

The Quest 331

Chapter 331: Divergent Thoughts

Mo Hua calmed his mind and thought carefully again.

The Grand Dao's annihilation and dissolution might not be quite accurate; at best, it was a prototype of the Grand Dao's annihilation and dissolution.

After all, he was still in the Qi refining stage and could only draw first-grade arrays and derive and induce first-grade Qi refining annihilation power.

But this was already enough.

Mo Hua was very satisfied with this power.

A peak late-stage first-grade Black Bear Demon was annihilated by the array, dying instantly. This was already beyond the usual destructive power of the Qi refining stage.

"In that case, could the array collapse really injure a Foundation Building cultivator?"

Mo Hua couldn't help but wonder.

Who should he test it on?

Judging by this power, even an early-stage Foundation Building cultivator could likely be killed... He could only find some wicked Foundation Building cultivators to test on.

Mo Hua touched his chin, contemplating:

"Why not sacrifice the third boss?"

After all, he was likely to be executed by the Dao Court. Using him to test the array before his death would be a waste of a bad person.

However, the Dao Court might not agree.

Execution was according to the Dao Laws, and using him to test the array would be extrajudicial punishment, which was against the rules.

Mo Hua felt a bit regretful.

If only he had learned this earlier.

In that case, during the attack on Heishan Stronghold, he could have tried to use the array secretly to test its power against a Foundation Building cultivator.

Now, the only remaining Foundation Building cultivator in Heishan Stronghold was the Qian Family Patriarch.

But the Qian Family Patriarch was mid-stage Foundation Building and very cunning.

Mo Hua wasn't confident that the array collapse could kill him, and even if it could, he might not be able to outsmart him.

He didn't want to end up failing and getting killed by the Qian Family Patriarch.

Mo Hua released his spiritual sense, confirming the surroundings were safe and that the Black Bear Demon was indeed dead. He then ran forward to check the details.

Half of the Black Bear Demon's body was intact, not a hair harmed.

The other half had disappeared, turned into black powder. This powder was pitch black, odorless, with no trace of blood or spiritual energy, like the remnants of a lifeless corpse after death.

This was the array master's understanding of arrays and the use of the power of the Dao.

"Array masters are truly terrifying..."

Mo Hua muttered, then nodded:

"Luckily, I am an array master!"

Mo Hua felt a small sense of relief.

Then he found a small grass among the black powder.

This small grass was intentionally left by Mo Hua as the "Gate of Life."

Mr. Zhuang had told him that the Dao of life and death cycles, life and death transformation, where there is death, there must be life.

The power of the array's collapse could annihilate everything, but within the annihilation, there was a sliver of life, which was the "Gate of Life" left in the calculation.

Mo Hua wanted to test the power of the array collapse and the retained life contained in the "Gate of Life."

And the location of this "Gate of Life" was left to this small grass.

In the gentle mountain breeze, this weak grass swayed, unscathed even in the midst of the terrifying annihilation power of the array collapse.

This proved that Mo Hua's calculations were correct.

He had not only calculated the power of the array collapse but also the "Gate of Life" within the array collapse.

Mo Hua couldn't help but feel happy.

As long as he practiced more calculations, attempted more collapses, and deduced more "Gates of Life," his array skills would improve daily.

One day, his array skills would become so profound that other array masters would be in awe.

Mo Hua was happy for a while, then began cleaning up the traces.

The traces of the array collapse needed to be erased, and the Black Bear Demon needed to be skinned and boned to be sold for spirit stones. Although the pelt was damaged and most of the blood was gone, it wouldn't fetch many spirit stones, but every little bit helps, and it couldn't be wasted.

After cleaning up, Mo Hua summarized the usage of the array collapse and felt regret.

Although the array collapse was strong, it wasn't particularly practical.

The collapse required prior calculation, which consumed a lot of spiritual sense and time.

Without ample preparation, the array collapse couldn't be used in combat.

Currently, the array collapse could only be used as a trap, like the Earth Fire Array.

It needed to be set up in advance and unnoticed.

Using it against demonic beasts had too much destructive power; after the collapse, most of the demonic beast's body turned to black ash, and what was left couldn't be sold for much.

It was basically a losing proposition.

Using it against cultivators required that the opponent not be too smart or too wary of him, preferably not knowing he was an array master, to catch them off guard.

Otherwise, they might not fall for it.

After the array collapse, the "Gate of Life" was also relatively small, only about a foot or two in space, not enough for a person to survive.

Currently, this "Gate of Life" was useless to him.

Mo Hua sighed.

Thinking about it, the conditions for using the array collapse were really stringent.

The calculations were complex, preparation time was long, the "Gate of Life" was narrow, and the opponent preferably needed to be a fool, or at least not too smart.

Indeed, the more powerful the force, the more restrictions there were.

Mo Hua sighed.

But despite the many restrictions, having a powerful force was better than not having one.

One shouldn't be too greedy.

Mo Hua nodded, packed up everything, and prepared to leave. Before turning around, he glanced at the small grass.

The surrounding soil, stones, and plants were annihilated by the array, leaving a barren land.

Only this small grass, weak but resilient, swayed in the wind, seemingly containing infinite vitality.

Mo Hua watched, lost in thought, and suddenly had an epiphany.

Mr. Zhuang was right. In this world, where there is life, there is death, and where there is death, there is life.

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In the following days, Mo Hua would visit Mr. Zhuang daily.

Sometimes he indeed had questions about arrays that needed Mr. Zhuang's guidance;

Sometimes his mother made delicious food, and he brought it for Mr. Zhuang to taste;

When he had nothing to do, he would chat with Mr. Zhuang about the customs and culture of Tongxian City and ask about the customs and anecdotes of various cultivation states.

When he had time, he would also play chess with Elder Gui.

Playing the simple and intellectually stimulating Five Elements Chess, the two of them enjoyed themselves immensely.

Mo Hua cherished this time.

Because he knew that perhaps in half a year, perhaps in a month, Mr. Zhuang would leave.

The cultivation world was vast, and cultivation time was long.

Once parted, it might be years before they could meet again.

Whenever he thought of this, Mo Hua's expression would become forlorn.

Mr. Zhuang would gently pat his head, "Cultivate well, and there will be a day when we meet again."

Mo Hua nodded earnestly.

Meeting is fate, gathering is fate, and parting is also a kind of fate.

After meeting comes parting, and after parting, comes meeting.

Even the carefree Bai Zisheng felt the atmosphere was off. He asked Mo Hua, "Is Mr. Zhuang leaving?"

"Yes." Mo Hua didn't hide it from him.

Bai Zisheng's expression became complicated, while Bai Zixi remained calm, though her gaze dimmed a bit.

"If Mr. Zhuang leaves, will you two also leave?"

Mo Hua asked.

Bai Zisheng seemed arrogant but was kind-hearted and treated him well. Bai Zixi had helped him a lot, telling him much about cultivation knowledge and insights.

Even though they were all just named disciples, they were like half a sect, and Mo Hua cherished this friendship.

Bai Zisheng looked dejected, "Probably..."

They had visited Mr. Zhuang, hoping he would take them as direct disciples. Once Mr. Zhuang left, they would have to leave regardless.

Even if they wanted to stay, Aunt Xue wouldn't agree.

The atmosphere became a bit heavy.

Mo Hua took out the wine, meat, and cakes his mother made and said, "Cultivation is long; fate will bring us together again."

"Yes."

Bai Zisheng nodded, though his expression remained gloomy, and even the beef he ate tasted bland.

Bai Zixi said nothing, just tasted a few bites of cake, finding it less sweet.

Due to frequent visits to Mr. Zhuang, Mo Hua and the Bai siblings spent more time together.

Aunt Xue assigned fewer tasks, and Bai Zisheng would spar with Mo Hua when free.

Bai Zisheng, at the ninth level of Qi refining, had deep cultivation and excellent martial arts. Previously, when sparring with Mo Hua, he would suppress his cultivation, only comparing body techniques or Dao techniques.

But now, with Mo Hua's spiritual sense foundation, his Passing Water Step, Concealment Technique, and Fireball Technique were more powerful, allowing him to spar with Bai Zisheng head-on without needing him to hold back.

The two sparred back and forth, exchanging moves intensely.

After tiring out, they would rest under the large locust tree.

Mo Hua lay on the soft grass, covered in sweat, breathing heavily.

His Dao techniques, relying on his powerful spiritual sense, were actually superior to Bai Zisheng's.

But his physical body and spiritual

roots were too weak.

Often, after a few rounds, his spiritual energy would run out, or his limbs would weaken, allowing Bai Zisheng to find an opening and subdue him.

Bai Zisheng also lay on the ground, panting.

He had thought he could easily win against Mo Hua with full effort.

But it wasn't as simple as he imagined.

Mo Hua's Passing Water Step was slippery, with no openings to exploit; his Fireball Technique was powerful, fast, and accurate, not to be underestimated.

Moreover, Mo Hua hadn't used his Concealment Technique. If he did, sneaking an attack would be even harder to deal with.

Bai Zisheng had to resort to "shameless tactics," exhausting Mo Hua's spiritual energy and waiting for his physical exhaustion to find a chance to close in and subdue him.

Though he could win, it wasn't a fair victory.

He realized he needed to work harder, not letting Mo Hua surpass him, or he wouldn't be able to be his big brother!

Bai Zisheng's fighting spirit ignited.

The two lay under the tree, resting, watching the blue sky and white clouds, letting their thoughts drift.

Mo Hua suddenly remembered the pill furnace.

These days, the Dao Court and Dao Soldiers had searched Tongxian City and Heishan Stronghold thoroughly. Any pill furnaces with different designs and unclear functions were destroyed.

Better to kill mistakenly than let go, to fundamentally eliminate the possibility of the Qian Family Patriarch refining the demonic pill.

Zhang Lan also told Mo Hua:

"All suspicious pill furnaces on the surface have been destroyed. Even if the Qian Family Patriarch wanted to refine, he would have no pill furnace to do so."

"And refining the Life-Transforming Elixir takes a hundred years, the refining time is too long, and any sect specializing in refining demonic pills might not succeed, let alone the Qian Family Patriarch. We might just be worrying unnecessarily."

Mo Hua felt Zhang Lan made sense and was somewhat reassured.

But there was still a vague doubt in his heart.

He felt he had forgotten something but couldn't remember what.

It was like the fog in the mountains, visible but untouchable, yet undeniably present.

While deep in thought, Mo Hua noticed Bai Zixi quietly watching him.

Mo Hua turned to look, their clear eyes meeting, like crystal-clear pools reflecting each other.

Both were slightly stunned.

White locust flowers fell, dancing between them.

Time seemed to freeze.

They stared at each other, not knowing how long, then silently looked away.

For some reason, Mo Hua suddenly felt a pang of loss, memories swirling, Bai Zixi's words, her clear and melodious voice, echoing in his mind.

Her guidance on arrays, her sharing of secret techniques, and her praise for his mother's cakes...

As thoughts surged, a sudden phrase surfaced in Mo Hua's mind:

"Evil arrays and demonic arrays mostly use flesh and blood as the array medium, drawing array patterns with evil thoughts, going against the Dao..."

Mostly using flesh and blood as the array medium...

Using "flesh and blood" as the array medium...

Mo Hua was startled, suddenly standing up.

He realized why he felt something was wrong.

He had indeed forgotten something.

He had forgotten... the fat pig in the bloody pill room!

Evil arrays use flesh and blood as the array medium...

That pig covered in blood marks was the array medium.

The blood marks on it were not blood marks but the array patterns of the evil array.

The evil array was carved on the pill furnace.

This meant that the pig was the real pill furnace!

Inside it, the Life-Transforming Elixir that could help the Qian Family Patriarch break through was being refined!