

The Quest 224

Chapter 224: A Thousand Homes' Smoke

Mo Shan smiled and nodded, "Yes."

"Are demonic beasts hard to deal with?"

"They are indeed difficult to handle. Demonic beasts have thick blood and tough skin. It usually takes five or six cultivators of the same level to hunt one. To be safe, it's best to have eight or nine."

Bai Zisheng pondered for a moment and asked, "So, do you think I can kill a demonic beast on my own?"

"On your own... no, you'd more likely be killed yourself," Mo Hua said quietly while gnawing on a chicken leg.

Bai Zisheng was unconvinced and glared at him lightly.

Mo Shan chuckled, "Not now, but in the future, when your cultivation is higher, it might be possible."

Bai Zisheng felt greatly encouraged.

"Dad, it's wrong to lie," Mo Hua said.

Bai Zisheng protested, "Uncle Mo is a demon hunter, he definitely knows better than you."

He had previously asked Mo Hua if he could hunt a demonic beast alone.

Mo Hua said no, which made Bai Zisheng somewhat unconvinced, but since Mo Hua had fought demonic beasts and he hadn't, Mo Hua's words carried some credibility.

But now Uncle Mo said he had great potential, maybe he really could hunt a demonic beast on his own in the future.

After all, Uncle Mo was a genuine demon hunter, while Mo Hua was just a little array master who relied on formations to outwit demonic beasts.

Mo Shan added, "Even if you could kill a demonic beast on your own, it's best to find some companions. They can watch your back. Demonic beasts are extremely cunning."

Bai Zisheng nodded, "Don't worry, Uncle Mo, I understand."

He often listened to Mo Hua's stories about demon hunting, both Mo Hua's personal experiences and those he heard from others.

Many demon hunters in those stories lost their lives due to carelessness, being ambushed, or deceived by demonic beasts playing dead. Bai Zisheng always kept these stories in mind as warnings.

Curious, Bai Zisheng asked, "Is the inner mountain of Dahei Mountain much more dangerous than the outer mountain?"

Mo Hua, whose cultivation was only at the sixth level of Qi refining, could only stay in the outer mountain. When he spoke of Dahei Mountain, he only mentioned the outer mountain.

Demonic beasts, miasma, mountain fog, and perilous areas were all things Bai Zisheng found both thrilling and curious. If the outer mountain was like this, what would the inner mountain be like?

Mo Hua chewed his meat, his cheeks puffed up, listening intently. He had never been to the inner mountain but knew he would go there eventually.

He had only heard snippets about the inner mountain from other demon hunters and didn't know much.

Seeing two pairs of black eyes staring at him, Mo Shan sat down and patiently began to speak:

"Miasma, mist forests, and poisonous swamps exist in both the outer and inner mountains, but the miasma is thicker, the fog denser, and the poison more potent in the inner mountain."

"The demonic beasts in the inner mountain are mostly in the late stage of First Grade, very powerful. If you're unlucky, you might encounter a Second Grade demonic beast, which is almost certain death."

Mo Hua asked, "Dad, have you ever encountered a Second Grade demonic beast?"

Mo Shan nodded, "I saw one from afar. Its blood was so thick it stained the whole forest red. We were lucky to spot it early and avoided it. The beast seemed to be dozing off after eating, so it didn't bother us."

Mo Hua sighed in relief.

Bai Zisheng asked, "Can't Second Grade demonic beasts be killed?"

"It's very hard," Mo Shan sighed, "It would take at least five or six, or even seven or eight Foundation Building cultivators to kill one. It's not easy to gather that many."

Mo Hua was worried, "Dad, will you encounter Second Grade demonic beasts again?"

Seeing Mo Hua's concerned look, Mo Shan's heart warmed, and he smiled, "The inner mountain is vast. It's rare to encounter one. Second Grade demonic beasts aren't common and live scattered in the large inner mountain, so meeting one isn't easy."

"And their blood is so thick you can sense them from afar. As long as you stay alert and avoid them early, there usually isn't any danger."

Mo Hua nodded.

Mo Shan continued, "Besides the environment and demonic beasts, the most dangerous thing in the inner mountain is people."

Mo Hua and Bai Zisheng exchanged surprised looks.

"Are you talking about demon hunters or other cultivators?" Mo Hua asked.

"Both. Some demon hunters from other places deliberately rob prey, and there are cultivators of various intentions and treacherous minds."

Mo Hua was curious, "Why haven't I met these cultivators in the outer mountain?"

Mo Shan explained with a smile, "Dahei Mountain is vast and stretches far, connected to other areas. Tongxian City is just a part of it..."

"The outer mountain of Dahei Mountain is connected to Tongxian City, not to other places, but the inner mountain is different."

"The paths in the inner mountain are more intricate, leading in all directions. Cultivators from the southern regions, when wanting to enter the city or pass through, must go through the inner mountain."

"The inner mountain is gloomy and remote, which suppresses the human mind and often gives rise to evil thoughts. Robbery, murder, and treasure-snatching happen frequently. Afterwards, they hide the bodies, leaving no trace."

Mo Hua felt a chill in his heart.

Demonic beasts were dangerous, but human hearts were even more so.

In this world, those who ate people might not be demonic beasts but humans.

Seeing Mo Hua and Bai Zisheng's tense faces, Mo Shan realized it was inappropriate to talk about such topics during festive days, so he switched to talking about amusing demon hunting stories.

Bai Zisheng, hearing them for the first time, listened with great interest.

Mo Hua, however, had heard some of these stories before. Bai Zisheng was hearing what he had already heard.

But now that he had entered Dahei Mountain, he knew what demon hunting was like.

Those stories he once found interesting now revealed their dangers and uncertainties, making him feel differently upon hearing them again.

Unnoticed, it grew late, and Liu Ruhua invited them to stay for dinner.

Bai Zisheng was eager, but Aunt Xue politely declined, "Thank you, Sister Liu, but we've troubled you long enough, it's time to go back."

Liu Ruhua didn't insist and, along with Mo Hua, saw them to the door.

Bai Zisheng felt reluctant to leave.

Here, there was food, drinks, stories to hear, and people to chat with. Going back meant only cultivating and doing tedious tasks.

Bai Zixi showed no emotion, but a slight regret flickered in her eyes.

Mo Hua, carefree himself, though he had to practice cultivation and array formations daily, could play whenever he wanted, unlike the Bai siblings, who had to follow a strict schedule.

Seeing their downcast expressions, Mo Hua's eyes brightened, and he invited, "Aunt Xue, on the fifteenth there will be lanterns and fireworks, why don't you come and watch?"

Aunt Xue smiled warmly at Mo Hua but still declined politely, "We appreciate your kindness, but we won't watch the fireworks."

Mo Hua said, "The fireworks are powered by arrays, which I drew. They're really beautiful."

Aunt Xue was surprised, "You drew them?"

"Yes," Mo Hua nodded, "I put a lot of effort into them!"

In fact, it hadn't taken him long, since they were just firework arrays and not too difficult.

Seeing Mo Hua's confident look, Aunt Xue couldn't help but smile. After a moment's thought, she agreed, "We'll come to see when you set off the fireworks."

Bai Zisheng was overjoyed and looked at Mo Hua with gratitude. Bai Zixi's eyes also brightened as she looked at Mo Hua.

On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, night had fallen, and the streets were adorned with lanterns and decorations.

Mo Hua checked the firework arrays again and, confirming everything was fine, nodded.

The firework arrays were composite arrays made up of ordinary firework arrays, less than First Grade, with few array patterns, making them easy for Mo Hua to draw.

The firework arrays were drawn on both sides of the riverbank, using the stone embankment as the array medium. By crushing spirit stones and injecting spiritual energy, the arrays could be activated to launch fireworks into the sky.

Mo Hua didn't use paper as the array medium because it was disposable; once the array was activated, the array paper couldn't bear the spiritual power and would be destroyed.

Using earth and stone as the medium allowed the arrays to operate multiple times.

This way, not just on the fifteenth, but on every festival, the arrays could be activated to release fireworks for celebration.

Mo Hua went to Elder Yu to get reimbursed for the spirit stones used in the firework arrays.

Since the arrays weren't complicated and didn't consume many spirit stones, Elder Yu readily agreed.

At the hour of Xu, Mo Hua activated the arrays.

Then he ran to the stone bridge to watch the fireworks with his parents, Bai Zisheng, Bai Zixi, and Aunt Xue.

After activating the arrays, it took fifteen breaths for the array patterns to activate.

The array patterns along the riverbank lit up in a variety of colors, then condensed into brilliant lights that shot up into the dark sky, bursting into dazzling fireworks, layer upon layer

, one after another, like a thousand blooming flowers and falling stars.

The dark night sky served as a backdrop, with fireworks blooming like splendid embroidery, weaving a magnificent and colorful tapestry.

The sky was filled with brilliance, breathtakingly beautiful.

For a moment, countless cultivators looked up at the sky, gazing at the splendid fireworks, watching them illuminate the streets and alleys of Tongxian City.