

The Quest 78

Chapter 78: Demon Hunting Ceremony

Nearly a year ago, Meng Da Hu reached the sixth level of Qi cultivation, but due to bad luck, he missed the demon hunting ceremony by just a few days, preventing him from becoming a demon hunter and hunting on the mountain.

Meng Shuang Hu and Meng Xiao Hu, having similar talents and despite their playful nature, diligently advanced in their cultivation, both reaching the sixth level within a year.

The ceremony was held in front of the ancestral hall. Meng Da Hu and others, who had just reached the sixth level of Qi cultivation, participated under the supervision of some highly respected elders.

The ceremony was intricate, starting with the burning of incense to worship heaven and earth. Then, participants made a blood pact, slicing their palms with a knife to mix their blood with wine, which they then drank together in unison.

Elder Han spoke a few words, but Mo Hua, standing at a distance, couldn't hear clearly, only catching the gist of it.

The essence was this: "As fellow demon hunters, though not related by blood, we are bonded by this blood pact. We drink this wine together, promising mutual support. If one bleeds, we all bleed; if one exerts force, we all do. The demonic beasts are many times stronger than cultivators. Without unity and concerted effort, one cannot sustain the life of a demon hunter and will easily become prey."

After the blood pact, the new demon hunters received their hunting tokens from the elders.

Reportedly made from the bones of special demonic beasts, each token was the size of a baby's fist and pale white in color.

Each cultivator received a hunting token. With every demonic beast they killed, a red crack would appear on their token. The more beasts slain, the more prominent the cracks became.

A token filled with cracks was considered a testament to a hunter's achievements.

Meng Da Hu and his companions each received a token, dripped their blood on it, and wore it around their necks.

The blood-stained token would accompany the demon hunters throughout their lives. Some hunters valued their tokens as dearly as their lives, preferring to lose their life over their token. Losing one's token meant losing all past achievements and essentially, the entirety of one's life as a demon hunter.

With the distribution of tokens complete, the ceremony concluded.

Meng Da Hu and his friends were tense throughout the ceremony but finally relaxed.

They wore new Taoist robes and rattan armor, and held brand-new simple broadswords.

The robes, made of ordinary fabric, were cheap but durable. The rattan armor and broadswords, however, were spiritual weapons. The armor protected vital channels, and the broadswords were used to hunt demonic beasts, making them the most common spiritual weapons among demon hunters.

Uncle Meng had spent all his savings to equip them fully. From now on, they would rely on these spiritual weapons to fend for themselves.

Mo Hua and the trio wandered the streets, noticing their lack of enthusiasm, and Mo Hua expressed concern:

“What's wrong? Aren't you happy?”

They stopped on a small stone bridge, leaning on the railing, watching the flowing water blend with the distant lights.

Meng Shuang Hu said, “I saw my mother crying secretly last night.”

Meng Xiao Hu added, “I saw it too. I guess she's heartbroken over the spirit stones. Our family used up all our spirit stones, those she had painstakingly saved.”

“Not only that, she even borrowed some. I saw dad borrowing from the demon hunting team’s uncles and Uncle Mo,” Meng Da Hu said, then asked Mo Hua, “Your family isn’t in urgent need of spirit stones, right?”

“Don’t worry, we have a restaurant at home, so we’re not short for now,” Mo Hua reassured.

“That’s good,” Meng Da Hu sighed in relief, but the three still looked dispirited.

Just a day ago, they were still children. After the ceremony, they had to start bearing the hardships of a cultivator’s life. Some things weren’t deeply felt before, but now, with responsibilities on their shoulders, they realized life wasn’t easy.

“There’s no need to be so downhearted; this is actually a good thing,” Mo Hua said.

The trio looked at Mo Hua together.

“Before, only Uncle Meng and Aunt Meng could earn spirit stones, and you could only spend them. Now that you’re demon hunters, you can hunt demonic beasts and earn spirit stones. Aunt Meng’s burden will be lighter, and life will get better. Once you repay your debts and earn more spirit stones, Aunt Meng can buy lots of nice things to eat,” Mo Hua explained.

Their eyes brightened.

Meng Shuang Hu scratched his head, “But, can we really earn spirit stones? Dad said that novice hunters mostly just watch and learn and don’t get much.”

“You guys are pretty good fighters, aren

’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Then just think of demon hunting as fighting. Before, you fought people; now, you fight demons.”

“But... hunting is still different from fighting,” Meng Xiao Hu hesitated.

“Then learn more from the uncles in the hunting team. Not everything is achieved overnight. The faster you learn, the sooner you can help, and the sooner you’ll earn spirit stones. That’ll make Uncle Meng and Aunt Meng happy,” Mo Hua comforted, lifting their spirits somewhat.

“But,” Meng Da Hu hesitated, “if we go hunting, we won’t be able to come and play with you as often.”

“And probably won’t be able to at all later...” Meng Xiao Hu added softly.

After saying this, their expressions fell again.

“It’s okay, maybe in a year or two, I’ll reach the sixth level of Qi cultivation too. Then I can become a demon hunter and join you on the mountain,” Mo Hua said.

“Really? That’s great!” Meng Xiao Hu cheered.

“What’s so great about that?” Meng Shuang Hu rolled his eyes, then looked at Mo Hua worriedly, “You’re not physically strong and you’re not on the path of physical cultivation. Being a demon hunter is dangerous, and Uncle Mo won’t agree. You should consider becoming an array master instead. It’s a more prestigious identity, earns more spirit stones, and doesn’t involve fighting.”

Meng Da Hu nodded quickly, “Being an array master is good!”

Meng Xiao Hu agreed, “Yeah, being an array master is good!”

“Okay, I’ll consider becoming an array master first. If another opportunity arises, or if I can take the path of physical cultivation, then I’ll consider becoming a demon hunter,” Mo Hua said.

But he thought about it and realized he really didn’t have the talent for being a demon hunter. Naturally frail and having learned techniques focused more on spiritual power, if he became a demon hunter, a demonic beast could easily maul him to death with just a few bites...

Mo Hua felt a bit regretful; he admired the robust and dashing lifestyle of physical cultivators.

Unfortunately, born frail, that path wasn't an option for him.

Mo Hua patted his wallet, "Today, I'll treat you to Guihua cakes from Liu's street stall, as a celebration."

Upon hearing about food, the trio's spirits lifted.

"But, it's always you treating us, which doesn't feel right," Meng Shuang Hu said, feeling a bit embarrassed.

"No worries. When you become renowned demon hunters, killing many demonic beasts and earning lots of spirit stones, you can treat me to something delicious!"

Hearing this, they felt emboldened and nodded in agreement: "Okay!"

With their worries dispelled, they walked spiritedly towards the pastry shop.

After enjoying the cakes, as it was getting late, they prepared to head home.

Before leaving, Meng Da Hu reminded Mo Hua, "Be careful after we go up the mountain. If anyone bullies you, tell us, and we'll come back to fight for you."

Mo Hua was touched and smiled, "Alright, it's a deal!"