

The Quest 104

Chapter 104: Steps of Flowing Water

By Mo Hua's side, most indeed were wandering cultivators with limited perspectives, yet there were not a few cultivators with extraordinary insights.

For instance, the master who taught Mo Hua the array formations was certainly not an ordinary cultivator. There was also the lady known as Aunt Xue, veiled in an ethereal mist, who possibly mastered illusion techniques, not to mention other magical arts. Additionally, the two children who accompanied him shopping one day, surnamed Bai, displayed an appearance and demeanor that suggested an exceptional background. And then there was his father, Mo Shan, whose cultivation might be mediocre, but his experience and vision from years of hunting demonic beasts in the mountains were surely not weak...

Zhang Lan pondered internally. If they knew he had taught Mo Hua a commonplace technique, it wouldn't be Mo Hua who would be despised.

What could a child like Mo Hua possibly understand?

It would be him, Zhang Lan, who would face disdain.

The thought of Aunt Xue looking down on him with a disdainful gaze was somewhat unbearable for Zhang Lan.

No, he couldn't afford to lose this face! "This matter concerns not only my personal dignity but also the reputation of the Zhang family. I can't let others think the Zhang family lacks a foundation in cultivation," Zhang Lan justified to himself.

"These techniques are all quite ordinary. I'll teach you something different," said Zhang Lan to Mo Hua.

"Something different?"

"Yes, unlike any ordinary technique."

Mo Hua was troubled. He had originally hoped Zhang Lan could just offer some guidance on what spells to learn—preferably well-known and commonly practiced spells.

Such spells would undoubtedly be practical, as cultivators wouldn't waste time on spells they couldn't use.

And if they were commonly learned, the stability of the spells would be guaranteed. Even if Zhang Lan stopped teaching, Mo Hua could seek guidance from others if he had any doubts.

But now that Zhang Lan intended to teach him something unique, Mo Hua was worried about the cultivation requirements, including the need for rare spiritual materials, which he simply couldn't afford...

"What's with that look?" Zhang Lan couldn't help but lightly slap the table, "Why do you seem so reluctant? Others beg me to teach them, and I refuse. Don't act like you're being wronged when offered a privilege!"

"It's just that I don't want to trouble you, Uncle Zhang," Mo Hua scratched his head, "How about you pick any technique from this book to teach me?"

Mo Hua spread open the "Compendium of Qi Cultivation Techniques." The book contained common spells known to those in the Qi Cultivation stage, familiar to low-level wandering cultivators. Learning from it seemed safer to him.

"No way! I can't afford to lose that face!" Zhang Lan would not agree.

Mo Hua didn't understand. How could learning a spell be disgraceful...

Determined, Zhang Lan gritted his teeth and declared, "I'll teach you the Steps of Flowing Water—it's the Zhang family's unique skill!"

Mo Hua hesitated for a long while before meekly saying, "Is your family's unique skill so worthless that you'd teach it so casually to others?"

Zhang Lan nearly burst a blood vessel in anger. Seizing Mo Hua's collar with his spiritual power, he lifted him up, "Follow me!"

Liu Ruhua witnessed this but knew Zhang Lan was an official from the Dao Court and had a good relationship with Mo Hua; she would not mistreat him, so she did not interfere.

Only thinking to herself, "Old Zhang is such a grown man, yet his temperament is hardly better than Mo Hua's..."

Zhang Lan dragged Mo Hua by the collar to the base of a mountain outside Tongxian City.

The area was dense with trees, secluded and quiet, seldom visited by others.

Mo Hua felt himself being lifted by spiritual power, his feet off the ground, then everything around him whirled as the scenery reversed. After a moment, he came back to his senses and found himself outside Tongxian City.

"Uncle Zhang, why have you brought me here?" Mo Hua couldn't help but ask.

"Stab me with this sword."

Zhang Lan handed him a sword, black lacquered with gold inlay and decorated with an ancient pine pattern, clearly no ordinary item.

Mo Hua opened his mouth, "This doesn't seem right."

"Just stab."

"What if I hurt you?" Mo Hua voiced his concern.

Zhang Lan looked at Mo Hua silently, making him realize he might have overestimated himself.

With Mo Hua's cultivation level, Zhang Lan could stand still, let him stab all day, and still not even a hair would be harmed.

"Alright."

Zhang Lan wasn't worried, so why should he be? Mo Hua

gripped the sword, prepared to stab Zhang Lan, but then said, "I can't."

"What now?" Zhang Lan asked.

"I can't lift this sword..."

Mo Hua muttered quietly.

What kind of sword was Zhang Lan using? Why was it so heavy? Could it really be a sword meant for spiritual cultivators?

Zhang Lan sighed and pointed slightly upward. Before Mo Hua could see what was happening, a section of a tree branch fell from above.

"Use this branch."

"Oh." Mo Hua nodded.

He took the branch, held his breath, and concentrated his strength through the branch, stabbing towards Zhang Lan. Of course, Mo Hua's strength was almost negligible, since he was not a body cultivator.

What happened next astonished Mo Hua.

His branch pierced through Zhang Lan's body.

Mo Hua was startled, but when he regained his senses, he found no feedback of force on the branch, and he had actually hit nothing. When he looked again, Zhang Lan's figure gradually blurred and then disappeared, reappearing a step away.

Although Mo Hua didn't understand what had happened, it felt impressive!

"Is this a movement technique?"

Zhang Lan smiled lightly, then his form dispersed like mist, creating many afterimages around Mo Hua that neither eyes nor spiritual sense could pinpoint.

Soon, all spiritual power dissipated, and Zhang Lan reappeared in his original spot, as if he had never moved.

Mo Hua was profoundly shocked.

Zhang Lan watched Mo Hua's inexperienced expression, feeling quite relaxed, though his face remained calm.

"Now, do you want to learn it?"

Mo Hua couldn't help but nod.

"This technique is called Steps of Flowing Water, a unique skill of the Zhang family, normally not taught outside. The Steps of Flowing Water is a movement technique for spiritual cultivators that allows the use of spiritual power to control the body, swiftly dodging attacks within a confined space. At higher levels, one can even create afterimages to confuse others' vision and disturb their spiritual sense..."

Mo Hua listened intently, then worriedly said:

"But by teaching me, aren't you revealing it outside? Won't the Zhang family punish you? If so, maybe we should forget it."

"Isn't the technique good?"

"It is good, but I don't want to cause you trouble," Mo Hua felt conflicted.

Zhang Lan paused, then laughed, "Don't worry, if I dared to teach you, it's certainly alright. Those old sticklers in the clan can't do much about me."

At most, they'd lock me up for a few months or make me kneel in the ancestral hall for a few days...

Zhang Lan silently added to himself, though such a loss of dignity, he would never admit aloud.

"Oh," Mo Hua nodded, then asked, "But if I learn it, wouldn't your family consider killing me to ensure the secret doesn't spread?"

Zhang Lan couldn't help but tap Mo Hua's forehead, "What on earth is in that little head of yours, how can you say such a jumble of nonsense?"