

The Quest 173

Chapter 173: Roadblock

"Yu Changlin, since when has the Demon Hunter had such a powerful Array Master? Let me meet them," Qian Hong said coldly.

Elder Yu feigned ignorance, "What Array Master? I haven't seen one."

Qian Hong's eyelid twitched, "What is this you've set up?"

Elder Yu replied, "How would I know? I just passed by. I don't know what's on the ground."

Qian Hong grew angry, "Old fool, stop pretending with me!"

Elder Yu shrugged indifferently, "Old turtle Qian, don't act high and mighty with me!"

Qian Hong seethed with anger but knew now was not the time to spar with Yu Changlin.

Yu Changlin would be happy to hurl insults for a day and night, waiting for the Demon Hunters to escort the spirit mine into the city, rendering the Qian family powerless.

The Earth Fire Array could harm Qi cultivators but posed little threat to Foundation Building cultivators.

Given the urgency, Qian Hong reluctantly decided to scout the path himself to locate the Earth Fire Array.

Just as Qian Hong took a step, he felt someone's spiritual sense locked onto him with murderous intent.

Qian Hong felt a premonition and looked up displeased, "Yu Changlin, what do you mean?"

Elder Yu's eyes were sharp, but he said calmly, "Nothing at all."

Qian Hong's eyes narrowed, "You want to fight?"

Elder Yu spread his hands, acting forthright, "Where do you see me making a move?"

Qian Hong gritted his teeth, "You just targeted me with your spiritual sense, harboring killing intent."

Elder Yu sneered, "That's because you're too timid. I always look at people this way. If you're scared, that's your problem."

Qian Hong glared at Elder Yu, who remained unafraid.

Qian Zhongxuan whispered, "This old fool is stalling. Master, don't fall into his trap."

Qian Hong knew this but had no good plan.

Qian Zhongxuan suggested, "Master, why not lead the way to scout the Earth Fire Array? I'll cover you."

Qian Hong shot him a cold look, "Why don't you lead the way, and I'll cover you?"

Qian Zhongxuan appeared ashamed, "Master, you forget, you're in charge now. I've failed repeatedly and can't intervene anymore."

Qian Hong cursed Qian Zhongxuan inwardly.

He didn't know what traps Yu Changlin had set. If he scouted and got ambushed, he'd be severely injured or worse.

Then Qian Zhongxuan could save him, claiming credit and indebting him.

Qian Zhongxuan hoped Qian Hong would be ambushed, not killed, just gravely injured.

Both men hesitated, each with their own schemes.

At this moment, Qian Zhuang stepped forward, "May I give it a try?"

Qian Zhuang's tone was respectful, but he couldn't hide his excitement.

His chance to shine had come!

He was familiar with the Earth Fire Array, having suffered greatly but also successfully dismantling it.

Though breaking the array cost him dearly, earning him severe punishment, this opportunity could turn his disgrace into merit.

Qian Hong frowned, "You have a way?"

Qian Zhuang replied, "Master, I've broken this Earth Fire Array before!"

"A Qi cultivator broke it?"

"Yes!"

Qian

Hong showed interest, "Explain."

Qian Zhuang detailed his previous method of breaking the Earth Fire Array. After listening, Qian Hong pondered briefly and nodded, "It makes sense."

Qian Zhuang beamed with joy.

Qian Hong ordered, "I have a dozen sets of iron armor. Pick cultivators with earth spiritual roots, and be quick. If this succeeds, you'll be greatly rewarded!"

Qian Zhuang was overjoyed, "Yes, Master!"

Soon, a dozen Qi cultivators at the ninth level with earth spiritual roots, skilled in body cultivation and with tough skin, were selected.

They donned the iron armor and, following Qian Zhuang's instructions, spread out and cautiously advanced, attempting to trigger all the Earth Fire Arrays on the mountain path.

Qian Zhuang was confident, having tested this method and believing it foolproof.

Once all the Earth Fire Arrays were cleared, the path would be open, and the Demon Hunters would be trapped, ensuring his great merit.

Qian Zhuang thought so.

However, as the first Earth Fire Array exploded, his confidence shattered.

With a loud bang, crimson flames flared, black smoke rose, and powerful spiritual energy waves surged.

The Qian family cultivator in iron armor was engulfed in flames, then blasted away by the intense spiritual energy, rolling on the ground in agony.

His body was half charred, bleeding, and the iron armor was cracked all over!

The onlookers gasped, and Qian Zhuang was dumbfounded.

This wasn't right!

Why was the array's power so much stronger?!

This wasn't the Earth Fire Array he had broken before!

Qian Hong glanced at the injured cultivator and then at Qian Zhuang with a cold gaze, as if looking at a dead fish.

Cold sweat soaked Qian Zhuang's back. He knew he was doomed.

If he hadn't sought the spotlight, he wouldn't be in this mess. Now, his recklessness had led him to disaster.

He had hoped to turn his disgrace into merit, but now not only had he lost that chance, his disgrace had doubled.

Qian Zhongxuan also gave Qian Zhuang a cold look, then turned to Qian Hong, "Master, the only option now is to charge through."

Qian Hong glared at Qian Zhongxuan, "How? You've seen the array's power. Even late-stage Qi cultivators would be severely injured if not killed."

Qian Zhongxuan's eyes flickered, "The mountain path isn't wide. A hundred or two cultivators charging through, triggering all the Earth Fire Arrays, would clear the way for the rest."

Qian Hong's heart sank, glaring at Qian Zhongxuan even more harshly.

This was forcing him to be the villain.

Out of nearly two thousand men, sacrificing a hundred or two would break the arrays.

The problem was, how to choose who to send to their deaths?

Or rather, who to sacrifice?

If done secretly, it would be fine, but with so many Qian family disciples watching, if he dared to do this, he could forget about remaining the master.

Qian Hong gritted his teeth, "As the master, I should lead by example and break this Earth Fire Array. Elder Qian, join me to guard against Yu Changlin's schemes."

Qian Zhongxuan feigned reluctance.

Qian Hong quickly said, "If you do this, your previous mistakes will be forgiven."

Qian Zhongxuan's eyebrow twitched, "Really?"

"Really!"

Qian Zhongxuan respectfully said, "As an elder of the Qian family, I should advance and retreat with the master!"

Qian Hong inwardly spat, but outwardly he appeared gratified, "Time is of the essence. Let's act now but beware of Yu Changlin's ambush."

"Agreed!"

Qian Hong and Qian Zhongxuan, the two Foundation Building elders, worked together, using their techniques to personally trigger the Earth Fire Arrays on the mountain path.

Two figures darted along the path, causing a series of explosions, firelight, and spiritual energy waves.

When the explosions subsided, the firelight dimmed, and the smoke cleared, they stopped.

Both were in a sorry state, with tattered clothes, soot-streaked faces, and while there was no visible blood, their internal organs ached from the spiritual energy shockwaves, suppressing the urge to spit out blood.

Bathing in a top-grade Earth Fire Array, even Foundation Building cultivators found it hard to endure.