

Chapter 24 - Searching for the Spiritual Ginseng

Huang Binghu knew that he had not taken him aback enough psychologically, so he added, "Your blade style and fist style requires you to be unencumbered, so you probably practise external martial arts. These types of martial arts lead to quick results. However, if you don't have superior internal martial arts technique supporting you, allowing you to go from external to internal and thus achieving dual practices, it'll probably be difficult for you to become a first-rate master. Naturally, becoming an innate master will be impossible."

"First-rate master? What rate am I? And what are innate masters about?"

Li Qingshan asked a string of questions, which actually convinced Huang Binghu slightly that his moves all came from a great master who happened to pass by. If he had a proper master, it was impossible for him to not know this. "Qingshan, with your skill right now, you haven't even reached third-rate."

"Then that's just mediocre!"

"You were able to defeat those ginseng foragers, so you're already an adept. You're still young, so there's no need to be too dejected. As long as you practise properly and become a third-rate master, you'll be able to roam through an entire region unopposed. With your talent, Qingshan, it won't be an issue for you to reach such a level."

Huang Binghu was afraid of going too far and dampening his determination, so he comforted Li Qingshan out of goodwill. However, he had no idea that the target the black ox had given Li Qingshan in the first place was to be able to roam through the entire world unopposed. The so-called internal martial arts he mentioned was even more of a joke.

"It's even more mysterious for innate masters. They have to open up all the meridians in their bodies first and pass through the entry hall of life and death, converting their inner force into true qi. This true qi can flow through their bodies without any inhibitions anymore. Once true qi becomes powerful enough, it can even be freely projected out of one's body to injure others."

Hold on. I think the qi in my body right now can move about uninhibited. However, I can't project it out of my body. It must be because it's too weak.

Li Qingshan suddenly understood that right from the beginning, his starting line was different from other normal people. The path he took was something regular practitioners of martial arts could not imagine.

"Hunting chief, I will definitely become an innate master."

Huang Binghu praised him for his aspiration, but he did not believe it at all. Innate master? When he heard of this the first time, he also held the same, noble aspiration, but how was it that easy?

It was as if he saw himself from the past. "If you really can become an innate master, I'll give you the position of hunting chief." This was not a blind promise. He believed that even if Li Qingshan could become an innate master, it would take him a few decades. Never did he think that the person right in front of him had already become a so-called 'innate master'.

Li Qingshan noticed something. "Hunting chief, you don't seem to be too well."

"I was born frail, and the physician originally said that I would not last for very long. However, my mother refused to believe it, managing to raise me after tremendous effort. I refused to believe that I was worse than the other kids in the village, so I forced myself to practise martial arts. However, my foundation's were still weak at the end of the day. I've often been in pain in the past few years, so I probably don't have much time left."

Li Qingshan truly admired the man in front of him slightly. Even though he did not have any great abilities or techniques, his will power and determination were enough for Li Qingshan to hold him as a role model.

"Don't worry, hunting chief. We just have to find the spiritual ginseng, and you'll definitely be cured."

"Yep. Although it's an almost non-existent possibility, it's still a chance for me. We have to take advantage of how the Ginseng King village has been weakened to enter the mountains to search today. Do you want to come?"

"My wounds have yet to recover completely, so I probably won't be able to lend any help." Of course, Li Qingshan would not agree. Huang Binghu had only put it like that. It was impossible for Li Qingshan to actually trust him.

"Alright. Once you're healed, we can clash again. I will arrange for people to teach you archery." Huang Binghu patted his shoulder.

After Huang Binghu left, Li Qingshan immediately questioned the black ox.

The black ox said with contempt, "What first-rate second-rate? Do even ants have to establish who's stronger or weaker? Though, if you can get your hands on that spiritual ginseng, it'll be highly beneficial to your cultivation."

Li Qingshan could only look at it helplessly.

"I am very relieved that you can learn hunting and stop relying on me. I can finally rest up. From today onwards, you better take care of yourself!"

As expected, the black ox stuck to his words and would never help him out. Li Qingshan had not properly planned on relying on him either. As for stealing from the jaws of the two villages, he felt even less confident. He would probably just lose his life for nothing, so he sighed a few times and discarded the thought. He chewed up another ginseng and began to meditate, only going to sleep deep in the night.

A wisp-like ghost rose up from the wooden tablet, turning into a child with delicate facial features. He glanced at Li Qingshan before seemingly making up his mind, entering the mountains with the night breeze as he opened and closed his pale lips.

If someone skilled at lip-reading were present, they would be able to tell that he was muttering 'spiritual ginseng'.

The black ox opened its eyes and glanced at him before closing them again. Xiao An flew out of the Drawn Reins village and into the stretch of mountains. He moved through the forest freely, but he would have to avoid stronger mountain winds from time to time. He saw a speck of firelight in the distance and only saw hunters from the Drawn Reins village resting by a bonfire with their weapons. Huang Binghu

was discussing battle tactics with a few hunters quietly. Xiao An circled around them a few times and listened for a while before riding the wind to Bailao peak. He carefully inspected every stream and rock he passed by. Of course, he would get carried by some small animals he came across from time to time and lose focus of his original objective. However, he would always return to the objective very quickly, continuing to search. Only a single thought existed in his head, I must, must find the spiritual ginseng. I can help him that way. Early in the morning, the ginseng foragers launched a night attack, but they were repelled by the prepared Huang Binghu. Neither of them found the spiritual ginseng. It was the same for Xiao An too. Using the time before the sun had risen, he returned to the village exhausted, basically rather tired of it all. The minds of children would always wander, never able to remain focused for long. Moreover, such work was simply too lonely for him. He had already experienced enough loneliness. However, when he saw Li Qingshan's sleeping face, new motivation suddenly flowed through him again. He clenched his fist and dove into the wooden tablet, going to sleep.

Early in the morning, a stern-looking old hunter woke up Li Qingshan. "The hunting chief sent me to teach you archery!"

Li Qingshan noticed that his left leg was slightly lame, but he only glanced at it from the corner of his eye to remain polite. However, he never thought the old hunter would notice it and say nonchalantly, "It was mauled by a wolf. Come with me!"

On the empty land to the west of the village, a group of half-grown children were already waiting. The older ones were around the same age as Li Qingshan, while the younger ones still had snot running down their noses. However, every single one of them carried a hunting bow on their backs. They all looked at Li Qingshan rather warily with gazes of hostility.

"Grandpa Zang, will he be with us?"

Grandpa Zang nodded slightly and did not try to explain anything. He directly said, "Draw your bows!"

The group of children immediately stopped talking. They drew their hunting bows and aimed at the target in the distance. Grandpa Zang corrected their forms one by one and explained the essentials of archery, leaving Li Qingshan standing on one side.

Li Qingshan did not find it boring. Instead, he listened carefully. This continued for an hour before grandpa Zang ordered everyone to rest. He finally spoke to Li Qingshan, "Go train your strength first!" He pointed at the stone dumbbells on the side.

Li Qingshan went over and grabbed the stone dumbbells. Compared to a teacher like the black ox who did not even care for his safety, the level of dismissal right now was within a range he could tolerate.

Grandpa Zang was rather surprised. He did not like Li Qingshan, but he could not disobey Huang Binghu's orders. As such, he purposefully gave Li Qingshan the cold shoulder, basically to train his temperament. He never expected Li Qingshan to show no anger at all, completely different from what he had originally expected. He thought to himself, No wonder the hunting chief favours him so much!

"Kid, where are you from?" The group of kids could not help but approach him in a provoking manner.

"The Crouching Ox village."

“Hmph, you’re just a farmer, but you do have some ox-like strength. I heard you brought an ox with you. We don’t need cows here, so let’s butcher it!”

Li Qingshan could not stoop to their level and pick a fight with them, but he could not let them simply insult him either. His arms suddenly erupted with strength, and he tossed two stone dumbbells several dozen kilograms in weight high into the air.

“Mother of heaven!” The group of children scattered frantically. If one of the dumbbells fell onto them, their heads would crack.

The stone dumbbells fell down heavily. Li Qingshan did not try to avoid them. Instead, he maintained his concentration, grasping the timing to grab the dumbbells. He turned around to nullify the force and smiled at them.

The group of children were dumbfounded. They all gulped. Just how much strength was needed to raise the two stone dumbbells? Most of them could do that, but it was impossible for them to toss them so high in the air, let alone catch them.

Li Qingshan ignored them. Instead, he smiled and said, “Grandpa Zang, do I still have to train my strength?”