

## The Quest 731

### Chapter 731: Second Grade (3)

Once a stranger, twice familiar.

This was Mo Hua's first attempt at drawing, and it was quite clumsy with many mistakes.

Because the Second-Grade Formation differed significantly in its Formation Patterns from the First-Grade, it took quite an effort to master.

But after completing the first drawing, with his strength in Divine Sense and aptitude for Formation Methods, his speed increased considerably on subsequent attempts.

Subsequent drawings of the Bright Fire Formation came naturally to Mo Hua, as he drew with ease and proficiency.

There is a cognitive barrier to Second-Grade Formation Methods.

...

Mo Hua's own understanding of Second-Grade Formations was also lacking.

Otherwise, drawing the "Ten Patterns of the Second Grade" Bright Fire Formation would actually be simpler than drawing the "Ten Patterns of the First Grade" Reversed Spirit Ultimate Formation.

Mo Hua continued to draw, over and over, until the Bright Fire Formation was ingrained in his heart, only then did he emerge from his Sea of Consciousness.

By this time, dawn had broken, and the sky was filled with the glow of sunrise, painting Mo Hua's cheeks a rosy hue.

Mo Hua was in high spirits, his face beaming with a smile.

Having successfully drawn the Second-Order Bright Fire Formation, he crossed over a minor threshold.

Next, he needed to actually draw the Bright Fire Formation into existence.

Creating it upon the Taoist Stele, using hands as the pen, Divine Sense as the ink, and the Stele as the media, did not truly count as “drawing” it.

Nor could it be considered truly “mastering” it.

Mo Hua got out of bed, laid out the paper on the table, picked up the pen, dipped it in ink, and prepared to try drawing the Second-Grade Bright Fire Formation.

But as soon as he moved the pen, Mo Hua paused, dumbstruck.

He suddenly realized a serious problem:

The Bright Fire Formation was a Second-Grade Formation...

But he had no Second-Grade Spiritual Ink!

It was not only Spiritual Ink; he lacked a Second-Grade Formation Pen, Formation Paper, or other formation media as well!

Without the necessary materials, how could one cook a meal?

With neither pen, ink, nor paper, how could he draw a Formation Method...

Mo Hua sighed.

He had miscalculated...

He had not worried about ink, paper, and other such matters for a long time, so it didn't occur to him until now.

"But... where can one find Second-Grade Spiritual Ink?"

"Stores?"

Mo Hua specifically visited various stores in Tongxian City and strolled through the market town, but to no avail.

There were no Second Rank Formation Masters in Tongxian City, so naturally, nobody would draw Second-Grade Formations, hence no Second-Grade Spiritual Ink!

Even if some clans or stores had some in stock, it had been stored for too long and the Spiritual Ink had lost its efficacy, rendering it useless for drawing Formations.

Helpless, Mo Hua thought for a moment and then decided to seek out Master Luo.

Master Luo had been a First Rank Formation Master for a long time, with significant experience and numerous connections. Having studied Formation Methods for many years and aspired to become a Second Rank Formation Master, he would surely have some Second-Grade Spiritual Ink prepared.

When Mo Hua arrived at the Luo Mansion, he learned that Master Luo was not there.

He had gone to have tea with Master Qian...

Mo Hua had no choice but to head to the Qian Mansion instead.

The once-great Qian Family had long since fallen into decline, and the family members had gone their separate ways.

The vast Qian Mansion had been divided into multiple independent courtyards.

The courtyard where Master Qian now lived was located in the southwest corner of Qian Mansion, covering the largest area and offering the most spacious surroundings; however, the signboard at the door had changed to “Qian Family’s School.”

This served not only as Master Qian’s residence but also as an academy he had established to teach Formation Methods.

Master Qian still remembered his agreement with Mo Hua, committed to studying Formation Methods deeply, and started teaching Formation Patterns to the Loose Cultivator children of Tongxian City.

Whenever Master Luo had spare time, he would come here for a visit.

Sharing tea and discussing Formation Methods with Master Qian, he would occasionally offer guidance to other disciples as well.

When Mo Hua entered, both Master Luo and Master Qian were enjoying tea in the tranquil and pleasant courtyard. Surprised and delighted to see him, they both stood to greet him warmly:

"Gentleman Mo, what a rare guest

Even though Mo Hua’s mastery of Formation Methods had already surpassed theirs, and now that he had achieved Foundation Establishment, his status was even higher. They did not dare neglect him.

Mo Hua greeted them with a smile as well.

"Master Luo, Master Qian, it’s been a long time.”

Master Luo looked Mo Hua over and saw that despite having achieved Foundation Establishment, with his profound gaze and stronger Divine Sense, and his deeper understanding of Formation Methods, he was still kind and genuine, seemingly unchanged from before, which inspired admiration.

Master Luo said with embarrassment, “Gentleman, I dare not accept the title of ‘master’ in your presence.”

Mo Hua didn't seem to mind it much.

After they were seated, Master Qian poured tea for Mo Hua and asked, "Youthful Gentleman, do you have any important matters for coming here?"

Mo Hua nodded and said, "Masters, do you have any Second-Grade Spiritual Ink?"

"Second-Grade Spiritual Ink!"

Master Luo and his companion exchanged glances, both somewhat surprised, "Youthful Gentleman, you can do Second-Grade Formations now?"

Though Mo Hua felt he was very familiar with the Second-Order Bright Fire Formation, he had never actually drawn it, so he did not want to boast and modestly said:

"A little, I want to try my hand at drawing."

When Mo Hua said he knew a little, naturally Master Luo did not think it was just a "little."

A bitter smile crossed Master Luo's face, and he didn't quite know what to say for a moment.

He was now over a hundred years old and still only a First-Grade Formation Master, but Mo Hua, so young, was already going to learn Second-Grade Formation Methods...

Although Mo Hua becoming a second-grade formation artist was good news for him, he still couldn't help but feel a sourness in his heart.

"Spiritual Ink, eh

Master Luo pondered for a moment and nodded, "I do have some Second-Grade Spiritual Ink, but not much, only two bottles

Master Qian also said, “I also have some, from the Qian Family’s old reserves, but only five bottles. If the Youthful Gentleman does not mind, please feel free to take them for your use.”

Mo Hua was overjoyed, “Thank you, Master Luo, thank you, Master Qian!”

"The Youthful Gentleman is too polite

Master Luo and Master Qian took out the Spiritual Ink and handed it to Mo Hua.

This Spiritual Ink, also comprised of the Five Elements, was contained in jade bottles, with a stirring aura, containing astonishing Five Elements Spiritual Power.

Mo Hua couldn’t help but say, “This Spiritual Ink, it’s quite expensive, isn’t it

Master Qian nodded, “Ordinary First-Grade Spiritual Ink, around ten Spirit Stones per bottle, depending on its quality or scarcity, there may be some variation, the cheaper ones, about two or three Spirit Stones per bottle, and the more expensive ones, dozens of Spirit Stones per bottle

"Second-Grade Spiritual Ink typically, even for the cheaper ones, would be about a hundred Spirit Stones per bottle.”

"And for the more expensive ones, several hundred to a thousand

Mo Hua was startled, “That expensive?!”

A hundred Spirit Stones per bottle...

In his hands, these small five bottles were worth at least five hundred Spirit Stones...

Master Qian sighed, “Yes, that’s why learning formations is not easy, and the higher you go, the more so

"With this small bottle of Spiritual Ink, a hundred Spirit Stones, even if you successfully draw a formation with absolute certainty and no mishaps, you can only draw two sets of Second-Grade Initial Stage formations

"And to truly master a formation, at the least it takes dozens of attempts, and at most hundreds of attempts

"To learn a single Second-Grade Formation, just the consumption of pen and ink Spirit Stones is not a small amount

"For the Great Clans and Great Sects, it doesn't matter, this amount of Spirit Stones is a drop in the bucket, what they eat for three meals a day is more than this

"For the mid-level Family Sects and Clans, it's not a big deal either."

"But for small families and minor sects, it will be much harder to support a Second-Rank Formation Master

"As for the Loose Cultivators

Master Qian gave a bitter smile.

Loose Cultivators could hardly support themselves, let alone afford a Formation Master of the Second Grade or higher.

Mo Hua's mouth fell open, and he looked again at the few bottles of Spiritual Ink in his hands, frowning and asking:

"Isn't this Spiritual Ink just mixed with Monster Blood? Why is it so expensive?"

Master Luo was silent for a moment and then said slowly:

"It's difficult to hunt Second-Grade Monster Beasts, and Blood Drawing is also hard."

"Of course, that's not the main reason

Master Luo's voice dropped a few notches.

"Even though Second-Grade Monster Beasts are hard to kill, for making Spiritual Ink, only the blood is used, not the scarce items like the inner core, heart, or Monster Marrow

"In theory, it should not be so costly."

"But, the formulas for making Spiritual Ink, the techniques, along with some rare Spirit Grass, are all in the hands of the Great Clans and Great Sects."

Master Luo pointed upwards, "Since they have the monopoly, they naturally get to dictate the terms."

"Whether it's ten Spirit Stones, a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand... it's not something we can decide."

"Those who actually hunt monsters, draw the blood, and mix the ink, they actually don't earn Spirit Stones at all; most of the profits are skimmed off by the noble clans and families

"With their actions, one reason is to make a profit, and another is

Master Luo paused for a moment but then decided to clarify a bit more, considering Mo Hua's background as a Loose Cultivator.

to prevent too many Formation Masters from rising from the lower ranks, thereby shaking their... foundations."

Chapter 732: "Windfall" (1)

Master Luo said no more, having reached the extent of his advice.

"As the saying goes, 'Only through enduring the most bitter hardships can one become the best amongst men.'



If Mo Hua were to join the Family Sects and Clans in the future, becoming ‘the best amongst men,’ then these words would be of no use.”

If Mo Hua upholds his Taoist Heart and remains true to his original aspirations, with his intelligence, he ought to know what to say, and naturally, he will have a measure in his heart.”

Master Luo looked at Mo Hua and saw his furrowed brows, a reflective look upon his face.

Knowing that he understood his meaning, he nodded slightly and said nothing more.

...

The discussion among the few then returned to Formation Mastery.

Master Luo said:

"Second-Grade Formations are categorized by the Divine Sense of a Cultivator during the initial, middle, and late stages of Foundation Establishment into initial, intermediate, and high stages.”

"Upon entering Foundation Establishment, a ten-pattern is the entrance-level Second-Grade Formation

"Entrance-level Formations are relatively simple, and though they are Second Grade, they are not considered within a stage

"In the initial stage of Foundation Establishment, from eleven to thirteen patterns are considered Second-Grade Initial Stage Formations;”

"In the middle phase of Foundation Establishment, from fourteen to sixteen patterns are considered Intermediate-level Second-Grade Formations;”

"In the late phase of Foundation Establishment, from seventeen to nineteen patterns are considered High-Grade Second-Grade Formations

"Formation Masters are categorized the same way, into initial, intermediate, and high stages."

"The threshold for a First-Grade Formation Master is very high, focusing only on the rank and not on the stages, but in truth, all First-Grade Formation Masters should be considered 'High Stage First-Grade Formation Masters,' it's just that these detailed divisions have been eliminated by the Taoist Court

"The categorization becomes more detailed and stringent at the Second-Grade Formation level."

"It's not easy to become a Second-Grade Formation Master, and advancing from there is even harder, involving an assessment with each advancement

Master Luo frowned, sighing deeply.

Master Qian felt equally helpless.

If passing the First Grade assessment is already difficult, what more for the Second Grade...

Mo Hua pondered for a moment before asking, "So, to become a Second-Grade Junior Formation Master, is it enough just to know how to arrange the Second-Grade Initial Stage Formations?"

Master Luo shook his head and said with a wry smile:

"It's not that simple. The Second-Grade Initial Stage Formations encompass those with eleven to thirteen stripes, and the difficulty varies greatly within them

"With each additional pattern, the Formation's difficulty increases significantly."

"One must master the most difficult Thirteen Pattern Formation at the initial stage, and not just one or two sets."

"According to the Taoist Court rules, one must learn at least four or five sets of the Thirteen Pattern Formations before they can apply for assessment and be promoted to a Second Grade Initial Stage Formation Master

"The same applies to the subsequent stages."

"Mastering the Sixteen-Pattern Formation advances one to Middle Stage Second Grade; mastering the Nineteen-Pattern Formation advances one to High Stage Second Grade

"Therefore, any Formation Master who truly passes step-by-step assessments and advances to a High-Stage Second-Grade Master is incredibly rare and exceptionally proficient in Second-Grade Formations

Mo Hua nodded, then said, "So basically, at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, one can become a Second Grade Initial Stage Formation Master?"

His statement was somewhat conservative.

Because his Divine Sense had already reached thirteen patterns, if judged by Formation standards, learning a Fourteen-Pattern Second-Grade Formation would bring him to the threshold of a Middle Stage Second-Grade Formation Master...

Master Luo, however, shook his head and said:

"That's not the case

"Generally speaking, it's only possible to become a Second Grade Initial Stage Formation Master during the Middle Phase of Foundation Establishment, a Middle Stage Second Grade in the Late Stage of Foundation Establishment, and as for a High Stage Second Grade Formation Master

Master Luo paused and sighed:

either one has already broken through to the Golden Core stage or one's cultivation has stagnated for too long in the Late Stage of Foundation Establishment, unable to make further progress, and thus, spends a hundred or two hundred years painstakingly learning Formations to be promoted to a High-Stage Second Grade Formation Master

Mo Hua opened his mouth in surprise, "Is it that difficult

"Difficult indeed

Master Luo's eyebrows knitted together in a shape.

Even though he considered Mo Hua exceptional, not bound to common convention, some fundamental "common sense" of Tao Cultivation still needed to be understood by him.

He is who he is, and others are who they are.

Not everyone is a little monster like him.

"Even if one's Formation skill is only a small realm behind one's cultivation level, such a Cultivator can still be considered a highly talented Formation Master. Ordinary Cultivators start learning First-grade Formations at Foundation Establishment and only go on to Second-Grade Formations at the late stage of Foundation Establishment or even the Golden Core stage. That's also normal

Mo Hua asked, "Is it because their Divine Sense isn't strong enough?"

Master Luo nodded, saying weakly, "Yes, the Divine Sense isn't enough

"Blood Qi and Spiritual Power can be enhanced through Cultivation Techniques, but not Divine Sense."

"Most Cultivators cannot train Divine Sense; aside from those born with an extraordinary Divine Sense, generally, they possess a Divine Sense matching their stage of cultivation, and rarely more than that

"At the initial stage of Foundation Establishment, one can have at most a Divine Sense of thirteen patterns. To become an initial stage Formation Master, one must learn a Thirteen Pattern Formation

"Learning this way can be very strenuous."

"The consumption of Divine Sense is immense, and recovery is extremely slow. Moreover, learning Formations this way is like groping one's way across a river by feeling the stones, careful and

cautious, with no room for error. One wrong step could even lead to the hazard of Divine Sense depletion.”

"Even so, after completely exhausting Divine Sense for a whole day, one might only be able to practice it two or three times

"The Second Grade Thirteen Pattern Formations are complex and profound. Practicing only two or three times a day—how could that be enough?"

"By the time one truly comprehends it, how long will it take

Master Luo said bitterly.

Mo Hua nodded in agreement.

He had the Taoist Stele, allowing him to practice Formations far more often, sometimes even twenty or thirty times in a single night.

Two or three times a day was indeed too little, hardly enough to even fill the gaps between his teeth...

With such a low frequency of practice, it would indeed be difficult to grasp the essence of Formations.

Moreover, Cultivators needed to cultivate and earn Spirit Stones.

Even for Cultivators of noble clans and sects, it's unlikely they would have the leisure to focus solely on Formations every day, as they would be preoccupied with various tasks within their Clan or Sect.

Chapter 733: "Windfall" (2)

"So

Master Luo continued, “Sharpening the knife does not delay the chopping of firewood. First, elevate your realm and strengthen your Divine Sense, then go back to learning formation methods. With a full Divine Sense, learning will become easier.”

"I see

Mo Hua nodded his little head and then his eyes shone brightly:

"That means, if I reach the Initial Stage of Foundation Establishment and become a Second Grade Junior Formation Master, that would be... pretty impressive, wouldn't it?"

"Foundation Establishment Initial Stage... Second Grade Initial Stage

...

Master Luo was taken aback, somewhat not wanting to converse with Mo Hua.

But then he thought about it and realized that such a possibility wasn't entirely out of the question for Mo Hua...

A sense of anticipation grew in Master Luo.

If Mo Hua, at such a young age, reached the Initial Stage of Foundation Establishment and became a Second Grade Junior Formation Master, perhaps he could achieve even greater feats in the future...

Master Qian also praised, “If the little gentleman becomes a Second Grade Junior Formation Master at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, even among the Noble Clans, he would be considered a rare formation genius

"Only

Master Qian sighed, a tinge of regret in his voice:

"In Tongxian City, the heritage and resources for Second-Grade formations are far too scarce

Formations were rare, and the costs of brush, ink, and paper were exorbitant.

Considering Mo Hua's family background, if he really wanted to continue learning, the difficulties would be immense.

Master Luo also felt a sense of regret for Mo Hua.

After discussing formations, everyone had more tea.

As noon approached, the disciples from the school began to leave class and respectfully said their farewells to Master Qian before heading home for a meal.

Suddenly, a five- or six-year-old child in the crowd caught sight of Mo Hua and brightened up, dashing into Mo Hua's embrace and calling out in a babyish voice:

"Brother Mo!"

Mo Hua was startled and then realized that the child was actually Zhouer.

Zhouer, with the surname Chu, was the child of Uncle Chu, a Monster Hunter skilled in using traps who had taught these trapping techniques to Mo Hua.

Zhouer's mother, Aunt Jiang, had been helping in Mo Hua's family restaurant.

Years ago, Uncle Chu suffered grievous injuries and was unable to continue Monster Hunting. He had asked Mo Hua to teach his son some formation methods so that in the future, he could earn a living without risking his life in battle

Later, when Mo Hua went on a journey, he entrusted Zhouer to Master Qian.

Seeing Zhouer behave this way, Master Qian helplessly said:

"No manners, not proper at all."

Zhouer then hid behind Mo Hua, only his little head peeking out.

Master Qian was strict in tone, but his expression was devoid of blame, showing that he was quite fond of this little disciple.

Mo Hua patted Zhouer's head and asked Master Qian:

"Master Qian, how is Zhouer's formation studies coming along?"

Master Qian responded, "He is young and just started. He should first memorize some text to understand the principles of formations. Learning one or two Formation Patterns will suffice for now

Mo Hua nodded in acknowledgment.

As it was nearing noon, having asked all he wanted, Mo Hua stood up and took his leave.

Zhouer clung to Mo Hua, so Mo Hua took him home, picked out some tasty and easily digestible food from the restaurant, and fed Zhouer until he was full before letting Aunt Jiang take him back home.

...

In the days that followed, Mo Hua began to practice Second-Grade formations with undivided attention.

Every time night fell, he would sit upright on his bed, his Divine Sense delving into his Sea of Consciousness, ceaselessly practicing formations atop the Taoist Stele.

During these days, the formation he practiced was the "Second-order Thorn Formation."

The Thorns Formation is part of the Wood series.



Once activated, it produces vines and thorns, trapping enemies; it is one kind of the Five Elements Trapping Formation.

The Thorns Formation includes eleven Formation Patterns, making it one of the simpler Second Grade Initial Stage formations.

This formation was one that Mo Hua had deciphered and created by reversing the source from the “Five Elements Formation Flow Map.”

This was the only Second-Grade formation suitable for Mo Hua that he had decoded in reverse from the source so far...

The “Five Elements Formation Flow Map” originates all of the Five Elements Sect’s Five Elements Formations from a single, eccentric “Five Elements Source Pattern.”

However, these formations have solidified into one “Source Pattern.”

This Source Pattern is very bizarre and dangerous. But since it has been suppressed by the Taoist Stele, it has become much more subdued...

Nonetheless, for Mo Hua to “decode” the Five Elements Sect’s formation legacy from this Source Pattern is still very challenging.

Firstly, this kind of reverse sourcing is very consuming of one’s Divine Sense.

As Mo Hua still needed to study formations and his Divine Sense was powerful but finite, he could only partake in this process in his spare time, or when he was bored with his pattern drawing.

Secondly, the formations “decoded” from the Source Pattern are random...

Mo Hua did not know the principles or laws by which the ancestors of the Five Elements Sect had managed to distill the Five Elements Formations into this Source Pattern.

So the formations he derived in reverse were disordered, chaotic.

It was like a “lottery draw

The Five Elements were varied, with First and Second Grades mixed in.

Mo Hua had no idea what formation he would “decode” next, what properties of the Five Elements it would be, if it would be First Grade or Second Grade, or how many Formation Patterns it would contain...

Mo Hua could only guess.

The only thing he could deduce was that the “Decoded” formation’s upper limit was related to the strength of his Divine Sense.

The number of patterns in Divine Sense corresponds to the maximum number of patterns he could “decode.”

With a fourteen-pattern Divine Sense, in theory, Mo Hua should be able to “decode” up to a fourteen-pattern Five Elements Formation.

But theory is just theory, and reality is reality.

So far, the best formation Mo Hua had deciphered was the ten-plus-pattern Thorns Formation he was practicing.

This was still acceptable, but what truly baffled Mo Hua was that this “Source Pattern” guaranteed nothing!

Its lower limit was even alarmingly low!

Most of what he had deciphered so far were First-Grade formations, including a great number of formations without grading and even one, with just three patterns, the most basic Bright Fire Formation!

Chapter 734: Chapter "Windfall" (3)

Although the Five Elements Source Pattern encompassed various Five Elements Formations, it was normal for these lower-tier formations to be included as well.

However, Mo Hua still felt that some of the formations were just filler added by the ancestors of the Five Elements Sect, meant to “contaminate” the Source Pattern...

Mo Hua sighed, feeling somewhat helpless.

His only option was to continue practicing formations while hoping that one day he would have a stroke of great luck and be able to draw...

No, it was to “decipher” a Fourteen Pattern Second Grade Five Elements Formation!

...

Until then, he could only hone his skills with these Ten Pattern and Eleven Pattern formations...

Mo Hua collected his thoughts, then spent the entire night practicing formations on the Taoist Stele.

When he awoke in the morning, he still felt unfulfilled.

Unfortunately, the few bottles of Second Grade Spiritual Ink given to him by Master Luo and Master Qian were used up, preventing him from actually drawing formations anymore.

Seven bottles of Spiritual Ink were not enough; it was nowhere near sufficient for Mo Hua’s use, and even with the utmost frugality, they wouldn’t last long.

"Learn to put into practice

Mo Hua firmly remembered Mr. Zhuang’s teaching.

Having the Taoist Stele, “learning” was not a problem.

With his Divine Sense submerged in the Sea of Consciousness, practicing on the Taoist Stele did not require pen or ink, nor paper, and his Divine Sense could even backtrack, allowing for training that was ten to dozens of times more than others.

Upon reflecting on this, Mo Hua felt somewhat fortunate.

"Thank goodness I have the Taoist Stele

Not only could he practice formations, but he could also temper his Divine Sense.

As long as he relentlessly persisted in practicing, he would learn more and more formations, his Divine Sense would grow stronger, and then he could go on to learn even more formations...  
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This cycle would continue, like a “snowball” effect, constantly enlarging his Divine Sense as well as his expertise in formations.

However, he was now able to “learn,” but unable to “use.”

It wasn’t just the Spiritual Ink; the pens and paper were also a big issue.

Mo Hua had bartered for a few Second Grade “Formation Papers” from Old Master An, but they were barely a stopgap and quickly ran out.

Such Second Grade Formation Papers were expensive.

They were difficult to acquire, yet all too easy to use up...

Even so, Formation Paper was the cheapest of the formation media.

Other formation media, such as Spiritual Artifacts, Array Plates, and Formation Flags, were even more expensive, far beyond what Mo Hua could afford.

Besides Formation Paper, there was also the Formation Pen.

Mo Hua hadn't expected Formation Pens to be more expensive than Formation Paper, and furthermore, Second Grade Formation Pens wore out more easily than First Grade ones.

The Spiritual Ink of the Second Grade contained a stronger concentration of Spiritual Power and Blood Qi from Monster Beasts.

A Formation Pen soaked in Spiritual Ink would wear down faster.

Inferior Formation Pens, often used until they went "bald,

Whereas those long-lasting, top-quality Formation Pens were made of lavish materials and had a prohibitive cost—selling himself wouldn't cover their price.

"Is there any way to draw formations without using paper or pens?"

Mo Hua stroked his chin, pondering briefly.

He had some vague ideas but needed more time to research them.

But even if he didn't use paper or pens, ink was essential...

"Second Grade Spiritual Ink is made with Second Grade Monster Blood

Mo Hua thought of the Big Tiger.

Drawing blood from the Big Tiger... definitely not an option; he had a pretty good relationship with the Big Tiger and couldn't entertain such thoughts.

Then, perhaps...

Find a way to work with the Big Tiger to hunt other Second Grade Monster Beasts in the Big Black Mountain?

It would eat the meat, while I drew the blood?

Mo Hua nodded silently, feeling that this plan was feasible.

Then Mo Hua was suddenly struck by a realization.

The Big Tiger...

Only then did he remember that the Big Tiger had also given him some “gifts,” those unclaimed Storage Bags.

After returning home, Mo Hua had so many people to greet that he had temporarily forgotten about them.

"I wonder what exactly is inside these storage bags

Mo Hua, feeling curious, pulled out the storage bags from under the bed and opened them one by one.

Some of these bags were still stained with blood, some were gorgeously exquisite, and others were grey, dirty, and somewhat eerie.

After laying out all the storage bags and carefully going through them, Mo Hua finally understood.

Some of the bags had belonged to serious cultivators, and others to demon cultivators.

In addition to the standard spirit stones, spiritual artifacts, and pills, there were also some demon path skills for blood-sucking, spirit-draining, and replenishing from others, as well as spells for soul capturing and corpse refinement...

These demon path skills and spells were deeply harmful and definitely couldn't be kept. Mo Hua planned to burn them together later to prevent them from harming others.

There were also some righteous dao cultivation techniques and spells...

As for cultivation techniques, Mo Hua had already learned the Heaven Yan Jue, which he didn't need...

Most of the spells were for body refinement within Tao cultivation martial arts, and a few were second-grade spells, but they all seemed to be common techniques.

However, Mo Hua wasn't picky and thought he might study them when he had some free time...

There were plenty of spirit stones, totaling up to tens of thousands!

If not for the limited capacity and inconvenient transport of these storage bags, there might have been even more.

There was also a rich variety of pills, those that revitalized the spirit, replenished blood, resisted poison, dispelled miasma, and even second-grade Small Rejuvenation Pills that could save one's life...

Mo Hua frowned.

All these added up to a hefty "windfall"!

Mo Hua was both shocked and delighted, but also somewhat puzzled.

Who were the owners of these storage bags, and how did they end up in Tongxian City? How did they die? And how did Big Tiger come to pick up these bags?

Mo Hua searched through the storage bags to find some clues.

After searching for a long time, he found a few scrolls with phrases like "personally initiated by the family head" and "seen and reported to the sect master" written on them. After reading them, he finally realized.

"These cultivators came to Tongxian City for their master

Some were from the Taoist State clans or their affiliated smaller families, sent by their family heads or sects to Tongxian City to investigate their master's whereabouts...

Some were people from the Demon Sect.

But they were probably not from any great sects, just smaller forces.

Once they arrived at Tongxian City, they fought each other at Big Black Mountain.

Then, in the fierce battle, either they perished outright or, grievously wounded, they fell victim to Big Tiger's opportunism.

A few of the storage bags were torn, bearing the traces of tiger teeth.

Presumably, Big Tiger had torn open the bags and consumed whatever spiritual objects were inside. After assimilating them, it broke through a realm and became a second-grade monster beast.

The rest of the storage bags, in recognition of some indebtedness, were left for itself.

After thinking it through, Mo Hua felt that this was probably the truth of the matter. Even if there were some deviations, they likely weren't significant.

"Since they harbored ill intentions towards the master, their deaths are of little consequence

Mo Hua felt justified in taking the "windfall" for himself.

Later, he sorted through the items in the storage bags, categorizing them, but then he inadvertently noticed a map.

The map was extensive, encompassing the Nine State.



In the Cultivation World's Nine State, "Taoist State" is the core, situated in the center, also the location of the Central Tao Court.

Beyond the Taoist State, the other eight states are named after the "Qian," "Kun," "Kan," "Li," "Gen," "Zhen," "Xun," "Dui" Bagua positions, arranged according to the Bagua to suppress the earth and heavens and to protect the central Taoist State.

"A map of the Nine State?"

Mo Hua was taken aback and examined it closely.

Although the map captured all of the Nine State, the other states were only marked with main mountain ranges, and the specific state boundaries were vague.

Only "Qian State" had clearly defined borders and detailed mountains and rivers.

Within Qian State, one boundary was circled in red ink, with a small note saying:

Qian State, Dragon Path Mountains, Fifth-class Qianxue State Boundary.

A coveted destination for the cultivators of Nine State seeking knowledge.

Many sects flourished here, gathering the proud sons of heaven.

A pinnacle of inheritance for formations, pill, artifact, rune, skills, martial arts, and spells.

It is the foremost state boundary within the Cultivation World, unparalleled and the premier place for pursuing the way and seeking knowledge!

Chapter 735: Storage Ring (1)

Dragon Path Mountains... fifth-class Qianxue State Boundary...

"A place of seeking knowledge

Mo Hua looked slightly dazed.

With Sects emerging one after another, and Proud Sons of Heaven gathering, could the gathering of the great achievements of Formations mean having a complete foundation of Tao Cultivation and inheritance of all categories of Formations?

Mo Hua had only learned the Five Elements Formation so far.

But besides the Five Elements, there are many other categories of Formations, each with their own systems.

...

Such as Eryi, Three Talents, Four Symbols, Six Harmonies, Seven Stars, Eight Trigrams, and others.

Mo Hua had only seen a few brief mentions of these Formation systems in Formation Books; the descriptions vague, not to mention a true and specific inheritance.

Mo Hua pondered deeply.

The Formations of categories like Eryi, Four Symbols, Seven Stars, Eight Trigrams—his master must also know them, but he did not teach them to Mo Hua, teaching only Five-elements Formation Methods instead.

Presumably because the Five Elements Formation is the most basic and also the most widely applicable Formation.

Biting off more than one can chew is never good; mastering the Five Elements Formation and laying a solid foundation first, then learning other systems of Formations for easier cross-referencing seemed wiser.

But the biggest reason, he guessed, was...

His master... knew that he didn't have much time left, and there were many things he wanted to teach, but he no longer had the time...

"Master

Mo Hua's gaze grew somewhat dim.

After a moment, he finally rallied his spirits and continued his examination of the map of Qian State.

The map marked a large number of Sects.

And in the Qianxue State Boundary, there were mostly "Tao Cultivation Sects".

The so-called "Tao Cultivation" Sects are different from Industry Sects, Hidden Sects, and Spiritual Merchant Sects.

Hidden Sects keep to themselves, avoid worldly affairs, and are relatively secluded.

Industry Sects and Spiritual Merchant Sects prioritize profit, earning Spirit Stones and profits by managing Tao Cultivation industries or operating various stores selling Formations, Pills, Artifacts, Runes.

They also accept disciples, but that is not their main activity.

However, Tao Cultivation Sects are founded on principles of teaching Taoist Skill, with their primary operation being to "instruct Cultivators in Cultivation, imparting Taoist methods," mainly benefiting from the Spirit Stone donations of their disciples.

Tao Cultivation Sects have some industry, but not much.

These things, Mo Hua learned while traveling, heard from the mouths of others.

Mo Hua also realized that there are quite a few differences between Sects.

Some impart knowledge and instruction, while others are purely profit-driven.

Tao Cultivation Sects...

"Teaching Cultivation, imparting methods

Mo Hua couldn't help but wonder, "Can I go there?"

He thought for a moment, then shook his head.

The Qianxue State Boundary is a fifth-class state boundary; the Tao Cultivation Sects inside should be quite expensive to join, right...

That "windfall" I came across, I wonder if it's enough to make a donation.

Even if I can afford the donation, would they accept someone like me?

Proud Sons of Heaven gathering...

These Sects should have strict criteria for accepting disciples, right?

Mo Hua flipped through the map and found that it contained sparse text, no other markings, and nothing more detailed.

"Should I ask someone about it?"

Mo Hua frowned, pondering for a long time before feeling that the most suitable person to ask was Court Leader Zhou.

Zhang Lan should know, but he had already returned home.

Court Leader Zhou also came from a Clan, though not a large one, but he must have experience and insight; otherwise, he wouldn't be able to serve as a Court Official of the Taoist Court.

Mo Hua went back to the Taoist Court and handed the map over to Court Leader Zhou to see.

"Qianxue State?"

Court Leader Zhou was somewhat surprised to hear this.

"Hmm." Mo Hua nodded.

Court Leader Zhou thought for a moment, then said, "Wait for a moment

He then rummaged through his Storage Bag and pulled out several booklets. Mo Hua glanced at them and saw titles like "History of Tao Cultivation", "Overview of Nine States" on the cover pages.

"Qian State is too vast and too far from here; I don't remember some things very clearly

After looking carefully through the books, Court Leader Zhou finally nodded, saying:

"Ah, that's right

"The Qianxue State Boundary is indeed the premier place for Tao Cultivation learning in all of Nine State, with numerous Sects, and a thriving academic atmosphere

"Across the lands of Nine State, most talented Cultivators who have reached Foundation Establishment before the age of twenty will go to the Qianxue State Boundary and choose to enter a Sect, where they can find great teachers, befriend Proud Sons of Heaven from the various states, while studying Taoism and laying a foundation for their future path

"Why do they all go to the Qianxue State Boundary?"

Mo Hua was a bit puzzled, "Because it's a fifth-class state boundary?"

"Not entirely," Court Leader Zhou looked at Mo Hua and explained patiently, "Although Cultivation is classified into nine grades, this is an ancient classification, with nine being the ultimate number of heaven and earth, belonging to Immortal Grade."

"Ever since the Taoist Court, nature's spiritual energy has been gradually depleting, and it's been a long time since anyone has become immortal."

"Not to mention the ninth grade, even the seventh and eighth grades are unattainable for Cultivators."

"A fifth-class state boundary, for ordinary Cultivators, is already out of reach

"However, the reason why Qianxue State Boundary is the premier learning destination isn't just because it's a fifth-class

Court Leader Zhou paused, then continued:

"In Tao Cultivation, one speaks of 'Wealth, Skill, Companionship, and Place

"Wealth refers to Tao Cultivation resources like Spirit Stones, Spiritual Objects, and other assets;"

"Skill refers to Tao Cultivation methods: Cultivation Techniques, Spells, Tao Cultivation Martial Arts, as well as all kinds of secret techniques not passed to outsiders, including Formations, Pills, Artifacts, Runes, and such methods related to the hundred trades of Tao Cultivation;"

"Companionship refers to Taoist Friends with shared paths and interests, with firm Taoist Hearts, who engage in exchanges and mutual feedback, reflecting and progressing together in their Cultivation;"

"Place refers to renowned mountains and rivers, the foundation of Taoist Sects

"With a confluence of Wealth, Skill, Companionship, and Place, Qianxue State Boundary has it all, and with nearly ten thousand years of Taoist learning history, numerous Sects stand to teach the Tao,

hosting complete arrays of heritage; that's why it is the foremost Tao Cultivation State Boundary of the Nine States!"

As Mo Hua listened, he felt yearning and involuntarily asked:

Chapter 736: Storage Ring (2)

"Court Leader, are the requirements for apprenticing at the Qianxue State Sects very strict?"

"Naturally Court Leader Zhou nodded, "Before one turns twenty, one must achieve Foundation Establishment, which is only the basic requirement

"Beyond that, it also depends on what kind of Taoist Foundation you have established."

"Noble Clans and Sect Disciples grind their realms, consolidate their cultivation, circulate their Spiritual Power to the utmost limit, and then they establish foundation at the age of seventeen or eighteen."

"That kind of Foundation Establishment is what truly counts as Foundation Establishment."

"Ordinarily, cultivators from smaller powers are greedy for quick success and are rash, with uncondensed Blood Qi and thin Spiritual Power, hastily establishing foundation at the age of fifteen or sixteen. That kind of Foundation Establishment naturally doesn't count

...

Court Leader Zhou finished speaking and fell into a momentary stupor, casting a glance at Mo Hua, who was fifteen and had both scant Blood Qi and Spiritual Power, he said somewhat guiltily:

"I didn't mean you

"It's okay, no worries."

Mo Hua was very generous and didn't take offense.

His weak Blood Qi and low Spiritual Power were facts obvious at a glance, there was no need to be reticent.

Moreover, he was proving the Dao with Divine Sense and had forged a Divine Sense Taoist Foundation, so Blood Qi and Spiritual Power didn't really matter to him.

Seeing that Mo Hua didn't mind, Court Leader Zhou finally breathed a sigh of relief and continued:

"And that's just for Foundation Establishment, other requirements are also exceedingly strict

"First is the Spiritual Root, in the Qian Xue State, the general sects only accept those with top-grade Spiritual Roots

"Some sects with great power, long inheritance, ranking within the top ten, even only accept disciples with superior top-grade Spiritual Roots

Mo Hua opened his mouth, "Not accepting anyone without a superior top-grade... Are the requirements really so harsh?"

Court Leader Zhou nodded, also feeling helpless, "Spiritual Roots are the foundation of a cultivator, the better the Spiritual Root, the higher grade of Cultivation Techniques one can practice, and the deeper the Spiritual Power one can cultivate. It becomes easier to break through realms in the future, and one can journey further on the path of Tao Cultivation

"However, that said, they are all top-grade Spiritual Roots, and the difference between superior top-grade and top medium-grade is just a sliver, so the disparity isn't that huge."

"Those sects, the reason they only accept superior top-grade, is simply because there are too many prodigies, and the competition is too fierce."

"This threshold has been raised time and again

"Thousands of years ago, some with a middle-grade Spiritual Root, as long as they possessed a firm Taoist Heart and had some specialty, could also be apprenticed in those sects, and might even become an Instructor or even an Elder."



"But now

Court Leader Zhou sighed, "There are no people from high-class sects who come from humble families, let alone Loose Cultivators. With poor Spiritual Roots, you can't even enter the gate

"That's why cultivators often say, in this world, once you're born and your Spiritual Root is determined, your fate is also determined

"And that's just talking about Spiritual Roots

Court Leader Zhou continued, "There are also considerations of family background, lineage, inheritance, and so on."

"Without a notable birth or a distinguished family, entering such sect is even more difficult."

"Furthermore, some sects even investigate the parents of those seeking to enter, what kind of Spiritual Roots they have, what their level of cultivation is, and who they are

Mo Hua found it extreme to the utmost and couldn't help sighing, feeling somewhat disheartened.

It seemed that there was no chance for him in the Qianxue State.

Not to mention anything else, just the condition of middle to lower Five Elements Spiritual Root blocked him firmly from entering any doors.

Mo Hua's expression became a bit downcast.

Court Leader Zhou looked at Mo Hua, and with a sense of pity, said:

"There are also some smaller sects that don't require one to have an exceptionally high-grade Spiritual Root, but

But their inheritance was doubtlessly shallow.

Even if you entered their ranks, you might not be able to learn anything valuable.

Court Leader Zhou sighed softly.

Loose Cultivators had indeed too fragile a foundation, with Foundation Establishment being the ceiling for them.

He still hoped that Mo Hua could apprentice at the Qianxue State Sects, systematically learn Tao Cultivation knowledge, increase his experience, and fill in his shortcomings so that he could go further in the future...

But he also knew that in such places, where Noble Clans gathered and prodigies clustered, the barriers between formal sects were extremely deep.

Even just stepping over the threshold was exceedingly difficult.

Especially for a Loose Cultivator like Mo Hua...

Court Leader Zhou said no more, only offering a few words of comfort to Mo Hua, speaking some pleasantries. Beyond that, there really wasn't much else he could help with...

Mo Hua felt somewhat disappointed, but after giving it some thought, he didn't take it too much to heart.

Having the chance to go to the Qianxue State to seek apprenticeship was, of course, good.

But even without such an opportunity, it didn't matter.

One shouldn't force what's not meant to be in this world.

Mo Hua returned home, as usual, read for a while, studied Formation for a period, and when his Divine Sense was exhausted, he felt a bit weary, so he spread the map of the Qian Xue State and looked at it again.

After perusing it a few times, Mo Hua put it away.

Since his Spiritual Root wasn't sufficient and he couldn't even secure entry, it was pointless to look any further; thus, Mo Hua placed the map into his storage pouch.

Then after a moment's thought, considering the map of the Nine States to be somewhat valuable and perhaps useful in the future, he decided to take it out of the storage pouch and once more put it into his Storage Ring.

The Storage Ring was small, but Mo Hua's hands were smaller, and he could only wear it on the thumb of his left hand.

This ring was a gift from his master, and Mo Hua had performed a blood recognition ritual on it. Its design was simple and unremarkable.

Mo Hua could see it, but others could not.

This Storage Ring was a concealed storage bag.

However, Mo Hua also felt that this ring could hide his aura, preventing others from seeing through his true strength.

It was very similar to the Spiritual Artifacts on his junior brothers and sisters that "obstructed the probing of Divine Sense".

Beyond that, it served no other purpose.

But because it was a gift from his master, Mo Hua treasured it.

After placing the Qian State map into the Storage Ring, Mo Hua checked the other items inside the ring, then he suddenly froze.

Within the Storage Ring, there was an extra Jade Slip.

Mo Hua had no recollection of this Jade Slip.

He had never seen this Jade Slip before when he put things into the Storage Ring.

"Why would there be an extra Jade Slip?"

Chapter 737: Storage Ring (3)

Mo Hua was somewhat puzzled as he took out the jade slip which was grey and dull, its appearance ancient, as if it had existed for many years.

With a sweep of his Divine Sense, Mo Hua saw that on the jade slip, three big characters were engraved:

"Qian Taoist Sect."

There was also a line of smaller characters beneath it:

"Those holding this order to enter the sect shall not refuse."

...

The tone used was that of an "imperial command

Did it mean that anyone who held this token and sought to join the sect could not refuse?

Mo Hua furrowed his brows.

"Qian Taoist Sect

This name seemed somewhat familiar...

Mo Hua once again took out the map of Qian State from the Storage Ring and upon scanning it briefly, he found that in the Qianxue State Boundary, there indeed was a sect named “Qian Taoist Sect”.

Moreover, it was one of the Four Great Sects within the Qianxue State Boundary!

Mo Hua was startled.

This was...

The Sect-Entering Order of the Qian Taoist Sect?!

"How did this jade token end up in the Storage Ring... is this what Master left for me?"

Mo Hua felt somewhat dazed.

The Storage Ring was given to him by his master, and only he knew about it.

No one else could open it.

If there was something inside, it could only have been left by his master...

"The Sect-Entering Order of the Qian Taoist Sect

Mo Hua pondered for a moment, then understood his master's intention.

His master had given him this token, and on the token was the name of a sect.

If he had the chance and knew what this sect was and where it was located, then he could rely on the token to join the sect himself.

But if he was clueless about it all, then it meant he had no such fate.

With or without this jade token, it would be the same.

"This is... a path out that Master left for me

Mo Hua was taken aback.

Although he had learned the Heavenly secret Calculation and had stealthily studied the Tricky Calculation, possessed the Five Elements Formation Flow Chart, his foundation was weak, his Formation techniques unorthodox, only versed in the Five Elements.

He needed to join a sect to learn more comprehensive Tao Cultivation knowledge.

To understand the formations beyond the Five Elements, other systems of formations.

To pursue higher realms of cultivation...

All these... Master had anticipated...

Mo Hua felt a sourness in the corners of his eyes.

He opened the map of Qian State again and located the destination indicated by the Sect-Entering Order.

"Fifth-class Qianxue State Boundary, Qian Taoist Sect, huh

Mo Hua was very clear in his heart.

By only cultivating behind closed doors, his progress in Cultivation and his mastery over formations would inevitably be slow.

After Foundation Establishment, exactly how to cultivate, how to stabilize the Taoist Foundation, enhance one's Cultivation, breakthrough to Golden Core, and beyond Golden Core, how to undergo Feather Transformation...

He was completely ignorant about these profound realms of Cultivation.

Cultivation is the foundation of a Cultivator.

Without sufficient Cultivation, he would forever remain a Foundation Building Cultivator, forever just a first or at most a Second Grade Formation Master.

He would also never learn the extremely profound formations that snatch the creation of heaven and earth, reverse the causality of life and death...

And thus, he would never... be able to save his master...

Or repay the kindness his master had shown him.

But Mo Hua felt conflicted within his heart.

He knew that sooner or later, he would have to leave Tongxian City.

"But, what about father and mother

Mo Hua furrowed his brows and sighed deeply.

What would happen to his parents if he left?

In the following days, Mo Hua was somewhat listless.

Liu Ruhua noticed Mo Hua's expression and one day, after finishing dinner and tidying up, she asked him:

"Huar, do you have some worries on your mind?"

Mo Hua was stunned for a moment, hesitated, but in the end, he shook his head.

"Mother, it's nothing

Liu Ruhua shook her head and looked at Mo Hua gently.

No one knows a child better than their mother.

Mo Hua was her child, and even though he was clever and skilled at painting formations, there were some things he couldn't hide from his mother.

Mo Hua, hesitation in his eyes, finally talked about the Qian Taoist Sect.

"Qian State

Liu Ruhua murmured, "Are Zisheng and Zixi also in Qian State?"

"Yeah," Mo Hua nodded, "But Qian State is very large, and they're far apart. It's not certain that we'll meet."

"Is that so

Liu Ruhua sounded slightly regretful, then after a moment of thought, her gaze became resolute, "Then go."

Mo Hua was stunned, "But, mother

Liu Ruhua shook her head, "The love of parents for their children means planning for their long-term future

"You have already completed your Foundation Establishment. Staying in Tongxian City, although I would be happy, I also know that this would be your future."

"If you were a hundred years old, two hundred years old, I wouldn't say anything."



"But you're only fifteen now... You can't be trapped here for a lifetime

"Although I'm reluctant, I also don't want to see you waste your talent."

"Moreover, there's Mr. Zhuang

Liu Ruhua sighed, "You haven't made it clear, but I know that Mr. Zhuang must have encountered some calamity, and he might be in a life or death situation, otherwise you wouldn't have returned alone

"Mr. Zhuang has shown great kindness to you, no, to our entire family."

"A favor as small as a drop of water should be returned with a spring."

"I don't know what cultivation level Mr. Zhuang has, but I imagine it's not low. With your current realm, you certainly can't help."

"But you must remember this favor."

"Even if you can't help now, you must keep it in your heart, and repay Mr. Zhuang's kindness when your cultivation is higher. Even if it's beyond your capability, you must do your best!"

The gentle look on Liu Ruhua's face was filled with determination.

"Alright, mother!"

Mo Hua nodded solemnly.

"But what about father

Mo Hua still had some concerns.

"You don't need to worry about your father at all

Liu Ruhua stroked Mo Hua's head, her voice gentle:

"Your father is a Monster Hunter. Hunting monsters is his livelihood. When you were young, he would spend years in the mountains, fighting Monster Beasts, accumulating scars after scars, earning Spirit Stones to raise you."

"He silently bore the burden of this family from a very early time

"Though he is only at the Qi Refinement stage, it's not yet time for you to worry about him."

"What he regrets the most is that he can't give you the best, neither in cultivation techniques nor formations, he can't help you."

"If you truly have the ambition to seek and learn the Dao, he won't say much, but he will surely be happy for you in his heart

Liu Ruhua looked at Mo Hua and smiled slightly:

"Although you've completed your Foundation Establishment, you're only fifteen years old. It's not time for you to worry about your parents."

"You just do what you want to do."

"Don't hesitate, just go forward

"But there's one thing

Liu Ruhua cautioned, "Huar, you must remember, to your parents, your life is the most precious."

"No matter what, take good care of yourself."

"Yes!" Mo Hua, moved, nodded and said, "Mother, rest assured, no one can kill me!"

His eyes suddenly flashed, innocence and cunning merged together, one eye foresaw the Heavenly secret, the other was filled with oddity, and within his fate lurked the terrifying blood-red Corpse King.

In the far-off South Yue City, Mining Cultivators burned incense, beseeching strength, and Karmic Protection.

Liu Ruhua was taken aback.

She always felt that Mo Hua was somewhat different just now, but on closer inspection, he seemed the same.

Still the child who was her heart and soul.

Liu Ruhua chuckled softly and pinched Mo Hua's tender cheek.

"There you go, talking big again

Mo Hua squinted his eyes, smiling happily.

With both parents' approval, he didn't need to hesitate anymore.

He had made up his mind. He would go to the Fifth-class Qianxue State Boundary, join a Sect, cultivate in the search for the Dao, and learn all the formations in the world!

He would forge a Golden Core, achieve Feather Transformation.

Step by step in the future, He would aim for the pinnacle of the Great Dao.

He would learn formations that others couldn't learn, and save a master that others couldn't save!

But one must prepare for a rainy day.

Before going to Qian State, he would take some time to plan carefully, prepare thoroughly, and make sure all was in order...

#### Chapter 738: Drawing Ground into Formation (1)

Mo Hua knew clearly in his heart that he only possessed a lower-middle-grade Small Five Elements Spiritual Root, and although he had a Sect-Entering Order for his journey to the Qian Learning State Boundary to seek knowledge, it was not guaranteed to be smooth sailing. There would inevitably be some bumps and obstacles.

Nevertheless, it was imperative to go to Qian State.

The path of Tao Cultivation was never easy.

Meet the soldier head-on when he comes, cover with soil when water flows, do not fear setbacks, and advance valiantly. If one hesitates out of fear, they will surely lose their Taoist Heart and no longer make progress.

And since he was going to the Qian Learning State Boundary, he must be well-prepared.

In the Qian Learning State Boundary, Sects abound, and it is a gathering place for the Proud Sons of Heaven.

...

Mo Hua was a Loose Cultivator without a notable origin or background, and his Spiritual Root wasn't exceptional. If he really wanted to join a Sect in Qian State, he would inevitably face cold looks, be underestimated, and be ostracized.

With an inherently frail body unable to undergo Body Refinement and a lower-middle-grade Spiritual Root with weak Spiritual Power, a head-on confrontation would be extremely disadvantageous.

Therefore, he needed to take a different approach...

Mo Hua remembered his master's admonitions:

"In the Cultivation World of the Nine States, geniuses emerge in great numbers

"You specialize in offensive cultivation, making you an enemy to these geniuses; they will not show you any kindness."

"But by assisting in offensive strategies, you can help them compete with other geniuses, and they will instead have to take your feelings into account."

"The stronger your means of assisting them, the less they dare to offend you."

"This way, even without a Noble Clan, any clan can become a force that helps you

"Without a Sect, any Sect can become your background."

"Among the profit-minded and opportunistic forces of Tao Cultivation, amidst the numerous geniuses with exceptional Spiritual Roots and proficient in Cultivation Techniques and Taoist Skills, you too will have a place and not be looked down upon!"

Mo Hua touched his chin thoughtfully:

"Assisting in offense... means amplifying Spiritual Power, also known as the Five Elements Spirit Formation."

The Five Element Ultimate Formation obtained from the Five Elements Sect is the basis for his stance among the numerous genius-filled Cultivation Sects of Qian State...

He doesn't need to compete with the geniuses to be supreme.

His Spiritual Root aptitude does not allow him to engage in such attention-grabbing behavior.

As long as he can establish himself in the Academic World of Qian State, avoid being bullied, cultivate properly, and learn Formation thoroughly to compensate for his weaknesses; laying a solid foundation for forming his Golden Core and the subsequent Feather Transformation is good enough.

Five Elements Spirit Formation!

Spiritual Power amplification, assistance in offense!

As long as he possesses the Five Element Ultimate Formation with the ability to assist in offense, even if he is not a Proud Son of Heaven himself, other geniuses will have to consider his opinion.

Mo Hua nodded to himself.

However, the Five Elements Spirit Formation...

Needs a new name.

This was also instructed by his master previously.

In the Qian Learning State Boundary with its profound heritage, and being a Second-Grade state boundary, naturally, it is not lacking in Great Cultivators with high cultivation levels, extensive experience, and broad knowledge.

The name Five Elements Spirit Formation would reveal its origins to them immediately upon hearing it.

The fact that he had inherited the tradition of the Five Elements Sect would likely also be unable to escape their notice.

And his master's ultimate entrapment took place in the Five Elements Sect. The inquisitive could probably trace the connection between him and his master.

This would be troublesome.

Therefore, the name had to be changed.

After pondering for a long time, Mo Hua decided to rename the Five Elements Spirit Formation as the Five Elements “Source” Formation.

If anyone asked about its origins, he would claim as his own discovery.

If anyone asked how he learned it, he would say he learned it in a confused state.

If anyone didn’t believe it and persisted in inquiring, he would have to reluctantly admit that he was a Formation Genius that appeared only once in a hundred years...

After all, Qian State should be no stranger to geniuses...

Mo Hua thought to himself.

Five Elements Source Formation.

Born from the Five Elements Source Pattern, it involves the essence of the Five Elements and amplifies the Five Elements’ Spiritual Power.

After learning the Second-Grade Formation, Mo Hua had made comparisons. All First-Grade Ultimate Formations were effective for Foundation Building Cultivators, and the Formation effects didn’t diminish significantly compared to Second-Grade Formations.

The First-Grade Five Elements Source Formation was no exception.

Mo Hua contemplated and speculated that the reason might be related to the number of Formation Patterns.

While the Ultimate Formation is classified as First-Grade, the number of Formation Patterns is within the scope of Second-Grade Formations.

Therefore, the Ultimate Formation is applicable in the Foundation Establishment Realm as well.

But this presented another issue.

Second-Grade Formation Patterns, derived from the fusion and transformation of two First-Grade Patterns, require twice the Divine Sense of First-Grade Patterns.

If so, the Divine Sense required for the same number of Patterns in a First-Grade Ultimate Formation should only be half that of a Second-Grade Formation.

Because the First-Grade Ultimate Formation uses First-Grade Patterns.

And Second-Grade Formations use Second-Grade Patterns.

But in practice, Mo Hua found that the Divine Sense consumed by a First-Grade Ultimate Formation was not less than that of a Second-Grade Formation with the same number of Patterns.

Mo Hua was puzzled.

Why?

Where was the extra Divine Sense consumed by the Ultimate Formation being “wasted”?

With Mr. Zhuang not around, Mo Hua encountered problems that he had to solve on his own.

After long contemplation, Mo Hua had some clues.

If his conjecture was correct, the additional Divine Sense consumed by the Ultimate Formation was used to comprehend, visualize, or connect with a certain type of Great Dao Law, or a powerful Taoist Meaning.

Half of the Divine Sense spent on drawing an Ultimate Formation was dedicated to the Patterns, the other half to the Laws.

That’s why Ultimate Formations were unique and so difficult to execute...



That's why a First-Grade Ultimate Formation could almost compare with a Second-Grade Formation, and its effect did not wane...

"The Great Dao is truly relatively fair; although Ultimate Formations are difficult, they hold their value for the challenge

Mo Hua silently reflected.

With the Five Elements Source Formation amplifying the power of Spells, Mo Hua had also tried it.

The only offensive Spell Mo Hua knew was the Fireball Technique.

The Fireball Technique is a Fire-type Spell that needs the Fire Origin Formation for amplification.

Chapter 739: Drawing Ground into Formation (2)

And the Second-Grade Fireball Technique, with the amplification of Spiritual Power from the Fire Origin Formation, saw its power increase by nearly twenty percent.

The power of a spell is difficult to enhance, and the methods to do so are often harsh.

An increase of twenty percent was already quite terrifying.

It was roughly equivalent to raising the Fireball Technique's spell tier by one level, giving a lower-tier spell the power close to that of a mid-tier spell.

"It's indeed worthy of the Thirteen Stripes Ultimate Formation and the Five Elements Sect, which has relied on this sect-protecting formation for thousands of years

For a cultivator in single combat, such an increase in power was already very strong.

...

And the more cultivators there are, the more apparent this increase becomes.

In a war of Tao cultivation, with the exchange of Taoist Soldiers, if blessed by the Five Elements Source Formation.

Then a disadvantage could turn into even odds.

Even odds could turn into an advantage, even a complete, crushing victory...

No wonder the Five Elements Sect held such an extraordinary status back then.

Under such circumstances, even though Mo Hua had only just entered the Foundation Establishment phase and was not yet proficient in the Second-Grade Fireball Technique, with the amplification from the Fire Origin Formation, its power was still considerable.

Mo Hua had tested it on late-First-Grade Monster Beasts in Big Black Mountain.

Basically, a Fireball Technique amplified by the Fire Origin Formation could slay a late-First-Grade Monster Beast, and for those with tougher hides, if not killed, they would be severely injured by the Fireball Technique, on the verge of death.

As for Second-Grade Monster Beasts...

Mo Hua's movement technique was still somewhat lacking; he was not yet willing to take on a Second-Grade Monster Beast alone.

The problem with the Five Elements Source Formation had been resolved.

What came next was the issue of the pen, ink, and paper.

Without ink, a pen, or paper, even if Mo Hua practiced diligently at the Taoist Stele, mastering the Second-Grade Formation perfectly, it would be meaningless if he couldn't put it into practice.

It's best to be prepared for unforeseen events.

If he waited until reaching the Qian Learning State Boundary to consider this issue, it would be somewhat late.

Moreover, the Qian Learning State Boundary is fifth-grade, so the cost of living would undoubtedly be higher, and Mo Hua definitely couldn't afford the expenses for pen, ink, and paper there.

"Ink is indispensable

"In that case, it's necessary to consider a method of Drawing Formation that doesn't use a pen or paper and could save a substantial amount of Spirit Stones

Mo Hua pondered.

"Just like in the Sea of Consciousness

"Without a pen, then use Divine Sense as the pen; without paper, then take the earth as the medium

This was a method of Drawing Formation that Mo Hua had been envisioning from an early stage.

He had now reached Foundation Establishment.

Foundation Building Cultivators have their Divine Sense greatly increased, their Divine Thought strong enough for Object Manipulation.

Although Mo Hua's Divine Sense had not doubled, the Divine Sense of a Middle Phase Foundation Building Cultivator with fourteen stripes was already strong enough.

Above that, thanks to the Heaven Yan Jue and the restructuring of Divine Thought by the Mysterious Heaven Great Formation, his Divine Sense had undergone a qualitative change.

Therefore, "Divine Sense Manipulation" was not a difficult task for Mo Hua.

What Mo Hua needed to do now was not just "Divine Sense Manipulation" but the more advanced "Divine Consciousness Control Ink."

Foundation Building Cultivators manipulate with Divine Sense, typically using hard and sharp objects for moving and slaying.

Like Sword Control.

Qi Refinement Sword Cultivators are generally modest in strength.

But Foundation Building Sword Cultivators, with Divine Sense Sword Control, undergo a transformation in combat power.

Even without controlling swords, wielding flying knives or needles as Spiritual Artifacts is also quite powerful.

But Sword Weapons are also expensive, so Mo Hua wasn't considering them for the time being.

What he wanted to do was to replace the Formation Pen with Divine Sense and directly manipulate the Spiritual Ink to solidify into formations.

Spiritual Ink is as fluid as water, ever-changing in form.

Generally, Foundation Building Cultivators can manipulate swords and blades with Divine Sense, but they absolutely cannot control water or ink.

But Mo Hua was different.

With strong Divine Sense and transformed Divine Thought, he could manipulate with precision in myriad changes.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense could control the formless flow of Spiritual Ink like water.

It was still very difficult, though.

And in actual manipulation, the Divine Sense was somewhat stiff, requiring much practice.

Besides that, there was the matter of using the earth as the medium.

Mo Hua had practiced the Thick Earth Formation, which connects with the Earth Dao Meaning when drawn on the earth's surface.

Previously, Mo Hua practiced the Thick Earth Formation every day.

His perception of the Earth Dao Meaning became increasingly clear, and his integration with the Dao Meaning deepened.

He had now reached the point where he could draw other Five-elements Formation Methods on the ground.

But this method of drawing also required much practice.

Using thought as the pen, the earth as the paper.

Covered by the heavens, extending across the earth.

With Divine Consciousness Control Ink, Drawing Ground into Formation!

After reaching Foundation Establishment, Mo Hua could finally start experimenting with his initial idea of Drawing Formation, unbound by external objects, which came after learning the Thick Earth Formation.

While the idea was good, it still required execution.

What followed was the need for extensive practice...

Practicing "Divine Consciousness Control Ink, Drawing Ground into Formation" definitely couldn't be done at home, and it wasn't quite appropriate in Tongxian City either.

It was best to find a secluded place, free from other people.

Mo Hua then went deep into Big Black Mountain and, using several bags of dried fish, “bribed” Big Tiger, and near its cave, he found an open space to practice the formation.

Big Black Mountain was peaceful, especially serene in its deep reaches.

Since Big Tiger was a Second-Grade Monster Beast with formidable strength, there were neither other Monster Beasts nor Cultivators around, avoiding disturbances and making it suitable for testing formations.

The first step was Divine Consciousness Control Ink.

Mo Hua didn’t have Second-Grade Spiritual Ink, so he had to practice with First-Grade Spiritual Ink.

It didn’t go smoothly at first.

Controlling ink with Divine Sense, its fluid form without support or anchor, was very easy to lose control of, spilling the Spiritual Ink on the ground.

After several attempts by Mo Hua, the results were not good.

He thought for a while and, like “Divine Thought Manifestation,” began to imagine his Divine Sense as a paintbrush.

The end of the Divine Thought transformed into fine brush hairs, merging, absorbing, and guiding the Spiritual Ink, drawing it through the air in sinuous flows at his will.

Although it was still clumsy and occasionally failed, it indeed got better with each attempt.

Chapter 740: Drawing Ground into Formation (3)

After learning the Heaven Yan Jue, Mo Hua mastered the Spirit Pivot Formation.

This kind of meticulous control was something Mo Hua had a good understanding of.

And after the transformation of Divine Consciousness, this intricate manipulation also underwent a qualitative change.

Mo Hua practiced for a day or two and gradually figured out the principles. After that, practice after practice, Divine Consciousness and Spiritual Ink became more and more in sync.

The Divine Thought became the brush, merging with the Spiritual Ink, and then controlling it.

The Spiritual Ink seemed to become an extension of Mo Hua's Divine Consciousness, floating in the air according to his will, condensing into various free-floating lines and complex patterns.

...

After practicing for several more days and mastering "Divine Consciousness Control Ink," Mo Hua began "Drawing Ground into Formation."

His pale little hand pointed vaguely, toward the ground.

Influenced by his Divine Consciousness, the Spiritual Ink solidified into thin threads, automatically spilling out of the bottle, following the tips of Mo Hua's fingers, seeping into the ground bit by bit.

Then, as Mo Hua moved his fingers, the ink gradually wriggled, flowed, moved, and condensed into Formation Patterns, finally forming a formation based on the Formation Pivot layout!

Without pen or paper, a complete formation was thus drawn on the ground.

A flash of light, and the formation was activated!

Mo Hua's eyes brightened, thrilled with joy.

He had succeeded!

He then suppressed his excitement, maintaining a humble and steadfast attitude.

"It's still just a simple First-grade Melting Fire Formation

He needed to continue practicing...

Starting with the ordinary First-grade Formations, he would progress from the simple to the complex, step by step, formation after formation, mastering Divine Consciousness Control Ink, using the ground as the medium to draw the Ultimate Formation, and then moving on to Second-Grade Formations!

In this way, not needing a pen or paper, he would be able to save a great deal of Spirit Stones in the future!

But that wasn't all.

This method of Formation Painting had relatively few restrictions.

It was faster, more convenient, and more covert.

Even in the midst of battle, if there was a spare moment, one could imperceptibly use thought as the brush, the ground as the paper, and lay down a formation!

Of course, Mo Hua's current abilities were still far from sufficient.

He needed to practice more, to achieve the realm where the ink would follow his heart's desire, handling it with ease.

In time, he would be able to do as he wished, Pointing to the Ground to Form a Formation!

Mo Hua thought about how one day, like the Divine Sense Incarnation in his Sea of Consciousness, he could do as he pleased, form a formation with just a point of his finger, and he was overjoyed at the thought.

Mo Hua's face was all smiles; then he gathered his thoughts and began to focus, continuing his practice.



He wanted to master this technique as soon as possible, to reach perfection!

Mo Hua squatted on the ground, Drawing Formation.

Big Tiger lay by the side, leisurely chewing on a large dried fish; occasionally stealing glances at Mo Hua, seeing him concentrating on something, becoming curious, it quietly brought its head over to see what Mo Hua was up to.

On the ground, Formation Patterns wriggled, forming a complex array.

Big Tiger watched for a while but couldn't understand, all confusion in its big eyes, so it lay back down and continued to nibble on the dried fish with a shake of its head...

In the secluded mountains, a person and a tiger lived together, peacefully and harmoniously.

...

More than half a month later, after relentless practice, Mo Hua's Divine Consciousness Control Ink had become quite proficient, and Drawing Ground into Formation was done with ease.

The formations he drew weren't limited to First-grade Formations; they now also included the Thirteen Stripes Five Elements Source Formation.

This was also the most profound formation Mo Hua had mastered so far.

However, using Divine Consciousness Control Ink to draw the Five Elements Source Formation consumed a lot of Divine Consciousness.

And the speed of drawing the formation was relatively slow.

It was far from the effect Mo Hua had anticipated.

The consumption of Divine Sense is large but still manageable, as Mo Hua's Divine Sense is inherently profound and powerful, so he doesn't mind using a bit more.

But the slow speed, that's more troublesome.

At least in real combat, there isn't time to draw it out.

Unless one is well-hidden enough and has plenty of time to prepare.

"How can I draw a bit faster?"

With his thoughts slightly stirred, Mo Hua began to ponder once more.

After thinking for a long time, the only method he could think of was the "Heavenly secret Tricky Calculation."

But as for how to achieve it, and use the Heavenly secret Tricky Calculation like Uncle to transform Divine Thoughts and utilize the techniques of Gui Tao's Divine Thought, Mo Hua was still very confused.

After all, he had only stealth-learned it, imitating without truly understanding.

He didn't have the inheritance, and figuring it out by himself was extremely difficult.

After a long time, Mo Hua had no clue and could only put this problem aside for the moment.

Since he already knew the basics of Heavenly secret Tricky Calculation, he would slowly ponder the various changes in the future. One day, he would understand it.

The duck in his pot was bound to get cooked eventually, and it couldn't fly away!

Next, what turned out to be more troublesome were the Second-Grade Formations.

He needed to find several more Second-Grade Formations, learn them, and keep them as a reserve.

Inside Tongxian City, there were hardly any Second-Grade Formation Diagrams.

The Second-Grade Formations that Mo Hua currently mastered were only the Ten Stripes Second-order Bright Fire Formation and the Eleven Stripes Second-order Thorn Formation.

He had drawn these two Formations to the point of perfection.

It would be ideal if he could find a more challenging Second-Grade Formation. After learning it, he could try to get some Second-Grade Spiritual Ink and test “Drawing Ground into Formation” with the technique of “Divine Consciousness Control Ink.”

He wanted to see what his current limit was.

Through this technique of Divine Consciousness Control Ink, what rank of Formation could he draw...

The only way for Mo Hua to get a Second-Grade Formation, as it seemed now, was from the Five Elements Formation Flow Map’s Five Elements Source Pattern...

This Source Pattern, Mo Hua would decipher whenever he had the chance, but up until now, the best Formation he had obtained was the Second-Grade Eleven Patterns Five Elements Formation.

His Divine Sense had undergone a “Transformation” to Fourteen Patterns.

In other words, his limit should be Fourteen Patterns!

Mo Hua felt a bit dissatisfied.

No matter how bad his luck was or how down on his luck he might be, after all this time, he should have been able to reverse-engineer a decent Second-Grade Formation...

Not many, just a Twelve Strip one would be enough...

Mo Hua decided to have another try.

Before deciphering, to show his sincerity, Mo Hua burned incense and even washed his hands, silently chanting in his mind:

"Second-Grade Formation, Second-Grade Formation, Second-Grade Formation

"Twelve Stripes, Twelve Stripes, Twelve Stripes

After the chanting, Mo Hua began the Calculation.

Above the Source Pattern, mystical transformations took place.

One by one, the Patterns were decrypted, and one after another, the Formations were logically deduced...

After what seemed like an eternity, finally, a flash of light appeared before Mo Hua's eyes!

A Formation Diagram, clearly different from the others, shining with a red glow and more eye-catching, emerged from the Source Pattern.

Mo Hua's breath hitched, and he looked closely.

It was a Formation with which he was extremely familiar, yet it was mysteriously complex and somewhat unfamiliar.

"Earth Fire Formation

Second Grade... Thirteen Patterns!