

The Quest 48

Chapter 48: Visitors

At the mountain path in front of Zuo Wang Residence, three cultivators stood.

Among the three, two children stood in front, and behind them was a woman with a veiled face.

The boy and girl appeared slightly older than Mo Hua and were dressed in splendid, luxurious clothes, clearly not of ordinary status. At the moment, they stood respectfully on the front steps, bowing towards the mountain above.

The boy had handsome features, and his eyes sparkled with brilliance.

The girl was extremely beautiful, her skin even whiter and more translucent than snow and ice under the sunlight.

From afar, the duo resembled celestial beings, like a golden boy and jade girl beside an immortal.

Behind the children stood a tall woman wearing a veil, her face obscured, resembling a family steward or guardian. There was no spiritual energy fluctuating around her, but she exuded a pressure Mo Hua had never felt before.

"It seems they are scions of a noble family, here to seek instruction from Mr. Zhuang..." Mo Hua mused to himself, though such matters were obviously for Mr. Zhuang to decide and none of his concern.

Mo Hua only needed to learn array techniques from Mr. Zhuang well, being just a nominal disciple with uncertain prospects of how long Mr. Zhuang would teach him.

As Mo Hua made his way up the mountain, the trio at the gate also saw him. Noticing his plain clothes and weak spiritual power, they merely glanced over and didn't pay much attention.

Mo Hua walked past them, ascending the remote mountain path, and reached the courtyard amidst the clouds.

Then, with a push of his small hand, he opened the bamboo gate that they had waited for hours to enter. He walked in as if it was his own home.

The expressions of the trio became complex.

The two children couldn't help but glance at the woman behind them, who subtly shook her head, signaling them to be patient. With that, the children settled down and continued to wait respectfully.

Inside the courtyard, Mo Hua put down his bamboo basket, took out a plate of soy-sauced meat and several plates of pastries, and arranged them on a small table. This way, Mr. Zhuang could enjoy some wine or tea while admiring the garden upon waking.

Mo Hua sneaked a peek inside the house; Mr. Zhuang was still enjoying his sleep.

Then, Mo Hua delivered two boxes of fried pine nuts to Elder Gui. Elder Gui, who was up early, was playing a game of Five Elements Chess by himself, his expression unreadable, between boredom and intrigue.

Mo Hua placed the pine nuts aside, and Elder Gui tasted one, noting, "The flavor is different."

"These are two flavors. One is fried with sweet licorice and the other with spicy herbs. My mother said to give them to you, to change things up."

After trying one from each box, Elder Gui nodded, "First practice your array techniques. If you get tired, come and play chess with me."

Mo Hua then ran to the study, picked up a few array manuals he hadn't finished reading, and sat down under the big locust tree in the courtyard, leaning over a small stone table to study the array techniques.

The small table and stump were specially made by Elder Gui for Mo Hua and placed in his favorite spot, perfectly sized for him.

Mr. Zhuang was undemanding, but Mo Hua knew such opportunities were rare and he might not have another chance to receive guidance on array techniques from such a master.

Therefore, Mo Hua studied very earnestly.

For a loose cultivator like Mo Hua, even being a nominal disciple was a significant fortune.

Grateful, he showed no slack in his efforts.

Studying array manuals and copying array patterns consumed spiritual awareness, which Mo Hua would restore using Meditation Techniques before returning to his studies. Once his spiritual awareness was depleted again, he would pause his meditative restorations.

As Mr. Zhuang advised, moderation is key. Even though Mo Hua felt no issues, he still followed Mr. Zhuang's teachings.

When he couldn't read or draw arrays due to exhaustion of spiritual awareness, Mo Hua would play chess with Elder Gui.

Five Elements Chess was simple and didn't require much thought, making it a relaxing pastime.

After several games of chess with Elder Gui, as evening approached, Mo Hua bid farewell to Mr. Zhuang and took the empty dishes and food boxes back home.

The sunset cast a beautiful glow on the mountains as Mo Hua left Mr. Zhuang's courtyard, noticing the trio still standing at the gate. Their posture and expressions were still respectful, but now tinged with fatigue.

Even for cultivators, standing a whole day without food or drink could be trying, especially for the two children who were only slightly older than Mo Hua.

But Mo Hua didn't wish to meddle.

They

had been standing outside for a day; Mr. Zhuang was certainly aware of it. Whatever the situation, it was clearly Mr. Zhuang's decision not to meet them.

To see them or not was Mr. Zhuang's choice, not something for Mo Hua to worry about.

So, Mo Hua simply nodded in acknowledgment to the trio, then silently continued down the mountain with his basket.

When he returned the next day, Mo Hua found the trio still at the gate.

The mountain was hot during the day and cool at night with heavy dew.

Having stood for a day and a night, the veiled woman was still fine, her profound cultivation enough to withstand the extremes.