

The Quest 751

Chapter 751: Departure (4)

"This lady's surname is Shen, given name Ru, a woman from the Shen family near the state boundary."

"It was my senior brother, he personally visited to pay his respects and said he wanted to meet the lady face to face to discuss their understanding of formations..."

"Then, they talked and enjoyed each other's company, and after some time, they arrived at the point of discussing marriage..."

Mo Hua's mouth dropped open.

Visiting personally...

Was this the Instructor Yan he knew, obsessed with formations, serious and rigid?

Manager Mo clicked his tongue in wonder, "One shouldn't judge a book by its cover... I never would have imagined my senior brother doing such a thing, admirable, admirable..."

Mo Hua was also shocked but deep down, he was happy for Instructor Yan.

Instructor Yan, for the sake of the grudges and disagreements within the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect, to pursue the traitors of the Sect, to reclaim the Sect's heritage, had led a life full of hardship and bitterness.

Now that he was able to find a beloved partner and join in matrimony for a lifetime of happiness, it was naturally the best possible outcome.

Plus, there would be a wedding feast to enjoy.

Mo Hua was already calculating in his heart what delicious foods there would be at the wedding feast...

Instructor Yan was quick to set his engagement and even quicker to get married.

Half a month later, he got married in Tongxian City and held a wedding banquet.

Mo Hua joined in the excitement, basked in the joyous occasion, and ate his fill.

At the wedding, Mo Hua also met Shen Ru, Instructor Yan's wife.

Shen Ru, dressed in red, kept a simple and dignified air even at her wedding, without too heavy a makeup.

Mo Hua went up to offer his congratulations.

Shen Ru saw Mo Hua's face was as lovely as a painting, her smile pure and lively, warm and adorable, and she couldn't help feeling delighted.

And when she heard from Instructor Yan that Mo Hua also studied formations, she esteemed him even more, deliberately sealing a large red envelope for Mo Hua and praised him, saying:

"This child is clever and quick-witted; study well, and you will certainly become a first-rank Formation Master!"

Instructor Yan, with an embarrassed expression, whispered:

"He... is already a first-rank Formation Master..."

Shen Ru was stunned, turned her head, looked at Instructor Yan in disbelief, her face filled with wonder, and it took her a long time to recover...

The wedding was boisterous and joyful.

After the wedding, Manager Mo also had a satisfied look on his face, as if he had resolved a concern.

"True to my senior brother..."

Manager Mo sighed.

When he really set his mind to do something, he was decisive and efficient, without any dawdling.

Manager Mo felt moved and said to Mo Hua:

"You should also learn from this in the future, let go of what should be let go of, not clinging to it, and utterly don't let go of what should be grasped!"

Mo Hua was startled, "Grasp what?"

Manager Mo had the look of someone who had been there before:

"You'll understand when you grow up..."

Mo Hua blinked, somewhat puzzled.

...

In the days that followed, life was as peaceful and harmonious as flowing water, but like water, it slipped away bit by bit...

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Mo Hua didn't feel much time had passed, but before he knew it, the day of departure had arrived.

Mo Hua was somewhat reluctant, but still packed his bags and set off on his journey.

Before leaving, Mo Hua earnestly instructed Mo Shan and Liu Ruhua:

"Dad, Mom, you must cultivate properly!"

"No slacking off!"

"The road ahead is still long, you must not be negligent..."

"Cultivate to Foundation Establishment, then cultivate to Golden Core..."

"Then live a long and safe life, happy and fulfilled..."

"Wait for me to master formations in Qian State and then I will come back to see you..."

Mo Shan and Liu Ruhua couldn't help but smile bitterly.

Weren't these the words they, as parents, should be saying to their child?

But the sadness of parting was somewhat alleviated because of it.

Later, Mo Hua rode a carriage, about to leave Tongxian City for Cloud Crossing City.

The carriage stopped outside the city.

Like when he left before, many cultivators from Tongxian City came to see off Mo Hua, their gazes full of hope and wishes.

Mo Hua also smiled and waved to them.

In this world, everyone has their own story and their own life to live.

Mo Hua hoped that everyone in Tongxian City would have peaceful and happy lives and that their life stories would be fulfilling and colorful.

As for himself, he was about to embark on a journey, stepping onto an unknown path in search of his own way...

The carriage gradually moved further away, leaving Tongxian City, and entered Big Black Mountain.

While passing through the deep mountains, Mo Hua suddenly paused, walked outside of the carriage, and waved towards the distant forest.

In the forest, there was a Big Tiger.

The Big Tiger had come to see him off, too.

A few days earlier, Mo Hua had already bid farewell to Big Tiger.

His journey to Qian State would involve riding the Cloud Ferry, crossing the Nine State, and Big Tiger, being a Monster Beast living in the deep mountains, couldn't possibly accompany him.

Mo Hua was worried that Big Tiger would not have enough to eat, so he asked his father, Mo Shan, when entering the deep mountains, to bring some big dried fish, and if he encountered a big tiger with black and white patterns, to feed it on his behalf.

With this farewell, he didn't know when he would see Big Tiger again.

Mo Hua stood on the carriage, waving to Big Tiger from afar.

The Big Tiger silently watched Mo Hua, its gaze somewhat empty, until Mo Hua's small figure disappeared into the distance, and only then did the Big Tiger, with a drooping head, turn and walk into the forest, its silhouette somewhat lonely.

Chapter 752: Journey (1)

A few days later, Mo Hua boarded the Cloud Ferry.

This Cloud Ferry was smaller and more austere than the one Mo Hua had seen before, which his Junior Brother and Junior Sister had taken.

However, it still carried an impressive aura.

As the Cloud Ferry took off, it stirred layers of clouds into a magnificent spectacle.

In about three months, the Cloud Ferry would enter Qian State.

Mo Hua also needed to arrive at Qian Taoist Sect, located within the fifth-class Qianxue State Boundary of Qian State more than five months later, or before September, to try to gain entry into the sect.

The Cloud Ferry floated in the sky, flying amidst the clouds.

Although it is referred to as "flying," it wasn't really "flying," at least not in the same way that cultivators fly through the skies.

Above in the sky, there are oceans of clouds, within which flow veins of clouds, and within these veins, there are currents. These currents form fierce winds that surge tumultuously among the clouds of Nine State before all converging in Xun State.

The Cloud Ferry utilizes these air currents within the cloud veins to travel between state boundaries.

At first, Mo Hua found this all very novel, but after a few days, once the novelty wore off, he started to feel bored.

Aboard the Cloud Ferry, each cultivator had their own guest room.

The guest room was small, meant for cultivators to practice and rest.

Mo Hua spent most of his time in his own small guest room, quietly cultivating and studying formations.

Being alone, to avoid trouble, he seldom went out.

He only ventured out when it was time to eat.

The Cloud Ferry had a large cabin, where various items were for sale.

There were all kinds of meals, but they were expensive. Although Mo Hua could afford them, he wouldn't eat there often, only occasionally indulging a craving.

He wasn't short of Spirit Stones, but he understood that when traveling, it was best to economize.

After all, there would be plenty of places to spend Spirit Stones once he reached Qian State.

Within the large cabin, cultivators could also rent stalls to sell local specialties and various types of Spiritual Artifacts, Pills, Formations, and so on.

Mo Hua occasionally browsed around, broadening his horizons.

It was his first time seeing various kinds of Spiritual Artifacts.

There were Mother-Child Blades, long spears, long halberds, flying needles, Pear Blossom Needles, Red Silk, iron chains, and so forth...

Among these, the most expensive were swords.

The sword was known as the king of a hundred Taoist tools.

Practices involving Sword Weapons, Taoist Skills, and Artifact Refining were numerous and profound. Even Sword Cultivators were distinguished from Spiritual Cultivators and Body Cultivation practitioners and were specifically referred to as "Sword Cultivators."

Many cultivators had a passion for practicing swordsmanship.

However, Sword Cultivators value both their cultivation techniques and swordsmanship. The method of refining Sword Weapons is a closely guarded secret, heavily relying on inheritance and deep foundations.

Therefore, around Big Black Mountain, there were hardly any cultivators who used swords.

The cultivators near Big Black Mountain mostly used blades.

Even those who did use swords, in fact, treated "swords" as "blades."

They used swords as typical Spiritual Artifacts for slashing, and could not be considered true "Sword Cultivators."

The only Sword Cultivator Mo Hua had ever seen should be Zhang Lan.

His extremely heavy ancient sword had a simple pine pattern, and just by holding it, Mo Hua could tell it was cumbersome, indicating it was very valuable.

Furthermore, there were said to be different types of Sword Cultivators.

Some Body Cultivators used swords for close combat, where the Sword Qi blended with their Strength and could split mountains and seas.

There were also Spiritual Cultivators who wielded swords from a distance, controlling them with Divine Sense to kill enemies from a thousand miles away...

But Mo Hua had never seen any of this with his own eyes, so he wasn't sure if it was true.

"Sword Cultivator..."

Mo Hua had also thought before that with his strong Divine Sense, if he were to practice the "Sword Control Technique," he could command thousands of flying swords with a mere thought, forming a rain of swords. Wouldn't that be both cool and powerful?

But after seeing the prices of Sword Weapons at the Cloud Ferry stalls, he silently dismissed this unrealistic idea.

Spirit Swords were too expensive!

Even a random Spirit Sword would cost seven or eight thousand Spirit Stones.

Slightly better ones would cost tens of thousands.

These Sword Weapons were prone to wear and tear.

If they broke, he would have to buy new ones all over again.

Not like those from noble clans and major sects, where top-quality Spirit Swords were ancestral, made from precious materials, durable, constantly maintained, one with the wielder, and astonishingly powerful when used.

Mo Hua sighed.

Forget it, he might as well stick to studying his own formations...

Swordsmanship was something he needn't bother learning.

It was beyond his reach...

In the large cabin of the Cloud Ferry, aside from food and Spiritual Artifacts, there were also various Pills and Formations.

As for Pills, Mo Hua didn't pay them much attention.

Old Mr. Feng, fearing Mo Hua would have some mishaps, had prepared quite a few for him, including both first-grade and second-grade Pills.

These second-grade Pills were made by a second-grade senior Alchemist at the request of Old Mr. Feng.

They included Spirit Revitalizing, Detoxification, and Avoiding Epidemic.

What interested Mo Hua the most were the Formations.

But this turned out to be greatly disappointing.

Most of the stall owners were first-grade Formation Masters, with very few second-grades.

Even when occasionally a cultivator was selling a second-grade Formation Diagram, the price was exorbitantly high and not considered rare. It was not a good deal.

Rather than spending Spirit Stones on these Formation Diagrams, it was better to try his luck at pondering the Five Elements Formation Flow Map, deciphering the Five Elements Source Patterns, or randomly drawing a Five Elements Formation...

Moreover, Mo Hua saw cultivators of various kinds.

The Cloud Ferry passed through Li State, Kun State, Dui State, Qian State, and finally arrived at Kan State.

Cultivators from these states would appear on the Cloud Ferry, bustling about, with their diverse clothing and dissimilar Cultivation Techniques and Spiritual Roots.

These wandering cultivators had different customs, appearances, and behavioral habits.

There were even some with Spiritual Root attributes Mo Hua had never seen before.

Although he was curious, he did not converse with anyone.

He feared there were bad people who might harbor ill intentions towards him.

After all, you can't judge a person's heart by their appearance. As a lone, minor cultivator out in the world, it was wiser to be cautious.

Along the way, some cultivators noticed Mo Hua was young and approached him with a false smile:

"What a cute little brother..."

"Little brother, are you traveling alone?"

Afterward, they would either say, "I have an opportunity..."

Chapter 753: Journey (2)

"Or maybe they'd say, 'Sister has a nice surprise for you...'"

Mo Hua was young, but he had traveled enough to barely qualify as an "old hand" in the Martial World. How could he not see through their insidious intentions?

In such situations, Mo Hua would pretend not to notice and simply ignore them. Read the latest on

After all, with a Great cultivator stationed in Cloud Ferry, these people wouldn't dare cause trouble or create a disturbance.

Usually, when Mo Hua paid them no attention, they got the hint and, feeling snubbed, stopped bothering him.

That's how Mo Hua spent his days, secluding himself in a small room, practicing his cultivation routine every day, persisting in learning about Formations, and at night, continuing to practice Second-Grade Formations on the Taoist Stele to further enhance his fourteen Pattern Divine Sense.

When he had some free time, he would delve into the Five Elements Formation Flow Map, deciphering some of the Five Elements Formations.

If he felt cooped up, he would go out on deck to gaze at the vast sea of clouds.

The days passed by, stable and peaceful.

Eventually, even this lifestyle became somewhat monotonous.

And so, with caution and carefulness, the three months slowly passed, and Cloud Ferry finally arrived in Qian State.

When Cloud Ferry docked, Mo Hua packed up his belongings and disembarked alone.

However, he couldn't help feeling a bit nervous and apprehensive.

Just off Cloud Ferry, Mo Hua was suddenly struck with awe as he looked up, his gaze filled with amazement.

In the Nine State world, though the sky was one vast expanse,

The sky above each state boundary was different for the cultivators there.

This difference was something most cultivators couldn't see, but Mo Hua knew about the Heavenly Dao Formation in the sky from personal experience, so he had a vague sense of it...

The Large Formation in the sky above Qian State was strikingly different from that over Li State.

This meant that this part of the Heavenly Dao Formation had different Formation Patterns and structures.

As to the specifics of these differences, Mo Hua's realm was too low to make out the details.

Mo Hua looked up again at the sky.

Qian State.

Qian, which means Heaven.

The laws of Heaven stress strength, inspiring gentlemen to relentlessly improve themselves.

No matter where you go, the sky above and the earth below are constant; with the permanence of the Heavenly Dao Formation above and the substantial Earth Dao Meaning below.

He should likewise grasp Formation knowledge, pursue the Heavenly Dao, and continuously strengthen himself...

Mo Hua nodded to himself.

The strangeness of being in a foreign land, along with the unease and nervousness, also began to recede.

With his Storage Bag slung over his shoulder, he walked off the deck with his head held high, stepping onto the land of Qian State against the vast expanse of the sky.

...

Qian State was vast, with many state boundaries.

The boundaries varied in size and grade, from low to high, among which one of the most famous was the fifth-class Qianxue State Boundary, known for its abundance of Sects and a flourishing academic atmosphere.

Where Cloud Ferry landed, Cangdu City lay within the Third-Grade Cangdu State Boundary.

Cangdu State Boundary was a considerable distance from Qianxue State Boundary.

Cangdu City blossomed into an Immortal City due to the prosperity brought by Cloud Ferry, with convenient transportation and frequent comings and goings of cultivators.

In the city, one could also see many young men and women who seemed to be cultivators from various states, taking Cloud Ferry to Qian State to seek knowledge.

However, they were all escorted by their Clan's Elders or Elders.

Only Mo Hua was alone.

After resting for a night in Cangdu City, Mo Hua set off the next day, leaving Cangdu City alone to head for Qianxue State Boundary.

Other cultivators seeking knowledge either rode horses, took carriages, or traveled by cloud chariots.

To save Spirit Stones, Mo Hua could only go by foot.

He planned a route for himself.

This route took him from Cangdu City, trekking mountains and rivers, passing through two Second-Grade state boundaries before reaching the Fifth-class Qianxue State Boundary.

Though it was a roundabout way, as the state boundaries were all Second-Grade, it was safer.

When traveling in foreign lands, it's better to be cautious.

In Second-Grade state boundaries, where the limit was on Foundation Establishment cultivators, Mo Hua, with his initial-stage Foundation Establishment strength, could thrive with his mastery over Formations and Spells.

If he encountered anyone he couldn't defeat, he could always rely on his Concealment Technique and Water Passing Step to make his escape.

But venturing into a Third-Grade State Boundary, if luck turned against him and he ran into some unrighteous Golden Core cultivator wanting his life, it would spell doom.

Against a Golden Core cultivator, he, a mere cultivator at the initial stage of Foundation Establishment, had no chance.

Just a single flying sword could spell his end.

So, it's better to be a bit more timid when necessary.

As long as he could reach Qianxue State Boundary and join the Qian Taoist Sect within a month and a half, that would suffice.

Mo Hua estimated the pace and distance, and time should be more than enough.

Moreover, he could use the journey to practice his Second-Grade Water Passing Step.

In Tongxian City, he had only managed a rough grasp and lacked depth in his study, not to mention opportunities to use it.

This journey provided the perfect chance to use practice as a substitute for learning, increasing his proficiency with the life-saving Second-Grade Water Passing Step.

This movement technique was crucial for survival, so he needed to practice it until he couldn't possibly know it better.

A moment's negligence might cost a life in a time of crisis.

Having settled on a plan, Mo Hua packed up and, following the main road, set out alone on his way to the Academic World of Qian State.

Along the way, he braved the elements and slept under the stars.

When alone, Mo Hua hastened his travel using the Water Passing Step, moving as effortlessly as a stream, creating a breeze with each step.

When tired, he would take a rest.

Occasionally, he'd come across some caravans that appeared legitimate, with the cultivators' aura and faces showing proper dignity and their Divine Thought free of malice; it was then that Mo Hua would draw near.

Sometimes, he would freeload meals or rides.

Such breaks were also a chance for him to recharge.

These cultivators were often very hospitable. Seeing that Mo Hua was young, traveling alone, they were surprised and would offer him food and drinks to show their hospitality.

One should not take rewards without merit.

Mo Hua would glance a few times and point out any issues with the Formation the caravan was using, offering to fix it for them.

This amazed them even more.

Often, when parting, they would give Mo Hua some gifts; though not valuable, they were heartfelt tokens, which pleased him greatly.

Chapter 754: Journey (3)

Danger would occasionally arise.

Such as monster beasts in the forests, lone fugitive cultivators, or groups that could deceive others but not Mo Hua, who could recognize a party of evil cultivators with a single glance.

Mo Hua had seen many demon cultivators.

In the beginning, following Uncle, they traveled together, encountering living demon cultivators, dead demon cultivators, or those who went from living to dead upon meeting Uncle—Mo Hua saw a heap of them.

The aura of demon cultivators was dark, and within their divine sense, there was a sense of putrid filth.

With his sharp divine sense, Mo Hua could easily differentiate them.

But there wasn't much he could do except to keep his distance.

As a lowly cultivator, unfamiliar with the land, such disputes were not something he could afford to entangle himself in.

Quietly, discreetly, traveling alone to the Qian Xue State Boundary, his utmost priority was to join a sect early and earnestly pursue cultivation.

On this journey, he would occasionally pass through Immortal Cities or small towns.

Mo Hua would usually stay for a short while, resting his feet, asking for directions, and checking if there would be dangers on the road ahead.

The cultivators in Immortal Cities, most were rather cold.

On the contrary, in some small towns, the customs were pure and simple, and the cultivators were both warm-hearted and talkative.

"Go forward, climb over the mountain, pass the halfway slope, follow the mountain path, walk a few hundred miles, pass a few Little Immortal Cities, and you'll be close to the Qian Xue State Boundary..."

"There are monster beasts in the mountains, you being just a kid, should be cautious..."

"If it's too dark, the road becomes hard to navigate, you can stay overnight in that dilapidated temple in the mountains."

"That decrepit temple was once a shrine to the Mountain God, but after the Mountain God became a malevolent spirit, it was slain by several elders from the Qian Xue State Boundary..."

"Now the temple is empty, and any cultivators delayed in leaving the mountains would stay there temporarily..."

The one who spoke these words was a hunched old man.

The old man ran a noodle shop in the town, and Mo Hua, being hungry, had ordered a large bowl of noodles, chatting leisurely with the old man as he ate.

Mo Hua politely thanked the old man.

Stroking his beard, the old man nodded slightly, then asked curiously, "Are you a child from another land? Why are you alone?"

"I'm out for some experience..." Mo Hua said.

The old man shook his head, "A kid like you, what's there to experience?"

"I'm fifteen years old, not young anymore!"

The old man huffed, "Fifteen years old? How big is that? Here, if you're not yet twenty, you're still just a little child..."

It was after asking in detail that Mo Hua understood.

Qian State was vast, the climate was pleasant, and on the whole, it was much wealthier than Li State, even the life of a loose cultivator was somewhat better there than in Li State.

Moreover, the cultivators in Qian State usually practiced for a longer duration.

Cultivators with a bit of family wealth, or those from families or sects, even more so.

They didn't need to rush into body refinement to strengthen their bodies and make a living like ordinary loose cultivators; instead, they could continue cultivating well into their twenties.

Nurturing their bodies carefully and securing a firm foundation before breaking through to Foundation Establishment.

If all else failed, they would be assigned to the family enterprise to gradually gain experience.

Therefore, before the age of twenty, they still belonged to the carefree period of steady cultivation and enlightenment in the Tao.

Mo Hua felt somewhat helpless.

He thought that at fifteen, he was already a young man.

But in these larger states, he was still considered nothing more than a child...

After sizing up Mo Hua carefully, the old man asked another question, "Have you reached Foundation Establishment?"

"Mm," Mo Hua nodded.

The old man looked slightly regretful, "Too hasty. With your spiritual power, your blood qi, why establish a foundation without properly consolidating it first?"

"Were you thinking, reach Foundation Establishment by twenty and then join a sect?"

Mo Hua nodded.

The elderly man sighed and said, "It's not that simple. With your current Foundation Establishment so fragile, even if you establish your foundation before the age of twenty, nobody would accept you..."

"Moreover, I see that your Spiritual Root doesn't seem too good either?"

Mo Hua did not hide the truth and said honestly,

"It's only of mediocre to inferior quality..."

The elderly man was stunned for a moment, then shook his head and sighed, "That's tough..."

Mo Hua initially wanted to ask, "Even with a Sect-Entering Order, it wouldn't work?" but after thinking it over, he decided not to ask.

When out and about, one should not flaunt their "wealth."

Nearby Qian State, there were many disciples seeking education, and something like a "Sect-Entering Order" was surely very precious. One should not casually inform others, to avoid attracting covetousness.

Mo Hua asked again, "Do you know of the Qian Taoist Sect?"

"Who doesn't know of the Qian Taoist Sect..." the elderly man said, startled, "You're not thinking of seeking entry into the Qian Taoist Sect, are you..."

Mo Hua nodded. "I'll try my luck."

The elderly man quickly shook his head, "That's even more impossible. The Qian Taoist Sect is one of the four major sects within the Qian Learning State Boundary, a top-ranking large sect. In the historical Qian Xue debates of Tao Cultivation, they've always ranked within the top three..."

"With your talent and Taoist Foundation, it's impossible for you to be accepted."

"Is there no exception..." Mo Hua asked.

"Exception..." The elderly man was briefly puzzled. "I, as an elder, do not know of any, but what kind of exception could there be? Even if you are the Sect Leader's illegitimate child..."

The elderly man furrowed his brows, "I doubt that would be enough... You don't understand how high the threshold for these sects is. They place extreme importance on the Spiritual Root..."

Mo Hua also furrowed his brows.

Placing such importance on the Spiritual Root...

It seemed he had underestimated the difficulty of gaining entry into a sect.

And it was uncertain whether the "Sect-Entering Order" would be recognized by the Qian Taoist Sect...

If it wasn't, he feared he would need to start making plans early.

After finishing his meal, Mo Hua chatted with the elderly man for a while, then paid with Spirit Stones, and resumed his journey, heading towards the distant mountains.

Seeing Mo Hua—a young child—setting out alone, the elderly man frowned with worry and couldn't help but caution him:

"Young lad, be careful. Try not to travel at night as much as possible. If it can't be helped, seek shelter in the Mountain God Temple."

"Thank you, Grandpa, I will!" replied Mo Hua.

"And be wary of some human traffickers..."

Mo Hua was startled, "Human traffickers?"

"Yes," the elderly man nodded, speaking in a low voice, "This is Qian State. Although the sects wield great power and the Taoist Court enforces strict regulations, ensuring good public order, still..."

"Some people would do anything for Spirit Stones..."

Mo Hua asked, "Human traffickers... Who do they abduct?"

The elderly man pointed at Mo Hua, "Mainly those like you..."

Mo Hua was momentarily puzzled, but then understood.

Qian State First Realm is a place where cultivators seek to study and cultivate.

Among the various powers, talented young cultivators often come here to learn.

Therefore, kidnapping cultivators in pursuit of their studies, to ransom them back to their families for a huge amount of Spirit Stones, is a dangerous, yet highly lucrative trade.

Even if there is no demand for a ransom.

These talented cultivators, with top-notch Spiritual Roots and excellent qualifications, could also be sold for a substantial amount of Spirit Stones.

"Kidnapping cultivators..."

Mo Hua nodded, "Alright, I'll remember that!"

The elderly man didn't know whether Mo Hua truly remembered or was just saying so but didn't say anything more, only looking at Mo Hua with deep concern.

Mo Hua waved goodbye to the elderly man then turned around, briskly walking along the mountain path toward the deep mountain in the distance...

Chapter 755: Shocking Night (1)

The rugged mountains were treacherous, and the scenery was eerily beautiful.

Fallen leaves had accumulated in thick layers, becoming soft and spongy as they rotted and merged with the soil.

A pale yellow miasma floated between the mountains.

Milky white mist shrouded the forest.

The babbling streams, originating from nowhere in particular, moistened the rugged rocks and disappeared without a trace.

Mo Hua had taken a Miasma Repelling Pill, dispelling the miasma within his body, released his Divine Sense, and, while guarding against the Monster Beasts in the forest, carefully walked northward along the rough mountain path.

After walking for the better part of the day, until the sun had set and twilight enveloped the mountains and the forest grew darker and deeper.

Mo Hua looked up and saw that the night was deep and foggy, the miasma thick, obstructing his Divine Sense.

The range of his Divine Sense was less than half of what it was during the day.

The Monster Qi in the mountains also thickened gradually.

Some Monster Beasts, which were "lively at night and sleepy during the day," seemed to be waking up, emitting strange, indescribable growls within the desolate night, resonating deeply through the mountains.

Mo Hua frowned slightly.

It seemed he could no longer travel by night...

He remembered the old temple mentioned by the elder, so he released his Divine Sense, chose a direction, and headed towards a hidden mountain path.

After passing through a stretch of woods and climbing over a giant boulder, another half an hour brought him to an old temple halfway up the mountain.

The temple was dilapidated but showed signs that people sometimes passed by, perhaps Cultivators resting there.

The Monster Qi and miasma nearby were also lighter.

In front of the decaying temple, there was a flight of stone steps, rough and steep.

Mo Hua ascended the steps with agility, as fluid as water, and in no time reached the gate of the old temple.

One of the temple doors was missing, and the other, weathered by sun and rain, was mottled and in terrible shape.

Upon entering, the walls let in the wind, and the place was dirty and messy.

Melancholic moonlight shone through the roof, casting onto a clay statue at the center that reflected a ghastly light.

The face of the mud statue was long and narrow with human features, yet none at all.

The eyes, illuminated by the moonlight, revealed a sinister gleam that pierced the dark night, staring at Mo Hua in a human yet Non-Human manner.

Mo Hua was unafraid, staring back at the mud statue with wide open eyes.

After locking gazes for a while, perhaps due to the shifting moonlight, the statue's gaze seemed to silently wander away...

Mo Hua, however, did not look away and continued to approach the statue, eyes intense as he gazed at it.

The mud statue promptly remained still and well-behaved.

Mo Hua stepped onto the offering stage and examined the statue closely, muttering,

"That's not right, why is there nothing?"

"There should be something..."

"I couldn't have seen it wrong..."

Mo Hua was puzzled.

The light had gone out from the statue's eyes, which now seemed eager to close.

Mo Hua licked his lips, "Such a shame..."

He then jumped off the offering stage, cleared a spot on the ground, and using Divine Consciousness Control Ink, drew a Warm Fire Formation.

As the Warm Fire Formation lit up, an orange flame arose, dispelling the night within the temple and the chill of the mountains outside.

Wrapped in a small blanket and seated by the fire, Mo Hua felt very warm.

As the warmth rose, Mo Hua suddenly felt hungry, so he took out some mountain yams and dried meat from his Storage Bag and roasted them over the Warm Fire Formation.

Sitting by the fire, eating the fragrant and sticky mountain yams, chewing on spicy beef jerky, and drinking the sweet fruit wine brewed by his mother,

Mo Hua shook his head and swayed, completely content.

After eating his fill, Mo Hua extinguished the Warm Fire Formation, wrapped himself up tightly in the blanket, and, taking advantage of the residual warmth on the ground, drifted into sleep.

All was quiet again within the old temple.

The cold moonlight shone down once more, illuminating the eyes of the clay statue on the offering stage.

The statue's icy gaze slowly lowered to rest upon Mo Hua, who, wrapped up like a "little dumpling" and fast asleep, oblivious to the world.

The statue's gaze flickered, as if it were pondering something.

For the duration of brewing a pot of tea, a faint white glow emerged from the statue.

This glow, seemingly real and yet illusory, was indistinct and obscure.

It could be sensed by the Divine Sense but was invisible to the eye.

The white light slowly stretched out and gradually condensed into a narrow human figure.

It emerged from the mud statue, shedding its shell, body like a human, face like a monster, with long whiskers, narrow eyes, and yellow fur.

This Yaoying moved stealthily, and with each gust of chilly wind, it approached Mo Hua, extending long claws, and said in a sinister voice,

"Young friend..."

"Turn around and look..."

"See for yourself who I am..."

It intended to convey this sinister whisper into the Cultivator's dreams.

To startle him awake from his dreams.

But before it had finished speaking, the one who seemed to be "deeply asleep" suddenly turned his little head. His large eyes stared straight at it, and he asked,

"Who are you?"

The wickedly-faced Yaoying was startled.

"You weren't sleeping?"

Immediately after, it was shocked again, "You can see me?"

"Didn't you ask me to look at you?" Mo Hua said, puzzled.

"No, no..."

The Yaoying shook its head repeatedly; the "seeing" it referred to was in dreams, casting itself as a frightening nightmare.

Not to be actually seen with eyes in reality.

The Yaoying became somewhat panicked, "What's going on with this boy..."

How could he see it?

Could it be... his Divine Sense was too strong?

That's impossible, how powerful could the Divine Sense of a little child be?

"Who are you?" Mo Hua asked again.

Regaining its composure and about to show its anger, the Yaoying saw Mo Hua's eyes clear and piercing, even carrying... a hint of strangeness, as if to see right through it.

The Yaoying's heart skipped a beat, only to hear Mo Hua say crisply,

"Were you the thing inside the mud statue just now?"

"The clay statue of the Mountain God Temple..."

"Are you the Mountain God?"

"No, that can't be right. The old man at the foot of the mountain told me that the Mountain God had turned evil and has already been slain."

Chapter 756: Surprising Night (2)

"So, you're an impostor?"

"A human body with a demon-like face, hosting in a clay sculpture, you're neither human nor demon, but a spiritual entity. Either you're a naturally malevolent spirit, or a ghost transformed by a person..."

Yaoying felt a sinking feeling in its heart.

How does this kid know so much?

How old is he? He speaks as if he deals with these demons and evil spirits every day...

Revealing a ferocious expression, Yaoying said, "Scared now, huh? Since you know, why not hurry and..."

It didn't finish its words before a fireball whooshed towards it.

This fireball was fast and accurate, with flames swirling around it, heading straight for Yaoying's face.

But the fireball didn't hit its mark; instead, it passed through Yaoying's face and flew out the door. Following an explosion, flames spread and burned several rocks.

Yaoying was stunned, then became furious.

Fireball technique on the face!

This foreign Cultivator is so rude!

Without any provocation, he throws a fireball?

Luckily, I am a Divine Consciousness Entity. Spells made of Spiritual Power can't injure a Thought Body, otherwise, wouldn't my face be wrecked by that attack?!

"What audacity!"

Yaoying's face was full of rage. It wanted to teach this young Cultivator a lesson, to show him the proper way of being a Cultivator!

But Mo Hua paid no attention...

"Fireball Technique is useless, huh..."

"Because it's an attack on the level of Spiritual Power, huh..."

"Evil thought... Divine Sense..."

Mo Hua pondered while muttering to himself.

His previous Divine Thought clashes were inside the Sea of Consciousness, where one spell after another was a Divine Thought Manifestation, capable of injuring evil thoughts.

But now, outside the Sea of Consciousness, Mo Hua lacked experience and didn't know which tactics would be effective.

Mo Hua continued to ponder by himself.

Yaoying was even more incensed.

A mere child, so disrespectful!

After all, I was once revered as a Mountain God, worshipped by people. Even though I've fallen, I shouldn't be humiliated by a kid to this extent!

In my own temple, with the empowerment of my Divine Effigy, my thought power is stable.

I am also a Divine Consciousness Entity, immune to Blood Qi or Spiritual Power attacks—basically invincible.

I was originally planning to frighten this young boy away, given his age.

But since he's so ungrateful, I have no choice but to take severe measures, to teach him the harsh realities of Tao Cultivation...

Yaoying's eyes turned crimson, its aura violently increasing in strength. Its once gaunt form began to bulk up, and its limbs grew fur, transforming into a huge "Yellow Skin"...

Seeing this, Mo Hua was not only unafraid but also quite intrigued.

I've seen transformations into "Evil Ghosts" and "Zombies", but this is my first time seeing one turn into a "weasel"...

The Yellow Skin Yaoying glared menacingly at Mo Hua, looking like it was about to attack.

Mo Hua, after a moment of contemplation, decided to strike first. With a flick of his hand, he laid out a Formation with Spiritual Ink at the feet of the Yellow Skin, drawing the Golden Lock Formation.

The First-grade Golden Lock Formation was simple, so he completed it rapidly.

Once the Golden Lock Formation was complete, chains materialized, binding the Yellow Skin Yaoying.

Straining against the Golden Lock Formation, the Yellow Skin managed to break the chains and free itself, but it was deeply shocked.

"A Formation?"

"Without a brush or paper, how did this kid set it up?"

Mo Hua, however, nodded secretly.

I was right in my thoughts.

The power of a Spell is determined by Spiritual Power.

Whereas the harm caused by a Formation, though made of Spiritual Power, also contains the Law of the Great Dao and a great deal of Divine Sense.

Using Divine Sense to restrain Divine Thought.

That's why Spells can't hurt it.

But a Formation can affect this "Yellow Skin" Yaoying, which has no blood, no Qi, is not harmed by physical attacks or affected by Spiritual Power.

Although, compared to the purely Divine Sense-based Formations in the Sea of Consciousness, its power is lesser.

But it's useful, and that's what matters...

Plus, I'm currently only using a First-grade Formation Method.

Mo Hua took out several bottles of Spiritual Ink and set to work with concentrated effort, using Divine Consciousness Control Ink to create an even more complex Formation...

The Yellow Skin, watching Mo Hua's calm demeanor, began to panic...

It felt that things were getting out of control...

This kid isn't flustered. He counters move by move with solid confidence; I can't quite see through him.

Give up?

But as a proud Mountain God, if I lose to a kid, wouldn't that be a big joke?

The Yellow Skin hardened its heart and tried to charge at Mo Hua.

Yet, before it could reach him, golden patterns emerged under its feet, solidifying into a three-fold Golden Lock Compound Formation, trapping it securely.

The Yellow Skin used claws and teeth in frantic effort to escape.

Though now in decline, its strength was not what it once was; still, it could handle a First-grade Golden Lock Formation.

But before it could fully escape, it looked down and saw even more Golden Lock Formations appearing under its feet.

The Yellow Skin was both shocked and scared.

"What's with this kid...?"

"What kind of teaching has he received? How can he draw Formations like this?!"

With this method of Drawing Formations, I can't win...

The thought of retreating crossed the Yellow Skin's mind. Your adventure continues at

"Should I ask for mercy?"

This thought just surfaced when the Yellow Skin immediately dismissed it.

A Mountain God such as myself can't beg a kid for mercy; wouldn't I be laughed out of existence?

I'll just hold out for now...

A mere young Cultivator, even if his Divine Sense is strong and his Formation knowledge slightly better, how long can he last?

When we're both at our limits, I'll just pretend and agree to a "draw", and we can stop without losing too much face...

But before it could finish its thoughts, its eyelids began to twitch uncontrollably.

It noticed suddenly that fiery red patterns had appeared around it without its knowledge. Surging Spiritual Power flowed through them, while imposing Divine Thoughts surged within them...

Chapter 757: A Night of Shock (3)

Second-Grade Formation!

And not just any ordinary Second-Grade Formation, but at least a Second Grade Initial Stage Twelve, perhaps even Thirteen Stripes, Killing Formation!

Yellow Skin trembled in his heart, widened his eyes, and immediately threw away the dignity of a Mountain God, shouting out,

"Young friend! Young friend!"

"Let's talk it over!"

Mo Hua ignored him and continued with the formation...

Yellow Skin grit his teeth and yelled, "Young master, my little ancestor!"

"I'm begging you, stop drawing, if you draw any more, it's going to cost me my life!"

It had not been easy for it to condense this damaged body, and if it were to be blown up again, it really might be scattered to the winds, never to recover...

Mo Hua stopped.

It wasn't that he really wanted to stop, but that he couldn't continue drawing.

His Divine Sense was strong, but using such a difficult method of Divine Sense to lay out formations, drawing a Second Grade Thirteen Stripes Earth Fire Formation, was already somewhat strenuous.

Setting up the Golden Lock Formation before had consumed a lot of Divine Sense.

Now this Second-Grade Earth Fire Formation probably couldn't be completed, and even if he managed to finish it, his Divine Sense would be close to exhaustion.

Moreover, since Yellow Skin was being so reasonable, even calling him "my little ancestor," Mo Hua decided to be magnanimous and let it off for now.

Mo Hua walked up to Yellow Skin and asked,

"You wanted to harm me?"

Yellow Skin replied helplessly, "I just wanted to scare you..."

Mo Hua, puzzled, "For no reason, why would you scare me?"

Yellow Skin gave a bitter smile, "Your Divine Sense is somewhat peculiar, as soon as you entered, you started staring at the Mountain God effigy, as if you saw something..."

"I was afraid that you would find out my secrets and bring disaster upon me, so I wanted to scare you into leaving early. I had no other ill intentions..."

"Oh..." Mo Hua nodded with half-belief and then asked, "Who are you?"

Yellow Skin said, "I am the Mountain God of this place..."

Mo Hua raised his eyebrow, "Nonsense, the Mountain God here was slain!"

Find more to read at

Yellow Skin hastily said, "I dare not deceive you, young friend. I truly am the Mountain God, named Lord Yellow Mountain. I am covered with yellow demon skin, my surname is Yellow, and I am a Mountain God, thus called 'Mountain Lord'..."

"Originally, when I was cultivating the Tao, something went wrong, and evil thoughts arose, which is why I was cut down by a cultivator of the Righteous Dao..."

"But because my roots were profound, I still had a glimmer of life left."

"These years, I presided over this broken temple, dispelling miasma and repelling demons, providing a place for traveling cultivators to rest, thus creating a bit of good karma."

"Plus, with the Mountain God effigy being worshipped, I received a bit of incense offerings."

"That's how I managed to condense this damaged body, but my strength is much less than before, just barely clinging to life..."

Lord Yellow Mountain sighed.

Seeing his expression did not seem fake, Mo Hua reluctantly believed him a little but still crisply threatened,

"You'd better not be deceiving me, otherwise, I will eat you!"

Lord Yellow Mountain was startled and couldn't help but laugh.

Thought to himself that after all, it's just a child, not knowing how to threaten someone.

He himself was a Divine Consciousness Entity, how could he...

Suddenly, Lord Yellow Mountain's heart chilled. As soon as the word "eat" came to mind, he felt a pull on karma and couldn't help but feel terror.

"This..."

Could this young cultivator really consume him?

No... Perhaps he had already consumed quite a few...

Lord Yellow Mountain opened his mouth, eyes filled with horror.

"What on earth is this young cultivator, and why is he more frightening than I am?"

Lord Yellow Mountain wished he could slap himself.

How could he be so unlucky to have provoked this little calamity?! When this little ancestor entered the door, why didn't he just hide inside the clay effigy and play dead?

Why did he have to be cheap and take a glance at him?

With that one glance, he almost lost his old life...

Lord Yellow Mountain felt bitter in his heart.

But Mo Hua, examining Lord Yellow Mountain, suddenly asked,

"I'll ask you a few questions."

Lord Yellow Mountain immediately retracted his demon form, revealing his original appearance with a human body and demon face, and said respectfully,

"Gentleman, please ask!"

Mo Hua asked, "Your essence is Divine Thought, but in the end, are you human, or are you a monster? And as for the Mountain God... what exactly is it?"

"How does one qualify as a 'god'?"

Mo Hua asked several questions in quick succession.

Lord Yellow Mountain was somewhat surprised.

He had thought this young cultivator, with such formidable abilities and profound knowledge of Divine Thought Slaughter, must have an extremely profound family heritage. Yet, the questions asked were somewhat inconsistent in depth.

Things he shouldn't have known, he knew, and not just knew, but to a frighteningly profound extent.

But things he should have known seemed to be rather limited in his knowledge...

"Is it an incomplete inheritance, or did the master only teach him half..."

Lord Yellow Mountain speculated in his heart but didn't dare to withhold information.

He was afraid this young cultivator was "deceiving" him, pretending not to understand what he actually did, and then seizing on his own words to "devour" him.

One's path in Tao Cultivation is fraught with peril, and it wasn't outside the realm of possibility...

Lord Yellow Mountain said:

"All entities of Divine Consciousness in the world, just like cultivators' Divine Sense, malicious spirits' ghost thoughts, and evil spirits' evil thoughts, are all illusory and not real 'Thought Bodies'."

"Ghosts are Thought Bodies."

"When a cultivator reaches their limit, and their body dies and their Tao fades, the transformed Divine Thought usually becomes a ghost."

"These ghosts and evil spirits, having scattered and mutated consciousness, consume human divine sense to sustain their own ghost thoughts, especially the divine sense of their close relatives, which to ghosts is an especially nourishing substance."

"'God' is also a type of Thought Body."

"But becoming a god is very demanding and relates to the Great Dao, cause and effect, offerings, incense worship, and the like."

"I'm just a minor Mountain God, given some incense offerings, worshipped by believers, and by chance acquired the Mountain God Position, but more profound matters... I don't understand..."

"Especially..."

Lord Yellow Mountain showed a look of fear, "In this world, it is said that there are ancient, supreme beings like Monster Gods, Evil Gods, and Demon Gods..."

"These beings are unseen, unknown, and almost 'Dao,' almost 'Immortal'..."

Mo Hua felt a chill in his heart.

This world of cultivation was seemingly bigger, deeper, more terrifying, and more complex than he had imagined...

Mo Hua took another look at Lord Yellow Mountain and asked doubtfully:

"Mountain God, you cultivate the Righteous Dao, so that's good, right?"

Lord Yellow Mountain smiled awkwardly, "That is generally the case... At least the divine sense is clear, desiring incense worship, wanting to form good connections, reaping good fruits..."

"Then why did you become bad before, and even got chopped?" Mo Hua asked curiously.

Lord Yellow Mountain, as if stabbed in the heart, hesitated for a moment before saying helplessly,

"That... alas, it's hard to avoid missteps in cultivation..."

"I was too complacent as a Mountain God, and my Divine Thought hadn't grown for a long time, so I took to perverse ideas and ate... ate a few people..."

Mo Hua's gaze turned cold.

Lord Yellow Mountain felt a chill over his entire body and immediately said, "Not 'me,' but the previous 'me'..."

Mo Hua's face stiffened, "The you from before isn't you anymore?"

Lord Yellow Mountain wished he could cry but helplessly replied, "Evil thoughts grew, one body, two thoughts; I had no control..."

"Then what?"

"After that... after eating a few people, my Divine Thought might have been tainted, but it definitely grew stronger. Just when 'Ino, the previous me—was complacently satisfied with myself, I was figured out by a cultivator from a nearby Righteous Dao Sect..."

"There was a White-Robed Sword Cultivator, with a profound level of cultivation, who chopped me down with a single sword..."

"After getting chopped, due to the good karma I had accumulated earlier, I was left with the faintest breath..."

"That Sword Cultivator said things like 'Heaven values all life,' 'one death, one life, should not be cut off,' and 'to leave a line of survival,' and let me go."

"But he also warned me that if I committed evil again, he would utterly exterminate me."

"So, young Gentleman, I really don't dare to harm you..."

Lord Yellow Mountain wished he could open his heart for Mo Hua to see.

"Mhm mhm." Mo Hua nodded, then suddenly remembered another question and asked:

"You are a Mountain God, a Divine Consciousness Entity, so how did that Sword Cultivator, with a sword, chop you?"

"It was..."

Seemingly recalling that moment, Lord Yellow Mountain's eyes still held immense terror.

"Divine Thought into sword..."

Mo Hua was momentarily stunned, then his eyes lit up.

Divine Thought...

Into sword!!

Chapter 758: Human Trafficker (1)

Mo Hua said excitedly, "Divine Thought into sword? How does one do that? What does the sword look like that's created? How do you drive it with Divine Thought?"

Lord Yellow Mountain had a complex expression, "How would I know..."

I was the one who was slain by the 'Divine Thought into sword', not the one who uses 'Divine Thought into sword' to slay others...

Mo Hua then asked, "Is that Divine Thought into sword very powerful?"

Lord Yellow Mountain nodded, "You see how pitiful I look after being slain, then you will know..."

Mo Hua glanced at Lord Yellow Mountain and questioned with a bit of doubt, "You're not powerful though..."

How does that prove the 'Divine Thought into sword' is powerful?

Lord Yellow Mountain, ashamed and annoyed, said, "Times have changed!"

"Back in the day! I was the Mountain Lord! I was the one who called the shots over this entire mountain!"

"It was just that I made a mistake, harbored evil spirits, and just like that my cultivation was destroyed in an instant. That's what led to my current state, defeated by you, fallen from my high state to be..."

Mo Hua's brows furrowed, and his gaze became dangerous.

Lord Yellow Mountain immediately swallowed the words "to be bullied by a 'dog'."

It couldn't be said that "a tiger fallen to the plains is bullied by a 'dog'..."

This little Cultivator isn't ordinary, to say the least. He's also a "Little Tiger," even a "Little Malevolent Tiger"...

A "man-eating" Little Malevolent Tiger...

If possible, it's better not to provoke...

Mo Hua was still somewhat incredulous, "Were you really powerful before?"

"Of course I was..."

Mo Hua pondered, "This place is the Second-rank small state boundary of Qian State. Even if you were powerful, you were at most a Second-rank Mountain God. How powerful could you have been?"

"You don't understand... I used to..."

Lord Yellow Mountain, with a narrow face and full of self-pride, began to speak, but stopped halfway, trying to laugh it off with some embarrassment:

"...Indeed, I was just a Second-rank Minor Mountain God..."

Mo Hua looked at him with suspicion.

Under Mo Hua's intent gaze, Lord Yellow Mountain felt guilty, looking up at the sky as if nothing had happened.

Mo Hua felt there was a big problem, but now that he had softened, it wasn't good to be too harsh, and after all, he was a Mountain God, so he shouldn't be too disrespectful.

Mo Hua was still more concerned about the matters of 'Divine Thought into sword'...

"What does a Sword Cultivator who can wield 'Divine Thought into sword' look like? What is his birth name? Do you know?"

Lord Yellow Mountain shook his head, "I don't know. I only remember he was clad in white, ethereal like an immortal, and then there was that terrifying sword intent. As for what he looks like, I didn't dare to look closely, much less inquire his name..."

"Which Sect does he belong to?"

Lord Yellow Mountain still shook his head.

Mo Hua, frustrated, gave Lord Yellow Mountain a disdainful glance, "How do you know nothing?"

Lord Yellow Mountain felt quite helpless.

What can I do?

I was slain by a single sword stroke. I was too panicked to even think about asking questions about that man.

"A white-robed Sword Cultivator, slaying an evil Mountain God..."

Mo Hua could only note this clue down, planning to find out more after joining a Sect.

To find out about the person with 'Divine Thought into sword', learn the method of 'Divine Thought into sword', master externalizing Divine Sense, and materializing it into a sword...

That way, upon encountering evil spirits or a Divine Sense like Lord Yellow Mountain's outside the Sea of Consciousness, he could also turn Divine Sense into a sword and slice them down...

Mo Hua murmured to himself.

Lord Yellow Mountain immediately shivered.

It didn't know what Mo Hua was plotting in that little head of his, but without needing to think, it knew for sure it was nothing good, possibly even something very frightening...

Otherwise, it wouldn't feel its neck getting cold...

"Young Mister..." Lord Yellow Mountain showed an extremely amiable smile, even a bit fawning, "The mountain breeze is chilly. You should rest early. Tomorrow morning, we still have to hurry on our journey..."

It wanted to send this little ancestor off as soon as possible...

"I'm not tired!" Mo Hua said.

With the Taoist Stele in his Sea of Consciousness, he wouldn't feel tired even if he didn't sleep.

Lord Yellow Mountain inwardly sighed.

Little ancestor, oh how I wish you'd feel sleepy.

If you're not sleepy, this lengthy night will be hard to endure...

Mo Hua had many more questions.

For example, how one becomes a Mountain God, what is virtuous affinity? If a Mountain God harbors evil, do they become an Evil God? Why consume incense offerings? Why accept worship?

And so on and so forth...

It was still far from dawn, and Mo Hua wanted to seize the opportunity to ask Lord Yellow Mountain all these questions. Just as he was about to speak up, he suddenly paused, turning his gaze towards the door.

Seeing the change in Mo Hua, Lord Yellow Mountain was somewhat surprised.

A moment later, he too was startled.

"Someone's coming outside..."

Mo Hua nodded.

Lord Yellow Mountain looked astonished.

Now it understood that this little Cultivator's Divine Sense was extraordinary.

Within its own mountain realm, this Cultivator could sense movements even before it could.

"We should hide a bit..."

Lord Yellow Mountain looked weakly at Mo Hua, seeking his approval.

Mo Hua nodded, and only then did Lord Yellow Mountain heave a sigh of relief. It turned into a wisp of white smoke and subtly merged with the Divine Effigy of the Mountain God.

Mo Hua erased the Warm Fire Formation on the ground and, using the Water Passing Step, walked vertically up the wall to perch on the beams, hiding behind a massive but broken beam. He then cast the Concealment Technique to hide himself well.

Soon, faint footsteps could be heard outside the temple.

Even though they kept their footsteps low, in the quiet mountain night, and especially to Mo Hua's senses, they were still distinctly audible.

Two unfamiliar Cultivators hid outside the temple door, looking into the temple and cautiously releasing their Divine Sense to scan around. Only after ensuring there was no one did they relax their guard and spoke to someone behind:

"Big brother, there's no one in the temple..."

Voices followed one after another.

"It's too late, and the road here is terribly difficult to navigate..."

"We've been tired for days..."

"Let's rest in the temple for a while..."

"May the Mountain God bless us..."

"Our heads are on our own shoulders, our lives are in our own hands. What blessing can a Mountain God give!"

Chapter 759: Human Trafficker (2)

...

A group of people chattered as they walked into the ruined temple.

Mo Hua, hidden in the crevices of the beams and borrowing the moonlight, watched secretly and saw that the ruined temple bustled with activity as more than ten people joined in.

Most of them were Cultivators at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage.

Some carried knives, some were equipped with swords, and a few pushed carts on which storage boxes sat, containing unknown contents.

The frontmost Cultivator, dressed in green robes and armed with a sword, appeared middle-aged and had an air of gentle refinement.

He seemed to be the leader of the group.

Though his Cultivation was also at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, it was clearly deeper than the rest, and his footsteps were methodical.

Mo Hua heard others call him "Boss Jiang."

Boss Jiang entered the temple, looked around, and nodded:

"We've been travelling day and night, and brothers are tired. Let's rest in the temple, and continue on our journey at dawn. Delivering the goods will earn us some Spirit Stones to live with ease..."

His voice was warm and cultured.

The other Cultivators nodded in agreement, placed their luggage down, and found a clean spot to sit cross-legged.

Some took out dry food to eat, some drank wine to relieve fatigue, and some, perhaps exceedingly tired, lay down and slept immediately.

A few people spoke in hushed tones, to which Mo Hua pricked up his ears to listen.

"Boss, how much longer..."

"Three to four days' journey..."

"How much can we make?"

"Don't think too much. Let's see when we get it..."

"The others..."

"It's just us..."

...

The few chatted for quite a while.

Mo Hua was somewhat puzzled, not understanding their conversation, and just as he tried to listen more closely, suddenly Boss Jiang's expression changed.

"Something's not right!"

The other Cultivators, taken aback, showed looks of astonishment.

"Boss, what's the matter?"

"What's happened?"

Boss Jiang stood up and slowly looked around, his gaze turning sharp, "There's someone here!"

Mo Hua was somewhat surprised.

The people in the ruined temple were shocked, stood up, and with their Divine Senses colliding, swept the area carefully, only to become collectively frowning.

"Boss, there's no one..."

Boss Jiang wiped the ground with his hand, his eyes alert, "The ground is still warm, indicating that a Cultivator warmed himself here not long ago..."

He looked around and found the skin of the sweet potato Mo Hua had partially eaten.

Holding the skin, his face showed confusion.

Suddenly someone exclaimed, "Boss, look!"

Boss Jiang, alerted, walked over and followed the direction pointed to by that person, and saw patterns crisscrossed on the ground as if newly smeared...

Boss Jiang felt a shudder in his heart, "Is this... Formation?!"

His usually gentle eyes suddenly became sharp, and he commanded authoritatively, "Everyone on guard!"

All the Cultivators present, their weariness dispelled, drew their swords or brandished their knives, channelling their Spiritual Power, their expressions extremely grave.

Yet, after a moment, the ruined temple remained completely silent.

Whether by the naked eye or the perception of Divine Sense, they found not a single trace.

Someone hesitated, "Boss, could we have been mistaken..."

Boss Jiang frowned, pondered for a moment, and shook his head:

"No, the Formation has just been erased, there is residual warmth. Someone was here in this ruined temple very recently..."

"In these desolate mountains with paths scarce and far between, only this ruined temple stands; that person would not have gone far, likely hiding from us due to our numbers..."

"Or perhaps... laying an ambush for us..."

The faces of the other Cultivators tensed.

"Boss, what should we do?"

After pondering for a moment, Boss Jiang looked at the ruined temple and spoke loudly, "Whichever Taoist Friend is present, why not show yourself?"

"Meeting by chance is fate..."

"We have no quarrel with you, and we will not harm you. A random meeting in the wilds can lead to friendship..."

...

Boss Jiang spoke politely, but Mo Hua remained unmoved.

One cannot see the heart through the belly. How could he know whether this group was good or bad?

Boss Jiang had exhausted his words, and seeing that there was still no response from the surroundings, his eyes grew cold, and he said sternly:

"If this Taoist Friend won't show common decency, don't blame me for being discourteous..."

"Once I tear down this ruined temple and smash this divine statue, leveling this place to the ground, let's see where you can hide..."

Tear down the temple?

Mo Hua was taken aback, and glancing down, he saw Lord Yellow Mountain, the spirit residing in the divine statue, looking indignant yet helpless.

The Mountain God was now in shambles and stood no chance against this band of Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

If his dwelling – the clay statue – was destroyed, he truly might lose his foundation.

Mo Hua didn't particularly care.

The mountain was vast, the night was deep, and even if the temple was torn down, he could still flee, but Lord Yellow Mountain couldn't run from the mountain god's temple...

He still had a host of questions to ask this destitute Mountain God.

After some thought, Mo Hua dispelled his Concealment Technique and called out crisply:

"I'm coming out!"

Boss Jiang was startled by the sound. He had thought that anyone daring to stop here in the dark of the night must be a seasoned traveler, experienced in the ways of the wild.

But why did the voice sound so young?

Before he could gather his thoughts, he saw a young Cultivator jump down from the rafters, petite in stature with a handsome face and innocent expression.

Boss Jiang was stunned, and then felt a chill in his heart, he couldn't help but ask:

"Are you human, or a ghost?"

Mo Hua glanced at him disdainfully, "Are you the ghost?"

Boss Jiang saw that Mo Hua's voice and appearance were vibrant and lively, indeed not like a spirit but a real, live, young Cultivator, and he relaxed slightly.

But then he furrowed his brows again, "Are you alone?"

Naturally, Mo Hua wasn't going to say he was alone, and simply replied:

"I got separated from my master and fellow senior and junior disciples. I was resting in this ruined temple temporarily and will look for them tomorrow."

With a Sect...

Boss Jiang's brow furrowed slightly but did not take it to heart.

Chapter 760: Human Traffickers (3)

But there was one thing he couldn't understand, and he asked with a deep voice,

"Why couldn't we detect you when we entered?"

Mo Hua replied righteously,

"How should I know?"

"If you can't find me, shouldn't you look for reasons within yourselves?"

"Could it be that your Cultivation is insufficient, or your Divine Sense is weak, or your vigilance is lacking?"

"What does that have to do with me, a child?"

One by one, their faces turned red with shame and anger at Mo Hua's words, but they seemed unable to refute them.

It appeared that... they could only blame their own incompetence...

They surely couldn't blame the child for hiding well, could they...

Seeing that they had such "self-awareness," Mo Hua nodded slightly.

A burly man approached Boss Jiang and murmured in an extremely low voice,

"What should we do?"

"Should we..."

The man's eyes turned cold, and he gestured with his hand as if it were a knife.

His movements were slight, his voice soft, but Mo Hua, with his powerful Divine Sense, still heard them. Nonetheless, he pretended not to.

Boss Jiang said in a low voice,

"Don't rush; let's see how things go..."

He was a bit puzzled about the background of this little cultivator and couldn't figure out the identity of this little demon.

As Boss Jiang furrowed his brows in thought, his eyes suddenly lit up, and he asked,

"Young brother, did you draw the formation in this temple?"

The Warm Fire Formation, huh...

After thinking for a moment, Mo Hua nodded and said, "Yes, I drew it!"

Boss Jiang was surprised but more so delighted.

"You actually know how to draw formations?!"

"Hmm..."

Boss Jiang's expression immediately softened, and he even showed a kindly smile.

A young cultivator...

Who can paint formations...

The price for that is not ordinary...

"Put away your swords and knives; don't startle the young brother..." Boss Jiang ordered. Then, looking at Mo Hua, he spoke softly and gently, as if the spring breeze were nourishing the rain.

"We are legitimate merchants, just passing through. Fearing being robbed and losing both our lives and wealth, we became a bit too vigilant. Young brother, please don't take offense..."

Mo Hua nodded, indicating that he didn't mind.

But inside, he sneered to himself.

Legitimate merchants? I've seen my fair share; who are they trying to fool...

Boss Jiang asked Mo Hua to sit down and even brought out some dry food and wild fruits for Mo Hua to eat.

Mo Hua didn't eat.

Boss Jiang didn't mind and asked warmly, "Young brother, to be able to draw such a standard of formation at your young age is truly impressive!"

This standard? The standard of the Warm Fire Formation?

His flattery didn't reach Mo Hua's heart; Mo Hua responded indifferently,

"Just average..."

Boss Jiang then probed, "Then, young brother, can you draw a first-grade formation?"

Mo Hua nodded, "Sort of..."

Boss Jiang, delighted by the response, said, "Young brother, you surely have a boundless future!"

He then raised his cup sincerely and said, "I'll drink this cup as a self-punishment for being abrupt and rude earlier, and to apologize to you, young brother!"

Boss Jiang drained the cup of wine in one gulp.

Mo Hua graciously replied, "Don't worry about it, I don't take it to heart."

Boss Jiang continued with more flattery, his eyes glinting, and he asked quietly, "May I ask, young brother, who is your master..."

"My master doesn't allow me to say..." said Mo Hua, "But my master is very powerful, he can casually draw third-grade formations..."

"My uncle is even more incredible, but I'm not at liberty to tell you about him..."

Boss Jiang chuckled to himself, thinking hard.

A mentor at the Golden Core Stage, huh...

Low, but with a talent for formation, a below-average mentorship... difficult to blackmail, so it's time to find another way to trade...

Having made up his mind, Boss Jiang suddenly slapped his forehead and said in astonishment,

"Your master... on the way here, I seemed to have encountered a high-level practitioner looking for his disciple. He said his disciple was extremely gifted, proficient in formations. Looking at it now, that sounds a lot like you, young brother..."

"This high-level practitioner might just be your master!"

Mo Hua silently watched his performance, emotionless, and replied,

"Are my elder brothers and sisters with him?"

Boss Jiang said, "Yes, that high-level practitioner was accompanied by a male and a female disciple, both outstanding and extraordinary, truly dragons among men..."

Mo Hua feigned "surprise" with a flat tone,

"Ah, that's great. They are indeed my master, my elder sister, and my elder brother!"

Even though Boss Jiang felt something off about Mo Hua's tone, his guilty conscience prevented him from noticing, and he sighed,

"It's just a pity they took the wrong path..."

"They went the wrong way?" Mo Hua asked with "surprise."

"Yes," Boss Jiang said with regret, "they headed towards Qingzhou City, taking a detour. You, waiting here in the mountains, will probably miss them."

Mo Hua's expression showed disappointment.

Boss Jiang, judging by Mo Hua's reaction, affirmed his guess.

This kid looked clever and was certainly cautious, but after all, he was just a child, inexperienced, especially when it came to his master, emotionally invested and confused.

Deceiving him with a lie wouldn't be difficult...

Boss Jiang suggested, "Your master is a great person, and we would like to establish a good relationship. How about this, we take you to find your master? It just so happens we're passing through Qingzhou City..."

"Really?" Mo Hua said, full of anticipation.

"Of course," Boss Jiang replied with a smile, looking amiable and friendly.

Mo Hua's eyes revealed an excited gleam, "That would be wonderful, thank you, big brothers!"

Mo Hua's gaze was pure and clear, and his demeanor was as brisk as a young deer's.

Relieved, Boss Jiang then said,

"It's getting late; let's rest for a while. Tomorrow morning, we'll take you to find your master."

"Okay!"

Mo Hua nodded eagerly with anticipation.

Everyone then rested in the dilapidated temple.

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Mo Hua slept quietly, his eyelashes black, breathing steady, just like any ordinary child.

Boss Jiang stood at the entrance of the temple, far away from him, speaking in a low voice with several cultivators.