

## 81 A Deal [2]

"What's going to happen if this treasure turns out to be fake? Will you reimburse us for what you took? Knowledge like what you mentioned costs too much," Wilford asked sternly.

Lucas smirked at the notion. He knew that in deals, especially with powerful people, there was always an imbalance in benefits; it was never an equal trade.

Lucas didn't underestimate them. That was precisely why he had selected the most valuable items in his storage space. Even in situations like this, where doubts arise, he just needed to stand his ground, firmly.

"Am I still your disciple, Sect Master? I believe I am. That's why I joined the sect—to gain new knowledge. In return, I present these items to you." Lucas said, clear in voice was smooth tone.

"Does that mean you won't leave the sect until you get what you want? The items are superb, but I still have my doubts."

"You don't fear death, Sect Master?"

At that moment, a hush fell over everyone in the

room, their eyes widening as they turned their attention to Lucas. Slowly, they withdrew to their seats, leaving the sect master to grapple with the implications of Lucas's veiled threat and the unsettling atmosphere it created.

"Are you threatening us or just me? Please don't joke; we won't turn down your offer. However, we will make demands and conditions for equal standing, even with you being powerful. Let's be civilized."

Lucas smiled approvingly at Wilford's negotiation stance. It wasn't a bad outcome for him; he was willing to entertain fair exchanges, despite not expecting them as entitlements.

"I understand... Please forgive my presumption. So, what are your terms? I'm certain they won't be as straightforward as my initial request, given the array masters' interests," Lucas remarked.

Wilford nodded. "Please become my disciple and represent the sect in the upcoming InterSect competition. That's all I demand."

When Wilford spoke, everyone in the room, including the officials, reacted with surprise. In contrast, Lucas appeared genuinely perplexed, his brows furrowed as he scanned the faces

around him, trying to decipher the unexpected turn of events.

"What do you mean by that? Judging by your brothers' expressions, it seems like there's more to your words," Lucas said to Wilford.

"I know. I asked you to be my direct disciple, which means I will devote my time to you as my junior, not as my senior who aspires to be an array master. Will you accept my demand?"

A glint of a smile tugged at the corners of Lucas's lips as he met Wilford's resolute gaze. He sensed sincerity and goodwill emanating from Wilford, which brought a wave of relief over him.

"What is this InterSect competition you're talking about? I'm curious," he said, giving Wilford a hint.

"So, you accept my condition?" Wilford inquired.

"I will. But I won't be a normal direct disciple. I want a peaceful time in your sect, Sect Master. That's why I was respectful towards you earlier, as you are my master in the array field," Lucas said, smiling.

"I will comply with your request."

And so, Wilford began explaining the InterSect

competition.

"The purpose of the factions inside the sect is the InterSect competition. It is to support the committee who filters out the best disciples and make them representatives of the sect in the quadrennial InterSect competition at the center of the Southern Region."

"Disciples from every faction don't fully understand the significance of the InterSect competition, and many only have a vague idea about it. We don't prioritize informing the disciples, as the secrecy of our knowledge is paramount, a practice engraved in our bones. However, the faction competition does yield a winner, who may become a representative or a core disciple."

"It might be confusing at first, but the reason for this secrecy is to protect our knowledge from outsiders. We always guard our secrets, often using diversions to prevent any information from being easily deciphered—even our disciples remain in the dark."

"Regarding the InterSect, why do we participate in this quadrennial competition? It's to elevate our reputation and aid the sect's ancestor in ascending to the upper heaven. That's our



purpose. So, Fellow Daoist or Junior Brother Lucas, is this clear to you now?"

As Wilford finished his explanation, Lucas's eyes glazed over with a bored expression, showing clear disinterest in what had been said. The lack of engagement was palpable. Sensing Lucas's indifference, Wilford sighed heavily.

"I had respect for you earlier, Fellow Daoist Lucas, but your youthful appearance seems to mirror your attitude," Wilford commented, a tinge of disappointment creeping into his voice.

"So what? I'm just curious if participating in the InterSect competition genuinely benefits you. Does it help in safeguarding your secrets or offer other advantages for your ancestor's ascension?"

"You're being blunt. Despite your disrespect, I won't respond aggressively. My sole goal is to aid the ancestor. After that, I'll find another purpose."

"Ah... Is that all? Such loyalty! I commend you. I have no qualms with you," Lucas sighed, a hint of resignation in his voice.

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After establishing a mutually beneficial deal, Lucas began studying arrays. It wasn't just about learning martial techniques, where he could easily memorize the content. He had to understand the fundamental structures of arrays, something he was unfamiliar with.

While he was used to memorizing and recognizing different arrays, he noticed they differed slightly from magic circles.

"Array formations, as I see, are similar to creating magic circles. However, arrays can only be drawn on surfaces, unlike magic circles, which can be inscribed on bones as runes or any other location on the body."

"It seems like this is a basic creation compared to the complex conditions of magic circles. Magic circles have intricate structures."

Lucas smiled as he read through each book in Wilford's personal library about arrays. Arrays no longer seemed complicated to him. As he grasped the contents, he immediately memorized them.

"Tranquil Mind and Picture Mind, take action."

After a week of relentless reading and study, Lucas finally achieved mastery of the knowledge

required to craft an array formation that could harness unique Qi. With all necessary ingredients already planned out, he stood ready.

All that remained were the ingredients to complete his array. The purpose behind this endeavor was to forge his own unique array. Armed with the foundational knowledge, he was poised to design a specialized formation of his own.

"What I need is unique Qi. From my observations, there are ordinary people who can incorporate magic into their system. In this world, there are diseases caused by magical effects and mana. If I take this into account, I can truly create a sect of mages."

"What an amazing experience this will be. This means I won't have to worry about companions or my bloodline since I'll be creating immortals. If that's the case, I can reach the Upper Heaven without fretting over my accomplishments."

It was widely understood among cultivators that Immortals acknowledged those with noteworthy accomplishments. There were numerous paths to demonstrate such achievements, but Lucas had no interest in pursuing them.

He believed there were better ways to interact with fellow immortals than focusing solely on accomplishments.

"But I don't care about my accomplishments... I just want to have a good life with immortals."

Lucas muttered to himself ceaselessly. After devising his own array, a surge of new ideas inundated his mind, prompting him to contemplate the potential future ahead.

As he reassessed his purpose, he sighed in frustration. Could he truly have been so disheartened by his current life?

Now contemplating the prospect of forming his own 'guild,' something he hadn't pursued in his previous life, he perceived a fresh path unfolding before him. This newfound goal became his focus.

He wasn't tired of life; he was tired of its monotonous flow as he grew older. A feeling of hope began to stir within him.

"I just need ambition in this world. And such a thing isn't impossible."

Lucas became Wilford's direct disciple, tasked with reading everything he could for the entire

week. Wilford visited him to check on his progress.

"Are you done?" Wilford asked.

Lucas looked up from his reading spot and pondered Wilford's presence. He gazed at him, then smiled, realizing how much time had passed.

"Ah. I used all my time? I didn't notice," Lucas said with a slightly embarrassed smile.

Wilford stepped into the library, his brow furrowed with confusion as he glanced at Lucas. Approaching the table, his eyes fell upon a book adorned with intricate characters.

"This is... The Theory of Otherworldly Structural Qi. Have you really read every book here, even reaching the last one?"

Wilford couldn't believe what he had stumbled upon. Initially, he had anticipated Lucas might falter in the daunting task of studying and memorizing the 1,000 books in the library. But now, he realized he had underestimated him completely.

Lucas was indeed a genius, not just playing with them like other peak experts in the Mortal

Heaven.

"Let me ask you, Junior Bro—Senior Lucas, did you read all of these books in just one week?"

Lucas noticed the strange respect in Wilford's voice and pondered for a moment. However, he had already realized that what he just did wasn't an easy feat. Although it was an easy job for him, there was still a difference between a mage's nature of reading and a cultivator's patience.

"I did. What of it?"

"That's just amazing..." Wilford said, an awkward smile on his face as he nearly lost his balance, leaning on the table with his right hand.