

Chapter 26 - Sparring Again

A heavy wave of warmth surged in his stomach. He immediately got up and began practising in the courtyard. Only when the warmth had vanished completely did he exhale deeply and stop.

Normally, he would feel tired after practising for so long, yet he was brimming with energy today. As expected, the medicinal alcohol made from ginseng was much more effective than simply eating meat.

Moreover, the true qi in his body seemed to grow slightly. It was very weak, but it was growing properly.

Medicinal alcohol made from ordinary ginseng is already so effective. I wonder how it would be like if I used the spiritual ginseng instead. He had thought of this before, but then he considered the difficulty in obtaining it, followed by the consequences that came after, so he could only give up in the end.

In just a few days, several hunters were carried off the mountains, either dead or injured. Clearly, the ginseng foragers were not easy to deal with. Although Li Qingshan had agreed to join the Drawn Reins village, it was just a measure to deal with his circumstances. He did not actually want to become involved in the dispute between the two villages.

In the blink of an eye, it was the fifteenth of the eighth month, the Mid-Autumn Festival. In the forested mountains, Huang Binghu gazed at the exhausted faces beside him. In the past few days, he had been moving through the mountains with his hunters, remaining alert at all times despite possessing the upper hand and basically slaughtering the ginseng foragers to a point of disarray.

However, it was impossible for him to remain unscathed, so it was difficult for him as well. Meanwhile, the spiritual ginseng only existed within the legends. No one had seen it with their own eyes, so these sacrifices became meaningless.

Huang Binghu let out a deep sigh and ordered them to return to the village. Xiao Hei said in a hurry, "Hunting chief, you can't give up. Your body is-" Huang Binghu cut in and said, "The village takes top priority!" Not only was it the Mid-Autumn Festival, a time for families to reunite, but it was almost winter as well. The village had to prepare for the change in seasons.

In one corner of the Drawn Reins village, within grandpa Zang's courtyard, Huang Binghu asked with a smile, "Grandpa Zang, how's the kid?"

"He's a natural marksman. His archery will definitely exceed both yours and mine in the future, but..."

"But what?"

"His mind is not with the Drawn Reins village. Even if we've gotten him to join the village, it's all useless. We're hunting dogs that guard the mountain, while he's a wolf, and a lone wolf at that. There'll be a time when he goes off on a long journey!"

"A lone wolf? That's only because he hasn't witnessed that a lone wolf is easy to hunt, while a pack of wolves is difficult to rival. I'll go see him. I refuse to believe that the position of hunting chief won't make him waver."

"You really plan on making him the hunting chief?"

“That’ll depend on his skills.” Huang Binghu smiled.

“Qingshan, has it been satisfactory for you here?” Huang Binghu entered the courtyard and greeted him straightforwardly.

“Thank you for your concern, hunting chief. I’ve been doing very well here.” Ever since the news of Li Qingshan killing seven ginseng foragers spread through the village, everyone had warmed up to him. However, this also meant that he had become complete enemies with the Ginseng King village. The ginseng foragers were not benevolent folk, so he had to rely on the Drawn Reins village in order to survive.

However, could he really just accept an arrangement like this?

Li Qingshan said, “Hunting chief, I want to try sparring with you again!”

Huang Binghu’s surprised gaze met Li Qingshan’s confident eyes.

Huang Binghu said, “Alright. Let’s see the fruits of your training from the past few days.”

“Ha!” Li Qingshan did not wait for Huang Binghu to pull away from him, suddenly rushing forwards. He threw a straight punch without any fancy tricks, striking towards Huang Binghu’s chest viciously. It gave off a slight whoosh from the rushing air.

“Not bad, kid!” Huang Binghu blocked using his arm, and with a smack, he staggered back three steps before stopping, shaking his arm in pain. Then he revealed a rather surprised expression. What great strength! Although he did not clash with Li Qingshan in brute strength last time, he could estimate that his strength back then should not have been so great.

Li Qingshan said, “Check out this move now!” He immediately rushed over and launched consecutive attacks. His fists rained down on Huang Binghu’s chest, launching a storm-like barrage, pushing the unencumbered force in his punches to the limit. His aura became extremely violent as well.

Careless, Huang Binghu lost the advantage and the upper hand, but it also roused his spirit. I refuse to believe that you can defeat me in terms of strength. His inner force began to circulate, flowing into his arms through his meridians. Welled up with inner force, his arms seemed to grow thicker as he received Li Qingshan’s punches.

For practitioners of martial arts, all of their martial arts depended on this inner force. He was using his true strength by doing this.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! Their arms intersected as they fought fire with fire. Whenever they clashed, they would produce a loud sound of collision between flesh and bone; it was like two beasts mauling one another. It was extremely rough and brutal.

Huang Binghu was still the one with richer experience at the end of the day. He grasped the timing and threw a punch at Li Qingshan’s chest.

Li Qingshan did not try to block or dodge, returning a punch at Huang Binghu’s face.

Huang Binghu thought to himself, I’ve trained my inner force diligently for all these years, so the force of one of my punches can even kill a young calf. Even if you practise external martial arts tough on the

body, you'll still be injured. As for Li Qingshan's punch, he ignored it completely. His punch would land on Li Qingshan first, and he would definitely seize up momentarily.

With a thud, the punch landed on Li Qingshan's chest. As expected, Li Qingshan seized up, but he immediately recovered, completely unaffected. Huang Binghu was taken aback and used a roll in a hurry. The first brushed past his cheek, causing a slight ache.

Li Qingshan chuckled and remained where he was, choosing not to pursue him.

Huang Binghu stood up. "You're actually fine?!" He understood the strength of that punch the best. Even if Li Qingshan used his external martial arts to block the force of the punch, he would not be able to stop the inner force imbued in the punch. However, it actually had no effect on him.

Li Qingshan rubbed his chest. "It hurt a lot!" A stream of qi seemed to penetrate his skin earlier, directly entering his body. However, it was immediately nullified by the true qi within him, basically failing to cause any damage at all. Afterwards, he immediately recovered his strength and almost landed a hit on Huang Binghu.

If it were explained as Huang Binghu would have explained it, this was the difference in quality between acquired inner force and innate true qi.

Huang Binghu had no idea how to respond. The punch that he was so confident in actually only received an evaluation like that. However, all practitioners of martial arts were competitive, seeking to prevail over others. He yelled out, "Then eat a few more of my punches!"

The two of them began fighting once more. This time, Huang Binghu no longer held back, using everything that he had. He became much swifter. As a result, Li Qingshan struggled to handle his attacks. Li Qingshan became peppered with punches.

To the untrained eye, Huang Binghu was overwhelming Li Qingshan, possessing the upper hand.

However, the two of them each experienced completely different thoughts. Li Qingshan only felt like Huang Binghu's movements had slowed down, no longer as difficult to capture as before. Even if punches would hit him, it would only ache slightly, so he might as well just ignore them and focus on attacking. He was like a rock in a storm, remaining firm and unshaken.

However, Huang Binghu felt more surprised the more he attacked. Li Qingshan's speed, reaction, and strength were all much greater than last time. He was basically like a completely different person. He was no longer able to attack Li Qingshan's vital points so easily, but striking other places was completely useless.

And as the battle went on, Li Qingshan's attacks became more and more orderly, throwing one or two extremely ingenious punches from time to time, forcing Huang Binghu into danger. It took him the experience from all these years of fighting to deal with. The fierce gale swept up with each of Li Qingshan's punches told him that as long as a single punch landed, he would be done for. They grew closer and closer to one another rapidly.

As a result, a strange scene appeared. One of them was constantly struck by punches, yet he did better the more he fought. The other was uninjured, but he grew weaker as the battle continued.

Sweat began to sprout from Huang Binghu's forehead. As exhaustion set in for him, Li Qingshan remained just as calm and unagitated as before.

The ox had always been an animal of great endurance. The further he cultivated, the more obvious the difference between supernatural abilities and martial arts would become.

Huang Binghu suddenly leapt away and called out, "Stop!"