

The Quest 711

Chapter 711: Departure (1)

Half positive and half weird?

True Man Situ thought he had read it wrong, so he couldn't help but blink. When he looked again, Mo Hua appeared as usual—obedient and adorable—with a hint of confusion, showing no other abnormalities.

"What... exactly is going on here?"

True Man Situ was puzzled, murmuring to himself.

On the other side, Bai Qiancheng also found it unbelievable.

The Planting Devil in Taoist Heart resolved...

Did Big Senior Brother show mercy?

This is impossible...

Bai Qiancheng couldn't help but ask, "Mo Hua... are you, alright now?"

Mo Hua nodded, "Uncle, I am fine."

The crowd looked at each other, then a Feathered Immortal probed, "Young friend, have you seen a Taoist with an odd aura?"

"I have," Mo Hua replied truthfully.

The crowd's hearts turned cold, then someone else asked, "Where is that Taoist now?"

"He left," Mo Hua said.

The crowd was stunned, "He left?"

"Yes," Mo Hua nodded, "Master taught me the Meditation Technique. When evil thoughts invade the body, meditating calmly can conquer oneself and guard the heart, suppressing the evil thoughts

"I meditated for a while, and that Taoist

Mo Hua nearly let slip "Uncle" but held back, correcting himself, that Taoist... seeing that my Taoist Heart was firm and impregnable, left

The group of Feathered Cultivators listened as if hearing a fantastical tale.

Planting Devil in Taoist Heart... is this how it is resolved?

Yet the young Cultivator before them had a clear gaze and coherent thoughts, clearly free from the control of Demon Thought.

"The Meditation Technique, huh

The Feathered Immortals became curious. Could this also be a spell point of Mr. Zhuang?

They wanted to ask, but it was somewhat inappropriate to inquire about such matters.

However, True Man Situ was frowning.

Bai Qiancheng was even more startled.

Others might not know, but she, having come from the same Sect as Mr. Zhuang, was well aware of what the Meditation Technique was used for. It was meant for calming the mind, disciplining the heart, and discarding scattered thoughts.

It could also restore Divine Sense.

But to say it could conquer oneself and guard the heart, dispelling the Planting Devil in Taoist Heart, was clearly nonsense...

Bai Qiancheng glanced at Mo Hua.

Mo Hua's small face was serious, earnestly "honest," with a hint of bewilderment that did not seem deceitful at all.

This made Bai Qiancheng doubt herself.

Perhaps she hadn't learned well, or hadn't learned the right thing?

Was there deeper knowledge in the Meditation Technique?

Bai Qiancheng was puzzled.

But no matter what, the fact that Mo Hua was safe and sound was a good thing.

Everyone also heaved a sigh of relief.

If they really had no choice, they would not want to harm a young Cultivator in his teens.

Moreover, this young Cultivator had a somewhat special status.

Still, they remained somewhat worried, fearing that the Demon Thought in Mo Hua had not been extinguished and the Demon Seed was lying dormant, suddenly corrupting his mind, and if he went mad, they would have to confine him to a room and observe him for a time.

After several days, Mo Hua was normal and showed no strange Demonic Qi.

Only then did everyone truly relax and let Mo Hua out.

Only True Man Situ occasionally looked at Mo Hua thoughtfully, his gaze carrying a trace of worry.

He couldn't forget the look in Mo Hua's eyes that he had glimpsed that day.

The eyes that were half clear and half strange, yet oddly natural, were somewhat unfathomable.

The clarity was still acceptable...

But this strangeness... the more he observed, the more it resembled Gui Tao's people...

He always feared that one day Mo Hua might suddenly undergo a change in Divine Sense, his pupils darken, turning into a mini version of "Gui Tao's people

Fortunately, thereafter, Mo Hua appeared as usual, showing no abnormalities.

And so, True Man Situ finally found peace of mind.

And with this, the matter of Gui Tao's people came to a close, concluding that chapter.

The Mysterious Heaven Great Formation had been unraveled, and the bottleneck in Mo Hua's cultivation of the Heaven Yan Jue was broken; he could now consider embarking upon his Foundation Establishment.

But before establishing his foundation, there were still some preparations to be made.

He needed to nurture his meridians and Qi Sea for a while, purchase some Pills for later use, get ready Spirit Stones, and most importantly, completely refine any remaining Gui Tao thoughts, ensuring heart and body were as one, flawless, otherwise he would not feel at ease.

However, other Cultivators would be leaving first.

The crowd of Feathered individuals, the Taoist Court's various Clan powers, as well as Bai Qiancheng.

For Mo Hua, Foundation Establishment was a major event.

But for the other Cultivators, especially those Feathered Immortals, it was a trivial matter of no consequence.

They would not change their scheduled journey.

No one cared whether a minor Qi Refinement Cultivator like Mo Hua established his foundation or not...

In the following days, the Feathered Immortals departed one after another.

Three days later, Mr. Zhuang was to be sent to the Bai Family.

Mo Hua then temporarily put aside his Foundation Establishment.

He feared that he might never see his master again, so he stayed by Mr. Zhuang's side every day these past few days.

The once spring-breeze-like, tender master now lay there cold and still.

Mo Hua's heart ached.

How much he wished his master could open his eyes and look at him one more time, speak to him, but all these wishes were in vain.

Sometimes when Mo Hua was tired, he would lie down and sleep beside him.

The dim light from the ever-burning lamp, its warm glow draped over him, seemed like someone comforting him, but Mo Hua was unaware.

That day, as Mo Hua slept, he heard voices in his hazy state.

It was True Man Situ and Uncle Bai.

Perhaps thinking Mo Hua was asleep, they did not avoid him.

Can he be saved?"

"It's difficult

Hearing this elderly voice, Mo Hua knew it was True Man Situ.

Aside from the severed Heavenly secrets, his very flesh...sigh, with the Qi Sea shattered, the Sea of Consciousness depleted, the Taoist bones extracted, and the lifeblood burned by the Sword Qi, there's no way to compensate

"Even if, in the future, there exists some against-the-heavens treasures that can repair this body, that's only the first step

Chapter 712: Li Departure (2)

"Divine Sense is the most troublesome

"This involves Heavenly secrets and karma

Bai Qiancheng's face was pale, "Is there really not the slightest chance...?"

True Man Situ shook his head, "These matters, just like becoming immortal

"Is there a chance to become immortal? Certainly, but in the vast Nine States, amidst the myriad of living beings, for tens of thousands of years, not one has attained immortality

"There is a chance, but it is so remote that it's almost the same as having none

Bai Qiancheng sighed.

True Man Situ hesitated for a moment before offering some advice, "What I am about to say, True Man Bai... you might not like to hear

Bai Qiancheng was startled, "Please speak, senior

True Man Situ measured his words, "Now, Mr. Zhuang has just 'died

True Man Situ paused here, feeling that it wasn't quite right.

To say "dead," but in fact there was still a glimmer of life, yet to say "not dead," was in reality almost the same as being dead...

"Mr. Zhuang's life is hanging by a thread

True Man Situ changed his expression and then continued, "You have lost your senior brother, and your heart is in mourning, but this grief is only temporary."

"You wish to save Mr. Zhuang, but this sentiment... it is also just for a moment... as time goes by, the emotions will fade

True Man Situ sighed deeply like one who had been through it all:

"Cultivators live long lives, and the fleeting time is enough to erase all regrets and pain; people go on living until they become numb, and there is nothing they can't let go of

"So True Man Situ sighed, "True Man Bai, you should still cultivate yourself, take care of your own affairs, and do not forcefully pursue the rest

Bai Qiancheng was somewhat silent.

She knew that True Man Situ was right.

In her life, she had also felt regret and pain, and thought life was not worth clinging to, but as long as she persevered through the years and crossed that threshold...

As time passed, the once sharp pain and setbacks faded, like healed scars, unsightly but no longer painful.

Just like her senior brother...

Her heart ached now, but over time, perhaps she too would become numb and forget...

Bai Qiancheng pursed her lips, "What if I insist on saving him?"

True Man Situ frowned, "It will be very difficult then

"Mr. Zhuang's karma is huge, he has too many enemies, and there are intertwined interests

"In this world, how many people want Mr. Zhuang dead? Neither the Taoist Court nor the Demon Sect would probably want to save him."

"If you try to save him, you will encounter endless obstacles."

"To 'resurrect the dead' It's very difficult, you need a vast number of Spirit Stones and Spiritual Objects, and more importantly, persistent, unwavering determination. Along the way, you will be tormented and in pain, accompanied by unceasing hope and despair. It's very hard to endure

"It requires an extremely tenacious Taoist Heart to remain true to your original intent and persevere

"And even that... is not enough."

"Even if the body is revived, if the Heavenly secret is dead, he still cannot live

"One must have a Formation imbued with the Great Dao of life and death to possibly mend the lost Heavenly secret of Mr. Zhuang and exchange it for a glimmer of life

"To covertly alter Yin and Yang, to seize creation, to reverse life and death

"Such Formation Diagrams are extremely profound, extremely powerful, and extremely ancient, mostly obliterated in Ancient Daoist sites or the forbidden realms of extinct cultivators. Where will you find a Formation Diagram?"

"Even if you have a Formation Diagram, who can learn it?"

"Not learnable

"Even if it's learned, who has the ability to truly construct it?"

True Man Situ's eyebrows were tightly furrowed as he lamented sincerely:

"Common folk often say 'Formation is vast and profound,' but only those of us who truly delve deep into our study of Formation truly understand just how vast and profound it is!"

"There are mountains beyond mountains, skies beyond skies."

"But beyond those skies, there are still unreachable heavens

"Some Formations in this world are so complex and harsh to the extreme that they are simply not intended for 'humans' to learn

A look of despair even surfaced on True Man Situ's aged face.

...

Bai Qiancheng also looked terrified, but after a moment of silence, she still clenched her teeth and obstinately said:

"I will not give up!"

True Man Situ sighed and nodded his head.

Whether she truly wouldn't give up or not, he had said all he needed to say and would not speak further.

Mo Hua, who had been lying on the side, had heard everything.

"To covertly alter Yin and Yang, to seize creation, to reverse life and death

He memorized this phrase in his heart.

As the sky gradually lightened, True Man Situ and the uncle master finished discussing matters and left.

Mo Hua opened his eyes and slowly sat up.

He looked once more at Mr. Zhuang, memorized the appearance of his master, and made a secret decision.

"If others can't save my master, I will save him!"

"If others can't learn the Formation, I will learn it!"

"Even if everyone in this world wants my master dead, I will ensure that my master is revived and continues to live well!"

Mo Hua's youthful face was serious, his gaze resolute, as he engraved this vow deep within his Taoist Heart.

The rising sun cast its light on the master and disciple.

Mo Hua murmured:

"Master, you just sleep for a while

"When the time comes, I'll call you

...

Three days later, Bai Qiancheng was about to leave.

She was to take away Mr. Zhuang, locked in the thin line between karma and life or death, and also to bring Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi back to the Bai Family.

Bai Zixi then approached Bai Qiancheng, with a resolute gaze:

"Mother, I want to take little junior brother back to the Bai Family

Bai Zisheng also nodded, "Mother, please take Mo Hua back with you

Bai Qiancheng's expression was somewhat indifferent, "Why?"

Chapter 713: Parting (3)

Bai Zixi's gaze was complex, and her heart was heavy with emotions she couldn't understand. "I've promised Master to take good care of Junior Brother

"Mmm." Bai Zisheng nodded as well.

They invoked Master's name, hoping that their mother would listen to reason.

But Bai Qiancheng shook her head, "How exactly will you take care of him?"

Both of them were taken aback.

Bai Qiancheng continued, "Once in the Bai Family, if he encounters any danger, who will be there to protect him?"

"You?"

"With just Qi Refinement, what can you do? Even if you reached Foundation Establishment, then what?"

"In the Second Grade Cultivation World, a Foundation Establishment Cultivator can command the winds and summon the rain, but in the Bai Family, a mere Foundation Establishment Cultivator, who can you really protect?"

Bai Qiancheng looked at the two children, her heart aching for them, yet she didn't sugarcoat her words:

"Moreover, you are descendants of the Bai Family, you rely on the Bai Family, not on yourselves. You want to protect him, but what if one day

"The Bai Family wants to harm him?"

"What will you do? What can you do?"

"Can you defy the clan?"

"With your Cultivation, how can you stand against the Bai Family, an ancient lineage of ten thousand years?"

"If you can't defy them, are you prepared to watch... your little Junior Brother die before your eyes?"

Bai Qiancheng's words were icy cold and realistic.

Bai Zixi and the other's faces turned pale, they hung their heads low, clenching their fists tightly, but they couldn't find any words to say.

They couldn't protect anything...

Neither Master nor their little Junior Brother...

Bai Qiancheng looked at the two children, her gaze softened slightly, and her tone was a bit more gentle:

"Cultivators, ultimately, must rely on their own Cultivation

"I know you have deep feelings for each other as fellow disciples, but bringing that child, Mo Hua, back to the Bai Family is not helping him, it's harming him

"The Bai Family is too vast, its karma too profound, it's also too complicated

Bai Zixi said with a trembling voice, "Mother, then

Bai Qiancheng hesitated for a moment, then slowly extended her hand and touched Bai Zixi's head, sighing, "Go

"To forget your little Junior Brother is the best protection you can give him

...

The little Senior Brother and Senior Sister were leaving.

They were going to Liyuan City, where they would take the Flying Cloud Ferry and leave the Dali Mountain State boundary.

Mo Hua came to see them off.

It was his first time visiting Liyuan City and encountering the Cloud Ferry.

The Cloud Ferry was huge, extravagantly ornate, docked at the ferry port like a colossal kun fish with wings in the sky. It was said that once it took flight, it was like a great ship in the sea of clouds, with incredible speed, capable of crossing state boundaries.

The principle of the Cloud Ferry seemed to be based on harnessing the flow of Spiritual Energy and rising among the clouds.

Mo Hua was very curious, but because of the imminent departure, his mood was somewhat downcast, and he wasn't in the mood to study the Cloud Ferry...

Bai Zisheng was worried that Mo Hua was unhappy, and babbled on and on.

He spoke of the famous attractions of Qian State, like some sky-touching Taoist constructions, ancient, atmospheric temples and monasteries, the hanging Sword Qi Waterfall, the Bai Family's ancient pavilions, Three Clear Spirit Mountain... and many others.

Mo Hua listened with great interest.

Bai Zisheng also told Mo Hua to be sure to visit the Bai Family someday.

But he warned him to improve his Cultivation before going.

There were many villains in the Bai Family, who might harm him...

Mo Hua gave Bai Zisheng a gift, a great dragon controlled by a Spirit Pivot Formation, no longer a crawling reptile compared to before.

Mo Hua added two wings to it, and flapping them, it could lift off the ground. Although it couldn't "fly" high, it was much better than crawling on the ground.

But adding wings made it look a bit ugly.

Mo Hua also promised, "When I've learned more about Formations, I'll craft one for you, a dragon that can fly without wings!"

Bai Zisheng was overjoyed and then asked Mo Hua:

"That technique I taught you, have you been practicing it?"

Mo Hua was startled, “Which technique?”

Bai Zisheng looked unhappy and enunciated every word, “Flying! Dragon! In! The! Sky!”

Mo Hua remembered the move Bai Zisheng had created himself, leaping into the sky, striking a pose, then wielding a long spear and descending from the heavens with that spear technique...

Mo Hua felt a bit embarrassed, “That... Can I not learn it...?”

Purely a showy sequence of movements, completely useless.

"No way!" Bai Zisheng insisted, “This is a move I created myself, and I’m only teaching you. In the whole world, only the two of us brothers will know it! You must learn it well!”

Mo Hua said helplessly, “Alright then

Bai Zisheng saw Mo Hua agree and nodded in satisfaction, then he seemed to remember something and became a bit downcast.

"I originally wanted to go back to Tongxian City to see Uncle Mo and Aunt Liu, but now I can’t go there. Qian State is so far away, I don’t know if there’ll be another chance

The food Aunt Liu makes is so delicious.

Bai Zisheng missed the carefree and well-fed days in Tongxian City terribly.

Mo Hua consoled him, “There will be a chance.”

Bai Zisheng perked up a bit and nodded.

After thinking for a while, Mo Hua asked, “What about junior sister

All this way, he hadn't seen the junior sister...

Bai Zisheng paused, sighed, and said, "She originally wanted you to go to the Bai family too, but now that you can't, she might feel a bit embarrassed to face you

What's there to be embarrassed about...

Mo Hua said in a low voice, "Is junior sister throwing a tantrum?"

Bai Zisheng thought for a moment and nodded, "I guess so

But he knew that it probably wasn't the case.

Ever since she heard Mother's words, Zixi had locked herself in her room, seeing no one, as if afraid that encountering Mo Hua again would make her heart ache.

Bai Zisheng didn't quite understand and shook his head.

Feeling sad after parting is normal.

That's exactly why we should see each other more...

Thus, Bai Zisheng couldn't help but chat with Mo Hua for a long time, until someone urged them, saying the Cloud Ferry was about to depart. Only then did he bid Mo Hua farewell, looking back three steps at a time as he boarded the ferry.

"We're really... parting now

Just before entering the Cloud Ferry, Bai Zisheng's eyes suddenly felt a bit sore.

The moments they spent together day and night, the three fellow disciples, laughing and playing, bickering and making noise, all rushed to his heart...

Bai Zisheng tried hard to hold back his tears, took a final look at Mo Hua, and committed his junior brother's image to memory. Then, he stepped into the vast expanse of the Cloud Ferry.

Mo Hua stood at the ferry port, feeling reluctant to let go, but still silently watched his senior brother and the unseen junior sister depart.

Inside the Cloud Ferry.

Bai Zisheng knocked on Bai Zixi's door, "Aren't you going to see junior brother?"

There was silence inside the room.

"If you don't see him, you might... never see him again

Despite his words, there was still no response from behind the door.

Bai Zisheng shook his head helplessly, clutching the large dragon his junior brother had given him as a parting gift, and turned to leave.

In the room, Bai Zixi sat silently, her dark eyelashes quivering, her beautiful eyes revealing a trace of melancholy.

The clear sunlight poured in, her cheeks slightly pale, which added a mournful beauty to her originally cold and flawless visage.

There she sat quietly, her thoughts unknown, her emotions complex and unsettled.

Moments later, the Cloud Ferry's massive humming sound began.

Bai Zixi suddenly felt alarmed, and Bai Zisheng's words echoed in her mind:

"You might... never see him again

Her heart trembled, and she quickly got up, left her room, and walked onto the deck of the Cloud Ferry.

But by then, the Cloud Ferry had already set sail.

The sky was clear, and the Cloud Ferry, grand and splendid, lifted off among the clouds, rolling up layers of cloud waves.

When Bai Zixi looked out again, the sea of clouds stretched out endlessly.

Mo Hua's small figure had been obscured by the vast clouds, completely vanishing from her sight...

Never... to be seen again...

A sharp pain struck Bai Zixi's heart, as if carved with a knife, and a single tear, clear as ice and snow, slowly slid down her pallid cheek...

The white clouds surged like great waves, and the flowing clouds like the sea carried the Cloud Ferry, sailing into the wind, farther and farther into the endless sea of clouds...

The Great Dao is boundless, seas of clouds lie between.

This parting, who knows when we will meet again.

Chapter 714: Foundation Establishment (1)

Junior Brother and Junior Sister have both left.

Mo Hua was left alone.

Without Master, without Grandpa Gui, without Junior Brother, and without Junior Sister, the road ahead had to be traveled alone...

After feeling lost for a while, Mo Hua began to rally his spirits.

He had to start preparing for Foundation Establishment.

Having lived through these successive upheavals, Mo Hua had gained a deep understanding that cultivation was the foundation of a cultivator.

To learn the Formation of “Stealing Yin and Yang, Seizing Creation, Reversing Life and Death,” he must have sufficiently high cultivation.

Only with cultivation as the foundation could he seek the Great Dao, learn about Formation, and thereby seek a sliver of life in the dead end of heavenly secrets, altering Master’s fate, reversing death into life...

And Foundation Establishment was the first step in establishing the Great Dao.

Before Foundation Establishment, Mo Hua thought things over carefully, even making a list to make sure he had considered everything and was fully prepared...

First was the need for an ample supply of Spirit Stones.

Mo Hua already had quite a few Spirit Stones in hand.

There were tens of thousands of these Spirit Stones, accumulated by his parents over the years for him, earned from his Drawing Formation, and secretly given to him by his Junior Brother and Sister.

The better the Spiritual Root and the higher the grade of the Cultivation Technique, the more Spirit Stones are needed for Foundation Establishment.

And since Mo Hua’s Spiritual Root was not excellent, he would need fewer Spirit Stones, so these tens of thousands were more than enough.

Moreover, Mo Hua had also bought some Pills and Spiritual Objects in Liyuan City in case of unexpected needs.

These were not for breaking through bottlenecks but rather for emergency situations during the breakthrough, if any mishaps should injure his foundation. They were for replenishing blood and Spiritual Power, nurturing the meridians, and sustaining his life force.

It all seemed like an excess of caution.

But he had only one life, and he couldn't afford to be negligent.

Next, he needed to find a safe, serene, and undisturbed place for Foundation Establishment.

After completing Foundation Establishment, he would return to Tongxian City to surprise his parents.

But before that, there was one thing that Mo Hua was particularly concerned about...

Mo Hua turned his head to look at the content old man drinking tea beside him, and asked with a skeptical expression:

"Senior Situ, why are you still here? Aren't you going back to Mystery Valley?"

True Man Situ leisurely sipped his tea and sighed deeply:

"Not in a hurry, it's rare that I get to come out, so I'll relax my mind before returning. The valley is quite dull, with too many annoying matters, I'm not in a rush to go back

It'd been decades since he'd been out.

Of course, he wanted to rest and enjoy the scenery.

Of course, the most important thing was that he had used the Qiankun Clear Light Lamp from Mystery Valley as a long-burning lamp to extend Mr. Zhuang's life...

It was likely that in a few decades, or maybe a hundred years, it would be rendered useless.

Such a treasure of the Mystery Valley...

He needed to come up with an excuse first to save face and then think about returning.

There was no rush for the moment.

"Oh," Mo Hua nodded.

True Man Situ glanced at Mo Hua's list, meticulously detailed with various Pills and Spiritual Objects, and asked:

"You're preparing for Foundation Establishment?"

"Yes," Mo Hua looked at True Man Situ, who seemed to have all the time in the world and appeared quite idle. He asked softly:

"Senior Situ, are you busy right now?"

"Somewhat, is there something you need?"

Mo Hua's eyes brightened, and he pulled out the list, offering it respectfully as he said very politely:

"This is the preparation for Foundation Establishment. Could you take a look for me? See if there's anything I've overlooked or need to add?"

Mo Hua's eyes were bright and earnest, and every word he spoke was imbued with courtesy.

True Man Situ nodded slightly, not opposed to the notion.

The child Mo Hua had left a deep impression on him.

Honestly, he was quite fond of the kid...

Although his Spiritual Root was somewhat lacking, he was cute, very polite, a pleasant speaker, clever, and he respected his elders and the teachings, truly a good child.

Otherwise, the Bai Family's two haughty children wouldn't go out of their way to protect their little Junior Brother...

He was free anyway.

"Let's see

True Man Situ took the paper from Mo Hua and glanced over it, quickly grasping the essentials. With a casual flick of his finger, he added a few Spiritual Objects and a couple of Pills without using ink to the back of the paper.

"These are for clearing the meridians, invigorating the body, as well as calming the mind and spirit. Though auxiliary in nature, they are greatly beneficial for Foundation Establishment, and also not expensive

Mo Hua looked at the additions and gratefully said, "Thank you, Elder Situ!"

True Man Situ hesitated but said, "Just 'Senior' is fine, drop the 'Elder

As one gets older, being called "old" can be a bit sensitive...

"Oh, oh." Mo Hua nodded repeatedly, though in his mind he complained that Senior Situ was odd, not pleased when given the respect due to an elder...

True Man Situ took another sip of tea, finding it tasteless, after all it was only Third-Grade Spiritual Tea from the Third-Grade State Boundary, feeling somewhat flat in the mouth...

Suddenly, he looked puzzled as he gazed at Mo Hua and asked, "The Pills and Spiritual Objects you've prepared don't include anything to break through bottlenecks, right?"

"Yes." Mo Hua nodded.

His bottleneck had already been broken.

It was Uncle who had broken it for him...

He didn't spell it out but vaguely mentioned, "My Spiritual Root isn't good, and my Cultivation Technique is average. Although I cultivate less Spiritual Power, the bottlenecks are straightforward and can be broken through quite easily

True Man Situ nodded, not prying further, but he pondered internally...

That's not very likely!

This young fellow must be deceiving me...

He is Mr. Zhuang's disciple, and even if his Spiritual Root was poor, with Mr. Zhuang's character of preferring deficiency over excess, he wouldn't let him choose a Cultivation Technique with "simple bottlenecks" that could be easily overcome.

Chapter 715: Foundation Establishment (2)

This is too casual, not something Mr. Zhuang would do.

Unless... this cultivation technique doesn't require spiritual objects and pills when breaking through a bottleneck...

Not needing spiritual objects and pills means the bottleneck is likely not in the Qi Sea or meridians...

Not in the Qi Sea or meridians?

Where else could it be?

It surely can't be in the Divine Sense...

True Man Situ suddenly had a moment of realization.

He was a cultivator of the Feather Transformation Realm, and also the Chief Elder of Mystery Valley, skilled in calculation, having lived for many years and experienced much, a very unfamiliar and somewhat obscure but preposterous term surfaced in his mind...

"Divine Sense Proving the Dao

Divine Sense... Prove the Dao?!!

True Man Situ was shocked and suddenly widened his eyes.

No way?

Could there really be someone with such grand ambition, to use the Divine Sense that cannot be enhanced by cultivation techniques, to Prove the Dao?!

True Man Situ glanced at Mo Hua.

Poor Spiritual Root, weak Blood Qi...

Why did Mr. Zhuang take on such a disciple?

With Mr. Zhuang's talent to shape heaven and earth, what kind of Dao path is he planning for this disciple?

There is only one answer...

Divine Sense Proving the Dao!

True Man Situ also recalled the intense Divine Sense that he had felt from Mo Hua that day, not belonging to someone of his age or realm...

The more he thought about it, the more possible it seemed.

"Divine Sense Proving the Dao, huh

True Man Situ was astounded in his heart.

Seeing True Man Situ with eyes wide and stunned for a long while without reacting, Mo Hua was somewhat puzzled and expressed concern:

"Senior, what's the matter? Did the hot tea choke you?"

True Man Situ came back to his senses, looked at Mo Hua, and silently thought to himself:

"I wasn't choked by the hot tea, I was shocked by you

Divine Sense Proving the Dao...

It's one who dares to teach and one who dares to learn...

This is no ordinary feat.

This child, he wouldn't really cultivate into a second "Gui Tao's person", right...?

True Man Situ felt a slight trepidation in his heart, but after some thought, he shook his head.

Divine Sense Proving the Dao and Demon Thought Gui Tao are still very different...

And if this child really had flaws in his nature, Mr. Zhuang, with his temperament, would certainly not teach him Divine Sense Proving the Dao.

"Let nature take its course, and observe the changes

True Man Situ silently thought to himself.

Suddenly he clicked his tongue and became curious again.

"Can this child really achieve Divine Sense Proving the Dao?"

He was eager to see it...

Having lived for so long, he had never seen a cultivator who could Prove the Dao with Divine Sense and make a name for themselves...

True Man Situ's enthusiasm was suddenly kindled, and he said to Mo Hua:

"If you have any doubts beyond Foundation Establishment, feel free to ask me."

Mo Hua was overjoyed, but still politely asked, "Won't that be a disturbance to you?"

True Man Situ waved his hand and said, "It's fine, I have nothing else to do."

Mo Hua then asked without reservation all the details about Foundation Establishment, including the areas he was worried about.

True Man Situ, being a Feathered Immortal and an elder, had a thorough understanding of Foundation Establishment.

Mo Hua, lacking inheritance, asked mostly elementary questions, but True Man Situ still patiently and wholeheartedly answered Mo Hua's inquiries...

He also said to Mo Hua:

"Foundation Establishment is about both effort and destiny

"Though it is so, the more you perfect every detail, the higher the probability of successful Foundation Establishment."

"Therefore, this 'destiny', as long as you understand it well enough, can also be altered by human effort

...

Mo Hua benefited greatly.

He remembered what he had overheard True Man Situ and the Uncle-Master saying: the tool that had helped the Master lock in causality and extend his life was Mystery Valley's Qiankun Clear Light Lamp.

The Mysterious Fire Everlasting Formation was also personally set up by True Man Situ.

Without True Man Situ, the Master might not have had even a sliver of a chance...

Mo Hua felt deeply grateful and bowed seriously:

"Senior, I will remember your great kindness and grace in my heart!"

True Man Situ saw the young Mo Hua with a serious little face, speaking earnestly, and could not help but smile a little.

A Qi-refining Realm child like you, what use is your gratitude to me...

But he did not voice this thought, and suddenly felt a "thud" in his heart.

As Mo Hua bowed.

True Man Situ's heart trembled, he felt as if some causality had begun to shift in the unseen world...

"Divine Sense Proving the Dao

"It can't be, really this mysterious, can it

True Man Situ opened his mouth but immediately changed what he was about to say:

"Good! Very good! Remembering kindness and seeking to repay it, that's a good child!"

He seemed nonchalant on the surface but emphasized the words "remembering kindness and seeking to repay it" heavily, afraid that Mo Hua did not hear it clearly and would forget about him...

Afterward, whenever Mo Hua had a doubt, he would go ask True Man Situ.

True Man Situ provided answers to each one.

When all the doubts were cleared and all the necessary spiritual objects and pills were prepared, Mo Hua began to officially initiate Foundation Establishment in a rented cave dwelling in Liyuan City.

The cave dwelling was large, quiet, and luxurious.

It was one that Mo Hua could not afford to rent.

The cave dwelling was specially rented by True Man Situ for Mo Hua's use in Foundation Establishment.

Mo Hua was somewhat embarrassed.

True Man Situ put on a stern face, "I am your senior, a lofty Feathered Immortal, the Chief Elder of Mystery Valley, this little thing is the least of my efforts, why are you being polite with me?"

"Thank you, Senior!"

Mo Hua said with a smile, quietly noting True Man Situ's kindness in his heart.

True Man Situ nodded in satisfaction, then gave some advice:

"As for Foundation Establishment, there's not much to say, just be prepared. If all goes well, everything will naturally fall into place; if not, don't be discouraged, you can always try again."

"For the Disciples of the Worldly Family, Foundation Establishment is not difficult; the challenge is building a good Taoist Foundation."

Chapter 716: Foundation Establishment (3)

Mo Hua asked, "When one builds a good Taoist foundation, will there be any extraordinary phenomena?"

The concept of the Foundation Building Phenomenon was something Mo Hua had heard from others.

They said that noble clans and sects spoke of once-in-a-millennium geniuses, who, during their foundation establishment, would be accompanied by phenomena between heaven and earth, with auspicious radiance filling the sky and the ringing of dragons and phoenixes that serve as proof of the Great Dao...

"It's not that exaggerated True Man Situ said helplessly, "These statements are concocted by noble clans to pretentiously inflate their value with grandiose fabrications, mostly to elevate the status of their own disciples—it's all a lot of opaque mystification

"The Foundation Building Phenomenon isn't that obvious, but it does indeed exist."

"Generally speaking, as long as the foundation is solid and the Taoist foundation is complete, there will indeed be some special phenomena

"You just focus on building your foundation properly, don't worry about these unnecessary distractions

True Man Situ instructed.

"Hmm, I understand," Mo Hua nodded.

Afterward, Mo Hua began to sit in meditation for foundation building in his cave dwelling.

He leveled his mind, collected his energy, followed the procedures methodically, step by step...

First, he took some pills to nourish and limber up his meridians and loosen his skeleton. Then he burned incense, calmed his mind, and, when his body and heart were unified and his thoughts undispersed, he began to refine spirit stones.

The Foundation building began, and the Qi Sea surged wildly, like a gaping mouth incessantly devouring spiritual energy.

One spirit stone after another was quickly refined.

Streams of spiritual energy flowed into the Dantian Qi Sea.

Tens of thousands of spiritual stones were consumed like water.

Mo Hua's spiritual power also grew stronger with each circulation, and the Qi Sea gradually became more substantial...

Thanks to True Man Situ's guidance and Mo Hua's detailed preparations, this process went quite smoothly.

After an indeterminate amount of time, the Qi Sea finally became stable and the spiritual power thickened and congealed like flowing mercury.

Condensing spiritual energy, spiritual power like mercury!

This is the Foundation Building spiritual power!

Mo Hua opened his eyes and felt the spiritual power in his Qi Sea, cloudy like fog, circulating like water, thick like mercury, and he could not have been more delighted.

He had finally built his foundation!

He was now a Foundation Building Cultivator!

But Mo Hua knew that this was not enough.

For him, the real Foundation Building was just beginning...

His path was that of “Divine Sense Proving the Dao,” and the enhancement of Divine Sense was the key.

According to his master, when cultivators build their foundation, spiritual power undergoes a qualitative change, and Divine Sense doubles.

His spiritual power had now changed qualitatively.

Next, it was time for his Divine Sense to double!

A Divine Sense at the Fourteen-Pattern Qi Foundation Middle Stage, after doubling, might break through the limit and advance by leaps and bounds to the Seventeen-Pattern Divine Sense of the Foundation Establishment Late Stage!

This was the Taoist Foundation that Mo Hua truly aimed to build!

Mo Hua felt anxious, but even more so, he was filled with anticipation.

A moment later, the Sea of Consciousness trembled, and then Mo Hua felt his Fourteen-Pattern Divine Sense grow at a rapid pace!

It was as if from the boundless Great Dao, endless Divine Sense was born, and as realizations dawned in Mo Hua’s mind, Divine Thoughts like springs flowed continuously into the Sea of Consciousness, augmenting Mo Hua’s Divine Sense!

The Sea of Consciousness of Mo Hua also expanded little by little.

Enhanced Divine Sense inevitably resulted in the expansion of the Sea of Consciousness.

A vast Sea of Consciousness is necessary to accommodate more Divine Sense.

Mo Hua had not deeply experienced this before because the enhancement of his Divine Sense had mostly been gradual and accumulative over days and months.

But now, breaking through to Foundation Building and experiencing the doubling of Divine Sense, Mo Hua could clearly sense his Sea of Consciousness expanding rapidly...

At the same time, more Divine Sense flowed into the Sea of Consciousness.

Rivers flowing into the ocean...

The realm of Mo Hua's Divine Sense also climbed step by step...

From Fourteen Patterns, it reached Fifteen.

Then it reached Sixteen Patterns.

Sixteen Patterns is the peak of Divine Sense in the Foundation Establishment Middle Phase...

After this point, any further increase of Divine Sense would hit the bottleneck of the late phase of Foundation Establishment.

This bottleneck was also deep like a chasm and not to be transgressed.

But Mo Hua's Divine Sense, with a very strong foundation, kept flowing into that chasm like a river after doubling, continuously pouring into and striking against the bottleneck.

The Sea of Consciousness of Mo Hua also began to ache slightly.

But he bore the pain, calmed his mind for meditation, discarded irrelevant thoughts, and steadfastly maintained his Taoist heart.

He sought to Prove the Dao with his Divine Sense!

Finally, after an indeterminable amount of time, Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness suddenly opened up.

The bottleneck shattered, and the chasm was filled.

The surging Divine Sense flowed into the Sea of Consciousness, and Mo Hua's Divine Sense reached... Seventeen Patterns!

Seventeen Patterns represent Divine Sense at the late phase of Foundation Establishment.

And it did not stop there.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense continued to grow, climbing upward unceasingly, bit by bit, strand by strand, merging into rivers, gathering grains to build a high tower...

Finally, it settled at Eighteen Patterns!

Eighteen Patterns of Divine Sense at the late phase of Foundation Establishment!

Mo Hua was shocked in his heart, then overjoyed, and he let out a long sigh of relief.

His master was right.

He could indeed... Prove the Dao with his Divine Sense...

He had just entered Foundation Building and already had a full Eighteen Patterns of Divine Sense, just one step away from the complete Nineteen Patterns of Divine Sense of a perfect foundation!

"I have finally lived up to my master's expectations

Mo Hua felt both joy and a tinge of melancholy.

Eighteen Patterns were already very powerful!

Mo Hua nodded to himself, and just as he was about to stop meditating and end the foundation building, his expression suddenly changed.

He sensed that something was off.

There was a dignified aura of the Great Dao spreading in his Sea of Consciousness, as if he had made some mistake, touched upon a "taboo" of the Great Dao...

Back when he had broken the Five Elements Slaughter Demon Great Formation and executed Feng Xi, with the tribulation lightning overhead, he had felt this same sensation.

What taboo?

Was his Divine Sense too strong?

Mo Hua was stunned and before he had the chance to think it through, he felt his Divine Sense touch some kind of barrier, like... the limits of the Heavenly Dao.

The Great Dao seemed... to forbid him from having such strong Divine Sense...

Chapter 717: Foundation Establishment (4)

Soon, the restrictions of the Heavenly Dao descended, and Mo Hua's originally expanding Sea of Consciousness was as if squeezed by something, suddenly contracting.

Mo Hua's head ached unbearably, but what was even more unbelievable to him was that his realm of Divine Sense was rapidly falling.

From Eighteen Patterns, he dropped to Seventeen Patterns...

Then from Seventeen Patterns, he fell to Sixteen Patterns...

And yet, it didn't stop there...

Sixteen Patterns, Fifteen Patterns... all the way down to the initial Fourteen Patterns!

A chill went through Mo Hua's heart.

But it wasn't over yet.

Following the fall of his realm, what came next was an even more severe cracking of his Sea of Consciousness, the agony of his shattered Divine Sense!

Mo Hua suddenly realized that although his Sea of Consciousness had contracted and his realm of Divine Sense had fallen, the Divine Sense that had been strengthened before was still there!

This Divine Sense was being infinitely squeezed due to the contraction of the Sea of Consciousness.

As a result, the Sea of Consciousness was being squeezed by the Divine Sense, gradually cracking, while the Divine Sense was being oppressed by the Sea of Consciousness, gradually shattering...

What to do?!

In desperation, Mo Hua could only endure the severe pain, on one hand, meditating to stabilize his mind, casting aside the agony, while on the other hand maintaining his damaged Divine Sense with Heavenly secret Calculation and accelerating the consumption of Divine Sense with Tricky Calculation.

But this was not a solution...

Sooner or later, his Sea of Consciousness would be completely destroyed, and his Divine Sense would vanish like smoke!

At the critical moment, in Mo Hu's Sea of Consciousness, there suddenly emerged a vast and endless, densely packed, layered Formation Patterns.

These Formation Patterns were flickering on and off, appearing and disappearing, forming into a whole piece that seemed to be branded in Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness, profound and mysterious.

Is this... the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation?!

Is this the bottleneck of the Heaven Yan Jue?

Mo Hua was taken aback.

The moment the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation emerged, those Divine Senses that were restricted by the Heavenly Dao and pressed by the Sea of Consciousness, with nowhere to hide, began to cluster along the Formation Patterns one strand at a time.

One by one, one formation after another, in Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness, with Mo Hua's Divine Sense, retraced and were woven into a—

Mysterious Heaven Great Formation!

Mo Hua was incredible shocked, and gradually a realization dawned in his heart.

"This is... the mystery of the Heaven Yan Jue

"This is the true meaning of the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation, which is the bottleneck of the Heaven Yan Jue?"

"Divine Consciousness Reconstruction?"

"Reconstructing Divine Sense with the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation?!"

What kind of "Divine Craftsmanship" was this?

Mo Hua had never heard of this before, and even his wildest dreams had not conjured such a possibility...

The restrictions of the Heavenly Dao, the contraction of the Sea of Consciousness, the oppression of Divine Sense, torn and shattered, and then automatically permeated into the Formation Patterns of the previously manifested Mysterious Heaven Great Formation, solidifying into a Formation, reconstructing Divine Sense...

This was a spontaneously generated process.

The only problem was, the reconstruction of Divine Sense was too painful...

And the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation was so large that forming bit by bit was so slow...

Mo Hua clenched his teeth and persevered, but he was still young and feared he might not be able to hold out.

"I have to think of a solution

Enduring the pain, Mo Hua's mind raced.

If generation by itself was too slow, then... why not actively form the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation?

This Mysterious Heaven Great Formation, his uncle had deciphered with Heavenly secret Tricky Calculation, so now should he do the opposite and reconstruct with Tricky Calculation?

The Large Formation was vast, consuming huge amounts of Divine Sense.

But now in Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness, there was an abundance of Divine Sense between Fourteen and Eighteen Patterns, which was ample to the point of seeming inexhaustible, with no worry of running out.

And during the process of forming, he could simultaneously use Heavenly secret Calculation to gain insight into the true essence of the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation?

This was as if he was “applying his study,” learning anew, the versatile and immensely profound “Mysterious Heaven Great Formation”?!

Mysterious Heaven Great Formation!

A jump went through Mo Hua’s heart, and then his eyes shone brightly.

Without delay, he immediately set to work. With a somewhat unfamiliar and clumsy method, he attempted to use Tricky Calculation to divide his Divine Sense, multitasking to expedite the formation of the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation, and in doing so, accelerated his own Divine Consciousness Reconstruction!

Meanwhile, he learned as he drew.

With Heavenly secret Calculation, he gradually deduced, comprehended, and discerned the essential nature of the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation.

In Mo Hua’s Sea of Consciousness, the Divine Thought solidified, grand and ancient, abstruse and profound Mysterious Heaven Great Formation was being generated on its own, while also being actively formed by Mo Hua...

Mo Hua’s Divine Sense was being consumed rapidly like hundreds of rivers flowing into the sea.

The pain in the Sea of Consciousness was also gradually relieved, as if by a spring breeze and a gentle rain.

Yet Mo Hua’s Divine Sense was undergoing unbelievable changes, step by step...

After an unknown length of time, the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation was fully formed, then gradually dissolved, merging into Mo Hua’s Sea of Consciousness, and vanished without a trace.

Mo Hua opened his eyes.

He discovered that his Sea of Consciousness was still that of the Fourteen Patterns realm.

But within the Sea of Consciousness, there was a hazy mist, swirling clouds and fog.

Mo Hua activated his Divine Sense and found that his Divine Sense had become incredibly concentrated, like water vapor, as if it had been compressed by the Sea of Consciousness, and reconstituted by the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation, undergoing a...

Transformation?

Divine Consciousness Transformation?!

Mo Hua was inexplicably shocked. After a brief contemplation, he suddenly had an epiphany.

The truly powerful aspect of the Heaven Yan Jue cultivation technique lied in... causing the Divine Sense to undergo a transformation?!

With a transformed Divine Thought, the foundation was solid, and manipulation became exceedingly keen.

The manipulation of Divine Sense was just an additional benefit.

And the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation, while seemingly a bottleneck, was in essence the key to reconstructing Divine Sense and achieving a transformation!

Divine Consciousness Transformation...

Mo Hua looked at his own small hand.

Divine Thought was ethereal, no matter how solidified it seemed, the essence remained an illusory phantom.

But now, the hand manifesting from his Divine Thought, though hazy, was veiled with mist, as if a slight condensation of... blood...

"This is... Divine Consciousness Transformation

Mo Hua was lost in a trance.

His Divine Sense was henceforth entirely different.

And thereby, he had established the foundation for the Supreme Divine Sense!

Chapter 718: Foundation Establishment (5)

...

Outside the cave dwelling for Foundation Establishment of Mo Hua, True Man Situ was somewhat puzzled.

"What's wrong

He had just felt a surge, insignificant to him, but exceedingly abundant in terms of Divine Sense fluctuations for a Foundation Building Cultivator.

This also confirmed his guess about "Divine Sense Proving the Dao."

Yet, for some reason, that surge quickly converged, vanished, and left no trace...

The aura of Mo Hua's Divine Thought hadn't seemed to increase.

"Did it fail?"

True Man Situ frowned.

He then waited outside...

After a long time, Mo Hua emerged, his steps light, even somewhat... springy?

He was clearly in a good mood...

True Man Situ could not help but ask, "Did you establish your foundation?"

"Yes!" Mo Hua nodded and smiled.

True Man Situ gave Mo Hua a discerning look.

His aura had indeed become much more solid...

But as for Spiritual Power, it was quite average, and his Blood Qi, pitifully weak...

His Divine Sense, he couldn't ascertain clearly, but it felt similar to the Divine Sense Realm before his own Foundation Establishment...

This... that's all for Foundation Establishment?

And...

"Why wasn't there any phenomenon at all

True Man Situ was somewhat puzzled.

Divine Sense Proving the Dao, no matter what, there should have been a slight sign, even the smallest hint would have given him some clue.

But it seemed, there really wasn't any.

True Man Situ shook his head, somewhat unable to understand.

But Mo Hua was ready to bid True Man Situ farewell:

"Thank you for your guidance during these days, senior. I have been away from home for a long time, and I will return tomorrow

True Man Situ nodded, "It was but a trifle, do not mind it."

But he still advised, "The path of Dao Cultivation is long, if you pass by Mystery Valley in the future, remember to drop a greeting card; I will treat you, show you around, and let you experience the heritage of my Mystery Valley

Mo Hua smiled broadly, "Definitely!"

The two chatted a lot more.

The next day, Mo Hua set out on his journey, a small figure walking on the Great Dao, waving at True Man Situ from a distance.

True Man Situ watched the figure of Mo Hua and suddenly felt somewhat reluctant, pausing longer than intended, watching Mo Hua disappear into the distance.

Mo Hua, alone on the Great Dao, though small in figure, had a steadfast Taoist Heart, fearless, and pressing forward.

True Man Situ thought to himself:

"I hope you, child, have a boundless Dao journey!"

"Maybe if fate allows, we will meet again

...

Having seen off Mo Hua, True Man Situ should also return to Mystery Valley.

Yet, before leaving, his mind was still concerned.

"How could there be... no phenomenon at all?"

"Was I mistaken?"

He hesitated for a moment, then slowly walked into the cave dwelling where Mo Hua had established his foundation.

The interior of the cave dwelling was luxuriously decorated.

Luxury wooden furniture, auspicious cloud screens, Spirit-embroidered porcelain... all present, but just as always, no different from before.

"Something's not right

True Man Situ scanned with his Divine Sense, then suddenly paused.

He reached out and gently touched the porcelain that was 'turning green with spirit stone,' and 'turning red with copper,' beautifully adorned with green and red colors.

As soon as he touched it, the porcelain instantly shattered.

Simultaneously, the surrounding masonry settings all cracked, their interiors already turning into fine powder!

No scent of Blood Qi.

No external force.

No remnants of Spiritual Power.

Could it be... Divine Sense?

Were these bricks, mortar, and porcelains, inadvertently smashed by the overflowing Divine Sense?

True Man Situ gasped sharply.

Divine Sense... shattered...

What exactly did this small cultivator establish?

...

At this moment, in an unknown void.

Yin souls wailed harshly, Gui Qi pervading.

With remnants of souls everywhere, weaving a terrifyingly enormous web.

This web, covering heaven and shielding the earth, seemed like a vast shadowy Large Formation, containing endless Gui Tao trickeries and the deadly aura of extinction.

At this moment, a dreadful shadow opened its eyes.

Within his eyes, pitch-blackness.

As if countless Deceit Patterns were condensed within.

"Back Ruins Heaven Burial is now in my hands

"But my Planting Devil in Taoist Heart... is missing... a trace of its origin

"Was it... erased

"Or was it... consumed

He hadn't spoken aloud, but numerous yin souls seemed to do it on his behalf.

Clustered voices, intermingling, indistinguishable in their sharp and piercing nature, potentially harmful to Divine Thought.

"Evil God, or Heavenly Demon... dare to consume... my Demon Thought?"

The shadow calculated with his fingers, a Dao robe of Void appearing on him, densely flowing with Deceit Patterns.

A name emerged...

"Mo... Hua

Who is it?"

The shadow's dark gaze condensed, trying to calculate again, only to find the Heavenly secret obscured, clouded, indistinct.

"Is it... my junior brother

"But you... are already dead... can't hide it anymore

The shadow's gaze became fierce. Amidst fear and struggle, the numerous yin souls were devoured by the Dao robe of Void, turning to ash, while his Tricky Calculation of Heavenly secret advanced further.

In the vague mist, he almost saw a small human face...

Just then, a Corpse King with a warped and twisted aura due to karmic mutation leapt out from the obscure causality, its eyes blood-red, its face fierce, biting fiercely into the shadow.

This bite swallowed countless yin souls and also severed the causality.

The shadow startled, slightly incredulous.

"This is... my nurtured Taoist Demon?"

"It... is biting me?"

This Corpse King, hidden in the obscure causation, seemed to be “protecting its master” as well as “protecting its food.”

Not allowing others to covet its “master,” nor allowing others to covet its “food.”

A trace of vindictive spirit appeared in the shadow’s eyes, then gradually calmed down.

A Taoist Demon, a being of Great Dao’s karmic mutation.

Conforming to the Dao yet defying it.

Hidden in causality, perilously unpredictable, and elusive.

This Taoist Demon he had nurtured, he could not kill it now...

The shadow fell silent, an all-encompassing deathly stillness, then his Deceit Pattern faded, retracting his Dao robe, returning to normal.

"We will meet again

His pitch-black pupils, irregular Deceit Patterns flickering between light and shadow.

In the land of void, thousands of yin souls, fiercely wailing, simultaneously shouting the name that knows neither cause nor effect:

"Mo Hua."

Chapter 719: Returning Home (1)

A hundred miles outside Tongxian City, the mountain forests were lush, and streams babbled.

On the mountain path, a caravan of more than ten people, pulling several storage carts, moved slowly forward.

Mo Hua sat on one of the caravan's carts, swinging his legs leisurely while looking at the nearby familiar yet slightly unfamiliar mountain scenery. He thought of his parents, the acquaintances, and childhood friends back in Tongxian City, feeling excited yet suddenly seized by a nervous trepidation as he neared his hometown.

From the Third Grade Dali Mountain State boundary to Tongxian City.

The journey had been long and arduous. Mo Hua stopped along the way, visiting Formation Masters, seeking out Formations, taking nearly half a year.

Now he was fifteen years old.

A First Grade Formation Master, at the Initial Stage of Foundation Establishment, with fourteen patterns in his Divine Sense, his Divine Thought had undergone a qualitative change, becoming as concentrated as mercury.

Compared to when he left home, Mo Hua had grown a bit taller.

His eyebrows and eyes had also broadened, carrying a trace of heroic spirit between them. However, at the tender age of early teens, he was still too young for a Cultivator.

Mo Hua had achieved Foundation Establishment early. Even though he had gone through many experiences, he still appeared as an uncut jade, naive and carefree.

"Mo lad, your parents really trust you to travel alone

An elder from the caravan couldn't help but ask.

On this trip, he must have asked this question at least seven or eight times.

The elder was the boss of the caravan, who had traveled far and wide, trading Spirit Stones and Pills to make a living.

His surname was Zheng, with a sharp look in his eyes, everyone else called him Old Zheng.

Tongxian City was growing more prosperous, and the number of Cultivators and traders coming and going had increased. Old Zheng's caravan was specifically there to sell some Tao Cultivation merchandise.

Only, the caravan had been attacked by Monster Beasts on the way, and the Formation on the cart was damaged.

Mo Hua came across them and helped fix the Formation. They were very simple Formations, around First Grade four or five patterns; it barely counted as lifting a finger.

But Old Zheng was amazed.

This young Cultivator was so young, yet he could already repair a Formation with five Formation Patterns...

His future was bound to be immeasurable!

In gratitude to Mo Hua, Old Zheng treated him well with food and drink. Learning that Mo Hua's destination was also Tongxian City, he offered Mo Hua a lift along the way.

Mo Hua, tired from the journey, conveniently took the opportunity to hitch a ride.

Along the way, there was food, drink, and company for conversation, so it was not dull.

Anyway, they were already very close to Tongxian City, and it would only cause a few days' delay.

But every time Old Zheng looked at Mo Hua, his expression was one of incredulity.

Just a kid, yet with such talent in Formations, did his parents really feel reassured, letting him travel alone?

If it were him, he wouldn't bear to let go.

Mo Hua spoke softly, "When I traveled, there were others with me. Now on my return, I'm by myself

As he said this, a hint of melancholy was hidden in the depths of Mo Hua's eyes.

Old Zheng nodded and did not ask further.

Among the steep mountains and ridges, the caravan followed the winding mountain roads step by step, heading for Tongxian City.

Mo Hua looked up and saw the rolling Big Black Mountain range in front of him, and the outline of Tongxian City, partly hidden by the mountains and mists, emerging faintly in the distance. He silently breathed a sigh of relief.

"No matter what, I'm nearly home

Since he left home, only a few years had passed.

A Cultivator's lifespan is long, and a few years do not count for much, but to Mo Hua, it felt like a very long time had gone by...

At last, he was finally returning home.

A slight sourness welled up in Mo Hua's heart.

Several more days passed, and after traveling tens of miles, Mo Hua saw acquaintances.

They were several uncles who were Monster Hunters.

Dressed in iron armor and wielding Pu Blades, their faces stern, they were all fully alert, tracking Monster Beasts, and happened to come across the caravan Mo Hua was with.

They were midst pursuing a Monster Beast, their armor and blades covered in blood, their faces bearing an aura ready for a fight to the death.

Seeing this, the other Cultivators of the caravan also became alert, their expressions tense.

Old Zheng felt a chill in his heart.

It was their first time trading in Tongxian City, and in this desolate Black Mountain region, encountering Monster Hunters with bloody blades and stern expressions, they couldn't help but feel uneasy.

Fearing that a misunderstanding might lead these Monster Hunters to rob and kill them...

Such incidents, they had encountered and heard of plenty during their travels.

What was more troublesome was that these Monster Hunters were clearly very powerful.

The caravan had hired guards, but these guards were merely at the latter stages of Qi Refinement, not exceeding the ninth level.

They could handle ordinary Mole Gangs, but compared to these Monster Hunters with profound cultivation, exquisite Spiritual Artifacts, and rich experience in combat, and moreover, those covered in blood, they were clearly outmatched.

Although nervous, Old Zheng tried his best to smile apologetically:

"Fellow Taoist friends, my name is Zheng, and I am on my way to Tongxian City to do some modest trade. I hope you would be lenient

He started to calculate in his mind how much “toll” he would have to pay to pass safely and minimize his losses.

The Monster Hunters remained silent.

They were on the hunt for Monster Beasts, and speaking little was a rule among Monster Hunters.

Seeing that they did not respond, Old Zheng’s forced smile grew ever more stiff.

Just then, one of the Monster Hunters, by chance, glanced at the carriage and saw a child with fine features, looking at him kindly with a smiling face.

He was shocked, widening his eyes in disbelief, and exclaimed:

"Mo... Mo Hua?!"

The other Monster Hunters glared at him angrily.

"What are you doing? Yelling and startling everyone like that?"

"Your voice is so loud; what if it alerts the Wind Listening Wolf?"

"Being a veteran Monster Hunter, don’t you know the rules?"

"It’s not... It’s Mo Hua!"

"What Mo Hua? Even if it’s Mo Hua, you can’t

This Monster Hunter was interrupted halfway through his sentence, then he too froze, “Mo Hua?!"

Chapter 720: Homecoming (2)

"You must be out of your mind, Mo Hua is not

Then he turned his head and saw, from within the caravan, that same beaming, innocent-looking Mo Hua.

Mo Hua waved at them, smiling, "Uncle Zhao, Uncle Sun, Uncle Zhou... I'm back!"

Everyone was taken aback, before their faces turned to rapture.

"It's not a mistake!"

"It really is Mo Hua!"

"Mo Hua!!"

"Keep it down, don't scare the wolf off

"Who cares about that darn wolf, let it be

Mo Hua was a bit bemused.

"Mo Hua, wait for us. We'll finish up here and escort you back to Tongxian City the Monster Hunters said enthusiastically.

Mo Hua looked at them, noticing the blood on their swords and armor. Though they had steely eyes and weathered faces, clearly having pursued the Monster Beasts for quite some time, it seemed they were nearly done with the hunt.

Mo Hua shook her head and said:

"Uncles, go on with your Monster Hunting, no need to bother. I'll be fine returning with the caravan."

"Drop by our place later; I'll treat you to a drink!" Mo Hua added, patting her little chest.

The group of Monster Hunters chuckled, but they weren't prissy about it.

Indeed, with Mo Hua's abilities, they really didn't need to escort her.

"Alright, we'll slaughter this wolf and head back. We've got some fresh Monster meat, all freshly killed, to let you try," said one of the Monster Hunters, smiling.

"Mhm, mhm," Mo Hua nodded repeatedly.

Afterward, the group parted ways.

Mo Hua waved her little arms, bidding farewell to her Monster Hunter uncles and grand-uncles.

Old Zheng, who had narrowly escaped danger, wiped the cold sweat from his forehead; his look towards Mo Hua was a mix of gratitude and astonishment.

"Young man, you know these Monster Hunters?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Mo Hua, nodding. "They are all my uncles and grand-uncles. They used to take care of me when I entered Big Black Mountain. We're quite familiar

You entered Big Black Mountain?

Old Zheng looked at Mo Hua's small arms and legs, not sure what to say.

But it's good... to know people.

Connections make things easier.

Old Zheng felt fortunate in his heart.

Lucky indeed, to have bumped into this young man. Otherwise, without knowing any Cultivators out here in the wilderness, meeting a troop of Monster Hunters, with blood on their blades, anything could happen...

Old Zheng's manners toward Mo Hua became even more courteous.

But as they continued marching forward, he noticed something wasn't quite right.

The closer they got to Tongxian City, the more Monster Hunters they encountered.

And each and every one of these Monster Hunters, upon seeing Mo Hua, first showed shock then joyous faces.

One moment solemn and murderous, the next that of joy as if it was New Year's...

Old Zheng gazed at Mo Hua, his mouth agape, and said in a daze:

"These Monster Hunters... you know them all?"

How do you know all the Monster Hunters in these mountains?

Mo Hua nodded.

But you seem... to know them too well...

Old Zheng still found it hard to believe.

Mo Hua grinned, "I'm just well-liked!"

Old Zheng was skeptical but continued to speculate silently.

This young Cultivator must have an unusual identity, perhaps a child of a high-ranking Elder in the Monster Hunting Guild.

Or maybe, the young master of a big family in Immortal City?

Old Zheng kept guessing as they went on.

The sky began to darken as they continued their journey.

The day neared dusk, the evening sky dyed with the glow of sunset.

Old Zheng flipped through the Map, estimating the distance, and furrowed his brow, "It's getting a bit late. If we don't hurry, it seems we'll end up spending the night in the mountains

Spending the night in the mountains would be dangerous...

A newly constructed mountain road now stretches from the Inner Mountain through the deep woods of Big Black Mountain, straight to Tongxian City.

The Monster Beasts in Inner Mountain are fierce.

Those in the deep mountains are even more bloodthirsty, and occasionally, Second Grade Monster Beasts appear.

It's fine during the day, but once night falls, staying in the deep woods, encountering Monster Beasts in the pitch-black night and treacherous terrain, it's feared that everyone might become a feast for the beasts.

"Shall we take a shortcut while it's not yet dark?"

At least to get out of the deep woods.

Someone suggested.

Old Zheng pondered for a moment and then nodded in agreement, "We need to move fast to reach Tongxian City sooner. Better not to have long nights full of dreams."

Mo Hua looked up, scanning the surroundings. They were located deep within the mountains of Big Black Mountain. The mountain path had been refurbished, and the terrain had altered slightly, which was unfamiliar to her.

Changes in the mountain's shape...

Apparently, the change was due to the sheer power when she dissolved the Five Elements Slaughter Demon Great Formation, which had nearly leveled half of the deep mountain, altering the whole landscape.

The mountain was the same, but it had changed shape; the roads were no longer the same.

For a moment, Mo Hua was unable to discern the exact location.

One of the traders in the party then said:

"I've been to Tongxian City a few times and know a shortcut, but it's a bit late, and we might encounter Monster Beasts

After a moment's thought, Old Zheng replied with a sigh, "It's better than spending the night in the deep woods. You lead the way, and everyone, stay alert."

"Sure thing, Old Zheng."

So the trader took the lead and the caravan turned onto a narrow path.

It was an old mountain trail.

Mo Hua vaguely remembered it, seemingly an old road leading from the outside of Big Black Mountain to Tongxian City.

It became less traveled and gradually fell into disuse.

The journey was indeed full of twists and turns.

Some rocks had collapsed a few years earlier due to the Great Formation Dissolution; while people could pass, the vehicles and goods had some difficulties.

And then there were the Monster Beasts

However, most of them were just middle to late First Grade.

The guards in the caravan could handle them, so Mo Hua just gave them early warnings and did not take action herself.

With everyone's cooperation, they slew a Kui Wood Wolf and a Red-eyed Demon Sheep. The rest of the journey became much smoother.

Just as they were about to leave the deep woods, Mo Hua's Divine Sense stirred, her brows furrowed, and she spoke up:

"Stop."

Old Zheng was taken aback, and the other Cultivators in the caravan were somewhat puzzled.