

# THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY

## Chapter 2: The Dao Stele

Ever since Mo Hua could remember, a Dao Stele had appeared in his sea of consciousness, accompanied by some fleeting memories.

In those memories, Mo Hua lived a brief life in another world devoid of spiritual energy.

In that life, Mo Hua's family was ordinary, but he studied diligently, achieved good grades, and was admitted to college, majoring in fine arts, with a passion for studying traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy.

After graduation, he worked in a major company as a graphic designer, often working overtime. He died of overwork in his twenties.

His life as a student was spent studying, and after graduation, it was consumed by work, living under constant stress and anxiety.

When he came to his senses, he realized he had lived a muddled life and died unexpectedly.

In his final moments, his life flashed before his eyes like a reel of film.

He realized he hadn't done anything truly valuable in life: he hadn't shown filial piety to his parents, hadn't pursued his dreams, had no love, and hadn't seen the vast world's landscapes...

These memories were blurry, and sometimes Mo Hua couldn't tell if they were real or not.

Like Zhuangzi dreaming of being a butterfly, it was unclear whether it was Zhuangzi dreaming he was a butterfly, or the butterfly dreaming it was Zhuangzi.

As time passed, Mo Hua stopped worrying about it.

The past was the past, and now, at the age of ten, he lived in a world of cultivation.

And he was a cultivator.

A cultivator who could fully comprehend the heavenly Dao, traverse the nine provinces, pick the sun and moon with one hand, and bury the stars with the other!

Or, he could be a cultivator who spent his life cultivating Qi, unable to fly, fight, or use many spells, and lived a humble life...

Without the Dao Stele, Mo Hua guessed he would probably be the latter, humble type.

The Dao Stele floated in Mo Hua's sea of consciousness.

It was wide, ancient, and oddly shaped, seemingly insubstantial, yet it seemed to ripple with a profound and mysterious aura. At times, it appeared utterly serene, as if nothing existed at all...

On this void-like surface of the stele, one could draw array formations, and each time an array was drawn, Mo Hua's spiritual sense would strengthen.

In the world of cultivation, array formations were revered!

Learning array formations was the most challenging of all cultivation practices, and the most important aspect was spiritual sense!

Array formations consisted of patterns that were the painstaking depictions of the heavenly Dao by ancient cultivators.

The patterns of the arrays resembled ancient texts or simple drawings, each containing infinite mysteries.

Drawing an array formation connected one's sea of consciousness to the secrets of the heavenly Dao, consuming a significant amount of spiritual sense.

If a cultivator's spiritual sense was insufficient, drawing an array could lead to exhaustion of spiritual sense, and even the shattering of the sea of consciousness, resulting in death. To become an array master, one must continuously study various array patterns and practice various formations. ㄖÀ NøbEs

Thus, learning and practicing array formations was difficult, and array masters often died from insufficient spiritual sense due to forcefully drawing arrays.

Mo Hua drew array formations on the Dao Stele, which consumed his spiritual sense, but when he erased the drawn arrays, the spiritual sense was instantly restored, making his spiritual sense abundant.

From existence to nonexistence, and then from nonexistence back to existence, it was akin to the great Dao, profoundly mysterious.

And with each drawing of an array formation, Mo Hua's spiritual sense increased slightly. Although it was a minor increase, it was indeed an increase.

As far as Mo Hua knew, there were no cultivation techniques in the cultivation world specifically for enhancing spiritual sense; increases in spiritual sense mostly depended on breakthroughs in cultivation levels.

Therefore, even a slight increase in spiritual sense was extremely precious.

As long as he kept drawing array formations on the Dao Stele, Mo Hua could improve his skills in array formation, and as long as he continued drawing arrays, his spiritual sense would keep strengthening.

With a strong spiritual sense, Mo Hua could learn more advanced and powerful array formations.

One day, he could become a powerful array master through this.

Array masters held a revered status. Even ordinary array masters who drew arrays for others earned a considerable income in spirit stones.

Once one became an array master and could draw various profound arrays, they had the means to continue cultivating and wouldn't have to spend their lives just cultivating Qi.

Mo Hua thought quietly to himself.

But becoming an array master was also fraught with difficulties.

Learning arrays and becoming an array master was challenging.

In the cultivation categories set by the Dao Court, the recognition of an array master was the strictest and most demanding.

Array formations were made up of patterns, with the simplest arrays containing only one pattern. Each

additional pattern raised the array's level, enhancing its effectiveness and requiring a greater amount of spiritual sense.

Drawing one to five patterns qualified one as an array apprentice.

Drawing six to eight patterns could make one an array master, but such a master was just ordinary and not recognized by the Dao Court's ranking.

Only by drawing nine patterns and passing the Dao Court's ranking assessment could one become a true first-class array master.

Becoming a first-class array master was almost like ascending to heaven for a Qi-cultivating cultivator.

A first-class array master was essentially a guest of honor in major families and sects. Even foundation-building cultivators dared not offend them easily. Even if they did nothing, they would receive a monthly stipend of spirit stones from the Dao Court's Tian Shu Pavilion and have countless young and beautiful female cultivators breaking down their doors, vying to become their Dao companions.

Apart from the extreme difficulty of the assessment, each state also had a quota for becoming a first-class array master. Whether one could become a first-class array master depended both on effort and fate.

With bad luck, if the quota in one's state was full, even if one had the skills of a first-class array master, they wouldn't get a quota in that assessment and would have to wait for the next one.

Some array masters spent their lives attempting the assessment and wasted their years.

Countless low-level cultivators exhausted their minds and grew old without ever achieving their lifelong wish to advance to a first-class array master.

The so-called quota limitation by the Dao Court was generally just an excuse predetermined by major families and sects. They needed the title of first-class array master to add glory to their direct descendants or direct disciples, making them stand out as geniuses.

Those low-level cultivators who toiled to become first-class array masters were just dust underfoot, never noticed.

It was already night, and Mo Hua lay in the bedroom of the disciple's residence, his spiritual sense immersed in the sea of consciousness, continuously drawing array formations on the Dao Stele.

The array formation Mo Hua was drawing was called the Dual Element Array, which included two patterns and was one of the basic array formations.

However, this array formation was one Mo Hua had never successfully drawn before.

Early-stage Qi-cultivating disciples, like those in the outer sect of the Tongxian Sect, generally lacked sufficient spiritual sense and could rarely learn an array containing a single pattern in its entirety.

But Mo Hua had already mastered the single pattern and could draw it effortlessly.

Mo Hua wanted to learn more challenging array formations, so every night, he practiced the Dual Element Array on the Dao Stele, which included two patterns.

After dozens of nights of repeated practice and persistent effort, Mo Hua finally succeeded.

For an array master learning array formations, each pattern was a threshold, and drawing an additional pattern was like climbing a step.

Being able to draw two patterns meant Mo Hua's spiritual sense and array mastery were already far superior to his peers in the early Qi-cultivating stage of the outer sect disciples at Tongxian Sect.

His array mastery was probably unique among them.

Mo Hua breathed a sigh of relief. When the hour of Mao arrived and dawn broke, his spiritual sense left the sea of consciousness, and Mo Hua opened his eyes.

Despite having drawn arrays all night, Mo Hua's spiritual sense remained clear, and he didn't feel tired, as if he had just had a restful sleep.

He opened the window, and the morning sunlight shone on his fair and delicate face.

The rising sun outside the window draped the sky in rosy hues.

The ten-year-old Mo Hua took a deep breath, gazing at the horizon with a determined look.

As long as he kept practicing array formations and continuously honed his spiritual sense, one day, he would surely become a first-class array master.

At that moment, like the rising sun, he would take a significant step towards seeking the path of immortality.

And he would no longer be just a Qi cultivator.