

Crossing to the Future, it's Not Easy to Be a Man

Chapter 13: Car or Plane?

Recently, Lan Luofeng had been mired in a conflicted sense of joy. These days, her baby was no longer visiting the sandman every time she wasn't eating.

However, before she could be happy about that for long, her conflict began — her baby had somehow become fascinated with a strange curled position.

Now, there was nothing wrong with the curled position ... but whenever she saw her baby's two little feet used as bolsters hugged between her little hands against her little head, Lan Luofeng couldn't help but twitch internally and feel a phantom pain in her bones — this position was definitely not something her old bones could achieve.

If it wasn't for the fact that Ling Lan was smiling like an idiot the whole time, so she knew that the position was not difficult at all for babies, she really would have rescued those little feet from those plump little hands.

Luckily Ling Lan did not know what Lan Luofeng was thinking about, or else she would have burst out in tears. This position was not as easy as her mum thought it was. Even for a baby's body, getting into this position was not an easy feat. Sadder still, this was just the easiest first stance — the following eight stances were even more difficult, with each consecutive stance being harder than the stance before it. Right now, Ling Lan really had no idea whether she could really complete learning the nine stances within a year.

She recalled Instructor Number Nine's warning. If she could not master the nine stances in a year, there would be punishment. Of course, to balance it out, if she finished learning the stances within the time limit, there would be a reward — the earlier she finished before the deadline, the better the reward.

In the mind-space, Ling Lan had felt that doing the nine stances was pretty easy, and so had been surprised when Instructor Number Nine had given her a one year deadline. She had arrogantly believed then that she would be able to accomplish the task within a month. Now, she finally realised that she had underestimated the courses of the learning space ... they were truly insane.

Actually, the difficulty was not in getting into the position itself, but rather in achieving perfect accuracy. Each and every muscular curvature and angle must be pin-point precise. These few days, Ling Lan had been practising the first stance over and over again, but she still hadn't been able to achieve the most accurate position in one move. Rather, she had to slowly tweak her position to get it right. This did not fulfil her

instructor's expectations, which was to get into the most accurate position within one second.

However, Ling Lan was not anxious. She continued her routine of practising the curled position with her physical body when awake, and practising with her spiritual self in the mind-space when asleep. Although practising in the mind-space had no direct impact on her body, it allowed her to hone her intuition — in other words, it gave her the ability to assess whether she had achieved the ideal position within a split second.

Where there's a will, there's a way. After over two months, just as she was about to turn nine-months old, she managed to achieve the state where her body would react the second her will moved. Within the blink of an eye, she could get into the ideal position. This officially marked Ling Lan's mastery of the first stance.

Just as Ling Lan was about to happily begin practising the second stance, some wonderful news brought a halt to Ling Lan's practice. Her mother had finally decided to be charitable and take her out for a day of shopping ...

In reality, rich and noble families with deep foundations like the Ling family would usually have a chamberlain to handle everything within the household. As the mistress, Lan Luofeng had no need whatsoever to go out to purchase anything personally. However, Lan Luofeng felt that since Ling Lan had already started to recognise people and notice objects, it was necessary for her to go out so she could explore more of her surroundings.

Although Chamberlain Ling Qin felt that the outing was still a little too premature, he would never go against Lan Luofeng's decisions, and so had quickly made the appropriate arrangements.

As a result, Ling Lan stepped out of the house for the first time to see what the world 10000 years later was like.

Over the grand hall and out the door, Ling Lan was immediately greeted by a refreshing scent. A large expanse of grass appeared before her eyes ...

That's right, outside the front door wasn't a marble staircase as Ling Lan half-expected, or even a wide and solid cement road — instead, there was a whole field of verdant grass stretching out into the distance. Ling Lan actually couldn't see the end of it, which just went to show how large the field really was. How large really was her family home?

Ling Lan didn't even have time to get over her awe before a car flew in from a distance. That's right, flew. This thing was like a car yet unlike a car. Its design was very much like the roadsters of Ling Lan's time. There was no one inside the vehicle, and the two seats were such that one was in front of the other. There was no steering wheel, and there were no such things as wheels below it, just a flat surface.

Could this be an unmanned car or plane? Please forgive Ling Lan for her uncertain phrasing — she was unsure what to call the vehicle although she was instinctively leaning towards it being a car.

That thing was hovering in the air, about 3 metres off the ground, but as it got closer to Ling Lan's group, the vehicle descended lower and lower. By the time it stopped in front of Ling Lan, its height had dropped to just 50 centimetres above the ground, a convenient height for embarking and disembarking.

The car doors opened automatically, greatly surprising an unprepared Ling Lan. Lan Luofeng and Ling Qin's attention was currently not on Ling Lan however, so they did not notice Ling Lan's strange change of expression.

"Mistress, please get into the car!" said Ling Qin respectfully.

Into the car? Bingo! 10000 years later, the common transportation vehicle was still the car, so Ling Lan did not have to worry that she would say something wrong by accident in the future.

Holding Ling Lan in her arms, Lan Luofeng moved directly to the back seat, while Ling Qin sat in the front seat.

Ling Qin ordered, "Ling-Zero-Seven 1, enter fully-sealed mode."

A synthesised voice rang out immediately in response, "Order acknowledged by Ling-Zero-Seven." Following this, the four doors swung shut and a transparent cover appeared to close over the previously open top section, turning the vehicle into a fully-sealed car. (At this very moment, within the mind-space, a napping Little Four was jolted awake. It felt like a brother was close by ...)

The synthesised voice soon rang out again, "Please select your destination."

This time Ling Qin did not answer, but turned back to look inquiringly at Lan Luofeng. After some thought, for safety reasons, Lan Luofeng decided to go to a classic commercial building which only catered to qualified members.

After receiving the destination, the transport vehicle Ling-Zero-Seven was soon off. Perhaps it was due to the fact that the car was hovering, but there was almost no sense of movement. If it weren't for the fact that the scenery outside was speeding by, Ling Lan would have thought that she was only enclosed in a small room.

The car gradually arrived at the busy city centre, giving Ling Lan the first glimpse of traffic. Ling Lan saw many other similar cars driving around theirs. At first, she had thought that all the cars drove at the same height, but in reality, this was not the case. On the same vertical axis, Ling Lan saw four different cars flying in the same direction at different heights, moving together at the same pace.

Ling Lan was awed yet puzzled by this. She wondered how these cars calibrated their heights — were they not afraid of accidents happening?

Her doubt was quickly cleared up, however, when Ling-Zero-Seven said, “Hover car on a collision course detected. Current distance 3 kilometres. Adjustment signal sent ...”

It looked like the hover cars operated under a central program and also had to possess a certain level of intelligence — enough for them to discover problems pre-emptively, and to take preventive action to avoid collisions.

As expected, Ling-Zero-Seven’s next words showed that the two cars had arrived at an agreement. “Descending one metre! Time for descent will be in three seconds, please watch out.”

In three seconds, their hover car really descended one metre, while the approaching hover car ascended by over a metre. Just like that, the two cars brushed by each other, and the distance between the two cars when they had shifted tracks ...

Well. Ling Lan’s little heart had skipped a beat — that was too goddamn close! Had there even been 10 centimetres between the two cars?!

However, looking at the calm and unconcerned faces of her mother and Chamberlain Ling Qin, Ling Lan knew that this distance must be pretty normal here. It looked like she still had some adapting to do.