

The Quest 353

Chapter 353: Weight

"If you donate spirit stones, once the grand array is completed and seals Feng Xi, we will erect a grand Demon-Suppressing Stele..."

Mo Hua gestured with his hand to show the size of the stele, then said to Old Master An, "We will carve your name at the top, larger, and highlighted in gold, so it stands out at a glance!"

Erecting a Demon-Suppressing Stele is a tradition among demon hunters. Once a powerful demon that has wreaked havoc is slain, demon hunters forge a stele to inscribe the names of those who participated in the hunt, showcasing their merit.

However, no one had killed a great demon before, so naturally, no one had erected a stele for slaying such a demon.

Old Master An asked calmly, "What if it can't be killed?"

Mo Hua candidly replied, "Just like in business, there are risks. Demon hunting can fail, especially against such a powerful demon, the risks are immense."

"If it can't be killed, then it can't be killed, and we'll have to find another way. Your spirit stones would then be donated in vain."

Old Master An frowned, "So, I would be donating my family fortune for a name that might not even be earned?"

"This is a real reputation, not an empty name," Mo Hua corrected.

"How is it real?"

Mo Hua explained, "Once the great demon is slain and the stele is erected, it will be the most important merit stele in the history of Tongxian City."

"As long as Tongxian City exists, the stele will exist, your name will be on it, and the An family will always be remembered by the cultivators of Tongxian City."

"This honor is rare and priceless. Missing this chance, no amount of spirit stones will buy it again."

Old Master An was moved, frowning deeply in thought.

Seeing this, Mo Hua quietly added, "Old Master, may I speak frankly..."

Old Master An nodded, "Go ahead."

Mo Hua blinked and said softly, "The An family is still flourishing now, known as the second largest family in Tongxian City. But what if one day the An family declines, losing its wealth? Who will remember you then?"

"At that time, the An family would be like all the small families in this world, fading into the crowd, no longer mentioned or remembered, even the descendants of the An family might not take pride in it."

Old Master An's expression remained calm, but his gaze lowered. He knew that Mo Hua was speaking the truth.

This is the fate of most small families in the cultivation world.

Where there is prosperity, there will be decline.

Small families have weak foundations. Once they decline, the members scatter, and there is little chance of revival.

Not to mention small families like theirs, even large families can gradually decline and eventually disappear from the history of the cultivation world.

Seeing Old Master An's wavering resolve, Mo Hua's eyes brightened. He seized the opportunity and continued, "But if your name is inscribed on the largest Demon-Suppressing Stele in Tongxian City, it would be different. All the cultivators in Tongxian City would remember your name and the history of the An family. Even if the An family declines in hundreds of years..."

Old Master An shuddered, looking at Mo Hua with a sorrowful gaze.

What do you mean by the An family being gone...

Mo Hua smiled awkwardly and rephrased more tactfully, "Even if the An family declines and isn't as prosperous, the people of Tongxian City will remember your contributions..."

"In that sense, the spirit stones are the illusion; the reputation is tangible."

Mo Hua spoke eloquently, gently guiding.

Old Master An frowned deeper, pondering for a long time, unable to make a decision, finally sighing, "Let me think about it."

Mo Hua didn't want to force Old Master An, knowing there were other ways to raise spirit stones.

However, the An family was indeed in a difficult position.

Donating or not donating was a tough choice.

So he suggested Old Master An donate some spirit stones to earn a good reputation for the An family's future generations.

Ultimately, the decision was Old Master An's.

"Take your time to think, I will take my leave."

Mo Hua respectfully bowed and walked out of the An residence.

Old Master An watched Mo Hua's retreating figure, lost in thought.

After a while, the screen shifted, and An Yonglu, the head of the An family, walked out quietly. He poured a cup of tea for Old Master An and asked cautiously, "Father, how did it go?"

Thinking of Mo Hua's composed manner, then seeing his son's humble demeanor, Old Master An couldn't help but get angry.

"You are the head of the family, yet in such important matters, you can't take the stage!"

"A ten-year-old like Mo Hua can openly come to me and discuss things logically."

"You, the family head, can't help, can't speak, just hide behind and eavesdrop!"

"If the An family falls into your hands, it is doomed!"

...

An Yonglu was scolded harshly, feeling aggrieved:

I wanted to step in, but you wouldn't let me...

But he didn't dare to retort.

Old Master An vented his anger, then sighed deeply, "Donate."

An Yonglu said, "Don't listen to Mo Hua's nonsense..."

Old Master An sighed, "Mo Hua has personal motives, but he speaks the truth. When disaster strikes, our An family's assets can't be kept... better to exchange them for a good reputation."

An Yonglu was dissatisfied, "How can we not keep them?"

Old Master An asked coldly, "With what?"

An Yonglu wanted to say he could keep them, but the words stuck in his throat.

Seeing this, Old Master An looked weary, "I have thought for a long time, still no good solution."

"The An family has two paths: leave or stay."

"Leaving means moving to another immortal city, but those cities are controlled by other forces, we might not be accepted, let alone thrive."

"Our family has always valued harmony and prosperity. Our descendants aren't ruthless. Moving elsewhere, we would decline within three generations."

"If we migrate with other independent cultivators, we would be a piece of fat meat, everyone would take a bite."

Thinking of the past, Old Master An recalled when the An family's caravan was devoured in Dahei Mountain by demonic cultivators under the Qian family patriarch, leaving no survivors.

This memory still haunted him.

The journey of moving could be fraught with dangers, like passing through numerous Dahei Mountains and encountering many Black Mountain Strongholds.

The An family might be stripped to the bone.

"If we stay, we must build the grand array."

"To build the grand array, we must unite. The poor independent cultivators have donated their spirit stones, how can our An family be selfish and be looked down upon?"

Old Master An had a personal motive too.

His life span was nearing its end, cultivation couldn't progress, and his life was almost over. Though he was a Foundation Building cultivator, he hadn't achieved much.

He wasn't willing to fade away, wanting to leave a name and a good reputation for the An family.

With a firm decision, Old Master An felt much lighter, "Donate."

An Yonglu was stunned, "Donate everything?"

Old Master An's anger flared again, "Are you stupid? Donate everything and we drink the northwest wind? Use your brain before speaking!"

An Yonglu meekly asked, "How much then..."

Old Master An felt a headache, "Seventy to eighty percent."

"Oh." An Yonglu asked tentatively, "Shall I count it and hand it to Chief Supervisor Zhou?"

Old Master An nodded, then reconsidered, shaking his head, "No, you count it and personally hand it to Mo Hua."

An Yonglu hesitated, "Isn't that giving him too much credit..."

Even if he could draw arrays, he was just a ten-year-old kid.

An Yonglu wanted to say more but saw Old Master An's anger rising, knowing he was close to getting hit...

He wisely shut his mouth.

Old Master An sighed, "Take Xiao Fu with you when you see Mo Hua, speak only when necessary, and be respectful."

An Yonglu reluctantly agreed, still puzzled.

Old Master An drank some tea, then spoke earnestly, "These spirit stones are for reputation."

"If we kill the great demon, our descendants will have a good name."

"If not, the independent cultivators will remember our good, especially Elder Yu. Being on good terms with him, the demon hunters will help if the An family faces trouble."

"But most importantly, this is to earn Mo Hua's favor."

"Mo Hua values personal relationships." Old Master An sighed with relief, "If the grand array is completed, Mo Hua will be a thirteen-year-old first-grade array master. No reputation is worth more than his favor."

An Yonglu was stunned, "Is it really that important?"

Old Master An shook his head, "You don't understand the weight of the title 'array master,' especially at thirteen."

An Yonglu was taken aback, nodding solemnly.

Since Old Master said so, the array master must be very powerful.

But whether a first-grade array master or array master, he felt there wasn't much difference...

Seeing his expression, Old Master An knew he didn't fully understand, and sighed deeply.

Two days later, An Yonglu counted the spirit stones and array materials, made a list, and with An Xiaofu, personally delivered them to Mo Hua.

Mo Hua was overjoyed, "Thank you, Uncle An, please convey my thanks to Old Master An, Mo Hua appreciates this favor!"

An Yonglu nodded, feeling accomplished, following Old Master's advice, spoke only a few polite words, then left

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An Xiaofu stayed behind.

He didn't care about donating spirit stones, just wanted to visit Mo Hua and enjoy a meal, considering Mo Hua's food the best.