

The Quest 292

Chapter 292: Gains and Losses

On the way back, Mo Hua silently summarized the gains and losses of this trip in his heart.

Overall, the infiltration into Heishan Stronghold was thrilling but not dangerous. However, upon closer reflection, many situations were indeed perilous.

Especially eavesdropping on the conversations of the Foundation Building demonic cultivators, spying right under their noses, and even stealing the Visualization Diagram of the third leader, only to be caught on the spot...

These actions were akin to pulling teeth from a tiger's mouth or picking chestnuts from the fire.

Although Mo Hua managed to bluff his way through and resolve the crises, one should always seek advantages and avoid dangers. Such risky actions should be minimized in the future. If unavoidable, one must plan even more thoroughly.

Mo Hua sighed slightly.

His actions lacked thoroughness, his considerations were insufficient, and his methods were not meticulous enough.

Most importantly, he had worried everyone, including his parents.

Mo Hua took this as a lesson to remember.

The cultivation world is vast and boundless, and the path of cultivation is long and arduous.

He was still young and inexperienced, with much to learn and many more experiences to go through in the future.

If there were any oversights in his actions, he must reflect deeply to benefit from them, so he could act more prudently in the future.

Mo Hua nodded to himself.

After summarizing his mistakes, Mo Hua began to calculate the gains from this trip.

Firstly, he learned the truth about the deep mountains, found the entrance to Heishan Stronghold, explored its secrets, almost mapped it out completely, and even discovered some of its deepest secrets.

Heishan Stronghold was the largest hidden tumor in Dahei Mountain. If not eradicated, the entire Tongxian City would face great danger.

By then, all the cultivators in Tongxian City, including his parents, as well as the Demon Hunters, artifact craftsmen, and alchemists he was familiar with, might fall victim to the demonic cultivators' hands.

This was something Mo Hua did not want to see.

Therefore, Heishan Stronghold had to be eliminated eventually, and conflict with it was inevitable.

Knowing oneself and the enemy ensures victory in a hundred battles.

Once a direct confrontation with Heishan Stronghold occurred, the information Mo Hua gathered would be crucial.

Knowing the stronghold's realities would make planning and dealing with it much easier.

If one were ignorant of its realities and engaged recklessly, the treacherous Heishan Stronghold would be several times more formidable.

The casualties in a battle with Heishan Stronghold would also be several times higher.

Mo Hua hoped everyone could live well, with no casualties being the best outcome. If unavoidable, the casualties should be minimized.

Besides the intelligence on Heishan Stronghold, Mo Hua had personal gains as well.

He caused the death of the fat cultivator and obtained Kong Sheng's jade pendant.

This jade pendant was exclusive to the direct line of the Kong family, holding significant symbolic value. For now, it could only be exchanged for spirit stones, but if kept, it might be useful for dealing with the Kong family in the future.

Secondly, Mo Hua obtained a manual for the Fireball Technique from the white-faced demonic cultivator.

He had put this manual into his storage bag without closely examining it.

If Mo Hua's guess was correct, although this manual was in the white-faced demonic cultivator's possession, it probably wasn't originally his. It might have been stolen or seized, or obtained by chance.

Such manuals, focusing on a specific type of spell, were quite rare and not something ordinary cultivators had access to.

Mo Hua was secretly pleased.

Understanding this manual could enhance the power of his Fireball Technique, compensating for his agility and resourcefulness but lacking in offensive strength.

However, there was no rush. Mo Hua planned to study it carefully once he returned.

Additionally, the most important item was the Visualization Diagram.

For the first time, Mo Hua saw the Visualization Diagram, glimpsed its secrets, and encountered the dangers within it.

He had some speculations about the Visualization Diagram, but due to his limited knowledge, he couldn't be certain. He needed to consult Mr. Zhuang.

Thanks to the Visualization Diagram, Mo Hua's spiritual awareness had increased dramatically, now comparable to that of a Foundation Building cultivator. He even drew a First Grade Ten-Pattern, a reverse spirit array, which was a rare occurrence against the Dao of Heaven.

Mr. Zhuang probably didn't expect this either.

Mo Hua was secretly a bit proud, wondering if he would scare Mr. Zhuang when he returned.

Finally, the most important item was the Dao Stele.

Mo Hua had been using the Dao Stele to practice array formations and sharpen his spiritual awareness.

This Dao Stele, rather than being a stele, was more like a "blackboard" where drawings could be erased and redrawn.

Anything could be drawn on it, but ultimately, nothing was left behind.

However, after this trip to Heishan Stronghold, seeing the Visualization Diagram, having the Blue-faced Demon enter his sea of consciousness, experiencing danger and resolving it, Mo Hua realized that he might know nothing about this Dao Stele.

He still remembered the Blue-faced Demon's look of fear.

It seemed to face the greatest terror in the world, true death and destruction of the Dao.

The Dao Stele did nothing—no light, no phenomena—just a few wisps of aura that turned the Blue-faced Demon into blue smoke.

Mo Hua was awed.

This Dao Stele might be far more powerful than he imagined, with a frightening origin.

Mo Hua couldn't ask Mr. Zhuang about it yet.

Although he trusted Mr. Zhuang deeply, the Dao Stele's origins were special and significant. The fewer people knew, the better. It was best if only he knew.

As for the secrets of the Dao Stele, he would study them slowly in the future.

The surrounding miasma thinned, and the fog lightened. The scenery was no longer oppressive, and the demonic beasts along the way became weaker.

Unknowingly, the group had exited the inner mountains and was now on the path in the outer mountains.

Mo Hua looked back at the deep mountains.

Shrouded in dense fog, it seemed vast and indistinct.

But Mo Hua knew Heishan Stronghold was hidden in that thick fog, having existed for two to three hundred years.

Inside the stronghold were mountains of corpses and seas of blood, with demons dancing wildly.

The spirit slaves were emaciated, the furnaces worse than death, and other captured cultivators were also tortured endlessly.

Mo Hua had lived in Tongxian City since childhood, experiencing a life of poverty but with harmonious neighbors and helpful cultivators.

Only now did he truly see the other side of the cultivation world.

Bloody, cold, cruel, and evil.

In this world, there were diligent and righteous cultivators, but there were also lawless, wicked demons.

Some cultivators not only killed but drank human blood, absorbed human spiritual power, treating people not as people but as spirit slaves, blood slaves, and living spirit stones.

This was a "man-eating" world.

Mo Hua understood that just learning array formations was not enough.

If his cultivation were strong, he could save all the innocent cultivators in Heishan Stronghold, instead of watching them suffer at the hands of demonic cultivators.

To kill those demonic cultivators, he wouldn't need to resort to tricks. A single Fireball Technique would be enough to burn them to ashes.

If his cultivation were sufficient, he could comprehend stronger array formations, even drawing an Earth-Fire Array to send the entire Heishan Stronghold up in flames.

Ultimately, cultivation is the foundation of a cultivator, array formations are the basis of one's standing, and spells are the tools of defense.

All three are indispensable.

He must understand the Dao through array formations, benefiting all beings, and also master spells through cultivation to eliminate evil.

Mo Hua's thoughts gradually became clearer, and his gaze grew firmer.

Liu Ruhua, beside Mo Hua, noticed his changing expressions—sometimes happy, sometimes frowning, deep in thought, and finally, a resolute determination.

Even just quietly watching Mo Hua, Liu Ruhua felt much more at ease.

Liu Ruhua smiled with relief, her gaze soft as water.