

The Quest 281

Chapter 281: Rage

The tall demonic cultivator was startled by what he heard and shook his head.

He wouldn't dare provoke the Fourth Leader's bad luck.

"So this fat man is just dead then."

He then asked, "Should we just feed him directly to save some trouble?"

"If this demonic beast wanted to eat humans, it would have done so already. It's very picky and doesn't eat human flesh."

"How strange," the tall demonic cultivator said in surprise.

"Indeed."

The two demonic cultivators threw the fat man's corpse out and began cleaning the bloodstains in the room.

Soon, they discovered the array on the demon-binding chains seemed dimmer than usual.

The tall demonic cultivator frowned and said, "Is the array broken? Or did someone tamper with it?"

Hearing this, Mo Hua, who was hiding in the rafters, was startled and considered whether to eliminate these two demonic cultivators as well.

He had tampered with many arrays in Heishan Stronghold.

Generally, an array master would not check an array unless it malfunctioned. After all, there were so many arrays in Heishan Stronghold that it was impossible to check them all.

But if these two demonic cultivators found out that the array had been tampered with and reported it to the Third Leader, the demonic cultivators would conduct a thorough investigation and discover the traces Mo Hua left while breaking the array.

Even if they couldn't see Mo Hua, they would increase their vigilance.

This would make it much harder for Mo Hua to gather information.

Mo Hua weighed the strength of the two demonic cultivators, considering whether he could eliminate them right here.

If he couldn't do it alone, he still had the big tiger.

If he and the big tiger worked together, striking from the shadows, killing one first and then dealing with the other, they could likely succeed.

The short demonic cultivator also looked at the array and asked, "Do you understand arrays?"

"No," the tall demonic cultivator shook his head.

"Then why are you talking like you do?"

"But this array does seem a bit off."

"How could it be different?" the short demonic cultivator retorted, "An array is an array. They all look the same to me."

"How can they be the same?" the tall demonic cultivator was still confused.

The short demonic cultivator cursed under his breath, "Use your brain for a moment. If this array had really malfunctioned, would this tiger demon be lying here so quietly?"

The tall demonic cultivator was taken aback but then nodded, "That makes sense."

He glanced at the tiger demon.

The tiger demon was lying quietly with its head drooping, looking very weak.

The tall demonic cultivator couldn't help but say, "This demon beast seems quite docile. Why would it suddenly bite the fat man to death?"

"Probably the fat man did something to provoke the beast, which made it angry and cost him his life. Such things happen often. Newcomers don't know their limits..."

The tall demonic cultivator nodded.

After that, the two stopped chatting and focused on cleaning the bloodstains on the floor.

Seeing that they weren't dwelling on the array, Mo Hua was relieved.

Fortunately, these two were "array blind" and knew nothing about arrays, or it would have taken more effort.

Mo Hua glanced at the big tiger and thought to himself, "You're on your own now. I've helped you as much as I can. Whether you can escape or not is up to you."

The tiger demon let out a soft "huff" as if it had really heard Mo Hua's thoughts.

Mo Hua shook his head. This big tiger was too clever.

After another day passed, with most tasks completed, Mo Hua considered whether to return.

The fat cultivator was dead, Kong Sheng's jade pendant was in hand, the map of Heishan Stronghold was mostly drawn, and some intelligence had been gathered.

More confidential information was probably unknown even to the demonic cultivators in the front stronghold, and Mo Hua didn't dare venture into the back stronghold.

It was about time to wrap things up.

However, there was one more thing that Mo Hua was conflicted about.

It was the Fireball Technique manual of the pale-faced man.

He had been eyeing the pale-faced man for days, wanting to steal his manual, copy it, and then return it without anyone noticing.

But after several days, he hadn't found any opportunity.

The pale-faced man always kept his storage bag close and treated the Fireball Technique manual like a treasure.

Then there was Kong Sheng. Killing him was easy, but doing so without leaving any traces was difficult.

Mo Hua sighed.

It seemed he would have to think of another way in the future.

At night, the scar-faced man and the pale-faced man were still on night watch, sitting around the fire, roasting meat, drinking terrible wine.

Mo Hua remained hidden nearby, listening.

He planned to go home the next day and was hoping to overhear some new information tonight.

The scar-faced man and the pale-faced man chatted while drinking.

Their conversation was either complaints, dirty jokes, or meaningless nonsense.

There was no new information.

Mo Hua was getting drowsy when he heard the two start discussing their demonic cultivation techniques.

The pale-faced man first sighed, "My 'spirit slave' died. It's really unlucky. I have to train another one."

The scar-faced man sneered, "Did you overdo it?"

"No matter how much I overdid it, it couldn't be worse than you," the pale-faced man retorted, "What have you done to your 'furnace'?"

"At least mine isn't dead."

"Living a life worse than death might be better off dead."

"Feeling sympathetic?" the scar-faced man looked at him mockingly.

The pale-faced man replied, "Unlike you, I know how to cherish beauty. If I practiced the extraction method, I would treat her well..."

The scar-faced man sneered, "What nonsense are you spouting?"

The pale-faced man wasn't offended, wearing a lecherous grin. After a moment, he suddenly asked, "Isn't this woman supposed to have a dao companion? How could she willingly let you use her for extraction?"

The scar-faced man laughed, "I threatened her with her husband. If she didn't comply, I would ensure her husband suffered a terrible fate."

"For her husband's sake, she had no choice but to obey me, pleading with me every time not to torment her husband."

The pale-faced man also laughed, "You're a real beast."

The scar-faced man's eyes gleamed with greed as he grinned.

The pale-faced man took a sip of wine and suddenly exclaimed, "Wait a minute, isn't her husband already dead, cut down by you?"

The scar-faced man laughed heartily, "Exactly."

"You're truly ruthless..."

...

Mo Hua's expression grew colder. He couldn't listen any longer.

He stood up and walked along the dark path to a corner of Heishan Stronghold, where some crude houses stood, holding a few innocent cultivators captive.

There weren't many female cultivators left alive in Heishan Stronghold. After searching a few rooms, Mo Hua found the woman the scar-faced man had mentioned.

She was locked in a room alone.

The room was simple, with basic food supplies. She wasn't chained, not restricted, just unable to leave.

The night was dark, and the cold moonlight shone through the window into the room.

The woman lay on the bed, hair disheveled, clothes tattered, body covered in bruises, looking frail and pitiful.

She wasn't crying, as if her tears had long dried up.

Suddenly, she slowly got up, took a wooden hairpin from beside the bed, and aimed it at her heart. But then, thinking of something, her hands trembled, unable to make the final move.

After a while, she seemed to resign herself and lay back down, clutching a sachet tightly in her hand, her knuckles white.

The sachet was embroidered with a pair of brocade mandarin ducks.

Mo Hua remembered his mother telling him this was a token of love between dao companions.

She must be worried about her husband's safety.

Despite the torture, despite losing her dignity, she was still holding on to life.

But her husband was already dead, and her future held only endless torment and pain.

Her perseverance was merely to endure more suffering.

Mo Hua wanted to save her, but he couldn't.

His cultivation wasn't strong enough, his spells not powerful enough. He could hide, he could trap enemies, but he wasn't good at killing.

If he went to find help, it would take too long.

This woman couldn't hold on until then.

Mo Hua felt a bit downhearted and sighed, then softly spoke, "Your husband is already dead."

The woman was startled, "Really?"

Her voice was hoarse but not surprised. Perhaps a husband and wife share a heart. Maybe she had already felt it but didn't want to admit it, still clinging to a sliver of hope.

"The scar-faced man said it himself."

"Is that so..." The tears she had long run dry began to flow again.

"Already... dead."

The room was silent. The woman's sobs made no sound.

"Thank you."

She spoke slowly, not knowing who was speaking to her, but the voice was tender, like a child's.

Why would a child be in this place?

This filthy, terrible place.

Maybe it was a boy under an immortal, unable to bear seeing her suffer and so told her the truth.

Were there really immortals in this world?

If there were, I wouldn't ask for rescue from this hell, only that those who deserve it should fall into the depths of it.

The woman silently wished, then clutched

the sachet in her left hand and drove the wooden hairpin into her heart with her right.

Blood stained her clothes, like poppies in the night.

With a look of peace and relief, the woman slowly closed her eyes.

"Husband, this life has been too bitter. If there is another life, let's become dao companions again."

Before closing her eyes, she murmured in her heart.

Mo Hua silently watched, his face saddened, then anger welled up within him.

In this world, those who should die still live, and those who should live well die tragically.

The moonlight was cold, and Mo Hua's gaze was even colder.

He made up his mind. Before going back, he would first kill that scar-faced man!