

The Quest 322

Chapter 322: The Past

Elder Yu frowned and said, "When the Grand Elder of the Qian family died, no, perhaps I should say when he faked his death, I was still young, and my cultivation was not high. My interactions with him were limited to seeing him from afar a few times, watching him exchange blows with the late demon hunter elder."

"In everyone's perception, the Grand Elder of the Qian family was already dead, so when I encountered him at Heishan Stronghold, I didn't think in that direction."

"But if what Mo Hua said is true, and the ancestor of the Qian family is indeed the leader of Heishan Stronghold, then this main leader is very likely the supposedly dead Grand Elder!"

Elder Yu recalled further and added, "Moreover, on the day we attacked Heishan Stronghold, I fought with this main leader. One of his arms lacked spiritual power, as if it had been replaced by an iron arm. And back then, the Grand Elder of the Qian family had lost an arm."

Everyone's faces darkened.

The ancestor of the Qian family is the leader, and the main leader is the Grand Elder of the Qian family.

In this way, everything makes sense.

The Qian family used a scheme to fake the Grand Elder's death, making him the main leader of Heishan Stronghold, recruiting demonic cultivators, practicing evil arts, and refining human pills.

The Qian family ancestor, with the substantial resources of the Qian family, secretly supported and built the vast Heishan Stronghold, allowing it to grow step by step.

Few people in the Qian family knew about this, and not many demonic cultivators in Heishan Stronghold were aware either.

The Qian family ancestor could hide in the shadows; even if Heishan Stronghold were destroyed and most demonic cultivators were killed or captured, no one would suspect him.

Because most demonic cultivators didn't know he existed.

And if Heishan Stronghold wasn't destroyed...

The Qian family ancestor could use the Longevity Pill to extend his life, surviving in this world. At the same time, the Qian family would have the support of Heishan Stronghold in the dark, standing undefeated forever.

No matter how much the Qian family suffered openly, with a little patience, they would always rise again.

Near Tongxian City, no force could rival Heishan Stronghold.

"What a deep calculation..." Elder Yu sighed.

Yang Jiyong and Zhang Lan also nodded gravely.

Elder Yu sighed again, "The Qian family ancestor was erratic and vengeful when he was young. In his later years, he became much more low-key. I thought it was because he was about to die, so his competitive spirit waned. But I didn't expect it was because he was lying low, setting up such a big game."

Mo Hua also pondered:

"So the Qian family, despite suffering so many losses in the past year or two, always made a big fuss but then downplayed it lightly. They were being low-key and patient to avoid exposing their secret..."

It started with Qian Xing being injured in an explosion, and the Qian family did not pursue it;

Then the Qian family failed to compete for the spirit mine;

The Qian family lost in the competition between the artifact crafting shop and the alchemy hall;

Finally, when they tried to kill Mo Hua, who had exceptional talent in array formations, they also failed...

In all these cases, the Qian family endured.

Because the foundation of the Qian family was not the cultivators, spirit stones, artifact crafting, or alchemy hall, but Heishan Stronghold, which harbored hundreds of demonic cultivators.

The most important thing for the Qian family was not to expose this secret.

Once they let the situation escalate, attracting more attention and allowing someone to uncover their connection with Heishan Stronghold through meticulous investigation, the Dao Court would surely send Dao soldiers to annihilate Heishan Stronghold!

And the Qian family, for colluding with demonic cultivators, would be exiled, their family destroyed!

Centuries of the Qian family's efforts would be ruined in an instant!

Everyone was both shocked and fearful, a chill in their hearts.

Yang Jiyong sighed, "Fortunately, this Qian family ancestor is only in Tongxian City, a small place, and is only at the Foundation Building stage. If he were in a higher realm or reached a higher cultivation stage, he would probably be an unfathomable great demon."

Mo Hua nodded in agreement.

The cunning and scheming of the Qian family ancestor were far deeper than Qian Hong's.

In comparison, Qian Hong's only specialty was patience, like an old turtle...

Mo Hua asked, "Uncle Yang, can you deploy Dao soldiers to deal with the Qian family ancestor?"

Yang Jiyong pondered for a moment and then said slowly, "According to the original order from the Dao soldiers' department, we were supposed to leave tomorrow, but now, given the urgency, I will write to the department to delay our departure by a few days."

Mo Hua was delighted, and Yang Jiyong continued, "However, it's best to confirm whether the Qian family ancestor is indeed the leader of Heishan Stronghold and if he is truly connected to it, to avoid any mistakes."

Mo Shan thought for a moment and said, "We can ask that second-in-command."

Zhang Lan shook his head, "He's half-crazy, knows nothing."

"We don't need to ask anything specific, just confirm if Heishan Stronghold has a leader. If he reacts to the term 'leader,' it means Heishan Stronghold indeed has one, making the Qian family ancestor more suspicious," Mo Shan explained.

Zhang Lan's eyes lit up, and he nodded, "That works."

Mo Hua thought for a moment and added, "I'll ask Old Master An. He's been fighting openly and covertly with the Qian family for many years; he must know something."

Elder Yu said, "I'll also ask some old people in the city to see if there are any clues."

After agreeing on their plan, everyone went their separate ways.

Yang Jiyong wrote to the Dao soldiers' department, while others went to gather information.

Mo Hua went directly to the An family.

The guards of the An family recognized Mo Hua and respectfully led him to the An family living room, offering him top-quality tea and asking him to wait.

Mo Hua took a sip of the tea, finding it delicious but unable to pinpoint why. He drank several more sips, still puzzled by its taste.

Every time Mo Hua finished his tea, someone would come and refill his cup.

After two cups, Old Master An finally appeared, apologizing:

"Sorry for the wait, I was tied up with some mundane affairs."

Mo Hua also bowed and said, "You're too kind, Old Master An."

Old Master An sat down, took a sip of tea, and then asked:

"Why has Young Master Mo come to visit?"

Mo Hua glanced around.

Old Master An understood and dismissed everyone, ensuring there were no outsiders around before saying:

"Now you can speak."

Mo Hua nodded and asked, "Old Master An, are you familiar with the Qian family ancestor?"

Old Master An was slightly surprised, "Familiar, but not in a friendly way. The An and Qian families have been fighting openly and covertly for years, known to everyone in Tongxian City."

"Why hasn't the An family been able to defeat the Qian family?" Mo Hua asked.

Old Master An felt somewhat uncomfortable.

He was unwilling to admit that the An family couldn't defeat the Qian family, even though it was true. He couldn't swallow this pride.

Usually, other cultivators wouldn't dare ask him such questions to his face.

But Mo Hua was an exception; he could ask.

Old Master An sighed and honestly said:

"The Qian family is cunning and ruthless. Our An family is not ruthless enough, so naturally, we can't beat them."

"Is the Qian family ancestor also ruthless?"

Old Master An's eyes grew cold, "The most ruthless of all, cruel and vengeful, causing countless deaths... But heaven has eyes; he's aging quickly, his blood and energy declining. It's a miracle he's still breathing."

There was a hint of schadenfreude in Old Master An's tone.

Mo Hua silently thought to himself that the ancestor was probably not aging or declining but had instead extended his life, breathing just fine...

After a moment of silence, Mo Hua asked the most pressing question:

"Old Master An, have any of your family's caravans disappeared in Dahei Mountain?"

Old Master An was stunned, his eyes gleaming with surprise as he looked at Mo Hua and said:

"How do you know?"

Seeing Old Master An's reaction, Mo Hua felt his guess was confirmed and said:

"Tell me the whole story, and then I'll tell you how I know."

Old Master An's brows furrowed tightly, and after a long contemplation, he sighed and said:

"Alright, it's all old news now, no harm in telling you..."

Mo Hua held his teacup and listened intently.