

## Chapter 29 - Autumn Hunting in the Mountains

Li Qingshan asked in a hurry, "You're literate. Did you remember it just now?"

Xiao An nodded and made Li Qingshan look at what he had written.

From Xian An, Li Qingshan learned that someone else had originally butt in to try and take the spiritual ginseng, and their martial arts was very powerful. Since they had seen this, they would never give up. They would definitely find a way to look for it.

"It looks like I need to be careful. I have to keep everything hidden. However, once I take a step further with my ability and develop the strength of an ox, there'll be no need for me to be afraid of anyone."

The spiritual alcohol would not become better the longer the spiritual ginseng remained in it. If it became too strong, Li Qingshan would not be able to digest it. As a result, he had his first sip of the spiritual alcohol after waiting for just a few days.

A special fragrance expanded through his mouth. The taste was not heavy and was rather faint instead. Extremely pure spiritual qi permeated his body.

He did not waste any time, utilising the ability to digest the spiritual qi. To his surprise, a sip of spiritual alcohol basically resulted in better effects than drinking a whole jar of alcohol made from regular ginseng.

The true qi in his body became twice as powerful. Although regular ginseng could replenish vitality, they were just regular objects of mortals, unable to affect true qi too much. The Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength focused on practising the body and not practising qi, so his true qi had never grown particularly quickly.

The spiritual ginseng was a true, innate object of nature, best at replenishing spiritual qi, which was why it had such effects. If this continued, he would be able to release his true qi beyond his body before long. By then, he could call himself an 'innate master'.

"Brother ox, I once swore that I would drink all of the finest alcohol the world has to offer. It looks like I'm mostly done now!" After drinking the spiritual alcohol, he would only find normal alcohol tasteless now.

The black ox only responded with a sneer.

At this moment, a racket started outside, along with a lot of barking. Huang Binghu had arrived in front of Li Qingshan's door with the hunters from the village, inviting him to participate in the autumn hunt with them.

Autumn was a great time for hunting. Not only did people have to prepare food for the winter, but the animals had to as well. Every single one of them would have stuffed themselves until they were plump. As such, the autumn hunt was an important gathering for the Drawn Reins village.

Many large clans would hold large-scale hunts during this time, not to hunt prey, but to train their descendents, complementing the desolation of autumn.

Huang Binghu said, "You've only learnt archery, but you haven't learnt the true way to hunt. You should stay by my side when we go into the mountains this time!" Ever since he clashed with Li Qingshan last time, he no longer treated Li Qingshan as a regular youth.

Li Qingshan considered it, but he declined in the end. "Thank you for the offer, hunting chief, but I want to hunt alone."

Before Huang Binghu could say anything, the other hunters began expressing their thoughts.

"What? Alone? Not only have you not learnt how to hunt before, but you don't even have a proper hunting dog."

"You really aren't afraid of the vicious beasts in the mountains?"

Although they admired Li Qingshan's skill in being able to kill seven ginseng foragers, they could not allow their forte to be looked down upon.

Huang Binghu tried to persuade him. "Hunting is not just about having some decent archery and skill." Suddenly, he thought of grandpa Zang's evaluation. A lone wolf!

Li Qingshan continued to shake his head. He only wanted to learn archery so that he could kill enemies and protect himself. As for hunting, it was unnecessary for him.

"If he wants to be alone, then let him be alone. Let's see what he can catch in the end."

"I think he won't even be able to catch a rabbit."

Li Qingshan smiled without contributing to the conversation.

Suddenly, someone said dripping with sarcasm, "You've already freeloaded in the village for so long, yet you still refuse to oblige to some arrangements. Do you really plan on freeloading forever?"

In the days he had spent in the village, all of his food and drink had been delivered to him under Huang Binghu's orders, which definitely used up some of the village's resources. He had a large appetite as well, so some resentment was natural.

Huang Binghu immediately scolded that person, "Qingshan is also a part of our village. How can you bicker with him over some food and drink?"

Li Qingshan became stern. He clasped his fist. "Hunting chief, there's no need for you to feel troubled over this. I, Li Qingshan, draw a clear line between my debts of kindness and grievances. I will never profit at another's expenses. I will definitely return everything I've consumed in the village these days twofold."

"Qingshan, there's no need to..." Huang Binghu was utterly furious with the person who had spoken. I've been working my heart out to rope him into the village, yet you're going to push him out over a bit of meat.

Li Qingshan did not want to become a part of any place. There was neither the need nor the interest. "I've heard that the village will hold a competition for the autumn hunt each year to see who has hunted the most prey, where the winner even gets some prizes. I'll participate this year as well."

Huang Binghu struggled to persuade him otherwise. Li Qingshan made some slight preparations and entered the mountains with a regular hunting bow as everyone looked at him like he was a joke.

The hunters went to the mountains in the north. Li Qingshan did not want to be with them, but the west was the myriad mountains. He had gained an understanding for the mysteriousness of this world, so he did not want much risk at all. Yet, to the south was the place of trouble, the Bailao peak, which was why he could only go to the east.

On Bailao peak, a group of people in the same uniform, all carrying swords, gathered together.

The leader was the young man who had killed the ginseng foragers that day. Back then, he had almost obtained the spiritual ginseng.

“Search! Even if you have to flip the entire mountain peak upside down, you have to find the spiritual ginseng!”

“Yes, young master!” The group of people responded and used their masterful movements techniques, shooting off to various places on Bailao peak.

Li Qingshan ventured deep into the mountains. He did not know how to distinguish the tracks of birds and beasts, nor did he know how to hide his own tracks. He did not know how to set traps either, and he was not working with other hunters. He did not even have a hunting dog with him.

If someone like him said they wanted to hunt, any hunter would laugh their heart out.

However, he was in no hurry at all. He began meditating among a pile of deadwood in the mountains. Only when it was dusk did he open his eyes and smile. “Xiao An!”

There was a gale of chilly wind between the trees. A while later, it returned.

Li Qingshan stood up and walked between the trees. Before long, he discovered a deer that had fallen dead. There was not a single mark on its body.

Ever since Xiao An’s strength had increased, his yin qi had grown heavier as well. He discovered that the deer had only run into him before it immediately fell unconscious and dropped dead.

Li Qingshan laughed. “As long as you’re here, Xiao An, there’s obviously no need to learn any hunting skills. It’s a waste of time. They were actually looking down on me. Let’s catch a lot to show them.”

Ever since the Mid-Autumn Festival, Li Qingshan no longer let Xiao An run free like before, keeping him in check a lot more. Now, when he used him, he did it without holding back at all. To people close to him, there was obviously no need for so much courtesy.

Xiao An nodded excitedly before diving into the trees as a gust of wind again.

The animals in the forests and mountains were vigilant, but they could not be vigilant about an invisible little ghost. They all dropped dead, waiting for Li Qingshan to come and collect them.

Li Qingshan had nothing to do, so he practised archery, shooting at the startled birds in the forest. Shooting moving objects was much more difficult as expected. Out of every three arrows, two would miss. However, as he gradually became accustomed to it, he missed less and less.

By dawn, a few hunters had brought their prey back to the village. However, most of them remained in the mountains, working together to hunt.

In an empty piece of land at the centre of the village, the respected grandpa Zang was responsible for counting the prey. He revealed a smile on his usually stern face. "Not a bad haul. It's a good omen." Afterwards, the women and children remaining in the village would deal with the prey, tanning the hides and preserving the meat.

"Why hasn't Li Qingshan returned yet?" There were already people eager to see Li Qingshan make a fool of himself.

"He entered the mountains to hunt alone, so why would he return so soon?"

Right after that, a person called out, "Li Qingshan has returned."

"W- what's that?" Several people looked in the direction of the voice, but the first thing they saw was not a person, but a hairy monster that formed a pile. It was just like a wild man mentioned in the legends.

Li Qingshan bent his waist back and carried water deer, milu deer, and so on. There were many large prey, amounting to several hundred kilograms. Additionally, plenty of pheasants and rabbits hung from his waist. The journey off the mountains had even made him sweat profusely. He said with difficulty, "Oi, Xiao An, it's too much! It's too darn heavy!"

Xiao An sat atop the mound of prey and laughed secretly while covering his mouth. He looked back as the east shone dimly. Before the first ray of sunlight could fall, he dove into the wooden tablet.