

The Quest 41

Chapter 41: Visitation

Master Luo is a first-grade Array Master and has refused the request of Yan Jiaoxi.

With no alternatives, Yan Jiaoxi had to settle for less, seeking Array Masters who, while not officially ranked, have studied the path of arrays for many years, to take Mo Hua as a disciple.

However, some outright refused, others made excuses, and some, although they agreed, made such unreasonable demands that accepting them would mean Mo Hua would spend his life merely as a tool or puppet, devoid of any freedom—akin to selling oneself.

After days of fruitless searching, Yan Jiaoxi returned to his residence and sat alone, deeply sighing.

Time was short as he would soon leave. If he could not find a suitable master, Mo Hua's progress in array cultivation might be hindered.

After much deliberation, Yan Jiaoxi seemed to have made up his mind. He carefully sealed Mo Hua's test papers and placed them in a storage bag.

In the evening, Yan Jiaoxi left Tongxian City, heading southeast towards a mountain peak outside the city.

This southeastern mountain of Tongxian City was secluded and beautifully scenic, creating its own tranquil charm. There were no signs or gates, just a small path leading into the residence nestled in the mountains.

Standing at the foot of the mountain, Yan Jiaoxi heard a frail voice after a long silence:

"Please."

The voice seemed close yet echoed in his sea of consciousness.

Yan Jiaoxi adjusted his Daoist robe, patted his storage bag, and with a resolved expression, began ascending the mountain.

Meanwhile, Mo Hua planned to withdraw from Tongxian Sect.

Being merely an Outer Sect Disciple, his relationship with the sect was primarily a transactional one based on the cultivation of his spirit stones. There was little emotional connection.

Especially since Yan Jiaoxi was leaving, and the Outer Sect would no longer teach arrays, there was no point in Mo Hua staying.

His spiritual root destined that his spiritual power wouldn't be strong, and his cultivation speed wouldn't be fast.

The other teachings of the sect, such as body refining, pill concoction, artifact crafting, and talisman making, were also of limited use to Mo Hua—worthless to learn but also a pity to abandon.

The only prospect for Mo Hua in cultivation was in arrays.

But within the Outer Sect, aside from Yan Jiaoxi, Mo Hua believed no one else could teach him arrays.

Da Hu and the other two also planned to withdraw from the sect.

However, their reason wasn't educational but economic, as their families were too poor to afford the increased sect dues and various fees.

According to Mo Hua, the old Sect Leader would retire in a few months and no longer involve himself in the sect's affairs, leaving Elder Qian in charge, or essentially, the Qian family.

The Qian family planned to reform the sect with various methods, but the core idea was to increase the collection of spirit stones.

Whether it was pill concoction, artifact crafting, or talisman making, the sect previously taught only the basics. Now, they would teach more advanced techniques, but at an additional cost of spirit stones.

Including the previously free transmission of techniques, Elder Qian had added a fee with the rationale that "sect teachings are precious and not easy to pass on, hence they come at a cost."

With these reforms, wealthy family disciples or those from affluent backgrounds could afford more spirit stones to receive better teachings.

But the poorer disciples, especially independent cultivators in the Outer Sect, could barely learn anything new and had to pay even more in spirit stones as sect dues.

For such independent disciples, other than withdrawing, there was no other choice.

Thus, through these reforms, Tongxian Sect was gradually purging its poorer disciples based on their family's economic status, leaving these low-level independent disciples with no choice but to fend for themselves in their future cultivation.

Mo Hua discussed his plan to withdraw with his parents. Mo Shan was not entirely agreeable but recognized the inevitability of the situation—it wasn't just about Mo Hua, but about all the lower-class independent cultivators in Tongxian City.

Liu Ruhua was indifferent; knowing Mo Hua's dedication to his cultivation and that he had his own plans, she didn't object.

Now that the restaurant business was doing well, even if her son did nothing at home, she could well afford to support him.

Thus, Mo Hua, at the third level of Qi cultivation, withdrew from Tongxian Sect.

He simply processed his withdrawal at the sect, receiving back half a year's dues—about fifty to sixty spirit stones.

After withdrawing, the biggest issue was the cultivation techniques.

Mo Shan agreed to explore the Demon Hunter path to see if there were suitable techniques for Mo Hua to practice, but this would take some time.

The other

issue was arrays.

Without the sect's guidance, Mo Hua had to rely on himself to learn, or perhaps find an Array Master to take him as a disciple.

But Mo Hua knew, for independent cultivators like himself, it was difficult to find an Array Master willing to teach, as not all were as open-hearted and keen to impart knowledge as Yan Jiaoxi.

Mo Hua planned to visit Yan Jiaoxi to thank him for his careful guidance during this period. But he didn't know where Yan Jiaoxi lived, and just as he was about to ask the steward for information, Yan Jiaoxi found him.

Having not seen each other for a few days, Yan Jiaoxi looked somewhat weary, as if he had been busy with something.

Mo Hua respectfully greeted Yan Jiaoxi, who nodded and asked, "Do you still want to learn arrays?"

Mo Hua nodded.

Yan Jiaoxi approvingly glanced at Mo Hua and said, "Follow me."

He took Mo Hua to a mountain peak outside Tongxian City, to the southeast.

Mo Hua remembered Da Hu mentioning that this mountain seemed to have been purchased by someone for secluded cultivation, keeping it off-limits to cultivators.

The mountain had no demonic beasts, precious herbs, or spirit mines. Its only merit was its scenic beauty and tranquil environment.

Tongxian City, bustling with independent cultivators, wouldn't linger for the landscape, so it was rarely visited by cultivators.

Yan Jiaoxi brought Mo Hua to the foot of the mountain and said, “There lives a reclusive master on this mountain, whom I met by chance. I don’t usually disturb him, but since I’m leaving in a few days, I wanted you to meet him.”

“Does this master know arrays?” Mo Hua curiously asked.

Yan Jiaoxi nodded, “Indeed, this master is highly skilled in arrays.”

“Is he a first-grade Array Master?” Mo Hua asked.

“I’m not sure of his exact rank, but he’s at least first-grade,” Yan Jiaoxi replied.

Mo Hua respectfully admired the possibility.

Just being a first-grade Array Master was impressive enough, and Mo Hua dared not even contemplate the abilities of those beyond that rank.

Could they truly possess the legendary power to steal creation and alter the heavens and earth, as rumored?

“Why does this master live in such a secluded place? Because he dislikes noise?” Mo Hua asked further.

“The master is naturally detached and dislikes worldly matters, hence he doesn’t wish to be disturbed. This mountain peak is seldom visited,” Yan Jiaoxi explained.

Looking at Mo Hua, Yan Jiaoxi said, “You’ve guessed why I brought you here, haven’t you?”

Mo Hua nodded, “To have this master take me as a disciple?”

Yan Jiaoxi nodded, “You guessed correctly. What I can teach you is limited, so I hope the master can guide you further.”

“You’ve already taught me a lot,” Mo Hua gratefully said.

“What I can teach you pales in comparison to what the master can offer.”

“But...”

Yan Jiaoxi shook his head, “You’re young and don’t fully understand. The more you see, the more you’ll realize the vastness and depth of array cultivation, which cannot be comprehended by merely Qi cultivating or even Foundation Building cultivators. Your spiritual sense is exceptional, your comprehension good, and you are diligent. You’re a promising student for learning arrays, so you must cherish this rare talent and not waste it.”

“Today, I bring you here hoping you can be accepted by the master. His nature is reserved, and he’s reluctant to take disciples. Even if you could be a nominal disciple, learning even a little would help you progress further in the path of arrays.”

Yan Jiaoxi gestured forward, indicating the mountain path that stretched up to the mid-slopes, shrouded in mist. In the mist, a simple yet mysterious courtyard gate could be seen.

Yan Jiaoxi instructed, “Proceed up the mountain alone, be respectful, and answer honestly to whatever the master asks. If he takes you as his disciple, it will be your good fortune. If not, don’t be discouraged; it simply means the fortune has not yet arrived.”

Mo Hua nodded seriously, then couldn’t help but glance at Yan Jiaoxi.

“Teacher...”

“Go on,” Yan Jiaoxi said no more but waved his hand.

Mo Hua hesitated for a moment, then with a firm stride, began his ascent up the mountain.