

Chapter 31 - The Stone Splitter Bow

"Hunting chief, you mustn't!" The other hunters quickly tried to dissuade him.

Li Qingshan felt surprised as well. He actually wanted to give him his personal bow. The implication of this was much more than just giving away a body, so he objected, "Hunting chief, good men will never take a beloved item of others. I can't accept this prize. Please treat all of this as a joke of mine!"

Huang Binghu rubbed the bow gently and said regardless of the objection, "The Stone Splitter bow has accompanied me for many years, and it's convenient to use. It has also helped me make a name for myself in the jianghu. Now that I don't have much time left, I want to choose a good master for it."

"I heard you disliked grandpa Zang's bow because it was too light. The Stone Splitter bow is a metal composite bow. It has a draw weight of three stones. Even normal practitioners of martial arts can't use it. Here, don't dilly-dally." Huang Binghu pushed the Stone Splitter bow into Li Qingshan's hands.

Li Qingshan held the bow, which felt heavy in his hands. He thought about how Huang Binghu stood atop the boulder before and killed people effortlessly.

Yes, this bow was not suited for hunting; instead, it was made for fighting on the battlefield. It was truly a weapon for killing people.

He fiddled around with the bowstring with his finger. There were metal strands within it, so it was extremely sharp. Normal people would need a ring to use it, but it was not a worry for him thanks to his Ox Demon Forges its Hide.

It was somewhat like Huang Binghu was entrusting his child to someone else. Although he had not mentioned it like that, everyone present could tell. However, no one objected to it. This was not only due to Huang Binghu's power and influence, but also because Li Qingshan had demonstrated his strength to everyone.

Whether Li Qingshan possessed the capability of leadership or whether the villagers would accept him as their leader was not an issue. Yielding to the powerful was an instinct of people, just like in a wolf pack. The Drawn Reins village was a wolf pack, while Huang Binghu wanted Li Qingshan to take over the position of wolf king.

He had only decided this after long, careful consideration. The Drawn Reins village was disliked by the government, and they had completely fallen out with the Ginseng King village. They seemed awe-inspiring, but they were actually facing danger from everywhere. Although there were outstanding talents in the village, none of them possessed the ability to control the situation. Only Li Qingshan could manage it.

Li Qingshan held the Stone Splitter bow as he felt like he was dreaming. Just a few months ago, he was the most inconspicuous and lowly cowherd in Crouching Ox village.

Now, he had the chance to become the hunting chief of the infamous Drawn Reins village. However, he did not accept the position. "Hunting chief, I'll accept the bow, so thank you for your kindness. However, I've actually come today to bid you farewell."

There was a commotion with that. Everyone felt that Li Qingshan was far too unappreciative. Even if Huang Binghu knew about his strength and potential, turning down the offer before so many people would still make Huang Binghu look bad.

“But I don’t want to take it for free.” He returned to his house and took out a small bottle of alcohol, handing it to Huang Binghu, “This is the medicinal alcohol my master left me in the past. It might be able to cure your illness.”

“D- do you really think so?” Now that he faced a chance for survival, Huang Binghu became rather excited. The other people stirred as well.

Li Qingshan smiled. “You’re welcome to try it.” This was the spiritual alcohol made from the spiritual ginseng. He did not possess any medicinal skills, but he did understand Huang Binghu’s sickness slightly. He was born frail, and the years of practising martial arts had used up the source of his life. He completely relied on his inner force to remain alive.

This was a terminal illness that all physicians, no matter how divine, would struggle to cure. It was a natural, innate deficiency that could not be made up for with ginseng or lingzhi ganoderma. However, the spiritual ginseng possessed this innate energy, which could save Huang Binghu’s life.

Huang Binghu drank it all in a single gulp before sitting down to meditate. A while later, white mist rose from the top of his head, and his waxy, sallow face recovered some redness. He opened his eyes after quite a while.

“Hunting chief, how do you feel?” the hunters all asked.

Huang Binghu touched his chest in disbelief. “Much better.” It was not just much better. It was better than he had ever felt before; it was as if he had regained his youth.

There was a cheer. Many hunters even shed tears. Many of the people who were originally hostile and had feelings of rejection towards Li Qingshan changed their sentiment completely. They held his hands and thanked him endlessly as tears of gratitude flowed.

Li Qingshan waved the Stone Splitter bow. “Then it would be rude for me to turn down the bow now.”

Huang Binghu reddened slightly. “About that... Li Qingshan... Could I switch the prize...” Having evaded death, he immediately became reluctant to part with this ‘old companion’.

“Don’t even think about it!” Li Qingshan declined firmly. “The words of men of the mountains weigh heavily just like the mountains. How can you just take it back so easily?”

“Then fine!” Huang Binghu said with a long face, which led to a roar of laughter in the surroundings. It was rare to see their hunting chief like that.

“Li Qingshan, will you be coming back?”

“I’m just going to the Crouching Ox village to take a look. There are still some matters I need to resolve there. And, I want some peace to myself so that I can practise my martial arts. I want to see if I can make a breakthrough.”

After drinking the spiritual alcohol these days, Li Qingshan felt like he had already touched on a critical juncture of the Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength. He planned on going on a retreat alone to achieve the strength of an ox. Once that happened, there was no longer a reason for him to hide in the mountains and forests. He would be able to go and check out the outside world.

He remembered the fatty he saved yesterday, who seemed to refer to himself as some district magistrate of Qingyang. He wanted to complete his promise to Xiao An. He had no idea just how far south Xiao An was referring to, but he had to take a first step.

"Another breakthrough?!" Huang Binghu had sensed long ago that the current Li Qingshan seemed completely different once again compared to a few days ago. His aura and energy had changed drastically. His rate of improvements was simply alarming.

Yet, in the blink of an eye, he said he was going to make another breakthrough. Huang Binghu could not help but think about what Li Qingshan had said before, where Li Qingshan told him he wanted to become an 'innate master'. Back then, Huang Binghu had only shrugged it off with a smile, but now, he suddenly felt that perhaps he might truly achieve it.

"But what about the prey that you caught?" Li Qingshan's haul from the past few days could almost rival the entire village's haul.

"I don't really care about the others. I just want the bones of the tiger. And, please collect some more tiger bones for me. I want to brew some medicinal alcohol with it. I will buy it according to the market price."

The reason why he had chased the tiger relentlessly was not just to look good before the village. Instead, the black ox had told him that once he had attained the strength of an ox with the Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength, he could begin practising the Tiger Demon's Fist of Bone Forging, which required another type of medicinal alcohol. One of the central materials to it was similar to ginseng, valuable and rare. It was tiger bones.

Hunters treated tigers as their arch nemesis. Individual hunters were afraid of tigers, but once a tiger created too much of a disturbance, there would definitely be a large-scale search of the mountain. They hunters would obviously set down many traps. Wild beasts were vicious, but they were still unable to defeat humans. There should have been quite a lot of tiger bones accumulated in the Drawn Reins village.

Huang Binghu said, "Is it also a formula that your master left behind?"

"Yes."

"Are the men of our Drawn Reins village supposed to be stingy while you're so generous? I can make the medicinal alcohol for you, but could we use your two formulas as well?"

Huang Binghu secretly tested Li Qingshan's formula, and the medicinal alcohol he brewed was much better than the medicinal alcohol the village originally used. Moreover, there was no need to purchase the items that went into making it from other people. The village could gather all it by themselves. If he used it to nurture the future generation, the strength of the Drawn Reins village would reach a whole new level before long.

Li Qingshan found no reason not to. The two formulas only created medicinal alcohol that went overboard. They were not particularly valuable, so it was no issue even if he gave it to someone else. It would also save him the trouble of making the medicinal alcohol himself, so it was perfect.

He gave the formulas to Huang Binghu before taking the Stone Splitter bow, mounting the ox and riding off slowly.

Only when Li Qingshan's figure disappeared around the corner of the mountain path did grandpa Zang whisper to Huang Binghu, "Hunting chief, why didn't you make him stay earlier? The spiritual ginseng is most likely on him, and the alcohol you drank was most likely steeped with spiritual ginseng. The spiritual ginseng is probably in the gourd on his waist."

Li Qingshan never mentioned the matter of the spiritual ginseng, but in the eyes of this experienced, old hunter, there were just far too many aspects that gave it away. Meanwhile, to Huang Binghu, who had once roamed through the jianghu, these aspects only appeared clearer and easier for him to understand.

Huang Binghu gazed at the mountain path that Li Qingshan vanished on. After a long moment of silence, he turned around and said, "At the end of the day, we're different from those ginseng foragers, aren't we?"

"Yes, hunting chief!"