

## The Quest 293

### Chapter 293: Intelligence

The group finally returned to Tongxian City. Elder Yu dismissed others, leaving only Mo Hua, Mo Shan, Yu Chengyi, Yu Chengwu, and Zhang Lan from the Dao Court.

Elder Yu led them to the reception room of the artifact crafting shop in the south city. It was secluded, with formations isolating them from the outside, ensuring some privacy.

Everyone knew Elder Yu's intent, and their expressions were somewhat grave.

Elder Yu took a sip of tea and asked Mo Hua, "In the deep mountains, there are really criminal cultivators?"

Mo Hua had always been careful in his actions. The fact that he spent so long in the deep mountains indicated he must have found something.

Considering the previous speculations about the deep mountains, Elder Yu suspected that what Mo Hua said before might indeed be true. Deep within Dahei Mountain, there was likely a group of criminal cultivators, and their power was probably significant.

However, Mo Hua shook his head. "Not criminal cultivators."

Elder Yu was momentarily stunned, then sighed in relief.

"It's not criminal cultivators, that's good..."

"It's demonic cultivators," Mo Hua said.

Elder Yu's relief was short-lived. He was shocked and asked, "Demonic cultivators?"

Mo Hua nodded.

Everyone, including Mo Shan and Zhang Lan, looked astonished. Zhang Lan, with a serious expression, asked, "How many?"

"Several hundred."

"Can you be more specific?"

"About five or six hundred."

Everyone, including Elder Yu, gasped in shock.

Five or six hundred demonic cultivators!

Demonic cultivators, unlike ordinary cultivators, practice sinister techniques that are not permitted by the Dao Court. These techniques generally progress quickly, are powerful, and have strange, unpredictable effects, making them extremely difficult to deal with.

Demonic cultivators pursued by the Dao Court usually operated alone, rarely gathering in groups. But unexpectedly, there were five or six hundred demonic cultivators deep within Dahei Mountain.

Although Zhang Lan knew Mo Hua wouldn't lie, he couldn't help but ask, "You didn't miscount, did you?"

Mo Hua replied, "I saw it with my own eyes and counted myself."

Zhang Lan nodded, then suddenly realized something was off. "You saw them with your own eyes and counted them? They just let you see?"

"I used the Concealment Technique. They couldn't see me."

Concealment Technique...

Zhang Lan remembered that Mo Hua had learned the Concealment Technique.

Even though he knew this beforehand, it still seemed incredible to Zhang Lan.

Mo Hua had managed to gather intelligence right under the noses of five or six hundred demonic cultivators and retreated safely.

Zhang Lan felt he should be shocked, but he couldn't muster the energy. He was becoming numb, feeling that no matter how unbelievable the situation, it seemed less so when it involved Mo Hua...

"You have great courage..."

Elder Yu asked, "What else do you know?"

Mo Hua thought for a moment, then gradually filled in more details.

"The demonic cultivators are all gathered in a stronghold called Heishan Stronghold."

Heishan Stronghold...

Everyone's expressions turned serious upon hearing this.

The stronghold of demonic cultivators deep within Dahei Mountain, just hearing the name Heishan Stronghold felt ominous.

"Do you know the location of Heishan Stronghold?" Yu Chengyi asked.

Mo Hua took out a map, with two lines drawn on it.

The map was a simple diagram of the deep mountains, drawn from Mo Hua's memory. One line was the route Mo Hua took to get there, a hidden mountain path between cliffs leading directly to the stronghold's gate.

The other line was the route Mo Hua took to return, extending from the gate of Heishan Stronghold to its outskirts and into the inner mountains.

The routes on the map, though drawn from memory, were likely in the correct general direction.

Everyone looked at the map, astonished.

"You're truly an array master. Your memory is amazing," Zhang Lan marveled, then curiously asked, "But with such thick fog in the deep mountains, how did you know the route?"

"Because I am an array master."

Zhang Lan didn't understand.

Mo Hua explained, "The fog in the deep mountains isn't naturally that dense. It's due to a fog array set up by the third master of Heishan Stronghold, making it difficult to discern directions..."

"But as an array master, the formations actually helped me distinguish the way."

Zhang Lan nodded, thinking it was fortunate Mo Hua was an array master. Otherwise, they would never have known that the dense fog was due to an array.

Even knowing that the fog was caused by an array, those who were not array masters wouldn't be able to see through it. The deep mountains would still appear as a misty expanse, hiding its secrets.

Only someone proficient in formations and quick-witted like Mo Hua could figure this out.

Zhang Lan was inwardly impressed.

Mo Shan, hearing this, was moved and asked, "The third master?"

Mo Hua nodded, "The head of Heishan Stronghold is a Foundation Building demonic cultivator."

Mo Shan's expression turned serious, "How many leaders are there?"

"There are four," Mo Hua answered.

Everyone exchanged looks, their expressions growing heavier.

Elder Yu asked, "Do you know anything more about these four leaders?"

Mo Hua nodded, "I found out by eavesdropping on two demonic cultivators on night watch..."

Of course, those two demonic cultivators had since been disposed of...

"The first leader founded Heishan Stronghold, has the deepest cultivation, and is the most senior, but is elusive and rarely seen; the second leader is cold-blooded and loves to kill, currently out killing people, not in the stronghold; the third leader is an array master who sets up sinister formations; the fourth leader is newly appointed, has a thirst for blood, and when there's not enough human blood, goes out at night to drink demon blood..."

Mo Hua revealed all the information he had gathered about the four leaders of Heishan Stronghold.

The more Elder Yu listened, the more astonished he became. This information was highly classified, revealing not only the identities of the leaders but also their sinister techniques and cultivation habits.

Without Mo Hua, they would have had no way to obtain such intelligence.

Four Foundation Building demonic cultivators!

Elder Yu frowned deeply.

Even though he had anticipated that these demonic cultivators, after years of clandestine development, would have Foundation Building cultivators among them, he hadn't expected there to be as many as four.

And these were cultivators who practiced sinister techniques.

For a moment, everyone was shrouded in a heavy atmosphere.

Seeing this, Mo Hua couldn't help but ask, "Elder Yu, can we defeat them?"

Elder Yu shook his head decisively, "We can't!"

"No matter what?"

"Relying on just us, no matter what."

"Then what should we do?" Mo Hua was also troubled.

Elder Yu looked at Zhang Lan and cupped his hands, "We can only ask for the Dao Court's assistance."

Mo Hua frowned slightly. The Dao Court didn't have many personnel either. But then he realized that Elder Yu referred to the "Dao Court," not the "Dao Court Division."

If that was the case, then Elder Yu's meaning was...

"Dao soldiers?" Mo Hua asked in surprise.

Dao soldiers, as the name suggests, were a military force of cultivators, directly under the Dao Court's jurisdiction.

When local Dao Court Divisions encountered threats they couldn't handle, they could petition the Dao Court to deploy Dao soldiers to suppress the threat.

Mo Hua had never seen Dao soldiers but had heard of their formidable strength and imposing presence.

The demonic cultivators of Heishan Stronghold were too powerful. Even all the demon hunters combined might not be able to defeat them. So the only solution was to request Dao soldiers.

Zhang Lan nodded slightly, "I will return immediately to report to the chief and ask him to petition the Dao Court for Dao soldiers to eliminate the demonic cultivators!"

Requesting Dao soldiers was not an overnight process. Assessing the threat posed by the demonic cultivators, the Dao Court's approval, and the deployment of Dao soldiers all took time.

Time was of the essence, and Zhang Lan stood up to leave, but Mo Hua stopped him.

"My intelligence isn't finished yet."

"There's more?" Zhang Lan couldn't help but ask, "How much intelligence did you gather that you haven't finished yet... Did you map out the entire Heishan Stronghold?"

"Not that exaggerated..." Mo Hua smiled, then took out another map and spread it on the table.

The map showed dense buildings and complex formations. At first glance, it appeared to be a large-scale architectural array diagram. Zhang Lan examined it closely, his eyes twitching.

This was no ordinary architectural array diagram!

Pointing at the map, Zhang Lan asked incredulously, "Is this..."

Mo Hua nodded, "It's the topographical map of Heishan Stronghold."

Zhang Lan couldn't help but ask, "Did you steal this?"

"I drew it."

Zhang Lan was incredulous, "You drew this too?"

Drawing a topographical map that included the structure of cultivation buildings and array designs, especially one of this size, required on-site investigation, analyzing the layout, and expertise in formations...

"I am an array master." Mo Hua's tone was matter-of-fact.

Zhang Lan didn't want to say anything more.

Alright, you're an array master, you're impressive.

Elder Yu carefully examined the map, also marveling inwardly.

This map was detailed and precise, showing the residences of the demonic cultivators, their prison cells, and even their kitchens.

The fact that Mo Hua drew this under the noses of

the demonic cultivators made it even more remarkable.

As Elder Yu examined the map, he frowned, pointing at a location.

"What is this place?"

The map was divided into the front stronghold and the back stronghold.

The front stronghold's map was detailed, but the back stronghold part was more simplified, indicating that it was likely more dangerous and Mo Hua didn't know much about it.

However, one area of the simplified back stronghold map was particularly detailed.

The paths, beast gates, blood array, hall layout, and even the beams of the hall were clearly marked, with a pill furnace drawn in the center, and even a pig.

"This is the demonic cultivators' pill room," Mo Hua said.

Zhang Lan's face changed dramatically, "What kind of pills are they refining?"



Mo Hua shook his head, "I don't know, but I saw them using people for pill refining, the whole room was filled with blood mist, and some herbs looked alive."

Elder Yu frowned. He didn't know much about demonic cultivators and didn't understand what kind of pills these were.

Zhang Lan's expression turned severe, and he said coldly, "They are refining Longevity pills from humans!"