

## The Quest 49

### Chapter 49: Sunset Glow

In the evening, Mo Hua first returned home to have some food prepared by his mother: two bowls of piping hot noodles, some soy beef, refreshing pickled vegetables, a few plates of snacks, and several pots of osmanthus wine.

After packing these foods into a lunchbox and placing it in his storage bag, he headed up the mountain.

On the mountainside, a boy and a girl, along with a veiled woman, were still standing upright.

Approaching them with his storage bag, Mo Hua straightforwardly said:

"You have disturbed Mr. Zhuang's peace. It's better for you to leave; Mr. Zhuang does not wish to see you."

The children looked disheartened upon hearing this, and the veiled woman said:

"Please inform him that an old friend has come to visit with urgent matters, and we must see Mr. Zhuang."

Mo Hua responded, "Why you have come is already known to Mr. Zhuang. If he doesn't want to see you, waiting any longer is futile."

The boy, with a resolute expression, said, "I will wait as long as it takes to see Mr. Zhuang."

The girl didn't speak, but her eyes also showed no sign of backing down.

Curious, Mo Hua asked, "What if Mr. Zhuang continues to refuse to see you? Will you really wait forever? Even for ten or a hundred years?"

The boy stubbornly remained silent.

He was quite handsome and seemed intelligent, but perhaps a bit too stubborn. Mo Hua mused to himself.

"And what will you eat?" he asked.

"I have sustenance pills," replied the boy.

"Eating too many of those pills can harm your body," Mo Hua advised.

Sustenance pills, crafted by alchemists using ordinary ingredients combined with preservative drugs to form pills, are easy to store and can stave off hunger and replenish vitality. They are essential for cultivators on long journeys or in prolonged seclusion. However, prolonged consumption can harm a cultivator's vitality.

"Ha," the boy snorted dismissively, but he still glanced covertly at the veiled woman.

The veiled woman acknowledged Mo Hua's consideration but said, "We must see Mr. Zhuang before we can leave."

"You might stay here with the intent to see Mr. Zhuang, but no matter how long you wait, you won't see him. Given Mr. Zhuang's character, the longer you wait, the less he wants to see you," Mo Hua explained.

The veiled woman hesitated; although she had never met Mr. Zhuang, she had heard of his ways and suspected the young boy before her was probably right.

"If Mr. Zhuang does not want to meet you, even waiting until you become skeletal remains will be in vain," Mo Hua continued.

Seeing her begin to waver, he added, "In cultivation, everything is about timing and fate. If Mr. Zhuang is not meeting you, it's because the timing isn't right. No matter how persistently you wait, it's against your wishes."

"When will we have the fate to meet him?" the woman inquired.

"That depends on Mr. Zhuang's mood. Visit on a bright and sunny day, perform a courtesy at his door, and if the door opens, Mr. Zhuang wishes to see you. If it remains closed, the time has not come, and you should leave," Mo Hua advised.

The woman was still uncertain, "The lady instructed us to ensure the young master and miss meet Mr. Zhuang; leaving now..."

"If waiting fruitlessly for ten or eight years damages your cultivation and vitality, even if you do meet Mr. Zhuang and become his disciples, the weakened foundation would hinder your path to the great Dao. What would be the point then?" Mo Hua countered.

Nodding, the woman frowned, "We never said we wanted to become his disciples. How did you know?"

Mo Hua thought to himself, you brought two children of the age to begin cultivation to meet the master; if not to become disciples, what else could it be for?

But outwardly, he kept a calm demeanor and invoked Mr. Zhuang's authority:

"I've told you, everything is within Mr. Zhuang's expectations. You should return now, and when Mr. Zhuang is willing to meet you, he will."

After finishing his words and feeling the time was right, Mo Hua opened the lunchbox, and a delicious aroma wafted out.

"Do you want to eat something?"

The girl was okay, but the boy almost couldn't stand still. Although he tried to appear composed, his eyes could not resist peering into the lunchbox.

The taste of the sustenance pills was not pleasant, and they could not compare to the flavorsome meat and snacks in Mo Hua's lunchbox.

Seeing the pale faces of

the young master and miss, who were accustomed to comfort and had never experienced such hunger, the veiled woman's heart softened.

She had watched the two children grow up; even if they could not become Mr. Zhuang's disciples and had to defy the lady's orders, she would rather face punishment herself than let the young master and miss suffer.

Moreover, the young boy's words were correct; daily consumption of sustenance pills, combined with the harsh mountain climate, could ruin their cultivation foundation, and nothing could compensate for that.

"Then, thank you, young friend," the woman said to Mo Hua.

"Young master, miss, please eat something first. Since Mr. Zhuang does not wish to see us, the time has not come. We will choose another day to visit."

The children also thanked Mo Hua.

Then they took out the noodles and various snacks from the lunchbox. Despite their hunger, they ate with grace, clearly well-mannered scions of a noble family.

The boy tasted a piece of spicy beef, initially detecting an odd flavor, but as he continued to chew, the taste became increasingly delightful, and he found himself unable to stop.

"Is this meat?" he asked.

"It's from a demonic beast," Mo Hua responded nonchalantly.

The boy's eyes widened, "Can you eat the meat of a demonic beast?!"

"You are eating it...," Mo Hua looked at him indifferently.

"But isn't it said that consuming the meat of demonic beasts can damage one's vitality and lose one's mind?"

"This is from a wild mountain ox; it feeds on grass and won't harm a cultivator's vitality. Those beasts that eat flesh and humans, their meat should not be consumed."

Mo Hua appeared unimpressed.

The boy, a bit fearful yet not wanting to appear weak in front of Mo Hua, took a few more bites and discovered that the more he ate, the more irresistible it became...

Meanwhile, the girl looked at the snacks in Mo Hua's lunchbox, "These snacks..."

"They're made by my mother, and they're delicious!" Mo Hua proudly stated.

"Your mother... makes snacks for you to eat?"

"Besides snacks, she makes lots of delicious food," Mo Hua nodded.

The girl's cool eyes revealed a trace of envy before she took a delicate bite from a snack on her plate.

Crisp and sweet.

Her long eyelashes shadowed her eyes, concealing her thoughts, and after a moment, she looked up at Mo Hua and praised, "It's very tasty."

Her voice was crisp and melodious, akin to celestial beings playing heavenly music.

Mo Hua was pleased, squinting his eyes and smiling, "Yeah, my mother makes the tastiest food!"

After finishing their meal, before departing, Auntie Xue took out a glowing jade pendant and offered it to Mo Hua:

"This is a first-grade Clear Heart Pendant, which helps keep the mind focused during cultivation. It's not very valuable, so consider it a token of our gratitude."

Though Auntie Xue said it wasn't valuable, the flowing light on it indicated it was no ordinary item, especially valuable to a solitary cultivator like Mo Hua.

While Mo Hua was tempted, he knew he couldn't accept it.

Their politeness was all because of Mr. Zhuang's influence. Without it, given the disparity in their statuses, they probably wouldn't even speak to him.

Studying array formations under Mr. Zhuang was already a favor; he couldn't trade Mr. Zhuang's face for benefits.

Mo Hua politely declined, and when Auntie Xue insisted, he said:

"If you really want to give something, just give some meal money. Five spirit stones would suffice."

Auntie Xue was taken aback, as if she had never heard such a request before. Nevertheless, she took out a storage bag containing forty to fifty spirit stones.

Mo Hua took only five stones and returned the bag to Auntie Xue. Without waiting for her to respond, he waved his hand and walked down the mountain with his storage bag.

Auntie Xue watched Mo Hua in silence, and just as he was about to disappear into the distance, the girl suddenly spoke up, her voice crisp and melodious:

"What is your name?"

Although faint, Mo Hua heard her and turned back, smiling, "My name is Mo Hua."

At that moment, the sunset was like spilled ink, and the mountain scenery resembled a painting.

Amidst the brilliant sunset glow, Mo Hua stood on the mountain, as if he was part of the splendid mountainous landscape.

The name Mo Hua, along with the colorful sunset, lingered in her sea of consciousness.

