

## The Quest 103

### Chapter 103: Spellcraft

Mo Hua thought to himself, "I deliberately wrote the book title so large that it can be seen from several yards away, and yet you still ask what book it is? Such pretentiousness, could it be any more fake?"

"No need, I'm just looking," said Mo Hua.

The more Mo Hua refused to answer, the more curious Zhang Lan became. He leaned in to take a closer look and then pretended as if he had just noticed the book title, saying, "'Compendium of Qi-Cultivation Spells,' not bad. Thinking of learning some spells? Have you reached the fifth level of Qi cultivation?"

"Just reached the fifth level, I'm just taking a look, no rush," Mo Hua replied, feigning nonchalance.

"How about it? Want me to teach you?" Zhang Lan raised an eyebrow.

"Uncle Zhang, are you a spiritual cultivator?" asked Mo Hua.

"Mm, kind of," Zhang Lan replied.

"Kind of... what does that mean? Oh, a half-baked cultivator?" Mo Hua teased.

Zhang Lan's face darkened. "What half-baked? Where did you learn these absurd words at such a young age?"

"I see your vitality is strong, though I haven't sensed much spiritual power. Is it just me not noticing?" asked Mo Hua.

Zhang Lan proudly said, "I've used a spell to conceal my aura; of course, you can't see it. If you could, all my cultivation would have been in vain!"

"Oh, does that mean you practice both spirit and body cultivation?" Mo Hua asked curiously.

"Spirit and body cultivation isn't that easy. I've just cultivated my physique a bit to avoid disadvantages in close combat during duels; my main focus is still on spellcraft. Those who practice both spirit and body cultivation need not only exceptional talent but also a great family legacy and vast wealth. You might not encounter one in your whole life," Zhang Lan lamented.

Mo Hua was taken aback by the need for talent, legacy, and wealth—three conditions far beyond his reach, making it nearly impossible even if he reincarnated a thousand times.

"Then, Uncle Zhang, are your spells powerful?"

"They're alright, fairly decent," Zhang Lan said modestly.

"So, not very powerful then."

Zhang Lan, annoyed, knocked on Mo Hua's head, "That's called being modest, understand? Modesty!"

Mo Hua rubbed his head and asked, "Then between you and Aunt Xue, who is more formidable?"

"That, well," Zhang Lan hesitated, "we've never sparred, how would I know?"

"Can you perform illusions?"

"Of course... not."

Mo Hua declared, "Aunt Xue can perform illusions, but you can't, so you must not be as formidable as her! I'll ask Aunt Xue sometime to see which spells I should learn."

Zhang Lan objected, "I just can't perform illusions, but my other spells are not inferior to hers."

"Really?" Mo Hua looked at him skeptically.

"Qi-cultivation spells, you can ask me anything about them."

"Alright, if I want to learn spells now, which should I start with?"

"Do you have any in mind?" Zhang Lan inquired.

Mo Hua handed over the 'Compendium of Qi-Cultivation Spells', "I've marked a few spells, you can see which one I should learn first."

Zhang Lan took the book, flipped through a few pages, and saw several spells circled with a pen.

Fireball Technique, Water Arrow Technique, Metal Blade Technique, Earth Stone Technique...

These were all spells that could be learned at the mid-stage of Qi cultivation, not difficult, and the spiritual power required for casting was manageable.

Zhang Lan nodded, "Starting with basic spells is wise. Many cultivators, when they first learn spells, want to learn those of a higher rank, with great power, or those that are very rare. Little do they know, higher-ranked spells require more spiritual power, more time to cast, and the rarer the spell, the stricter the conditions for learning it.

Not to say whether they can be learned, but even if they are, a single spell could exhaust most of their spiritual power. If they miss their target, they are essentially sitting ducks."

Zhang Lan stared at Mo Hua for a while, then suddenly realized a problem, "The spells you picked, are they all offensive?"

Mo Hua was startled, "If not offensive spells, then what should I learn?"

"Aren't you thinking about how to protect yourself?"

"Oh, right," Mo Hua had an epiphany, "First, I need to be able to protect myself. If I can't even do that, who am I attacking?"

The incident with Qian Xing also made

it clear to him that cultivators must have means to protect themselves. Otherwise, if suddenly in danger, they would be powerless and caught in a passive deadlock.

"What protective spells are there? Something like the Golden Bell Shield?" Mo Hua asked earnestly.

"The Golden Bell Shield isn't bad, but it's not very useful for you."

"Why not?" Mo Hua didn't understand.

Zhang Lan looked at him with a hint of disdain, "Haven't you realized your spiritual power isn't that strong?"

"That's because my cultivation level is low," Mo Hua argued.

"It's partly because your cultivation level is low, but isn't your spiritual root quality just average? If I'm not mistaken, the cultivation technique you're using also doesn't enhance your spiritual power much, so the spiritual power in your Qi sea is definitely weaker compared to others at the same level."

Although Mo Hua didn't want to admit it, it seemed to be the truth.

Zhang Lan looked at him and thought to himself, fortunately your spiritual root talent is average. If your talent in spiritual roots was as good as your talent in array patterns, what then? It seems the Dao of Heaven is still relatively fair.

Zhang Lan continued, "If your spiritual power is weak, even if you use defensive spells like the Golden Bell Shield, it won't last long. Once your spiritual power is exhausted, you can only sit and wait for death."

"Moreover, the Golden Bell Shield requires foreknowledge of danger and prior activation of spiritual power. If you are ambushed and don't have time to activate it, then the spell is as good as unlearned."

Mo Hua looked troubled, "Then what should I learn?"

So you have your troubles too, huh? Not willing to ask me! Zhang Lan secretly gloated for a while.

In the Qi-cultivation stage, every problem is a small problem... as long as it doesn't involve array patterns.

Zhang Lan put on a bit of an act and then said to Mo Hua, "You could learn evasion techniques."

"Evasion techniques?"

"If you learn defensive spells like the Golden Bell Shield, you can only take hits when attacked..." Zhang Lan glanced at Mo Hua, "But your physique and spiritual power can't really withstand much."

Mo Hua nodded in agreement.

"So, if you learn evasion techniques, you can attack or retreat as necessary, and if all else fails, you can still run," Zhang Lan explained.

"Are there any drawbacks?"

"There definitely are. If you use defensive spells, at least you can withstand a few hits before your spiritual power is exhausted. But if you use evasion techniques, you either dodge skillfully without a scratch, or if you are not careful and someone catches you off guard, you're likely doomed."

"So, it's like taking an attack without any defense at all, is that right?"

"Exactly."

Mo Hua hesitated for a moment, then said, "Defensive spells mean being at the mercy of others once spiritual power is exhausted. Evasion techniques mean being at risk if caught off-guard. But at least with evasion techniques, there's a chance to advance or retreat. If I learn the Golden Bell Shield, I really wouldn't be able to block or run..."

"Have you decided?"

"Yeah, I'll learn evasion techniques."

Zhang Lan nodded, "That's smart. Since you can't have it all, you might as well play to your strengths and avoid your weaknesses."

Zhang Lan picked up the 'Compendium of Qi-Cultivation Spells', flipped through it, and then picked up the pen on the table, marking a few evasion techniques for Mo Hua to choose from. But he suddenly realized something wasn't right.

These evasion techniques, common in the Qi-cultivation stage, were fine for Mo Hua to learn, but since they were common, others could teach them too. How then could he stand out?