

The Quest 561

Chapter 561: Cow and Horse (1)

First came the design of the mine.

This large mine had to penetrate the mountain range, connecting the mountains, while also establishing a structurally rigorous and functionally complete Formation System.

Which mountains to mine, and how to connect them.

Which Formations to construct, and how to layout them.

All these were considerations.

Mo Hua first studied the structure of the various mines around South Yue City according to maps from past generations.

Then, he sought the opinions of a few Noble Clans and Sect Elders.

These Elders' clans or sects also had mining industries.

They had managed Tao Cultivation-related businesses, defended mines, or participated in mine construction.

When Mo Hua asked them, they did not hold back any secrets.

Not only did they want to plan welfare for the impoverished Mining Cultivators, but they were also grateful to Mo Hua for suppressing the Corpse King and quelling the Corpse Menace.

Once Mo Hua became familiar with the mine structure, he spent several days drafting a large Formation Diagram.

There was no need for a Large Formation within the mine, nor was it feasible to use one.

Large Formations are grand and uniform.

Whereas the Formations in a mine are fragmented.

They need to fulfill various functions and must be as simple, solid, and durable as possible. Even if damaged, they must be easy to repair.

If a Large Formation were used and it broke, hardly anyone could fix it after Mo Hua left.

Therefore, the Formations within the mine were just a cluster of Compound Formations that included some basic-use Single Formations.

Simple, fundamental, yet practical.

Yet the workload was not small.

Additionally, Mo Hua integrated the underlying structure of the Five Elements Slaughter Demon Great Formation, using the principle of Five Elements Generation and Restraint to streamline and optimize these disparate Formations.

He made the Formations clearer and more concise, while also removing some redundant Formations, lowering some of the costs.

Despite the large number of Formations used in the mine, their complexity was not high.

Mo Hua didn't even need to show his work to Mr. Zhuang; he just presented it to Bai Zixi. The two of them got together, reviewed the Formation Patterns, sorted out the Formation Pivots, and after patching up any omissions, the design was perfected.

He then presented it to Formation Masters of the Taoist Court to consult, and after some discussion, it was finalized.

Although there were many Formations, Mo Hua, despite his speed at Drawing Formations, was still just one person and couldn't draw them all, so he needed the help of these Formation Masters from the Taoist Court.

They all agreed to help.

After Mo Hua left, an older Formation Master sighed in admiration, "This Formation is well-constructed..."

A younger Formation Master expressed doubt, "But it's all commonplace Formations, just average, right?"

The old Formation Master glared at him, "What do you know? The trickiest part is making good use of common Formations."

He pointed at the Formation Diagram on the table, "These Formations seem simple, but the layout is concise and efficient, and they complement each other well. One more would be too many, one less would be insufficient. To achieve this balance, one must have a deep foundation and robust basics..."

The old Formation Master continued to praise Mo Hua.

The young Formation Master nodded, although he still seemed somewhat unconvinced.

Simple Formations, after all, were just that—simple. Even if used to their fullest, they seemed rather plain.

The old Formation Master couldn't help but shake his head.

Young Master Yun, looking at the Formations before him, fell silent, his brow furrowed in thought.

As a Second Rank Formation Master with deep family knowledge, he saw things more profoundly.

The disposition of these Formations appeared simple yet grand and imposing, as if derived from... a Large Formation?

Large Formations make the complex out of the simple, integrating various parts seamlessly, while these Formations exemplified the essence of simplification.

The design was indeed exquisite, but...

Young Master Yun was somewhat puzzled.

Why use only the most basic and simple Formations?

Why not use some with stronger effects, First Grade or even higher than First Grade?

Young Master Yun thought over it, confused. When, days later, Mo Hua began to draw the Formations, Yun approached Mo Hua somewhat sheepishly and rather apologetically.

Mo Hua was intently Drawing Formations when he saw Young Master Yun and asked curiously,

"Young Master Yun, is there something you need?"

Mo Hua naturally recognized him as the sole Second Grade Formation Master among the various powers of South Yue City—especially one so young—even though they hadn't really chatted before and weren't familiar with each other, mainly because the urgency of the Corpse Tide left no time for such interactions.

Being looked at by Mo Hua's innocent, wide eyes, Young Master Yun felt somewhat out of his element but still managed to compose himself and voiced his queries,

"These Formations... there are better choices, right? So why choose the most basic ones?"

Mo Hua replied, "Because these Formations are meant to be used."

"Used?" Young Master Yun was slightly startled.

Mo Hua nodded, "My master taught me that Formations must be learned for practical application..."

"The Formations in this world, when drawn on paper, are one thing, but when actually put to use, the situation is varied."

Young Master Yun looked thoughtful.

Mo Hua let out a small sigh, then continued,

"This is a mine, and inside are Formations for Mining Cultivators to use."

"Mining Cultivators are very poor."

"Using fancier Formations might yield better results, but once they break, no one will be there to fix them for them."

"Even if they could repair them, they couldn't afford it."

"Therefore, simple, durable, sturdy, easy-to-repair Formations are what's best for them."

Young Master Yun was taken aback.

No one had ever put it to him that way before.

Every Formation Master was studying more advanced Formations, mastering more difficult ones, to elevate their own level of Formation knowledge and to seek a grander daoist future.

Nearly no one had thought to make these most basic Formations widely accessible to the most common Cultivators...

He hadn't realized this either.

Chapter 562: Cattle and Horses (2)

Young Master Yun's face suddenly flushed a shade of red, his expression somewhat abashed.

Mo Hua looked at him in surprise as well.

He had assumed that someone as young as Young Master Yun who had already become a Second Rank Formation Master would surely be haughty and arrogant. However, he did not expect him to be so shy, with even thinner skin than himself.

He guessed that Young Master Yun had probably always stayed within his clan and hardly ever went outside, lacking worldly experience.

It seemed as though Young Master Yun remembered something and hesitated, wanting to say something but stopping himself.

But it was almost as if his thoughts were written all over his face.

Seeing it clearly, Mo Hua asked:

"What else do you want to ask?"

Young Master Yun hesitated for a moment, then said with an apologetic tone:

"Perhaps, this might be a bit presumptuous..."

"Hmm," Mo Hua said, "Ask away."

Young Master Yun made up his mind and slowly asked:

"The Formation on the Corpse King, was it drawn by you? Is it... an Ultimate Formation?"

Mo Hua nodded his head, admitting frankly:

"Yes!"

Even though Young Master Yun had already guessed as much, his expression still changed dramatically at the confirmation.

Other cultivators, even some other Formation Masters, probably did not understand what the Ultimate Formation truly meant.

Qi Refinement at the eighth level.

Mastery over a First-grade Formation with twelve patterns.

This kind of thing defied the common knowledge he had as a Formation Master.

Young Master Yun felt a sense of defeat.

In the Yun Family, and even throughout the entire state boundary they resided in, he was recognized as a Formation Genius.

But only now did he understand.

There are differences between geniuses, and those differences can be as vast as the heavens and the earth.

Some people are so extraordinarily gifted they seem like evil monsters.

He looked again at Mo Hua, whose face still held traces of youthful innocence, and heaved a sigh internally.

This was a little evil monster indeed.

Mo Hua, seeing that Young Master Yun's expression was somewhat defeated, did not know what he was thinking.

Suddenly Mo Hua's eyes lit up, and he spoke softly:

"Young Master Yun, do you know what this Formation is called?"

Young Master Yun shook his head honestly, asking with curiosity:

"What Formation?"

"The Spiritual Pivot Formation," Mo Hua replied.

"The Spiritual Pivot Formation..."

Repeating the name a few times, Young Master Yun nodded and praised, "Indeed an Ultimate Formation, just the name itself is extraordinary..."

"So..." Mo Hua blinked, tempting him, "do you want to learn it?"

Young Master Yun's heart skipped a beat, and his mouth fell open.

He thought Mo Hua was teasing him, but upon looking up and seeing the clear and sincere look in Mo Hua's eyes without any hint of mockery, he suppressed the excitement in his heart and slowly nodded:

"I do..."

No Formation Master could resist the temptation of a Formation.

Mo Hua smiled and said, "Then I'll teach you."

Young Master Yun was even more surprised, "You're willing to teach me?"

"Yes," Mo Hua nodded, "Formations need to be passed down to endure and flourish. If one hoards their knowledge, no matter how precious the Formation is, it will eventually be lost."

"Once lost, no matter how precious the Formation is, it is useless."

"Since you wish to learn, I will teach you, but you must promise me not to use it for evil deeds."

Young Master Yun couldn't help but nod repeatedly, "Okay, I promise you!"

"There's one more thing..." Mo Hua continued, "After you've learnt it, you'll have to help me with something."

"Help you?" Young Master Yun was taken aback.

"Yes!"

Mo Hua's eyes gleamed, "I need to construct some things that will be controlled by the Spiritual Pivot Formation. I can't manage it alone and need your assistance."

This had been his plan all along.

There are limits to manpower.

Although he was proficient in Formation Study, there were many things that he could not accomplish alone, and it would take up a lot of time.

Having help would make a difference.

Moreover, the project would involve the use of the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

The Ultimate Formation with twelve Pattern Patterns was complex, and the demands on Divine Sense were high, almost no one in South Yue City could learn it.

But Young Master Yun should be able to.

As a Second Rank Formation Master and a Formation Genius, his Divine Sense and comprehension ought to be sufficient.

Mo Hua had been coveting his abilities for a long time.

Now that he had "offered himself," it was the perfect opportunity for Mo Hua to take advantage and ask for his help.

"Well, I could..." Young Master Yun thought for a moment and asked curiously, "But what exactly do you need help with?"

"Help me with drawing Formations."

"The Formations in the mine?"

"Among others, you'll find out in due time..."

Mo Hua left him hanging with that cryptic hint.

Thus, it only seemed natural that Young Master Yun would become Mo Hua's "menial worker."

The mine required the layout of some preliminary Formations to construct the Formation framework and to pre-fill some foundational Formations.

Afterward, zombies would begin mining.

Once mining was complete and the mine shaft was excavated, the subsequent Formations would be filled in.

These Formations were quite complex.

They included a defensive formation, Solid Earth Formation, Illumination Formation, Ventilation Formation, Filth Removal Formation, and some that were to be used for dealing with Monster Beasts on the spot, like the Gold Blade Formation and Earth Prison Formation, among others.

Mo Hua taught him the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

While Young Master Yun was learning, he would occasionally help Mo Hua draw Formations when he had free time.

Being a Second Rank Formation Master, Young Master Yun was very quick at drawing First-grade Formations.

But what he found unbelievable was that Mo Hua was even faster!

While drawing Formations, he had to refer to the Formation Diagram to confirm the Formation Patterns.

Yet Mo Hua did not even need to look; he simply relied on memory, his fair wrist twisting and turning, his brush strokes vigorous and fluid. One Formation Pattern after another appeared under his pen.

Though it seemed casual, the Formations he drew were neat, precise, and impeccably accurate, even carrying a special charm.

How many times had he drawn these to reach such proficiency...

Young Master Yun was secretly amazed, and at the same time, he felt somewhat relieved.

Even though talent was important, this kind of painstaking effort was something not every Formation Master could achieve.

Days passed by.

Young Master Yun was not quick at learning the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

The main issue was the limitation of his Divine Sense; he could not practice it many times a day, so inevitably the Formation Patterns were unfamiliar to him, and his comprehension was much slower.

What took him a week to cover, Mo Hua could finish in just one or two days.

That his progress was slower was only to be expected.

Chapter 563: Cow and Horse (3)

When Mo Hua had some free time, he would also ask Young Master Yun for some knowledge about Second-Grade Formations.

His current level of Formation expertise had already far surpassed that of a First-grade Formation Master.

But Ultimate Formations seemed to be completely different from Second-Grade Formations.

Mo Hua wanted to know what exactly the threshold was for a Second-grade Formation Master as well as for Second-Grade Formations.

Young Master Yun, repaying favor with favor, answered diligently:

"Upon reaching the Second Grade, both Formation Masters and Formations are divided into three stages—the initial, middle, and high stages, corresponding to the realms of the Foundation Establishment Initial, Middle, and Late Stages."

"My current level of Cultivation is only at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, so my level as a Formation Master is also just at the Second Grade Initial Stage."

"Second-grade Formations are just as difficult to learn and require a great deal of time and effort."

"Generally, the level of a Formation Master falls behind their own cultivation realm."

"For example, at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, one is only a First-grade Formation Master; at the Qi Foundation Middle Stage, one qualifies as a Second Grade Initial Stage Formation Master; by the Foundation Establishment Late Stage, one becomes a Second Grade Middle Stage..."

"For someone like me, achieving Second Grade Initial Stage as a Formation Master while only at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage is already considered..."

Young Master Yun intended to say "a genius," but upon glancing at Mo Hua, he said instead: "...quite good..."

Mo Hua curiously asked, "Can a Qi Refinement Cultivator become a Second-grade Formation Master?"

Young Master Yun shook his head, "It's not possible."

"Because of insufficient Divine Sense?"

"Typically it's due to insufficient Divine Sense, but there's another reason, which is Spiritual Power."

"Spiritual Power?"

"Yes," Young Master Yun explained, "between Qi Refinement and Foundation Establishment, there is a difference in the 'quantity' of Divine Sense, but there is a 'quality' difference in Spiritual Power. Likewise, the Formation principle involved in First-grade and Second-Grade Formations, as well as the Spiritual Power driven by the Formations, also differ in 'quality'."

"So, Qi Refinement Cultivators cannot learn Second-Grade Formations."

Mo Hua felt somewhat regretful.

He had thought that if perhaps his Divine Sense were strong enough, he might try learning Second-Grade Formations.

It appeared that the restrictions of the Heavenly Dao categories were indeed very strict.

Within the same grade, one could step beyond others and learn faster.

But no matter how one exceeds the grade, they cannot surpass the category...

The Reversed Spirit Formation, the Thick Earth Formation, and the Spiritual Pivot Formation, these Ultimate Formations, although surpassing the grade, are still within the First Grade category; they are First-grade Formations, not Second-Grade Formations.

Essentially speaking, they shouldn't be considered truly "beyond category" but rather, significantly beyond the stage...

Mo Hua nodded, gaining a deeper understanding of the concept of grades.

Afterward, he asked some other questions.

Young Master Yun answered each one.

Mo Hua was forthright with people, and Young Master Yun, not being very worldly or cunning, and both being Formation Masters, found a lot to talk about as they became more familiar with each other, their conversation flowing effortlessly.

Mo Hua taught Young Master Yun the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

Young Master Yun was extremely grateful. Thinking that he had no way to repay, he secretly taught Mo Hua some of the Yun Family's inherited Formations.

Mo Hua felt somewhat uncomfortable, "Is this alright?"

Young Master Yun blinked, "Just don't say I taught you."

Mo Hua was slightly stunned.

These words sounded somewhat familiar, similar to Uncle Zhang Lan.

When he learned the Water Passing Step from the Zhang Family, it seemed that Zhang Lan had instructed him the same way...

Some time passed, and the initial Formations had been drawn in the mines. Young Master Yun's Spiritual Pivot Formation was also roughly understood.

Mo Hua then awakened the Corpse King and commanded it to lead the Iron Corpse and tens of thousands of Walking Corpses out of the Corpse Mine and into each of the mines.

The sight of zombies filing into the mines en masse, obeying Mo Hua's commands in an orderly fashion, was both bizarre and harmonious.

To avoid any unexpected changes with the zombies, all Mining Cultivators remained inside Tongxian City.

Taoist Soldiers were stationed all around.

Yang Jishan and a few other Cultivators with profound Cultivation levels were on alert, watching the Corpse King, fearing it might rebel and turn into a Taoist Demon.

The mine once again became a busy place.

However, this time the workers were not Mining Cultivators, but zombies.

Their movements were mechanical and repetitive, pickaxing away at the mines, little by little.

For the wellbeing of their descendants, they chiseled out a home where they could be well-fed, clothed, and live in peace...

Under Mo Hua's control, the Corpse King did not transform, the Iron Corpse heeded each command, and all Walking Corpses took it upon themselves diligently.

Everything was carried out in an orderly fashion.

Over a month later, the excavation of the mine was completed.

The mine was connected to several mountains; it was of immense scale, with broad corridors and sturdy walls, free of filthy Qi, making it both safe and somewhat comfortable.

Mo Hua then ordered the zombies to return to the Corpse Mine to rest.

The Formation Masters from the Taoist Court, as per Mo Hua's Formation Diagrams, completed the subsequent Formations within the mine.

These Formations were simple; it made no difference whether Mo Hua drew them or not.

Mo Hua needed to draw something else.

He called over Young Master Yun and went to a workshop in the city.

In the spacious courtyard were arrayed several wooden puppets resembling bulls and horses, made of hardwood.

Young Master Yun was a bit astonished, "These are..."

"Puppets," Mo Hua said. "With the Spiritual Pivot Formation drawn on them, they can be controlled by Divine Sense to move and transport ore, reducing the labor of Mining Cultivators and improving mining efficiency..."

Young Master Yun snapped back to reality, "The help you need from me, is it related to this?"

"Yes," Mo Hua nodded. "Many Spiritual Pivot Formations need to be painted, and I can't manage them all alone, so I need your help to paint them."

Young Master Yun nodded slightly, his heart stirring with emotion.

This was the true essence of understanding Formations and applying knowledge to practical use.

Having learned Formations, they were being used to their fullest, to benefit more Cultivators...

Before this, he seemed to have never done such a thing.

"Alright!" Young Master Yun said, readily agreeing.

Then he hesitated, a bit puzzled, "Do these puppets have names?"

"They do!" Mo Hua smiled brightly, "You can call them 'Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses'!"

Chapter 564: Little Zombie (1)

These Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses are just simple puppets.

Their structure is very basic, capable of only mechanical forward movement, backward movement, and turning.

Even the Little Tiger designed by Mo Hua is more complex than these, but for the purpose of transporting ore, they're sufficient.

Due to their simplicity, only the most basic Spiritual Pivot Formation is needed.

Unlike the Corpse King, there's no need to draw complex Sequential Formation Patterns, and build hundreds or thousands of Spirit Pivot tiers for layered control.

Therefore, even Young Master Yun, who was just beginning to learn the Spiritual Pivot Formation, could draw it.

And with Young Master Yun's help, the progress was much faster.

But after the drawing was completed, things weren't that simple.

These Spiritual Pivot Formations and Ox and Horse Puppets still had to be used in practice and adjusted accordingly.

Mo Hua took some time to test them in the mines, to see if these Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses could function normally.

Adjusting was not difficult, but it was tedious.

During the test mining and ore transport, manpower was needed to assist.

Adjusting the Formation, modifying the Formation, as well as repairing these Wooden Ox and Flowing Horse puppets also required "people" to lend a hand.

Mo Hua decided to use zombies for this labor.

Mo Hua then drew a group of zombies from the Corpse Mine, had them mine the ore, loaded it on the carts, and then pulled it out with the Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses.

Among these zombies was a small one.

It was not tall and had a pale face.

It was the small zombie that Mo Hua had first modified with Sequential Formation Patterns in the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses, the one that secretly opened the door for Mo Hua every night.

Part of the Corpse Mine had collapsed, and the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses had been destroyed.

While clearing the zombies and coffins from the Formation, Mo Hua found that this small zombie was still there.

Because it was so small and weak,

Lu Chengyun had not sent it out to fight with the Taoist Soldiers.

So, in the midst of the surging Corpse Tide and the fierce battle on both sides, it had quietly remained in its own coffin all along.

This small zombie was probably about ten years old, which should be older than Mo Hua, but it probably also came from a poor background, given its skinny build. It didn't look much bigger than Mo Hua.

It's just unknown how it died at such a young age, and how it ended up in the hands of Lu Chengyun, to be refined into a zombie.

At the age of ten, its life had just begun.

If its family was poor, it might not have even enjoyed much happiness in life.

Mo Hua felt some sympathy and regret for it.

During the adjustment of the Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses, Mo Hua specifically kept it by his side.

The other zombies mined, dug and transported the ore.

This small one, on the other hand, followed Mo Hua around, moving things, sweeping the mine tunnels, and exploring the mountain paths.

Or, when a Wooden Ox or Flowing Horse malfunctioned, it listened to Mo Hua's commands, took the puppet apart for Mo Hua to inspect, or handed Mo Hua brushes and ink to repair the Formations....

All these lighter labor tasks were done by the small zombie.

Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi also saw this small zombie and were somewhat surprised.

Bai Zisheng was mainly angry:

"Lu Chengyun, that bastard, didn't even spare such a young Cultivator. I should have stabbed him a few more times!"

Bai Zixi, looking at the small zombie, furrowed her brow.

Mo Hua asked in confusion, "Sister, is there something wrong?"

Bai Zixi thought for a moment and slowly said,

"This small zombie has only Corpse Qi on its body, no Blood Qi."

No Blood Qi?

Mo Hua was slightly taken aback but soon understood.

Only having Corpse Qi, without Blood Qi, meant that it had died and was turned into a zombie, but it hadn't had the chance to eat human flesh or drink blood yet.

That wasn't much of a surprise.

This small zombie was somewhat weak; it probably couldn't kill a person.

Even if it had the opportunity to eat flesh and drink blood, it wouldn't be able to compete with other zombies.

It could only rely on the nefarious Qi in the Corpse Raising Coffin to nourish its Corpse Qi.

Bai Zisheng glanced at Mo Hua, puzzled, "You're not planning to keep it by your side forever, are you..."

Mo Hua sighed and shook his head,

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; since it has become a zombie, it has its own destiny."

Bai Zisheng curled his lip and muttered,

"Such a young age, yet speaking so morbidly."

Mo Hua snorted, "You won't get any beef tonight!"

Bai Zisheng immediately softened, "Junior Brother, I was wrong, what you just said was not wrong at all, very right, it makes a lot of sense!"

Bai Zixi let out a slight sigh and looked at Bai Zisheng with some disdain.

After a while, Bai Zisheng asked,

"So what are you planning to do with this small zombie? Burn it? The Corpse Burning Formation of the Taoist Court is almost ready..."

Mo Hua was somewhat conflicted and after pondering for a moment, he sighed,

"I've drawn Formation Patterns on it, and it has helped me. We're connected by fate. Once everything is over, I'll let it be laid to rest..."

Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi both nodded in agreement.

...

Over ten days later, the Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses were properly adjusted.

All of the Ox and Horse Puppets had been marked with the Spiritual Pivot Formations.

As Mo Hua had predicted, the Spirit Stones were not greatly depleted, the controls were simple, the wood was durable, and they had enough strength; transporting ore was more than manageable.

The only issue was, once damaged, there was no one to repair them.

To fix these puppets, mastery of the Spiritual Pivot Formation was required.

When both Mo Hua and Young Master Yun leave, no one in South Yue City would know the Spiritual Pivot Formation, so naturally no one would be able to repair these Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses.

Therefore, they must be well-maintained during regular use.

With proper use, the natural wear and tear, these Ox and Horse Puppets would have a long lifespan.

Mo Hua entrusted this matter to the new Court Leader in South Yue City.

The Taoist Court Officials in South Yue City were almost completely replaced, from top to bottom.

The new Court Leader, a member of the Situ Family named Situ Shen, who seemed to be of the same branch as the former Elder Situ Jin, were particularly courteous to Mo Hua and even showed some respect.

Chapter 565: Little Zombie (2)

His attitude was very solemn.

In South Yue City, he found an opportunity for himself, as well as for the Situ Family.

The Corpse Mine incident was of significant importance.

If he failed to handle it properly, it would be the Situ Family's reputation at stake.

Likewise, if he managed to settle the aftermath properly, it would be a great accomplishment, earning him a good reputation within the clan and accumulating substantial Merit Points for a promotion within the Taoist Court.

Moreover, Mo Hua was a Formation Master and also the "Master" of the Corpse King.

Dealing with the Corpse King and its horde required Mo Hua's consent.

Constructing new mine shafts and improving the lives of South Yue City's Cultivators also depended on Mo Hua's support.

Therefore, to Mo Hua, he was almost beseeching and demanding.

Whatever Mo Hua said, he would agree without hesitation and spare no effort in executing.

Mo Hua felt reflective in his heart.

It seemed that the competition within the family was indeed fierce, and the pressure was substantial.

Eating from the same pot, if one did not make an effort or think things through, one might not even get to sip the broth.

...

The Wooden Ox and Flowing Horses were built, and so were the mine shafts.

Then, it was time to start work.

Situ Shen organized the Mining Cultivators to resume work.

The Mining Cultivators were hesitant and uneasy.

They were still scared from the previous Corpse Tide that had besieged the city.

Although the Corpse Tide had receded, there could still be remnants left behind, especially within the mine shafts—dark and polluted, the perfect hiding places for Zombies.

They dared not start work.

They were scared of poverty, suffering, and encountering Zombies, risking their lives.

But they dared not refuse to work either.

Because they were truly poor, without Spirit Stones even food was unaffordable.

If they started working and encountered Zombies in the mine, at most one of them would die.

But if they did not work, their whole family would starve to death.

Their hearts were filled with trepidation and insecurity.

Yet, it wasn't until they entered the mine that they realized everything had changed.

The mine shafts were larger, more spacious, brighter, and there was even a breeze—neither cold nor hot, just pleasantly cool.

Gone was the eerie atmosphere, gone was the sense of oppression.

The Filthy Qi was also much less intense.

Staying inside felt much more comfortable.

It was not as grueling as before.

And there were Formations everywhere, some even specifically designed to prevent Monster Beasts, which were very reassuring to see...

"Is this really the mine of South Yue City..."

The Mining Cultivators found it hard to believe.

Afterward, they gathered together, thanking the Court Leader profusely.

Since the founding of South Yue City, these Mining Cultivators, along with their ancestors, had never worked in such safe mine shafts.

In the mine, the Formations that had been set up for the protection of these Mining Cultivators over hundreds and thousands of years, if all combined together, would not amount to the number of Formations now present in this single mine shaft.

They were immensely grateful.

The Court Leader told everyone to stand up and said,

"There's no need to thank me. If you want to thank someone, thank Little Mo Gentleman. It was he who quelled the Zombie plague and built these mine shafts for everyone."

The Mining Cultivators then thanked him in unison,

"Thank you, Little Mo Gentleman!"

But they did not know who this Little Mo Gentleman really was...

Afterward, Situ Shen set some new regulations.

For instance, Mining Cultivators could not work in the mines for more than four hours a day.

Their daily wages could not be less than one Spirit Stone.

No Clan or power in the locality could withhold Spirit Stones from the Mining Cultivators for any reason...

Moreover, Jinhua Street was also shut down.

All establishments related to eating, drinking, prostitution, and gambling were closed.

The female Cultivators from the Brothels had their contracts revoked and were allowed to start fresh.

Those who coerced Cultivators into selling themselves, causing them to lose their dignity and lives, were dealt with severely.

Situ Shen and Mo Hua stood on the city wall, watching Jinhua Street being demolished.

Some managers, gamblers, crooks, female brothel keepers, and thugs who had the Lu Family's backing and were notorious for their misdeeds, were escorted to the Taoist Prison by the Enforcement Leader of the Taoist Court, along the way facing public scorn, being pelted with stones and rotten vegetables.

Some broke free from misery and wept bitterly with their loved ones.

There were also those who were lonely and secretly heartbroken.

Most people, however, were righteously indignant, clapping their hands in approval.

For decades, the glamorous Jinhua Street, established by Capitalist Lu, glossy on the surface but concealing tears and blood, was now being torn down in broad daylight.

Situ Shen reflected,

"Under the bright sun, the filth and darkness have nowhere to hide."

Mo Hua, however, discerned the implications in his words, "Are places untouched by sunlight still the same?"

Situ Shen was somewhat surprised.

He had not expected Mo Hua to be so perceptive.

The subtle thoughts that he had harbored were captured by Mo Hua.

Mo Hua's gaze was profound, his thoughts penetrating, and he had even shown kindness to Situ Shen and the Situ Family. Thus, Situ Shen decided to be candid and share some heartfelt words.

"Mr. Little Mo," sighed Situ Shen, his voice growing somber,

"Since I was thirty years old, I have been serving in the Taoist Court, starting from a lowly Enforcement Leader to becoming a Supervisor, Deputy Court Leader, and I have also served as the Court Leader in several Little Immortal Cities..."

"This kind of thing... I've seen it quite a lot..."

"Or to say, across the entire Cultivation World, such things are all too common."

"This issue could be resolved, simply because it was brought into the open."

"Matters exposed to the public are always carried out with propriety and grandiosity, but if they are not brought to light, the scene is completely different."

"To put it in hurtful terms..."

Situ Shen looked at Mo Hua and said in a low voice,

"Today, as the Court Leader of South Yue City, I can act uprightly and advocate for these unfortunate Cultivators, sweep away these Brothels and gambling dens, appearing righteous and dignified."

"But if I had come to be the Court Leader of South Yue City before this..."

"It's very likely that I would have done the same things as the previous Court Leader."

"Frequenting Brothels, squandering thousands of gold, using the bodies of these unfortunate women for pleasure, and indulging in a life of luxury and debauchery."

Chapter 566: Little Zombie (3)

"Together with the Lu Family, oppressing, squeezing, and playing with these cultivators..."

Situ Shen's gaze was murky as he shifted the topic and said:

"Of course, I'm just saying..."

"The Situ Family has its family disciplines, at most I'll keep to my own sense of integrity, I won't really sink into the mire with them."

"But most people, even if they talk the talk of righteousness, when they actually get to that position, they act no different than Court Leader Qian..."

"And if this incident hadn't blown up, with local Taoist Court Officials covering for each other, the matters involving the Lu Family would most likely have been quietly dropped."

"In this world, light and dark alternate, and human hearts are complex..."

"Those who stand in the light often shine bright, but once they step into the dark, who knows what they turn into..."

"It is not always light everywhere, and you too might inevitably find yourself walking in darkness..."

Looking at Mo Hua, Situ Shen spoke earnestly:

"Mr. Mo, you must be careful in the future."

Be wary of others, but also of yourself...

These were things Situ Shen could see and understand clearly, but he couldn't resolve them.

He didn't want Mo Hua's pure Taoist Heart, to get entangled in the mire of fickle human hearts, lost in the sinister currents of worldly desires, and thereafter suffer in confusion.

Mo Hua seemed pensive and then nodded solemnly.

"Thank you, Court Leader Situ!"

Situ Shen had spoken these heartfelt words out of real concern for him.

Mo Hua was well aware of this in his heart.

Situ Shen smiled and nodded slightly.

He turned his head, looking down at the demolished Jinhua Street, and sighed softly.

This bustling marketplace, bright as pouring gold under the night lights, now revealed its true form under the daylight, showing a sordid mess.

In the Cultivation World, despite many places still being dark and unjust,

There was ultimately a beam of light that shone upon this place...

With the destruction of Jinhua Street, many cultivators regained their freedom.

Qinglan made a special visit to thank Mo Hua, bringing along Hundred Flower cakes she made herself.

In South Yue City, she no longer had any family.

Qinglan was alone and, although capable of supporting herself, life was still somewhat difficult.

Situ Fang decided to take her under her wing; she could teach Qinglan cultivation, and in turn, Qinglan could prepare her meals and take care of her daily needs.

As a Supervisor, Situ Fang was quite busy on a regular basis and had no time to care for herself.

And behind Situ Fang stood the support of her clan.

With her, Qinglan would be more stable, not adrift like duckweed with the current.

Mo Hua, Bai Zisheng, and Bai Zixi sat in the courtyard, eating Hundred Flower cakes and chatting with Qinglan for a while.

Bai Zixi gifted her a cultivation technique.

It was not rare in the Bai Family, but very precious to Qinglan.

Before departing, Qinglan bowed deeply in gratitude, saying:

"If there's ever a way for Qinglan to be of help to the Young Master and Miss Bai, I will not hesitate even at the cost of my life!"

Mo Hua waved his hand, "Sister Qinglan, you speak too seriously."

...

After seeing Qinglan off, Elder Su paid a visit the next day.

Elder Su brought some fine tea for Mo Hua to taste.

The two sat in the courtyard, sipping tea with a gentle breeze coming through, the air moist and fragrant with tea.

Elder Su apologized, saying:

"Young Gentleman, I'm sorry, I had no idea that the Lu Family Head... Lu Chengyun, had such ruthless ambition, a loose tongue, and that's what got you, Young Gentleman, caught in his scheming..."

"It's alright, it's alright." Mo Hua did not mind.

If Lu Chengyun did not act on his own ideas, then he, too, would not yet learn about the Spiritual Pivot Formation, could not exhaust the Contemplation Map, and would not be able to thoroughly solve South Yue City's zombie plague, nor help them rebuild the mines.

The Loose Cultivators of South Yue City, they suffered, too.

Mo Hua was also a Loose Cultivator by origin, and he still remembered his mother's words.

If you come across a Loose Cultivator struggling to get by, help them out within your capabilities if you can.

Elder Su sighed and said, "Young Gentleman, you truly have a broad heart..."

Although Elder Su's flattery always seemed a bit awkward, Mo Hua still felt quite pleased when he heard it.

Mo Hua's face was smiling, but he humbly said:

"Not at all, not at all."

Seeing that Mo Hua held no grudges against him, Elder Su's heart settled down.

The atmosphere became much warmer as a result.

The two of them chatted about Formation Arrays as usual and talked about mundane matters.

As they talked, the conversation turned to Jinhua Street and the Hundred Flower Tower...

Elder Su expressed his gratitude:

"I have to thank you for what happened at Jinhua Street."

Mo Hua nodded his head but then seemed puzzled, "Jinhua Street has been demolished, Elder, so you can't go to the Hundred Flower Tower to listen to music anymore, right? You're thanking me for this?"

Elder Su's face turned red, "No, it's not like that, I'm really not familiar..."

Mo Hua obviously did not believe him.

Seeing the keen look in Mo Hua's eyes, Elder Su knew that he knew everything and no longer hid anything, but his expression turned wistful:

"The music is soothing to the ears, and the ladies are pleasing to the eye."

"Not being able to hear or see it is indeed a regret."

"But these are just minor personal desires, they don't count for much."

"What I hope for more is that no one in this world will have to live a life adrift in the dust, and no young woman will have to suffer misfortune like Shuixian..."

Mo Hua was taken aback, then lifted his teacup and crisply said:

"I shall drink this tea in place of wine to honor the Elder."

Elder Su, caught between laughter and tears, still raised his cup and drank tea with Mo Hua...

...

The affairs of South Yue City had essentially come to a close.

The mines were built, and the Formation Arrays perfected.

The Mining Cultivators of South Yue City could now earn Spirit Stones through their own efforts, make a living, and live a steady and secure life.

Apart from that, the countless zombies also had to be burned.

The Corpse Burning Formation of the Taoist Court had been built.

The Corpse Burning Formation was a Compound Formation, constructed atop the cemetery hill, made up of many Fire-series Single Formations, covering a vast area. When activated, the flames surged upwards, turning the entire cemetery hill a crimson red as if it had become a Flaming Mountain.

All the zombies of South Yue City queued up to be cremated.

Mo Hua controlled the Walking Corpses, leading them into the Corpse Burning Formation in batches, burning away their bodies, dissipating the Corpse Qi, and eliminating the Corpse Poison.

All the zombies had to be cremated.

This process took a long time.

And the only one not cremated was that little zombie.

It had not touched any bloodshed, had committed no evil acts, and had even helped Mo Hua.

Mo Hua, with a sense of compassion, laid down a Formation Array, vented its Corpse Qi, and buried it on a secluded but serene little hill in the cemetery.

The hill was desolate, yet tranquil, undisturbed by anyone.

When evening came, and the sun set in the west, the afterglow would scatter over the hill and over the little grave that Mo Hua had erected for the tiny creature...

Chapter 567: Go Die (1)

Atop the burial mound, the flames of the Corpse Burning Formation blazed fiercely.

Apart from the tiny zombies, all Walking Corpses, Iron Corpses, including the Corpse King, had to be thoroughly purified within the Corpse Burning Formation, eradicating the evil that had been wrought.

There were too many Walking Corpses; thus, after cremation, their ashes were mostly buried together.

The Lu Family was raided and fell into disarray.

Among the Iron Corpses, the elders of the Lu Family were ignored; after being burned, they were buried haphazardly, with a simple mound erected. No one paid respects, and some even looked down upon them. Every time Cultivators from South Yue City passed by, they would spit upon the graves.

Some Foundation Building Cultivators from other families or Sects would be claimed after cremation and buried in their ancestral graves.

Mo Hua also solemnly collected the bone ashes of past Elders of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect; these would later be handed over to Instructor Yan for a proper burial.

Having learned the Spiritual Pivot Formation, I received a favor from the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect.

Therefore, I also wanted to show some heartfelt gratitude.

The Corpse Burning Formation continued for more than ten days, incinerating all walking and iron corpses until only the Corpse King remained.

But the Corpse King could not be incinerated.

Even though the fire in the Compound Formation used to purify the Corpse King was of a Second-Grade Formation, with flames so intense they resembled molten iron, it still could do no harm to the Corpse King.

The Corpse King kept its eyes closed, hands crossed over its chest, situated amidst the surging flames, letting the fierce fire burn. Its coppery-red body showed no signs of incineration.

Several days passed, and the body of the Corpse King remained unaffected by the fierce fire.

Yang Jishan frowned.

The crowd's expressions were grave.

Cultivators in-the-know were even more startled.

The Corpse King was a Taoist Demon's disaster; it had the potential to evolve into a Taoist Demon and was extremely vexing.

Now that it had submitted to Mo Hua, losing the possibility to become a Taoist Demon and temporarily in slumber, yet if it wasn't killed, no one could say if it might undergo a perverse transformation later on.

Yang Jishan and the others tried various methods.

Spiritual Artifacts, Spells, Runes, and even other more powerful Second-Grade Formations, but at most, they only harmed the Corpse King's flesh, unable to completely incinerate it.

Out of options, Yang Jishan had no choice but to seek Mo Hua, hoping Mo Hua might have a solution.

The Corpse Burning event was managed by the Taoist Court, and Mo Hua did not interfere much.

He merely controlled the Corpse King to enter the Corpse Burning Formation, leaving the rest unattended.

Now that Yang Jishan asked him, Mo Hua made a special trip to check on the situation.

Atop the burial mound, the flames were like a sea of fire.

And the Corpse King was immersed in this sea of fire, body unharmed by the intense flames.

Mo Hua also furrowed his brows, puzzled.

Logically speaking, with the power of a Second-Grade Formation, after refining for so long, even if the Corpse King was a Copper Corpse, it should have melted into a pool of "copper water."

Mo Hua released his Divine Sense to sense more carefully; after a moment, he noticed a faint Taoist Meaning entwined around the Corpse King.

A Copper Corpse couldn't resist the incineration of the Corpse Burning Formation.

But this Corpse King wasn't just a Copper Corpse; it was also a Corpse King.

This strand of Taoist Meaning shared similarities with the Great Dao's Taoist Meaning that Mo Hua had sensed before from the earth.

However, it was malformed, mutated, vicious, and a perversion.

This was the twisted "Taoist Meaning" of a Taoist Demon.

It was the source of the Taoist Demon.

This twisted Taoist Meaning prevented the Corpse King's body from being purified and was also fostering the emergence of the Corpse King's autonomous consciousness.

As Mo Hua clearly perceived this strand of Taoist Meaning, the Corpse King suddenly opened its eyes.

Its eyes were pitch-black and empty, gazing coldly at Mo Hua.

At the same time, a fierce phantom appeared in Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness.

This phantom was both the Corpse King and yet not entirely the Corpse King.

Wrapped around it was a faint, mysterious, and terrifying air, filled with profound hatred and indignation, watching Mo Hua with enmity.

This was the air of a Taoist Demon.

It seemed to harbor venomous resentment towards Mo Hua for thwarting its destiny.

Mo Hua remained unruffled, looking back at it calmly.

When the "Corpse King" met Mo Hua's gaze, it suddenly appeared internally fearful despite its ferocious front. Beneath its venomous demeanor, there was deep-seated fear.

It was as though a fierce servant longed to devour its master, but the malicious intent it harbored was discovered by the master.

Therefore, underneath its fierce exterior, there was hidden cowardice.

Mo Hua understood in his heart.

The Corpse King had submitted to him, and naturally, the Taoist Meaning within it also feared him.

It wanted to devour the master.

Only by devouring the master, could the Taoist Meaning grow, and the Corpse King evolve into a Taoist Demon.

But as long as it couldn't devour the master, it had to follow his commands to the letter!

Since it had to obey him, that made things easier.

Mo Hua's eyes turned cold as he commanded in an uncompromising, icy voice:

"Wicked beast, die."

Yang Jishan and the others trembled at the words.

And within the eyes of the Corpse King, terror emerged.

When the master orders death, his servant must die!

As Mo Hua issued the command, the Taoist Meaning within the Corpse King transformed into a fierce corpse shadow, with red eyes and a ferocious face. It twisted, howled, and screamed.

But no matter how unwilling or how much it struggled, it had to obey Mo Hua's command to die as per the laws of the Great Dao.

Its figure gradually faded, and the atmosphere of the Taoist Demon dissipated.

Simultaneously, the Corpse King let out a roar. The flames of the Corpse Burning Formation shot up to the sky and, under the astonished gaze of onlookers, the flesh withered, the face collapsed, and the ferocious fire gradually reduced it to ashes...

The Corpse King truly died...

The Cultivators looked at Mo Hua with a hint of fear in their eyes.

The Lord of Ten Thousand Corpses, a manifestation of a Taoist Demon, actually died just because of Mo Hua's single command...

But as to how this had happened, the crowd knew nothing.

They wanted to ask, but were at the moment restrained by Mo Hua's commanding presence as he ordered the Corpse King to its death, and they didn't dare to inquire.

Only the gaunt elder had a solemn expression, showing a thoughtful look.

Chapter 568: Go Die (2)

But no matter what, with the Corpse King dead, the troubles with the corpses had truly come to an end.

This matter could finally be considered closed.

Everyone let out a sigh of relief.

Through twists and turns over these days, continuous life-and-death battles, and multiple unexpected changes, they had hovered on the brink of death and witnessed scenes both bone-chilling and inconceivable. Now, they could finally ease their burdens and relax.

Mo Hua also breathed a sigh of relief.

He turned and left with light steps.

But, just as he turned around, his heart suddenly skipped a beat.

Within the darkness, he had a premonition.

It seemed as though something fierce had taken residence within him.

This thing was malformed and cruel, like the Taoist Meaning, but extremely twisted, akin to the Corpse King's vile thoughts, brimming with loathing and glaring at him menacingly.

Yet, as soon as he attempted to perceive it, it would, as though startled, vanish without a trace, its hiding place unknown...

This sensation was exactly the same as the mutated Taoist Meaning on the Corpse King.

"But hasn't it dissipated already?"

Mo Hua wondered, baffled.

Concerned about the Taoist Demon, Mo Hua had to be more cautious.

Upon returning, he sought the advice of Mr. Zhuang.

"Master, the Taoist Demon that died seems to have latched onto me..."

Mr. Zhuang was somewhat surprised, yet not taken aback; reclining in his bamboo chair, he said leisurely,

"You ruined its chance of becoming a Taoist Demon, so of course it hates you, and thus its Taoist Meaning has fused into your cause and effect."

"Fused into cause and effect?"

Mo Hua didn't understand.

Mr. Zhuang then explained,

"Everything in the world has its cause and effect, from the grass and the trees to every drink and peck, none can escape the realm of causality."

Mo Hua felt like he understood Mr. Zhuang's explanation, but upon closer thought, he was still confused.

Mr. Zhuang sighed, "Don't think too hard; cause and effect is just a form of the Great Dao's rule. Everything operates according to its own rules; this is causality."

"It's the same with people."

"A person's past actions, thoughts, and desires are all formed by the cycles of causality."

"And all of a person's past forms the cause, and everything that happens later forms the effect based on those past causes."

"Therefore, cause and effect also make up a person's fate."

"The fate of the past is set, unchangeable, but the fate of the future, based on your previous life, is subject to myriad changes..."

Mo Hua seemed to have an epiphany and nodded.

Mr. Zhuang looked at Mo Hua, hope shining in his eyes, "As for matters of causality, it's good that you understand them now; thinking too much is pointless..."

"When your Divine Sense grows stronger, your experiences more diverse, and your understanding of the Great Dao, Formation, and all things more profound, then you can study further..."

Mo Hua couldn't help asking, "Master, is this 'cause and effect' thing really useful?"

Mr. Zhuang said, "It might be useless, but it could also be extremely useful; it all depends on how deeply you understand it."

Mo Hua's eyes flickered as he asked,

"Master, so the Taoist Demon infusing into my cause and effect, is it a good thing or a bad thing?"

"It's not a good thing," Mr. Zhuang said.

Mo Hua felt a chill in his heart.

"But it's also not necessarily a bad thing," Mr. Zhuang added.

Mo Hua, with his mouth agape, couldn't help but mutter,

"Master, what you've said is... as good as saying nothing..."

Mr. Zhuang gently tapped Mo Hua's head and chuckled,

"In this world, everything has its pros and cons, misfortune and fortune go hand in hand; there's no such thing as absolute good or bad."

"So what should I do?" Mo Hua asked.

Mr. Zhuang said indifferently, "Just keep a normal heart, uphold your Taoist Heart, and there's no need to worry or fear. Don't even think about it; once your Divine Sense is powerful, everything will be easily solved..."

Mo Hua's eyes brightened, recalling Mr. Zhuang's previous words,

"If the Taoist Heart is clear and the Divine Thought is strong, then all evil will not invade... Is that right, Master?"

Mr. Zhuang nodded with approval.

Mo Hua thus let go of his concerns.

However, he didn't notice the solemn weight in Mr. Zhuang's lowered gaze.

As Mo Hua stood to take his leave, Mr. Zhuang suddenly said,

"Mo Hua."

Mo Hua looked at Mr. Zhuang with some confusion.

Mr. Zhuang paused for a moment before asking,

"How did this mutated Taoist Meaning fuse into your causality?"

Mo Hua thought for a moment and then replied truthfully,

"It seems that... I ordered it to die, and it tried to, but didn't fully succeed, and then it hated me..."

Mr. Zhuang's gaze froze, his fingers hidden in his sleeves quivering, and his heart couldn't help but flutter.

"You... ordered it to die?"

"Yes," Mo Hua nodded and asked worriedly, "Master, is there any trouble?"

Mr. Zhuang's eyes became inscrutable as he smiled faintly,

"It doesn't matter, just remember what I've just told you."

"Alright, Master!"

If the Master said it didn't matter, then there probably wasn't anything wrong.

Mo Hua left cheerfully and at ease.

After Mo Hua left, Mr. Zhuang sighed deeply and frowned.

Old Kui's figure appeared, and he said in a soft sigh,

"Too bold..."

Uncharacteristically, Mr. Zhuang didn't retort but instead nodded in agreement,

"Yes, too bold..."

To actually order a Taoist Demon to die...

Fearless due to ignorance.

And the troubling part is that the Taoist Demon really followed his command to die...

Mr. Zhuang said helplessly,

"The Corpse King wasn't quite a Taoist Demon. Making the Corpse King kneel was just touching upon a great causality, but now that he directly ordered a Taoist Demon to die, it's like he swallowed this great causality whole. Truly... recklessly audacious..."

Old Kui glanced at Mr. Zhuang contemptuously, "Weren't you quite proud before? Feeling remorse now? What do we do?"

Chapter 569: Go to Die (3)

Mr. Zhuang sighed.

He had calculated that everything would end once the Corpse King was subdued.

Yet unexpectedly, complications had arisen at the last minute.

If he had known, he would have swallowed his pride and not put on airs, issuing more warnings to Mo Hua, telling him to stay out of idle affairs.

Let the people from the Taoist Court worry about the cremation of the Corpse King.

Old Kui frowned and said:

"However, even if the Taoist Demon is integrated into cause and effect, it doesn't really matter, does it? It's not a true Taoist Demon, just a strand of twisted Taoist Meaning."

"The problem lies exactly here..."

Mr. Zhuang sighed, "Mo Hua is embarking on the 'Divine Sense Proving the Dao' path. Once his Divine Sense becomes strong enough and his comprehension of the universe deepens, he will inevitably nourish his own Taoist Meaning."

"But with the presence of the Taoist Demon's aura entangled in cause and effect."

"What he might cultivate could no longer be Taoist Meaning, but rather... his own flesh and blood nourishing the 'Taoist Demon' within him..."

Upon hearing this, Old Kui's face turned somewhat pale.

Becoming the embodiment of a Taoist Demon!

Then he would indeed become a Demon Head, more terrifying than Gui Tao's people.

Old Kui frowned and said, "This child, Mo Hua, possesses a nature of purity and clarity. It shouldn't come to that, should it?"

"It seems so now..." Mr. Zhuang lay down slowly, his eyes uncertain, "but as for the future, who can be sure?"

"Especially now... while he is still young and can maintain a mind free of distractions."

"But as he grows up and experiences more, it's inevitable his mind will become cluttered with various thoughts. If his feelings change because of emotions, and one thought turns demonic, then..."

Mr. Zhuang's voice gradually faded to inaudibility.

Old Kui raised his eyebrow, "Are you referring to the Bai Family?"

Mr. Zhuang arched an eyebrow but didn't elaborate.

Both of them, however, understood very well.

The shared daily life between the two children might have fostered naive and indiscernible affections, but these two elders saw everything clearly.

"The Bai Family..."

Mr. Zhuang shook his head with a hint of disdain, yet his eyes betrayed a deep wariness.

Old Kui's expression was as cold and severe as if it were carved from stone.

The Bai Family's depths were truly unfathomable...

Looking into the distance, Mr. Zhuang sighed, "This child, Mo Hua, is a person of utmost sincerity and emotion. The more so, the easier he is wounded. Even without that young girl, an accident involving his parents or friends might equally provoke a change in his nature..."

Old Kui knitted his brow and glanced at Mr. Zhuang before shaking his head:

"I disagree, the child's nature may be upright, but he's not rigid. He's clever, occasionally crafty, his thoughts thorough, and he knows how to adapt. He should not reach such a state."

"Let's hope so..." Mr. Zhuang sighed.

"Won't you make this clear to him?" Old Kui asked.

"Even if I explained, it would be futile..." Mr. Zhuang shook his head.

"Speaking plainly about matters like the Taoist Demon and Taoist Meaning might just disrupt his thoughts and ruin his state of mind."

"It's better to let him believe that with a clear Taoist Heart, he will be invulnerable to all evil. Focused solely on cultivating his Divine Thought, he might indeed become immune to all evil..."

"After all, what he needs to do remains the same, to cultivate his Divine Sense to perfection, unencumbered, more readily forging ahead."

Old Kui nodded slightly.

Mr. Zhuang closed his eyes in thought and, after a moment, as if struck by a revelation, opened them and added:

"Also, this might not necessarily be a bad thing..."

Old Kui, resonating with his thoughts, slowly said:

"You mean, Gui Tao's people?"

Demon Sect Cultivators who practice Gui Tao.

You must not think of them, not speculate, and even less speak their taboo names.

Yet, Old Kui showed no concern as he directly called out the name of 'Gui Tao's people,' with not a single anomaly around him.

Mr. Zhuang nodded, his gaze profound:

"The Taoist Demon has form, has spirit."

"The Corpse King was the embryo of a Taoist Demon, and after its form perished and its spirit died, the resentful remnant of the Taoist Demon's aura merged with cause and effect."

"The Taoist Demon at the level of cause and effect is nearly indestructible and exceedingly difficult to deal with."

"Even for my senior brother, it's the same."

"But for Mo Hua, it's a bit different."

"Although partly a twist of fate, he subdued the Taoist Demon on his own, commanding it to die."

"Mo Hua is the Master of the Taoist Demon."

"The Taoist Demon hides within Mo Hua's cause and effect, certainly harboring a vengeful spirit, desperately seeking to devour its master. But as long as it cannot consume its master, it must protect him!"

"Thus, it is a double-edged sword."

"Turned inward, it may corrupt Mo Hua's Taoist Meaning, but turned outward, it truly might make him invulnerable within cause and effect!"

"For in his fate, lurks a most vile and sinister Taoist Demon!"

"As the Taoist Demon is the ultimate evil, so he becomes invulnerable to all evil!"

Mr. Zhuang's gaze was sharp.

Old Kui was inwardly shocked.

If such were truly the case, then Mo Hua, this seemingly inconspicuous little cultivator, might actually be a grand terror within the Heavenly Secret Calculation.

His fate masked with Taoist Demon, an unfathomable, inestimable, and inviolable abyss!

Chapter 570: Farewell (1)

The matters of causality and fate were completely unknown to Mo Hua.

He only remembered one phrase:

"With a steadfast Taoist heart, no evil shall invade."

As long as he concentrated on learning Formations, comprehended the Great Dao, and remained resilient in his Taoist heart, continuously refining his Divine Sense to its ultimate strength, with thoughts profound and insights penetrating the principles of all things, then all malevolent spirits would pose no threat.

Mo Hua continued to cultivate and learn Formations just as before.

But the Taoist Demon clearly refused to give up.

The shadow of the Corpse King occasionally appeared inexplicably within his Sea of Consciousness, its gaze blood-red, looking at Mo Hua with a cruel expression.

This kind of existence was completely different from that of the Little Green-faced Ghost and the Divine Thought Body of the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family.

It seemed existent yet nonexistent.

Palpably real yet illusory.

It didn't seem like a real Divine Thought, and as Mr. Zhuang had said, it was more like a lingering thought of karma, residing in the past.

The shadow of the Corpse King appeared repeatedly.

At first, Mo Hua was somewhat surprised and worried, but then he recalled Mr. Zhuang's words:

"Just maintain your equanimity, hold fast to your Taoist heart, you need not worry or be afraid, you don't even have to think about it..."

And so, Mo Hua became nonchalant about it.

In his Sea of Consciousness, the Corpse King was just a Copper Corpse.

He had killed Copper Corpses before.

The Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family was consumed by him, though it was a situation of many against few and somewhat dishonorable, but now it was different.

Now, he was at the peak of the Thirteen Stripes of Divine Sense, far from what he used to be.

Even in a fair fight, one-on-one, he could subdue the Copper Corpse incarnate of the Zhang Family's Ancestral Master.

And this Corpse King, he had controlled it once with the Spirit Pivot Formation.

"In life," it was under his command.

"In death," it couldn't escape the palm of his hand.

Mo Hua didn't know much about the matters of causality.

Fearing nothing from ignorance.

Because of "ignorance," there was "no fear."

And because of fearlessness, Mo Hua's Divine Sense was unyielding, his aura strong, not giving any regard to this Corpse King tinged with the breath of a Taoist Demon.

The Corpse King let out a roar.

Mo Hua frowned and said, "Don't bother me!"

Scolded by Mo Hua, the Corpse King instinctively trembled, then became infuriated, its gaze fierce, but it truly couldn't do anything and could only growl lowly again, retreating unwillingly...

Every now and then, the Corpse King would surface in Mo Hua's mind.

But Mo Hua paid it no heed, often full of disdain, occasionally even telling it to get lost.

The Corpse King could only glare violently and lurk in the shadows.

After that, the appearances of the Corpse King became less frequent...

Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness also became much clearer.

But what he didn't know was that his own causality and fate had thereby become much more dangerous...

...

After the events of South Yue City, the Corpse King was subdued, Lu Chengyun died, and the Spirit Pivot Formation was learned. It was also time to leave.

Before leaving, Mo Hua entombed the ashes of the past Elders of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect in the Gold Inlaid Black Jade Urn and handed it to Instructor Yan.

Grasping the ashes, Instructor Yan looked moved.

Then with a mixture of sighs and feelings of guilt, "I, as a disciple, failed to protect our Sect's Elders from this disaster..."

Instructor Yan's eyes reddened, tears welled up, and his emotions took a long time to calm down.

The anger, confusion, hardship, loneliness, and despair he had felt over the years surged in his chest.

Bringing the traitor to justice, reclaiming the legacy Formation of the Sect.

These were things he thought about day and night for so many years.

But he had never imagined the day when his dreams would indeed come true.

Instructor Yan turned to look at Mo Hua, filled with gratitude and self-reproach, he couldn't help but sigh:

"I owe it all to you for this matter..."

Investigating the traitor, discovering his identity, disrupting his schemes, making him pay with his blood, comforting the spirit of his master and the ancestors of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect in heaven...

These were things that he was supposed to do himself.

But it was all thanks to Mo Hua that this grudge was settled.

This matter also involved the Lu Family, the Corpse Mine, the Corpse King, and even lead to the Taoist Court, forcing them to dispatch Taoist Soldiers for suppression.

How much danger was involved, Mo Hua didn't say, but he could guess.

These dangers were originally his to bear...

Yet they all fell upon the young Mo Hua.

He himself had hardly done anything.

Overwhelmed with shame, Instructor Yan lamented, "As an Instructor, I truly am ashamed to show my face..."

Mo Hua shook his head, "Instructor, you've done a lot already."

Instructor Yan was taken aback, then spoke with a wry smile:

"You don't have to comfort me..."

Yet Mo Hua shook his head and said, "It's not comfort, the master told me before, everything in this world has its causality, every drink and every peck has its rule."

"The subjugation of Lu Chengyun and the quelling of the corpse calamity result from the seeds of virtue you planted, which brought about this virtuous outcome."

Mo Hua had just learned the basics of causality from Mr. Zhuang and was now using it to console Instructor Yan.

Instructor Yan frowned, "What does this have to do with me?"

"Of course, it does!"

Mo Hua explained confidently:

"Without your initial teaching, I might not have chosen the path of Formation; without your introduction, I could not have taken Mr. Zhuang as my teacher; without taking Mr. Zhuang as my teacher, I wouldn't have been so proficient in Formations, nor would I travel everywhere in search of them."

"And going to South Yue City was to seek Formations, but also to find you."

"Had you not been in South Yue City, I would not have come."

"It was your clues that allowed me to unravel the mystery step by step, find out about Zhang Quan, Corpse Walking Stronghold, Corpse Mine, along with Lu Chengyun and the Corpse King's schemes..."

"Finally, I was able to kill Lu Chengyun, subdue the Corpse King, allay the corpse disaster, and reclaim the stolen legacy of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect."

"And with the Corpse King killed by the Spirit Pivot Formation, Lu Chengyun can be said to have died under the legacy of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect."