

The Quest 317

Chapter 317: Clues

Mo Hua naturally accepted the invitation to a grand meal without hesitation.

The next day at noon, Mo Hua went to the banquet.

Commander Yang seemed to have invited quite a few people, including members from the Dao Court and Dao Soldiers Division, as well as many demon hunters.

Mo Hua's father, Mo Shan, also attended, but he went early with Elder Yu, probably to discuss some matters.

Mo Hua practiced the array formations a few times and did some calculations before setting off. He was slightly late but should arrive just in time for the feast.

While walking along the way, Mo Hua unexpectedly encountered Zhang Lan.

Zhang Lan seemed reluctant, wandering aimlessly, heading in the same direction as Mo Hua.

Mo Hua greeted him, and upon seeing it was Mo Hua, Zhang Lan perked up and joined him.

"Uncle Zhang, are you also going for a free meal?" Mo Hua asked.

Zhang Lan corrected him, "It's not free; I'm attending the banquet out of respect!"

"Well, you can say that too."

Zhang Lan clearly didn't agree but then thought about it and realized attending a banquet and getting a free meal were indeed quite similar.

The street was bustling at noon.

The two strolled and chatted.

Mo Hua suddenly remembered something and quietly asked, "Any news from Heishan Stronghold?"

Zhang Lan was surprised, "What do you want to know?"

"The second in command was captured, right? Did he say anything?"

Seeing the noisy surroundings and that no one was listening to them, Zhang Lan lowered his voice and said, "The second in command is bloodthirsty and has long lost his sanity. He only responds to a few names, knowing nothing else. After ten days of questioning, nothing useful has come out."

Mo Hua was a bit disappointed.

Zhang Lan raised an eyebrow, asking quietly, "Are you still suspicious of something?"

Mo Hua released his spiritual sense, ensuring safety, and whispered, "I suspect there is someone behind Heishan Stronghold..."

Zhang Lan's eyes narrowed, but he didn't seem surprised.

Mo Hua was taken aback, "Uncle Zhang, do you think so too?"

Zhang Lan nodded, "Heishan Stronghold's power is too great, and they've been entrenched for so long. Without local support, it's almost impossible."

Mo Hua bluntly asked, "Could it be the Qian family?"

Zhang Lan asked, "Do you know what the Qian family has done?"

Mo Hua thought hard but shook his head.

He had thought about it for days but couldn't find any connection between the Qian family and Heishan Stronghold.

The Qian family had no transactions with Heishan Stronghold, didn't hire their demonic cultivators for murders, and had no cultivators hiding within Heishan Stronghold.

Zhang Lan said, "In such cases, anyone can be suspected. Even the Dao Court, Elder Yu, or myself. You have to guess everyone..."

"But when it comes to conclusions, you must be cautious and have evidence. Otherwise, it's easy to make mistakes."

Mo Hua knew Zhang Lan was guiding him and nodded seriously, "Uncle Zhang, I understand."

This child grasps things quickly...

Zhang Lan nodded slightly, feeling both gratified and a bit envious.

At this rate, he would soon have nothing to teach Mo Hua, and thus nothing to show off in front of him.

He needed to build his foundation quickly, or else he wouldn't even be able to hold his head high in front of Yang Jiyong, let alone Mo Hua...

Zhang Lan thought to himself.

Mo Hua, unaware of Zhang Lan's thoughts, was still pondering over Heishan Stronghold's matter: "If it's not the Qian family, who else could it be? What dealings do they have with Heishan Stronghold? What have they done to help Heishan Stronghold?"

Mo Hua walked along, thinking deeply.

As they reached the Spirit Meal Tower, Mo Hua temporarily set aside his doubts and went upstairs with Zhang Lan.

The farewell banquet was lavish, with many attendees, most of whom were familiar to Mo Hua.

Mo Hua felt at ease, and after everyone started eating, he happily joined in.

Commander Yang sat next to Mo Hua, quietly asking, "Mo Hua, have you thought about joining the Dao Soldiers Division?"

Mo Hua glanced at his father, Mo Shan.

Commander Yang continued, "I've asked your father. He said it's up to you, and he won't interfere."

Zhang Lan mumbled nearby, "Persistent as ever, thick-skinned!"

Commander Yang said, "It's a great opportunity..."

"What's so great about the Dao Soldiers Division?"

"Better than your Dao Court..."

The old supervisor from the Dao Court, pretending not to hear anything, couldn't help but cough.

Realizing his slip, Commander Yang apologized to the old supervisor, "I meant Zhang Lan, not the Dao Court. Please don't take offense."

The old supervisor said nothing, while Zhang Lan retorted, "Yang, don't make me reveal your embarrassing secrets..."

"Do you think you don't have any? Who's afraid of whom?"

They started arguing again.

Luckily, the banquet was lively, and everyone was busy, so the overall atmosphere remained harmonious.

Initially, Mo Hua listened to their argument but soon lost interest and focused on eating.

After a while, Commander Yang remembered his purpose, having almost forgotten it while arguing with Zhang Lan.

He looked at Mo Hua intently.

Mo Hua, enjoying his meal, saw Commander Yang's look and, feeling he couldn't refuse directly, politely said, "Uncle Yang, I still need to study array formations. Once I master them, I'll consider joining the Dao Soldiers."

Mo Hua thought Commander Yang might be displeased but was surprised when he beamed and praised, "That's right! An array master should focus on the path of formations. There's no rush to join the Dao Soldiers. Even if you become accomplished in arrays and don't join, it's no big deal..."

With a kind smile, Commander Yang continued, "You could join my Yang family instead..."

Zhang Lan sneered, "Dreaming in broad daylight? He'd join the Zhang family first!"

"My Yang family is prestigious..."

"And mine isn't?"

"I don't want to argue with you."

"As if I want to argue with you?"

...

They started arguing again.

Mo Hua sighed and focused on his meal.

When the banquet ended, Mo Hua was full.

As they left, the crowd exchanged a few words before parting.

In a few days, Commander Yang would lead his troops away. The path of cultivation is long, and who knows when they would meet again?

Facing this parting, Zhang Lan refrained from arguing with Commander Yang.

Elder Yu, representing the wandering cultivators of Tongxian City, presented some gifts to Commander Yang, thanking him, "This success is due to Commander Yang's excellent leadership and the bravery of the Dao Soldiers, ensuring the safety of Tongxian City."

"It was a mere trifle. Elder Yu is too kind."

Commander Yang returned the salute and added, "In fact, we owe a lot to Mo Hua this time..."

Zhang Lan couldn't help but roll his eyes, "Enough already..."

He just wanted to recruit Mo Hua into the Dao Soldiers Division. How much more praise could he give?

"I'm not exaggerating..." Commander Yang said seriously, "In battles involving Dao Soldiers, formations are crucial. Without Mo Hua, this operation against Heishan Stronghold would have been much more difficult."

Chief Supervisor Zhou thought for a moment, sighed, and nodded, "Commander Yang is right. Without Mo Hua, we wouldn't have found the mountain path, seen through the fog, located the hidden gate of Heishan Stronghold, or broken through the layers of formations..."

He also praised Mo Hua.

Elder Yu nodded proudly.

Mo Hua, being a demon hunter's child, felt a bit embarrassed but pleased with the praise.

Mo Shan, though embarrassed, was proud of his son's recognition by two Foundation Building cultivators.

After exchanging farewells, Mo Hua followed his father home.

The streets were bustling and noisy.

As Mo Hua walked, recalling the praise from Commander Yang and Chief Supervisor Zhou, he smiled contentedly.

But as he smiled, a sudden unease gripped his heart.

He felt something was off.

It seemed he had realized something but couldn't quite grasp it.

Mo Hua carefully reviewed their words.

"...Without Mo Hua, this operation against Heishan Stronghold would have been much more difficult..."

Without an array master... difficult to eradicate Heishan Stronghold...

Without an array master... couldn't find the path, see through the fog, locate the hidden gate...

Without an array master...

Mo Hua's heart trembled as he recalled a saying:

Wandering cultivators lack array masters.

Among wandering cultivators, few study formations, and even fewer achieve mastery.

Mo Hua was an exception, with his unique spiritual awareness, encountering Yan Jiaoxi, and becoming Mr. Zhuang's disciple, leading him to become a first-grade array master.

Typically, wandering cultivators don't produce array masters.

"What happens if there are no array masters?"

Mo Hua's brows furrowed as he pondered, feeling a growing chill.

Without array masters, no one could see through hidden formations, find the mountain path, or see through the fog to discover the truth.

No one could find the hidden gate of Heishan Stronghold or even know about the terrifying demonic stronghold in the mountains!

Heishan Stronghold could exist unnoticed in Dahei Mountain due to formations!

As long as wandering cultivators couldn't see through hidden formations and fog arrays, they could remain there, killing, practicing evil arts, refining human pills... without anyone knowing!

Mo Hua gasped!

He forced himself to calm down and think carefully.

Preventing wandering cultivators from learning formations...

Mo Hua remembered that Tongxian Sect initially taught formations.

But after Yan Jiaoxi

left, no one taught array patterns, and Tongxian Sect stopped offering formation courses. Consequently, Mo Hua couldn't learn formations and left the sect...

Since then, wandering cultivators couldn't learn formations, completely severing the path to becoming array masters.

Without Mo Hua, there would indeed be no array masters among wandering cultivators.

"Yan Jiaoxi left, preventing wandering cultivators from learning formations..."

And why did Yan Jiaoxi leave?

Mo Hua frowned, then his eyes gradually sharpened.

It was the Qian family!