

The Quest 259

Chapter 259: Explanation

Lu Hui's body was first transported to the Dao Court in Tongxian City, where an official reported to the chief, Zhou Da Ping.

Upon hearing the news, Zhou Da Ping furrowed his brows. When he saw Lu Hui's corpse, his frown deepened, and he couldn't help but curse, "Zhang Lan, that brat, always causing me trouble."

Lu Dian, in perfect condition, came to Tongxian City. However, after entering the mountains with Zhang Lan, he turned into a mutilated corpse. How was Zhou Da Ping supposed to explain this to Qingxuan City's Dao Court? Could this incident have nothing to do with Zhang Lan? Who would believe that?

Zhou Da Ping asked the official, "What exactly happened?"

The official bowed and said, "According to Zhang Dian, Lu Dian was pursuing Guang Toutuo when he was ambushed, sustaining severe injuries. During the escort of Guang Toutuo, they encountered a demonic beast, and unfortunately, Lu Dian died heroically in the line of duty."

"Died in the line of duty?" Zhou Da Ping snorted coldly. "He's certainly washed his hands of the matter. The death is disgraceful, but he found a respectable excuse."

"Does he think others are fools? The body is right here; anyone with insight can see how Lu Hui truly died."

Zhou Da Ping pondered silently, shook his head, and scrutinized Lu Hui's body with his spiritual sense. Suddenly, his eyes lit up.

The method... was quite clean.

The fatal wounds on Lu Hui's body were of two kinds.

One was inflicted by a cultivator, with a faint trace of wind elemental spiritual power at the wound site. The person who injured him was clearly Guang Toutuo. Wind elemental spiritual roots are

quite rare, and their Dao Court could not find a single cultivator with wind spiritual roots. Among the cultivators on this mission, none had wind spiritual roots; this spiritual power couldn't be faked.

The other kind of wound was from a demonic beast's bite. The wound bore the beast's foul saliva and scarlet demonic power, confirming death by a demonic beast's bite. This, too, couldn't be faked.

Feeling relieved, Zhou Da Ping thought better of Zhang Lan. He could handle some things but should not leave loose ends or cause trouble for the Dao Court. This way, Zhou Da Ping could turn a blind eye, acting as if nothing had happened, and give a plausible explanation to the outside.

With a satisfactory explanation and no trouble, Zhou Da Ping felt at ease. He looked at Lu Hui's corpse again and thought, "Good riddance!"

From top to bottom, the Dao Court in Qingxuan City was a mess; what kind of people were they?

Though Zhou Da Ping didn't express it, he held great contempt for them. He wasn't exceptionally virtuous, but he had a conscience. At most, he took some kickbacks but never engaged in cannibalistic practices.

However, he was merely the chief of Tongxian City and could only manage his domain; he couldn't intervene in Qingxuan City's affairs.

Sighing, Zhou Da Ping found himself puzzled again. How exactly did Zhang Lan manage to kill Lu Hui?

Judging by the wounds, it was indeed Guang Toutuo who injured Lu Hui, and the demonic beast killed him. But things couldn't be that simple.

Lu Hui was cunning and shouldn't have been that foolish...

Lu Hui was at the ninth level of Qi refining, and so was Zhang Lan. Though Zhang Lan was stronger, he couldn't have killed Lu Hui without leaving any trace. Someone must have helped.

Zhou Da Ping pondered quietly. Mo Shan and Ji Qingbai, who had entered the mountains with Zhang Lan, likely assisted. Who else?

A flash of cunning eyes crossed his mind.

Zhou Da Ping stopped stroking his beard, slightly startled, "Could it be that Mo Hua also took action?"

The more he thought about it, the more plausible it seemed. After getting to know Mo Hua, Zhou Da Ping realized that despite his young age, Mo Hua couldn't be judged by common standards. He was meticulous, acted after careful planning, and left no traces.

Zhou Da Ping nodded approvingly as he glanced at Lu Hui's body, "Well done!"

At this time, Mo Hua and Zhang Lan were still in the valley where the criminals hid.

This valley was used by Guang Toutuo and his men for hiding, living, and storing stolen goods. Many caves, big and small, were dug out, totaling about ten.

Inside the caves were beds, pills, spiritual tools, food, and other items for the cultivators' daily use and cultivation, indicating that the criminals had been hiding there for quite some time.

The Dao Court's cultivators searched each cave, sorted the stolen goods, recorded them, and piled them in the valley center.

A considerable amount of stuff was already piled up in the valley—spiritual tools, pills, miscellaneous books, and more. However, it was clearly not enough.

Given how long Guang Toutuo had been robbing in Dahei Mountain, there should have been more. Where was it hidden?

Frowning, Zhang Lan continued searching the valley, expanding his spiritual sense to look for any hidden rooms or mechanisms. Then he noticed Mo Hua standing before a stone wall, deep in thought.

Zhang Lan approached and knocked on the stone wall. The sound was normal.

"Is it hollow?" Zhang Lan asked.

Mo Hua nodded.

Zhang Lan scanned it with his spiritual sense but found nothing unusual. It seemed like an ordinary stone wall. He asked, "How did you figure it out?"

"Just a sweep with my spiritual sense," Mo Hua replied casually.

"Alright." Zhang Lan sighed. Though he didn't want to admit it, he had to. This kid's spiritual sense was already stronger than his.

Thankfully, he wasn't the only one with a weaker spiritual sense compared to Mo Hua. Few cultivators at the ninth level of Qi refining could match Mo Hua's spiritual sense.

"Can you break it open?"

Mo Hua shook his head, "There's an array. Breaking it by force would be troublesome, and who knows what traps might be inside."

"Do you have a way to break the array?" Zhang Lan asked.

Mo Hua nodded, "I'll see if I can disarm it."

Zhang Lan's eyelid twitched, "Disarm the array?"

"Yes, Uncle Zhang, you know about it?" Mo Hua looked at Zhang Lan curiously.

"Of course," Zhang Lan feigned nonchalance, though he was trembling inside. This kid could even disarm arrays?

He had only heard the term "disarm the array" briefly mentioned by an array instructor at the Zhang family academy. The instructor didn't know the specifics, only that it wasn't something ordinary array masters could learn.

Disarming arrays and composite arrays were different matters. Could this really be something a first-grade array master should learn?

Zhang Lan coughed and cautiously asked, "Isn't disarming arrays difficult? If you can't, we can just break it open."

Mo Hua scratched his head. He had been observing the stone wall, thinking about the array and how to disarm it. He had seen some clues.

Mo Hua said, "No problem, I'll disarm it. This array isn't difficult, probably not even first-grade, so it should be easy."

He was being modest. Disarming arrays below first-grade was quite easy, but it was best not to speak too confidently to avoid embarrassment if he failed.

"Not even first-grade... easy to disarm..."

Zhang Lan sighed. Alright, comparing oneself to others could be frustrating.

He patted Mo Hua's shoulder, "I'll leave it to you then."