

The Quest 58

Chapter 58: Gifts

Mo Hua returned home and shared with his parents that he was on the verge of breaking through to the fourth level of Qi refining and needed a cultivation technique.

Mo Shan and Liu Ruhua were quite pleased. At Mo Hua's age, reaching the fourth level of Qi cultivation made him outstanding among his peers in Tongxian City.

Regarding the cultivation technique, Mo Shan reassured Mo Hua not to worry:

"We've already discussed this, your mother and I. If you can't learn the techniques from the Tongxian Sect, we'll have to seek out some experienced independent cultivators. There's an elder surnamed Han among the demon hunters in Tongxian City, a cultivator with a middle-grade Five Elements spiritual root, who might be willing to help. Elder Han is known for his warm heart, and he would likely be glad to assist. We can offer him some spirit stones as thanks. However..."

Mo Shan paused, then continued, "Elder Han also comes from an independent cultivator background, and he often says that although his family's cultivation technique is complete, it doesn't promise much of a future in the later stages of cultivation..."

Mo Shan wanted the best for Mo Hua, but that was all he could provide, which left him somewhat disheartened.

Mo Hua, on the other hand, consoled him, "Dad, I want to become an array master in the future. For an array master, abundant spiritual sense is enough; the specifics of the cultivation technique are not crucial, as long as I can cultivate steadily. This technique, passed down through generations by Elder Han, shows that it's reliable and safe, which is better than anything."

Mo Shan felt somewhat reassured by this, and Liu Ruhua gently patted Mo Hua on the head, saying warmly:

"Let's eat, and you should rest early after dinner, as tomorrow you will be learning array formations from Mr. Zhuang."

"Okay," Mo Hua nodded obediently.

Bai Zisheng mentioned he would help Mo Hua find some cultivation techniques, but Mo Hua hadn't mentioned it to his parents because the larger the clan, the stricter their heritage, and they seldom shared their techniques freely.

Moreover, he did not want to owe Bai Zisheng a favor, especially since he couldn't repay it yet.

Who knew that the next day, Bai Zisheng would actually bring several jade slips and sneak them to Mo Hua like a thief.

"These are some I took out while Aunt Xue wasn't looking. Take a look and see if any are suitable. Keep one, and I'll return the rest."

Mo Hua was speechless.

Bai Zisheng grinned, "How do you feel? Isn't it touching!"

Bai Zisheng appeared somewhat arrogant but was genuinely warm-hearted.

Mo Hua said, "Aren't you afraid of being punished for sneaking out these techniques?"

Bai Zisheng scoffed, "I'm a direct descendant of the Bai family. It doesn't matter whether it's a few minor techniques or even a family heirloom; if I take it, I take it, and they can't do much about it."

Mo Hua was visibly skeptical.

Bai Zisheng insisted, "I wouldn't lie to you."

"Maybe just a year or two of confinement, nothing serious."

Bai Zixi spoke in a casual tone, a slight smile in her eyes.

Bai Zisheng's face reddened a bit.

After thinking it over, Mo Hua shook his head, "I can't take these techniques; I can't implicate you."

Bai Zisheng was displeased, "I'm not afraid, what are you afraid of?"

Bai Zixi also added softly, "Though these techniques are precious, they are not rare for the Bai family. You can cultivate them without worry, or else Aunt Xue wouldn't have allowed my brother to take them out."

"Exactly!" Bai Zisheng nodded vigorously, then suddenly exclaimed, "How does Aunt Xue know I took out the techniques?"

Bai Zixi glanced at him lightly, "Everything you do is under Aunt Xue's watch; you're the only one who thinks otherwise."

Bai Zisheng slumped his shoulders, his spirit somewhat dampened.

Mo Hua was tempted; he wanted to know what kind of techniques the large families cultivated and what made them so profound.

After understanding this, Mo Hua stopped refusing and silently acknowledged the kindness of the Bai siblings, then started examining the jade slips in Bai Zisheng's hands:

"The Minor Five Elements Technique," suitable for cultivators with a middle-grade Five Elements spiritual root. It's a simplified version of the superior "Great Five Elements Technique." Cultivators can refine spiritual power for up to thirty-three heavenly cycles, controlling the five types of Five Elements spells: metal, wood, water, fire

, and earth, simple and widely applicable...

"The Hidden Spirit Technique," suitable for cultivators with a middle-grade water elemental root. It can refine spiritual power for twenty-eight heavenly cycles, suitable for concealment spells...

"The Fiery Flames Technique," suitable for cultivators with a middle-grade fire elemental root. It can refine spiritual power for thirty-five heavenly cycles, enhancing the power of fire spells by ten to twenty percent...

"The Water-Wood Spirit Technique," suitable for cultivators with middle-grade water and wood elemental roots. It can refine spiritual power for thirty-six heavenly cycles. This technique cleanses meridians and nourishes the body, reducing cultivation bottlenecks. It's good for health maintenance but not for vigorous physical combat. Required spiritual materials: Celestial Ginseng Wood, Boundless Water, Spirit-Transforming Liquid...

...

Mo Hua was dazzled by the array of choices, but as he continued to read, his brows furrowed.

"Is there no suitable one?" Bai Zisheng asked, seeing Mo Hua's expression.

Mo Hua cautiously inquired, "What is Celestial Ginseng Wood?"

"Celestial Ginseng Wood is the root wood of celestial ginseng. It nourishes the body and isn't too expensive."

"How many spirit stones does it cost?"

"The sprouts of celestial ginseng are extremely expensive, but the wood is much cheaper, probably a few hundred spirit stones each," Bai Zisheng replied uncertainly.

"And what is Boundless Water?"

Bai Zisheng scratched his head, unsure, and looked at Bai Zixi.

Bai Zixi's beautiful eyes shifted as she explained, "Boundless Water is sea water from the Boundless Sea, which must be refined by an alchemist over forty-nine days to remove impurities, resulting in Boundless Water. It's not expensive, but it's labor-intensive. A small bottle of Boundless Water might cost around a thousand spirit stones, more if it's from a remote area. And this type of spiritual material is rare; even with spirit stones, it might not be available."

Mo Hua inhaled sharply.

What kind of cultivation techniques were these? He couldn't afford to practice them!

Techniques like "The Water-Wood Spirit Technique," even if they only required one piece of Celestial Ginseng Wood and a small bottle of Boundless Water, would cost far more in spirit stones than Mo Hua had anticipated.

Not to mention, based on the technique descriptions, cultivation required spiritual materials, breakthroughs needed spiritual materials, and even daily cultivation needed spirit stones, adding up to an astronomical sum, far beyond Mo Hua's means.

This was just the expenditure for the Qi refining stage; the Foundation Building stage would be even more resource-intensive, a well-known fact in the cultivation world.

Even if Mo Hua became a top-tier array master, tirelessly crafting array formations day and night, he could not afford the expense of such cultivation.

Mo Hua looked at Bai Zisheng, then at Bai Zixi, and couldn't help but ask, "Do all the disciples in your family cultivate these kinds of techniques?"

"Of course not," Bai Zisheng shook his head. "Direct descendants cultivate even superior techniques requiring more precious natural treasures. Some spiritual materials are so rare they are priceless and exclusively preserved by the family, never shared externally."

"But these techniques are also not to be shared externally. Even if one wanted to share them, without the specific spiritual materials required for cultivation, others wouldn't be able to practice them."

"The techniques I've given you are among the best that can be shared to some extent. Normally, collateral or illegitimate disciples, unless exceptionally talented, might not even qualify to cultivate them."

"Do your family provide the spiritual materials for these cultivation techniques?" Mo Hua asked.

"I'm not sure about others, but my sister and I receive everything we need for cultivation from our mother," Bai Zisheng said.

Bai Zixi glanced at Bai Zisheng and added softly, "The family categorizes disciples by legitimacy and talent. The more legitimate and talented the disciple, the higher their status within the family, and the more cultivation resources they receive. For a talented direct descendant, whatever is needed for cultivation is readily provided..."

"For other disciples, if they wish to cultivate superior techniques beyond what their status allows, they must find their own ways. Usually, parents or other relatives spend merit points to exchange for spiritual materials from within the family."

"In any case, the descendants of noble families need only focus on their cultivation; the spirit stones and spiritual materials required are not their concern."

"Right," Bai Zisheng nodded, "Whether it's our Bai family or other noble families, all have thrived for at least a thousand years with rich heritage. The channels to obtain natural treasures are well-established, and except for truly extinct items, most natural treasures are not considered rare."

Mo Hua was awed by the vast resources of noble families, their extensive heritages like a vast ocean, while independent cultivators could only access a mere speck of this vastness.

No wonder the Qi refining stage is just the beginning for cultivators, but for the lower echelons of independent cultivators, it's a lifelong struggle.