

The Quest 381

Chapter 381: Small Town

Mo Hua returned to his room and practiced the Reversed Spirit Formation for a while.

He indeed felt the growth of his Divine Sense slowing down; it wasn't as fast as before.

"It seems that I need to find more difficult formations to learn," Mo Hua silently thought to himself.

After practicing formations for a while more, until his Divine Sense was exhausted, Mo Hua rested for a short moment. Then he thought about it and opened his Storage Bag.

With the travels ahead, he didn't know what he would encounter, so he decided to take an inventory of his possessions first.

The first item was Spirit Stones.

Mo Hua carried over a thousand Spirit Stones on his person.

There were also several thousand more Spirit Stones stored inside the carriage, sealed with a formation under Mr. Zhuang's care.

These Spirit Stones were for Mo Hua's Foundation Establishment.

He had earned some himself, some were saved by his parents, and some were given by Elder Yu. At the very least, they should be enough for Foundation Establishment.

Additionally, there was a first-grade Spiritual Artifact, the Thousand Jun Stick.

Mo Hua had Master Chen reforge this Thousand Jun Stick; its material was now more robust, and he had added a layer of Thousand Jun Compound Formation to it. It felt even more comfortable to use when dealing blows stealthily.

Around Mo Hua's neck, he also wore a Pill Jade.

This was a gift from Old Mr. Feng, with a faint warmth that could refresh and calm the mind.

Although Old Mr. Feng said "talk of merits is illusory and intangible,"

the Pill Jade seemed to truly carry the merit of Old Mr. Feng's healing and saving lives, always emitting a gentle and moist luster.

Every time Mo Hua looked at it, he felt it contained a lot of goodwill.

Besides the Pill Jade, Mo Hua also wore a Monster Hunting Token around his neck.

This Monster Hunting Token was given to him by Elder Yu, and every Monster Hunter had one.

But Mo Hua found that his seemed a bit different.

Other Monster Hunters, after killing Monster Beasts, would have a thin red blood streak appear on their tokens.

After using the Great Formation Dissolution to kill Feng Xi, Mo Hua's Monster Hunting Token also gained a bloodstreak.

However, this bloodstreak was half a finger thick and pale gold.

Mo Hua asked Elder Yu about it, and Elder Yu also looked puzzled, saying that he had never seen anything like it before, and even the Monster Hunter literature had no records of it.

A pale gold bloodstreak...

Mo Hua couldn't figure it out, so he decided to leave it be for now.

Regardless of whether the bloodstreak on the Monster Hunting Token was red or gold, it didn't matter much; there were no benefits presently, so he would figure it out when he had the time in the future.

Mo Hua also put the Bronze Waist Token from the Taoist Court in his Storage Bag.

According to Court Leader Zhou's words, he had applied to the higher-ups, allocating a lot of Merit Points, which were now inside this token.

The Taoist Court in Tongxian City made a great contribution for slaying Feng Xi.

Court Leader Zhou, in his later tenure, received an unexpected major merit and was overjoyed beyond measure.

This merit was largely thanks to Mo Hua.

Mo Hua had a somewhat special identity; a thirteen-year-old first-grade Formation Master would raise disbelief if reported, so Court Leader Zhou did not make it clear to the Taoist Court. Instead, he subtly granted Mo Hua some extra benefits.

These benefits were the Merit Points inside the Bronze Waist Token.

Should Mo Hua need it when he was away from home, he could exchange the merits from the Merit Points for Spirit Stones or Spiritual Objects in case of emergency.

As for how much these Merit Points amounted to and what they could exchange for, he hadn't tried yet and was unaware, but he imagined they wouldn't be few.

Mo Hua tapped the token and felt more at ease.

Furthermore, the most important item was the ring of a first-grade Formation Master.

The ring was made of white jade inlaid with gold, simple yet luxurious.

Named the Heaven Shu Ring, it was crafted by the Heaven Shu Pavilion of the Taoist Court and given to those who passed the assessment as Formation Masters.

Nine star patterns were engraved on the ring, with three stripes on each star, symbolizing the nine ranks of formations, each with three levels.

Mo Hua's Heaven Shu Ring now illuminated only one star, signifying that he was recognized by the Heaven Shu Pavilion as a Formation Master of the first rank.

The Heaven Shu Ring served as a proof of identity as a Formation Master and was also a small storage ring.

Like a Storage Bag, it could hold items, but its space was smaller and reserved for storing confidential and valuable objects.

Mo Hua placed the Jade Slip of the Heaven Yan Jue and some rare Formation Diagrams in the Heaven Shu Ring, tied it to a string, and also hung it around his neck.

He originally wanted to wear it on his hand, but it was too big for his fingers and could only fit his thumb, like a ring guard.

Mo Hua was always afraid that it might fall off, so he strung it with a string and hung it around his neck.

Now he had three items hanging around his neck, but thankfully they weren't heavy and didn't tire him to wear.

After checking his belongings, Mo Hua sat in meditation and then started Drawing Formations again.

Dinner was at the inn; everyone ordered a few simple dishes, not particularly delicious but not bad either, certainly not as good as the ones Mo Hua prepared himself.

After dinner, everyone rested in the inn for the night, and they were to set off again the next day.

Before departure, Mo Hua affectionately hugged Big White's neck, patted its back, and said,

“We're going to trouble you again.”

Big White grunted a few times and nuzzled Mo Hua's face with its head.

Mo Hua smiled happily.

The morning glow spilled across the sky, casting its light on the road.

The group set out on their journey, left the city gates, and took to the main road.

After traveling the main road for a while, they passed through a mountain trail lined by towering peaks, with few travelers in sight, only the recurring sound of the horse hooves.

Having walked for the better part of the day, they came upon a small town.

Mo Hua looked up and from a distance saw the town's signboard:

Thousand Families Town.

As far as the eye could see, the scenes of the small town were fully in view.

There were quite a few people in Thousand Families Town, but it was clear that they were all Loose Cultivators, and their clothes were covered in mud stains.

In the distance beyond the town, there was a large expanse of connected Spirit Fields.

Many Cultivators were bent over, working in the Spirit Fields.

Mo Hua had heard from his father, Mo Shan, that in the way of Tao Cultivation there was a category called “Spiritual Plant Master,” which involved farming and nurturing various Taoist crops, or growing herbs for a living.

Those who farmed were generally known as “Spirit Farmers.”

These Cultivators working in the Spirit Fields must be the “Spirit Farmers” his father, Mo Shan, had mentioned.

Old Kui stopped the carriage.

Mr. Zhuang lifted the curtain, glanced at the town, and nodded, saying:

“We are going to stay here for a while.”

The three companions, Mo Hua, exchanged glances, not understanding why they needed to stay here.

Remembering the words that Mr. Zhuang had spoken to him, Mo Hua’s eyes brightened as he asked:

“Master, does this town have an Ultimate Formation?”

Mr. Zhuang nodded slightly.

Mo Hua looked over the town again.

The houses were low and the bricks and stones worn, with many places showing signs of decay from years of neglect, clearly indicating that most Cultivators were not living well.

There was one mansion in the town that was obviously opulent, likely the residence of the most affluent clan in the area.

This was similar to other small towns Mo Hua had encountered on his journey.

Where there is poverty, there is wealth, and of course, with wealth comes poverty.

The residences in the town all had Formations drawn on them, but most were very rudimentary, with only a few Formation Patterns.

Even the Formation used by that most opulent mansion was something Mo Hua could see through at a glance.

In such a small town, where could there be an Ultimate Formation?

Unable to understand, Mo Hua asked Mr. Zhuang:

“Master, how do you know that there’s an Ultimate Formation here?”

Mr. Zhuang said inscrutably, “I saw it.”

Mo Hua continued to probe,

“How did you see it?”

He was truly curious in his heart.

Mr. Zhuang looked at Mo Hua and gently said, “Take a guess.”

Mo Hua frowned slightly.

Mr. Zhuang asked him to guess, not to simply suggest; that meant the method must be one he was aware of.

Mo Hua cast another distant glance at the town.

Since there were no obvious Formation Patterns, it meant Mr. Zhuang had not seen any specific Formation.

Moreover, it was a stop made on the spur of the moment during their travels.

This indicated that Mr. Zhuang hadn't known there was an Ultimate Formation here in advance.

It was something he saw, or rather perceived, that made him decide to stay.

What did he see, or perceive?

Mo Hua released his Divine Sense, the world turned into a vast expanse of white, and then the multicolored Spiritual Power began to emerge one by one.

After perceiving with his Divine Sense for a while, Mo Hua's eyes suddenly lit up and he ventured,

“Was it calculated through Divine Sense?”

Since the Formation Patterns could not be seen, it must be that he had deduced the Patterns through the spiritual force of the Formation and then determined the strength of the Divine Sense required for the Formation Patterns, thereby concluding that there is a lost Ultimate Formation here.

Mo Hua faintly perceived some Formation energies, but they were too distant and obscure for him to calculate; he could only guess based on intuition.

Mr. Zhuang nodded approvingly, “That's right.”

Then Mr. Zhuang patiently explained,

“An Ultimate Formation is different from ordinary Formations; it is a more subtle, more fundamental, and more sophisticated use of Spiritual Power.”

“A Reversed Spirit Formation is to reverse engineer Spiritual Power, a Large Formation accumulates Spiritual Power, and other Ultimate Formations also have some extraordinary features.”

“The world changes, the sea turns to mulberry fields, and things appear in various forms, constantly transitioning.”

“Some Ultimate Formations are thus buried underground, or sealed within ancient relics, or painted in some unknown corner of a small town, operating silently, unknown to anyone...”

“You can’t find traces of the Formation by just looking with your eyes.”

“Eyes can deceive, but Divine Sense cannot, appearances can deceive, but the essence of Spiritual Power cannot.”

“Therefore, you must perceive with Divine Sense, calculate in the Sea of Consciousness, through an understanding of the Formation and the operation of Spiritual Power, to determine whether there is a lost Formation here...”

Mo Hua suddenly saw the light and nodded repeatedly.

Perceiving with Divine Sense, calculating with Spiritual Power, deducing Formation Patterns, seeking Ultimate Formations...

With a point from Mr. Zhuang, Mo Hua had an epiphany.

However, Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi exchanged confused glances.

They had no idea what Mo Hua and Mr. Zhuang were talking about...