

The Quest 74

Chapter 74: Heavenly Proliferation Technique

When Mo Hua found Mr. Zhuang, he was leisurely taking a nap.

Mo Hua opened the food box, which contained various types of beef and some refreshing vegetables and fruits, convenient for accompanying the wine. The aroma of meat and wine slowly began to diffuse.

Mr. Zhuang opened his eyes, "Qi-cultivation level four, not bad."

Mo Hua smiled, "Thanks to your teachings, sir."

Mr. Zhuang waved his hand dismissively and then slowly sat up, took a sip of wine, tasted a piece of meat, and leisurely lay back down.

"How is your array training going?"

"I am now attempting to draw arrays with seven array patterns. My spiritual awareness should be sufficient, but I need more practice with the arrays."

Mr. Zhuang's expression remained unchanged, but he chewed his food slower, muttering to himself, "Qi-cultivation level four, seven array patterns..."

"Sir, should I continue learning arrays in the same manner?" Mo Hua hesitated before asking.

"Do you have any doubts?"

Mo Hua shook his head, "Learning through application, drawing arrays on different array mediums while manifesting their effects indeed deepens the understanding of arrays..."

"Then just keep it up," Mr. Zhuang said, "To become a first-grade array master, or even higher, is both difficult and simple. Just keep drawing arrays, continuously... Few can truly keep it up."

Mr. Zhuang's tone held a deeper meaning.

Mo Hua, feeling reassured, was about to leave when Mr. Zhuang suddenly asked, "Any changes in your Heavenly Proliferation Technique?"

"Yes, my spiritual power has strengthened."

"Advancement in cultivation naturally strengthens spiritual power, unrelated to the technique," Mr. Zhuang stated.

"Then... my spiritual awareness has also strengthened."

"Advancement in cultivation also strengthens spiritual awareness, again unrelated to the technique."

"I feel my control over spiritual power has become more sensitive..." Mo Hua began, then hesitated, unsure, "Is that also unrelated to the technique?"

For a moment, Mo Hua thought he saw a sharper look in Mr. Zhuang's eyes, but looking again, it seemed unchanged, perhaps just an illusion.

"Draw an array for me to see," Mr. Zhuang said calmly.

"Oh," Mo Hua took out some paper, prepared it, and asked, "Sir, which array should I draw?"

"Draw the Tripartite Array."

"Understood."

Mo Hua had recently practiced the Tripartite Array and remembered it well, so he completed it quickly. He was quite satisfied with his drawing, but when he looked at Mr. Zhuang, he noticed that his attention seemed not on the array.

"Sir, is there something wrong?"

Mr. Zhuang pondered for a moment, "Your speed in drawing arrays has increased."

"With advancement in cultivation, wouldn't the speed of drawing arrays increase?" Mo Hua questioned.

"Not at all!" Mr. Zhuang asserted firmly.

"The strength of spiritual awareness determines whether you qualify to learn arrays, your comprehension of arrays determines whether you can draw them, and proficiency dictates the speed of drawing. Once proficient, the only thing that can affect the speed is the control of spiritual awareness."

"Control of spiritual awareness?"

"Correct," Mr. Zhuang explained, "In practices like spellcasting, object manipulation, and array drawing, control of spiritual awareness is crucial. You're still early in your cultivation to encounter this, but you'll understand in time."

Mo Hua looked forward with anticipation, "So, is my technique rather impressive?"

Mr. Zhuang glanced at Mo Hua, hesitated, and said:

"In the vast world of cultivation, some techniques are so extraordinary they defy fate, unimaginable to most. Yours is decent, at least better than average."

Elder Gui, who had been standing unobtrusively in the corner, silently rolled his eyes at Mr. Zhuang.

But Mo Hua was already quite happy, being considered "decent" by the well-informed Mr. Zhuang was a compliment in itself.

"Even so," Mr. Zhuang continued, "you must understand the importance of caution. It's best not to disclose anything about your cultivation to others. If they discover something unique about your technique, they will attempt to seize it, disregarding your life."

"Yes!" Mo Hua nodded emphatically.

He hadn't experienced murder for treasure or heritage yet, but he had heard many such stories and understood the lesson well.

"A protruding nail gets hammered down, a fattened pig gets slaughtered."

"What would you say if someone asked why your spiritual awareness is so keen?" Mr. Zhuang tested Mo Hua.

"Um... should I say that I... have a unique talent?" Mo Hua hesitated.

Mr. Zhuang appeared satisfied with the teachable moment.

"Wouldn't that get you beaten?" Mo

Hua was uncertain.

"When you say that, keep your tone humble. Even if you get beaten, it's better than being captured, tortured, and then killed," Mr. Zhuang advised sagely.

Mo Hua found this very reasonable; indeed, Mr. Zhuang was experienced and knowledgeable.

After discussing the technique, Mo Hua suddenly remembered something, "Sir, what exactly is a Composite Array?"

"You've seen a Composite Array?"

"Yes, in the alchemy furnace at Xinglin Medical Hall, Elder Feng uses the Wood-Fire Spirit Control Array, which is a Composite Array."

"Composite Arrays, well, that's a complex topic..." Mr. Zhuang mused, then gestured towards the corner.

Mo Hua then noticed Elder Gui, who had been standing there silently all along, so unnoticeable that Mo Hua hadn't seen him until then.

Elder Gui retreated to the bookshelf and soon returned with a thick book, handing it to Mo Hua.

Mo Hua took it, seeing the title page marked "Initial Solutions to Composite Arrays."

"This book contains knowledge about Composite Arrays, including some basic array diagrams. You can broaden your horizons by reading it, but don't spend too much energy on it. It's too early for you to study this."

Mo Hua was delighted; he had been somewhat embarrassed about disturbing Mr. Zhuang's rest. Now he could read and learn on his own, and then consult Bai Zixi or Bai Zisheng for clarification, thereby doubling his efficiency without overly disturbing Mr. Zhuang. After all, Mr. Zhuang's hobbies were few, mostly eating and sleeping.

"Thank you, Mr. Zhuang!"

Mo Hua also thought of Elder Gui, looked around, and realized Elder Gui had disappeared again. After a moment, he noticed Elder Gui was actually right beside him.

It seemed that if Elder Gui wanted you to see him, you would; if not, you wouldn't.

It might have been an illusion, or perhaps Elder Gui was just very adept at concealing his presence.

Mo Hua handed Elder Gui a storage bag filled with about seven or eight boxes of pine nuts, specially roasted by Mo Hua's mother.

Elder Gui accepted the storage bag, a hint of pleasure visible in his eyes...

Although Elder Gui's expression seemed unchanged, Mo Hua felt that he was pleased at the moment.

"Sir, I won't disturb your meditation."

Mo Hua bowed respectfully, then happily withdrew.

Mr. Zhuang sighed, "Such a good kid, really saves me a lot of worry!"

Then he took another bite of meat, a sip of wine, and relaxedly lay down again.