

The Quest 309

Chapter 309: Suspicion Clouds

Mo Hua once again stood before the gates of Heishan Stronghold.

Two days ago, Heishan Stronghold was breached, and the majority of the demonic cultivators were eradicated.

Among the four Foundation Building demonic cultivators, the fourth leader was killed in battle, the second leader was captured with severe injuries, and the first and third leaders escaped heavily wounded, currently being pursued by the Dao Court and Dao Soldiers.

Heishan Stronghold, which had once hidden deep in the mountains and committed numerous atrocities, was nearly annihilated.

The remaining demonic cultivators would be hunted and pursued.

The main force that destroyed Heishan Stronghold was the Dao Court's Dao Soldiers.

As Zhang Lan mentioned, the Dao Soldiers were indeed powerful.

Mo Hua hadn't witnessed it firsthand but had inquired from his father, Mo Shan, afterward.

It was said that during the battle, the Dao Soldiers' spears were invincible.

The demonic cultivators under their spears had no match; in a brief moment of engagement, the demonic cultivators were either severely injured or killed.

The Dao Soldiers were the sharp blade maintaining the Dao Court's power, symbolizing its strength and authority.

With such powerful Dao Soldiers under its command, it was no wonder the Dao Court could unify the cultivation world and stand strong for twenty thousand years.

And these were just First Grade Dao Soldiers in the Qi Refining stage.

The Dao Soldiers above First Grade would undoubtedly be even more terrifying...

Mo Hua sighed in his heart.

Although Heishan Stronghold was destroyed, he still had many things he couldn't figure out.

Mo Hua looked towards the mountain gate of Heishan Stronghold.

The Concealment Array on the gate had failed, the bloody and eerie gate had one pillar broken, and the entire stronghold was in ruins.

Mo Hua didn't enter through the main gate but went around to a nearby high wall.

The first time he entered Heishan Stronghold, he had unlocked the array from the high wall and dug a hole to sneak in.

At this time, the small hole in the corner of the wall was still there.

"Did the demonic cultivators not find this?"

Mo Hua was a bit surprised, released his spiritual sense, and sensed through the high wall for a moment, then his gaze tightened.

"No, they discovered it!"

Behind the wall hole, several new arrays had been added, including the Golden Bell Array, the Wood Binding Array, and a few others.

The Golden Bell Array was for warning, the Wood Binding Array was to trap people, and the other arrays had similar purposes.

They discovered this hole and wanted to lie in wait for him!

As long as Mo Hua entered through the hole again, he would trigger the arrays, alerting the demonic cultivators and trapping him.

These arrays must have been set by the third leader.

Mo Hua almost didn't need to think; he knew the third leader must have stationed people nearby, ready to catch him once the arrays were triggered.

But before they could catch Mo Hua, Heishan Stronghold was already destroyed...

Now that there were no demonic cultivators left in the stronghold, Mo Hua had no more concerns.

He took out the Qianjun Stick, made the hole larger, and destroyed the arrays on the opposite side before walking into Heishan Stronghold through the wall hole.

The current Heishan Stronghold was still bloody, but it had a few more traces of desolation and wasn't as oppressive.

Mo Hua spent some time walking around the front stronghold according to his memory.

Most of the houses had collapsed, their contents cleared out and handed over to the Dao Court.

The prison within the stronghold was empty.

The cultivators who had been captured and imprisoned here were all killed by the demonic cultivators without exception.

Perhaps the demonic cultivators killed them before the battle; perhaps during the standoff, they killed them to replenish their blood and spiritual power; or maybe during their defeat, they went on a killing spree in a fit of rage.

In any case, not a single person was left alive.

The Dao Court and Dao Soldiers had already encoffined the bodies, sealed the coffins, and taken them back to the Dao Court, trying to identify them to give their families an explanation.

If they couldn't be identified, they would be buried nearby with a simple grave and an unnamed tombstone.

These cultivators met a tragic end.

After death, no one mourned or remembered them; even their tombstones wouldn't bear their names.

Mo Hua sighed, feeling somewhat bitter.

After looking around the front stronghold, Mo Hua went to the back stronghold and frowned.

The arrays in the back stronghold were dense, much more than when he first came.

Drawing arrays took time, and only the third leader in Heishan Stronghold knew how to draw these First Grade arrays, so these arrays were laid out early.

Probably right after he left, the third leader began arranging them.

But why?

Did they suspect something?

Mo Hua sat cross-legged on the high wall of the back stronghold, looking at the front stronghold, deep in thought.

The front stronghold was too large to defend, so they concentrated the arrays in the back stronghold, making it harder for the Dao Soldiers to attack.

Mo Hua had asked Commander Yang; during the three days of attacking Heishan Stronghold, two days were spent breaking the arrays in the back stronghold.

The demonic cultivators seemed to know they would be attacked and weren't opponents, so they preemptively laid arrays in the back stronghold for a desperate fight.

The purpose was to... delay time?

Mo Hua frowned, "What's the point of delaying time? In the end, they're still waiting to die."

"Could it be to delay the time for refining pills?"

Mo Hua turned and walked towards the pill room.

The beast door was mostly destroyed, and the arrays in front were forcefully broken, indicating the Dao Soldiers had attacked here as well.

Mo Hua walked into the pill room, where the pillars had collapsed, and the floor was cracked, indicating a Foundation Building cultivator had fought here.

Blood was splattered everywhere, it was unclear whether it was human or demonic.

The white bone pill furnace in the center of the room was also damaged, first pierced by a spear, then half of its lid was shaved off, exposing the bone walls inside and the blood-colored demonic array on them.

There was some foul, thick pill liquid inside the furnace, which should be the remnants of refining Longevity Pills. Just smelling it made one nauseous.

"Can anyone really consume such a thing..."

Mo Hua covered his nose, thinking in disgust.

The pill furnace was destroyed, and the demonic herbs around it were also gone.

They were likely cleared out by the Dao Court, either handed over or destroyed on the spot, not left in the world.

After all, these herbs were used for refining human pills, which was heinous and forbidden.

It seemed the pills weren't refined...

Mo Hua opened the secret compartment, which was empty.

The third leader didn't hide anything here again.

Of course, that made sense. Being stolen from once, hiding things here again would indeed be foolish.

Mo Hua looked around the back stronghold and found several hidden chambers for closed-door cultivation.

There was also a treasury, now empty, likely cleared out by the Dao Soldiers.

Besides that, there was nothing special in the back stronghold.

Mo Hua thought over the entire matter carefully.

First, the third leader discovered the hole he had dug and the unlocked arrays, becoming suspicious.

How far the suspicion went, Mo Hua didn't know.

But Heishan Stronghold made a move.

First, they changed the arrays in the foggy forest, adding more fog arrays, then strengthened the arrays in the back stronghold.

But this was to no avail.

When the Dao Soldiers attacked, it seemed they delayed time, but not for long; they seemed to hold out for a while, but ultimately didn't hold.

Heishan Stronghold was thus eradicated.

It all seemed reasonable, but thinking about it felt off.

Mo Hua pondered for a long time before realizing what felt off:

Heishan Stronghold seemed to know it would "die," and inevitably "die," then after a slight struggle, calmly "accepted death."

This battle seemed less like they eradicated Heishan Stronghold and more like Heishan Stronghold "planned" and methodically... was eradicated.

It was as if an unseen hand silently pushed Heishan Stronghold to the blade, and then Heishan Stronghold naturally extended its neck and was beheaded.

Mo Hua frowned tighter, left the pill room, and climbed to a high point, taking in the entire Heishan Stronghold.

Nestled between two mountains, Heishan Stronghold covered a vast area.

The previous doubts resurfaced:

"How was such a large Heishan Stronghold built?"

The stronghold was enormous, with numerous arrays, requiring massive manpower and resources to construct, especially in such a remote mountain. Could the demonic cultivators alone build it?

Mo Hua frowned.

Was there someone secretly supporting Heishan Stronghold?

If someone were indeed supporting it, it must be a force from Tongxian City, as it was closest to Dahei Mountain, making clandestine communication convenient.

Mo Hua's eyes narrowed.

The first one he thought of was the Qian family.

The Qian family was deep-rooted and ruthless; it wouldn't be surprising if they did such a thing.

But thinking carefully, it didn't seem right.

At least for now, on the surface, there was no connection between the two.

The Qian family had no collusion with Heishan Stronghold, and there were no Qian family cultivators in Heishan Stronghold.

If it was just because he had grudges with

the Qian family and hated them, attributing this to the Qian family would be biased.

But if not the Qian family, then who?

Besides the Qian family, the major forces in Tongxian City included the An family and Tongxian Sect.

But supporting Heishan Stronghold didn't seem beneficial to them either.

Moreover, with their strength, they might not be able to support such a large stronghold.

The An family was oppressed by the Qian family, barely surviving by running a restaurant. If they had raised such a large group of demonic cultivators, they would have already retaliated against the Qian family.

Tongxian Sect was even less likely; they couldn't even redeem their own Tongxian Peak, so how could they have spare resources to support demonic cultivators?

Mo Hua unconsciously scratched his head, unable to figure it out.