

The Quest 641

Chapter 641: Foundation (2)

"My head, why does it feel a bit sore?"

Bai Zixi paused, her cheeks blushed slightly as she said:

"It was me who hit you..."

"Ah..."

Mo Hua was stunned.

Bai Zixi, with a hint of apology, said softly, "You woke up earlier, but something seemed off, so I knocked you out..."

Mo Hua thought about it and understood.

He had been trapped in the Shrine Taoist Field before, and the Little Five Elements Ghost had escaped to his Sea of Consciousness, intending to take over and seize the chance to break free.

Luckily his little junior sister was smart and knocked him out...

Mo Hua nodded and said, "It's okay."

But he couldn't help but rub his head, muttering to himself:

Little junior sister's punch hurts...

Has she been practicing Body Refinement along with her spells...

Noticing Mo Hua rubbing the back of his head nonstop, Bai Zixi realized she might have hit him too hard and said with a touch of concern:

"Does it still hurt?"

Mo Hua shook his head, "Not so much anymore..."

Bai Zixi thought for a moment and then said softly, "Let me help you rub it."

Mo Hua's face reddened slightly, "No need..."

But before he could finish speaking, he felt his junior sister's fingers rubbing his forehead, cool and soft, soothing the pain away in an instant.

Mo Hua's heart couldn't help but flutter, and his face became even redder.

After a moment, Mo Hua realized there was another hand on his head. He turned his head to see that Bai Zisheng was also rubbing it.

Mo Hua was startled, "What are you doing?"

Bai Zisheng said, "I'm helping you rub it."

Mo Hua refused, "No need!"

Bai Zisheng, fidgety and careless, messed up his hair.

Bai Zisheng said discontentedly, "This is an elder brother's affection for his younger brother!"

"No need..."

"To not know the blessings you live in! You're actually complaining?"

"..."

The two of them bickered and teased.

Mr. Zhuang walked behind them, watching his three disciples with a gentle gaze, his lips slightly upturned.

A breeze blew by, and Mr. Zhuang looked up slightly at the Mountain Protection Array of the Five Elements Sect; the smile in his eyes gradually faded.

After a moment, his gaze became gentle again.

But within that gentleness, there was both regret and wistfulness.

...

After the group returned to the guest rooms and rested briefly, Mr. Zhuang asked Mo Hua:

"Have you learned the Five Elements Spirit Formation?"

"Mm!"

With the Chief Elder not there, Mo Hua didn't hide anything and nodded with a smile. Experience more on

"Not only that, I also saw something else in the Shrine..."

Mo Hua recounted everything he experienced in the Shrine to Mr. Zhuang, sparing no detail.

Mr. Zhuang was quite surprised:

"Source Pattern?"

"Yes." Mo Hua nodded, then asked:

"Master, is this Source Pattern the Five Elements Formation Flow? Does every Formation Flow have a 'Source Pattern'?"

Mr. Zhuang looked at Mo Hua and sighed softly:

"In principle, I shouldn't tell you about Formation Flows at this time..."

"But since you've seen it and learned the Calculation Method, I'll briefly explain..."

Mo Hua sat up straight, listening attentively.

Mr. Zhuang said, "The so-called Formation Flow, its full name is 'Formation Method Origin Stream,' which seeks the commonality and essence of a certain type of Formations."

"The form of a Formation Flow is diverse."

"Some are a versatile set of Formation Formations, which act like a skeleton. Once mastered, it makes drawing similar Formations much more efficient;"

"Some are a kind of Taoist Meaning. After grasping this Taoist Meaning, similar Formations can be easily understood by analogy;"

"Others are embodied in physical objects: there are swords, diagrams, sculptures, and even mountains and rivers..."

"Of course, there are also what you mentioned, a Formation Pattern."

"Simplify the complex, unify the many, condense thousands of Formations into a single 'Source Pattern'."

"Such Formation Flow inheritances are more difficult and more complex, and the Divine Sense consumed in Calculation is also the most."

Mr. Zhuang said this, shook his head, and his expression turned contemplative:

"I never imagined that the ancestors of the Five Elements Sect would have such great ambition, to expend the power of an entire Sect in Calculation of the 'Source Pattern,' to create a Formation Flow, with the desire to make the Sect's Formations flourish and become a giant in the Formations field..."

Mo Hua couldn't help asking:

"Master, how is the Five Elements Formation Flow different from the Immortal Sky Formation Flow?"

"Does our Sect's Immortal Sky Formation Flow contain the Five Elements Formation Flow?"

Mr. Zhuang pondered for a moment before slowly speaking and explaining:

"Formation Flow signifies the Formation Method Origin Stream."

"But this so-called 'Origin Stream' might not necessarily be the true 'Origin Stream.'"

Mo Hua was puzzled, frowning, then his eyes brightened:

"The Origin Stream is comprehended by people, and even if it approaches the Great Dao, it might not be the true Great Dao?"

Mr. Zhuang's eyes brightened with approval as he nodded:

"That's right, so the so-called Formation Method Origin Stream might not necessarily be the true origin, but rather the Formation Master's comprehension and summary of the 'Origin Stream' for a Formation Flow."

"As such with the Immortal Sky Formation Flow, so with the Five Elements Formation Flow. The same principle applies."

"In other words, the Formation Flow formed by the Five Elements Sect's Calculation of the Five Elements Formations is called 'Five Elements Formation Flow.'

"Other Sects that comprehend the origin of the Five Elements Formations can also call it 'Five Elements Formation Flow.'

Mr. Zhuang looked at Mo Hua again with a profound meaning:

"Someday, if you comprehend the essence of the Five Elements and create your own Formation Flow, it can also be called 'Five Elements Formation Flow.'"

Mo Hua had an epiphany:

"So, the Immortal Sky Formation Flow, encompassing the Formation Method Origin Streams of all heavens, even if it includes the Five Elements Formations, may differ from the Five Elements Sect's Five Elements Formation Flow, and might even be completely different?"

Mr. Zhuang nodded and said:

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"Formation Flows each have their strengths and weaknesses, but they all share common drawbacks."

"The Immortal Sky Formation Flow contains an extremely profound understanding of formation arts, so much so that it could be held as a standard by any Formation Master."

"But no matter how profound, it is still just one perspective."

"Blind faith is worse than no faith at all."

"That's why I urged you not to rush into learning Formation Flows, but to step by step comprehend and learn the world's formations, to apply what you learn, and to integrate and understand them. Eventually, you will form your own Formation Flow and use it to seek the true Great Dao."

Mr. Zhuang said with profound meaning:

"Using the law to attain the Dao."

"All laws are but rafts."

"Formation Flows are 'laws', they are 'rafts', not the 'Dao'."

Mo Hua felt he understood some but not all, so he carefully remembered Mr. Zhuang's words. When he had an epiphany in the future, he would verify and slowly comprehend them.

But after hearing Mr. Zhuang's words, Mo Hua also roughly understood the concept of "Formation Flows."

Formation Flows are the summary and understanding of the origin stream of formations.

All the Formation Flows in the world, including the Immortal Sky Formation Flow and the Five Elements Formation Flow, touch on the source of formation arts. On one hand, they are extremely profound and mystical; on the other hand, they each have their own strengths, and it is difficult to distinguish the true from the false.

One must learn and use them on their own.

Unity of knowledge and action, to apply what you learn, to discern and adopt in practice.

Blindly venerating "Formation Flows" will make one a puppet of the Flow, mistaking the 'raft' for the 'Dao', and enduring a self-imposed confinement with no hope of seeking the Dao.

The gleam in Mo Hua's eyes grew brighter.

Mr. Zhuang nodded slightly.

Mo Hua had some clarity, then he frowned and asked about another matter:

"Master, do 'Source Patterns' have their own will?"

Mr. Zhuang's gaze sharpened, his tone grew heavier, "Their own will?"

"Yes," Mo Hua thought for a moment and said, "They evolve on their own, spread on their own, can parasitize and dominate. Though they cannot speak, the Formation Patterns are like eyes, possessing human-like emotions..."

Mr. Zhuang's expression became solemn, "Are you speaking of that 'Five Elements Source Pattern'?"

Mo Hua nodded.

Mr. Zhuang's face was grave, his fingers tapping on the table, his thoughts turbulent. After a long while, he finally spoke:

"Generally, Source Patterns don't have that..."

"Legacy is simply legacy, which is the understanding and perception of Cultivators. It is a spell point, it has no will."

"The ones with will are the people who control the legacy."

"An 'aberration' in the Source Pattern..."

Mr. Zhuang frowned and pondered aloud:

"Did something go wrong with the Five Elements Sect back then, a miscalculation that caused the Source Pattern to mutate?"

"Or did they face a catastrophe, with evil spirits invading?"

"Or perhaps, were they schemed against, nurturing something..."

"The decline of the Five Elements Sect, could it be because of this 'Source Pattern'..."

Mo Hua nodded repeatedly.

He thought the same.

He was truly his master's disciple, thinking alongside him!

Mr. Zhuang's gaze turned sharp and he asked Mo Hua, "Where is that Source Pattern now?"

"I've hidden it inside a painting."

"A painting?"

Mo Hua took out the Contemplation Map.

Previously, this Contemplation Map was the Zhang Family's Zombie Ancestor Picture. Now, without the zombie but possessing the Source Pattern, imprinted with the legacy of formation, it had become the "Five Elements Formation Flow Map."

Mr. Zhuang took out a few Copper Coins, arranged them on the table in a formation pattern that Mo Hua could not understand, and then placed the map within the formation, slowly unfolding it.

On the map, there was a Five-Colored Formation Pattern.

The Formation Pattern was sealed, its luster subdued, but its aura was ancient.

"Be careful, Master, it will open its eyes."

Mo Hua whispered a reminder.

Open its eyes?

Mr. Zhuang was slightly stunned, looking at the Five Elements Formation Flow Chart, but noticed that the Formation Patterns were completely still, showing no signs of "opening their eyes," very calm, even one could say...

Obedient?

Mr. Zhuang asked in confusion, "What's wrong with it?"

"It probably moved home from the shrine and hurt its vitality, so it doesn't dare to surface."

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How its vitality was hurt, it concerned the Taoist Stele, and Mo Hua did not elaborate.

Mr. Zhuang also had a rough understanding and did not delve deeper but still glanced at Mo Hua silently, thinking to himself that his little disciple, though seemingly harmless to humans and animals, did not seem to go easy on "people" when bullying them...

That put his mind at ease.

Mr. Zhuang took another look at the "Five Elements Formation Flow Chart," his thoughts stirring, he performed some calculations, and the more he calculated, the more surprised he became, finding it somewhat incredible:

"Is this really... the bedrock of the Five Elements Sect..."

"The bedrock?" Mo Hua was puzzled.

Mr. Zhuang's expression was complex as he looked at Mo Hua, saying helplessly:

"The foundation of thousands of years... isn't that the 'bedrock'..."

Mo Hua's mouth opened slightly, in disbelief.

The foundation of thousands of years...

He pointed at the Five Elements Source Pattern, struggling to understand:

"Just this thing?"

The Five Elements Source Pattern quivered with indignation, but ultimately it still didn't dare to "open its eyes."

Mr. Zhuang nodded, "Turning the many into one, with the Calculation Method of the Source Pattern, the Five Elements Sect compiled the Formation of the entire sect into this Source Pattern theory..."

"In other words, this Source Pattern contains all the Formation heritage of the Five Elements Sect over thousands of years..."

Mo Hua was flabbergasted.

He knew that this Source Pattern was a product of Formation Flow evolution and should be extraordinary, but he never imagined it would be extraordinary to this extent!

"But..." Mo Hua was a bit puzzled, "How is this 'Source Pattern' used?"

He really didn't understand Formation Flow.

What the purpose of this Source Pattern was, he also wasn't quite sure.

It couldn't possibly be used as a "pathogen" to infect someone else's Sea of Consciousness...

Mr. Zhuang said, "There are two possibilities..."

"First, if you can't suppress the will of the 'Source Pattern,' don't look at it, don't study it, because once the 'Source Pattern' settles in, changing the master of the Sea of Consciousness, the consequences would be unimaginable..."

"The second..."

Mr. Zhuang glanced at Mo Hua, "If you have a way to suppress this 'Source Pattern,' then you can try to reverse calculate and disassemble the 'Source Pattern'..."

"Reverse Calculation, disassemble the Source Pattern?"

Mo Hua was taken aback.

Mr. Zhuang gave a nod, continuing:

"You've learned the Calculation Method of the Five Elements Sect, which can deduce Formation Patterns, reduce complexity to simplicity; conversely, it can also turn simplicity to complexity, and disassemble the deduced Formation Patterns back out..."

Mr. Zhuang remarked with a sigh:

"Within this Source Pattern lies all the Five Elements Formation heritage of the Five Elements Sect, by disassembling it, you would obtain the Formation Diagrams of these Formation methods..."

The entire Formation heritage of the Five Elements Sect...

Mo Hua nodded, then as if remembering something, his heart suddenly trembled, "Doesn't that mean..."

Mr. Zhuang smiled slightly, giving an affirmative nod:

"Indeed, this includes the heritage of the Five Elements Spirit Formation!"

"And it's not just any heritage..."

Mr. Zhuang's tone revealed his amazement:

"It's very likely a complete set of precious, nearly lost, ancient Ultimate Formation heritage from First Grade to Second Grade, and even Third Grade and above!"

"This is the true foundation of the Five Elements Sect accumulated over thousands of years!"

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Including a complete set of inheritance for the Five Element Ultimate Formation, from the first rank and above!

And it was the ancient heritage of the once first-rate Formation Sect, the Five Elements Sect!

Mo Hua was beside himself with excitement.

After Mo Hua finished celebrating, Mr. Zhuang smiled slightly:

"Of course, it's not that simple..."

"I knew it..." Mo Hua muttered to himself, pondered briefly, and then asked Mr. Zhuang:

"Master, this foundation must be hidden very deeply, right?"

Mr. Zhuang nodded, saying in a grave tone:

"Getting the foundational inheritance of the Five Elements Sect is not that easy..."

"Firstly, as I just said, one must have a way to suppress the 'Source Pattern'. If one cannot suppress it and rashly attempts to calculate the Source Pattern, they will inevitably be parasitized by the 'Source Pattern', leading to death and the dissipation of one's spirit..."

"Even if one can suppress it, they must still be extremely careful."

"This Source Pattern is too ancient and contains endless and inscrutable computing power of Divine Sense; it is unknown exactly what anomalies have occurred."

"The Five Elements Sect of those days, with such great power, so many Formation Masters, and such profound knowledge of formation study, still could not deal with it in the end."

"Therefore, if you truly wish to comprehend and calculate the 'Source Pattern', you must be extremely cautious and fully confident!"

Mr. Zhuang's expression was solemn.

Mo Hua nodded gravely, "Master, I will be careful. I will 'play it safe' when necessary!"

Mr. Zhuang couldn't help but smile, then continued:

"The second requirement is Divine Sense."

"The Source Pattern involves calculation, which consumes a great deal of Divine Sense."

"Moreover, it is reverse calculation, and what you are calculating is a 'Source Pattern' that has condensed countless amounts of computational power, so the requirements for Divine Sense are extremely high."

Mr. Zhuang looked at the Five Elements Formation Flow Chart again, fixing his gaze on the five closed-eyed, multicolored 'Source Patterns', and said slowly with profound eyes:

"This 'Source Pattern' contains all the Five Elements Formation methods treasured by the Five Elements Sect, including the Five Elements Spirit Formation, akin to a Formation 'Taoist Repository'."

"But most of the formations inside are 'encrypted' through variations of Formation Patterns."

"Without sufficient Divine Sense, they cannot be calculated."

"With your current Divine Sense, even if you attempt to calculate, you'd only see the tip of the iceberg..."

"The rest of the 'Taoist Repository' is inexhaustible, and you must wait until the future, when your cultivation improves, and your Divine Sense becomes stronger before you can uncover and comprehend it."

Mr. Zhuang closed the Formation Flow Chart and handed it to Mo Hua.

"This Source Pattern encompasses the myriad phenomena of the Five Elements..."

"It is the core formation inheritance of the entire Five Elements Sect, and looking across the Cultivation World, it can be said to be as rare as phoenix feathers and unicorn horns, invaluable beyond measure..."

"You must keep it safe, and remember, you must not reveal it, else it will surely attract covetous eyes!"

Mo Hua felt the chart in his hands as heavy as a thousand catties and nodded solemnly.

Mr. Zhuang patted Mo Hua's head, letting out a slight breath of relief.

"There's one more thing..." Mr. Zhuang added, "The Five Elements Spirit Formation needs a new name."

"A new name?" Mo Hua was startled. "Does it not sound good?"

Although he felt that the name Five Elements Spirit Formation lacked dominance and sophistication, seeming like a common and somewhat rustic formation, he didn't think it was necessary to change the name...

Mr. Zhuang shook his head with a smile, "The name of a formation is related to its principles and generally isn't chosen haphazardly."

"The Five Elements Spirit Formation, with the word 'Spirit', may sound ordinary, but to the knowledgeable Formation Master, it signifies that this formation involves the essence of the Five Elements' Spiritual Power, markedly different from ordinary formations."

"I suggest you change the name because I want to avoid drawing connections, not wishing to link you with the Five Elements Sect."

"Five Elements Spirit Formation is closely related to the Five Elements Sect, and your mastery of it inevitably implies that you have ties to the Five Elements Sect."

"Possessing treasure incurs guilt."

"In the eyes of those with intentions, you are like someone holding a treasure, flaunting your name and parading in the streets."

Realizing the point, Mo Hua nodded repeatedly:

"Master is right!"

"Keeping a low profile while making a fortune is the best way!"

"Though we study openly and honestly, being too showy can easily attract jealousy and trouble."

"Besides, that Chief Elder is old and narrow-minded. If he knew I had learned their Sect Protecting Formation, it would probably infuriate him to death. To avoid giving him a coronary, I'll just keep it from him!"

Mo Hua said thoughtfully.

Mr. Zhuang chuckled, then after a moment of reflection, he instructed:

"The causality of the Cultivation World is determined by destiny. This Source Pattern, though obtained by your own ability, is after all a favor from the ancestors of the Five Elements Sect."

"If there is a chance in the future, you can repay this causality and do some good deeds for the Five Elements Sect lineage, but not now..."

"Hmm." Mo Hua nodded. "I'll remember."

Then he asked, "Master, the Five Elements Spirit Formation... If I were to change its name, what should I rename it to?"

Mr. Zhuang replied gently: "Think about that yourself. There are very few Formation Masters who know this method—what others lack, you possess, which shall become your foundation. Even if the name is unattractive, it's yours to use."

Mo Hua frowned pensively.

This indeed was a serious consideration that required thoughtful deliberation and could not be rushed.

But there was no urgency at the moment.

The pressing matter at hand was to see whether he could, as he initially hoped, suppress the Source Pattern and invert-calculate all the Five Elements Formations, including the Five Elements Spirit Formation, from it.

After bidding farewell to Mr. Zhuang, Mo Hua returned to his room, wanting to start contemplating the 'Source Pattern'.

But upon reflection, he still felt it was unwise.

He had promised his master to 'play it safe' a bit more.

Chapter 644: Zhen Deterrence (2)

Mo Hua then set up a Formation around, with some that isolated their aura to prevent detection, and created control-type Formations to prevent himself from running amok if he were to be "parasitized."

The Formations within the room were dense and intricate like a spider web.

Mo Hua patted his hands together, feeling considerably more at ease.

But he still wasn't completely reassured, so he ran next door and knocked.

Bai Zixi opened the door, looking at Mo Hua with confusion.

Mo Hua said, "Senior Sister, if I act abnormally later, stop me and then call for Master."

Bai Zixi's eyes lit up, "Should I knock you out too?"

Mo Hua's head started to throb subtly, but he still clenched his teeth and said, "Knock me out!"
Then he added:

"But, could you... go a bit easier?"

Bai Zixi nodded, "I'll be gentler."

After entrusting her with the task, Mo Hua returned to his room and placed the "Five Elements Formation Flow Map," which held the Five-elements Variant Source Pattern, in front of him.

Just as Mo Hua was about to open it, he hesitated once more, feeling that he could still be a bit more "cowardly"...

Mo Hua checked the sky, it was already 22 p.m, and before long, it would be 1 p.m.

At 1 p.m, within his Sea of Consciousness, a Taoist Stele appeared.

With the Taoist Stele as his support, he would proceed to comprehend the Map.

"A delayed sharpening doesn't slow the chopping of wood, just wait a bit more..."

Mo Hua sat cross-legged, calming his mind and spirit.

As 1 p.m. struck, Mo Hua suddenly opened his eyes, then opened the Map, calmly visualizing and focusing intently on the Calculation.

The Source Pattern closed its eyes, with no anomalies, it was just the usual Formation Flow.

It was the Formation Method Origin Stream formed by summarizing various Formations.

Following the Calculation Method of the Five Elements Sect, Mo Hua began to calculate in reverse.

Indeed, at the edge of the Source Pattern within his Sea of Consciousness, tiny bits of the Formation Patterns slowly separated, evolved, and eventually formed various complete Formations.

Mo Hua was very familiar with these Formations.

They were all commonly used Five Elements Formations within the realm of the First-grade, and while the methods were a bit different due to their ancient heritage, the Formation Patterns had some alterations, they were largely the same.

Mo Hua's spirit was lifted.

Master was right; reverse Calculation was feasible.

This Source Pattern was a Taoist Repository, a treasure of Formations that contained countless Five Elements Formations.

Once one learned to perform Calculations, it would be possible to reverse engineer and obtain various Five Elements Formation Diagrams.

Mo Hua's eyes brightened as he continued his Calculations.

The Sea of Consciousness was silent, Mo Hua's mind was undistracted.

After spending most of the night on it, Mo Hua had finally understood another point.

The reverse computations were related to the strength of the Divine Sense.

The stronger the Divine Sense, the higher the grade of the Five Elements Formations he could calculate.

With his Divine Sense at the peak of Thirteen Stripes, the Formation Patterns he derived were also below Thirteen Stripes.

Formations above Thirteen Stripes were beyond his ability to "decode."

As for which specific Formations he could derive, it was up to fate.

So far, the Formations that Mo Hua had derived from the "Source Pattern" were varied, although all categorized under Five Elements, encompassing complete representations of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, ranging from Formations with three or four patterns to First-grade Formations with nine.

It was like drawing lots; whatever you drew was what you got, without any particular pattern.

Mo Hua furrowed his brow.

According to his deduction, the process of Calculating the Source Pattern and deriving the Formation Flow was complex. Such a large "Tao Cultivation project" must certainly follow specific protocols and rules.

These Formation Patterns must also be arranged in a given order and framework, coming together to form the Source Pattern, and could not possibly be in a state of chaos.

However, Mo Hua was not yet clear on this and would have to continue his comprehension in the future...

Mo Hua couldn't help but admire the situation again.

Thousands of years of heritage...

How many Formations could be contained within this Source Pattern?

What would it look like if it was completely Calculated and fully "decoded"?

What if he could learn all the Formations contained herein?

Being knowledgeable in both Formations and Calculation,

Wouldn't he become like a "Human-shaped Source Pattern"?

Mo Hua entertained these thoughts wildly, filled with anticipation in his heart.

As his mind wandered, he suddenly felt sleepy, as though the prolonged Calculation had made him weary, and his Divine Sense was also significantly depleted.

Mo Hua's eyelids were fighting each other, and he was vaguely dozing off, his little head nodding repeatedly...

Maybe a little sleep...

That was what Mo Hua thought, but suddenly, he was jolted awake.

Sleep? What sleep?

This was in his own Sea of Consciousness, in front of the Taoist Stele; he never felt sleepy!

"Something's off!"

When Mo Hua opened his eyes, he saw that the "Source Pattern" on the Five Elements Formation Flow Map had somehow opened its eyes!

Mo Hua's heart skipped a beat, and he braced himself entirely, examining his own Divine Sense.

Sure enough!

Inside his Sea of Consciousness, there was an intricate array of Formation Patterns.

This "Source Pattern" was restless again, harboring ill intentions, taking advantage of his focused Calculations and his exhausted Divine Sense to create an Earth Series Sleeping Formation, intending to make him drowsy and fall asleep.

Meanwhile, its Formation Patterns, like ants or tentacles, were secretly infiltrating his Sea of Consciousness!

"It still wants to parasite itself on me?"

Mo Hua's gaze sharpened.

Not right!

Following the Formation Patterns, Mo Hua realized with a start:

"The Source Pattern's target is the Taoist Stele?"

"Does it have the audacity to parasite onto the Taoist Stele?"

Mo Hua frowned, his mind racing, and he soon grew solemn:

"No, it wants to... assimilate with the Taoist Stele?"

Mo Hua was suddenly enlightened.

The Taoist Stele, formless and in line with the Great Dao, carried the essence of the Great Dao on itself.

Did this "Source Pattern" want to assimilate with the Great Dao and merge with the Taoist Stele?!

"This Source Pattern wants to be a 'concubine,' cleaving to the Taoist Stele?!"

Does it even qualify?

Mo Hua's eyebrow twitched, intending to use the Calculation to reorganize the Formation Patterns and force the Source Pattern back into the Five Elements Formation Flow Map.

However, his Calculation was still a bit too slow. Several five-colored Formation Patterns had already spread through Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness, latching onto the central Taoist Stele.

Chapter 645: Zhen's Deterrence (3)

The Five-Colored Formation Pattern imprinted itself upon the ethereal surface of the Taoist Stele.

The "eyes" of the Source Pattern suddenly widened.

The ancient aura of the Great Dao made it tremble, yet it seemed to excite it immensely.

It was being eroded by the Great Dao bit by bit, but at the same time, it was approaching the essence of the Great Dao, undergoing a transformation...

Mo Hua tried to use the Calculation Method to suppress the Formation Patterns, but his Divine Sense was limited, and inevitably, his speed was still too slow...

A sense of heaviness crept into Mo Hua's heart.

It was at that moment a silent and annihilating aura suddenly emerged from atop the Taoist Stele.

This aura, equally ancient, was more domineering, filled with a cold and dead silence that seemed capable of erasing everything.

Above the Taoist Stele, crimson Formation Patterns lit up!

It was the Immortal Pattern containing the power of tribulation lightning that Mo Hua had glimpsed and memorized through the cracks of the Heavenly Dao when he broke the Large Formation, executed Feng Xi, and triggered the Heavenly Dao Formation to bring down heavenly retribution.

With the presence of the Immortal Pattern, a scarlet hue of tribulation lightning appeared atop the Taoist Stele.

In a flicker of lightning, all the spreading Formation Patterns from the "Five Elements Source Pattern" were erased!

The vitality of the Source Pattern was greatly damaged, its "eyes" trembling with inexplicable terror.

Immortal Pattern?

Tribulation lightning?

If the Taoist Stele signified the Great Dao that encompasses everything,

Then that tribulation lightning symbolized the pure "Killing Path" that annihilates all things.

The Source Pattern would have never imagined that within Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness, there was an Immortal Pattern inscribed, a tribulation lightning engraved, hiding a shocking lethal tribulation!

The Source Pattern, with the speed of lightning that leaves no time to cover one's ears, shrank back into the "Five Elements Formation Flow Map."

Now its "eyes" closed even tighter, shaking tremulously like a thin line, daring not to open even a slit for fear of "seeing" something terrifying again.

Mo Hua felt somewhat speechless.

"Aren't you just being masochistic? Without a beating, you never learn..."

Now the "Source Pattern" did not even dare to get angry, it could only hide in the chart, silently playing dead.

Mo Hua shook his head, but also breathed a sigh of relief.

With the Taoist Stele's suppression and the Immortal Pattern's deterrence,

The Five Elements "Source Pattern" should now be thoroughly honest and dare not harbor any more cunning thoughts.

It would also be much safer for him to deduce Five Elements Formation Patterns in the future.

But at the same time, Mo Hua developed a new curiosity:

What is the relationship between the Immortal Pattern and the Source Pattern?

Could it be that the Immortal Pattern itself is a kind of higher-end "Source Pattern"?

If that were the case...

By deducing the "Source Pattern," one could gain the compiled Five Elements Formation from within the Source Pattern...

Then, if one day, my Divine Sense grew powerful enough to deduce the "Immortal Pattern," what would be derived from the "Immortal Pattern"?

Heavenly tribulation?

Thunder Formation?

Mo Hua's heart raced with excitement.

However, these matters were mere conjecture, and he was not yet certain of them.

He must wait until his cultivation was higher, his Divine Sense stronger, and his mastery of formations deeper, to validate these ideas...

Mo Hua sighed.

His cultivation was not yet high enough, his Divine Sense not yet strong enough...

It seemed he needed to expedite his cultivation and achieve Foundation Establishment sooner.

There were so many more powerful formations waiting for him to learn!

His spirits lifted, Mo Hua nodded to himself.

...

On the other hand, in front of the shrine, the Chief Elder was frowning.

Mo Hua and his two companions "frustrated," Mr. Zhuang "defeated," the Chief Elder had indeed exhaled in contentment for a few days.

But a few days later, the more he thought about it, the more it felt off.

Mr. Zhuang... renowned for his meticulous schemes, did not seem to be the type to fail so simply...

Regarding his three disciples:

As for the siblings, he didn't know much about them, so he would not comment.

But speaking only of the Junior Formation Master named Mo, whose talent was astonishing and whose flair for formations was indeed extraordinary, the biggest problem was his lack of virtue!

His schemes were too wily!

Would such a scheming Junior Formation Master really be so dejected simply because he couldn't learn a formation?

Or rather, it would be normal for him not to learn it easily, but with his talent, to not learn anything at all was abnormal...

The Chief Elder felt that he might have been played by Mr. Zhuang and his disciple!

What was worse, he had taken it all for true!

The Chief Elder felt his blood boil with anger.

He offered incense before the shrine once more.

This time, the incense burned without any anomaly, finishing steadily.

Yet, the Chief Elder's brows knitted even tighter.

No anomaly meant no sign.

Where was the sign?

What happened to the little demon housed in this shrine? Where had it gone?

After examining the shrine for a while, the Chief Elder suddenly froze.

The shrine seemed normal, but below it was a dark spot where... a door seemed to be missing?

Who had broken the great door of the shrine?

No way...

Inside the shrine lay the heritage of the Five Elements Sect.

The great door of the shrine was broken, and the little demon inside was gone.

The Chief Elder felt a tremor in his heart, an unbelievable thought surfacing:

"Could it be that the hidden heritage of my Five Elements Sect has been completely plundered..."

"No way..."

Chapter 646: Bottleneck (1)

The Chief Elder called for Sect Leader Liao.

Sect Leader Liao stared at the Shrine for a long time before expressing his confusion,

"It seems... indeed, a door is missing..."

Both furrowed their brows, quite perplexed.

This Shrine, handed down from the ancestors of the Five Elements Sect, was a Divine Thought Taoist Field containing the transmission of the Five Elements Spirit Formation.

Born from the hands of the Sect's forefathers, the Shrine was profound and unfathomable.

Who on earth had the ability to forcibly break open the doors of the Shrine?

And how did they do it?

Were the ones who broke the door Mr. Zhuang's three disciples, or that little ghost inside?

Sect Leader Liao knew about the matter of the little ghost.

It was a secret of the Five Elements Sect.

To prevent the loss of the Formation's knowledge, hundreds of years ago, an old Sect Leader of the Five Elements Sect had specifically captured a little ghost and placed it within the Shrine to nurture, letting it create illusions to bewilder outsiders and prevent the core heritage of the Five Elements Sect from leaking out...

But now, with the Shrine's doors broken and the little ghost missing...

Sect Leader Liao exclaimed with concern, "The transmission of the Five Elements Spirit Formation..."

The Chief Elder shook his head and sighed,

"I do not know..."

He then raised his eyes to take another look at the Shrine and said with a frown,

"Over these hundreds of years, I've always felt that within this Shrine, there is a special significance... as if it's also hiding some particularly special heritage..."

"But now, with a door of the Shrine missing, this significance has suddenly disappeared..."

"It's as if the contents have been emptied by someone unknown..."

The Shrine now stood as an empty shell, like a deserted pavilion, empty and cold.

Sect Leader Liao asked in astonishment, "Chief Elder, what other heritage does our Five Elements Sect have?"

The Chief Elder remained silent.

Because he did not know either.

Sect Leader Liao shook his head and sneered inwardly.

To embellish one's own face with gold, besides the Five Elements Spirit Formation, what other heritage could the Five Elements Sect have?

Even the Five Elements Spirit Formation was in name only, with nobody able to learn it, and utterly unattainable...

However, these were thoughts that he naturally wouldn't express aloud.

A glint of light flashed in Sect Leader Liao's eyes as he said in a low voice,

"Chief Elder, could it be that Mr. Zhuang and his disciples have stolen our Five Elements Sect's heritage?"

The Chief Elder's heart trembled, his brow even more furrowed.

This was precisely his worry...

With Mr. Zhuang being inscrutable, and his disciples possessing exceptional talent, if the master and apprentices had orchestrated a scheme and stolen the heritage of his Five Elements Sect, it would be endless trouble.

The key question was, what exactly was this heritage?

The Five Elements Spirit Formation?

If it was the Five Elements Spirit Formation, they had no grounds to object, as it was something they were supposed to learn, and they had rightfully mastered it.

But what if it wasn't just the Five Elements Spirit Formation?

Not just the Five Elements Spirit Formation...

What else could it be?

What else had the old ancestors of the Five Elements Sect left behind for them?

The Chief Elder was completely bewildered.

Sect Leader Liao had other ideas and so he asked, "What do you plan to do?"

"What to do?" The Chief Elder's gaze darkened, "What do you mean by that..."

"If there is indeed other heritage within the Shrine, it must be extraordinary, and we must investigate!"

"Investigate..."

Sect Leader Liao raised an eyebrow, "You know what I mean."

The Chief Elder hesitated.

Sect Leader Liao continued, "With the Shrine damaged and the heritage lost, Mr. Zhuang's disciples are the prime suspects, so..."

Sect Leader Liao moved closer to the Chief Elder and spoke in a lowered voice,

"We must find a way to keep them here!"

"Keep them here..."

The Chief Elder mused thoughtfully.

Sect Leader Liao nodded and suggested,

"We start with an investigation within the Five Elements Sect, then look into that missing little ghost, and then Mr. Zhuang and his disciples..."

"Before the investigation is clear, we must make sure to detain them!"

"If the heritage is in their hands, we must find a way to take it back; if not, we apologize, make amends, and let it pass..."

Upon hearing this, the Chief Elder sneered, "As if it would be that easy to let it pass..."

Who do you think you're keeping?

Mr. Zhuang is not so easy to deal with.

Moreover, that wooden-like elder beside him, his Cultivation is even more unfathomable.

Sect Leader Liao knew what the Chief Elder was worried about and said persuasively,

"We proceed with courtesy before force, first inviting them to stay with our Five Elements Sect for a little while longer, to linger a few more days."

"Since there's an ancestral connection, visiting as guests and exchanging knowledge about Formations is a reasonable and appropriate request..."

"They might just decide to stay."

"This is the 'courtesy' part. If they do not agree, then we resort to 'force'..."

"Mr. Zhuang and the elder may possess extraordinary Cultivation, but his disciples are only at the Qi Refinement level. Throughout these days, they have crossed hands with our Five Elements Sect disciples.

Though stronger than Qi Refinement, perhaps even comparable to Foundation Establishment, they are still only at the initial stage of Foundation Establishment, and cannot turn the tables on our Five Elements Sect..." Experience tales with

"Mr. Zhuang seems indifferent, but he obviously cares quite a bit about those disciples, especially that one named Mo, who he dotes on greatly."

"We just need to control that little disciple, no, even any single disciple, and use that to threaten Mr. Zhuang, and he will have no choice but to submit."

"If that still doesn't work..."

Sect Leader Liao pointed skywards and spoke with a solemn voice, "We still have... the Five Elements Mountain Guarding Formation!"

The Chief Elder was shocked, "To activate the Large Formation?!"

Sect Leader Liao nodded, "Once the Large Formation is activated, we won't worry about keeping them!"

"Even if their Cultivation is strong, they wouldn't dare to Transcend the restrictions of the Heavenly Dao, and they would inevitably be trapped within the Large Formation!"

The Chief Elder frowned in thought. He felt that Sect Leader Liao might have a point, but he still lacked confidence in his heart.

Chapter 647: Bottleneck (2)

He still didn't dare to make an enemy of Mr. Zhuang.

Especially within the gates of the Five Elements Sect, within the Mountain Protection Array, to confront Mr. Zhuang head-on.

"To tear off the face like this... isn't that a bit too harsh?"

The Chief Elder expressed his concern.

Sect Leader Liao took a step back and said softly,

"Chief Elder, it's not that we must tear off our face with Mr. Zhuang..."

"If we treat him with great kindness and he decides to stay, wouldn't that be even better?"

"Even if we must activate the Large Formation and come to arms, we don't need to fight to the death. We just need him to hand over our Five Elements Sect's inheritance; even if it's only half, it's better than losing it all to outsiders..."

"We would also have something to report back to our ancestors in the sect..."

"Chief Elder..."

Sect Leader Liao looked at the Chief Elder, his tone earnest as he said, "The inheritance is of great importance!"

The inheritance is of great importance!

The Chief Elder's heart trembled.

"Indeed, all this is for the inheritance of the Five Elements Sect!"

Even if there were risks, they had to be taken.

The Chief Elder took another look at Sect Leader Liao and nodded inwardly.

This Sect Leader, although his realm and vision were somewhat limited, still had some measure and could come up with some tactics when it mattered.

"Alright!" the Chief Elder nodded, "Then go ahead and prepare. We must keep them in the Five Elements Sect!"

Sect Leader Liao's face lit up with joy as he clasped his hands in agreement.

Once the two had finished discussing, the Chief Elder still stayed in front of the Shrine, contemplating and full of anxious worries.

Sect Leader Liao left the Formation Pavilion alone.

Night had fallen, and outside the Formation Pavilion, there was a sight of carved beams and painted rafters, glittering gold and resplendent.

As Sect Leader Liao stepped out of the Formation Pavilion, he looked back at it and couldn't help but sneer.

"The inheritance is of great importance?"

"Inheritance my ass!"

Your journey continues with

"What inheritance does the Five Elements Sect have at this point?"

The study of Formations had declined, and Formation Masters had been lost.

The Five Elements Sect now, built on Earth and Wood, was merely superficial, just like that Shrine, nothing more than an empty shell that shone from the outside.

Without people, without Formations, what use was just an empty shell?

The revival of the sect was a joke.

Sect Leader Liao sneered with disdain, then twirled the jade ring on his finger.

But it was not all loss...

Over the years, he had reaped many benefits from it, squeezing every last bit of value from this decaying wood and beams, making a fortune. Now, the time had come to flee...

The mess was someone else's problem.

Spirit Stones were his own!

As for the Five Elements Sect...

Sect Leader Liao snorted coldly.

Although he was indeed a man of the Five Elements Sect, it was just a title after all. Changing alliances was not a big deal.

But before he left, the Five Elements Sect still had one last use...

Sect Leader Liao took in the entire mountain gate of the Five Elements Sect, his mouth curling into a trace of cold intent.

...

Two days later, Sect Leader Liao visited Mr. Zhuang.

He still had a frank look, without any hint of scheming, earnestly saying,

"I have long admired Senior Zhuang, and I apologize for the difficulties and accusations made earlier. Please forgive me..."

Mr. Zhuang did not express agreement or disagreement.

Sect Leader Liao continued,

"...Now that the inheritance matters are settled, and the timing is right, I humbly ask that you spend some more time as a guest in the Five Elements Sect, allowing me, as the host, to show a bit of hospitality."

Sect Leader Liao's words seemed sincere, but he was very nervous inside.

He couldn't fathom Mr. Zhuang's intentions, couldn't penetrate Mr. Zhuang's thoughts, and felt like he was on pins and needles under Mr. Zhuang's deep gaze, sweating profusely.

Sect Leader Liao anxiously awaited Mr. Zhuang's response.

After pondering for a moment, Mr. Zhuang suddenly said, "Alright."

This one word "alright" relieved Sect Leader Liao immensely.

He felt lighter by quite a bit and couldn't help but smile, saying,

"I am deeply grateful for Senior's favor."

Mr. Zhuang nodded slightly and said nothing more, taking up his teacup to drink.

Sect Leader Liao knew to take a hint, so he clasped his hands and said,

"Then I won't disturb Senior's cultivation any longer, I take my leave."

After Sect Leader Liao left, Mr. Zhuang called Mo Hua over, thought for a moment, and then instructed,

"During this time, practice diligently. You'll establish your foundation here in the Five Elements Sect."

Mo Hua was startled, "Here?"

The Five Elements Sect was not exactly a safe haven.

From the top down, there was both jealousy and hatred toward him; if not outright hostility, at least the attitude was unfriendly.

But Mr. Zhuang affirmed confidently, "No matter, establish your foundation here!"

Mo Hua was somewhat puzzled, "Isn't that a bit too soon..."

Since reaching the Qi Refining Ninth Level, it had only been a few months, and his Qi Sea was not yet stable, his foundations were not solid, and his Cultivation was not firm...

Establishing his foundation now felt too premature.

Mr. Zhuang said gently, "Your Spiritual Root... is not that great, and no matter how you refine your Spiritual Power, that's pretty much it, so you don't need so many requirements. Don't bother polishing your realm, it doesn't matter if the foundation is not solid; as long as you can break through, that's good enough..."

Although he spoke softly, his words still stung.

"Alright..."

Mo Hua nodded and then asked, "Master, what about my Divine Sense? Is that sufficient too?"

"Does drawing the Five Elements Spirit Formation enhance your Divine Sense?" Mr. Zhuang asked.

"It does, but not much..." Mo Hua replied truthfully.

"Can you break through to the Thirteen Stripes?"

Mo Hua thought about it and shook his head, "It feels very difficult..."

He had been drawing the Five Elements Spirit Formation whenever he had the chance.

Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth – he drew the Spirit Formations of the five elements again and again.

Drawing by day, and even at night on the Taoist Stele.

His Divine Sense was indeed growing slowly, and at a considerable rate, stronger than when he was drawing the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

Although the requirement for the Five Elements Spirit Formation was Thirteen Stripes, since "Divine Sense Becomes the Dao," part of the Divine Sense needed to be separated and merged with the Formation, becoming one with the Spiritual Power.

Chapter 648: Bottleneck (3)

Find adventures on

So the Divine Sense actually consumed was a bit more than that of thirteen stripes.

And the Spiritual Pivot Formation only had twelve patterns.

If the Divine Sense strengthened by the Spiritual Pivot Formation were a small stream,

Then the Divine Sense strengthened by the Five Elements Spirit Formation would be a small river.

But be it a small stream or a small river, in front of the threshold from thirteen to fourteen stripes, both seem somewhat insignificant.

It's like channeling water into a ravine; the water is not a little, but the ravine is unfathomably deep and can never be filled...

Mr. Zhuang pondered for a moment and said, "Then forget it, just build the foundation with the peak Divine Sense of thirteen stripes..."

"You don't need to reach fourteen stripes?" Mo Hua asked weakly.

Mr. Zhuang shook his head and sighed,

"No more forcing it. Although fourteen stripes are good, they are indeed too difficult..."

And plans cannot keep up with changes; there's not much time left...

There was a fleeting look of melancholy in Mr. Zhuang's gaze before he then instructed,

"You just build your foundation with the peak Divine Sense of thirteen stripes. Although it isn't extremely supreme, it is already very good..."

Mr. Zhuang originally wanted to say "very strong," but he hesitated for a moment and still didn't want Mo Hua to become arrogant.

However, in all fairness, having the Divine Sense at the peak of thirteen stripes in Qi Refinement is extremely rare in his recognition, even considered to be at the limit...

Going beyond that is truly too difficult.

Mr. Zhuang said gravely, "If you build your foundation with the peak Divine Sense of thirteen stripes, theoretically, you should overcome the obstacles, and your Divine Sense should increase manifold, reaching the Qi Foundation Middle Stage, between fourteen and sixteen stripes."

"As for the exact amount, it will depend on the Taoist Skill..."

Mo Hua asked curiously, "Master, if the Divine Sense multiplies, why isn't it twenty-six stripes?"

Mr. Zhuang was taken aback and lightly tapped Mo Hua's forehead,

"What are you thinking? The increase of Divine Sense isn't simply arithmetic."

"The number of patterns is just a scale."

"Between two scales, the amount of Divine Sense can differ as much as heaven is from earth."

"Nine stripes in Qi Refinement, and ten stripes in Foundation Establishment, are already a substantial difference, a full double."

"Twenty-six stripes, that's already the Golden Core..."

"Such good fortune doesn't just happen..."

Mo Hua smiled sheepishly, then curiously asked again,

"Master, is the disparity in Divine Sense also a full double between the initial and middle stages of Foundation Establishment?"

Mr. Zhuang replied, "Not necessarily. The Divine Sense disparity between the early and middle phases of Foundation Establishment is significant, but it won't be as much as a full double."

Mo Hua, with his keen mind, immediately found another question,

"Then why can my Divine Sense only reach the middle stage of Foundation Establishment after it increases upon my breakthrough?"

Mr. Zhuang took a sip of tea and continued to explain to Mo Hua,

"Because the further you go with Divine Sense, the slower and more difficult its growth becomes."

"Moreover, your situation is quite special; your current Divine Sense is already very strong, so your realm breakthrough will lead to a great increase in Divine Sense, but it may not necessarily double."

"Heavenly Dao maintains balance, always with limits and often with many restrictions..."

If it weren't limited, your Divine Sense would truly become 'unruly and untamed'...

Mr. Zhuang looked at Mo Hua and silently sighed to himself.

Mo Hua nodded as if he understood.

"Alright, focus on your cultivation..."

Mr. Zhuang looked at Mo Hua again and said with a gentle smile,

"I estimate that in less than a month, your Cultivation will be nearly adequate. Try to break through the realm and see what the bottleneck of the Heaven Yan Jue is, then we can find a way to break through the bottleneck and build the Taoist Foundation!"

"Yes!"

Mo Hua nodded, his eyes sparkling.

Though he couldn't reach fourteen stripes, and that was a pity, he was still very happy to be on the verge of Foundation Establishment.

Without the fourteen stripes, so be it...

Man follows the earth, the earth follows the heavens, the heavens follow the Tao, and the Tao follows nature.

Tao Cultivation is about following the natural course of things, without forcing anything.

You should not bite off more than you can chew.

For the next month, Mo Hua focused entirely on his cultivation, tirelessly absorbing Spirit Stones.

Even when studying Formation, he only did it at the Taoist Stele at 1 p.m., and during the daylight hours, he mostly used his time to meditate and assimilate Spirit Stones.

Normal cultivation requires a steady pace, like the constant dripping that wears away a stone.

Persistence every day, with practice making perfect.

But now, on the verge of Foundation Establishment, it is necessary to spend more time and more Spirit Stones, to use both time and Spirit Stones on the "cutting edge."

Mo Hua cultivated with single-minded devotion, preparing for Foundation Establishment.

Bai Zixi and Bai Zisheng, knowing that Mo Hua was about to build his foundation, did not disturb him, and silently protected their junior brother to prevent any mishaps in his cultivation or disturbances from others.

And Mo Hua's cultivation was progressing smoothly.

Spirit Stones were consumed one after another, and Spiritual Power was increasing bit by bit.

Finally, after a month.

Mo Hua's Cultivation reached the peak of the Qi Refining Ninth Level.

At the same time, he also touched upon the bottleneck of Foundation Establishment...

Chapter 649: Mystery Sky (1)

That day, Mo Hua was cultivating as usual when suddenly his Qi Sea trembled and filled up on its own.

Mo Hua's expression brightened with joy.

The ninth layer had reached perfection, and spiritual power overflowed.

He had touched the threshold of Foundation Establishment!

The abundant spiritual power began to condense within the Qi Sea and circulate, gradually solidifying like a layer of mist, damp and moist.

This was a precursor to spiritual power becoming as quicksilver, as well as a prerequisite for Foundation Establishment.

Spiritual power like quicksilver, ascending to Foundation Establishment.

But before spiritual power could be refined to that quicksilver state, a bottleneck had to be overcome.

This bottleneck varied from person to person, mainly depending on the cultivation technique and the cultivator's spiritual root.

Mo Hua's cultivation technique was the Tianyan Jue.

So, according to the Tianyan Jue, the bottleneck for Foundation Establishment resided within the Sea of Consciousness.

Sure enough, moments later, that overflowing spiritual power turned into gossamer threads of spiritual silk, flowing out from the Qi Sea, following the meridians to converge at Baihui, then seeping inward at the Heavenly Gate, entering Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness.

The spiritual power entering the Sea of Consciousness transformed into filaments and began to weave into Formation Patterns.

This scene was not unfamiliar to Mo Hua.

He had experienced this when breaking through from the early phase to the middle phase of Qi Refinement, and again, from the middle phase to the late phase of Qi Refinement.

This time was no different.

The spiritual threads outlined patterns and drew Mystery Formations, covering the Sea of Consciousness.

The one thing Mo Hua worried about was whether this Mystery Formation would exceed a first-grade nine-patterned, turning into a ten-patterned or even higher pattern that Mo Hua had never seen or learned before—the Ultimate Formation.

Overcoming this bottleneck by solving the formation would then be extremely difficult.

His attempt at Foundation Establishment would also become much more challenging.

Mo Hua watched the spiritual threads somewhat nervously, observing as they wove Mystery Formations like weaving flowers. After a short while, he let out a sigh of relief...

It was only a Compound Formation, and they were all fairly simple.

With his current level of Formation mastery, breaking the Compound Formation was still well within his capabilities.

He was also fortunate that his master had taught him many advanced Formation theories and instructed him to establish himself with Formations, and to Prove the Dao with Divine Sense. His knowledge of Formations far surpassed that of an average first-grade Formation Master.

Otherwise, even just breaking a Compound Formation would be quite troublesome.

Now, to establish his Foundation smoothly, it seemed he would face many more difficulties.

Hard work always yields rewards.

Mo Hua celebrated in his heart.

However, after a while, his expression froze, and his face grew more and more solemn.

Something was wrong...

The Mystery Formations continued to appear...

And there was no sign of stopping.

One Compound Formation after another slowly came into existence and connected together.

As more Mystery Formations accumulated, like snowflakes in the depths of winter, layer upon layer, they covered the entire Sea of Consciousness.

When the creation of the Mystery Formations was complete.

Mo Hua's mouth dropped open, his eyes filled with disbelief.

What was...this?

The spiritual power, dense like silk threads, wove an entire world of Formations, like an enormous cocoon that completely and thoroughly enshrouded his Sea of Consciousness.

This was...a Large Formation composed of Mystery Formations?!

Mo Hua was profoundly shaken.

A Large Formation like a cocoon, concealing the Sea of Consciousness.

Would he end up trapped, or would he break free like a butterfly from its cocoon?

Mo Hua fell silent for a long time and was at a loss for words.

This was...too outrageous...

How could there be such a bottleneck for Foundation Establishment?

Mo Hua glanced over the enormous Mystery Formation again, his Divine Sense sweeping across it, roughly counting the formations, his gaze shaking.

The entire Large Formation contained tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Mystery Formations!

Was he supposed to solve each and every one of them?

Would that take until the end of time?

Mo Hua frowned and tried to solve a few Mystery Formations.

The Mystery Formations were not difficult to solve.

It was just the sheer number of them that was overwhelming!

Mo Hua made an estimate.

Solving ten formations a day, it would take about ten to twenty years to completely dismantle this Mystery Formation that had entrapped him like a cocoon.

After solving a few more Mystery Formations and looking up again, Mo Hua sighed deeply, overcome with a sense of powerlessness.

Before him was an endlessly vast sea of formations.

And the few Mystery Formations he had just solved were nothing but a drop in the ocean.

Just thinking about all the Mystery Formations left to solve made Mo Hua's scalp tingle.

And this wasn't even the most troublesome part.

If these Mystery Formations made up a Large Formation, then the most difficult aspect would lie in its Formation Pivot.

What structure could the Formation Pivot of a Mystery Formation have?

And how should it be solved?

Mo Hua was completely clueless.

This was not a problem one person could solve on their own.

Constructing a Large Formation required an immense amount of manpower, and solving it would demand an even greater amount of Divine Sense computation—breaking a Formation was much more troublesome than constructing one...

What should he do?

Mo Hua furrowed his brow.

Aside from solving, the only other method he could think of was "disintegration."

The Five Elements Slaughter Demon Great Formation had been completely disintegrated by his use of the Reversed Spirit Formation, leaving nothing behind.

But the problem was that this was happening in his own Sea of Consciousness.

If he disintegrated the Large Formation, he would likely be destroyed along with it.

Mo Hua sighed again.

"I can only ask my master for guidance..."

...

The next day, Mo Hua hurried to find Mr. Zhuang without delay.

Mr. Zhuang was drinking tea when he heard the news, his action paused, and he slowly looked up, "A Large Formation?"

"Yes," Mo Hua nodded and said, "Many, many of them, all covering my Sea of Consciousness, with intricate patterns and densely woven spiritual silk, like a pale blue cocoon..."

Mr. Zhuang's pupils constricted, "A cocoon..."

"Yes." Mo Hua nodded again, then asked with concern:

"Master, will I still be able to establish my Foundation?"

Mr. Zhuang's gaze became focused, and then he smiled faintly, saying warmly:

"When was Foundation Establishment ever easy?"

"Bottlenecks are bottlenecks because they are hindered by the Great Dao and are difficult to surpass; otherwise, everyone in this world would face no impediments in Tao Cultivation."

"Since you are a cultivator, aspiring to seek the Heavenly Dao, whether it is difficult or not, it should not hinder your Taoist Heart."

Chapter 650: Mystery of the Heavens (2)

"You will be establishing your foundation tomorrow, and you must still continue your cultivation and decode formations, even if it takes ten or twenty years to establish your foundation, the same tasks await: cultivation and formation decoding..."

"As cultivators, we seek the Great Dao without concern for success or failure."

"The tasks at hand remain the same; do not let fear of gain or loss make you timid."

Mo Hua's state of mind suddenly became clear, and all his doubts dissipated.

Right, worrying is pointless...

If this bottleneck really takes one or two decades to break through, then so be it. Could it be that I would give up on decoding formations and breaking through, to remain a mere Qi Refinement cultivator for a lifetime?

Once a matter is determined, looking to the past and future is meaningless.

After all, the things that must be done are always the same.

I am a Formation Master; all I need is to focus solely on learning and decoding Formation Methods.

My Taoist Heart must not be disturbed by the difficulty, success, or failure of my tasks.

Mo Hua's initially anxious heart gradually calmed down; his breath steadied, and his gaze became resolute.

Mr. Zhuang felt reassured within and nodded gently, saying with a smile,

"Good, it's good that you understand. But there's no need to rush; it won't take that long to fully decode the Mystery Formation..."

"Yes, Master!"

After their conversation, Mo Hua stood up to bid farewell, ready to return and ponder over the Mystery Formation some more, but Mr. Zhuang suddenly called out to Mo Hua, pausing briefly before speaking:

"Mo Hua, show me part of the Mystery Formation you've worked on."

Mo Hua, puzzled but obedient, took out paper and brush, and drew a part of the Mystery Formation and its Formation Pivot.

Mr. Zhuang nodded, "Good."

After Mo Hua left, Mr. Zhuang looked at the section of the Mystery Formation that Mo Hua had drawn, and his expression became increasingly grave.

Old Kui appeared, took a glance at the Mystery Formation, and furrowed his brows as well.

"What is this thing?"

"You don't know, do you..." said Mr. Zhuang, somewhat distracted.

Old Kui's gaze darkened, shaking his head, "I have never seen this before."

It was plainly a First-grade Formation Method and also a Mystery Formation, but in his many years of Tao Cultivation experience, there was not a trace of recollection.

"Yes..." Mr. Zhuang murmured, "I thought I would never see this kind of formation again in my lifetime..."

Old Kui's expression turned solemn, "What exactly is this formation?"

"This formation is called..."

Mr. Zhuang fell silent for a long while, his eyes showing struggle, before finally speaking:

"Mysterious Heaven Great Formation!"

Old Kui's eyes widened with shock, "Mysterious Heaven Great Formation?!"

Mr. Zhuang nodded with a bitter smile.

Mysterious Heaven Great Formation...

Old Kui's expression shifted, hesitating several times as if wanting to speak, but in the end, he swallowed his words and just stared blankly, saying:

"How could it be..."

How could it be the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation...

Old Kui's brows were tightly knitted, he didn't delve deeper but instead asked:

"What's the difference between this Mysterious Heaven Great Formation and a regular Mystery Formation?"

Mr. Zhuang shook his head, "It's different..."

"A Mystery Formation can constitute a Large Formation, but such a Large Formation is merely a collection of simple mystery arrays. It has the scale of a Large Formation but lacks the essence; strictly speaking, it isn't considered a true Large Formation..."

Mr. Zhuang took another look at the Formation Method drawn by Mo Hua earlier and sighed:

"The Mysterious Heaven Great Formation is different..."

"It is an extremely special Large Formation..."

"So unique that it's utterly unclear what the essence of this formation truly is."

"The existing Mysterious Heaven Great Formations are used to seal away secrets that are unknowable..."

"The Mysterious Heaven Great Formation holds mysteries as vast as the sky..."

"The principles of the formations involved are also bizarre and extraordinary..."

Mr. Zhuang stared at Old Kui, as if asking for his opinion or perhaps questioning himself:

"A Mystery Formation is just a trick for decoding, so how can it constitute a Great Formation?"

"And how can it even become a Great Formation?"

"All Great Formations coordinate myriad formation methods, emphasizing a unison of origin, whether it be to kill, trap, or defend."

"So, what does a Mystery Formation coordinate? What is its common origin, what is the source, and what does it advocate for? Is it simply the concept of a 'mystery'?"

"And who is capable, bold enough, and possesses strong enough Divine Sense Calculation to build a Mysterious Heaven Great Formation?"

"Moreover, what is the purpose of constructing a Mysterious Heaven Great Formation?"

...

Mr. Zhuang pondered for a long time, then came to a sudden realization, murmuring to himself, "I was wrong; from the very start, I was mistaken..."

"There is a major problem with the Tianyan Jue Cultivation Technique!"

"Constructing the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation within the Sea of Consciousness..."

"This technique is very likely not intended for 'humans' to practice at all..."

"Perhaps, it was genuinely meant for some kind of 'evil monster,' as the literal interpretation suggests..."

"Who exactly created this technique?"

"Or should I say, is this truly a technique that 'humans' could have created?"

"Can 'humans,' relying on a cultivation technique, construct a Mysterious Heaven Great Formation within the Sea of Consciousness of a cultivator..."

Mr. Zhuang's brow furrowed further.

Ancient Cultivation Technique...

Mysterious Heaven Great Formation...

Tianyan...

"The Great Dao has fifty paths, Tianyan has forty-nine, and humans evade one..."

He felt as if he had glimpsed something significant amid the haziness as if he were caught in the "Mysterious Heaven Great Formation" itself.

"Enough..."

Mr. Zhuang sighed.

I no longer have much time to consider these problems.

Now, the issue is this child, Mo Hua...

"Can the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation be decoded?" Old Kui asked.

"Even though it's the 'Mysterious Heaven,' it's still a Mystery Formation, and it's only first-grade. With that child Mo Hua's proficiency in formation methods, it can be decoded. It's just that..."

It's just that it really might take about a decade.

And that's if everything goes smoothly.