

The Quest 369

Chapter 369: Little Junior Brother

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Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi returned to the family estate and informed Aunt Xue of Mr. Zhuang's agreement to take on disciples.

Aunt Xue was naturally overjoyed.

She had taken the siblings through much hardship to become Mr. Zhuang's disciples, and finally, her wish was fulfilled, allowing her to account for it with the lady of the house.

However, after her initial excitement, she was puzzled:

"Why did Mr. Zhuang initially refuse to take on disciples, but has now suddenly changed his mind?"

Bai Zisheng scratched his head, as he hadn't thought about it and couldn't fathom Mr. Zhuang's thoughts.

On the other hand, Bai Zixi seemed to be deep in thought and slowly said,

"Could it be because of... Mo Hua?"

Aunt Xue was startled and asked in confusion, "Why?"

Bai Zixi calmly said, "Because the gentleman values him."

"Values?"

Aunt Xue didn't quite understand.

Mo Hua did have a decent talent for Formation and was quite likable, but to say he was valued by Mr. Zhuang seemed a bit of a stretch.

After all, both the quality of a Cultivator's Spiritual Root and physical body are equally important, and Mo Hua was somewhat lacking in both aspects...

Aunt Xue thought of a polite way to put it.

Indeed, within the Bai Family, high-grade Spiritual Roots were common, and medium to low-grade ones, even among side branches, were considered insignificant.

Yet Bai Zixi nodded and said, "He values him a great deal."

Aunt Xue was still confused, "Because of Formations? It's true that Mo Hua is quite skilled at Drawing Formations..."

"Not just quite skilled," Bai Zixi shook her head, "but extremely, extremely skilled!"

Aunt Xue was taken aback, "Extremely, extremely skilled?"

It was the first time she heard such high praise from Bai Zixi.

Bai Zixi never praised anyone because she was exceptionally talented, insightful, and diligent in her Cultivation – an excellent prospect for Tao Cultivation – and naturally, she was also exceptionally beautiful. 如琢如磨

Like an uncarved jade, pure and flawless.

In terms of Cultivation or any other Tao Cultivation disciplines like Formation, none of her peers in the Bai Family could match her.

Some of the Bai Family disciples, regardless of gender, even felt ashamed in her presence and dared not speak loudly.

Bai Zixi was somewhat aloof and had few friends in the clan, and rarely praised anyone, for no one was worthy of her praise.

But now, she was praising Mo Hua's Formation as "extremely, extremely good"...

Aunt Xue realized she might have overlooked something, but still uncertain, she said, "Is it really that good?"

Bai Zisheng then interjected, "Aunt Xue, do you know about the Large Formation that killed the Big Demon?"

Aunt Xue nodded, "Wasn't that Mr. Zhuang's doing?"

Bai Zisheng shook his head, "It was drawn by Mo Hua."

Aunt Xue was shocked, "How is that possible? How old is he?"

Aunt Xue, born into the Bai Family, did not pay much attention to the happenings in a small place like Tongxian City.

But she did not expect that Tongxian City would face such disasters repeatedly, even a Big Demon emerging.

The appearance of a Big Demon surely meant foul play; such calamities would not just coincide in a little Immortal City.

If not for Mr. Zhuang's presence, she would have taken Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi away long ago.

A mighty demon of such scope was no match for ordinary Cultivators.

Yet, what followed still shocked her.

Tongxian City built a Large Formation, destroyed it, killed the Big Demon, and even attracted a heavenly tribulation.

Such events were a rarity in her life.

But because Mr. Zhuang was there, she took it for granted.

Such feats must have been Mr. Zhuang's work.

When Mo Hua was struck by heavenly lightning, Aunt Xue was initially very worried, but then thought it was not so serious.

Since it was all part of Mr. Zhuang's plan, and Mo Hua followed his instructions, surely nothing would go wrong.

As for why Mr. Zhuang would have Mo Hua perform such dangerous tasks...

Aunt Xue guessed it was because Mr. Zhuang preferred not to be involved.

And since Mo Hua was his disciple, a local Cultivator from Tongxian City, and proficient in Formation, who better to do it?

However, now she realized she might have been wrong from the start.

Mastery of Formation could no longer simply be called "proficiency"...

A primary Formation Master was already a distinguished figure among Formation Masters, especially at such a young age.

"Is the Large Formation truly drawn by Mo Hua?" Aunt Xue still found it hard to believe.

Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi both nodded.

Aunt Xue was somewhat stunned, the more she thought about it, the more unfathomable it seemed.

Thirteen years old, a primary Large Formation...

Aunt Xue couldn't help but sigh,

"No wonder Mr. Zhuang values him so highly."

Yet Bai Zixi's gaze flickered.

She faintly felt that Mr. Zhuang's valuation of Mo Hua was not solely due to his Formation skills.

That Mr. Zhuang treated Mo Hua well and valued him highly was a consensus between her and her brother.

This matter was something she originally did not quite comprehend.

Latterly, as Mo Hua's learning of Formation accelerated and his talent became more fearfully evident...

Initially, she could teach Mo Hua; later, she could exchange insights on Formation with him; and eventually, the Formations Mo Hua drew, and his knowledge of Divine Sense spell points, had become beyond her comprehension.

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Bai Zixi was a direct descendant of the Bai Family and had seen countless Bai Family classics since childhood.

Some things, even if she didn't know how to use them, she wasn't completely ignorant of.

However, the Formations that Mo Hua had mastered, as well as some Formation methodologies, she hadn't just not learned them—she hadn't even heard of them, let alone seen them recorded in the Bai Family's Scripture Pavilion.

These abstruse teachings must have been taught by Mr. Zhuang and were extremely precious inheritances.

Moreover, Mr. Zhuang's attitude towards his three disciples appeared to be the same, but it was clearly biased.

Whenever Mo Hua wanted to visit Mr. Zhuang's bamboo room, he could do so, just as if it were his own home.

Even if Mr. Zhuang was busy, Mo Hua could still sit on the threshold, casually read a book or fish in the pond.

Both Mr. Zhuang and Old Kui showed nearly "indulgent" goodwill towards Mo Hua.

She had heard her mother speak of Mr. Zhuang's past.

Mr. Zhuang had exceptional talent and a willful nature; he was never such an easygoing person.

And he had never before treated a disciple this way, especially one who was just a named disciple...

Aunt Xue also understood Zixi's meaning now.

Mr. Zhuang wouldn't change his mind for no reason.

Certainly, Mo Hua must have said something, done something, or perhaps Mr. Zhuang considered something on behalf of Mo Hua.

Only then did Mr. Zhuang change his mind, initially accepting them as named disciples, and now taking them as Direct Disciples.

Aunt Xue sighed.

Unexpectedly, their Bai Family had received a great favor from this child, Mo Hua.

If not for Mo Hua, they might not have been able to meet Mr. Zhuang, might not have become named disciples of Mr. Zhuang.

And now it was even less certain they would have been able to become disciples of Mr. Zhuang.

Aunt Xue then said to Zisheng and Zixi:

"Now that you have Mr. Zhuang as your teacher, you are of the same alliance from now on. Being from the same alliance, you must take good care of Mo Hua."

Bai Zisheng assured her while thumping his chest, "Aunt Xue, don't worry, I will look after him from now on!"

Bai Zixi nodded slightly, her eyes gradually lighting up.

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Several days later, Mr. Zhuang chose an auspicious day for a simple initiation ritual.

Why it was an auspicious day, Mr. Zhuang did not say.

Mo Hua flipped through a calendar and couldn't find what was special about that day.

It was probably dependent on Mr. Zhuang's mood.

The ceremony was indeed simple.

It involved burning incense, bowing to heaven, presenting tea, and then the ritual of respecting the teacher was complete.

The burning of incense was an offering to heaven.

According to Mr. Zhuang, Formation Masters sought out the Heavenly Dao, they only bowed to heaven, not to gods, nor to humans.

Mo Hua and the two other children lit incense, and after bowing three times to heaven, the ceremony was concluded.

After that, each of them in turn presented Mr. Zhuang with tea, and then they were allowed to address him as “Master.”

A named disciple could only call him “Gentleman,” but only a Direct Disciple could call him “Master.”

Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi both called out “Master” once.

Mr. Zhuang nodded slightly.

Mo Hua also happily called out “Master.”

Mr. Zhuang nodded too, but his gaze flickered, betraying a different emotion.

After the incense was burnt, heaven was bowed to, and the tea was offered, and they had called him Master.

Mo Hua and the others were now truly members of the same alliance.

But now that they were of the same alliance, the matter of seniority arose.

The three began to argue.

“I’m the oldest, I should naturally be the senior brother!” Bai Zisheng argued strongly.

“There is a sequence in learning the way, I entered first, I should be the senior brother!” Mo Hua humphed.

Bai Zixi had a calm expression, but she had her own insistence:

"I want to be the senior sister!"

"In any case, I'm the senior brother."

"You're the junior brother, I'm the senior brother..."

"I'm the senior sister..."

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In the end, no one could persuade the other, and three pairs of bright eyes looked toward Mr. Zhuang.

Mr. Zhuang was momentarily startled, his thoughts stirred, and then he said to Mo Hua:

"You're the youngest, take a little grievance and be the junior disciple."

Mo Hua was greatly disappointed, but since Mr. Zhuang had spoken, he naturally would listen and replied, "Okay, Gentleman."

Mr. Zhuang chuckled, "Are you still calling me Gentleman?"

Mo Hua realized his error and smiled as he called out:

"Master!"

Mr. Zhuang nodded slightly, his eyes full of mirth.

And so, the three named disciples under the great pagoda tree became Direct Disciples of Mr. Zhuang.

There was a pair of siblings born of Noble Clans, with the grace of dragons and phoenixes, and dazzling talents as the senior brother and sister.

And there was one of humble origin, with inferior Spiritual Root, who seemed to be “making up the numbers,” the junior brother.