

The Quest 67

Chapter 67: Compilation

Since obtaining the "Collection of a Thousand Formations," Mo Hua has been incessantly poring over it, turning to Mr. Zhuang's library whenever he encountered an interesting array, meticulously noting down any doubts.

In the mornings or evenings, he would seek guidance from Mr. Zhuang.

For independent cultivators like him, acquiring even a single array diagram was challenging. When copying arrays for Manager Mo, aside from basic ones like the Blazing Fire Array, any slightly more complex diagrams required additional spirit stones.

But now, with nearly a thousand array diagrams at his disposal, mastering all these arrays would surely elevate him to a first-rate Array Master. Just the thought filled Mo Hua with excitement.

Night and day, Mo Hua studied the arrays like a mouse trapped in a rice store, wishing he could stuff all the rice into his belly.

During the day, he studied array books and practiced drawing arrays, consulting Mr. Zhuang with questions, while at night, he practiced repeatedly on the fragmented steles in his sea of consciousness.

Mo Hua had learned the Heavenly Proliferation Technique, which, according to Mr. Zhuang, meant his learning should be broad rather than specialized. Thus, he didn't delve too deeply, as long as he could draw the arrays. Some arrays he just learned to draw were forgotten immediately after.

For months, Mo Hua's spiritual awareness fluctuated between being fully charged and utterly depleted, yet his cultivation level hadn't progressed, but his understanding of array theory deepened, making him more composed in learning and inscribing arrays. Arrays that once seemed complex and obscure now felt natural and familiar.

"What are you looking at?"

One day, while Mo Hua was engrossed in a book, Bai Zisheng popped his head over and asked.

Mo Hua had been focused on learning arrays and hadn't paid much attention to Bai Zisheng, whose Aunt Xue seemed to think Bai Zisheng was distracted and had tightened up his schedule, which now included cultivation, arrays, alchemy, and artifact forging.

Although Mr. Zhuang was the tutor for the Bai siblings, he mostly let them learn independently. It seemed their goal wasn't to have Mr. Zhuang guide their cultivation. To avoid annoying him, aside from scheduled greetings and lessons, they rarely disturbed Mr. Zhuang.

Thus, the Bai siblings' cultivation was mainly managed by Aunt Xue, following the Bai family's tradition of nurturing direct disciples.

Back home, Bai Zisheng could shut himself away to study and cultivate in peace. Now outside, confronted with novel and intriguing things, and with Mo Hua to talk to, he found the routine of cultivation somewhat dull.

Mo Hua's eyes were fixed on the book, merely lifting the cover so Bai Zisheng could see.

Bai Zisheng leaned over and read out, "Collection... of... a Thousand... Arrays..."

"What's so interesting about that?"

"Do you have one too?" Mo Hua asked.

Bai Zisheng shook his head, "The Bai family's library has it. It compiles various arrays collected within the family for disciples to study and refer to, broadening their horizons on array formation and facilitating research when learning specific arrays. Every disciple studying arrays gets one; it's not particularly rare."

A copy for every family disciple, not rare...

As someone from a background of independent cultivation, Mo Hua didn't bother to argue with someone speaking from a place of privilege, merely responding with a noncommittal "Oh."

Seeing Mo Hua's indifference, Bai Zisheng scratched his head and suggested, "How about you lend it to me for a look?"

"You just said your family has one. Why do you need to see it?"

"Different families and sects have different inheritances; the arrays recorded in the compilations vary. I want to see what kind of arrays Mr. Zhuang has included."

Mo Hua hesitated.

"Just a peek!" Bai Zisheng pleaded gently.

"Alright then."

Mo Hua closed the thick "Collection of a Thousand Formations" and handed it to Bai Zisheng.

Bai Zisheng flipped through it briefly, then his mouth fell open:

"There really are over a thousand arrays!"

Mo Hua rolled his eyes, "Isn't it called 'Collection of a Thousand Formations'?"

"You don't understand, those who compile these collections often do so out of vanity, embellishing the truth. If they compile ten arrays, they call it a 'Collection of a Hundred Arrays'; a thousand might be called a 'Collection of Ten Thousand.' Some even name their techniques with grandiose terms like 'Heaven Opening,' 'Earth Splitting,' 'Creation,' 'Divine Skills'—sounds impressive but are just low-grade techniques..."

"Do cultivators in the cultivation world like to do this kind of thing?"

"Until they become immortals, they're still human, and humans like to brag."

"Oh."

Mo H

ua thought of his own practice, the Heavenly Proliferation Technique, which also used the grand term "Heaven" yet wasn't highly rated. Was it also just for show?

However, it was an ancient technique, likely created by ancient cultivators who were probably more honest...

Mo Hua sincerely hoped so.

Bai Zisheng continued flipping through the compilation, becoming more amazed as he did, soon gesturing to Bai Zixi to come over, "Zixi, Zixi, come look, there are so many arrays I've never seen before!"

Bai Zixi, who had been quietly cultivating, also leaned over.

Mo Hua curiously asked, "The Bai family is a major family, right? Does Mr. Zhuang's collection have more arrays than your family's?"

Bai Zisheng, feeling slighted, corrected, "Just the lower-tier arrays. It's hard to say for the higher-tier ones."

"The Bai family does have a legacy of array techniques, but we're not known for our prowess in arrays, so it's normal that Mr. Zhuang's collection is more extensive," Bai Zixi said calmly.

"Hmph!" Bai Zisheng huffed, unable to retort or lose his temper at Bai Zixi, and just sulked.

As Bai Zixi continued to peruse the compilation, her eyes brightened more and more, looking as if she couldn't bear to let go. After a moment, she raised her head, her eyes as clear and bright as autumn waters, looking at Mo Hua.

She didn't say anything, but Mo Hua understood her look.

Mo Hua hesitated, then sighed, "I can only lend it to you for an afternoon, okay?"

They were, after all, fellow disciples, and Mr. Zhuang would probably not mind.

A hint of a smile flickered across Bai Zixi's flawless face, like dawn light touching a lotus after emerging from water, clear and bright.

Bai Zixi took out a coverless book from her storage bag and handed it to Mo Hua, "This is the Bai family's compilation of lower-tier arrays. Take a look, and if there's anything you want to learn, I can teach you."

Mo Hua's eyes lit up, happily accepting the book. Though it contained fewer arrays than Mr. Zhuang's, the ones it did include were more foundational and explained in greater detail, likely intended for beginner disciples. Many sections had handwritten notes, elegantly beautiful, seemingly written by Bai Zixi herself.

"Isn't this against your family rules?"

Mo Hua was a bit worried; he knew some families were strict about their array teachings.

"It might be..." Bai Zisheng nodded.

"It's not!" Bai Zixi countered.

"Why?"

"Because I'm giving it to you!"

Bai Zixi's casual yet resolute tone somehow made her seem unexpectedly charismatic.

In the days that followed, Mo Hua not only studied arrays on his own but also learned from Bai Zixi. He soon realized that Bai Zixi's knowledge of arrays was far deeper than his own, reminding him that the path of array techniques was endless and not to be complacent.

When Bai Zixi had questions during their studies, Mo Hua noted them down and then asked Mr. Zhuang. After clarifying, he would discuss the answers with Bai Zixi, which led to him consulting Mr. Zhuang more frequently.

One day after Mo Hua had consulted Mr. Zhuang and left, Mr. Zhuang furrowed his brows, "This isn't good."

"What's wrong?" Elder Gui asked casually.

"Mo Hua keeps coming to me with questions, I have no time to close my eyes and meditate!"

"You mean sleep..." Elder Gui bluntly corrected.

Mr. Zhuang pretended not to hear and pondered, "What to do..."

"Just don't answer him."

Mr. Zhuang remembered Mo Hua's clear, inquisitive eyes, sometimes filled with admiration, and shook his head, "That wouldn't be right. A teacher who doesn't answer his disciple's questions is not a good teacher."

"When did you start caring about such things?"

"Just now."

Elder Gui, uninterested, continued carving something out of wood, the knife moving along the wood, chips falling silently.

Mr. Zhuang lounged in his chair, eyes fixed on the wooden beams above the pavilion, lost in thought for a moment before coming back to reality.

"I need to find an excuse to laze around." Mr. Zhuang thought to himself.