

The Quest 32

Chapter 32: Eating Out

Utilizing the Dao Stele within the Sea of Consciousness, Mo Hua continuously honed his array techniques, thereby enhancing his Spiritual Sense.

This method, although cumbersome, was the only approach Mo Hua could rely on at the moment.

"Thankfully, the Dao Stele is within the Sea of Consciousness, otherwise, using such a clumsy method would be impossible," Mo Hua thought gratefully. Practicing array formations in reality drained the Spiritual Sense significantly and recovery was excruciatingly slow. To strengthen his Spiritual Sense by this method would demand much more time and energy.

Resigned to his fate, Mo Hua settled down to practice the Magma Array on the Dao Stele without any distractions.

As long as he kept practicing, he was bound to master it one day.

Mo Hua initially managed to draw the first four Array patterns before his Spiritual Sense was nearly depleted, at which point he would erase them.

After resting briefly, he would continue drawing and then erasing again.

This cycle continued until he felt a slight reserve in his Spiritual Sense, allowing him to add an extra stroke after completing the four patterns.

The entire night passed, and Mo Hua had managed only to add two more strokes, but these at least confirmed that his Spiritual Sense was indeed growing.

Waking up the next day, Mo Hua headed to the market to buy some ink needed for the Magma Array.

The ink, made from the blood of fire-attribute demonic beasts mixed with various herbs, wasn't particularly expensive. Mo Hua bought over ten portions at once.

Because Array Masters were rare and few cultivators knew how to draw arrays, not many were purchasing this ink. The shopkeeper, encountering such a major customer in Mo Hua, even gifted him a few extra portions.

Once home, Mo Hua began to practice drawing the Magma Array with the ink.

Since the ink was purchased with Spirit Stones, Mo Hua drew with exceptional care, every stroke meticulous.

However, limited by his Spiritual Sense, Mo Hua could still only manage two extra strokes beyond the four basic patterns, unable to complete the full five patterns of the Magma Array.

After drawing, he would need to rest for an hour to recover his Spiritual Sense before he could continue.

This efficiency was much lower compared to drawing on the Dao Stele in the Sea of Consciousness. It also consumed ink and spiritual paper, meaning he was spending Spirit Stones. However, in order to learn the Magma Array sooner, Mo Hua didn't mind the cost.

Night after night, he practiced the array, and after half a month, he could add about ten more strokes, roughly half a pattern.

At this rate, he estimated it would take another half-month for his Spiritual Sense to be sufficient to draw a complete Magma Array with five patterns.

Mo Hua silently breathed a sigh of relief.

Considering that the crafting of the stove also required time, some preparations needed to be made sooner.

During the day, Mo Hua would stroll through the streets, and in the evening, he would return home to dine with his parents.

Under the flickering candlelight, the table was laid with fragrant rice porridge, soft white steamed buns, two dishes of fresh vegetables, and a small dish of pickled vegetables.

For an ordinary independent cultivator's family, this was quite a feast, as meat was rarely affordable.

Liu Ruhua was skilled in cooking; the meal was simple but delicious, and Mo Hua enjoyed it immensely.

Though Liu Ruhua cooked the meal, it was Mo Shan who provided the fire with his spiritual power.

Liu Ruhua's expression was usual, but there was often a hint of loss in her eyes, and she occasionally appeared distracted.

After swiftly consuming a steamed bun, Mo Hua cheekily asked, "Mom, have you thought about opening a Spirit Meal Tower?"

Caught off-guard while sipping her porridge, Liu Ruhua paused, then smiled, "Why do you suddenly ask this?"

"You cook so well, opening a Spirit Meal Tower would surely earn a lot of Spirit Stones."

"Starting a Spirit Meal Tower requires capital, you know. Where would independent cultivators like us get the Spirit Stones to open one?" Liu Ruhua replied with a chuckle, then playfully tapped Mo Hua's nose, "Maybe we can consider it when you're grown up, have a high cultivation level, and can earn lots of Spirit Stones."

"We could start with a small one," Mo Hua quietly suggested.

"What small one?" Liu Ruhua was puzzled.

"A small eatery," explained Mo Hua. "I walked around the market today and noticed many such places selling drinks, dishes, snacks, noodles, etc., and they all seemed quite profitable."

Liu Ruhua hesitated, her expression falling slightly.

Mo Shan added softly, "Child, your mother... she can't use spiritual power."

Unable to use spiritual power meant

she couldn't provide the fire needed for a cultivator's meals.

Even if she could use spiritual power, running an eatery with customers coming and going, requiring the preparation of many dishes, was not something a Qi-cultivation stage cultivator could sustain.

Mo Hua raised an eyebrow, pride in his tone, "We'll build a stove."

"A stove?"

Mo Shan and Liu Ruhua looked at each other in disbelief.

Mo Hua pulled out a large blueprint from his storage bag.

"This is the design for the stove. I've asked Master Chen from Chen's Artifact Crafting Shop about the materials, dimensions, and the Spirit Stones needed; I'll figure out the array. Once the stove is crafted, it won't need cultivators to power it with spiritual energy. Just insert Spirit Stones, and it will continuously provide fire, making it much easier to cook and stew ingredients."

Mo Shan and his wife were stunned that their son had already prepared blueprints, both momentarily speechless.

"Crafting a stove requires a lot of Spirit Stones, right?"

"We'll make a small one first. I've asked Master Chen, and it doesn't need too many Spirit Stones. A small eatery will be fine with a smaller stove."

"What about the array?" Liu Ruhua inquired.

Mo Hua feigned nonchalance, though his expression betrayed a hint of pride, "I'll handle the drawing. I've already secured the array diagrams from Manager Mo; the arrays aren't too complex..."

Despite his nights spent tirelessly practicing without fully mastering the Magma Array, Mo Hua felt a slight twinge of guilt at his boast.

Liu Ruhua looked at him skeptically, “Really not difficult?”

Mo Hua chuckled, “Although I haven’t mastered it yet, just give me a few more days, and it’ll be no problem.”

A Five-Pattern Array wasn’t easy to learn, after all.

Liu Ruhua nodded, considering Mo Hua’s youth and his relatively short time learning array techniques. If he could learn it, it probably wasn’t too complicated.

But she pondered a moment and then shook her head, “Opening a shop isn’t so simple. Even a small eatery requires renting a place, hiring help, and managing many things. It also costs a lot of Spirit Stones. If we can’t make ends meet, it’ll be even harder for our family to get by. Right now, the most important thing is to save Spirit Stones for your cultivation...”

Mo Shan, who had been silent, suddenly spoke, “We’ll open this eatery. I’ll figure out the storefront and staffing; you don’t need to worry.”

Mo Shan then pulled out a storage bag and handed it to Mo Hua, “This contains over a hundred Spirit Stones, which I’ve earned from hunting demonic beasts in recent months. I know you’ve been earning Spirit Stones by drawing arrays for others, but let’s use these for the stove first...”

Mo Hua started to refuse, but Mo Shan pushed the storage bag into his hands.

Holding the bag, Mo Hua felt the weight of the Spirit Stones earned through his father’s life-and-death struggles with demonic beasts, making them seem heavier than ordinary stones.

With Mo Shan’s agreement, the decision to open the eatery was nearly finalized. After dinner, Mo Hua returned to his room to continue practicing the Magma Array.

Liu Ruhua still looked worried.

Mo Shan reassured her, “Don’t overthink it. It’s just a small business. Even if we lose money, it won’t be much.”

Liu Ruhua sighed, “Mo Hua is talented and smart. In the future, he’ll need a lot of Spirit Stones for cultivation, to learn techniques and Dao methods, and to become an Array Master. If we use up all our Spirit Stones now, what will he do when he needs them for cultivation?”

Mo Shan spoke gently, “Don’t underestimate our son. He’s already helping merchants with their arrays, even though they’re simple ones. Maybe in a decade or two, after refining his skills, he really could become an Array Master.”

Mo Shan smiled, “By then, we might be relying on our son to support us.”

Liu Ruhua smiled back, but her concerns lingered.

Mo Shan took her hand, “Then let’s make the eatery successful, save up more Spirit Stones, and later think about finding Mo Hua a wife and seeing him start a family.”

Liu Ruhua considered his words, a smile appearing on her face, though she was still not entirely reassured, “But what if…”

“Even if something happens, I’m here. No matter how tough life gets, there’s always a way. We’ll just have to work harder, hunt a few more demonic beasts.”

Mo Shan’s tone was gentle yet firm.

Liu Ruhua said no more, silently leaning into Mo Shan’s embrace.