

The Quest 941

Chapter 941: Fire Buddha (3)

Three men surrounded Mo Hua, who looked increasingly panicked and exhausted as he manoeuvred swiftly.

Yin Thunder Child and his companions sneered with satisfaction, convinced that they could capture the boy within ten rounds.

But after only three rounds, Mo Hua flashed a cunning smile, seized the opportunity, and rapidly pointed his fingers, launching fireballs consecutively toward the faces of the three attackers.

The attack was as fast as lightning.

Caught off guard, the three men were hit squarely in the face by the fireballs.

The injuries were minor, but their faces were charred and disheveled, and their concerted attack broke, filling their hearts with rage.

In that instant, Mo Hua's movement technique seemed to become even faster.

He flowed like water, escaping from the encirclement and running towards a nearby grove.

That's when Yin Thunder Child and the others realised what had happened and cursed silently:

"What a cunning brat!"

Such fast Fireball Technique!

Even faster movement technique!

This kid, even under their close pursuit, still had tricks up his sleeve, waiting for a slip to escape unexpectedly.

And indeed, he had managed to escape!

It was a tremendous disgrace!

Qiao Laowu and his men, disregarding the soot on their faces, continued the chase.

Mo Hua kept running, the forest ahead almost within reach, about to escape, when suddenly a large figure appeared ahead.

Fire Buddha!

Mo Hua narrowed his eyes, forced to halt.

Behind, Qiao Laowu and his men caught up and stood firmly, together with Fire Buddha, they cornered Mo Hua.

Still furious, the three men mocked Mo Hua.

"You wanna run again, kid?"

Mo Hua ignored them and instead focused on the still, mountain-like Fire Buddha, hesitating for a moment before flicking his fingers and shooting three fireballs straight at Fire Buddha.

He wanted to test the strength of Fire Buddha.

Unexpectedly, Fire Buddha didn't dodge; he stood still and took the three fireballs head-on.

As the fireballs hit Fire Buddha, they disappeared as if sinking into the sea, refined instantly without causing any disturbance.

Mo Hua was shocked.

What was going on?

Fire Buddha, unfazed, said lightly:

"This Fireball Technique of yours is mediocre, let me teach you..."

Fire Buddha spread his arms, his body surrounded by swirling fire Qi, his eyes a bloody red, resembling a sea of fire.

Such a strong presence!

Mo Hua furrowed his brow, released his Divine Sense to sense Fire Buddha's aura, and discovered that inside Fire Buddha's chest, it seemed as if two flames were burning.

These flames, extremely fierce, looked like two hearts, originating from the same source and residing within Fire Buddha, containing immense Fire Spiritual Power.

Could this be... the characteristic of the Meteor Fire Forbidden Art?

To violate the taboo, implanting two fireballs within the body as hearts to enhance Spells?

Was this the true high-level Fire Spells?

Yin Thunder Child and his companions continued to laugh disdainfully, mocking Mo Hua for overestimating himself and attempting to display his Fireball Technique in front of Fire Buddha.

Mo Hua, unwilling to accept this, looked at Fire Buddha and said seriously:

"My Fireball Technique is not just this!"

Fire Buddha seemed surprised, then showed a keen interest, "Then, show me what you've got..."

He was genuinely interested.

"Big brother, maybe we should...first," Qiao Laowu, frustrated, wanted to capture Mo Hua to avoid further trouble.

Fire Buddha's gaze, sharp as a knife, filled Qiao Laowu with fear, forcing him to swallow his words and remain silent.

Fire Buddha then turned back to Mo Hua, saying benevolently:

"Come on, show me..."

"Alright!"

Mo Hua's gaze hardened, filled with a will to fight and a touch of resignation to fate.

"This technique, I will only use once in my life..." Mo Hua spoke gravely.

His words seemed to weigh heavily on Fire Buddha.

Then Mo Hua began to form hand seals, a series of bizarre, complex, and seemingly nonsensical gestures...

Mo Hua, serious, spent a long time forming these gestures, pretending to be preparing a powerful move, fostering an atmosphere that this technique was overwhelmingly strong and required a long time to charge.

This technique, indeed, he could only use once in his life.

Because these hand gestures were all improvised on the spot...

He couldn't guarantee he could "invent" them again exactly as they were...

But Fire Buddha didn't know that.

Unable to gauge Mo Hua's depth and unsure of what Mo Hua was doing, he followed his Cultivator's intuition that the unknown was always dangerous...

Finally, after Mo Hua finished his hand seals, he suddenly shouted, with his left and right hands, a fireball appeared in each.

This move genuinely shocked Fire Buddha.

"Cast two Spells at once?!"

Yin Thunder Child and his followers didn't understand, but Fire Buddha, deeply versed in Spells, knew this seemingly simple move was theoretically complex and extremely difficult.

Was this kid serious?!

Fire Buddha, inherently cautious, instinctively activated his Spiritual Power, forming a fire Qi barrier in front of him.

Mo Hua pushed his Divine Sense to the limit, manipulating the two fireballs, twisting and deforming them before clapping his hands together, making the two fireballs rapidly collide.

This move inexplicably alarmed Fire Buddha.

He swung his hands, forming a fire shield in front of him, trying to block Mo Hua's technique.

But what he anticipated—a surge of Spiritual Power, a fierce explosion, and bizarre Spells—did not happen.

Mo Hua's two fireballs did not collide; they both veered off course, flying forward, exploding on the ground, kicking up pieces of stone and dust.

Fire Buddha and his men were momentarily stunned.

They couldn't discern what had happened.

After a few moments, as the dust settled, they regained their senses only to find that Mo Hua...

Had slipped away again.

Fire Buddha's face turned incredibly sour.

He had been tricked!

Some powerful Fireball Technique?

All fucking nonsense!

For all his years in Qian State, after committing countless crimes and killing numerous people, never had anyone dared to mock him like this!

An immature brat, barely weaned, yet so audacious!

A glint of murderous intent appeared in Fire Buddha's eyes as he coldly said:

"You think you can run? I want to see how you manage that."

The four men, swift as the wind, furiously pursued Mo Hua, chasing him deep into the forest, where they looked around but saw only rustling trees, with no sign of Mo Hua's whereabouts.

Chapter 942: Disaster Begins

The mountain forest was silent, the trees lush, and as the sunlight came through, it was fractured into mottled shadows—yet beneath the layers of shadows, there was no sign of anyone.

Qiao Laowu frowned, "Where's that brat?"

Yin Thunder Child's expression was also ugly, "Hiding in the forest?"

"Where did he hide?"

"Underground?"

"There aren't any traces on the ground, how could he go underground?"

"Then it must be..."

The four exchanged glances, their pupils constricting slightly.

Concealment Technique?!

This brat, he's actually learned the Concealment Technique?

Qiao Laowu cursed loudly, "Damn it, slippery as an eel and hard to catch, and he can even conceal himself, it's like seeing a ghost."

"How the hell are we supposed to catch him?"

Fire Buddha and the others were caught completely off guard.

They had seen that the brat was young, skilled in movement techniques, and obviously had trained hard. Where could they have imagined that he had also learned concealment?

Instead of proper spells, he focused on these disgusting, obscure skills.

Truly a devious little thing!

"This isn't right..."

Yin Thunder Child thought of something and frowned, "This brat is at the Initial Stage of Foundation Establishment, even if he learned the Concealment Technique, how could he possibly fool us who are at the Late Stage of Foundation Establishment with our Divine Senses?"

"There's something strange about his Concealment Technique..."

"Is his Divine Sense too strong? Covering up his presence..." Qiao Laowu voiced doubtfully.

Yin Thunder Child scoffed, "What nonsense are you spouting? At the Initial Stage, a mere brat, how strong could his Divine Sense be?"

"At most twelve or thirteen Patterns, as if he can reach the heavens..."

Qiao Laowu retorted angrily, "Then you tell me, what's the reason?"

Yin Thunder Child's gaze sharpened, "It must be that his Concealment Technique is extremely refined."

"Bullshit!" Qiao Laowu cursed, "Hidden Elder-Second lived over two hundred years and only achieved mastery in his Concealment Technique. How old is this brat? How much experience could he possibly have to master it to such a degree?"

Yin Thunder Child's face turned red, yet he had no reply.

Ghost Face Sha, who had been silent until now, suddenly frowned, "This Concealment Technique feels eerily familiar. Could it be..."

Ghost Face Sha's face tensed, "Hidden Elder-Second's...Minor Five Elements Stealth Skill?"

The three were startled.

Fire Buddha's gaze also darkened.

"Impossible," Yin Thunder Child shook his head, "That was Hidden Elder-Second's forte, his means of survival. He guarded that skill very closely and never disclosed it to anyone..."

"Hidden Elder-Second went in, right..."

"The prison's as deep as the sea, he probably won't come out alive, likely to leave his life inside."

"Entering Taoist Prison, and with death imminent, Hidden Elder-Second would certainly not disclose it, for in any case it is a certain death..."

"What about before he was captured?"

"Before he was captured...what does that have to do with this brat? Could it be that this brat is the one who had Hidden Elder-Second captured?"

"Besides, Hidden Elder-Second was tough..."

"When he was captured and tortured severely, even when his teeth were smashed and swallowed, he didn't utter a sound nor did he hand over the spell of the Stealth Technique..."

"It wasn't easy to pry his mouth open."

"Moreover..."

Yin Thunder Child looked around the mountain forest again, a wary look in his eyes.

"A Concealment like this, silent and traceless, erasing traces while also hiding from Divine Sense, without leaving any mark..."

"Even Hidden Elder-Second couldn't achieve this extent."

Qiao Laowu said in frustration, "What should we do then? Search everywhere?"

"The mountain forest is so vast, how can we search..."

"Set fire to the mountain?"

"Are you seeking death? Attracting the dogs of the Taoist Court right now, how could we continue with our tasks?"

Qiao Laowu was furious, "Then what do we do?"

Yin Thunder Child frowned and turned to Fire Buddha, who was leading.

Fire Buddha's eyes were fierce, but then he calmed down, his expression turning benevolent, his voice gentle, "Let it be, Heaven values all life, let's spare his life for now. It's getting late, and we still have important matters to attend to..."

Qiao Laowu was dissatisfied.

He had been toyed with by Mo Hua, wishing he could slaughter Mo Hua right away.

But he dared not defy Fire Buddha, so he buried this hatred deep inside, thinking that the next time they met, he would chop the brat to pieces with a bloody machete.

The group turned around and left.

After walking a few dozen steps, Fire Buddha suddenly stopped.

Qiao Laowu and the others were slightly startled and looked toward Fire Buddha, who seemed to have remembered something, his expression puzzled.

"Big brother, what's the matter?"

Fire Buddha pondered for a moment, confused, "How exactly did that little cultivator recognize us?"

One person is fine, but how could he possibly recognize all four of them instantly?

Yin Thunder Child and the others also frowned.

"Could this brat be a small lackey of the Taoist Court?"

"The fools of the Taoist Court couldn't raise such a cunning lackey..."

"Could it be..."

Yin Thunder Child's expression turned serious, "That...Blood Covenant List, did it fall into his hands?"

Fire Buddha's eyes flickered with murderous intent, but he ultimately shook his head, "Shouldn't be such a coincidence..."

Such a secretive thing, how could it by chance fall into the hands of this unfamiliar little brat?

Moreover, it was sealed with Sealing Patterns and Secret Patterns.

The secrets within, not something a little cultivator could fathom...

"But this..."

Yin Thunder Child and the others were even more puzzled.

Fire Buddha subdued all emotion, adopting a compassionate demeanor, turned to look at the mountain forest where Mo Hua had vanished, his voice empty and smooth, "We need to focus on the important matters. As for this little cultivator..."

"We will meet again..."

Fire Buddha's gaze was intense, like Karmic Fire burning, filled with cold murderous intent.

"Next time we meet, I'll teach you, how exactly Fire Spells should be used..."

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He then solemnly turned around and went west.

Qiao Laowu and his group, too, stared at the forest like fierce gods and demons before they angrily turned to follow the Fire Buddha.

...

By then, Mo Hua's figure had already disappeared from the woods.

Mo Hua had early on made use of the concealing wood energy in the forest and the Minor Five Elements Stealth Skill to sneak away quietly.

The Fire Buddha was dangerous.

The other three were no pushovers either.

Since he could not overpower them, the natural course of action was to flee early to prevent further complications.

After employing the Concealment Technique and delving deep into the woods, and after winding through the mountain paths to ensure he had shaken off the Fire Buddha and his three companions, he made a large detour back to the gates of Luan Mountain City to wait for his senior brothers and sisters.

To be safe, he was still using the Concealment Technique.

About 30 minutes later at the bustling city gates, two graceful figures appeared.

It was Murong Caiyun, dressed in colorful garments with a dazzling appearance, and Hua Qianqian, in a frock adorned with hundreds of flowers, looking lively.

Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu followed right behind them.

Mo Hua let out a sigh of relief, withdrew the Concealment Technique, and waved to greet them, "Senior brothers, senior sisters!"

Seeing Mo Hua, Murong Caiyun approached with a hint of surprise and asked,

"Junior brother, what are you doing here? Weren't you drinking tea at the teahouse?"

"I ran into some bad people!" Mo Hua said with a solemn face.

Bad people?

Murong Caiyun and the others exchanged glances before looking at Mo Hua with concern, "Are you okay?"

"Yep." Mo Hua nodded, "They wanted to kill me, but I got away."

They wanted to kill Junior Brother Mo?

Ouyang Feng's gaze chilled, and Murong Caiyun and the others looked furious, "Where are those people?"

Mo Hua felt warmed by their concern but still shook his head,

"That group, there were four of them, at least two at the Foundation Establishment Late Stage, and the leader had learned Forbidden Techniques... very dangerous..."

Foundation Establishment Late Stage? Forbidden Techniques?!

Murong Caiyun's expression shifted slightly. She closely inspected Mo Hua again and noticed his clothes were a bit dirty but he was indeed unharmed, which allowed her to relax.

However, she was also surprised as she asked,

"And you managed to escape from them?"

Mo Hua responded, "I was lucky, and fortunately escaped..."

"Well then..."

Murong Caiyun didn't probe any further.

This junior brother of theirs had, if nothing else, a variety of peculiar lifesaving methods.

But it was still a bit absurd to have escaped alone from the encirclement of those at the Foundation Establishment Late Stage...

Ouyang Feng's expression was solemn as he pondered,

"With four of them, at least two at the Foundation Establishment Late Stage, we'll have no choice but to report this to the Taoist Court Officials. The Taoist Court in Luan Mountain City might not suffice..."

"It's safer to report to the Taoist Court of Qianxue State Boundary."

The others all nodded in agreement.

Mo Hua nodded repeatedly, too.

He was thinking the same thing.

If what Uncle Gu said was right, then this Fire Buddha, with his strong spells, was a formidable opponent for anyone below Second Grade.

Even if the Second Grade Taoist Court of Luan Mountain City dispatched someone to pursue, they would likely perish cleanly under the Meteor Fire Skill.

It was best to go back to the Qianxue State Boundary and report to the Fifth Grade Taoist Court.

Without delay, they hired a carriage and set off immediately. Half a day later, they arrived back at the Qianxue State Boundary, entered the grand doors of the Taoist Court, located the principal Enforcement Leader, and said they wanted to report a crime.

However, the procedure for "reporting a crime" was also rather complicated and slow.

Mo Hua briefly explained the whole story and even reported a long list of names of Sin Cultivators:

"Blood Woodcutter, Yin Thunder Child, Ghost Face Sha, Fire Buddha."

The Enforcement Leader thought Mo Hua was joking, standing dumbfounded for a while, puzzled,

"How do you know that those four go by these names?"

In a Fifth Grade state boundary so vast and filled with all kinds, hosting many Sin Cultivators and Evil Cultivators, he was unfamiliar with some of these names.

How could a minor cultivator recognize them?

"They were chatting, and I overheard," Mo Hua found an excuse on the spot.

The Enforcement Leader was skeptical.

It wasn't that he didn't believe it but he found it hard to believe, and was undecided for a moment, unsure of how to proceed.

Finding him dawdling, Mo Hua said, "Where is Supervisor Gu? I'll talk to him."

"You know Supervisor Gu?"

"Yes." Mo Hua nodded, "I have a good relationship with Uncle Gu!"

The Enforcement Leader looked incredulous.

That Supervisor Gu who was as stern as a "cold-faced judge," who looked down on everyone, could have a good relationship with a minor cultivator like you?

"Supervisor Gu is busy with official duties..."

"This is serious." Mo Hua spoke earnestly, then lowered his voice and looked at the Enforcement Leader, "Uncle Gu is petty. If you report this late, beware he might make things difficult for you..."

Hearing this, the Enforcement Leader was startled.

Whether the matter of the Sin Cultivators was true or false, he wasn't sure, but one thing the young cultivator hadn't got wrong,

Supervisor Gu indeed was petty!

And to dare to say that a petty Supervisor Gu was petty, aside from all else, at least showed an unusual courage and insight!

"Alright, I'll take you to see Supervisor Gu."

The Enforcement Leader readily agreed, then turned to remind, "But... don't say I was the one who brought you."

"Okay!"

So Murong Caiyun waited in the hall while the Enforcement Leader led Mo Hua through the imposing and majestic Taoist Court, full of lofty pavilions, turning left and right to a court office.

This seemed to be where Gu Changhuai worked his office duties for the Taoist Court.

Mo Hua had not been here before and memorized the route in his heart. Next time there was an issue, he could come directly to knock on Uncle Gu's door.

The Enforcement Leader only dared to bring Mo Hua to the door, then slinked away.

Mo Hua shook his head, it seems that Uncle Gu was not well-liked in the Taoist Court.

Everyone was afraid of him.

Chapter 944: Disaster Begins (3)

Unlike himself, he was so endearing.

The Taoist Court office outside had a doorbell, ancient in style. Mo Hua shook it lightly, and a crisp sound emanated.

Then from inside the room, a cold and haughty voice spoke, "Come in."

The door opened, and Mo Hua walked in.

The room was simple and tidy, with furnishings that were both exquisite and elegant. Gu Changhuai sat at the desk, focused and intent, writing something unbeknownst to others.

As Mo Hua entered, Gu Changhuai looked up, paused for a moment in surprise, then frowned.

"Why is it you again?"

He glanced around the room and, seeing only Mo Hua, asked,

"How did you find this place?"

The Court Official's office within the Taoist Court was a Supervisor's workplace. Though it wasn't exactly fortified or restricted, it was off-limits to outsiders.

Mo Hua said, "A passing, kind-hearted Enforcement Leader brought me here."

He was loyal and did not disclose the appearance of the Enforcement Leader to Gu Changhuai.

Gu Changhuai sighed, somewhat helpless, and continued to look down and write, saying indifferently, "Tell me, what's the matter this time?"

"I encountered the Fire Buddha!"

Gu Changhuai's hand shook, and a long streak of ink marred the document. He looked up, incredulously, at Mo Hua.

"The Fire... Buddha?"

"Yes!"

"How did you run into him?"

"I was drinking tea at the teahouse, and I ran into him."

Gu Changhuai paused in speechless astonishment.

The Fire Buddha wasn't some peddler rushing to do business with you; you have a sip of tea at a teahouse, and you can run into him...

Or are you saying, young man, you truly have the "law following the word," proclaiming you can meet the Fire Buddha and actually encounter him upon leaving home...

Seeing Gu Changhuai's disbelief, Mo Hua earnestly said, "It's true!"

Gu Changhuai didn't disbelieve it; he just found it too preposterous.

The Taoist Court had been searching for so long with no results for this Sin Cultivator, and you, a minor Sect Disciple, go for tea and claim to have stumbled upon him?

Are you a Minor Religious Con Man or what?

Besides...

Their Taoist Court also demanded evidence; even if Mo Hua was a disciple from one of the Eight Great Gates, Taixu Gate, it wasn't like whatever he said could be taken as fact.

The Taoist Court didn't have that many personnel to waste.

Gu Changhuai sighed, "How do you know the person you encountered is the Fire Buddha?"

Mo Hua said gravely,

"He was tall and large, with a kind face, and spoke little. Under his ordinary clothes, he wore a kasaya. His hair was tied up, but it was fake, concealing several fiery scars from vows..."

"Accompanying him were three others. A burly man skilled with a bloody hatchet, called 'Qiao Laowu'—he could be the Sin Cultivator known by the nickname 'Blood Woodcutter'..."

"Another was a skinny man with a grim complexion, probably 'Yin Thunder Child.' And another large man, with a fierce and intimidating face, I suppose could be 'Ghost Face Sha'..."

Gu Changhuai's casual demeanor vanished, growing more solemn with each word.

What Mo Hua described didn't sound fabricated at all.

These people were indeed the notorious Sin Cultivators from within the Second Grade State Border.

But...

Gu Changhuai's gaze became stern as he looked at Mo Hua, "Where did you learn about so many Sin Cultivators?"

What "Blood Woodcutter," "Yin Thunder Child," "Ghost Face Sha"—you mention them as easily as if they were treasures in your home.

As if these Sin Cultivators were items on your "menu"...

With righteous indignation, Mo Hua replied earnestly,

"Although my cultivation is not high, I have always remembered my Sect's teachings—to uphold the Righteous Dao, to slay demons and eradicate evil, to despise wickedness like an enemy, and to detest Sin Cultivators. I long to catch them all in one fell swoop!"

"So I like to gather information about Sin Cultivators in my spare time; that's how I know just a little bit more..."

Listening, Gu Changhuai felt a headache coming on.

What nonsense are you spouting, kid?

What "upholding the Righteous Dao," "hating evil as you would a foe"...

"Is that you're talking about really you?"

"Even lies need a draft."

But in his heart, he also faintly felt that the Fire Buddha's involvement was very likely true.

However, the evidence was still scarce...

Physical appearance, kasaya, the scar from a burn mark...

These could only prove that this person somewhat resembled the Fire Buddha. It's not like there were no other Buddhist believers in the world, cultivators with burnt scars donning kasayas.

Gu Changhuai frowned and said, "Are there any other clues proving he is the Fire Buddha?"

Mo Hua thought for a moment and said, "He is proficient in fire spells, and when he casts spells, two fierce flames ignite inside him, as if he had two hearts..."

Gu Changhuai shuddered inside and exclaimed, "He took action?"

"He did."

Gu Changhuai's gaze hardened as he looked at Mo Hua. "And you escaped?"

"Uh-huh," Mo Hua nodded, "As soon as he made his move, I ran."

"How did you escape?"

Mo Hua felt this question was rather redundant, "Of course, I ran with my legs..."

Gu Changhuai was somewhat frustrated.

"I meant to ask you..."

Gu Changhuai calmed his emotions, and as he was halfway through his reply, he suddenly paused, his gaze darkened, and he said no more.

There are indeed certain things that should not be asked excessively.

Especially the means by which a cultivator preserves their life...

It's just that Mo Hua, in his eyes, was becoming more and more enigmatic...

"Do you know where the Fire Buddha went?" Gu Changhuai asked solemnly.

Mo Hua shook his head, "I was lucky to get away, where would I dare to follow them..."

"Where did you encounter them?"

"On the outskirts of Luan Mountain City..."

Mo Hua thought a bit and then got more specific, "Between the mountain paths outside Luan Mountain City and Bishan City, there is a stretch of forest and a small tea house..."

"The mountain path junction between Luan Mountain City and Bishan City..."

Gu Changhuai nodded, "Alright, I got it. I'll go check it out myself with some people. If the situation turns out to be true..."

Gu Changhuai glanced at Mo Hua, "I will compensate you with Merit Points."

Mo Hua was thrilled inside, "Thank you, Uncle Gu."

Gu Changhuai nodded, his brows furrowed in deep thought.

"Uncle Gu," Mo Hua asked quietly, "what exactly does the Fire Buddha intend to do by suddenly showing up?"

Gu Changhuai shook his head, "I don't know, don't worry about it, and don't get involved anymore."

After saying this, Gu Changhuai put his documents in order and hurriedly left the room.

He also summoned several teams of Enforcement Leaders, dividing them to act separately as if to trace the Fire Buddha's whereabouts.

Mo Hua really wanted to join them, but without having to think, he knew Uncle Gu would definitely disagree, so he could only return to the Sect with his senior brothers and sisters.

After returning to the Sect, Mo Hua still had this matter on his mind.

How could they catch the Fire Buddha?

How could he obtain the cultivation spell for the "Meteor Fire Skill," a forbidden technique, from the Fire Buddha?

And the Fire Buddha, his face wearing compassion while slaughtering mercilessly...

What exactly did he intend to do by suddenly appearing?

With too few related clues, Mo Hua just couldn't understand it.

So he asked Senior Sister Murong for help, to gather some news.

He faintly felt that since the Fire Buddha had appeared, he must be up to something...

Several days later, Murong Caiyun found Mo Hua and hesitated for a moment before she spoke with a grave expression:

"The Xie family of Bishan City has been annihilated by the Fire Buddha."

"The Xie family has become a sea of fire; men, women, the elderly, children, all were burned to ash without survivors..."

Chapter 945: Annihilation

Mo Hua's pupils constricted.

Extermination?

The Xie family?

"The Xie family from Bishan City, isn't that..."

Murong Caiyun nodded, "Exactly, that day, when we went to capture the traitor from the Sever Gold Sect, we encountered that Second Grade Xie family."

Mo Hua remembered.

That day, he, Senior Sister Murong, and Senior Brother Feng took up a mission to go to Bishan City to capture a traitor from the Sever Gold Sect.

The traitor, reportedly having stolen something from the Xie family, vanished without a trace. The Xie family, unable to capture him, posted the mission to our sect.

To catch him, the Xie family sealed the city and searched the streets, going through a lot of trouble.

But surprisingly, they offered very few merit points.

And indeed, that traitor was not easy to capture.

He cultivated the Sever Gold Sect's "Escape Gold Technique" movement technique and was also skilled in "Disguise," disguising himself as a woman, hidden in a brothel disguised as a restaurant.

Capturing him took quite an effort.

The odd thing about this matter was...

The traitor's disguise technique was extremely exquisite, changing from man to woman, from old crone to dwarf. When we captured him, he appeared as a burly man.

We couldn't tell what his original appearance was.

Divine Sense could only detect the presence of Spiritual Power, not the fleshly appearance.

Thus, even though Mo Hua had strong Divine Sense, able to identify his Spiritual Power, he couldn't revert the fleshly appearance of the traitor outside his Spiritual Power.

Moreover, what exactly the traitor stole from the Xie family, Mo Hua didn't know.

Leaving Bishan City, Mo Hua vaguely felt that this matter was not yet over.

But he never expected it would start with the "extermination" of the Xie family...

Mo Hua asked softly,

"Senior Sister, why would the Fire Buddha exterminate the Xie family?"

Murong Caiyun shook her head, "I don't know, Taoist Court is still investigating, and the rumors outside are hardly credible."

"What kind of rumors?" Mo Hua asked curiously.

"All sorts..."

Murong Caiyun raised her fair finger, counting them out for Mo Hua...

"Some say the Xie family offended Fire Buddha in the past and accumulated grievances, and this act was his revenge..."

"Some say Fire Buddha collaborated with the Xie family, and they fell out over dividing the spoils, which led him to slaughter the entire Xie family..."

"Some say Fire Buddha was cultivating Evil Skills, using the entire Xie family as a sacrificial offering..."

"Others suggest the Family Head of the Xie family once took a woman whom Fire Buddha admired, leading him to become dispirited, leave secular life, and enter the demonic path. Now that his spells are accomplished, he sacrificed the lives of the Xie family to commemorate the woman he loved..."

"And more absurdly, some people, unable to discern right from wrong, say the Xie family deserved their extermination for their misdeeds, and Fire Buddha was carrying out heavenly justice..."

...

"Rumors rise with the wind, and nobody really knows what happened..." Murong Caiyun said, shaking her head.

Mo Hua frowned, then, with some sympathy, asked:

"Did they really... not leave a single survivor?"

Murong Caiyun sighed softly, "No..."

In addition to sympathy, Mo Hua had some doubts:

"Did the Xie family not resist?"

"The Xie family, after all, is a Second Grade family. There are quite a few cultivators in the family. Even if they couldn't win, they should have been able to hold them off for a while, perhaps allowing one or two to escape..."

Murong Caiyun's gaze grew intense, "I thought the same..."

"This matter is very suspicious..."

"The Xie family, weak as they are, is still one of the top Tao Cultivation families in Bishan City..."

"And Fire Buddha, strong as he may be, is just a Second Grade Sin Cultivator."

"Logically, he shouldn't have been able to annihilate an entire family of cultivators..."

"But the fact is..."

Murong Caiyun took a deep breath, her expression extremely solemn.

"The entire Xie family is dead..."

"According to Cultivators in Bishan City, that night, the entire Xie residence was engulfed in a sea of fire, blood lighting up half the sky. The cultivators of the Xie family, like evil ghosts in purgatory, were killed, dismembered, and then turned to ashes in the Karmic Fire..."

"In that endless Karmic Fire, Fire Buddha, clad in a kasaya, with fiery red eyes and chanting Buddhist scriptures, had an expression of indifferent compassion..."

Thinking of that scene, Mo Hua felt a chill in his heart.

Fire Buddha seemed much more dangerous than he had imagined...

And the power of that Meteor Fire Skill might also be much more terrifying than he had expected...

Mo Hua remembered "Qiao Laowu," "Yin Thunder Child," and other three and asked with confusion, "Fire Buddha... Did he have accomplices?"

Exterminating a family was something he might not have been able to accomplish alone.

"I don't know..."

Murong Caiyun shook her head, "The act of exterminating a family is extremely cruel and has a very negative impact. The Taoist Court will lock down the news, and no clues will be revealed to the public."

"Has there been any similar extermination before?" Mo Hua inquired.

Murong Caiyun thought for a while before speaking, "Very few... The last time was more than a hundred years ago, a small family was exterminated by Evil Cultivators..."

"The specifics are unclear, I only learned of it from my aunt."

"That time, because of the terrible nature of the act, some small families were panic-stricken, the upper echelons of the Taoist Court were furious, deploying a large number of Supervisors and Enforcement Leaders, searching day and night for those Evil Cultivators."

"Eventually, those Sin Cultivators were all captured, suffered death by Formation as a public warning..."

"Since then, there hasn't been much talk about exterminations."

"And now, it's the extermination of the Xie family by Fire Buddha..."

"This event will also shake people's hearts, so, until the Sin Cultivators are apprehended and the truth is clarified, the Taoist Court will not reveal any information."

Chapter 946: Annihilation (2)

"That..." Mo Hua whispered, "Will the Daoist Court issue a bounty to the Sects for the capture of Fire Buddha?"

"No," Murong Caiyun affirmed.

"It won't?" Mo Hua was slightly disappointed.

"Mhm."

Murong Caiyun nodded and explained:

"Such matters are too perilous..."

"The bounties issued by the Daoist Court typically target Sin Cultivators in the early to middle stages of Foundation Establishment. Although they are not weak, with the cooperation of Sect Disciples, they can be dealt with."

"But Fire Buddha is different. This sort of murderer, extremely dangerous Sin Cultivator, the Daoist Court dares not assign the task to the Sects."

"Sect Disciples mostly come from noble families; should anything go amiss, the Daoist Court will be held accountable."

"Moreover, in matters of sect extermination, the Daoist Court will keep it confidential for the sake of secrecy, and will not leak the news."

"At most, after Fire Buddha is caught and the dust has settled, they will issue some tasks for the Sect Disciples to help catch any escapees..."

"Oh..."

Mo Hua nodded thoughtfully, seemingly lost in contemplation.

Murong Caiyun glanced at Mo Hua and cautioned:

"Don't get any crooked ideas..."

Mo Hua was taken aback.

Murong Caiyun then asked, "Are you interested in Fire Buddha?"

"Kind of," Mo Hua answered vaguely.

It wasn't that he was interested in Fire Buddha per se, but rather in Fire Buddha's Forbidden Techniques.

Seeing a glint in Mo Hua's eyes, Murong Caiyun said helplessly:

"Pursuing Fire Buddha is a matter for the Daoist Court, and there is no room for our involvement."

"Besides, this matter is fraught with great danger. If you fall into Fire Buddha's hands, I fear the odds would not be in your favor. You might escape from Fire Buddha once, but not necessarily a second time..."

Murong Caiyun's face showed concern, "So, do not take risks and wade into this mire..."

After some serious thought, Mo Hua solemnly responded:

"Don't worry, Senior Sister!"

...

After Murong Caiyun left, Mo Hua pondered the matter of Fire Buddha.

Senior Sister was right, it was indeed too dangerous.

Forbidden Techniques are not easily acquired, nor can they be exchanged for Merit Points.

Moreover, Fire Buddha's Meteor Fire Skill is a Fire Forbidden Skill, with two flames burning fiercely within, like a heart.

This could very well be key to his research in Fireball collisions, Skill Pattern breakdown, and Spiritual Power Fusion.

If there was a chance, he absolutely had to get his hands on the Meteor Fire Skill!

Once missed, who knew when the next opportunity would arise.

But he must be extremely careful.

To preserve his own life.

He still had to provide for his aging parents!

Mo Hua frowned and began to ponder earnestly:

"How can I obtain the spell for Meteor Fire Skill?"

Catch Fire Buddha before the Daoist Court does?

Once the Daoist Court captures Fire Buddha, even if he confesses the spell for Meteor Fire Skill, it would be impossible for Mo Hua to obtain such a Forbidden Technique.

The Daoist Court wouldn't hand over a dangerous Forbidden Technique to a junior disciple from the Taixu Gate.

Besides, given Fire Buddha's modus operandi, he'd probably prefer to "perish together with his enemy" rather than betray the Forbidden Technique.

As soon as Fire Buddha was captured, the Fire Forbidden Skill would go to the grave with him.

"Catch Fire Buddha before the Daoist Court, or simply kill him and search his body?"

How to kill him?

Do it alone?

Mo Hua thought it over and shook his head reluctantly.

"That's unlikely..."

Fire Buddha was too alert, and his personal cultivation, Spells, and methods were all too strong.

Furthermore, he had Sin Cultivators like Yin Thunder Child, Blood Woodcutter, and Ghost Face Sha as henchmen.

Those henchmen were not easy to handle either.

To kill by himself, he would probably have to meticulously prepare, set an ambush, and take down an entire First Grade Large Formation to slay Fire Buddha, who was at the late stage of Foundation Establishment.

But where could he find a First Grade Large Formation to dismantle?

Besides, with such a huge cost to dismantle a First Grade Large Formation, killing Fire Buddha seemed like a wasteful extravagance.

And Fire Buddha was cautious. Even with a trap set, it was uncertain if he would fall into it.

So, it had to be done by someone else...

He would assist from the side, giving a little help.

Then, who could be relied upon?

Mo Hua stroked his chin, thinking...

Senior Sister Murong and Senior Brother Feng, they definitely wouldn't do.

His Senior Brothers and Sisters were only at the Middle Stage of Foundation Building, and although they were among the chosen of the Eight Great Gates, they were still far from comparing to Fire Buddha who was at the Late Stage of Foundation Establishment and capable of mass murder.

Whether they could win or not was another issue.

If they failed, they might even lose their lives.

Senior Sister Murong cared for him and didn't want him to take risks.

Similarly, he did not want his Senior Brothers and Sisters, who had helped him a great deal, to face such deadly peril.

They didn't have as many life-saving methods as he did.

Who else was there?

After much thought, Mo Hua could only think of one person who might be just adequate for helping dispose of Fire Buddha.

That was Uncle Gu, Gu Changhuai...

Golden Core Realm cultivation, Dao Court Canon Supervisor.

The identity fit and the cultivation was sufficient.

Moreover, Uncle Gu seemed to have always been intent on bringing Fire Buddha to justice.

But the problem lay right there; as a member of the Daoist Court, even if he captured Fire Buddha and extracted the Secret Manual of the Meteor Fire Skill, publicly or privately, it was highly unlikely he would give it to Mo Hua.

Putting himself in the shoes of "Uncle Gu," Mo Hua wouldn't hand over the Meteor Fire Skill to an unknown "Mo Hua" either.

In Uncle Gu's eyes, he was already a "dangerous" element.

It was impossible for him to let a small cultivator already deemed "dangerous" to learn an even more "dangerous" Forbidden Technique...

But after much contemplation, Mo Hua had no other options.

Uncle Gu was the only choice.