

The Quest 70

Chapter 70: A Test Run

Master Chen deliberated and asked, "Mo... young brother, this array of yours, could there possibly be... something wrong with it?"

"Where do you think the problem lies?" Mo Hua inquired.

"I don't know much about it, but it seems... could there be an extra array pattern?" Master Chen suggested.

Mo Hua's eyes lit up. "You noticed?"

"Um..." Master Chen hesitated, "Is this array still a Magma Array?"

"Of course!" Mo Hua explained, "This is a Magma Array with Six Paths Array Patterns I just learned from the master. It's still a Magma Array, but the extra pattern significantly enhances its effectiveness..."

"Have you drawn it before?"

"Don't worry, I've practiced it many times on paper!" Mo Hua confidently declared.

"Have you ever drawn it on a forging furnace?"

Master Chen didn't voice this question, but he knew without asking that this young man had surely not done so in practice.

A chill ran through Master Chen's heart, "It's done for, my forging furnace is now this kid's practice ground!"

But it was too late to turn back now.

Master Chen looked at the dismantled forging furnace, then at the erased array, and steeled himself, "Go ahead and draw, old man, I trust you."

Mo Hua didn't detect the reluctance in Master Chen's voice and felt greatly encouraged. With a flourish of his array brush, he began drawing.

Master Chen watched anxiously. Every pause or furrowed brow from Mo Hua made him sweat nervously.

This furnace was his entire livelihood. If anything went wrong, he'd be left out in the cold.

The ordeal lasted nearly two hours until Mo Hua finished the entire array. Master Chen finally breathed a sigh of relief, but before he could catch his breath, Mo Hua declared, "It's done."

Master Chen's heart leapt to his throat.

"Is the array... drawn incorrectly?" Master Chen's voice trembled.

"The array... isn't wrong, but the array patterns can't activate, spiritual power can't be conducted..." Mo Hua pondered, stroking his chin.

"What should we do then?"

"Don't rush, Uncle Chen, let me think."

"Okay."

Master Chen nodded eagerly, too anxious to make a sound, circling around but not daring to interrupt Mo Hua.

"The array is exactly as on the array diagram, the array hub is correct, the patterns are correct, and the Array Eye is a Spirit Gathering Array. When the Spirit Gathering Array absorbs spiritual power, it should light up the entire array..."

Mo Hua muttered to himself.

Typically, once an array is drawn on a spiritual tool, some spiritual power must be infused to light up the patterns to verify if the array can be activated.

Mo Hua placed his palm on the Spirit Gathering Array, a faint spiritual power emanated from his hand into the array, which glimmered slightly, and spiritual power gradually entered each pattern, but the array showed no response.

After a moment, Master Chen could no longer hold back, "Shall I give it a try?"

Mo Hua thought, 'I drew the array and I couldn't light it; what difference would another person make?' But seeing Master Chen's anxious expression, he agreed to let him try.

Master Chen placed his palm on the Spirit Gathering Array, channeled his spiritual power, and then the entire array lit up...

Mo Hua's mouth fell open, looking at Master Chen, he couldn't help but wonder, "Strange, why can't I light it up, but you can?"

"Is it possible," Master Chen gently suggested, "that your spiritual power is too weak..."

Mo Hua: "..."

"You're only at the third level of Qi cultivation, right?"

"If it weren't for learning the Heavenly Proliferation Technique, I would have been at the fourth level by now!" Mo Hua explained.

Master Chen reassured him, "It's okay, it's okay. At your age, having the third level of Qi cultivation is quite good. When my disciples were your age, they were only at the second or third level."

"Right!"

All the apprentices nodded along, though it was unclear if they were being genuine.

Mo Hua didn't want to explain further and simply said, "Let's put the forging furnace back together and see if it works."

"Yes, yes! I almost forgot about the main issue, let's hurry and put it back together."

Master Chen rallied his spirits and hurriedly called his disciples to assemble the furnace, then inserted two spirit stones at the back of the furnace.

After lighting it, flames surged forth.

Master Chen's eyes brightened as he placed a knife-shaped spiritual tool embryo into the fire. After a moment, the embryo glowed red hot. Master Chen removed it, swung a hammer a few times, and couldn't stop smiling

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"Good! The fire is strong! This furnace's flames are nearly as powerful as a larger forging furnace."

Mo Hua also relaxed, confident in his skill but fearful of an accident that might ruin Master Chen's furnace.

"Master Chen, I'll be heading back now."

"What about the spirit stones for drawing the array?"

Mo Hua waved his hand, "We agreed it would be free, so forget the spirit stones."

Master Chen still felt uneasy and gave Mo Hua the remaining Spirit Ink used for the Magma Array and several array brushes, insisting on giving them to him.

The array brushes were brand new, likely commissioned by others for Master Chen to craft. They were better than what Mo Hua had been using. As for the Spirit Ink, Mo Hua had long coveted such high-quality ink.

Mo Hua politely refused at first but then gladly accepted the gifts.

Master Chen added, "If you ever need to craft any spiritual tools, just come to me. As long as they're not too large, I won't charge you any spirit stones."

This promise was quite generous.

"Thank you, Uncle Chen!"

Mo Hua went home happily, pondering which spiritual tools he might need Master Chen's help to craft in the future.

As Mo Hua walked away, Da Zhu quietly asked his master, "Master, is giving him just this much really enough? If we had Master Jia draw this array, it would have cost a lot of spirit stones!"

Master Chen replied irritably, "I would have given more if I had the spirit stones."

"We still owe the Shen family for that batch of spiritual tools, and we need spirit stones for fueling the furnace, buying iron for crafting, and even feeding you lot. Splitting one spirit stone into ten pieces wouldn't be enough; I can only shamelessly take advantage of this young kid."

Da Zhu, not wanting to upset his master, chose to remain silent.

Master Chen stood up, paced a few steps, then decided, "Bring that box of Century-Old Poria Water. I'll send it to Mo Hua later. I heard his mother is unwell, suffering from excessive internal heat, and this medicine would be perfect for her."

(Translator Note: "Poria" is the English name for "Fu Ling," a type of fungus used in traditional Chinese medicine, and emphasizing the age ("Century-Old") convey the significance of the herb's maturity and potency.)

"But wasn't that box of Century-Old Poria Water meant to be given to Master Jia? What will we do about him if we give it to Mo Hua?"

"Never mind him. He's polite when receiving gifts, but becomes arrogant when asked to draw an array. He charges a hefty sum for his services, as if he can't choke on his own greed," Master Chen grumbled.

"If we stop sending gifts, he might be unhappy and refuse to draw arrays for us," Da Zhu expressed concern.

"It's fine, we have Mo Hua now."

"Are we not going to give Mo Hua any spirit stones for drawing arrays? That doesn't seem right..."

Master Chen glared at Da Zhu, "Do you think I'm that kind of person? We genuinely don't have any spirit stones right now, but we'll give him some when we do, okay?"

"That's good, that's good," Da Zhu nodded, then voiced another worry, "But I heard that Master Jia might become a first-grade array master in a few years. If we offend him, won't that cause trouble?"

Master Chen scoffed, "Becoming a first-grade master isn't that easy. He just takes advantage of others' ignorance, spouting nonsense. When it comes down to actually drawing an array, he's not even as adept as that young kid Mo Hua. I bet by the time Mo Hua becomes a master, he won't even be close."

"That's unlikely. Mo Hua is only at the third level of Qi cultivation right now. Becoming a master will take ages."

"Stop your nonsense. Just go and deliver it. I know what I'm doing."

Da Zhu weighed his options and decided he'd rather give gifts to Mo Hua than to Master Jia.

"I'll go over later then."

"Why wait?" Master Chen was puzzled.

Da Zhu scratched his head, "If I go later, I might be able to join them for dinner. Aunt Liu's cooking is really good."

Master Chen: "....."