

## The Quest 145

### Chapter 145: The Threshold

Mo Hua chatted with Young Master An for a while, then Zhang Lan approached him to say goodbye and asked if Mo Hua wanted to leave.

Mo Hua bid farewell to Young Master An, who seemed reluctant. Mo Hua advised him to take some time to think about what he wanted to do in life.

Ultimately, people can only rely on themselves.

Young Master An nodded solemnly.

Mo Hua and his companions left the An family. Zhang Lan and Situ Fang did not return home but followed Mo Hua to his family's eatery. They spent spirit stones to buy a lot of wine and meat, saying they would take it home to eat.

Their actions puzzled Mo Hua greatly.

They spent spirit stones to treat Mo Hua to a spiritual feast, didn't eat it themselves, and then went to Mo Hua's house to buy meat to eat with more spirit stones!

Mo Hua didn't know what to say.

But since they had plenty of spirit stones, he let them be.

Zhang Lan didn't like spiritual feasts, and Situ Fang had tasted the beef Mo Hua brought from the mountains before and couldn't forget it.

Each of them bought several pounds of demonic meat and then bid farewell to Mo Hua.

Mo Hua remembered that he still had some spiritual feast dishes from the Spirit Meal Tower in his storage pouch.

Chicken, duck, fish, and meat, there was plenty.

Mo Hua handed the spiritual feast over to his mother.

Liu Ruhua divided some of it among Madam Meng, Aunt Jiang, and other neighbors, keeping some for herself. She then cooked it again that evening for Mo Hua to try.

After eating, Mo Hua nodded in approval, feeling that the taste was just right.

In the following days, Mo Hua continued his regular practice of drawing arrays.

One morning, while meditating, Mo Hua felt his meridians tremble.

He immediately took out more spirit stones and focused on absorbing and refining them.

He didn't know how much time had passed, but his cultivation had broken through.

Mo Hua felt a complex mix of emotions.

Striving hard for a breakthrough doesn't always succeed, but cultivating with a calm mind often leads to success.

Indeed, cultivation is a process of gradual accumulation, a natural progression.

At last, he had reached the sixth layer of Qi cultivation!

Mo Hua felt invigorated.

He sensed that his spiritual awareness had strengthened further, and the invisible shackles limiting his spiritual growth had unknowingly loosened.

Mo Hua lifted his blanket to find a row of storage pouches beside his bed, all filled with jade bottles, each containing demonic blood!

There were over a thousand bottles!

Mo Hua planned to use this demonic blood to comprehend the nine array patterns and cross the threshold to become a first-rank array master!

He opened the "Thousand Arrays Compendium" and selected an array.

The First-Rank Iron Armor Array!

This was the first array with nine patterns that Mo Hua aimed to learn.

Mo Hua had long memorized the array patterns, but his spiritual awareness was previously insufficient to draw them.

Now that he had reached the sixth layer of Qi cultivation and his spiritual awareness had significantly improved, he could attempt to draw the nine-pattern array.

Calming his mind, Mo Hua spread out the paper, prepared the spirit ink, dipped his brush in it, and began drawing the First-Rank Iron Armor Array.

He easily drew the first eight patterns, but as he started the ninth, he felt his spiritual awareness waning.

"Impossible..."

Mo Hua was stunned. As his spiritual awareness neared exhaustion, he had only managed to draw eight and a half patterns.

"Why is it so difficult?"

Mo Hua set down his brush, resting his chin on his hand, deep in thought.

Logically, his cultivation had advanced, and his spiritual awareness should have correspondingly increased. Why was it that his spiritual awareness now only allowed him to draw half a pattern more?

He had thought that even if he couldn't complete the nine-pattern array in one go, he could at least sketch a rough outline and refine it with practice.

Now it seemed far from simple.

Frowning, Mo Hua sat down to meditate, using visualization techniques to restore his spiritual awareness. After several attempts, the results were unsatisfactory.

In the afternoon, he went to the Bamboo Residence to consult Mr. Zhuang.

Mr. Zhuang gave Mo Hua a complicated look and asked, "How many patterns does the array you're drawing have?"

"Nine."

"And your cultivation level?"

"Sixth layer."

Mo Hua didn't understand why Mr. Zhuang was asking this.

Mr. Zhuang sighed inwardly and said, "The breakthrough from the fifth to the sixth layer of Qi cultivation—what makes you think it can bridge the gap between eight and nine patterns?"

"Aren't they just one level apart?"

"The difference between the ninth layer of Qi cultivation and the Foundation Building stage is also just one level."

Mo Hua smiled sheepishly.

Patiently, Mr. Zhuang explained, "Within each major realm, the closer you get to the end, the slower the progress in cultivation and spiritual awareness. The gap between levels becomes more significant."

"So the gap between eight and nine patterns is larger than the previous ones?" Mo Hua asked.

Mr. Zhuang nodded, "Generally, nine patterns mark the extreme limit for a first-rank array master."

"Drawing nine patterns in one stroke requires a high level of skill in array drawing, memory of the array diagrams, comprehension of the array hub, and control and strength of spiritual awareness..."

"The gap between eight and nine patterns may seem small, but it's substantial. Some array masters spend their entire lives at this stage, always one step away from advancing, but that one step may never be crossed."

Mr. Zhuang spoke with a sense of resignation.

Mo Hua felt a bit nervous. Would he also spend his whole life at this threshold?

Seeing through Mo Hua's thoughts, Mr. Zhuang tapped his forehead and said, "You're still young, no need to worry. Just go back and practice more."

With Mr. Zhuang's reassurance, Mo Hua felt at ease.

As long as he continued practicing array drawing, sometimes the simplest method was the best.

Mo Hua nodded in agreement.

After bidding farewell to Mr. Zhuang, a gentle breeze stirred in the Bamboo Residence, and Elder Gui appeared behind Mr. Zhuang, curiously asking:

"How long will it take him to cross this threshold?"

Mr. Zhuang replied, "A few days at the shortest, half a month at the longest."

Elder Gui fell silent, eventually unable to hold back, "You call that a threshold?"

Ten days to half a month, that's not a threshold, not even a stumbling block...

Mr. Zhuang calmly explained, "His breakthrough released the shackles on his spiritual awareness, broadening its growth limit. Though his spiritual awareness is still insufficient now, with ten days of practice, his spiritual awareness will strengthen enough to handle the nine-pattern array."

Elder Gui was speechless.

Mr. Zhuang raised an eyebrow and said, "For other cultivators, nine patterns are indeed a threshold, but for Mo Hua, who has practiced many arrays, it's nothing."

Elder Gui was displeased, "Then why did you say so much nonsense earlier?"

Mr. Zhuang's expression turned playful, and he smiled slightly:

"I was just teasing him, to keep him from getting arrogant."

Upon returning home, Mo Hua earnestly followed Mr. Zhuang's advice, maintaining a calm mindset and diligently practicing his arrays.

After some practice, he felt his spiritual awareness strengthening and found that he could draw more patterns of the Iron Armor Array each day.

Encouraged, Mo Hua continued his practice.

Gradually, as his spiritual awareness grew stronger each day, he was able to draw more patterns daily.

Ten days later, Mo Hua naturally completed the Iron Armor Array, feeling a sense of accomplishment and seamless progress.

Yet, Mo Hua frowned.

It didn't seem as difficult as Mr. Zhuang had said.

Wasn't there supposed to be a threshold between eight and nine patterns? Where was it?

Mo Hua recalled carefully but couldn't identify anything that seemed like a threshold.

"What's going on?"

Mo Hua was puzzled, frowning even more deeply.

Where was the promised threshold?