

Transmigrated into a Grandpa, Embracing the Laid-Back Life

Chapter 293: Old Stories from the Camp Market

[1,441 words]

On the evening of the third day, Su Ming returned to the Spirit Pivot Hall carrying a jade slip densely carved with data.

"Elder Mo, this disciple has a solution."

Su Ming wasted no time on pleasantries, directly sketching a new formation diagram in the air.

He hadn't altered any of the core runes of that old hub, not even touching the outer shell.

He had simply connected a strange device, only the size of a palm, in parallel downstream of the hub, which was the necessary path for the spiritual energy's return flow.

The interior of that device was carved with dense, intricate spiral patterns, like a miniature whirlpool.

"What is this?" Elder Mo narrowed his eyes.

"This disciple calls it a 'Spirit Vortex Stabilizing Stone'," Su Ming pointed at the whirlpool. "Since the main hub cannot withstand excessive spiritual pressure impacts, we add a 'force dissipation point' behind it. When the spiritual pressure becomes too high, the excess spiritual energy will automatically flow into this vortex, where its kinetic energy is consumed through high-speed rotation, becoming docile, before flowing back into the main channel."

"It's like... digging a reservoir beside a turbulent river channel."

Elder Mo stared at the diagram for a long time without speaking.

His fingers tapped lightly on the table, the rhythm growing faster and faster. As a master who had immersed himself in the path of formations for a century, he saw the brilliance of this solution at a glance—extremely low risk, extremely low cost, not touching the foundation, yet cleverly resolving the stubborn ailment.

"Go and test it." Elder Mo's voice carried a barely perceptible tremor.

Half an hour later.

When that rather unremarkable "Spirit Vortex Stabilizing Stone" was installed in place and the formation began operating again, the heavy, rumbling sound from the old hub gradually became soft and smooth.

On the nearby spiritual pressure monitor, the needle that had long hovered near the red line steadily dropped back into the safe zone.

Efficiency increased by twenty percent, risk almost reduced to zero.

Elder Mo stood before the formation hub, reaching out to stroke the cold metal shell, sensing the smooth flow of spiritual energy within. After a long while, he let out a deep sigh.

"The younger generation is truly formidable."

"Elder Mo praises me too highly. This disciple merely used a clever trick," Su Ming said, bowing his head.

"A clever trick?" Elder Mo shook his head, his expression turning solemn. "Do you know what the highest realm of the formation path is?"

Su Ming thought for a moment, then tentatively offered, "Act according to the momentum, guide the beneficial and transform the harmful?"

"That is merely technique, not the true path."

Elder Mo clasped his hands behind his back, his gaze piercing through the dome of the Spirit Pivot Hall as if looking into the endless void. "This old man has devoted a lifetime of study and only glimpsed the surface. The true path of formations is: 'See the formation as a long river, do not seek its source, but observe its momentum. Knowing its momentum, one can then guide its benefits and control its harms.'"

"Do not seek its source, but observe its momentum..." Su Ming murmured the words, feeling as if a bolt of lightning had flashed through his mind.

All along, whether repairing formation plates or deciphering broken formations, he had been trying to trace the origins and destinations of every line, attempting to fix every error.

But Elder Mo's words had opened a new door for him.

Since this formation was like a surging river, since all things in this world had their own momentum, why must one stubbornly obsess over the clarity or turbidity of the source? As long as one could see the direction of its flow, a gentle push at the critical point could borrow force to strike force, transforming decay into wonder.

Within the Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu was also uncharacteristically silent for a moment before chuckling lightly. "This old man has some substance. Disciple, you must carve these words into your bones. This is the highest form of the 'Way of Survival'—not fighting head-on against the great momentum, but riding on its neck."

Su Ming felt his Spiritual Platform become utterly clear. The understanding of formations that had been stuck at a bottleneck shattered completely in this moment.

Seeing the gradually brightening light in Su Ming's eyes, Elder Mo nodded with satisfaction.

Elder Mo paused, then said, "For this improvement, five thousand Military Merit will be recorded."

Su Ming took a deep breath and saluted solemnly. "Thank you for Elder Mo's guidance."

When he walked out of the Spirit Pivot Hall, the wind and snow outside seemed to have lessened somewhat. Su Ming gripped the cold token in his hand, yet his heart was burning. He knew that from this moment on, at Iron Wall Pass, he was no longer just a transient visitor doing repairs, but had truly obtained a ticket to the higher echelons.

"Five thousand Military Merit..." Lin Yu rubbed his hands together within the Consciousness Sea. "One step closer to the Earth Vein Spirit Milk. But disciple, that 'sudden enlightenment' expression you just put on was quite well-acted. Even I almost believed it."

A slight smile touched the corner of Su Ming's mouth. He gathered his sleeves and quickly merged into the wind and snow.

"Master, that wasn't an act."

"I truly understood."

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There was no true marketplace within Iron Wall Pass, only this wind-sheltered slope located behind the side of the supply camp, which cultivators had tacitly trampled into a trading ground.

There were no shouts here, only hushed conversations and the occasional clang of metal.

The cold wind whipped sand and grit against the worn tent cloth, producing crisp crackling sounds. The stalls were mostly crude, often just an animal skin spread on the ground, and the items displayed carried a distinct air of bloodshed—broken fragments of magic swords, shriveled eyeballs of unknown demon beasts, inner armor that hadn't yet been cleaned.

Here, while spirit stones were still hard currency, they were far less sought-after than life-preserving talismans and elixirs.

Su Ming tightened his gray robe around himself, lowering his head as he moved through the crowd.

He had just traded twenty self-made "Water Shield Talismans" with a Pill Cauldron Peak disciple attached to the army for three blank medium-grade formation plates.

He continued forward, his gaze sweeping over the various stalls.

Reaching a corner, an utterly inconspicuous stall caught his attention.

The stall owner was an old man with hair and beard as messy as withered grass. His left arm was severed, the empty sleeve fluttering in the wind. He hadn't displayed any magical implements or elixirs in front of him, only a pile of yellowed, brittle old papers and a few broken stone slab rubbings.

Most of the surrounding cultivators ignored it entirely. Occasionally, someone would stop, flip through a couple of items, then toss them down disdainfully, muttering "old, outdated junk."

But Su Ming stopped.

"Young man, if you're not buying, don't rummage around. The paper is brittle, can't take the rough handling." The old man lifted his eyelids, his murky eyes exuding a cold, unwelcoming aura.

Su Ming crouched down, gently picking up a stone slab rubbing.

The patterns on the rubbing were already blurred and indistinct, but one could vaguely make out that it was an ancient type of prospecting formation line. The lines were bold and rugged, completely different from the refined style popular nowadays.

"What formation is this?" Su Ming asked in a low voice, his fingertips tracing the intermittent lines.

The old man's half-closed eyes snapped open, a flash of sharpness piercing through the murkiness before quickly dimming again. He scoffed, "Some eye you have. Young people these days only know how to use ready-made formation plates. Few recognize these clumsy methods passed down from the ancestors."

"Clumsy methods aren't necessarily useless." Su Ming put down the rubbing, his gaze falling on a sheepskin scroll tied with animal sinew beside it. "This scroll is also...?"

"That's a prospecting field journal. Not sold separately." The old man waved his lone arm impatiently, but his body suddenly began to tremble uncontrollably. A rasping, wheezing sound like a bellows came from his throat, and his face instantly turned a purplish-red.

This was an old ailment left by "soul oscillation," a common occupational disease among many old formation masters.

Seeing this, Su Ming flicked his wrist, and a small oil paper package appeared in his palm.

Gently peeling back a corner, a clear, elegant fragrance instantly spread through the air, thick with the smells of sweat and blood.

It was his "Heart-Clearing Incense Cake," made primarily from Silver-Spotted Heart-Clearing Orchids, remarkably effective for soothing the soul.

The old man's wheezing abruptly stopped.

His nose twitched twice, his gaze fixed intently on the oil paper package in Su Ming's hand. His Adam's apple bobbed with difficulty. "This is... high-grade Soul-Calming Incense?"

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