

## The Quest 99

Chapter 99: Expressing Gratitude

When Zhou Cheng heard that Mo Shan only requested five spirit stones, he couldn't help but open his mouth wide, then earnestly said:

"Brother Mo, this can't be right. How about I give you five more?"

He wanted to give more, but he truly had no more spirit stones.

He had discreetly inquired in Tongxian City; to commission an Iron Armor Array, array masters generally charged fifty spirit stones, and those newly initiated, lacking confidence in their own skills, would ask for thirty—that was already the lowest rate.

Returning home last night, his mind was uneasy for a long time, unsure of how much Mo Shan would ask for. Today, when he asked, Mo Shan only wanted five spirit stones, which made him feel quite uneasy.

Mo Shan patted his shoulder, "Keep the extra spirit stones, and buy some quality spirit ink instead; it's all for the kids, no need to refuse."

Zhou Cheng felt grateful and didn't say more.

That afternoon, he took the time to buy some Gold Essence Spirit Ink and personally delivered it, along with an armor made from rattan, to Mo Hua's house. Mo Hua completed the Iron Armor Array in less than an hour, then handed the rattan armor over to Mo Shan.

This earned him five spirit stones and half a bottle of unused Gold Essence Spirit Ink.

Mo Hua thought this business deal was quite acceptable.

"Should I tell others that I'm now an array master, and let them come to me for arrays?" Mo Hua thought, then shook his head.

He was still young, and being too conspicuous was not advisable. He remembered what Mr. Zhuang had once said: cultivators should keep a low profile, as the nail that sticks out gets hammered down,

and a pig gets slaughtered when it's fat. The cultivation world was filled with too many dangers, and with Mo Hua's current cultivation level and experience, he was not ready to face them all.

Moreover, his skill in array crafting was still far from sufficient; there was much more to learn in the art of arrays. He couldn't afford to be distracted by short-term profits at the expense of his true pursuit of the Dao.

That matter was thus settled. The next day, the demon hunter who had asked Mo Hua to craft the array unexpectedly showed up at his door, accompanied by a naively honest-looking young man.

"Da Ping, quickly thank Uncle Mo and Brother Mo."

The young man bowed respectfully, "Thank you, Uncle Mo, thank you, Brother Mo!"

Mo Shan then introduced him: "This is your Uncle Zhou Cheng, his given name is Cheng, and this is his younger son, Zhou Da Ping. That array was commissioned by your Uncle Zhou Cheng."

"Hello, Uncle Zhou, hello, Brother Da Ping!"

"Hello, hello," Zhou Cheng laughed heartily, "No need to be so formal, just call him Da Ping."

Zhou Da Ping scratched his head, "Just call me Da Ping."

Zhou Cheng brought a variety of items, including some drinks, vegetables, and fruits, which were fine, but the most valuable was a bottle of spirit ink.

Mo Hua only took five spirit stones for his work on the array. Zhou Cheng originally felt uneasy about this, but after receiving the rattan armor, he saw that the array patterns were meticulous and the strokes were elegant, shimmering with a faint golden color.

Though he was not knowledgeable about arrays, he could tell at a glance that the craftsmanship was expertly done and would not have been possible without significant effort.

Zhou Cheng originally thought that, given Mo Hua's young age, the array would barely be functional. Now, seeing the quality, he realized it was comparable to those crafted by array masters in Tongxian City who had been practicing for twenty to thirty years.

Zhou Cheng also tested the armor's effectiveness; it exceeded his expectations significantly. In critical situations, it might indeed save his son's life.

Feeling even more indebted, he scraped together more spirit stones and personally went to express his thanks.

Mo Shan adamantly refused, "Keep these items for yourself; earning spirit stones isn't easy."

But no matter what Mo Shan said, Zhou Cheng was determined to give the gifts.

The two men thus stood in a deadlock, looking like it could last all night.

Mo Hua finally said, "Dad, Uncle Zhou is genuinely kind-hearted, please accept it. If he needs any arrays in the future, he can just come to us."

Zhou Cheng was overjoyed, "Brother Mo speaks truly; please don't refuse."

Mo Shan, with no other choice, reluctantly accepted.

Afterwards, Zhou Da Ping went hunting demons in the mountains, wearing the rattan armor Mo Hua had enchanted. He was injured a few times, but the armor, being sturdy, prevented serious harm.

Knowing this, Zhou Cheng finally breathed a sigh of relief

, glad that all his efforts weren't in vain. Just the spirit stones saved from treating injuries were substantial, not to mention the potential life-saving ability of the array on the armor in real danger.

As an independent cultivator, life was hard; he had raised his son through great hardship. If his son lost his life hunting demons, it would be truly devastating.

As a veteran demon hunter, Zhou Cheng knew that every year, young cultivators lost their lives to demons.

Every time he thought of this, Zhou Cheng was profoundly grateful to Mo Hua, but being poor, he could only offer words of appreciation to express his feelings.

From then on, he praised Mo Hua wherever he went, saying that although Mo Hua was young, his array crafting was excellent. After Mo Hua had enchanted the rattan armor, it was impervious to blades and spears, and his son no longer feared going into the mountains to hunt demons.

His words were a bit exaggerated and somewhat embellished, but they were well-received by those who loved a good story.

A young array master in his early teens was met with skepticism by some, but others believed it.

Every few days, someone would invite Mo Shan for a meal or a drink, then indirectly inquire whether his son truly could craft arrays and whether the enchanted rattan armors were indeed impervious to blades and spears.

Mo Shan, feeling helpless, would explain: "My son can indeed craft arrays, but even with the array, the rattan armor isn't completely impervious to blades and spears; it's just tougher than before."

"I thought so; if it were truly impervious, that would be something else."

"I've seen that rattan armor; with the array, it's definitely tougher, but it's still not quite there. It's usable for mid-stage Qi cultivation, but not for the later stages. It can't withstand a swipe from a high-grade demon."

"Usable for mid-stage Qi cultivation?" someone asked.

"Yes, it's quite effective, at least in protecting vital areas."

"Then I need to get one for my son; every time he goes into the mountains, I'm on tenterhooks. When I was young, I wasn't nearly as nervous going up there. I'm tough, a demon biting me doesn't scare me, but I'm terrified of those beasts biting my son. One wrong move and I might be burning paper for him before he has a chance to do the same for me..." a burly man said with a rueful smile.

"After all, it's just mid-stage Qi cultivation gear, not that useful..." another person disdainfully remarked.

"You don't have a son, of course it's not useful for you, but it's different for me, I have three sons! Mo Shan, we've been friends for so many years, you've got to let your son make a few for me, let's say... three... no, six, I need a few spares..."

"Count me in as well."

"And I want one too..."

"You don't even have a son, what do you need it for?"

The man retorted, "I don't now, but who says I can't have one in the future?"

"That's not certain."

"Stop talking nonsense; if he wants it, let him have it. Maybe he has a few illegitimate children out there."

"You bastard, what are you talking about!"

Several of them, drunk, started fighting.

Mo Shan could only laugh and cry at the absurdity of it all.