

The Quest 28

Chapter 28: A New Idea

The next day, Mo Shan hurried back.

When Mo Shan arrived at Xinglin Medical Hall, his clothes were ragged and stained with mud, his arm wrapped in a bandage as if torn by a demonic beast, with blood seeping through.

It seemed he had just battled a demonic beast with his demon hunting team and hadn't had the chance to tend to his wounds before rushing back.

Upon hearing that his wife's life was not in danger, Mo Shan finally breathed a sigh of relief. Elder Feng checked Liu Ruhua's condition and also treated Mo Shan's arm.

A few days later, Liu Ruhua returned home to recuperate. Following Elder Feng's instructions, she had a light diet, avoided exertion, took her medicinal pills on time, and also could not use her spiritual power for a month.

Mo Shan and his son stayed at home for a few days until Liu Ruhua sent them out—Mo Shan, as the leader of the demon hunting team, needed to hunt demonic beasts, and Mo Hua, as a sect disciple, had to attend to his studies and could not afford to delay.

Fortunately, Liu Ruhua couldn't use spiritual power, but her daily life was not significantly impacted.

Mo Shan had to ask the neighbor, Aunt Yang, for help, and whenever he was free, he would come back home. Similarly, every ten-day rest period, Mo Hua would take leave from his instructor and return home to check in.

Yan Jiaoxi was understanding and did not make things difficult for Mo Hua, only reminding him not to neglect his cultivation and sect duties.

A month later, Liu Ruhua was almost fully recovered, although she still had to stay at home and could not engage in activities that required spiritual power, as it would cause her to cough incessantly, but otherwise, she suffered no other harm.

Mo Hua was relieved, but noticed that his mother was not very happy. Though she still smiled, her expression was noticeably more subdued than before, and she often sat alone in contemplation.

Mo Hua was worried but couldn't figure out why, so he asked Mo Shan.

Mo Shan sighed and told Mo Hua, "Your mother's wishes are simple; she wants to save enough spirit stones for you to cultivate properly, watch you grow up, get married, and have children... But now she can't use her spiritual power and therefore can't do anything, let alone earn spirit stones."

"Having been busy for half her life, suddenly being unable to do anything or help you, she feels somewhat empty inside..."

Mo Hua felt uneasy and asked, "Does mother have other interests, like Dan patterns or arrays?"

"Other interests?"

"Yes, things she's interested in, like Dan patterns or arrays..."

Mo Shan thought for a moment and said, "She hasn't shown much interest in those, but she does enjoy cooking. Not to boast, but within ten miles, no one cooks better than your mother."

Mo Shan added with a sigh, "When I promised to marry your mother and become spiritual partners, I boasted that I would open a meal tower for her to research various meals, but after all these years, she's only endured hardships with me, and I never fulfilled that promise..."

Mo Hua looked at his somewhat remorseful father and knew he couldn't blame him.

Mo Shan's cultivation and methods were among the best among the demon hunters in the area, and over the years, he had risked his life fighting demonic beasts, often returning home covered in blood. Despite this, the family was still struggling to make ends meet.

Ultimately, the life of a low-level independent cultivator was difficult; just maintaining a living was exhausting.

Mo Hua then said, "Father, don't worry, I will definitely open a large meal tower for mother in the future!"

Mo Shan, knowing his son was trying to comfort him, patted Mo Hua's head, feeling somewhat consoled, "Good!"

But his wife could not use spiritual power, and even as a meal chef, spiritual power was necessary. Even if they opened a restaurant, without spiritual power, it would be hard to be a meal chef.

Thinking of his wife's melancholy, Mo Shan felt sorry for her and patted Mo Hua's shoulder, "Talk to your mother more often when you have time; sometimes your words work better than mine, don't let your mother think too much."

"Alright," Mo Hua nodded.

Afterward, whenever Mo Hua had time, he would actively talk with Liu Ruhua, and her complexion did indeed improve somewhat, but when alone, she still appeared melancholic.

"If only mother could use her spiritual power," Mo Hua thought, but he also knew this was unlikely.

Illness arrives like a mountain collapsing and recedes like drawing silk; moreover, it was a chronic illness accumulated over many years, only treatable through slow rehabilitation.

The cultivation world surely had

heavenly treasures capable of curing such illnesses, as Elder Feng had mentioned a few, but for a family like Mo Hua's, finding such resources or affording them was nearly impossible.

Mo Hua could only give up.

Half a month later, the hottest month of the year arrived. The sun hung high, and the ground was scorchingly hot. Tongxian Sect, following tradition, began a month-long summer break.

A year-end break and a summer break were the two longest vacations of the year.

Due to the hot weather, demonic beasts were less active, and those that did appear were primarily fire-type, stronger in such weather and very challenging to deal with. Thus, the summer was also a slow season for demon hunting.

Mo Shan would spend more time at home, only occasionally leaving for a few days if his team members discovered valuable demonic beasts, bringing back some spirit stones or skins.

One time, after being out for a few days, Mo Shan returned home with a large bundle. When Mo Hua opened it, he found a large pack of beef tendons, his mouth agape in surprise, "Father, is this..."

"This is wild mountain ox meat," Mo Shan explained, "It doesn't contain much spiritual energy and isn't very valuable, but compared to other demonic beasts, its meat quality isn't too bad, and it doesn't have a strong odor."

"Recently, the demon hunting team hasn't had much success, so we only got this wild mountain ox. After skinning and butchering it, we couldn't sell the meat; everyone complained it was too tough and old, hard to cook and hard to chew, so we each took some home to eat," Mo Shan explained.

Mo Hua uncertainly said, "Father, are you going to cook this meat?"

Mo Shan ruffled Mo Hua's head, "What, you think your father's cooking isn't tasty?"

Mo Hua just smiled and didn't respond.

At noon, Mo Shan cooked the beef, struggling for half a day to get it tender, and served it in a large open-mouthed white porcelain bowl.

"Try it, see how it tastes!"

The white porcelain bowl contained soy-sauce-colored beef.

Liu Ruhua glanced at the beef and put down her chopsticks, only scooping up a spoonful of soup and slowly sipping it.

Mo Hua, however, picked up a piece of beef, chewed a few times, his teeth aching from the effort, the meat still stubbornly tough, not breaking apart at all.

Mo Hua, embarrassed yet polite, spat the meat out and picked up a spoon to sip the soup, then complimented, "The soup is good!"

Mo Shan glared at him, "The soup was made with the sauce your mother prepared, of course it's good."

Liu Ruhua pursed her lips and smiled, "I appreciate your effort, but meal preparation isn't something that can be done casually. Even using spiritual power to stoke the fire for cooking requires much attention; when to use high heat, when to use low heat, when to add which sauce and how much, all require precision..."

Hearing this, Mo Hua suddenly asked, "So if it's cooked long enough, would the beef become tender?"

Liu Ruhua responded, "In theory, yes, but that would require a cultivator to watch over the pot all day and night, continuously using spiritual power to stoke the fire..."

"A normal cultivator definitely can't do that, and a cultivator who could would probably not be so bored," Mo Shan added.

"What if we used an array?" Mo Hua's eyes lit up.

"An array..." Liu Ruhua pondered, "I'm not sure, but I've heard from the head chef at the meal tower that some large meal towers have artifact craftsmen craft stoves, then array masters inscribe arrays on them. This way, only spirit stones are needed to sustain the cooking for long periods without using a cultivator's spiritual power. However, hiring an array master is very expensive, and at least the previous meal tower couldn't afford such a stove."

"I see..."

Mo Hua mused.

Mo Shan also picked up a piece of beef, chewed a few times without breaking it down, and had to admit, "It's indeed tough to chew." Then he just swallowed it, forcibly digesting it with his spiritual power.

That evening, Mo Hua practiced arrays on the damaged stele while thinking about the meal tower.

The next day, Mo Hua didn't stay home to practice arrays but instead went out under the scorching sun directly to North Street.

Despite the intense heat making him sweat profusely after just a few steps, there were still some small vendors on the street, braving the scorching sun, their voices weak as they hawked their wares.

Mo Hua arrived at North Street and found the largest meal tower there—F

ulu Meal Tower—then asked the shopkeeper, "Is your young master surnamed An, called An Xiaofu... no, An Xiaofu?"

The shopkeeper, not looking down on Mo Hua for his ordinary clothes, instead guessed he might truly be an acquaintance of the young master due to Mo Hua's familiar tone, and courteously responded, "The young gentleman is correct, the young master is upstairs, would you like me to send a message for you?"

Mo Hua, also very polite, said, "Please inform him that a fellow sect member surnamed Mo is looking for him regarding a matter."