

The Quest 38

Chapter 38: Grand Opening

The pricing at the eatery was not expensive, considering most patrons were neighbors or common independent cultivators, who didn't have much to spend. This pricing strategy ensured that at least everyone could afford a meal, aiming for small profits but high turnover.

The eatery's specialty was beef. A serving of beef was priced at two spirit stones per plate, which was not exactly cheap for independent cultivators, but compared to other eateries serving spiritual meat or beef, it was a bargain.

Beef noodles were even cheaper. Plain noodles cost only three fragments of a spirit stone, and with beef added, the price was six fragments of a spirit stone.

For an ordinary Qi-cultivating cultivator, a day's income was roughly one spirit stone plus a few fragments. A plate of beef required two days of hard work to afford. It was something to enjoy occasionally, but impossible to eat every day.

However, for two spirit stones, one could have a meat dish, the only such offer in all of Tongxian City. Even just to satisfy a craving, a bowl of beef noodles cost only six fragments of a spirit stone.

A few days after opening, the customer base had already started to grow.

Local independent cultivators, while not able to afford meat daily, always had someone looking to indulge a bit and have a good meal every day.

Some were Qi-cultivating cultivators from relatively well-off backgrounds who could afford to eat meat every few days; others met with Daoist friends, not wanting to be too extravagant nor too frugal, so they would order a plate of beef with some side dishes to accompany their drinks.

Some parents, seeing progress in their children's cultivation, would bring them for a spicy beef noodle treat to reward them.

Occasionally, traveling merchants, weary from their journeys and hearing that the eatery served meat, both wanted to indulge but hesitated because they were short on money, would be wide-eyed upon hearing that a full plate of beef cost just two spirit stones.

They were still wary, wondering if such cheap meat could taste good.

But then, seeing how busy the eatery was, they figured the taste must not be too bad and decided to give it a try.

Once they had a taste, they couldn't stop eating.

From then on, traveling merchants regularly stopped at the eatery, ordering a plate of meat and a few drinks. Even those who used to pass by without stopping now paused to enjoy some meat and chat.

Some merchants, who originally did not pass through, would even make a detour to the eatery just to savor the beef and relieve the fatigue of their long journeys.

After all, within a hundred miles, this was the only place where one could eat such delicious meat for so cheap.

As more patrons came, the eatery became busier, and the three brothers from the Meng family came to help out. After a day's work, they would eat a big bowl of beef noodles and take some beef home, fully satisfied.

But as the Tongxian Sect was about to start its new term, there would soon be a shortage of hands.

Mo Hua, not wanting his mother to overwork herself, suggested hiring someone to help. Mo Shan, considering his wife was still recovering and unable to use her spiritual power, agreed with Mo Hua's idea.

After discussing with his wife, they hired a hunter's wife from the Demon Hunter team to help in the eatery for thirty spirit stones a month.

The next day, a young-looking and shy woman came by, holding a basket of fresh wild vegetables still dewy from being picked that morning on the mountain.

From his parents' conversation, Mo Hua knew the woman's surname was Jiang and her given name was Yun.

Her husband, surnamed Chu, had been severely injured by a demonic wolf during a hunt, and the family had spent all their savings on his treatment. Though his life was saved, he was too injured to continue hunting, and the family had no income.

Jiang Yun had a poor spiritual root and had left the sect after reaching only the fourth level of Qi-cultivation. A few years later, she married and had a child. After her husband was injured, she looked for work to support the family, but with her low level of cultivation, she couldn't earn much. The odd jobs she found paid very few spirit stones and were unstable. Plus, with a young child to care for, making ends meet was extremely difficult.

Now, with a steady job at the eatery earning thirty spirit stones a month, she was very grateful.

Jiang Yun was inherently introverted and not good with words. She wanted to express her thanks but could only repeat the few phrases of gratitude she knew, her face flushing with embarrassment.

Liu Ruhua quickly reassured her, telling her not to overthink and just focus on her work.

Finally, Jiang Yun settled down, following Liu Ruhua's instructions diligently. She was hardworking and meticulous, slow to learn but serious, which Liu Ruhua found endearing.

After closing for the night, Liu Ruhua packed several bowls of noodles with extra pieces of meat for her to take home.

Jiang Yun initially refused, her face turning red as she insisted: "Sister Liu, you have been too kind to me already. I can't take this."

But Liu Ruhua insisted, saying, "Take it for your child."

Unable to refuse any longer, Jiang Yun accepted the food container, thinking of how to express her thanks, but still unable to articulate more than a few words of gratitude.

Liu Ruhua simply comforted her, "Don't think too much about it; it's getting late, go home and check on your child."

Jiang Yun carefully carried the food container, and as she walked home, she paused at a corner, standing still as if in tears, then silently wiped her eyes with her sleeve before continuing on her way.

From a distance, Mo Hua watched her retreating figure, his emotions complex.

His family was not wealthy either, living from hand to mouth, but in Tongxian City, many independent cultivator families were even worse off.

He wished that all cultivators in this world could be free from the struggles of making a living.

Mo Hua thought quietly to himself.

Liu's Eatery had a smooth opening. Liu Ruhua was busy with the eatery every day, looking thinner but healthier and more radiant.

Running the eatery allowed her to study various diets and save spirit stones for her son's future cultivation and marriage. Liu Ruhua felt very satisfied, her face often bright with smiles.

Seeing his wife's current state, Mo Shan felt reassured.

And Mo Hua, enjoying more delicious food, also became happier.

With the eatery's opening, the family's income from spirit stones increased, and they no longer had to live as frugally as before. By the time Tongxian Sect's term started, the eatery had profited over two hundred spirit stones.

Liu Ruhua gave all the earned spirit stones to Mo Hua, urging him to choose a suitable cultivation technique at the sect and reminding him not to neglect his cultivation.

Mo Hua nodded in agreement.

The next day, as the summer vacation ended, Tongxian Sect opened its gates, welcoming disciples back to school.

Mo Hua waved goodbye to Liu Ruhua at the foot of the mountain and then stepped into Tongxian Sect.

As disciples gradually returned to school, the previously quiet Tongling Peak became lively again.

However, after two months of summer break, many disciples had become lax in their cultivation, and returning to school, their expressions carried a trace of nervousness.

Yan Jiaoxi, in an effort to refocus everyone, abruptly announced a sudden array formation assessment.

The lingering heat of summer was instantly quenched by this unexpected cold shower, leaving many disciples with a look of utter despair.

This assessment was to be done on the spot, without the opportunity for any tricks.

However, Mo Hua was not the least bit intimidated.

He had already mastered drawing five array patterns, making him an experienced apprentice. The sect's basic array assessments were no challenge for him.

Moreover, during the latter part of the summer break, he had practiced array formations day and night, pushing his spiritual sense to its limits and continuously strengthening it.

Such a minor assessment was nothing to him, and he was confident it would be a piece of cake.

But when the assessment papers were handed out, Mo Hua was taken aback.

He checked several times to make sure, and finally realized that the assessment was not on individual array patterns, but a complete array formation, including six array patterns!