

The Quest 375

Chapter 375: First Grade

Mo Hua was awakened by the bell of the Azure Cloud Sect.

He groggily opened his eyes and realized that he was participating in the assessment for a first-rank Formation Master, and there was only the time it took to brew a pot of tea left until the assessment ended.

Mo Hua checked over his answer sheet again and, finding no problems, laid his head down on the table again, waiting to hand it in.

The tabletop was smooth and cool to the touch, quite comfortable to lie on.

The only issue was the examiner who kept staring at him, which made Mo Hua feel somewhat uneasy.

But since he was the examiner, it seemed like there wasn't much of a problem with it.

After the time it would take to sip a pot of tea had passed, the bell rang again.

One after another, Formation Masters sealed their answer sheets and handed them over to the examiner.

Mo Hua did as the others did, blending into the crowd and handing his own answer sheet to the examiner.

Mo Hua thought he had kept a low profile, but all along the way, many Formation Masters looked at him.

And that examiner, with a stern expression, didn't look at others and just kept his gaze on him, and he even seemed to hesitate as if wanting to say something.

This left Mo Hua somewhat puzzled.

It wasn't like he did anything wrong...

Could it be because he slept during the exam?

After handing in his paper, Mo Hua left the Wenxian Palace and suddenly felt a sense of relief wash over him.

The assessment itself wasn't tiring, as he had finished quite quickly.

It was rather the feeling of being watched by others that was exhausting.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense was strong, and he could perceive anyone watching him.

Whenever someone looked at him, his Divine Sense would react and, over time, it was indeed very tiring.

After the examination, Mo Hua would still have to stay in the Azure Cloud Sect for three days.

During these three days, examiners from the Heaven Shu Pavilion would mark the answer sheets and review the Formations, ultimately deciding who would be awarded the title of first-rank Formation Master.

With nothing to do, Mo Hua practiced his formations, or he would go to Azure Mountain City with his father, Mo Shan, to browse around. If he found anything interesting, he would buy it thinking of giving it to his mother when he returned.

Two days later, the answer sheets had already been reviewed.

In the sealed hall, the answer sheets tentatively determined to be of first-rank were grouped together.

The assessment had several examination halls, each with an examiner, and now these examiners were gathered together, discussing the final decisions:

"This Zhao Cheng from Qingxuan City, at the age of one hundred and ninety-six, has skilled penmanship. In my opinion, he can be awarded first-rank..."

"Conventional to a fault, lacking in Spirit Transformation, I don't think it's particularly good..."

"Azure Mountain City, Yang Xu, eighty-six years old, has a profound foundation in formation arts and can be considered exceptionally talented for his age."

"The Yang Family's foundation is indeed not bad, but at eighty-six, he's still a bit young. We should give more spots to the older Formation Masters..."

"How many spots do we have left?"

"Not many. A few of the Great Clans have pulled some strings and secured a few spots, and some Sects have also reserved a few. There are also two spots donated by Golden Core Cultivators for their juniors in exchange for Spirit Stones..."

"All things considered, we're left with fewer than five."

"Sigh... it's tough making these decisions," one of the examiners lamented.

"What else can we do? The higher-ups have sent their word, we can't afford to offend them, nor can we do nothing..."

...

The examiners discussed amongst themselves.

One examiner with a rigid face, however, was looking at an answer sheet with an expression of utter disbelief.

"Brother Zhao, what are you looking at?" asked one curious examiner.

Coming back to his senses, the examiner named Zhao spread out the answer sheet in his hands and slowly said,

"Look at this formation..."

Everyone leaned in to take a look, showing signs of amazement:

"Such good penmanship!"

"Such a solid foundation!"

"Effortless like clouds flowing in the sky, completed in one go, it even has a bit of a master's style..."

"Indeed, it's not bad!"

...

After the praise, another examiner expressed his doubts:

"How did we miss such a good formation?"

"This mastery of formations isn't included in our provisional first-rank lineup?"

A middle-aged examiner responded with a bitter smile:

"I'm the one who excluded it..."

The others asked with frowns, "Why?"

The examiner pointed to the name section in the margin of the answer sheet, "Guess the age of this Formation Master?"

The margin bore the name “Mo Hua.”

Seeing this, everyone exchanged glances and began guessing:

"With such a profound foundation, he must be at least one or two hundred years old?"

"I guess over two hundred..."

"Below a hundred isn't impossible. After all, amongst Formation Masters, there are countless geniuses..."

The middle-aged examiner slowly said, "Thirteen years old."

Everyone was taken aback.

"How much?"

"Thirteen."

"What kind of joke is this?"

"At thirteen years old, how many formations could he have drawn, how many Formation Books could he have read?"

"One hundred and thirty years old is more like it..."

The examiner named Zhao let out a sigh, "It's thirteen years old."

The room went silent for a moment.

"Truly thirteen years old?"

"Impossible, right?"

"Are you kidding us?"

"Did he really draw this himself, or could someone have drawn it for him..."

"There was someone proctoring the exam, how could he have someone else draw for him?"

"Who proctored this person?"

The stern-faced, rigid examiner named Zhao said indifferently, "It was me."

At that, everyone fell silent again.

Someone asked, "Brother Zhao, are you certain the formation was drawn by him himself?"

The examiner named Zhao gave a wry smile, "Yes."

He himself was unwilling to believe it, but the formation was right before his eyes, and he had no choice but to accept it.

Previously, he had only intended to check Mo Hua's paper to see what nonsense he had scribbled. If it really was nonsensical, he was prepared to report it to the Heaven Shu Pavilion and hold the local Taoist Court accountable.

But he hadn't expected that the formation would leave him feeling ashamed...

Another question came to the middle-aged examiner, "If that's the case, with the child drawing so well, why did you exclude him on your own?"

The middle-aged examiner helplessly replied, "He's too young... For Formation Masters under one hundred, we have to consider carefully, not to mention, he's only thirteen..."