

The Quest 601

Chapter 601:

Taking the lead? Holding up the show? Saving face?

Mo Hua was stunned.

Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi also looked at each other in dismay.

Mo Hua asked, "Master, what should I do?"

"It's simple," Mr. Zhuang said with a light smile, "you just go and compete with them. If you win, you'll get to learn the Five Elements Spirit Formation."

"Compete in First-grade Formation Methods?"

"First-grade."

Mo Hua's eyes lit up.

When it came to First-grade Formation Methods, he feared no one, of course, besides Mr. Zhuang.

But he would not be careless.

Mo Hua frowned and said, "Master, what if the Five Elements Sect plays dirty and I lose?"

It actually didn't matter much if he lost himself.

Personal victory or defeat was trivial.

The Five Element Ultimate Formation, though important, was something he would learn sooner or later.

The key issue was, if he lost, he would lose face for his master.

His master's prestige was the big deal!

Mo Hua's expression became somewhat serious.

Mr. Zhuang felt a hint of warmth in his heart, then raised an eyebrow and said:

"Don't worry. As my disciple, what do they have to win against you?"

This statement was somewhat subtle, but Mo Hua actually felt it made a lot of sense, and he couldn't help but nod his head. Still, he looked somewhat apprehensive.

Mr. Zhuang's gaze shifted, and he continued:

"Do you still remember the words I told you at the beginning?"

Mo Hua was a bit puzzled, unsure which words Mr. Zhuang was referring to.

Mr. Zhuang feigned regret as he sighed:

"Back then, when I went to the Five Elements Sect, I wanted to learn that Ultimate Formation, but for various reasons, I didn't manage to learn it, and accordingly, they looked down on me and I lost a lot of face..." Rǎnò B Ès

"This old score, I can no longer settle."

"Now, I'm counting on you to reclaim this stage for your master..."

Looked down upon, lost face?

Mo Hua's little face tensed up, and she immediately bristled with fighting spirit, saying:

"Master, rest assured! I will certainly reclaim this stage for you and crush them into utter defeat!"

"And then I'll learn their Sect-Protecting Ultimate Technique and drive them crazy with grief!"

Mr. Zhuang couldn't help but smile proudly, "Good, leave them in utter defeat, and drive them crazy with grief!"

Old Kui, outside the door, shook his head upon hearing this.

Despite his age, he's still as puerile and competitive as a child.

Mo Hua thought for a moment, then asked, "Master, should I show them any mercy?"

Mr. Zhuang shook his head, "Not only should you not, but you should also be more arrogant."

"Arrogant?"

"Right," Mr. Zhuang said, "use that set of pretentious skills I taught you."

"Pretentious?"

Mo Hua had somewhat forgotten.

Mr. Zhuang demonstrated for Mo Hua once more.

He let go of his gentle demeanor, his brows and eyes becoming sharp, his expression turning indifferent, proudly holding his head high, like an ancient sword sealed and undisturbed, with an air of grandeur, as if he were an Azure Dragon looking down upon the world.

His grace and demeanor made others dare not look directly at him.

Mr. Zhuang quickly concealed his demeanor again, his expression becoming gentle once more, "Remember now?"

"Uh-huh."

Mo Hua's eyes shone, and then he too imitated the posture.

He held his head high, hands on his hips, with a nobody-in-my-eyes look on his tender little face.

Except he didn't resemble a dragon, but rather a fierce Little Tiger.

Mr. Zhuang couldn't help but pet Mo Hua's head and said:

"It lacks a bit of style, but it's passable for now. You'll need to practice more in the future."

"Yes, Master!" Mo Hua obediently responded.

Old Kui looked at this mentor-disciple pair, his expression even more speechless...

Mr. Zhuang then instructed Mo Hua:

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"In a few days, you will take the lead and also stand in for your senior brothers and sisters. Only those who win against you will qualify to compete in Formation Methods with your senior brothers and sisters."

With Mr. Zhuang's words, Mo Hua understood:

"I am the threshold!"

Whoever wanted to compete with his senior brothers and sisters had to cross his threshold first.

Mr. Zhuang nodded approvingly.

This child was indeed clever.

Bai Zisheng felt a bit guilty on the side, "Master, my Formation skills are not as good as my junior brother's..."

Bai Zisheng was quite self-aware. Although he was a senior brother, his level in Formation skills was far from Mo Hua's.

If someone did manage to win against Mo Hua, he most certainly wouldn't stand a chance.

Bai Zixi was better off, her Formation skills, albeit not as strong as Mo Hua's, were still quite high.

But his own flaws would be exposed.

Mr. Zhuang said with a light smile, "That's alright. This threshold your junior brother presents, it is quite a high one..."

And moreover, it was an insurmountably "high" one.

Mr. Zhuang thought of Mo Hua's level in Formation methods as a cultivator in the Qi Refinement Realm, still somewhat astonished in his heart.

Mo Hua, praised by Mr. Zhuang, had a smiley face again.

...

In the ensuing days, the Five Elements Sect appeared calm on the surface, but there was a buzz of activity behind the scenes: dispatching messengers, sending letters, bargaining...

Sect Leader Liao was busy with receptions and farewells.

The Elders moved about frequently.

Some unfamiliar disciples also appeared silently within the Five Elements Sect...

Mr. Zhuang sat by the window, watching all this unfold, unflustered and unshowy.

A few days later, Sect Leader Liao came to invite Mr. Zhuang, respectfully saying:

"The Tao Discussion Meeting is about to begin. Mr. Zhuang and several esteemed disciples, please proceed to the Formation Pavilion."

Mr. Zhuang nodded slightly and stood up, turning towards Mo Hua, Bai Zisheng, and Bai Zixi, and said:

"Let's go."

...

The Tao Discussion Meeting.

It was a grand assembly for cultivators to discuss the Tao.

It was also a general term for various kinds of meetings among cultivators.

Cultivators gathered to discuss cultivation, scholarly matters, Artifact Refining, Alchemy, Formations, and even about rearing Spirit Beasts, keeping cats and dogs.

The Tao Discussion Meeting of the Five Elements Sect was mainly for verifying Formations.

The Formation Pavilion was the place within the Sect for storing Formation knowledge and artifacts.

Stored within were Formation Books, Formation Diagrams, precious inks, ancient brushes, valuable Formation Papers, and a series of Tao cultivation items related to Formation methods.

The Formation Pavilion was a place of secrecy and also one of the important venues for Tao discussion meetings within the Sect.

Chapter 602: Formation Pavilion (2)

The Five Elements Sect once established itself with Formation methods, but now it prospers with Earth and Wood, hence the Formation Pavilion is quite expansive and luxurious.

The Formation Pavilion has four floors.

The venue for the Tao Discussion Meeting is on the widest floor, adorned with carved beams and painted rafters, glittering with gold and jade.

At this moment, ink, brushes, desks, and documents are all prepared, and the disciples of the Five Elements Sect have taken their seats.

The chief seats are occupied by the Chief Elder and Sect Leader Liao of the Five Elements Sect, along with various Elders and Guest Elders.

The Chief Elder, who had been in seclusion for a long time, has emerged from his retreat.

By the Chief Elder's side are two elders dressed in brocade clothes and adorned with golden crowns and jade ornaments, their presence profound and unmistakably that of two Great Cultivators of the Golden Core Realm.

At this moment, the Chief Elder was discussing in a low voice with these two elders:

"...The gentleman's surname is Zhuang, and he comes from an imposing background, not suitable to be detailed..."

"It's an agreement made by our ancestors, we have no choice but to abide..."

"But the Sect is in decline, not as it used to be...being bullied to this extent..."

"...coveting our Five Elements Sect's ancestral Ultimate Formation..."

"I ask you two old friends, you must! Lend the Five Elements Sect a helping hand!"

The Chief Elder feigned distress, his words earnest and sincere.

The other two elders both replied with "Certainly, certainly!" but their expressions were dull and they seemed somewhat indifferent.

The Chief Elder cursed them in his heart.

Truly, the older they get, the more cunning they become!

The older they get, the more worldly-wise.

No one would wake up early without benefit, as stingy as two iron roosters.

The Chief Elder bowed with his hands clasped, "Sect Leader Chu, Brother Shen...once this matter succeeds, a generous reward will be offered..."

The hands of the Chief Elder, hidden in his sleeves, secretly gestured a number of Spirit Stones for the two elders to see.

Both of their eyes lit up.

The elder surnamed Shen was the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family from the nearby Si Water City, an aristocrat of Formation Method, in the early stages of the Golden Core Realm. **RANÖBES**

His originally indifferent face immediately blossomed into a smile, and his tone became much friendlier:

"The Chief Elder is too kind, it would be disrespectful to refuse, truly disrespectful..."

Afterwards, the Old Ancestor of Shen Family said solemnly:

"With the Taoist Court unifying all, cultivators must act according to the law, no matter how prominent the background, one must still abide by the rules. As the saying goes, 'even a mighty dragon cannot crush a local serpent.' Chief Elder, rest assured, I will uphold justice for you!"

He is the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family.

The Shen Family is vast and wealthy, with many disciples and a great consumption of Spirit Stones; they could never have too many.

The Chief Elder internally cursed, "Money-grubbing old fool," while outwardly smiling and clapping his hands, he praised:

"Brother Shen's heart is as warm as the ancient roads, I admire you!"

On the other hand, Sect Leader Chu, dressed impeccably, pondered for a moment before saying:

"Brother, I do not want these Spirit Stones."

Not wanting Spirit Stones...

The Chief Elder wasn't happy about this, rather he was on alert.

Not wanting Spirit Stones doesn't mean he truly doesn't want anything.

It's very likely that Spirit Stones simply aren't to his taste.

This Sect Leader Chu was the Supreme Sect Leader of the Formation Mysterious Sect, venerable in years, and had already abdicated his position, holding a nominal title. Yet in the Sect, he was still deeply respected, his word carrying great weight.

The Formation Mysterious Sect, being adept in Formation methods, did not place much importance on Spirit Stones.

As expected, Sect Leader Chu continued:

"Your Five Elements Sect doesn't easily earn Spirit Stones, how could I have the heart to kick you when you're down..."

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family beside him felt displeased within.

What does he mean? Wanting Spirit Stones is kicking them when they're down?

But he had lived long enough to possess the skill of containing his emotions.

His wrinkled old face gave nothing away, showing neither joy nor anger.

The Chief Elder frowned, "Then, Brother Chu..."

Sect Leader Chu continued, "All I ask for is to take a look at the Formation Diagram of your Five Elements Mountain Guarding Formation..."

The Chief Elder's color changed abruptly and he quickly interjected:

"No, absolutely not!"

The Formation Diagram of the Mountain Guarding Formation?

What are you thinking!

To look at the Formation Diagram of the Large Formation, isn't that like revealing your entire foundations?

This old coot!

The Chief Elder internally cursed.

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family, in a sarcastic tone, added:

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"Spirit Stones are external possessions, but Formation methods are the foundation of one's existence. Getting some Spirit Stones is good enough; coveting someone else's foundations is rather shameless..."

Sect Leader Chu did not get angry, instead he negotiated:

"I would be satisfied with just seeing a First Grade Formation."

"Even a First Grade is not permissible."

"I would just look at the simplified diagrams, not the actual Formation Patterns."

"Brother Chu, please do not make this difficult for me..."

Sect Leader Chu's face became stern, "Brother, do you not trust me?"

"This is not a question of trust..."

Sect Leader Chu knew the Chief Elder's concerns and said:

"There is a vast difference between a First Grade Large Formation and a Second Grade Large Formation, the Formation Patterns are as different as heaven is from earth. Even if the Formation Pivots bear some resemblance, their essence is entirely different..."

"What the Five Elements Sect has laid is a Second Grade Large Formation."

"Seeing only a First Grade Formation Diagram would actually have no real effect on your Five Elements Sect."

The Chief Elder hesitated, "This..."

Sighing, Sect Leader Chu expressed:

"In this life, Chu has no other desires than to expand his knowledge of Formation Diagrams."

"Now that your Five Elements Sect faces peril, I step forward to vent this frustration for you, if for nothing else, for the sake of the old times between our two Sects..."

"Now, with such a minor request, you hesitate and evade me, Brother, it really chills my heart..."

Sect Leader Chu looked disappointed.

But the Chief Elder knew that this was him using reverse psychology, leveraging the situation to pressure him.

If he did not show the Formation Diagram, he would stand by and not help the Five Elements Sect.

The key issue was that the Formation Mysterious Sect, grounded in Formation methods, was very powerful.

While the Five Elements Sect was on the decline, the Formation Mysterious Sect was striving vigorously, with numerous Formation geniuses among its disciples.

If this Chu did not help, the outcome of the contest was indeed uncertain.

Depending solely on the disciples of the Five Elements Sect and the talents from the Shen Family and a few other Noble Clans, it was really uncertain whether they could outperform Mr. Zhuang and his pair of high-level siblings.

Chapter 603:

The Chief Elder pondered for a moment, then said through gritted teeth,

"Fine! In consideration of the centuries of friendship between our two sects, I agree to your terms!"

Sect Leader Chu's expression brightened.

The Chief Elder added, "However, you can only look at this Formation Diagram here in the Formation Pavilion, and you can only look for one day. You may not take it away."

Sect Leader Chu frowned, "What can one discern in just one day?"

Though it was only First Grade, it was still a Large Formation after all...

The Formation Patterns were complex, the Formation Pivot profound, and the Single Formations numerous.

Even though he was of the Golden Core Realm, he was merely a High-Grade Second Rank Formation Master and did not have much confidence that he could master the intricacies of a First Grade Large Formation within a single day.

After thinking it over, Sect Leader Chu felt not that he didn't have much confidence, but rather, he had no confidence at all...

"Three days!"

Sect Leader Chu said, "Give me three days just to look at this Large Formation Diagram!"

The Chief Elder cursed inwardly.

Three days?

Was that what one called a glance?

That seemed an extraordinarily long time for just 'a look'.

"Two days!" the Chief Elder said.

Sect Leader Chu immediately tried to push his luck further. "Two and a half days!"

The Chief Elder firmly replied, "Two days is it! If that doesn't work for you, then forget it. I will find someone else..."

"Fine!" Sect Leader Chu readily agreed, "Two days! Just two days!"

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family could not stand it any longer, speaking in a tone that was neither salty nor light,

"We are Golden Core Cultivators and leaders of our sects, not peddlers in a market town haggling over every trifle, squabbling over petty profits..."

Though his voice carried a strange tone, in his heart, he regretted immensely.

If only he had known, he would have bargained as well!

All under heaven are bustling for profit.

All hustle and bustle draw them to gain.

For the sake of Spirit Stones, it's not demeaning.

To take this opportunity and use some glib words to gain more benefits was better than anything else.

How regrettable, it was too late...

He couldn't very well go back and renegotiate the terms after agreeing to them.

One might shamelessly break one's word, but there are limits to such shamelessness...

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family sighed.

He was also somewhat curious; Sect Leader Chu, in exchange for a sizable amount of Spirit Stones, went for two days of looking at a First Grade Five Elements Mountain Guarding Formation. What was he really up to? PαNObÈ S

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family looked at Sect Leader Chu with an inscrutable gaze but did not pursue the matter further.

Now that the matters of interest were settled, the Chief Elder began discussing the next arrangements,

"That person has a total of three disciples."

"Among them, the youngest disciple is already a First Grade Formation Master at a tender age."

"The other two are siblings with astonishing talent; their depths are unfathomable, and their level of skill in formations is unknown, but since they are the senior disciples, they are undoubtedly even more mysterious than the little student."

"At the very least, they are also First Grade!"

"And they must be seasoned First Grade Formation Masters!"

The Chief Elder was somewhat reluctant to admit it, but still said,

"Now, that Junior Formation Master, with the strength of our Five Elements Sect, we can still manage."

"But those two, with their shockingly brilliant abilities, we are out of our depth..."

The Chief Elder saluted Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family with a cupped fist gesture and said,

"I must request assistance from the Formation Mysterious Sect and the esteemed Proud Sons of Heaven from the Shen Family to take action and help us win the formation matchup, ensuring the inheritance of our Five Elements Sect!"

Sect Leader Chu nodded and said, "Of course."

He too wanted to use this opportunity to showcase the Formation Mysterious Sect's prowess in formations.

Let everyone know that the Five Elements Sect had not fallen behind, but it was their Formation Mysterious Sect that truly stood at the pinnacle of Formations.

The Five Elements Sect sets the stage, and they would perform the play.

It couldn't be more perfect.

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family, remembering the large sum of Spirit Stones and the First Grade Five Elements Mountain Guarding Formation Diagram, yet somewhat puzzled, asked the Chief Elder with a frown,

"Are that person's disciples really so formidable as to warrant such a significant expense on your part?"

The Chief Elder's eyebrows twitched.

If this had been in the past, with the Five Elements Sect's abundance of talent, they naturally wouldn't fear a comparison with Mr. Zhuang's disciples—unless these few disciples really possessed Mr. Zhuang's unparalleled perceptiveness and talent...

The Chief Elder sighed in his heart.

Objectively speaking, they couldn't compare with Mr. Zhuang.

But that being said, there has only been one Mr. Zhuang for so many years.

The disciples of Mr. Zhuang, after all, aren't Mr. Zhuang. Even if they are formidable, there will always be a limit.

It was then that the Chief Elder took up the idea of organizing a debate conference to compare Formations.

Although the Five Elements Sect was not up to par, the Chief Elder wasn't willing to admit it, which would hurt his own face and dampen his dignity. So he said:

"Their talents are exceptionally good, and how their Formation skill truly measures up can only be known after they compete..."

"It's possible that they might not even be a match for the disciples of our Five Elements Sect..."

The Chief Elder began to pat himself on the back, and then he said diplomatically:

"However, this matter relates to the Sect's lineage inheritance, which is of great concern. I must act cautiously and meticulously to prevent any accidents that could cause our Sect's lineage to fall into the hands of others."

"Even if it means paying a certain price, it is worth it!"

Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family both nodded in agreement.

Even if they looked down on the Formation skill level of the Five Elements Sect now, the Chief Elder's considerations were faultless.

When it concerned the Sect's top-secret inheritance, being as cautious as possible was the correct approach.

Sect Leader Chu then said, "Chief Elder, rest assured, the Five Elements Sect, known for the Five Elements Spirit Formation, will ensure that this Ultimate Formation will remain within the Five Elements Sect, and no one will be able to learn it!"

The Chief Elder was overjoyed, "Thank you, Sect Leader Chu!"

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family frowned and said, "However, those who dare covet the Ultimate Formation must be disciples of no ordinary talent."

Sect Leader Chu calmly said, "No matter."

He gave a cold laugh, "The study of Formations is profound and limitless, requiring both talent and hard study. Even with talent, it's impossible to be proficient in everything."

"Formation Patterns, Formation Pivot, Formation eye, Formation principle, as well as some advanced Formation Taoist Skills, they can't be proficient in every aspect."

"Every ruler has its strengths, and every inch has its weaknesses."

"It's the same for even the most gifted Formation Masters."

"If these disciples of Mr. Zhuang are of mediocre strength, we shall win over them with dignity, teaching them a lesson to appreciate the vastness and depth of Formations, the profound and unpredictable nature of Formation principles."

"We'll make them understand that there are always higher skies and other people beyond themselves."

"However, if they indeed have extraordinary talent and outstanding Formation skill..."

"Then we will use our strengths to target their weaknesses!"

"With so many disciples, each with their own specialties, we will certainly have areas where we are stronger than them. In such a comparison, we can also overcome them."

"While it may seem somewhat unsporting, the matter of the Sect's inherited legacy is of great importance, and we need not fuss over these details."

"Winning is winning, losing is losing." Your journey continues at

"Since they dare to come and learn Formations, they should be prepared for this. If their skills are inferior, they have no grounds to argue!"

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The Chief Elder nodded in approval, "Good!"

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family also stroked his beard and praised, "Well said."

After discussing their plans, they sat upright and waited for Mr. Zhuang and his party.

The bustling disciples of the Formation Pavilion gradually quieted down...

Half an hour later, Mr. Zhuang, accompanied by Mo Hua and two others, entered the Formation Pavilion in front of everyone.

The Formation Pavilion instantly became even more silent, so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

The three Golden Core Elders who were meditating with their eyes closed all opened their eyes. Their aged gaze, filled with a glint of sharpness, fell upon the newcomers.

So this is Mr. Zhuang!

Truly a figure of immortal grace and unparalleled presence.

The man and woman following behind—are they the siblings?

Indeed, they possess a regal bearing and flawless charisma.

And the one at the back...

All three were taken aback.

Doesn't he seem rather young?

Although they had all been previously notified of a youngster in his teens—an established First Grade Junior Formation Master—seeing it firsthand was still inconceivable.

He's so young...

Is this truly a First Grade Formation Master?

Are you kidding me...

They had earnestly discussed strategies for so long, and this is what they faced—a mere child.

To compete against him, wouldn't it be bullying?

Chapter 604: Competition (1)

Mo Hua followed Mr. Zhuang into the Formation Pavilion.

Upon entering, they saw the grand and splendid Formation Pavilion, filled with cultivators.

On the platform, three old men with white hair exuded a strong sense of spiritual power that brought an overwhelming sense of pressure.

Golden Core!

It was Mo Hua's first time seeing Golden Core cultivators, which made him somewhat nervous.

However, he then thought of himself as a disciple of Mr. Zhuang and didn't want to let his master's momentum falter, so he straightened his little head and acted arrogantly, just like Mr. Zhuang.

Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi, on the other hand, were completely calm.

For the Bai Family, a powerhouse in its own right, a few Golden Core cultivators were not enough to cause any disturbance.

The Chief Elder raised his hand to signal for silence, then stood up and greeted from a distance, "Mr. Zhuang."

Mr. Zhuang nodded slightly in response.

The Chief Elder said, "Please!"

Mr. Zhuang then sat down on the opposite high platform, facing the three Golden Core Masters directly.

Mo Hua and the other two stood respectfully behind Mr. Zhuang.

After seating himself, the Chief Elder got straight to the point:

"Mr. Zhuang, may we begin the Tao Discussion Meeting?"

Mr. Zhuang replied indifferently, "We may."

"Quite the attitude..." The Chief Elder felt displeased in his heart but kept his expression serene. Turning to the disciples, he proclaimed loudly:

"Our Five Elements Sect is founded upon Formation methods."

"Today we have esteemed guests who have come from afar. To sit and discuss the Tao by exchanging knowledge on formations is indeed a fortunate event..."

"Since we are discussing the Tao through formations, we have rules that follow ancient traditions."

"First to compare Formation principles, second Formation patterns, and third Formation study. Formation principles encompass all things, Formation patterns hold the universe, Formation Patterns, Formation Pivots, Formation eyes, all complementing each other, Formation study..."

This introductory speech by the Chief Elder was dry and lengthy.

Mr. Zhuang became somewhat weary and simply said, "There's no need."

The Chief Elder paused, and the other cultivators also showed signs of surprise.

"It's too troublesome," Mr. Zhuang shook his head and suggested, "Let's keep it simple..."

His gaze sharpened as he looked around, and even though his tone was calm, it contained a hint of disdain:

"Let all the Qi Refinement disciples present, everyone, whether from the Five Elements Sect or not, come forth..."

"Whatever the challenge, if any of you can surpass my disciple in even one aspect, we will no longer study this Five Elements Spirit Formation."

The Formation Pavilion fell into utter silence.

Then there was an uproar from the entire hall.

Arrogant!

It was truly too arrogant!

The Chief Elder's face turned red with anger.

Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family also revealed cold lights in their eyes.

All the Formation Masters in the seats were filled with righteous indignation.

This simply disregarded the Five Elements Sect... no, all the Formation Masters in the entire state boundary of Dali Mountain!

Mo Hua, standing behind Mr. Zhuang, couldn't help but open his mouth in shock.

So this was what his master was like...

Such arrogance...

He had been with Mr. Zhuang day and night and thought that his master had always been gentle, elegant, amiable, and approachable...

In contrast, Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi were not surprised at all.

"Good!"

The Chief Elder was seething with rage and gritted his teeth.

You're seeking your own death!

Don't blame us for bullying then!

The assembly was a gathering of hundreds of disciples and Proud Sons of Heaven from all over the state boundary of Dali Mountain, representing clans and sects, and nearly all the Formation talents.

You think your mere three disciples can win against so many?

Foolish dreams!

"Who will come first?" the Chief Elder asked coldly.

A disciple in a blue robe stood up and said, "I am but a novice, and I wish to exchange knowledge on formations with the distinguished guest."

This had already been arranged beforehand.

This disciple was nearly at the strength of a First-grade Formation Master and ranked within the top five among the Five Elements Sect's younger generation of Formation Masters.

The Chief Elder nodded slightly and looked to Mr. Zhuang.

Mr. Zhuang smiled faintly and patted Mo Hua on the shoulder.

Mo Hua stepped forward and said in a crisp voice, "I will compete!"

Although expected, the Chief Elder still asked, "What about your senior brother and sister? Aren't they competing?"

In front of the Golden Core Masters, Mo Hua still felt a bit nervous.

"Can't lose face for Master..."

"Can't lose face for Master..."

Mo Hua repeated this to himself twice, then, imitating Mr. Zhuang's manner, he held his head high and feigned "arrogance" as he said:

"You are not yet worthy to compete with my senior brother and sister!"

"Get through me first, then we'll talk!"

A little kid, with such big words!

The disciples from all sects and clans in the seats grew even angrier.

The three Golden Core Master cultivators, however, remained composed.

Mo Hua's words might have been arrogant, but he was clearly nervous and lacked confidence.

After all, he was young and inexperienced. Facing these old foxes, he showed a hint of fear.

For this reason, the three Golden Core Elders looked down on Mo Hua a little bit more.

The Chief Elder turned to Mr. Zhuang to inquire:

"Mr. Zhuang, what shall we compare?"

Mr. Zhuang articulated nonchalantly, "Anything will do."

The Chief Elder sneered internally, "All right, then we will follow the rules of the Five Elements Sect!"

"Let's start with a First-grade Formation Method!"

Skiping the verbal debate over Formation principles, they would get straight to the point with Drawing Formation, where the true quality would be revealed in the strokes. The first challenge would be a First-grade Formation Method to test the waters and see just how much ability this little Formation Master had.

"A First-grade Heavy Water Formation, time limit of two hours, to see who can draw it better."

After the Chief Elder finished speaking, he looked at Mo Hua and asked, "What do you think, young brother?"

Mo Hua hesitated for a moment.

Heavy Water Formation?

What kind of formation is that?

He was quite sure he had never learned it...

But as long as it was a First-grade Formation, it should be fine...

Mo Hua nodded, "Okay."

The Chief Elder nodded slightly in return.

Even though this was merely a test, there was a method to it.

This Heavy Water Formation was a treasured First-grade Formation held by the Five Elements Sect, with a rare function, not widely known or learned because of its difficulty.

Apart from the disciples of the Five Elements Sect, other Formation Masters would generally not know it.

Chapter 605: Competition (2)

He had deliberately chosen this to be the exam question.

If Mr. Zhuang's young disciple had learned it, then there was nothing to be done, it would simply mean his Formation experience was indeed vast.

Everyone competed using Formations, to decide victory or defeat.

But if he did not know it, then he was almost certain to lose without a doubt.

Two hours, including both learning and Drawing Formation, was simply not enough time.

The Chief Elder snorted coldly.

Originally, choosing this Formation as the test was somewhat "winning without honor."

But now that Mr. Zhuang was so arrogant, making such bold statements, it was no longer unfair for him to take advantage of this unconventional question, given the circumstances.

Mo Hua and the blue-robed Sect Disciple from the Five Elements Sect went to the center of the field, each sitting at a desk, several yards apart, shielded by a Formation. They could neither see each other clearly nor spy with their Divine Sense.

Of course, with three Golden Core Cultivators and around ten at the Foundation Establishment level present, there was no chance for any foul play.

After a while, the Formation Diagrams were distributed.

Upon receiving the Formation Diagram, Mo Hua frowned.

Heavy Water Formation...

He truly had never learned it.

The Formation Patterns were somewhat rare; the Formation Pivot was rather simple; the demand for Divine Sense was a bit higher than usual, with more than nine Patterns but less than ten.

The overall difficulty was about the same as the first rank Melting Fire Formation.

Mo Hua assessed it for a moment and then felt a surge of relief—and a bit of excitement.

He hadn't expected to learn a new Formation during a competition...

What a gain!

Mo Hua then started to concentrate intensely, staring at the Heavy Water Formation Diagram, memorizing the Formation Pivot and Patterns, while calculating the trajectory of the Spiritual Power in his mind.

Meanwhile, the blue-robed disciple had already started drawing.

The Heavy Water Formation was one of the treasured Formations of the Five Elements Sect. He had learned it long ago, and these past few days, under the Chief Elder's mentoring, he had practiced it over and over, knowing it like the back of his hand.

It was as if the examiner had leaked the questions before the test and allowed him to memorize the answers more than ten times.

So right now, he drew the Heavy Water Formation with ease and skill.

Mo Hua was examining the Formation Diagram while the blue-robed disciple was Drawing Formation.

The Chief Elder could see everything clearly from above and nodded slightly.

He was now sure that this young Formation Master had never learned the Heavy Water Formation!

Good!

The Chief Elder was inwardly thrilled.

A swift and first victory.

This first match, they should have won.

Once this young Formation Master lost, it would be his Senior Brothers' and Senior Sisters' turn.

He was curious to see just how skilled Mr. Zhuang's prized disciples truly were in Formations.

...

Time trickled by, second after second...

An hour later.

The blue-robed disciple had already completed the majority of the Formation.

Mo Hua had at last finished looking over the Heavy Water Formation.

And after studying, he began to draw.

The moment Mo Hua made his move, the Chief Elder noticed and mused to himself,

"Does he know he doesn't have enough time and has to bite the bullet and draw it?"

The Chief Elder understood all too well.

When he had taken his Formation Master Grading and encountered unknown Formations, he had acted the same way.

As the time was nearly up, he couldn't leave a blank paper.

He had to draw as much as he could.

Perhaps he could even guess a few Formation Patterns correctly...

The experienced Chief Elder felt he understood thoroughly.

But as he watched, a flicker of surprise crossed his mind:

"This young Formation Master... Not to mention anything else, at least the way he moves his pen and the momentum of his Formation Painting are quite professional..." **raNo6E5**

Another half-hour passed.

The blue-robed disciple had finished and carefully checked his work once more, nodding in satisfaction.

The Formation was complete, the Patterns smooth.

Everything that should be there was there.

Though there were minor imperfections, they were like trivial flaws on white jade, not significant.

He had outperformed himself, living up to the Chief Elder's expectations!

The blue-robed disciple was filled with pride.

On the other side, Mo Hua had also finished drawing, and after inspecting it once, he shook his head slightly.

It was his first time drawing it, and while his pen technique wasn't skilled enough, he drew strictly according to the Formation Diagram, with excessive precision but lacking in artistic spirit; it was missing something.

But it was passable.

He might as well submit it and see.

The two of them sealed their Formations and handed in their papers.

The two sealed Formations were then placed in front of the three Elders, including the Chief Elder.

The Chief Elder glanced at Mr. Zhuang.

Mr. Zhuang said, "Please have a look."

The Chief Elder nodded and first examined the Formation submitted by his Sect's Disciple.

After just a glance, he was reassured.

Well drawn!

Even better than when he was teaching it.

He had indeed put in a lot of effort.

Then he eagerly opened Mo Hua's Formation.

But after a glance, he frowned.

Where was the Formation?

Why was there only the Formation Diagram?

He flipped through it and was taken aback again.

Two identical Formation Diagrams?

Upon careful examination, the Chief Elder realized that one of them was freshly inked, the ink was different, and while the penmanship was extremely meticulous, the Patterns were exactly the same without a hair's breadth of difference, as if carved from the same mold. At first glance, it looked like there were just two Formation Diagrams.

A tremor went through the Chief Elder's heart.

Could the young Formation Master have painted a Formation exactly identical to the sample Formation Diagram?

Cheating?

But how could he cheat in the presence of three Golden Core Cultivators?

The Chief Elder looked carefully again and, after a thorough confirmation, had to admit that these precise and meticulous Patterns were indeed hand-drawn by the young Cultivator...

The Chief Elder took a deep breath and looked at Mo Hua with a more solemn gaze.

To draw to this extent, he must have practiced this Formation countless times.

And to be able to master such an obscure Formation to this level of proficiency...

He was truly worthy of being Mr. Zhuang's disciple; he had some real skills.

But then he thought of what had happened earlier and felt displeased.

"This cunning kid, staring at the Formation Diagram earlier, pretending not to know it all this time —was he playing me?"

"Mocking me?"

Such a nasty character!

Though talented, he lacks virtue!

The Chief Elder internally assessed.

Chapter 606: Competition (3)

Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family, upon seeing Mo Hua's Formation, were also secretly astonished.

"Though meticulously executed with surplus neatness, it lacks in charm, having a bit too much of a craftsman's air. But for someone of such a young age to be able to draw to this extent, with such precision, is already very commendable."

At the very least, it's better than those drawn by the disciples of the Five Elements Sect.

The Chief Elder then compared it to the Heavy Water Formation drawn earlier by the disciple in the blue robe and let out a slight sigh.

Although their disciple drew well, it was merely drawing.

There were quite a few flaws in his brushwork.

It didn't seem too bad until the comparison was made.

But once compared, it just didn't hold up.

When it comes to Formations, good is good, bad is bad.

In front of so many Formation Masters, and especially in front of Mr. Zhuang, the Chief Elder could only concede:

"This round..."

The Chief Elder paused for a moment, thought hard, and then finally remembered the name of the young Formation Master.

It seemed like this name was very easy to overlook and hard to remember.

"...Mo Hua, is slightly superior."

Mo Hua's expression brightened.

The disciple in the blue robe, however, had a defeated look on his face, unable to comprehend how he lost, and where exactly he fell short.

After drawing the Formation and warming up, Mo Hua was no longer nervous.

The first victory was a success, earning face for his master.

Moreover, he had learned a new Formation - the Heavy Water Formation was a free lesson provided by the Five Elements Sect.

Mo Hua was very pleased in his heart and looked forward with even greater anticipation to the upcoming competitions.

In the glittering Immortal City filled with cultivators.

Mo Hua leaned on a tall desk, swinging his legs and asked with shining eyes:

"What's next?"

The Chief Elder's brow twitched, feeling a faint pressure emanating from the innocent and lively Mo Hua.

His gaze hardened slightly, and after a moment of contemplation, he said solemnly:

"Speed of drawing!"

Mo Hua was taken aback, then understood.

It's about who can draw faster.

The speed of a Formation Master's drawing is important.

The faster the Formation is drawn, the more Formations there will be. This speed matters in the construction of large-scale Tao Cultivation projects, production, Taoist Soldiers expeditions, fights to the death between Cultivators... ㄖǎNǒBĚŚ

In any situation involving the application of Formations.

Being one minute faster in drawing a Formation could mean having an advantage.

Especially when Formation Masters are in confrontation, if your opponent has finished setting up their Formation while you're still huffing and puffing drawing Formation Patterns, then the Formation you haven't finished can only be drawn in your next life...

But speaking of speed of drawing, this is also Mo Hua's strength.

Heaven Yan Jue enhances Divine Sense control.

Back in Tongxian City, constructing the Artifact Refining Workshop and Pill Refining Workshop, as well as later building the Five Elements Slaughter Demon Great Formation, all those Formations were done almost single-handedly by him.

Not to mention now, he has also comprehended the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

"Come on!"

Mo Hua said expectantly.

He wanted to know if the Five Elements Sect would let him learn any Formation for free this time.

The Chief Elder frowned, sensing something amiss, but still clenched his teeth and waved his hand.

A disciple in a gold robe stepped out from the crowd and sat opposite Mo Hua.

Lean and tall, with an upward tilt at the corners of his eyebrows, he seemed quite arrogant.

The Formation Diagrams were distributed.

Mo Hua took a glance and felt a bit disappointed.

It was a Sharp Gold Formation.

He had already studied this Formation.

He didn't manage to freeload a new Formation...

Mo Hua was somewhat regretful.

Since he had learned it already, there was no time to waste; best to make it quick...

After the Chief Elder said "begin," Mo Hua and the disciple in the gold robe both started drawing at the same time.

The disciple in the gold robe was very fast.

His Spiritual Root was special, affined to gold Spiritual Power, and so he was extremely adept at drawing any Gold-series Formation Method, twice as fast as anyone else.

In the entire Five Elements Sect, no disciple could draw the Gold-series Formation Method faster than him.

He was therefore highly regarded by the Chief Elder.

The disciple in the gold robe, full of confidence, wrote with vigor...

But before he had drawn many Patterns, he heard a crisp and slightly immature voice say:

"I'm done!"

The hand of the disciple in the gold robe shook, pressing down a brushstroke that smeared a wide swath of gold ink on the paper.

But he couldn't afford to attend to that.

He stiffly turned his neck to see Mo Hua sitting on the chair, gently swaying, eagerly waiting to hand in his work.

The disciple in the gold robe could hardly believe it.

How long had it been?

And he was finished already?

When Mo Hua's completed Formation was laid out in front of everyone, the Chief Elder's expression became even more somber.

Down to the last detail, it was indeed the Sharp Gold Formation.

The Chief Elder was incredulous.

And even Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family beside him couldn't snap back to reality.

It was too fast.

All they saw was Mo Hua pick up the brush, dip in the ink, make the stroke, and then with a swishing sound, as though playing around, he finished drawing the Sharp Gold Formation in just a few motions...

This was a First-grade Formation Method.

Could a First-grade Formation Master draw a First-grade Formation Method so quickly?

Is this really the skill level a First-grade Formation Master should have?

The three Golden Core Elders fell into a prolonged silence, unable to utter a single word.

Mo Hua, however, was getting a bit bored waiting and asked:

"What's next?"

Once the competition was over, he could help his master regain his pride, and then he would be able to learn the Ultimate Formation with Thirteen Stripes.

What else is there to compare?

In Mo Hua's crisp voice, there was an air of ease.

This time, not only the Chief Elder, but also Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family felt the pressure emanating from the young Qi Refinement cultivator in the room...

Chapter 607: Who Else (1)

"What should we do?"

The Chief Elder and two others began to communicate with Divine Sense.

"Our Five Elements Sect has already fought the opening battles and lost two in a row, it's not suitable to continue fighting. Next up should be the Formation Mysterious Sect and the Proud Son of Heaven from the Shen Family to show their skills..."

The Chief Elder spoke with subtlety.

Sect Leader Chu and the Elder of the Shen Family were well aware of what he implied.

The Five Elements Sect was out of options.

Among the Qi Refinement Disciples, those two who fought earlier were already the best they could offer, yet they were effortlessly defeated by the Junior Formation Master.

Unless they allowed a Foundation Establishment First or Second Grade Disciple to step forward.

Otherwise, sending any more of the Five Elements Sect's inferior disciples would only result in further embarrassment.

But asking a Foundation Establishment disciple to fight would be completely bullying the weak, shameless. Such an act would be even more embarrassing to make public.

"Chief Elder, rest assured, I always do as I promise," Sect Leader Chu said with an air of ease.

"Next, let one of my Formation Mysterious Sect's disciples meet this Junior Formation Master."

The Formation Mysterious Sect was unlike the Five Elements Sect.

While the Five Elements Sect had been declining, the Formation Mysterious Sect was gradually flourishing.

Several geniuses in the sect possessed talents that were even superior to what I had in my youth.

Sect Leader Chu glanced at Mo Hua, who was sitting leisurely in the great hall, and slowly said:

"Young brother, let's compete with a First-grade Formation Method."

"A First-grade Formation Method?" Mo Hua was puzzled, "Didn't we already compete with that?"

"This time it's not about who draws better or faster; it's about who draws the more difficult one..."

Sect Leader Chu's eyes flashed with a sharp light. "I will send out a disciple from Formation Mysterious Sect. Each of you will draw a Formation. Whoever's Formation is more difficult, requires stronger Divine Sense, contains more Formation Patterns, will be the victor."

Mo Hua nodded, "Who will it be?"

Amidst the crowd, a Formation Mysterious Sect Disciple clad in a Five Elements Sect Taoist robe stepped forward.

Their previous conspiracy was to let the talented Formation geniuses pretend to be Five Elements Sect Disciples for the competition.

But now that Mr. Zhuang has exposed them and everyone present had sharp eyes, continuing the charade would only be self-deceptive and ridiculous.

This Disciple, full of talent, cupped his fists and said:

"I am Chu Xuan, a Direct Disciple of the Formation Mysterious Sect."

Mo Hua also cupped his tiny hands and said, "Mo Hua."

Then, feeling he missed a bit of grandeur without adding a title, he continued, "... a Direct Disciple of my master!"

He thought this statement was imposing enough.

Yet Chu Xuan found him somewhat childish and couldn't help shaking his head.

Afterward, the two started Drawing Formations.

Chu Xuan showed confidence in his strokes, as if inspired by the divine.

But Mo Hua was entangled in thoughts.

Competing on difficulty?

What level of difficulty should he choose for his Formation then?

Should it be the nine-patterned Reversed Spirit Formation, the eleven-patterned Thick Earth Formation, or the twelve-patterned Spiritual Pivot Formation? 否

If it's moderately difficult, he might not win.

If it's too difficult, though, it might be too ostentatious.

It's better to keep some of the real strength hidden...

Mo Hua discretely measured up Chu Xuan, calculating that he only needed to draw a slightly more difficult Formation to win. This Chu Xuan seemed quite polite, with proper speech and demeanor.

A little more difficult, win by a bit, leave him some face.

If it's significantly more difficult, it would show too much of a gap between them, which could be seen as impolite.

Mo Hua was thoughtful and considerate in his deliberation.

But how to know the difficulty of the Formation he could draw?

After some thought, Mo Hua's eyes brightened a bit.

He could calculate it.

After all, each was drawing their own, so sneaking a few glances wouldn't count as cheating.

Mo Hua took a look at Chu Xuan, slightly activated his Divine Sense, made a few calculations, and then he understood.

Although he didn't know which Formation Chu Xuan was drawing, he deduced from the trajectory of the Spiritual Power that it was likely above nine patterns and very close to ten patterns, but not quite there yet.

It had a hint of the flavor of an Ultimate Formation.

But just a hint.

Mo Hua, who drew Ultimate Formations daily, was very sensitive to their essence.

This Disciple named Chu Xuan was drawing a Formation very close to an Ultimate Formation, but not exactly one.

However, it was still very impressive.

This was one of the most gifted First-grade Formation Masters Mo Hua had ever seen.

Such a Formation Master should be well encouraged, not too harshly criticized.

The young Mo Hua felt a sense of appreciation for talent and nodded slightly, beginning to draw his own Formation.

...

Atop the grand hall, the Chief Elder looked at Chu Xuan with some surprise.

"Is this... the Dry Wood Reviving Spring Formation?"

Sect Leader Chu nodded, "Indeed."

"The Dry Wood Reviving Spring Formation, is it not the hereditary ten-patterned Ultimate Formation of your Formation Mysterious Sect?" the Old Ancestor of Shen Family also frowned slightly.

Sect Leader Chu sighed, "The hereditary one is an Ultimate Formation, but this child Chu Xuan's drawing doesn't count as one."

He paused, then calmly explained:

"A ten-patterned Formation requires Foundation Establishment Divine Sense to learn."

Experience tales at

"But a Qi Refinement Disciple doesn't have Foundation Establishment Divine Sense and hence absolutely cannot learn it."

"Therefore, generation after generation of our Sect's Elders have been dedicatedly researching how to simplify this Ultimate Formation so that Qi Refinement Disciples can also learn it."

"After the painstaking efforts of four generations of Sect Leaders, my generation has finally seen some results."

Sect Leader Chu spoke modestly, but his face couldn't hide the pride, clearly very pleased with himself.

"Now, although this Formation's effectiveness has been reduced a bit, it is infinitely close to an Ultimate Formation."

"What's more important is that Qi Refinement Disciples can truly learn it."

"It's just that the Divine Sense required is extremely high, far surpassing the demands of the average ten-patterned Formation, and the difficulty is also exceedingly high..."

Sect Leader Chu stroked his beard in contemplation.

Though he spoke humbly, everyone could see he was boasting.

But there was nothing they could do about it, even though it was obvious.

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family shook his head.

The Chief Elder was envious, jealous, and a little disheartened.

Chapter 608:

The standard of formations at Formation Mysterious Sect was rising by the day.

However, the Five Elements Sect was in decline, generation after generation... Neglecting formations, building the sect on mere earth and wood, its prosperity waning, it would sooner or later fade away.

At the same time, he felt somewhat relieved.

A Qi-refining cultivator, an intricate formation very close to an Ultimate Formation, a first-grade formation with nine peaks of patterns, and the limit of Divine Sense for someone at the realm of Qi Refinement... The odds of winning this competition were very high.

The inheritance of the Five Elements Sect might be preserved after all.

The three Golden Core Elders sitting at the top all had their own thoughts.

Mr. Zhuang's attitude was calm, without the slightest ripple.

In the center of the grand hall, Mo Hua and another person were each painting their formations.

After an unknown amount of time had passed, both finished their formation paintings almost simultaneously, sealed them, and handed them in.

The Chief Elder first looked at the "Dry Wood Reviving Spring Formation" drawn by Chu Xuan, his expression one of sentiment and amazement.

This was a "Pseudo-Ultimate Formation".

An intricate formation almost at the level of an Ultimate Formation.

It was a ladder for a Qi-refining cultivator to touch upon the echelons beyond grade, reaching for the Ultimate Formation.

Naturally, the cultivator who drew this formation was extraordinarily talented.

But to be able to simplify this formation for use was the true reflection of a sect's foundational strength in formations.

However, these had nothing to do with the current Five Elements Sect anymore...

The Chief Elder sighed, then immediately flipped to the formation drawn by Mo Hua. After one glance, his hands involuntarily trembled...

Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family noticed the Chief Elder's unusual behavior and also looked over, their gazes moving from his astonished expression to the formation in his hands, causing both their hearts to shake and their brows to furiously twitch.

Ten patterns!

An Ultimate Formation?

Could this young lad truly draw an Ultimate Formation?!

And it was not a simplified Ultimate Formation.

It was the real deal, not a single line amiss, an Ultimate Formation containing ten Formation Patterns!

All three of their expressions grew solemn.

"Is this... an Ultimate Formation?"

"First-grade with ten patterns, undoubtedly an Ultimate Formation."

"What kind of Ultimate Formation?"

Sect Leader Chu frowned, "Our Formation Mysterious Sect doesn't have this kind of inheritance; I can't recognize it..."

The Chief Elder and Old Ancestor of the Shen Family were also puzzled.

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family transmitted with Divine Sense, his voice trembling:

"To be able to draw a first-grade formation with ten patterns, doesn't that mean that this youngster, despite having only Qi-refining cultivation, possesses Foundation Establishment Divine Sense?"

Sect Leader Chu was extremely startled.

There are great limits in the cultivation path.

A Qi-refining cultivator refines Qi for Spiritual Power, solidifies Qi for Divine Sense; these are the shackles of the Heavenly Dao.

In his whole life, he had never seen a Qi-refining cultivator possess Divine Sense at the Foundation Establishment Stage.

At most, he had only heard of it.

And it was the kind of hearsay that bordered on legend.

After a moment of contemplation, the Chief Elder shook his head, "Not necessarily..."

"How so?" Sect Leader Chu asked.

The Chief Elder frowned and pondered, "The realm of Qi Refinement, Divine Sense of Foundation Establishment, how could that be so easily achieved? Even Mr. Zhuang of years past, with his exceptional talent, never broke through in Divine Sense..."

"I guess, this young cultivator can draw a first-grade formation with ten patterns because, like Mr. Zhuang, he has learned that inheritance!"

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family couldn't help but ask, "What inheritance?"

The Chief Elder's gaze turned serious, "The supreme inheritance of the Innate Formations that can integrate all the origins of formations, to understand one is to understand them all!"

Both Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family gasped.

The Chief Elder's heart also sank.

He had misjudged!

Continue reading on

He had previously thought this Junior Formation Master was merely someone Mr. Zhuang had used to set the stage, and even as a first-grade Formation Master, his strength was just somewhat strong and might not even be highly regarded by Mr. Zhuang.

Now it seemed, he was greatly mistaken!

This Junior Formation Master had a profound mastery of formations, an immense strength in formation arts!

Even, he might have been taught that orthodox and supreme inheritance of Innate Formations by Mr. Zhuang!

It showed that this Junior Formation Master was highly favored by Mr. Zhuang.

And this Junior Formation Master was merely the junior-most disciple; above him, there was a pair of senior brother and sister.

If he could draw a first-grade formation with ten patterns, what about his senior brother and sister?

Could they draw eleven patterns, or even... twelve patterns?

The Chief Elder broke into a cold sweat.

No wonder that Mr. Zhuang was so arrogant!

He truly had the capital to be arrogant.

Sitting down below, Mo Hua, seeing their hesitance, then inquired, "How is it?"

The Chief Elder's mouth twitched slightly, a bitter tone in his voice:

"Chu Xuan's drawn formation, the Dry Wood Reviving Spring Formation, a peak of a first-grade with nine patterns..."

"Mo Hua's drawn formation, a first-grade with ten patterns..."

"Mo Hua... wins."

First-grade with ten patterns?!

Chu Xuan, who had thought the victory was in his grasp, immediately stood up, looking at Mo Hua in disbelief.

The other disciples were also abuzz with discussion:

"Isn't a first-grade just nine patterns, how can there be a formation with ten?"

"You don't even know this?"

"You must be from the Five Elements Sect..."

"Forget learning formations..."

"A first-grade with ten patterns is an Ultimate Formation, an extraordinary formation that is generally unattainable."

"But isn't he just Qi-refined, how can he learn a ten-pattern formation?"

"How would I know?"

"Why don't you go ask?"

A disciple whispered, "Didn't you see the Chief Elder's face? It looked like a pig's kidney, he's obviously not happy. Who would dare ask at this time and risk stirring him up?"

"You're dead meat now, the Chief Elder is a Golden Core, he must have heard what you said..."

The disciple's face turned white, covering his face with a sleeve, hoping the Chief Elder wouldn't see him.

...

Chu Xuan was overwhelmed with emotions, his face showing defeat and reluctance, but at last, he let out a sigh, shed off the pride he had on his face, and respectfully gave Mo Hua a bow.

Mo Hua returned the gesture, nodding silently in his heart.

This Chu Xuan, he had a good temperament, indeed had the potential to be crafted.

Amidst some noise in the Formation Pavilion, and after a while when things settled down a bit, Mo Hua began to soul-searchingly inquire:

"What's next?"

Chapter 609:

No one dared to answer.

The disciples in the hall all looked towards the three Golden Core Elders sitting above them.

The expressions of the three Golden Core Elders were gloomy.

They had clearly underestimated this Junior Formation Master.

Their initial plan had been to use the disciples of the Five Elements Sect to deal with this Junior Formation Master, as a test.

Then, the Formation Mysterious Sect and the Shen Family would send out their talented disciples to handle the brother and sister who were like dazzling dragons and radiant phoenixes.

But now, they were close to being defeated by this "test water" Junior Formation Master...

Whether it was due to naturally strong Divine Sense or a heritage in the art of Formations, this Junior Formation Master was a tough nut to crack.

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family transmitted a message, "What should we do?"

The Chief Elder's gaze shifted as he said in a deep voice,

"At this point, this competition is no longer just about the loss or gain of a single sect; it's about the honor and disgrace of an entire state boundary. In our Dali Mountain State boundary, Formation geniuses are plentiful. If we even fail to defeat this Junior Formation Master, wouldn't that be a huge embarrassment?"

Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family frowned.

What the Chief Elder said was deliberately alarmist to drag them into this.

But they couldn't deny it either.

That was indeed the fact.

However, Sect Leader Chu had reservations, "Even if we win against this Junior Formation Master, there are still his senior brothers and sisters..."

"Otherwise," the Chief Elder's eyes flashed with a thought, "I suspect that this Mr. Zhuang might be bluffing..."

"This young Cultivator already has an astonishing talent."

"Such talented Formation Masters are not cabbages; they can't be found just anywhere."

"Even if his senior brothers and sisters are stronger than him, I estimate they can't be that much stronger..."

Sect Leader Chu and the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family both nodded.

When put that way, it really did make some sense.

Once the bow has been drawn, there's no turning back. At this point, they had to bite the bullet and press on.

"Being capable of a First-grade Ultimate Formation means the foundation within the realm of first-grade Formations must be extremely deep. Any further tests on our part are unlikely to give us any chance of winning." ㄟㄣㄣㄣ ㄟㄣㄣ

"Many of our earlier arrangements are now redundant."

"We can only test with some more unconventional methods..."

...

After discussing through Divine Sense transmission, the Chief Elder then addressed Mo Hua:

"Junior Gentleman..."

His form of address also became a few degrees more respectful.

Being able to draw a First-grade Ultimate Formation in the Qi-refining Realm, he was as deserving of the title "Gentleman" as Mr. Zhuang.

"Do you understand how to decipher Formations?" asked the Chief Elder.

Mo Hua nodded, "Somewhat."

Sect Leader Chu nodded.

Then, another disciple stepped forward from the crowd and with a cupped fist salute said,

"Junior Chu He, with only average accomplishments in Formation arts but a fondness for 'Formation Explanation'. I have a bit of insight, although my skills are not refined. I would like to ask for guidance from this Junior Formation Master."

Indeed, Formation Explanation is a niche art within Formations.

Apart from descendants of Noble Clans or Sect disciples who have inherited Formation methods, few Formation Masters spend time studying Formation Explanation.

Most Cultivators focus on breaking Formations rather than explaining them.

Breaking a Formation is noisy but straightforward, whereas explaining a Formation is discreet but complex and profound.

Although Mo Hua was very adept at Formation Explanation and used it quite often, having mastered it thoroughly,

He also remembered what Mr. Zhuang had said. Mr. Zhuang had stated that Formation Explanation was a way for Formation Masters to "augment intelligence" and "recreate," difficult and niche, with few learners.

Now, Mo Hua knew that what Mr. Zhuang called "augment intelligence" and "recreation" was definitely not the same as what ordinary people would consider.

In truth, Formation Masters proficient in Formation Explanation are as rare as phoenix feathers and qilin horns.

The Examination posed by the Chief Elder was also extremely straightforward.

Explain a Compound Formation.

See who gets it right and who does it faster.

Mo Hua felt rather unenthusiastic upon seeing the Compound Formation.

It was indeed too simple.

It was just a Compound Formation consisting of three Single Formations, with only one of them being a nine-pattern Formation, while the others were a seven-pattern and an eight-pattern Formation.

This didn't even qualify as an appetizer.

Mo Hua looked up.

The Formation Pavilion was bustling with many more disciples.

Continuing this competition, who knew when it would end.

It needed to be "quickly resolved" once again.

So, while that disciple named Chu He was still explaining the first Formation, Mo Hua had already swiftly and effortlessly completed his explanation. Then he casually said,

"I'm done."

The Chief Elder and the others were startled once more, their hearts becoming somewhat numb by now. [Explore more at](#)

Mo Hua had undeniably won the Formation Explanation.

Mo Hua said bluntly, "Just come at me, and make it quick. I'm short on time..."

He was eager to learn the Five Elements Spirit Formation and then focus on Foundation Establishment.

His words came across as rather arrogant.

Everyone present was angry.

Soon, disciples who were not satisfied stood up to challenge Mo Hua in Formations.

Yet no matter what they tried, they were quickly defeated. When it came to Formations alone, none of the First-grade Formation Masters present were a match for him.

Gradually, everyone present lost their anger, replaced only with gravity.

A tinge of panic began to surface in their hearts.

He was skilled at drawing Formations, quick at it, knew Ultimate Formations of the First-grade, and was an expert at Formation Explanation.

He could even be considered impeccable...

In the Dali Mountain State boundary, disciples of Formation Masters gathered from all around, but surely not one of them could defeat this young cultivator...

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family no longer kept his own counsel and instructed,

"Shen Wen."

A disciple stood out, his eyes blazing, as if he had been holding back for a long time.

"I'll compete with you in Calculation!"

The Chief Elder was greatly surprised, and Sect Leader Chu was also shaken.

Even Mr. Zhuang appeared slightly astonished.

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family sighed deeply.

This was his trump card, something he had hoped to keep hidden.

Originally, he did not want to reveal it.

Shen Wen was his great-grandson, born with keen Divine Sense and meticulous thoughts. By chance, he had been taken in by a Great Formation Master and taught the Divine Sense Calculation Method.

The Great Formation Master had instructed him that Formation Calculation was a matter of secrecy, not to be disclosed, and he should be careful not to let any information leak out.

Thus, he had always kept his lips sealed.

But now, at the critical moment, he had no choice but to reveal it.

Calculation, huh...

This Golden Core Cultivator, a High-Grade Second Rank Formation Master himself, did not know this Formation knowledge. Perhaps this Junior Formation Master would at last...

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family's thoughts were interrupted halfway when he heard Mo Hua casually say,

"Okay."

The Old Ancestor of the Shen Family's recently eased heart was clenched with tension again.

No way...

You, this child, know Divine Sense Calculation too?

Thus, the Old Ancestor of the Shen Family quickly found out that not only did Mo Hua know it, but he also performed the calculations quickly and accurately, with a relaxed and effortless demeanor.

The two were simultaneously calculating the Spiritual Power trajectories of a Formation.

Just as Shen began his calculations, Mo Hua had already finished.

Shen was defeated quickly and thoroughly, his face a complete loss of soul.

Similarly, Mo Hua started asking again,

"Anything else to compete in?"

The entire place fell deathly silent.

Seeing no one speaking, Mo Hua changed his question, "Anyone else?"

All the disciples were pale-faced.

Even the three Golden Core Elders were too shocked to speak.

They had never imagined that what was supposed to be a grand event would conclude so swiftly.

This Junior Formation Master, merely sitting quietly at the desk, became an impregnable gate, against whom none could prevail, truly defeating all the genius Formation Masters of the entire state boundary...

Just like Mr. Zhuang years ago...

No, there were some differences.

The Chief Elder's painful memories surfaced one after another.

Mr. Zhuang in those days was like a sharp sword bared for all to see, one they couldn't look at directly.

But this Junior Formation Master surnamed Mo, he had a reserved edge, a congenial temperament, like a naturally formed uncut jade.

He was simply an evil monster!

...

The Formation Pavilion was silent for a long time, and an eerie stillness fell among the disciples.

The three Golden Core Elders were also at a loss.

After what seemed like an eternity, Mr. Zhuang slowly stood up and said indifferently, "Are we done competing?"

The Chief Elder's heart quivered, but he couldn't find the words to reply.

Mr. Zhuang gave him a look, and with an unquestionable tone, said,

"The winner has been decided. Tomorrow, we shall come to the Formation Pavilion to learn the Five Element Ultimate Formation!"

Chapter 610: Immortal Sky Formation Flow (1)

The Tao Discussion Meeting had ended.

Mo Hua had dominated all four corners.

The Five Elements Sect was utterly defeated.

Mr. Zhuang left the Formation Pavilion with his usual composed demeanor, shrouded in a solitary pride with a hint of calm nonchalance.

It seemed that such a minor scene was not worth his emotional investment.

But Mo Hua knew Mr. Zhuang well and was aware that although his expression appeared calm, he was certainly very pleased inside.

With Mr. Zhuang happy, Mo Hua also felt the trip had not been in vain, and he couldn't help but stand tall and proud, following behind Mr. Zhuang.

Seeing his junior fellow disciple gaining the limelight, Bai Zisheng nodded slightly, his face expressing a reflected glory.

Bai Zixi also glanced at Mo Hua, her eyes like rippling water, her lips holding a faint smile.

...

The master and disciples left the Formation Pavilion and returned to their lodgings.

Mr. Zhuang then praised Mo Hua, saying:

"Well done!"

Mo Hua grinned and said, "It's all thanks to Master's excellent teaching!"

Mr. Zhuang felt very gratified.

Having an obedient disciple really made a difference.

Mr. Zhuang added:

"Rest for today, and tomorrow you'll start learning the Five Elements Spirit Formation."

"Yes!"

Mo Hua nodded fiercely, full of anticipation.

Then he suddenly remembered something and seemed a bit worried, "Master, will the Five Elements Sect allow me to learn the Five Elements Spirit Formation?" Experience new stories with

Mr. Zhuang's gaze became slightly stern, "Considering the legacy of the ancestors of the Five Elements Sect, I have already given them enough respect..."

"The rules were set by them, the examination questions were devised by them, and they were even allowed to seek outside help, yet they lost fair and square..."

"If they still prevaricate and do not honor the promises of the past, then they cannot blame me for disregarding past affection..."

Mo Hua felt reassured, but still harbored some concerns:

"Even if they let me learn, they will probably create obstacles, right?"

Mr. Zhuang nodded, "That is to be expected, but such sneaky tactics are tolerable as long as they are not too excessive; otherwise, I won't bother myself with it." 然而

Mr. Zhuang looked at Mo Hua and gently patted his shoulder:

"You will encounter such petty schemes often in the future, learn to deal with them on your own."

Mo Hua nodded, "Yes, Master."

Mr. Zhuang looked a bit tired and closed his eyes to rest for a while before opening them again and continuing:

"Tomorrow, you and your fellow brothers and sisters go to the Formation Pavilion together and see if you can grasp the Five Elements Spirit Formation."

After Mr. Zhuang finished speaking, he also addressed Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi:

"Mo Hua's Divine Sense is sufficient to learn the Formation with Thirteen Stripes."

"As for you two, since your Divine Senses are not enough, try using the method I taught you..."

Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi respectfully nodded in agreement.

Mo Hua's expression shifted subtly, hesitating to speak, but in the end, he remained silent.

However, Mr. Zhuang noticed his expression.

After advising his disciples, Mr. Zhuang paused, then called back Mo Hua as they were about to leave.

"Mo Hua."

Mo Hua, who had reached the threshold, turned back with a puzzled look, "Yes, Master?"

Mr. Zhuang gestured him closer.

Mo Hua walked up to Mr. Zhuang.

After a moment of silence, Mr. Zhuang asked:

"You... Do you want to ask something?"

Mo Hua hesitated, then shook his head.

Mr. Zhuang's gaze softened, seemingly penetrating Mo Hua's thoughts, and he gently said:

"If you want to ask something, go ahead."

Knowing he could not hide from Mr. Zhuang, Mo Hua no longer concealed his curiosity and quietly asked:

"Master, what exactly did you teach my elder brothers and sister?"

"Do you want to know?"

"Yes." Mo Hua nodded.

He was indeed very curious.

Mr. Zhuang looked thoughtful and instead of answering, he posed a question:

"You... Why didn't you ask me before?"

Mo Hua honestly replied, "Master is far-sighted and strategic, and naturally you have your own plans. If something is meant to be shared, you would surely tell me. If you do not speak of it, it's obviously better that I remain unaware..."

Mr. Zhuang was momentarily taken aback, then warmth surfaced in his heart, like a spring stream warmed by sunlight, gently flowing through his thoughts.

His gaze was tender as he softly asked Mo Hua:

"Don't you feel that I favor your brothers and sister over you?"

Mo Hua shook his head, "Master has already been very good to me!"

Everything that should have been taught, could have been taught, and even some material that was beyond the syllabus and shouldn't have been taught had been imparted to him.

He often asked the most questions.

And Master never grew tired, always answering with the utmost detail.

Normally, his brothers and sister held more reverence towards Master.

While Master treated him with more closeness.

Upon reflection, Mo Hua felt that Master still favored him a bit more.

Mo Hua looked at Mr. Zhuang, his gaze clear and untainted, filled with the crystal-like trust and reliance of amber.

Mr. Zhuang's eyes were moist, and the feelings in his heart were hard to articulate.

He took a deep breath, his expression earnest as he said:

"Mo Hua, you must remember the next words very carefully, but do not mention them to anyone else."

Mo Hua's heart tensed, and he nodded seriously.

Mr. Zhuang gestured with his hands and lightly swept them aside.

There was no visible change around them.

But Mo Hua faintly felt that within the confines of this dwelling, an area of several feet seemed to have been isolated.

Isolated from sound as well as from cause and effect.

Mr. Zhuang said solemnly:

"Gui Tao's people..."

Mo Hua's expression changed and his pupils contracted.

Nothing happened around them.

Mo Hua breathed a sigh of relief.

Mr. Zhuang knew that Mo Hua had understood and continued:

"I've told you before, our lineage has a sect."

"Gui Tao's people, Zixi and Zisheng's mother, and I, all come from the same sect, we are fellow Taoist brothers and sisters."

"Now, you, Zisheng, and Zixi are also disciples of this sect."

"This sect has an ancient heritage."

"I am the forty-ninth Sect Leader of this sect."

"But I can't tell you the name of this sect, nor must you know it."

"The teachings of this sect are numerous, and among them, the most important and orthodox, which is reserved only for the direct line of the Sect Leader, is a type of Formation Flow. It is the same legacy that I have taught your elder brothers and sister..."