations treasured by the Shangguang Family and Wenren Family, cross-referencing and corroborating each other to broaden his formation experiences.

The improvement of the Five Elements Source Armor also continued iteratively.

Yu Er became more lively.

With Mo Hua looking after her, Yu Er in the Taixu Gate was like a joyful little swallow, free and unbounded, fluttering around everywhere.

This was also the happiest time of his life.

Time flies, and unknowingly, another year passed.

The New Year Festival came and went as usual.

Mo Hua, now in the Middle Stage of Foundation Establishment, successfully advanced another level.

And a new batch of disciples entered the Taixu Gate, younger than Mo Hua by a batch, truly his "Junior Brothers" and "Junior Sisters."

Mo Hua truly became an "Elder Brother" now.

Chapter 1245: Refining Demon Mountain

This is Mo Hua's fourth year entering Taixu Gate.

It is also the academic year for the Foundation Building Middle Stage.

This year marks the beginning of Mo Hua's study of the Tao cultivation course for the Foundation Building Middle Stage, including engagement with artifact refining, alchemy, and runes of the Second Grade Middle Stage.

Additionally, step by step, Mo Hua will delve deeper into learning High-Level Second Grade Formations.

Striving to enhance his Divine Sense to Nineteen Patterns within three years.

This is the minor goal Mo Hua has set for himself.

He originally thought about targeting Twenty Patterns, but he also knows deep down that it's practically impossible.

Twenty Patterns correspond to the Divine Sense of the Golden Core Realm, and given his current cultivation and the growth rate of his Divine Sense, it's absolutely unattainable in the short term.

Afterward, everything proceeded as usual.

Though the cultivation course changed, the overall framework of the inheritance did not. Neither did the Elders nor the Instructors who taught the classes change.

Thus, Mo Hua quickly adapted to the study year for the Foundation Building Middle Phase.

After two months, once the Disciples' cultivation stabilized and everything was on the right track, the Sect informed Mo Hua and the others:

Refining Demon Mountain is now open.

The Elder responsible for cultivation instruction stood before the Tao Teaching Room, and addressed the crowd of Disciples:

"Refining Demon Mountain, as its name implies, is a place for Disciples to hunt Monster Beasts, hone their Taoist Skills, and temper themselves."

"This is also the most important source of Merit Points for you during the Foundation Building Middle Phase, aside from undertaking rewards."

"Some rewards even specifically involve hunting Monster Beasts."

"The Monster Beasts on Refining Demon Mountain come in a wide variety, possess unique Bloodlines, and are formidable. Many rare Monster Beast materials cannot be bought even with Spirit Stones."

"Therefore, for Sword Cultivators, Artifact Refiners, Alchemists, or any Disciple who needs to refine Top-Grade Spiritual Artifacts, visiting Refining Demon Mountain is indispensable."

"However, Monster Beasts are different from Cultivators..."

The Elder paused slightly, lifting his eyes to the group of Disciples:

"You who hail from noble families have led privileged lives from a young age and mostly seen docile Spirit Beasts. Few among you have truly seen Monster Beasts up close."

"Monster Beasts have intense Blood Qi and overflowing demonic power, making them very difficult to handle. They are also of a fierce nature, many of which prey on humans."

"Even those that feed on Spirit Grass and drink sweet dew do not consume humans, but they will still kill humans."

"Therefore, when hunting Monster Beasts, there should be a group of at least five and up to ten people. And one must be exceedingly cautious, to avoid unwittingly falling victim to these beasts."

"When you go out to fulfill rewards, Sin Cultivators and Demon Cultivators might not be reasonable, however, such Evil Demons fear the Sect and dread the noble families backing you, hence they may not truly dare to strike a deadly blow."

"But once you enter Refining Demon Mountain, you will face ferocious Monster Beasts devoid of humanity, and there truly is no reasoning with them."

"If you are not careful and neglect vigilance, it is highly likely that you end up in the belly of a beast."

"Moreover, those capable of being captured by the Elders of the Sects and deliberately placed inside Refining Demon Mountain are no ordinary beasts, making them even more troublesome to handle."

The Elder pondered for a moment, then said slowly, "Although Refining Demon Mountain is now open, as per usual practice, at least until the second half of the year, or maybe next year..."

"When your cultivation becomes more solid, and your Taoist Skills and Spiritual Artifacts are more attuned with your Cultivation, then consider venturing into Refining Demon Mountain to hunt Monster Beasts, extract materials, and earn Merit Points. It wouldn't be too late."

"Sharpening the axe does not delay the work of cutting wood. Do not be hasty and reckless, or else you might suffer the consequences."

"I have said my part, as for when to enter Refining Demon Mountain, you should weigh it for yourselves..."

The Elder's gaze lowered, sweeping over the seated Disciples, "One final thing to say to all of you..."

"If you encounter betrayal by your fellow Sect Disciples or other Sect Disciples within Refining Demon Mountain, even if it's one of the Four Great Sects, our Sect will certainly demand an explanation."

"However, if you meet your end within a Monster Beast's jaws due to your own foolishness and rash actions, the Sect will not take responsibility."

"Not only Taixu Gate, but this is also the custom throughout Qianxue State Boundary."

The sons of noble families, if content with self-degradation, can certainly continue their lives of luxury and extravagance.

But if they truly wish to advance, the pressure is great, and the competition, even more so.

Yet even so, being raised within prestigious families shielded from the wind and rain, where most struggles revolve around family interests and personal prospects without truly facing the deadly dangers of the Cultivation World.

Therefore, upon joining the Sect, they must begin to adapt accordingly.

Undertaking rewards is one aspect, to teach Disciples how to deal with Sin Cultivators and understand the malignity of human hearts.

Refining Demon Mountain is the second point, to teach Disciples about the ferocity of Monster Beasts.

Therefore, a long time ago, an Elder of the Qianxue State Boundary, against much opposition, set this rule:

To die within a Monster Beast's mouth on Refining Demon Mountain is to die in vain.

This rule was established to instill a sense of risk awareness in the Disciples of the Sect, to appreciate the difficulty of life and experience the horror of death.

Upon hearing this, the faces of the seated Disciples all turned solemn, with a sense of vigilance in their hearts.

Mo Hua also felt a bit tense.

But his tension was due to anticipation.

Monster Hunting!

He felt the "Bloodline" of the Monster Hunter within him growing restless.

In the Refining Demon Mountain, where towering peaks and dense forests house gatherings of Monster Beasts, there will be so much to do.

But he does not know whether Elder Master Xun will agree to him entering the mountain.

Mo Hua pondered to himself.

On the surface, Elder Master Xun's grounding order was to prevent him from leaving Qianxue State Boundary.

Since Refining Demon Mountain is within Qianxue State Boundary, within the established limits, there should be no issues.

But Mo Hua knew that Elder Master Xun's intention was to keep him away from danger and have him concentrate on studying Formations securely.

Refining Demon Mountain is perilous, and Elder Master Xun might not agree to him entering.

After deliberating, Mo Hua decided to consult Elder Master Xun anyway.

Upon seeking an audience with Elder Master Xun, Mo Hua's request to enter the mountain was flatly refused as soon as he broached the subject.

Elder Master Xun, with a stern face and strict tone yet revealing concern, said, "You child, why such eagerness for trouble?"

Chapter 1246: Refining Demon Mountain (2)

"The Monster Beasts of Refining Demon Mountain are extremely perilous; you have no idea,"

"Moreover, you are not a Body Cultivator, with a feeble body; your Spiritual Power is weak, and your spells also don't hold an advantage; you don't refine Spiritual Artifacts, hence no use for Monster Beasts' materials; you draw Formation Diagrams every day, and you're not lacking Merit Points..."

"Why are you going to Refining Demon Mountain?"

Elder Master Xun had rendered Mo Hua speechless with his questions.

Although Elder Master Xun's words were somewhat at odds with the actual situation,

Although my body is weak, my movement technique is good; my Spiritual Power is insignificant, but my spells are quick; I don't refine Spiritual Artifacts myself, but Master Gu helps me to refine them. [nøvel.com](http://novel.com)

It's true that I draw Formations every day, but how could I not lack Merit Points?

Merit Points are something that the more you have, the better.

It may not be necessary for oneself, but that doesn't mean one should not accumulate them.

Qian Zhuang, hero of boldness.

The more Merit Points Mo Hua has, the more reassured he feels in his heart. He wished he could save up ten or twenty thousand points, and even just looking at the Taixu Token brings him pleasure.

But Elder Master Xun also made sense.

All these, considered currently, are not essential.

Nevertheless, Mo Hua was somewhat unwilling to accept this.

Elder Master Xun noticed his reluctance and slightly shook his head, thinking to himself that Mo Hua, this child, although good-natured and steady, and seeming more grown-up, has become a handsome and charming young boy.

But he is still somewhat childlike at heart, always eager to join in on the excitement.

And indeed, Refining Demon Mountain, with hundreds of Sect Disciples gathered to form teams for Monster Hunting, is quite the spectacle.

But, is that an excitement you, child, can join in?

"Your talent lies in formations, one strength that covers many flaws. Develop your talent to the utmost, and you may carve out your own path in the future. There's no need to imitate others..."

"There are paths you need not and cannot walk. Formation itself is a clear path!"

Elder Master Xun spoke with earnest and profundity.

"Oh..." Mo Hua nodded slightly.

Seeing that Mo Hua was still somewhat unhappy, Elder Master Xun thought for a moment, flipped his wrist, and took out a thick stack of Formation Diagrams.

"You've almost learned the Five Elements Bagua Formation from Taixu Gate with the Seventeen Patterns. Now learn this set of mine..."

Mo Hua was taken aback, "Elder Master, isn't yours from Taixu Gate as well?"

"It's a bit different..."

Elder Master Xun said, "The formations from Taixu Gate focus on 'heritage', intended for teaching and imparting..."

"What I am giving you now is the real 'research' in formations."

"These Formation Diagrams are also based on Five Elements and Eight Trigrams, but compared to those you learned before, they are significantly more challenging..."

Mo Hua's eyes lit up, "Significantly more challenging?"

He quickly and respectfully took the Formation Diagrams, glanced over them briefly, and his eyes shone even brighter.

These Formation Diagrams strangely shared an ingenious similarity with the formation heritages of the Shangguan Family and the Wenren Family. Moreover, they seemed even more profound.

"Thank you, Elder Master!" Mo Hua said with a beaming smile.

Seeing Mo Hua happy, Elder Master Xun finally breathed a sigh of relief, and waving his hand he said:

"Go, go and study the formations."

"Sure, sure."

Mo Hua immediately tucked the Formation Diagrams into his clothes and scampered off.

Elder Master Xun watched and smiled wryly, shaking his head softly.

In the time that followed, not to disappoint Elder Master Xun's kindness, Mo Hua temporarily put Refining Demon Mountain out of his mind and focused wholeheartedly on studying the new formations.

But there will come a day when the new formations will have been fully studied.

Once Mo Hua finished learning, he went to find Elder Master Xun to express his wish to venture into Refining Demon Mountain.

To appease Mo Hua, Elder Master Xun could only give him more Formation Diagrams to keep him busy and to settle his restless heart.

And so, nearly another half a year passed by.

Using Refining Demon Mountain as an excuse, Mo Hua "extorted" many Formation Diagrams from Elder Master Xun, which weren't supposed to be taught to him at this time.

Meanwhile, Cheng Mo and the others became more stable in their Cultivation, adapted to the Middle Stage of Foundation Establishment battles, and began venturing into Refining Demon Mountain in teams of five.

Mo Hua, a bona fide Monster Hunter, could only watch on eagerly.

At mealtime, Cheng Mo and the others gathered, chattering excitedly about Refining Demon Mountain.

"Disciples and Monster Beasts everywhere..."

"Tigers with claws longer than necks, Bear Pi standing like small hills, Wolf Demons with green fur all over, and Phoenixes adorned in fiery red..."

"Battling against the Monster Beasts, one can fight with full force, with martial arts and spells unhindered, the combat invigorating and unrestrained."

"A single Early Stage Second Grade Demon Core is worth three hundred Merit Points."

"And there are valuable pelts, bones, essence blood, gallbladders, all worth a fortune..."

Cheng Mo told the tales with vivid enthusiasm.

But after about ten days, having made a few trips to Refining Demon Mountain, Cheng Mo seemed somewhat dejected.

Mo Hua inquired, "What happened?"

Cheng Mo let out a sigh, "Inside Demon Hunting Mountain, most are Sect Disciples in the Late Stage of Foundation Establishment with rich experience, adept techniques, profound cultivation, and top-grade Spiritual Artifacts."

"We can't mix into their teams..."

"Our group of five formed a team, aiming to try our hand at a Second Grade Early Stage Wolf Demon, but that Wolf Demon was really cunning. We spent half a day struggling just to find it..."

"And then what happened?"

"We were defeated..."

Cheng Mo looked quite frustrated.

Mo Hua nodded, unsurprised.

Monster Beasts are indeed formidable.

Especially for someone like Cheng Mo, who had never actually hunted Monster Beasts before and had almost no experience, encountering difficulties at first encounter is inevitable.

The profession of Monster Hunter is challenging for newcomers.

Mo Hua could only share some Monster Hunting tips as a reminder.

It was not the time for more specific advice because specific problems require specific analysis.

A lot of Mo Hua's Monster Hunting experience came from Big Black Mountain.

Big Black Mountain, a Second Grade mountain range in Li State, is where Mo Hua was born and raised, and he is very familiar with its environment and Monster Beasts.

However, now they were in Qian State's Refining Demon Mountain.

Chapter 1247: Refining Demon Mountain (3)

Mo Hua had never personally visited Refining Demon Mountain and had no knowledge of its situation. Naturally, he couldn't blindly apply the methods used in Big Black Mountain to hunt and refine the monster beasts of Refining Demon Mountain.

He could only pick some general Monster Hunter tactics and briefly explain them.

Like the habits of Monster Beasts when foraging, hibernating, ambushing, dwelling, playing dead, as well as the common tactics used by Monster Hunters to set traps, encircle, and slay monsters.

Cheng Mo and the others listened and nodded again and again.

Hao Xuan's eyes lit up, "Junior Brother, you know so much..."

"It's alright."

Mo Hua replied modestly.

Cheng Mo took in all the advice Mo Hua gave.

But taking the advice is one thing, and actually hunting monsters is another story altogether.

The process of Cheng Mo and his team's Monster Hunting was still fraught with difficulties. However, as time passed, they gradually persevered.

After all, being able to study at the Qianxue State Boundary, and to become disciples of one of the Eight Great Gates, the Taixu Gate, they were the Heaven's Chosen Sons of their respective families, each with their own temperament and pride.

Time passed like this for a while.

Everything was going relatively smoothly, until Mo Hua saw Cheng Mo, wrapped in bandages, with an arm in a sling, his face swollen and bruised, unable to move...

"Got slapped by a bear."

Situ Jian said as much.

Mo Hua had a complex expression and didn't know whether to laugh or to sympathize.

Cheng Mo was stubborn, "It was my carelessness this time. Just a mere Second Grade Early Stage Bear Pi, once I recover from my injuries, I must fight this fiend for three hundred rounds, chop off its paws to avenge this humiliation!"

Situ Jian said quietly, "If your bones were half as tough as your mouth, you wouldn't have broken eight of them..."

As soon as Situ Jian spoke, Cheng Mo indeed grimaced in pain.

"Situ, you must have been corrupted by Junior Brother! You didn't used to be so irritating when you spoke!"

But Situ Jian was no longer willing to pay him any attention.

So Mo Hua asked, "How long will he need to recover?"

Situ Jian shook his head, "Elder Murong looked at him and said the Bear Pi's force was too great, this big fool's muscles and bones are injured, it will take at least half a month to recover, and then we'll see how it goes."

"Then aren't you short one person for Monster Hunting?" Mo Hua said.

Being short on ordinary people was not too bad.

But Cheng Mo had robust Blood Qi, and his Mountain Splitting Axe had huge and heavy strikes. He was a Body Cultivator who could both endure and fight.

Now that he's injured, finding a replacement won't be easy.

Situ Jian sighed, "Let's slow down for now. With our current level of Cultivation, maybe indeed it was too early to go to Refining Demon Mountain. During these days, we haven't earned any Merit Points either, it's somewhat unsustainable... "

"We'll make some more preparations and wait until next year when our Cultivation is more solid, then try Refining Demon Mountain again."

Mo Hua then asked, "What about the other fellow disciples?"

Situ Jian shook his head, "They are all about the same. Anyway, it's tough to get by on Refining Demon Mountain, being a Monster Hunter is really a tough job."

Situ Jian sighed again.

Mo Hua shook his head in silence.

It seemed he, the "Junior Brother," would have to lead them in the endeavor.

After considering for a moment, Mo Hua went to find Elder Master Xun.

"Going into the mountain again?"

Elder Master Xun frowned.

Mo Hua then brought out the prepared excuse: "I've learned quite a few Formations and want to put them into practice by painting them on Spiritual Artifacts to test the effects. Refining Demon Mountain is the most suitable place."

"Where did you get the Spiritual Artifacts from?"

"The Gu Family has a Third Grade Artifact Refiner, Master Gu, who will help me refine them."

The Gu Family?

Elder Master Xun was a bit surprised and his eyes showed contemplation, but he didn't speak.

Mo Hua said, "I'll only be Drawing Formations to improve the Spiritual Artifacts, staying behind others, I won't take action myself."

Elder Master Xun still had concerns, "Inside Refining Demon Mountain, the Monster Beasts are ferocious..."

"It's alright," Mo Hua proclaimed confidently with his head raised and chest out:

"Elder Master, without exaggeration, I am actually from a Monster Hunter background. Since I was a child, I've been dealing with Monster Beasts, and the experience in Monster Hunting is a family legacy!"

Elder Master Xun was taken aback by Mo Hua's declaration.

What sort of thing...

A Monster Hunter?

He looked at the fair-skinned, slender-limbed Mo Hua and couldn't see how he resembled a "Monster Hunter" in the least.

"Monster Feeder," perhaps would be more likely.

To feed himself to the Monster Beasts...

Seeing that Elder Master Xun didn't believe him, Mo Hua emphatically stressed, "Really!"

Elder Master Xun silently observed Mo Hua, and although he still didn't believe him, he thought that given Mo Hua's character, he wouldn't tell such an absurd lie to his face.

A bit far-fetched, but probably not false.

"Alright then," Elder Master Xun sighed.

Mainly, he had no other Formations to console Mo Hua with.

The Seventeen Patterns formation, whatever could be given had been given, and Mo Hua had already learned whatever he could. Other formations either required a higher level of Divine Sense, which Mo Hua still couldn't learn.

Or they were... those formations that simply could not be passed on.

After all, he needed to find something for him to do.

Moreover, something like Formations really does need to be "applied in learning." If one doesn't use what they learn then they'll end like those old pedants, obsolete relics.

Elder Master Xun suddenly remembered, that person from back then, who also discussed Formations with him and said similar words:

Formations require "application in learning" as the key of the Way of Formations.

"Learning" is the threshold to entering the path, "Application" is the foundation of walking the path.

Learn to apply, apply to promote learning.

Combined learning and application, aligning knowledge and action.

Only by doing this can one be unbiased and persistent, glimpsing at the most fundamental Great Dao of Formations...

Now these words still echo in his ears, but that incredibly talented and admirable person is no longer here...

Elder Master Xun felt inexplicably wistful, and when he turned his head to look at Mo Hua again, he was suddenly taken aback, feeling somewhat emotional in his heart:

"He really does resemble him a bit..."

However, Mo Hua wasn't contemplating all of this; instead, his eyes were shining bright as he said:

"Thank you, Elder Master!"

Elder Master Xun nodded slightly but still admonished, "Be careful. Remember to follow behind others. Study the Formations only and don't take action yourself."

Chapter 1248: Refining Demon Mountain (4)

"Hmm!"

Mo Hua replied readily, and after respectfully saluting, stood up to take his leave.

After Mo Hua left, Elder Master Xun's gaze grew somber as he contemplated for a moment, then called over a Taoist Child and instructed, "Summon Ziyou."

The Taoist Child took the order and left.

Not long after, a man dressed in the Taoist robe of the Inner Sect of Taixu Gate, with a handsome appearance and a somewhat leisurely air, came over and saluted Elder Master Xun:

"Elder Ancestor."

Elder Master Xun nodded slightly and asked, "You know of Mo Hua, don't you?"

The man replied respectfully, "I do."

Mo Hua might not know him, but he knew Mo Hua.

With Elder Master Xun as a connection, which of the elders and instructors throughout the Taixu Gate wouldn't recognize Mo Hua, who was even closer to Elder Master Xun than his own great-grandchildren?

Elder Master Xun nodded, "Mo Hua is going to enter the Refining Demon Mountain, which is where you're on duty. Take good care of him..."

After speaking, Elder Master Xun glanced at the man, "If he loses even a single hair, you will kneel in the ancestral hall."

The man was taken aback and immediately felt his scalp tingle.

He felt that a massive trouble had just fallen upon his head.

And this trouble could even turn into a "huge scapegoat."

Seeing no one around, the man lowered his voice and quietly asked a question that he had long wanted to ask, but never dared to voice:

"Elder Ancestor, this child Mo Hua... surely he doesn't share the surname 'Xun' like me, does he?"

Elder Master Xun looked up, glanced at him coldly, and said indifferently:

"I can see that you're rather idle. Once this matter is settled, I'll assign you some more tasks to temper you further..."

The word "temper" was spoken by Elder Master Xun with profound meaning.

The man's expression instantly turned bitter as if he had just swallowed a bitter herb.

If he had known better, he would not have opened his mouth to ask.

The tasks assigned by the Elder Ancestor, could they ever be easy? It's likely he'd lose a layer of skin even if he doesn't die...

Seeing that he was now behaving, Elder Master Xun brushed his sleeve, "Go, remember what I said. It doesn't matter if you break an arm, but that child cannot lose a single hair."

The man sighed deeply and resignedly said:

"Understood..."

He was now certain that the child definitely did not carry the surname "Xun."

Because those who bore the surname "Xun" did not have this kind of treatment.

After the man left, Elder Master Xun remembered another matter and couldn't help but ponder:

A Monster Hunter by origin?

How could he be of Monster Hunter origin?

How could a Loose Cultivator who is a Monster Hunter learn about Formations?

Elder Master Xun's brows furrowed slightly.

Li State is far away from Qian State.

And Mo Hua is just a Loose Cultivator.

Previously, Elder Master Xun had not specifically thought to investigate Mo Hua's background as it did not concern him.

A hero does not boast about his origins.

Being able to enter the Qianxue State Boundary and join the Taixu Gate is considered a predestined opportunity.

As long as Mo Hua has a good nature, talent, and can master the Formation, that's all that matters.

Elder Master Xun has no prejudices regarding family background; he does not judge others based on their origins. Moreover, as an elder ancestor with many responsibilities, he would not inquire into a disciple's background.

But now, he was suddenly very curious.

What had this child grown up doing?

And exactly what had he done to become a Formation Master with such a profound foundation in the Five Elements Formation?

Elder Master Xun pondered for a moment, then summoned another Taoist Child, and said in a serious tone:

"Summon a disciple from the Inner Gate who can perform the Wind Travel Thousand Miles Skill."

"Yes, Elder Ancestor."

The Taoist Child left, and after a short while, a disciple dressed in the Inner Sect Taoist robe, swift as the wind in movement, came over.

"Elder Ancestor!" The disciple saluted with a bow of his hands.

Elder Master Xun nodded and instructed: "Prepare yourself and set off as soon as possible, head to Cloud Crossing City, then take the Cloud Ferry to Li State, go to a place known as Big Black Mountain State Boundary which is a Second Grade State Border, and inquire about some matters for me..."

Chapter 1249: Tracking

The disciple endowed with the Wind Travel Thousand Miles Skill set off on his mission.

Elder Master Xun, his hair white as snow, sat calmly at the table, his gaze gentle but his heart unsettled like a stone causing ripples on the surface of a lake.

He always felt that he would uncover some astonishing truths.

But what were these truths exactly?

For now, Elder Master Xun had no leads...

...

With the permission of Elder Master Xun, Mo Hua was in high spirits and his steps were much lighter.

Upon returning to the Disciple's Residence, he began planning what to do when he entered the Refining Demon Mountain.

Everything is established with preparation, and without preparation, everything fails.

This is the Monster Hunter's rule.

A few days later, coinciding with a break, he set off alone for a trip to the Refining Demon Mountain.

The Refining Demon Mountain, located north of the Qianxue State Boundary, is a continuous rolling, deeply forested, cloud-enveloped mountain teeming with miasma and fierce Monster Beasts.

Upon reaching the entrance of Refining Demon Mountain, Mo Hua looked up and saw the intense Monster Qi and the inscrutable depths of the mountain.

Sporadically, monstrous roars and fierce beasts bellowed, the air mingled with a faint scent of blood, exuding a dangerous aura.

Around him, several new disciples stared at the Refining Demon Mountain resembling a dormant beast, most of them looking nervous and showing signs of fear.

Even the experienced ones had solemn expressions, daring not to be careless.

Only Mo Hua appeared relaxed, his eyes slightly bright.

He gazed at the mountain covered in dense clouds and entwined with Monster Qi, reminiscent of Big Black Mountain, and momentarily felt a sense of 'coming home.'

There was even a thrill of nervous excitement close to his hometown.

When learning about formations, Mo Hua was a Formation Master.

But now, Mo Hua felt that his Monster Hunter's bloodline was beginning to awaken.

He lifted his head and chest, swaggering his way up the mountain, but was stopped at the mountain pass:

"One hundred Merit Points, one Demon Refining Command."

Mo Hua could afford a hundred Merit Points, yet he still remarked:

"That expensive?"

The disciple guarding the gate, with a cultivation of the Foundation Establishment Late Stage, likely belonged to a Sect that had already graduated and successfully joined the Inner Gate. He was guarding the gate to earn Sect Merit Points.

He calmly said: "If you find it too expensive, you don't have to buy it."

Left with no choice, Mo Hua took out a Taixu Token, transferred a hundred Merit Points, and bought a "Demon Refining Command" to enter the mountain.

In each Sect, Merit Points are of equal value, generally usable only within one's own Sect.

However, to access some common grounds within the Qianxue State Boundary for cultivation, combat, and Monster Hunting by Sect Disciples, spending Merit Points is also possible.

The Refining Demon Mountain is such a place.

Moreover, the Refining Demon Mountain is unique in that only Sect Disciples from within the Qianxue State Boundary possessing a Sect Disciple Token and spending Merit Points are allowed entry.

Cultivators outside the Qianxue State Boundary who don't belong to any Sect are strictly prohibited from entering.

This is to prevent outsiders from mixing in, causing confusion;

Or someone harboring malicious intentions with ulterior motives;

And also to prevent some rare Monster Beasts of Refining Demon Mountain from being illegally hunted by non-Sect Cultivators.

After purchasing a Demon Refining Command, Mo Hua proceeded alone into the mountain.

Seeing this, the gatekeeping disciple was taken aback and called out to Mo Hua, "Just you alone?"

Mo Hua, puzzled, replied, "One Demon Refining Command allows many people to enter?"

The gatekeeper, taken aback, shook his head:

"What are you thinking? There's no such deal..."

Mo Hua was speechless.

Then you're asking nonsense.

The gatekeeper was stalled, scrutinized Mo Hua again, frowned, and said, "Your Blood Qi is so weak, you're not a Body Cultivation practitioner, and your Spiritual Power is also weak. Going up the mountain alone without any companions?"

"I'm just going to take a look; one person is enough," Mo Hua said.

The gatekeeper, with a solemn expression, cautioned:

"Refining Demon Mountain is perilous, even just to take a look, it's still very dangerous."

"Mhm." Mo Hua nodded.

Seeing that Mo Hua wasn't really listening, the gatekeeper helplessly said: "Forget it, as if I never said anything."

Having a Demon Refining Command allows entry into the mountain.

Mo Hua insisted on going alone, and there was nothing the gatekeeper could do, only sighing to himself:

"These young disciples really don't understand the dangers..."

And so, Mo Hua walked into the mountain gate of the Refining Demon Mountain.

A moment later, a handsome man with a leisurely demeanor walked by.

Upon seeing him, the gatekeeper immediately bowed and said:

"Elder Xun."

The man addressed as "Elder Xun" nodded slightly and casually said, "I'm going in to take a look."

"Yes."

The gatekeeper respectfully let him pass.

Elder Xun entered the mountain gate, looking up at the winding mountain path.

At that moment, on the mountain path, a young boy dressed in a Taixu Taoist Robe, walked heroically uphill.

Elder Xun slightly shook his head.

"The old ancestor really, if he's so worried about his safety, should just confine him inside the Sect, and not let him out..."

"Even if he's let out, he shouldn't be let into this Refining Demon Mountain, it's just begging for trouble..."

"This child too, does he not know his own cultivation level and strength? Wandering alone in Refining Demon Mountain, truly he's not afraid of death..."

While Elder Xun was inwardly criticizing, suddenly he saw Mo Hua's figure halt and pause mid-step, then turn around and look down the mountain.

Elder Xun instinctively dodged aside, hiding.

Mo Hua stood on the mountain path, looking downwards.

After looking for a long time and seeing no suspicious figures, he tilted his head, his gaze perplexed, and silently muttered:

"Did I sense wrong?"

"Just now, someone was clearly watching me, even probing me with Divine Sense, and seemed to be speaking ill of me in their mind..."

"How come in the blink of an eye, there's not even a single figure?"

Mo Hua glanced left and right, surveyed his surroundings again, then shook his head, muttering: "It must be an illusion."

Afterwards, he turned around and continued walking up the mountain.

After Mo Hua left, Elder Xun slowly appeared, watching Mo Hua who had already disappeared on the mountain path, his gaze somewhat trembling.

Chapter 1250: Tracking (2)

This little rascal... he couldn't have noticed me, could he?

How old is he? How strong is his Divine Sense? How could he possibly detect me, a dignified Golden Core late-stage cultivator, spying on him?

This can't be that bizarre, right...

Elder Xun furrowed his brow.

After a moment, he lifted his head again, following the mountain path upward, continuing to trail behind Mo Hua.

But this time, he wised up. He didn't dare to blatantly follow behind anymore. Instead, he moved through the trees, concealing his figure, simultaneously employing a secret technique to hide his aura, keeping a respectful distance as he shadowed him from afar.

He had to comply with the ancestor's orders—to secretly watch over this young boy whose single strand of hair was more precious than his own arm.

After all, his arm, if broken, would simply remain broken.

But the boy's hair? If even a single strand were missing, who knows how the ancestor would "train" him afterward.

Elder Xun sighed helplessly.

Thus, Mo Hua walked ahead, while Elder Xun followed behind.

Mo Hua had no idea that as soon as he stepped into the mountain, he'd already gained a "bodyguard."

He was focused on carrying out his plan.

When arriving at an unfamiliar place, first familiarize yourself with the environment—this is the basic rule for a Monster Hunter.

The same applies to Big Black Mountain.

And it holds true for Refining Demon Mountain as well.

Mo Hua took out a map of Refining Demon Mountain.

This map was one he had bought for two Spirit Stones from Little Immortal City at the foot of the mountain.

The map simply marked out the mountain's terrain, vegetation, and streams, but it was crude and simplistic, only providing a rough outline of the mountain range.

This surely wouldn't suffice.

Mo Hua began his routine practice of personally measuring Refining Demon Mountain's topography, using this basic map as a foundation to draw his own exclusive map of the mountain.

Refining Demon Mountain is vast, and monster beasts are numerous.

The outer regions are mostly populated with second-grade monster beasts, but in the deeper mountains, it's said that there are even third-grade and fourth-grade monsters.

However, those third-grade and higher beasts are trapped in formations within the deeper mountains.

Disciples cannot enter the deep mountains.

Similarly, the high-grade monsters of the deep mountains cannot descend to the lower regions.

Mo Hua only planned to operate along the outskirts of the outer mountain.

The more experienced the Monster Hunter, the more cautious they become—the more self-aware, the longer they live, the more monsters they can hunt.

This is what his father, Mo Shan, had taught him.

Mo Hua deeply agreed.

Though he wasn't "old," his methods were deft enough that he could barely be considered a "seasoned" Monster Hunter.

On the mountain path of Refining Demon Mountain.

Mo Hua found a large rock, sat down, spread out his rudimentary map, and carefully examined it, memorizing various mountain ridges in his heart.

Then he gazed into the distance, taking in a full view of the outer mountain to cross-reference with the map in his mind, ensuring he had a thorough grasp of the terrain.

After finishing, he chose a route and set off up the mountain.

As he walked, he observed and recorded his surroundings.

Behind Mo Hua, far away in the bushes, Elder Xun silently followed with an astonished expression.

He realized he had underestimated the boy.

Sharpen the axe before chopping the wood.

Entering Refining Demon Mountain and first familiarizing oneself with its terrain—a concept that most disciples wouldn't even consider, let alone execute.

Disciples of the sect cared only about the height of their realm, the depth of their cultivation, the strength of their Taoist Skills, and the sharpness of their swords or Spiritual Artifacts.

When entering the mountain, their minds were filled with thoughts of quickly hunting monsters.

They neglected the idea of first becoming familiar with the surroundings.

In magic battles between cultivators, life-and-death outcomes aren't solely determined by strength or weakness.

Timing, terrain, and human harmony—all are indispensable.

Environment equates to "terrain."

This is something only experienced Monster Hunters or well-traveled veteran cultivators can truly understand.

Yet, watching this young boy in action, there was a smooth proficiency that seemed ingrained in his every move.

Elder Xun nodded slightly.

No wonder the ancestor valued this child. Though his talent looked ordinary, his actions revealed a certain skill and ingenuity...

And so, Elder Xun continued to watch as Mo Hua wandered alone through Refining Demon Mountain for an entire day.

Whenever Mo Hua encountered special terrains, minerals, herbs, or dangers such as swamps, quagmires, miasmas, or demon holes, he would document them.

If monsters appeared, a sweep of his Divine Sense alerted him in advance, enabling him to promptly evade.

On the rare occasion when luck betrayed him and he found himself cornered by a monster, leaving him no choice, he would employ the Concealment Technique to hide.

Some monsters, however, were inherently blind and relied on sensing aura to identify targets.

The Concealment Technique couldn't fool them.

In such cases, Mo Hua relied on his movement technique, maneuvering cleverly to lure them to the edge of a cliff. Then, using his quick reflexes, he conjured instantaneous, ever-changing spells, forcing the monster off the cliff while retreating gracefully himself.

The more Elder Xun watched, the more alarmed he became.

If not for the fact that Mo Hua was at the Foundation Establishment stage, with a clear and pure aura undoubtedly signifying he was a human cultivator...

Elder Xun might have suspected that Mo Hua was an ancient shapeshifting demon in human guise.

His expertise was exceptional, his techniques were exemplary.

In the perilous mountains, where even late-stage Foundation Establishment disciples must tread carefully with utmost vigilance, the boy moved as if it was a casual stroll.

It was as if he were walking through his own backyard.

Such talent at such a young age... truly remarkable...

The more Elder Xun observed, the more admiration he felt, and his respect for Elder Master Xun grew spontaneously in his heart.

No wonder the ancestor!

To be able to see beyond the limitations of a mid-lower grade Spiritual Root and recognize the talent of this child.

Elder Xun reflected further...

Perhaps the ancestor had sent him to watch over this boy to ensure he would witness these things firsthand.

To let him realize that, though this child seemed ordinary in Spiritual Roots, his ingenuity and intellect were exceptional, promising great potential; that was why the ancestor showed such care for him.

"The ancestor truly had thoughtful intentions..."

Elder Xun sighed inwardly.

As he was deep in thought, he suddenly noticed that the sky was growing dim. The setting sun dipped below the mountain, and the evening glow painted half the sky red. In less than an hour, night would fall.

