

### Chapter 311 - Outcome Already Determined

If it were just Chu Tian, then so be it. He had always been called a genius anyway. However, Li Qingshan was a disciple of the school of Novels that they had mocked all this time, a clown for fulfilling their sense of superiority. Perhaps no one treated him as a genius due to the trio from the entrance examination.

However, at this moment, reality told them that Li Qingshan was a true genius, a genius that could rival Chu Tian. Meanwhile, their mockery was simply so foolish. Their sense of superiority immediately collapsed.

On the platform occupied by the mohist disciples, Hao Pingyang slapped Zhang Lanqing's shoulder. "I told you he has got some moves."

Zhang Lanqing smiled easily too. In the past three days, he had worried a lot. He Yishi stood in the corner of the platform and raised his head to look at Li Qingshan on the Cloud Ridge Giant. All he felt was fear.

Yu Zijian praised, "So powerful!" Hua Chenglu said, "He really is something else. What did I say? With my insight, how could I go wrong?"

Wu Gen posed a question to himself. As an eighth layer Qi Practitioner, could he stand a chance against either one of them? He glanced at Qian Rongzhi. She maintained her smile the entire time, neither worried or surprised, as if everything was developing according to her expectations. It only added to her wondrous charm.

He had once thought of himself as a conqueror. Only at this moment did he suddenly realise he was drawn to her due to her strength, her unconfused, unwavering, unhesitant "strength".

Perhaps it was time for him to cast everything aside and cultivate properly. Perhaps he should copy Li Qingshan and enter secluded cultivation for a while.

"Old Wang, how's that?" Hua Chengzan looked back and smiled.

"Interesting, but it's still nowhere near enough!"

"Then let's just see how everything unfolds!"

Chu Tian and Li Qingshan's gazes clashed in the air above the arena.

"Turns out I've always been underestimating you," Chu Tian said in some disbelief.

"Same here. I really am quite surprised by how you've managed to say something like that," Li Qingshan said with composure.

"But if you think you can defeat me like this, you're far too naive. What Cloud Ridge Giant? That's just a facade, a bravado. Watch as my Earthen Strongman smashes it to pieces!"

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! The Earthen Strongman's steps were like blaring drums as it rushed towards the Cloud Ridge Giant with whistling wind.

The Main Martial Arts stadium was massive, but that was with respect to human size. Compared to these two colossal figures, it was like a tiny stage, nowhere to dodge, nowhere to hide.

The huge punch was like a mountainside landslide as it smashed towards the Cloud Ridge Giant's head, or more accurately, Li Qingshan beside the head. It moved with stoppable, terrifying power.

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Li Qingshan smiled. He could tell from a long time ago that Chu Tian had no idea about battle tactics at all. If Li Qingshan were in control of the Earthen Strongman instead, he would have caught the cloud in the situation before. And, he would not throw punches right now either. Punching right now was completely pointless. All Chu Tian knew was how to brawl like a regular person.

Chu Tian could use techniques to annihilate most Qi Practitioners, so there was no need for him to try and learn these battle tactics or whatever they were. With the size of the Earthen Strongman, just being able to brawl would be sufficient.

However, it was not enough today.

The clouds surged, and the Cloud Ridge Giant tilted its head. The Earthen Strongman's punch missed. A pillar of clouds rushed up as a vicious hook shattered the Earthen Strongman's chin.

Because the Cloud Ridge Giant was just too large, it only resembled a blurry humanoid shape. Even its eyes and mouth were just three depressions in the cloud, and it did not have legs either, just a long tail of clouds.

Li Qingshan would never use it to unleash his martial arts either. However, as long as he paid attention to the situation and used his judgement, he could abuse someone inexperienced like Chu Tian.

The Earthen Strongman lost its balance, and the Cloud Ridge Giant drifted forwards. A straight, left punch landed on the Earthen Strongman's face, and with a boom, it crushed its nose.

If it were a human, then it would have suffered heavily from that, but the Earthen Strongman was not made out of flesh and blood after all. It did not know what pain or dizziness was. As Chu Tian roared out, it threw a punch back at the Cloud Ridge Giant's chest.

With how big the Cloud Ridge Giant was, it was impossible for it to dodge. Li Qingshan had no intentions of dodging either. The Cloud Ridge Giant received the punch and continued to advance forwards, beating up the Earthen Strongman to the point where rock and soil flew off its body.

The Earthen Strongman's punch pierced the Cloud Ridge Giant, directly creating a hole. Chu Tian laughed aloud. "Die!"

What answered him was a combination. A left jab, a right straight, and a left hook was completed in a single stroke, causing the Earthen Giant to stagger backwards. Its face had been reduced to a mess.

Li Qingshan smiled. "Idiot."

Just like how water element techniques were not suited for battle, the Cloud Ridge Giant was not made for fighting. It was nowhere near as destructive as the Earthen Strongman. As a matter of fact, it paled in

comparison to the impenetrable defenses of earth element techniques too. However, it was accustomed to absorbing and nullifying damage.

The clouds surged and gathered once again, filling in the hole within the blink of an eye. The pliable Cloud Ridge Giant was perfect for overwhelming the Earthen Strongman that triumphed through brute force.

Everyone on the spectating platforms were dumbfounded. They never thought Li Qingshan would gain the upper hand the moment he struck. He was not conceited for giving Chu Tian a handicap of three moves. Was he really a disciple of the school of Novels?

“Beat him up! Beat him up!” Hua Chenglu called out.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Among the thunderous rumbles, the Cloud Ridge Giant forced the Earthen Strongman to the edge of the arena, unleashing its fists as it wished.

The Earthen Strongman fought back desperately, but it was unable to break out of this awkward situation. Instead, it appeared feeble before the Cloud Ridge Giant.

The slovenly daoist priest laughed aloud as he watched on. “Juechenzi, this is called eroding rock with water, conquering the unyielding with yielding. Interesting, interesting. What a pity, what a pity.”

“Li Qingshan, you’ve really infuriated me now! I’ll make you pay the price!” Chu Tian’s hands flashed about as he formed seals once again.

With a cry, a huge Bird of Flames unfurled its wings and rushed into the sky, lunging towards the Cloud Ridge Giant.

It was even larger than the one from before. Chu Tian rode on the bird’s back as the flames around him turned him scarlet red. The tongues of fire licked around him. At this moment, no one noticed his unhandsome appearance anymore. He seemed like a legendary god that could wield fire.

Liu Zhangqing smiled as he stroked his beard. This move alone was enough to evaporate away the Cloud Ridge Giant.

At this moment, there was a dragon’s roar that drowned out the bird’s cry. A water dragon surged over diagonally, biting down on the bird’s neck.

It was complete with horns, scales, claws, and teeth. All of it was conjured from water.

The Blaststream Water Dragon.

This was the technique with the greatest destructive power out of everything that Li Qingshan had grasped so far.

The water dragon bit the fire bird, and it rushed into the sky, smashing it heavily against the screen of light at the top. The barrier seemed to shake.

Chu Tian lowered his head in surprise. He saw Li Qingshan standing between the horns of the dragon as the azure blue ripples of water swept his clothes about without wetting him. He continued to smile faintly like before, as if he was mocking his helplessness.

Chu Tian gritted his teeth as he roared inside, How dare you mock me! How dare a mere mortal like you mock me! I am a celestial!

The flames on the fire bird surged, and it pecked down on the dragon's head, snapping its horns. Its pairs of talons ripped away the dragon's scales. The water that contained the vitality of the water dragon leaked out, but before it had even reached the ground, it turned to steam due to the high heat.

The Blaststream Water Dragon coiled around the fire bird and dug in deeply with its four dragon talons. Feathers dropped out of the sky, turning into ashes.

Among the hisses, huge swathes of steam permeated the surroundings. On the ground, the Cloud Ridge Giant and the Earthen Strongman continued to throw punches at one another.

The mouths of many spectating Qi Practitioners had dropped, having forgotten to close them again. They seemed to be stupefied, as if they had been taken back to a primeval battlefield, where gods wielded divine beasts and clashed with surging fire and water, while giants took arms on the ground, fighting to no end.

Many people had even clenched their fists, making up their minds to cultivate diligently.

Very few Qi Practitioners of this day and age could witness battles between cultivators at Foundation Establishment and above. This battle had a huge impact on them.

Liu Zhangqing looked around the platforms and took note of everyone's expressions. Regardless of the outcome, the entire academy would benefit from this battle. These disciples who had grown accustomed to peace could truly witness what fighting was.

As it seemed, he needed to organise battles like these more frequently in the future. From the news he had received recently, he could already vaguely smell the scent of war.

However, he had no doubts of the outcome of this battle right from the beginning. He was just waiting to see when Chu Tian would set aside his pointless arrogance.

The dragon and bird entangled with one another. Li Qingshan and Chu Tian had never been so close to each other throughout the entire battle. They could clearly see the fury and smile on each other's faces.

"Li Qingshan!" Chu Tian roared. Pushing off the back of the bird, he rushed towards Li Qingshan. Five-coloured true qi appeared from his body, suddenly condensing into a five-coloured palm that smacked right towards Li Qingshan.

"Great Palm of the Five Elements!"

Li Qingshan pushed off the dragon's head and rushed into the air. His true qi surged within his sea of qi, all pouring into his fist. Like a roaring tsunami, he threw the punch.

Liu Zhangqing said, "The outcome has already been determined."

The palm strike and punch collided. The water dispersed.

It was at this exact moment that the water dragon, locked in battle with the fire bird, dispersed too. It was vaporised to surging mist.

The Cloud Ridge Giant engaged in close combat with the Earthen Strongman. Although it had gained the upper hand and destroyed most of the Earthen Strongman, most of its body had been exhausted away too. Both of them only stood at a few meters tall, so they were unable to attract anymore attention, nor were they able to determine the outcome of the battle.

The only thing that everyone saw was Li Qingshan rapidly falling down into the mist and vanishing.

Li Qingshan had lost. His full-powered punch was unable to fend off Chu Tian's cultivation method, the Palm of the Five Elements.

Hua Chenglu suddenly felt pained. It was true. No matter how hard a regular person worked, they could not defeat a genius, much less a Reincarnated Celestial like Chu Tian.

On the other platforms, many Qi Practitioners felt dejected too. They had originally come to see Li Qingshan make a fool of himself, but when Li Qingshan actually demonstrated strength that could contend with Chu Tian, they began to support him before they even knew it.

This was because Li Qingshan was the "weakling". Compared to Chu Tian, he was a "mortal", just like them. They wanted to see a mortal defeat a celestial, just like how regular people always looked forward to miracles.

Chu Tian descended from the ground, and the Palm of the Five Elements destroyed the Cloud Ridge Giant along the way. He looked around as he sneered inside. What an idiot. To think you even cursed me earlier, actually thinking you could take on my Palm of the Five Elements. You're probably half-dead now! How dare you make me so dishevelled. Watch as I smack you to death with my palm strike.

Hua Chenglu stood up and arrived on the platform where Han Anjun stood. "Uncle Han, please announce the outcome of the battle!"

However, Han Anjun, who was always serious and as cold as a rock, curled the corner of his lips slightly as he said, "The outcome has already been determined."

### **Chapter 312 - The Sword of Reversion**

"Qingshan!" Watching as Li Qingshan fell out of the air, Hao Pingyang and Zhang Lanqing both paled in fright.

He Yishi instead eased up. He gazed at Han Anjun on the platform in the distance. As long as he did not interfere, then it would be for the best if Chu Tian killed Li Qingshan, nipping this source of trouble at the bud.

"Yeah, the outcome has already been determined, so why don't you separate them? Chu Tian is going to kill Li Qingshan!" Hua Chenglu said in a panic as she grabbed Han Anjun's sleeve.

There were friendships between generations among the Han family and Hua family, and they did not focus on a confucian education, so there was not a lot of courtesy they had to follow.

Han Anjun said, "Let him kill him."

Hua Chenglu turned to Han Tieyi. "Tieyi!"

However, Han Tiewei seemed to have emerged from the same mould as Han Anjun, even speaking in the same manner. It made Hua Chenglu so furious that she stamped her foot. She arrived on the platform where Wang Pushi and Hua Chengzan stood. However, all she discovered was Wang Pushi staring straight at the centre of the arena as if he was stunned.

Just when she wanted to ask for help, Hua Chengzan pointed. "Look!"

"Look what?" Hua Chenglu looked over with a frown. The barrier from the formation had already dispersed, and the rolling steam gradually drifted apart.

A lustrous edge, three feet long, shone with cold light. The straight blade of the sword extended off in two directions.

One end disappeared into the mouth of a black dragon. That was the guard, while the coiled body of the dragon formed the hilt, gripped within a powerful hand. Li Qingshan had lunged forward, as if he had pressed all of his strength into the sword strike.

He said softly, "If I wanted to kill you, a single move is all that I need."

The other end had completely stabbed into Chu Tian's back.

Chu Tian's face twisted from pain and fear. He did his best to turn around. His eyes were wide open, filled with disbelief. He seemed like he wanted to say something, but blood spurted out instead.

Sword qi was currently devastating his innards. As long as Li Qingshan gently twisted the sword or swung it to one side, Chu Tian would be a dead man.

No matter how great of a genius he was, he was unable to escape the fate of death.

However, Li Qingshan's hand was still, but it was not because he did not want to move it. He never showed mercy when it came to killing people.

A fair-skinned hand was gripping the blade of the sword with three fingers, severing the killing intent.

Liu Zhangqing stood between Li Qingshan and Chu Tian in an impressive manner. His brows were firmly furrowed, still in shock. He never expected Chu Tian to actually lose, and to lose in such a swift manner, so swift that he had almost failed to save him in time from dying here.

Li Qingshan was very tempted to try to see whether his strength could break free from the grasp of the three fingers and kill Chu Tian here. However, the thought only flashed through his head before he let go of the sword hilt and clasped his hands at Liu Zhangqing.

"School leader Liu, long time no see."

Outside the arena, the audience went from absolute silence to a complete uproar.

W- what was going on? What happened in that moment?

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The pervading mist had failed to influence Chu Tian's sharp senses. He immediately discovered Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan knelt on the ground on one knee, as if he was quite heavily injured.

Originally, Chu Tian wanted to say a few words and humiliate Li Qingshan, but he remembered that Han Anjun could interfere at any time, so he swallowed those words again. He directly charged over and launched a palm strike ruthlessly.

With a plop, Li Qingshan was forcefully smashed apart by the Palm of the Five Elements, reduced to a puddle of water.

“Hmph, a pointless struggle before your death!” Chu Tian was slightly taken aback, but he did not care too much. Having used so many techniques already, Li Qingshan must have depleted more true qi than him. Li Qingshan had received a palm strike from him too, so he was like a toothless tiger. He no longer posed any threat anymore.

This thought was severed by an extremely terrifying sword intent. As the mist surged, a huge figure could be vaguely seen as it rapidly approached Chu Tian from behind.

Murderousness filled the air as light and shadows twisted. Li Qingshan appeared.

He moved like a tiger, while his gaze was like a dragon’s.

“Protection of the Five Elements!”

It was already too late for him to turn around. The five-coloured hand returned to Chu Tian and turned into a circular, five-coloured barrier of light. The five colours mixed and fluctuated as the five powers twisted and merged.

It bore the principle of the mutual regulation of the five elements. Earth could contain water, while metal could chop down wood. It completely surpassed any regular protective technique.

This was what Qian Rongzhi had told Li Qingshan.

Deep within the night in the bamboo forest, light and shadows danced about as Qian Rongzhi moved her vermilion lips, telling him about the power of the Palm of the Five Elements.

“If you can’t get through his Protection of the Five Elements, you won’t be able to defeat him.”

“I will win.” Li Qingshan gave her a simple description of this reality, even though he was not confident he could pierce this five-coloured barrier.

The path of slaughter had never been about who had more true qi or who could use stronger techniques, which was why he provoked, why he mocked, why he triumphed, and why he was defeated. All of this, every little part of it, was preparation for this moment.

After a fierce battle, Chu Tian had depleted quite a lot of his true qi too, and he had lowered his guard too. As a result, Li Qingshan used the Glazed Mirror of Invisibility to hide himself and immediately concealed all of his aura before casting out a bait using a water clone.

All of it was for this sword strike.

Without any hesitation, Li Qingshan poured the hundred or so strands of sword qi in his dantian into this strike.

The sword qi collided with the five-colored barrier, and the sound of glass shattering rang out. The tip of the sword tasted blood as sword qi surged into Chu Tian's body.

Victory was determined in an instant.

Liu Zhangqing glanced at Li Qingshan deeply as he patted Chu Tian's chest. An abundant amount of righteous qi rushed into Chu Tian's body, forcing out the sword.

The sword shattered mid-air.

Li Qingshan rubbed his chest. Chu Tian's Palm of the Five Elements really was impressive. Even now, his arm and chest still ached. If it were not for his extraordinary toughness, the outcome would not have been determined so easily.

Liu Zhangqing frowned even harder. Originally, he wanted to force out the sword qi too, but the sharpness surpassed his imaginations. Even under his righteous qi, it managed to linger tenaciously.

With how heavily injured Chu Tian was, it would probably come with a great loss of cultivation. Liu Zhangqing raised his head and looked at Han Anjun. He used his gaze to question why the referee had not prevented this from happening. As the leader of the school of the Military, his reactions were definitely much faster than Liu Zhangqing. He could have prevented Chu Tian's injuries altogether.

"I've already said." With a swish, Han Anjun vanished from the platform and appeared before Li Qingshan, demonstrating that he was indeed capable of something like that.

Suddenly, Hua Chenglu understood what Han Anjun had meant earlier by, "Let him kill him." It was not Chu Tian killing Li Qingshan, but Li Qingshan killing Chu Tian, and he would not interfere with it.

Liu Zhangqing let out a great sigh. Chu Tian was just too good at offending people. Originally, Han Anjun's responsibility was to prevent any major injuries or deaths during the battle, but Chu Tian had yelled out, "If I want to kill you, no one can stop me." Such words were akin to slapping him across the face.

Han Anjun passed eight thousand spiritual stones to Li Qingshan. He even patted his shoulder and said, "Nicely done, though you're still a little rough in some aspects of battle. You're welcome to come take a look at my school of the Military in the future."

All the spectating military disciples widened their eyes. Rarely did they ever hear their school leader praise a person like that, not to mention speak such a long sentence. This was basically the utmost glory. He had already gained the recognition of the school of the Military.

Han Anjun had spent many years of his life waging war, so he possessed a sharp sense for all battles. When Chu Tian arrogantly declared that he wanted to kill Li Qingshan, he had already guessed the outcome of the battle.

It was purely due to the difference in their mental states. One was arrogant and conceited, in a hurry to destroy his opponent, while the other was extremely calm, moving methodically. Out of the countless battles throughout history when the weaker side triumphed over the stronger, there were far too many examples like this. If a calm and collected person was bold enough to take the initiative and challenge a person stronger than him, he would definitely possess some confidence.



Now, the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple where the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus, do many calculations lead to victory and few calculations to defeat, let alone no calculation at all?

TL: Comes from Sun Tzu's Art of War. Partially borrowed from Lionel Giles' translation.

Afterwards, Han Anjun watched on like he was appreciating a classic battle. Li Qingshan's army was nowhere near as powerful as his opponent's. He used raids to the flank of the opponent in the beginning before confronting the enemy head on, finally feigning defeat and baiting the enemy into a land of no return. The three hundred sacrificial soldiers rushed out, straight into the enemy general's tent, claiming the general's head. He was unable to express his praise for how refined the calculations were.

Li Qingshan said politely, "Yes, general." Although Han Anjun's cultivation was not the highest among the school masters, he believed the one standing before him would be the one to survive to the very end if a chaotic battle really did erupt among them.

Han Anjun declared loudly, "This battle has ended! Li Qingshan wins!"

Clang!

The giant lumberman Mu Kui struck the bronze gong, declaring the end to the battle.

Cheers rang out from the spectating platforms as they chanted Li Qingshan's name. Even quite a few confucian disciples chanted along.

This was not due to Li Qingshan alone. During the few months Chu Tian had spent in the academy, he had flirted around with female cultivators as he ordered male cultivators around. Every second word he spat out was either genius or talent, basically mocking them as hard as he could. However, they were unable to do anything to him. They had all erupted with their resentment with this opportunity.

Hao Pingyang raised his arms and called out. He cheered the loudest. Zhang Lanqing held his hands emotionally, while He Yishi had become ashen in the corner.

The two girls who always followed Chu Tian around rushed over to his side and sobbed.

"Big brother Tian! What has happened to you, big brother Tian?"

"I don't accept it! I don't accept it! You despicable cheat! I haven't lost! I haven't lost!" Chu Tian jerked awake violently. His eyes were bloodshot as he stared right at Li Qingshan, as if he wanted to stand up and fight him again.

He utterly refused to accept this outcome. He still had not used that yet. He still had powerful trump cards he had yet to use. As long as he unleashed just one of them, Li Qingshan would never be his opponent.

On one hand, he was reluctant to expose this before so many people, while on the other hand, he was confident. He believed that he could finish off Li Qingshan with techniques alone, but never did he think that the situation would reverse so swiftly and quickly.

He was like a general who had been slain by the sacrificial soldiers still muttering about the army of a hundred thousand strong he had yet to mobilise, but his head had already been tossed high into the air, dying a regretful death.

“Yeah. Big brother Tian, you haven’t lost.”

“No, you’ve lost!” Qian Rongzhi cut her off.

“Rongzhi, you!” Chu Tian was stunned. Recently, he had shown plenty of goodwill towards Qian Rongzhi. She was unlike the other female cultivators too, who expressed great disgust towards his womanising behaviour. He thought they were friends already.

“Qian Rongzhi, you bitch!” One of the girls swore.

Qian Rongzhi ignored them. She crouched down and held Chu Tian’s hand. Her gaze was filled with motherly, gentle sympathy, as if she felt bad for him from the bottom of her heart. She said softly, “Little Tian, everyone loses. It doesn’t matter if you lose once as long as you can stand up again. You’d better get some rest first!”

Chu Tian felt warmth flood the bottom of his heart. Her gaze was so gentle, as if it could comfort any and all pain within a person’s heart. There was no mockery or contempt, only sympathy.

At that moment, she seemed like the most beautiful woman in his eyes.

### **Chapter 313 - Trudging Back Through the Snow**

Liu Zhangqing frowned. Why would a disciple of legalism know the arts of charm? However, he saw how she was friends with Chu Tian, and she was indeed comforting Chu Tian’s mind, so he did not interfere.

Qian Rongzhi used this opportunity while Chu Tian was mentally shaken up to cast a firm shadow in his heart.

Of course, it was not something like a seed of suggestion. She had no idea how to plant something like that, and even if she did, she would never do it before so many school leaders.

Her arts of charm were completely harmless. At most, it would just make Chu Tian develop a good impression and feeling of love towards her, but that was enough. Compared to something as coarse and inferior as seeds of suggestion, this suited her better.

She knew Chu Tian was hiding something, something that he had not even told the two girls beside him about. However, under her verbal probings, she learned the existence of this object. Just what was it that could make the arrogant, conceited Chu Tian behave so cautiously?

No matter what it was, she had to obtain it. If she could not manage that, then she would still have a powerful pawn under her thumb. Even in the worst-case scenario, he would be a human-shaped pill, though his true qi of the five elements might be rather difficult to digest.

Chu Tian recovered his fighting will. He stared at Li Qingshan with pure hatred. “Li Qingshan, you got lucky this time. I won’t spare you. I’ve said before that if I want to kill you, no one can stop me.”

Li Qingshan slighted him casually. “You’re welcome to try at any time.”

Chu Tian's mind eased up, and he fell into a slumber. Out of the two girls beside him, the older one said to Qian Rongzhi, "Sorry, big sister Qian. We shouldn't have said that to you."

Qian Rongzhi sighed gently. "I can understand what you're feeling. Take good care of him."

Li Qingshan had no idea why she was doing this, but he still took pity on Chu Tian. I hope you recover before this venomous snake swallows you. I still want to make some more spiritual stones off you!

Chu Tian was taken to Benevolence island by the school of Medicine's leader. In the blink of an eye, the various school leaders and primary disciples had all vanished.

"Qingshan, please don't hold a grudge against my school of Confucianism. This battle was not necessarily a bad thing for Chu Tian. It's a blessing that the academy has a genius like you. There will be a lot of competitions of swordsmanship on Great Virtue island in the near future, so you're welcome to participate too. Your sword is very interesting." Liu Zhangqing tossed that out and left, demonstrating his extraordinary demeanour.

At this moment, Hua Chengzan arrived before Li Qingshan. "Where's your wolf tablet?"

Li Qingshan was taken aback. Did Wang Pushi really find him so repulsive that he wanted to expel him from the Hawkwolf Guard? However, he did not say anything, simply taking out his wolf tablet and handing it to Hua Chengzan.

Hua Chengzan accepted it before passing a scarlet bronze wolf tablet back to him. The shiny, red wolf tablet was extremely detailed, such that he could even make out the eyelashes on the wolf. It was rather hefty as he held it in his hand.

Li Qingshan asked, "What's this?"

Hua Chengzan said, "Congratulations, you've been promoted. Old Wang told me to give you this. In the future, if you want to investigate anything or make some spiritual stones, you're welcome to go take a look at the Hawkwolf Guard of Clear River city."

"Alright!" Li Qingshan smiled. In order to gain someone's recognition, there was always a need for him to prove himself.

Wang Pushi and Li Qingshan did not hate one another. It was simply a result of Li Qingshan's negative first impression on him combined with everything that had happened after that. Today, Li Qingshan had proved himself. This did not mean Wang Pushi now liked Li Qingshan, but regardless of how he felt about him, this man had earned the right to this identity and status. This was how the school of Legalism handled things.

"Now, let's go celebrate!" Hua Chengzan wrapped his arm around Li Qingshan's shoulder before calling to Han Tieyi in the distance, "Tieyi, you're forbidden from leaving. Come along as well."

"Am I invited too?" The primary disciple of the school of Daoism, Juechenzi, approached them with a smile.

Li Qingshan was slightly taken aback. He smiled. "Since we're friends, why wouldn't you be invited?"

During the banquet that day, Li Qingshan had drunk a lot of alcohol. Originally, Li Qingshan was competing against Hua Chengzan.

Hua Chengzan was unable to continue any further before long. His face was crimson. He turned them against one another, fiercely praising Han Tiewi's drinking capacity. Before they knew it, it turned into a drinking competition between Li Qingshan and Han Tiewi.

The first-class spiritual alcohol was emptied jar after jar. Han Tiewi kept a cold expression the entire time. Let alone becoming drunk, his expression had not even changed the entire time, which made even Li Qingshan uneasy.

After downing over thirty jars, Han Tiewi suddenly closed his eyes and collapsed like a log, unable to get up anymore.

"So I'm still the victor after all." Li Qingshan laughed aloud. He heard about how Hua Chenglu had stood up for him, so he specially went over to toast to her, turning her bright red.

Using his drunken recklessness, he patted his chest and said, "Miss Hua, you're the same as your older brother, a good person. If you have any trouble in the future, feel free to come find me!"

Even if he did not drink, he would still give her a promise like that. Back then in Lakeside city, it was all because of her assistance that he had managed to escape. She had even given him a puppet for free as Xiao An's birthday present. He drew a thick line between kindness and grievances. Perhaps he could ignore small grievances, but he would always return kindness, no matter how big or small.

"Really?" Hua Chenglu blinked her eyes.

"Really." Li Qingshan was not after a solemn pledge, but he would never shirk away from a promise among friends.

"Alright, then a promise is a promise." Hua Chenglu lifted her cup and clinked it against Li Qingshan's gently as if she was considering something.

Then, Li Qingshan went to find Juechenzi to drink with. Juechenzi had not come under the orders of the slovenly daoist priest. Instead, he had come out of his own accord. He wanted to resolve the grievances between Li Qingshan and the school of Daoism, but it was not because he was afraid of Li Qingshan. With the slovenly daoist priest's cultivation nearing Golden Core, he feared nobody.

In a different time and place, perhaps they would be master and disciple. However, under these particular circumstances, they had instead developed resentment for one another. Juechenzi wanted to share his master's burden, and he also felt that Li Qingshan was worth befriending.

Li Qingshan and Xiao An had not even spent a year in the academy, but Juechenzi firmly believed they would become prominent figures in the Clear River prefecture in the future, or even more than that.

Juechenzi took advantage of his drunkenness to say, "My master wished for none of what happened on that day too. He originally admired you very much. He often laments to me again and again about how great of a pity this all was."

Li Qingshan, "Since it's all in the past now, let's not talk about it anymore. There's nothing bad about the school of Novels anyway. At least I can stand on equal footing with you as a primary disciple."

The slovenly daoist priest had screwed him over, but it was not because he wanted to harm him. He just wanted to vent his emotions, but Li Qingshan did not give him this chance, instead cursing back at him. With the slovenly daoist priest's cultivation and status, if he were just slightly petty, it would mean endless trouble for Li Qingshan. It showed that he was rather forgiving too.

As such, why would Li Qingshan cling onto this matter of the past?

Zhang Lanqing stood to one side with a smile. His face had also reddened despite his darker skin tone. He discovered that if he looked closely, the primary disciples of five schools were actually present. Excluding Li Qingshan, the primary disciple of the school of Novels, the schools of Buddhism, Daoism, Legalism, and the Military were all renowned major schools.

Figures like them would shine no matter where they were.

Li Qingshan returned to Cloudwisp island alone, while Xiao An went back to Anāsravā? island. Despite being the primary disciple, the time she had spent on the island so far was even less than that of a young acolyte. No matter how ignorant she was about how to conduct herself, she still knew that this was rather inappropriate. And, she was burdened with another important mission, which was to help Li Qingshan collect pills so that he could complete that final step.

The One Thought master's emotions were mixed, but he still felt happy when he saw his primary disciple return. Before Xiao An had even said anything, he had already presented her with many pills to support her future cultivation.

Regardless of how he felt, if he made a supreme prodigy like her suffer on his Anāsravā? island or waste time due to a lack of pills, it would be an utter waste.

If he learned the reason behind why she had returned, he would probably facepalm in exasperation. Fortunately, it was unlikely for him to ever know. He could roughly estimate just how many pills other disciples would eat and how many missions they would complete, but just who could estimate her cultivation progress?

Xiao An did not need these pills either. Right now, the true qi she had condensed in her body was just something akin to an illusion. Practising the Path of White Bone and Great Beauty was still based on refining flesh and blood.

Li Qingshan had already promised her that he would take her out to "uphold justice" again soon. Yep, that was how he said it, but in her ears, it sounded more like a "great feast".

Xiao An said, "Master, I want to listen to your sermons of scriptures."

"Alright, alright, alright. Which one would you like to hear? I'll give you one right now." The One Thought master was delighted. Learning the texts of buddhism was an extremely important component of cultivation to buddhist disciples, but it was also a component that was extremely easy to neglect, particularly for genius disciples like her.

When he faced regular disciples, the One Thought master would tell them earnestly, "Only by comprehending the essence of buddhism can you progress with great ease in practising the buddhist cultivation methods." However, just how much ease did Xiao An need with her current cultivation

speed? He would obviously feel happy from the bottom of his heart now that Xiao An had come to him out of her own accord to hear his sermons without becoming blinded by her own talent.

Little did he know that as a practitioner of the Path of White Bone and Great Beauty, Xiao An understood this principle better than anyone. Although she had read through the entirety of the jade slip called the Canon Depository, buddhist scriptures were different from the path of the sword. No matter how clever she was, it was impossible for her to comprehend their essence so easily.

From a certain perspective, the classics that were purely ideological were more profound and complicated than most cultivation methods.

Xiao An said, "All of them."

The One Thought master could only smile bitterly. The buddhist scriptures were as vast as the open sea. He had read through all of them, but he only specialised in a single area, and that was already an extremely outstanding achievement.

Xiao An remained silent most of the time, but whenever she asked a question, it would be a difficult one. The One Thought master scratched his bald head and finally made up his mind. He wanted to hold an assembly of dharma and invite all the eminent monks he knew throughout the Clear River prefecture, no, the nine prefectures of the Ruyi commandery, so they could come and give sermons to her.

After all, surely he did not have to bear this "punishment" alone. He could imagine just how speechless she could make his senior and junior brothers become. He actually began to look forward to it.

"Amitābha, how sinful of me, how sinful of me!"

Seeing Li Qingshan return, trudging through the snow, Liu Chuanfeng suddenly raised his head and extended his neck. He asked, "Did you win?" Because of his experiences last time, he was afraid to watch the battle this time.

"I won."

Liu Chuanfeng danced around. "That's fantastic! That's fantastic! Hahahaha, the heavens have blessed my school of Novels. No one will look down on me anymore!"

### **Chapter 314 - I Want to Write Novels!**

Li Qingshan was tempted to say, "Oi, I don't think this had anything to do with you!" Throughout the entire battle, he did not use the techniques of the school of Novels at all.

But regardless, the battle still allowed the declining school of Novel's reputation to surge. At the very least, no one dared to mock its primary disciple anymore.

After settling down, Liu Chanfeng gave him an update on the situation. "Qingshan, all thanks to my senior brother's efforts, the Cloudwisp association you mentioned has basically been established now. Sure enough, the process of gathering the power of belief is much faster. If this continues, there's a lot of hope for me to reach Foundation Establishment. This was all your idea, so you need to condense your Divine Talisman of Great Creation soon too!"

Li Qingshan hesitated, rubbing his chin in thought.

“Yeah, Qingshan. It’s just you now!” Outside, a voice rang out clearly. Sun Fubai circled around in the air on a white crane before landing in the courtyard.

Li Qingshan glanced over and almost failed to recognise him. Sun Fubai was still the same Sun Fubai as before, but a lot of his grey hair had vanished, and his face had a healthy shine. He radiated with energy as he walked. He was in high spirits. His leisurely aura as an old man had faded away, replaced by the determined spirit and aura of a middle-aged person.

“Senior brother, your cultivation!” Liu Chuanfeng exclaimed.

Originally, due to the limits of his talent, Sun Fubai was an eighth layer Qi Practitioner, and basically all hope of making further advances in cultivation had been severed due to his age. However, after being gone for most of the year, Sun Fubai had returned as a ninth layer Qi Practitioner.

With the progression of his cultivation, his true qi had increased, and all eight of his extraordinary meridians were connected now, so he obviously seemed younger. However, the core reason behind all of this was the influence on his mentality. Compared to idling around in a bookshop and waiting for his end to come, establishing foundations for the school of Novels and bringing glory back to the school was without a doubt much better for raising his spirits.

Sun Fubai smiled. “I didn’t sit around during this period. I casually wrote some things too.”

With how large the Cloudwisp association was, it was obviously impossible for it to thrive off just a single person’s novels. As the boss behind the scenes of the Cloudwisp association, Sun Fubai would obviously make use of the “mediums” he had created himself. Recently, whenever he dealt with the matters on hand and had nothing better to do, he would lift up his brush again and write.

He had read a myriad of books in his life and experienced the vicissitudes of human life, such that Liu Chuanfeng was nowhere close to matching his knowledge and wisdom. Following the path that Li Qingshan had laid out, he adjusted his writing style slightly and wrote things that ordinary people would like to see. The results were actually extremely good. Now, the popularity of the Ancient Cypress Elder probably even exceeded Liu Chuanfeng’s Master of Wind and Moon.

He had gathered large quantities of the power of belief. Having been stuck at the eighth layer for many years, the assistance brought on by this power allowed him to forcefully break through, taking another step forward with cultivation.

Li Qingshan asked, “Fubai, what brought you back here?”

Sun Fubai said, “I heard you were going to fight someone, so I came back to take a look. Looks like you’ve won.”

Now, only the three of them remained for the school of Novels. Now that they were all gathered here, it was a joyous occasion. They were all filled with delight.

Sun Fubai said, “I’ve brought some things back for you two too.”

“Oh? What is it?” Liu Chuanfeng accepted an ordinary, large bundle wrapped in white cloth from Sun Fubai. Apart from being tied together by red silk, there was nothing special about it. It did not give off any spiritual qi either.

Li Qingshan became curious as well. To cultivators, there was basically nothing good that lacked spiritual qi. Sun Fubai's gift was rather strange.

Liu Chuanfeng opened it. It was filled with paper and letters.

In order to receive the feedback from below in time so that Liu Chuanfeng could adapt his stories, he made the members of the Cloudwisp association ask for the audience's opinions once they completed their storytelling or performances. Afterwards, it evolved into many members of the audience writing letters to the "Master of Wind and Moon". Even if they were not literate, there were special people who could write on their behalf. He gathered all of their responses and handed them over to Liu Chuanfeng.

Liu Chuanfeng opened them up and read them in a hurry. Obviously, most of them commended him, with quite a lot giving suggestions and expressing their anticipation for his works. He sat there and just laughed to himself idiotically. As the school leader with the least dignity, who was frequently mocked by others in the academy, he had found his long-awaited respect. He truly experienced the magnificence of writing novels.

This gift was truly more precious than any pills or spiritual stones.

Then, Sun Fubai said to Li Qingshan, "Qingshan, you like to drink, so I brought back the fine liquor from various lands for you. Although they're not as great as spiritual alcohol and can't assist you with your cultivation, they're still something to relish."

The domain of the Clear River prefecture that spanned fifteen hundred kilometers had produced several dozen fine liquors. Their ingredients and methods of fermentation all differed. Sun Fubai had chosen the best of the best among them, bringing them back for Li Qingshan.

Just his intentions behind this was enough to touch Li Qingshan. Sitting at home and tasting the fine liquor from various lands was quite a pleasurable thing to do.

Li Qingshan accepted the several dozen jars of fine alcohol and bowed. "Fubai, you've outdone yourself."

Sun Fubai smiled. "It's all but a trifle. Compared to your ideas, it's absolutely nothing. I've already planted the tree by borrowing your ideas. If you refuse to enjoy the shade underneath, then you'll really be letting down my hard work."

Reaching there, just who could still decline him? Li Qingshan said, "I want to condense a Divine Talisman of Great Creation. Please teach me, Fubai."

The power of belief could conjure anything and everything. While its effects were nothing special in Liu Chuanfeng's hands, he had no idea on how to fight in the first place. For example, if he could summon something as simple as a metal chain, he could turn the tides of battle by catching the opponent off-guard as long as he timed it correctly, even if he failed to bind his opponent with it. If he knew something like that, it would only be easier for him to deal with a narrow-minded idiot like Chu Tian.

And, if he advanced even further and the power of belief he had accumulated was powerful enough, just trapping his opponent for a second would be enough for him to land countless strikes.

Sun Fubai smiled. The school of Novels had a successor now.



Liu Chuanfeng heard none of it. All he did was laugh to himself idiotically as he read these letters. He read them bent over, he read them laying down, and he even read them crouching down.

Sun Fubai and Li Qingshan smiled at one another.

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An ocean surged with azure waves to no end. Countless rivers flowed into it. The seawater evaporated and turned into clouds, filling the rivers once again.

At this moment, a mysterious power suddenly flattened every single ripple on the sea. A simplistic, navy glyph rose up from the still seas. Countless water dragons rose up and merged there. The simplistic glyph became clearer and stronger, radiating with withdrawn light before hovering over the ocean in the end.

The seawater began to surge once more. Vaguely, there seemed to be a spirit turtle swimming about.

Li Qingshan opened his eyes. A divine talisman seemed to flicker in the depths of his eyes. The process of condensing the Divine Talisman of Great Creation was much simpler than he had anticipated, probably because of how pure his true qi was. He had completed it in less than three days.

However, the path of divine talismans was different from regular cultivation. Condensing a divine talisman was just the basics.

Sun Fubai had already returned to the prefectural city to deal with the matters of the Cloudwisp association. Li Qingshan had given him a few more suggestions, so he hurried back to make the Cloudwisp association even larger.

As for Liu Chuanfeng, he left the academy after he finished reading the letters. He wanted to follow the example of ancient novelists, to go out travelling and collect references.

As a result, only the primary disciple, Li Qingshan, was left on the large island. However, before he departed, he left something to Li Qingshan—a fine table.

The brushes, ink, paper, and inkstones had already been prepared.

The pure-white paper laid there flat, becoming even whiter under the snowy reflection from outside the window. On the brush rack were a row of weasel hair brushes of varying sizes and styles. Even someone as unsophisticated as Li Qingshan experienced an urge to write.

Several days later, Liu Chuanfeng returned from collecting references. He said he was collecting references, but he actually visited the various branches of the Cloudwisp association scattered across the land, listening to the storytellers tell stories he had written while secretly grinning. Riding around on a white crane, he had visited quite a lot of places in those seven or eight days.

He wondered just how Li Qingshan was doing. Hmph, writing novels isn't that easy. He must have written some trashy works. I'll teach him a proper lesson later and reestablish my dignity as a school leader.

Liu Chuanfeng arrived in the bamboo loft, and sure enough, he saw Li Qingshan sitting before the table with a brush in his hand and Xiao An on the ground, reading the commentary on a buddhist scripture. She spotted Liu Chuanfeng and glanced at him, but she said nothing.

However, Li Qingshan did not even look over. Liu Chuanfeng thought, Pretty diligent. He walked over and took a look. The white paper was empty. There was only a black blotch of ink that had dripped down from the tip of the brush.

“Where are the parts that you’ve finished?” Liu Chuanfeng asked.

Li Qingshan turned his head slightly. “What parts finished?”

“The novel!” Liu Chuanfeng said obviously, but he soon noticed that his eyes were bloodshot, and his hair was rather messy too. Li Qingshan, who had been eternally high-spirited, actually seemed rather dishevelled now.

“Heehee!” Xiao An giggled, but Li Qingshan immediately glared at her. She stuck out her tongue and pulled a face.

Li Qingshan finally understood what barely forcing out six words over three days meant now.

TL: Forcing out six words over three days is a spin off of forcing out six words over seven days, which comes from a Chinese skit by Zhao Benshan, a renowned skit writer in China.

In the beginning, he wanted to write something original, but he gave up on that thought very soon. Although his memories of his past life were mostly gone, he still remembered a few iconic stories after all.

However, when he tried to convert these memories into words and express them through the tip of the brush, he immediately felt he was not made for this line of work.

He managed to write a little after quite a lot of effort, but his penmanship was so horrid that even he himself found it to be unbearable. Suddenly, he realised just how boring those iconic stories in his memories actually were.

He had tried calming his mind by drinking tea, he had tried riling himself up with alcohol, but none of it worked at all. He was unable to write anything at all. He even began to admire Liu Chuanfeng a little. Regardless of the quality, at least he could still throw a book together.

It took every shred of Liu Chuanfeng’s willpower to hold back his smile, but his smile still managed to leak out from every single crease on his face. All of the creases said the same thing, “Hah, to think you would have a day like this.”

He said ‘earnestly’, “It’s just like what I said, it’s not that easy. The first step is always the most troublesome. Come, allow the renowned novelist, the Master of Wind and Moon, to teach you how to write.”

Thud. Li Qingshan threw the brush away and leapt to his feet. “I’m not writing anymore. What’s so great about writing novels anyway? It’s a waste of time. I’m going to go out and move around a little.” He left through the door with Xiao An, flying off on a cloud and vanishing into the darkness before dawn. His rebukes could be heard from afar. “Stop laughing!”

Liu Chuanfeng was speechless. He shook his head and sighed. Looks like it really would be difficult for the legacy of the school of Novels to thrive on!

Around dusk, Liu Chuanfeng happened to be bent over a table, writing, when Li Qingshan entered through the door. There were bruises on his face, but his smile oozed with confidence. "I want to write novels!"

### **Chapter 315 - How Do I Start Writing (One)**

Li Qingshan left Cloudwisp island with Xiao An, pinching and twisting Xiao An's cheeks. However, she leaned against his arms and laughed even harder, such that even Li Qingshan felt powerless.

The sun had yet to rise up. It was currently the darkest part of the night. The academy was silent. He could only hear the neverending rise and fall of waves below the ice.

Although Qi Practitioners could go for several days and nights without sleep, they would still rest at night like regular people if there was no need to stay up so that they could maintain their mental state. It was beneficial to cultivation.

Li Qingshan wanted to move around a little, but he had no idea where to go. In the past few days, he felt like something had been pressing against his chest the entire time.

Suddenly, he thought of something. Didn't he still have some unresolved grievances?

Hao Pingyang happened to be clinging to his blanket, sleeping soundly. Suddenly, he heard a few knocks on the door and got up to see who it was. Opening the door, he saw Li Qingshan and Xiao An standing there.

Li Qingshan told him about how He Yishi had tried to frame him when the Hawkwolf Guard was carrying out an investigation.

Hao Pingyang was infuriated too. Without saying another word, he put on his clothes. "Let's get him!"

The two of them then knocked on Zhang Lanqing's door. After a moment of thought, Zhang Lanqing said, "Give me a moment."

He returned upstairs. They could vaguely hear a woman's complaints, along with Zhang Lanqing's gentle pleading.

The two of them smiled at one another. Li Qingshan thought about how Zhang Lanqing's cultivation was not particularly high, but he spent his days even more comfortably than them, unlike him who had to face an obscene man who wrote smut all day.

He could not help but think about finding a woman to warm his bed. The figures of a few women flashed across his mind. Hua Chenglu was too young. Yu Zijian was not bad, but she had yet to blossom completely either. Han Qiongzhi would be pretty good, but it seemed like it had been quite a while since he had last seen her.

Speaking of which, sect master Qiu Haitang was still the best. They say a friend's wife is off-limits, but it'll just be in my fantasies, so you can't blame me, little Hua.

Xiao An stared straight at Li Qingshan. She found his expression to be slightly strange, rather similar to Liu Chuanfeng's. Did he infect Li Qingshan with something bad? Did she have to kill him?

As Li Qingshan was carried away by his fantasies, Zhang Lanqing came back down, and Li Qingshan said, "Apologies. We've interrupted your spring night."

Zhang Lanqing reddened. "What spring night? Let's go!"

It was still very dim outside, but rows of street lights lit up the way. Various structures of strange shapes stood within the darkness. Looking at them in the darkness, it added a sci-fi-esque feeling to the air.

Li Qingshan had compared the Academy of the Hundred Schools to university before, but the status of Qi Practitioners were obviously beyond anything university students could match. It was impossible for them to be all squeezed into a single dormitory, even nominating a bunch of people in charge.

They all had their own residences, which they could personally adjust using the mechanisms built into the structure. Just this alone demonstrated how great a mohist disciple's residence was.

He Yishi's residence was located in a corner to the west of Divine Mechanism island. He was sleeping too, except he slept rather uneasily. After Li Qingshan made a name for himself in that battle, his fear grew with each passing day.

He had once investigated Li Qingshan and learnt that he possessed the nickname of "Tiger Butcher" in Jiaping city, and he possessed a cruel, murderous character. Just this alone had made him jerk awake several times. He set down layers upon layers of trigger mechanisms, but it still gave him no peace.

Seeing how close Hua Chengzan and Li Qingshan were to one another, he knew that being exposed was just a matter of time. His own betrayal haunted him constantly.

He Yishi suddenly sat up in bed. He was covered in cold sweat. He had dreamt that Li Qingshan had become a tiger and mauled through his belly, ripping out his organs.

Blurrily, he saw a few dark figures standing before his bed. He jerked awake completely.

Li Qingshan and He Yishi met face to face. They made eye contact and were both stunned.

He Yishi had set up many warning mechanisms, but how was it possible for them to be triggered with Hao Pingyang and Zhang Lanqing here? They dismantled all of them, allowing them to enter He Yishi's bedroom smoothly. They were just about to throw something over his head and vent their anger, but they never expected him to actually wake up at a time like this.

Hao Pingyang and Zhang Lanqing looked at one another too.

Li Qingshan rushed up. He picked up the cotton blankets and threw it over his head, beating him viciously. They were already here anyway. Were they supposed to apologise and say that they had entered the wrong room at a time like this?

Below the blankets, He Yishi called out, "Don't kill me! I've seen nothing! I've seen nothing!" After witnessing Li Qingshan's battle against Chu Tian, he no longer possessed even a shred of confidence in holding his ground against Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan had no idea on how to react. He never planned on killing He Yishi in the first place, or he would not have called Hao Pingyang and Zhang Lanqing to come with him. Not only was his killing intent not heavy enough to kill in the academy, but He Yishi was not worth this risk to him either.

Li Qingshan lifted his fists of revenge and gave He Yishi a thorough beating.

“Qingshan, enough! He doesn’t deserve death!” Zhang Lanqing was afraid Li Qingshan would actually beat He Yishi to death.

He Yishi ached all over, but he was still so touched that he almost began crying. Senior brother Zhang was truly a kind-hearted person!

“I’m fully aware!” Li Qingshan punched him another three times viciously. “He Yishi, don’t act like you’ve seen nothing. The person who beat you was me, Li Qingshan. I saved your life back then, but you turned against me instead. Today was for showing the consequences. I’m not a person who you can frame just because you want to. If you hold any ill intent towards me again in the future, I’ll never spare you! Let’s go!”

He heard the footsteps vanish through the door, followed by a bang when the door closed. Only then did He Yishi reveal himself from his covers slowly. His face was swollen like a pig’s, to the point where he almost could not open his eyes. His fear of dying was gone now, while his body was in agony. He even felt like a few bones had broken.

He had never suffered so much before. As he sobbed, he cursed Li Qingshan, he cursed Hao Pingyang, and he cursed Zhang Lanqing. After becoming exhausted from all the cursing, he collapsed on bed and felt his mind lighten up. Finally, there was no need for him to be on edge all the time. He could finally sleep in peace.

If Li Qingshan learnt how his beating had instead brought He Yishi relief and liberation, who knew how he would feel? Anyhow, Li Qingshan was in quite a good mood right now. A part of the gloominess he had built up over the past few days had vanished.

He was not afraid of He Yishi reporting this to someone either. He did not have evidence, and even if he did have evidence proving they were responsible, they would just suffer a bit of punishment at most, but He Yishi would not be able to remain in the academy any longer. A backstabbing, ungrateful scoundrel was not welcome anywhere.

Originally, Li Qingshan wanted to invite Hao Pingyang and Zhang Lanqing to the Hundred Flavours restaurant for breakfast, but Zhang Lanqing insisted on going home. Afterwards, he invited out his “companion”. She was not a supreme beauty, but she was a gentle and understanding person.

When the female cultivator witnessed the arrival of the two primary disciples, both prominent figures within the academy, her small complaint completely vanished. She felt happy that Zhang Lanqing had friends like them. She even personally manned the kitchen, preparing a sumptuous breakfast for them all.

Zhang Lanqing helped her out during the process. Even Li Qingshan was amazed by how perfect of a combination they were. Everyone had their own path of cultivation. With how vast it was, there was no

need for a person to advance alone, and even if companionship resulted in nothing in the end, there would be no regrets when looking back.

A few bowls of congee and a few pickled vegetables were served up. The taste was nothing special, but Li Qingshan still sang praises about how lucky Zhang Lanqing was. All of it came from the bottom of his heart.

The sky lit up, and the day of study and cultivation began.

Hao Pingyang said, "You've missed quite a few classes on forging artifacts."

Li Qingshan was currently facing a dilemma about whether to continue writing novels or not, so he was in no mood to study artifact forging. "I need to visit the school of the Military for some matters. I'm going to hold off artifact forging for now!"

The leader of the school of the Military, Han Anjun, had personally invited him. No matter his reason, he had to go.

He cared quite a lot about what Han Anjun had said too. He had not undertaken any systematic battle training before, purely relying on his own understanding, so there was nothing he could do about his moves being rather rough. He could unleash a hundred and twenty percent of his strength during every single battle through his impressive talent for battle, reaching the state where any move that could knock down a person was a good move.

However, if he could receive some guidance from a master of battle like Han Anjun, he would definitely benefit quite a lot. Compared to the techniques that involved true qi, forging and tempering his body was still his roots, particularly when he transformed.

And, according to his past experiences, moving around and working up a sweat would put him in a good mood too.

As the disciples of the other schools were still struggling to get out of bed, all the military disciples had already begun training. They all stood on the snow-covered land, naked. They were all doused with a bucket of ice water first before being forced into the lake to swim a lap around Great War island.

It was no different from living in military barracks, but no one even batted an eye. When they leapt into the icy lake, if they hesitated even in the slightest, the officers behind them—equivalent to the professors—would immediately give them a kick, showing them absolutely none of the respect that Qi Practitioners deserved.

Though, almost a year had already passed since the entrance examination. Even the new disciples would not hesitate anymore.

Those who could not put up with this lifestyle had already left the school of the Military. Among the academy, the school of the Military was the only one with disciples who left willingly. It was also the only one without female disciples.

Forging the body was no less painful than practising qi. They had to undertake the hardships of tempering and toughening their bodies. Only creatures like men would give up on their wonderful lives

and experience a sense of pride as well as a hot-blooded bond of brotherhood through these masochistic drills.

Within the academy, the disciples of the school of the Military were the most united too.

Han Tiewi was at the very front with a patrol group. Suddenly, he heard a loud whistle from above, and he spotted Li Qingshan smiling on the cloud, saying, "Nice build, though your drinking capacities are a little lacking! Hahaha!" Li Qingshan thought about his glorious achievement of toppling Han Tiewi in drinking again.

Han Tiewi heard why Li Qingshan had come, and he immediately withdrew the disciples back on shore. Afterwards, he made Li Qingshan wait outside.

Li Qingshan arrived before the central building of the school of Military. Outside the martial arts hall, there were several hundred tall, wide steps. Several hundred military disciples stood to the two sides, all bare-chested and neutral in expression, without shifting their gazes at all.

Li Qingshan said, "You're far too polite. You've even arranged a special welcoming ceremony for me!"

Han Tiewi appeared on the top of the steps. He wore a set of black clothes that were easy to work in, which accentuated his straight eyebrows and twinkling eyes, making him seem extraordinarily valiant. "If you want guidance from the school leader, we'll have to see whether you qualify or not."

Li Qingshan asked, "Then how can I qualify?"

Han Tiewi seemed to smile, but it was just too fast, such that even Li Qingshan doubted his own eyes.

"Don't use any techniques. Fight your way up!"

### **Chapter 316 - How Do I Start Writing (Two)**

Li Qingshan had been expecting this from Han Tiewi. He raised his head and gazed over. There were at least seven or eight hundred military disciples standing on the long steps, ranging from as low as the second or third layer to as high as the seventh or eighth layer. They were cleverly divided by the steps.

Every single disciple of the school of the Military gave off a scent of valour and fierceness. If regular Qi Practitioners were hounds, then they would be true wolves. From a rough glance, their figures did not seem particularly large, but when it came to actual battle, it would be completely different.

Han Tiewi said, "The training mission today is actual combat. Your objective is to defeat that person."

"Yes, sir!"

Military orders bore the weight of mountains, and it would be strictly enforced. Several hundred pairs of eyes turned towards Li Qingshan at the same time, all staring daggers at him.

Every single one of them had witnessed the battle the other day. They admired and applauded this person who had defeated Chu Tian despite the odds, earning Han Anjun's praise, but they did not fear him. As "soldiers", they were people who had to be able to cast aside their personal safety and charge in with full strength even against enemies that outnumbered them ten-to-one.

Li Qingshan could truly feel the existence of the army's "might".

When they poured their strength together and achieved unity, they would form a monster called an “army”. The tremendous bearing crushed down on him like an avalanche, like he was facing an army a hundred thousand strong.

Yes, if it were an army composed of regular people, even if they were a hundred thousand strong, they still would not be able to stop them.

Faced with this situation, it would be quite rare if regular Qi Practitioners could even unleash thirty percent of their full strength.

However, was Li Qingshan a regular person? He had never been shaken up by anyone’s aura or bearing before. Compared to lifting a brush and writing, situations like this were what he was adept at dealing with. As a matter of fact, he even liked such situations.

Not only was he composed and devoid of any fear, but this had even set off his burning fighting spirit, making him eager to try them. He laughed aloud. “Tieyi, we’re friends who’ve drunken together, even though I overwhelmed you, hahaha! Yet, you use something like this against me. When I get up there, I’ll definitely give you a punch or three.”

He infuriated the military disciples with that. Although they admired Li Qingshan’s strength, he was just a seventh layer Qi Practitioner if he could not use any techniques or weapons. He knew the art of forging the body, but just who here didn’t know that? Let alone beating him up, they could even exhaust him to death.

Han Tieyi snorted coldly. “Then you’d better give it a try! Do you really think you’re invincible just because you defeated that piece of trash?”

Li Qingshan turned towards Xiao An and said, “Wait here. Watch how I tear through his military formation!”

With that, he planted a foot on the steps. Over a dozen figures leapt up and immediately filled his vision. As they called out, they attacked every inch of Li Qingshan’s body at the same time. Their combination was flawless, like they were a single person. They sealed off every single direction for Li Qingshan, along with any possibility for him to dodge.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! He was basically struck at the same time all over his body. The punches, kicks, palm strikes, and knee strikes were like spear thrusts and hammer blows. Even a boulder would be smashed to pieces by them.

We’ve won. All the disciples who launched the attack thought at the same time. He had no protective techniques. They did not even sense any protective true qi. How was he supposed to withstand their punches and kicks with his body alone?

“Now, this is the welcoming ceremony our school of the Military gives to esteemed guests!” said a military disciple, answering Li Qingshan’s little joke from earlier.

Li Qingshan lowered his head. His tied-up hair was shaken loose, draping onto his face.

“Really? Punches as weak and as powerless as this don’t seem like a particularly enthusiastic welcome.”



The military disciple who had spoken suddenly became stunned. A pair of eyes shone red like a beast's within the messy hair as his lips curled into a vicious grin, exposing his snow-white teeth.

With a jolt, the true qi stored within his sea of qi began to surge out.

All the military disciples who had struck him were sent flying, landing far away. Their arms and legs that they had used to strike Li Qingshan were in agony, but none of them groaned. Some of them even struggled back onto their feet, wanting to fight back.

"It's best if people like that just sit out if that's all the strength that you have. People like that can't pique my interests at all."

As Li Qingshan said that, he continued to climb up the steps. Whenever he climbed a step higher, even more and even stronger military disciples would attack him. He still did not fight back, allowing his body to endure their attacks. He did not even bother to shake them off. The punches from third or fourth layer Qi Practitioners would never be able to harm him even without protective true qi.

On the steps, the military disciples had completely surrounded Li Qingshan, punching and kicking him, but they failed to slow him down, not even slightly. Instead, their arms and legs ached as Li Qingshan shook them off. They were in utter shock. Just how powerful were his defences?

Li Qingshan could tell that he had to climb to a certain height before stronger military disciples would attack him.

Han Tiewi watched on from the very top. Their gazes met.

Li Qingshan smiled. Suddenly, he leaned forwards, and his arms draped down naturally. The stone steps that had been reinforced using techniques cracked under his feet.

All of a sudden, Li Qingshan's figure vanished from before the military disciples.

Li Qingshan had already shot off like an arrow, charging through the military disciples in his way and sending them flying. He directly rushed towards the highest point on the steps.

The Tiger Demon Climbs the Mountain in an unstoppable fashion.

No one had expected Li Qingshan to actually be so fast when he decided to move quickly. In the blink of an eye, he reached the top of the stairs, only ten steps away from Han Tiewi.

The military disciples all roared out, "Stop him!"

Not a single disciple remained where they were anymore. All of them were alarmed and set off at the same time. If they allowed Li Qingshan to charge to the very top, they truly would become laughing stocks.

"Eat my fist!"

Li Qingshan grinned. The bones throughout his entire body thrummed as he mobilised all the true qi in his dantian. Nothing happened when he remained still, but once he struck, he would unleash his full strength.

His vision suddenly dimmed, as if a wall had appeared out of nowhere, blocking his path to Han Tiewi.

The giant lumberman Mu Kui let out a furious roar. Lifting his arms over his head, he swung them down like battering rams.

He was the other person who had once competed against Li Qingshan in a trial of strength. He was naturally endowed with unrivalled physical strength, and he had spent most of the past year working diligently, allowing his strength to reach a whole new level. He wanted payback right now.

Thump! The platform at the very top of the steps seemed to shake.

The punch and the battering rams collided.

Mu Kui was overwhelmed with shock. Under an overwhelming force, his colossal body stumbled backwards before he collapsed on his bottom in the end.

Li Qingshan maintained his posture of throwing a punch without taking a single step back.

The ox demon had provided him with great physical strength, while the tiger demon had provided him with unrivalled explosive power. Together, he could even force back a giant lumberman who was naturally endowed with strength.

However, Mu Kui's obstruction gave the military disciples the opportunity to stop Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan looked around.

The strongest disciple present at the eighth layer had already arrived before him. His fists actually burned with flames, fusing his abilities as a Body Practitioner and a Qi Practitioner together. Even Li Qingshan could not afford to underestimate him.

A little further away, over a dozen seventh layer Qi Practitioners unleashed their various techniques and shone with an assortment of colours. Even further away, several hundred men of the school of the Military formed a sea of surging heads, lunging over like a wolf pack that had spotted prey.

In front of him, Mu Kui had stood up again; he spread out his arms, refusing to let Li Qingshan pass.

"That's more like it! Come get me together!"

Li Qingshan laughed before turning around and charging into the crowd. He was like a fierce tiger that had climbed to the very top of the mountain before turning around and lunging back down.

The Tiger Demon Descends from the Mountain!

The first in line was a seventh layer Qi Practitioner. He wielded his palm like a knife as Geng Metal true qi condensed a blade. His moves were as swift as lightning, specialising in tearing through protective true qi.

The path of the military did not have any spectacular techniques, but what they could do was condense all their power into a single point, forming a simple but highly effective killing move.

His plan was that as long as he could force back Li Qingshan by even half a step, they would be able to fall into formation and launch combined attacks against Li Qingshan. By then, no matter how capable Li Qingshan was, he would not be able to break free. He would be a sitting duck.

Li Qingshan only attacked without defending. He allowed the Geng Metal blade to land on him while all he did was smile viciously and throw a punch.

At that moment, whoever retreated would take a great blow to their momentum.

If that's the case, then I'll make you suffer. The military disciple gritted his teeth and swung down hard.

Even an idiot knew what was more damaging—being struck by a punch or being chopped by a blade.

With a thump, the military disciple took off like a broken kite, falling down the steps and colliding against his fellow officers. His eyes were wide open. All he saw was a white mark on Li Qingshan's shoulder, which soon disappeared.

Just what kind of body tempering techniques did he practise? That was the final thought that flashed through his head before he fainted.

Li Qingshan's Gui Water true qi was extremely pure. Although it could not block the Geng Metal blade qi completely, it could slow it down momentarily. Before it could even land on him properly, Li Qingshan interrupted the attack with his punch, and the residual power was nowhere near enough to get through his Ox Demon Forges its Hide.

We're both seventh layer Qi Practitioners, but my physical strength is greater, my speed is faster, and even my true qi is more pure. How are you supposed to contend against me?

Li Qingshan attacked every single direction, like a tiger within a flock of sheep. All he saw were figures. There was no need for him to consider what moves he would use. All he did was throw his arms and legs about, and the military disciples would be sent flying as they called out one by one.

Above, there were also a few drillmasters of the school of the Military besides Han Tieyi. They could all tell that Li Qingshan was not a brute on a mindless rampage. From the beginning till end, he did not give the strongest few disciples the opportunity to surround him. Their fellow officers had instead become their obstacles.

It was truly shocking that he could still grasp the entire situation despite how chaotic it was. Even more shockingly, he actually seemed to be trying to defeat all of these disciples alone.

An old drillmaster asserted, "It's impossible for his physical strength and true qi to last that long."

Fifteen minutes later, half of the military disciples had already collapsed. All of them could fight no more. Some of them had even fainted, directly rolling down the steps, and this was all with Li Qingshan holding back, or they would have been dead.

On the other hand, Li Qingshan was still as energetic as ever, without the slightest hint of exhaustion. Instead, he was in high spirits, calling out, "Satisfying!" He grabbed a military disciple by the leg and whirled him around a few times like a weapon before throwing him far away.

The drillmasters were utterly astounded. The old drillmaster from earlier added again, "This kid truly has taken me by surprise, but he won't be able to last much longer."

Sure enough, Li Qingshan's true qi had already begun to run out. He would only use his true qi to block relatively more dangerous attacks, which earned a series of nods from the drillmasters.

However, fifteen more minutes passed, and Li Qingshan could not even unleash his protective true qi anymore. His sea of qi was empty too. He completely relied on an ox's resilience and a tiger's staunchness to keep fighting. He became riddled with injuries too, but his vigour did not weaken at all. Instead, he grew even fiercer, reaching a peak.

### **Chapter 317 - How Do I Start Writing (Three)**

Li Qingshan swept away the military disciples like an autumn breeze to fallen leaves. Having lost his protective true qi, he was covered in wounds, gasping for air. In particular, his chest had an extremely prominent print of a scorched fist. He was covered in blood, both from others and himself.

Large swathes of military disciples laid on the ground below his feet.

Li Qingshan grinned and chuckled to himself. A battle like this was even more satisfying than downing fifty jars of fine alcohol. Everything troubling him had been cast aside.

The few dozen remaining military disciples looked at him like he was a monster. If it were not for Han Teyi and the drillmasters watching on from above and the fact that their lives were not in danger, they would have scattered a long time ago.

No matter how great the willpower of the military disciples were, it was still finite.

However, there were still moments when this "monster" would be weakened. "Don't let him recover! Get him, brothers!"

However, their faint glimmer of hope was soon put out by Li Qingshan.

He grabbed two military disciples by the neck, one in each arm. Tightening his grasp, the two of them directly fainted. After that, he casually tossed them aside.

At this moment, a fist arrived before him. He received it with a headbutt, and with a crack, the arm broke, and Li Qingshan shook his head too.

Although he seemed like he could collapse in the next moment, he remained standing staunchly. Only when the last military disciple had collapsed did he laugh aloud.

Li Qingshan had not achieved this because he had erupted with extraordinary strength. Instead, he had finished off all the seventh layer Qi Practitioners one by one in the chaotic battle, while the strongest opponent, the eighth layer Qi Practitioner, had been finished off at the cost of an injury from forcefully taking on a punch. The other person Mu Kui had received a kick from Li Qingshan too, rolling down the steps and falling unconscious.

Even an exhausted tiger was not something that a group of wolf cubs could threaten.

Now, no one else could stand on the several hundred steps anymore apart from him.

Li Qingshan said to Xiao An, "See?"

Unknowingly, the spectators below were not just Xiao An anymore. There were also many other disciples from other schools who had heard the news and rushed over from the other islands. They all

stared at him in shock. All of them had just watched him defeat approximately ninety percent of the disciples of the school of the Military alone. Was he still human?

Li Qingshan looked down from above and saw a sea of heads. It was a gathering on par with the one during his battle against Chu Tian. Hua Chengzan, Hao Pingyang, and a few others were among them. Han Qiongzhi seemed to be there too.

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“Li Qingshan, that coward? Did he enter seclusion and run away from the battle again?” Han Qiongzhi had just returned from a mission when she heard about the news of the battle between Li Qingshan and Chu Tian.

A few months had already passed by now. The slight heart throb she experienced back then had already vanished. Ever since she learned Li Qingshan had entered the school of Novels, she knew that he had probably lost the right to pursue her forever. She found this to be a slight pity.

Only when she heard how he wanted to fight the genius Chu Tian did she become interested again. She went to watch and simply because of his favourable impression on her, she wagered five hundred spiritual stones on him, but in the end, he did not even show up, which immediately disappointed her. The slight heart throb turned into disdain. All she thought was she had completely misjudged him back then.

Hua Chengzan leaned against the door. “Of course, he came. I said this last time. You misunderstood him. He’s not someone who would run away from a battle.”

Han Qiongzhi continued to tidy her things. “If you were a woman, I’d probably suspect you feel something towards that kid. No, you might even be infatuated with him. What, did Chu Tian beat him until he was half dead, making you lose another one thousand spiritual stones?”

Hua Chengzan said, “The heart of a woman is as difficult to grasp as a needle on the bottom of the ocean, but getting a woman to understand a man is extremely difficult too. This time, I won.”

Han Qiongzhi stopped what she was doing. “What did you say?”

“Of course. I made back everything I lost last time. Chu Tian is still hospitalised in the school of Medicine. And, the kid you’re talking about has already reached the seventh layer. I think catching up to you is just a matter of time for him. Of course, if the two of you fight right now, you probably aren’t his opponent.”

Han Qiongzhi asked, “Then what about him? How’s he doing?”

“Basically unscathed. I heard he has been writing novels recently. Hehe, if old Wang hears this, it’ll drive him crazy again.”

Han Qiongzhi frowned. “Have I misjudged him? Tell me exactly what happened.”

As a result, Hua Chengzan told her the entire story. With how nimble his tongue was, he would probably be the best storyteller there ever was if he decided to tell stories.

Han Qiongzhi was enthralled. She was tempted to rush over in person and celebrate with Li Qingshan. So she had misunderstood him. She put down her things. No, I have to go see him.

However, she stopped herself again. When he joined the school of Novels back then, I didn't go to see him, so if I go see him now, wouldn't he just take me as a snob?

But he had entered secluded cultivation just a few days after joining the school of Novels. She had been busy too, which was why she had not visited him. And, as a woman, it would be utterly humiliating for her to have any contact with a person from the school of Novels.

Just as she was stuck in this dilemma, a legalist disciple reported, "Senior brother and sister, there's another show going on again! Han Tieyi has laid down his military formations for Li Qingshan to challenge!"

"Let's go take a look!" Hua Chengzan said, so Han Qiongzhi just went with the flow. She hated missing out on the fun the most.

After she arrived, Han Qiongzhi felt rather glad. At least she had not missed this battle.

As she watched Li Qingshan rampage through the military disciples with a composed smile, she suddenly felt her heart thump, while her eyes were firmly glued to him too.

Hua Chengzan smiled. "Who's the one infatuated now?"

Han Qiongzhi's face reddened, but she did not back down. "Do you have any issues with that? This is the type I like. It's countless times better than a pretty face like you!"

Hua Chengzan rubbed his nose. "You really can't keep a grown girl at home. In the blink of an eye, your childhood friend has become a pretty face."

They knew one another since they were children. Since young, he had been radiating with charm, such that he would interest basically every single woman that he met. Only she maintained a relationship of purely friends with him. Even without him, Han Qiongzhi would still dislike romantic men, as she came from a clan of soldiers. No matter how charming Hua Chengzan was, it would still be ineffective against her.

Han Qiongzhi sniggered. "This time, li'l bro Tieyi's in for quite the humiliation. My old man must be quite ashamed too."

Before she had even finished speaking, a cold snort pierced her ears like an awl. Han Qiongzhi shivered all over as she became sheet-white.

Hua Chengzan asked, "What's wrong?"

Han Qiongzhi gritted her teeth. "It's the old coot. To think he would actually be so vicious to his own daughter."

Hua Chengzan said, "There aren't any daughters who speak so brazenly either."

As they spoke, the outcome had been determined on the platform. Han Qiongzhi saw how Li Qingshan was riddled with wounds, tottering about, which pulled at her heartstrings. She called out, "You've won, so come down already!"

“Hold on. I need to beat you up now!” Li Qingshan instead turned around and made his way up as he said this to Han Tiewi.

Li Qingshan climbed up step by step, arriving before Han Tiewi.

A military disciple on the ground suddenly climbed up and wrapped his arms around Li Qingshan’s waist.

“Brothers, stop him!”

The incapacitated military disciples all grabbed Li Qingshan’s legs with everything that they had.

Li Qingshan lifted his fist, throwing it towards the military disciple around his waist. The disciple just closed his eyes, but he continued to cling onto him. However, he felt no pain at all. For some reason, Li Qingshan had pulled the fist back again.

Li Qingshan moved his heavy feet with difficulty, forcefully dragging so many people along as he approached Han Tiewi step by step. He tottered about very much as he walked, but he was determined.

With a thump, he finally stepped onto the platform on the top, throwing a punch towards Han Tiewi.

Han Tiewi raised his hand to stop the drillmasters who wanted to interfere. Without dodging at all, he received the punch.

“Young general!” The military disciples were all furious. This was akin to watching helplessly as the enemy general charged through their ranks and killed their commander. Every single military disciple who was still conscious felt disgraced. They gritted their teeth, with some even tearing up like children.

“Release him,” Han Tiewi ordered. “There are still two more punches.”

Li Qingshan exercised his body slightly. “Even I find punches so powerless to be boring, so I’ll keep it on credit for now. I’ll punch you when I recover my strength!”

With that, Li Qingshan fell backwards. There was a flash of golden light, and Xiao An caught Li Qingshan with her vajra avatar.

The sound of snoring rang out as he slept away soundly. As he slept, he grinned in pure satisfaction.

“Give him to me. He needs some treatment.”

A woman arrived beside Xiao An. Her beauty was picturesque as she spoke gently. Dressed in white clothes, she seemed to radiate with white light. An ivory tablet hung from her waist, engraved with the word “One”.

On the steps, disciples of the school of Medicine in similar white clothes got to work, tending to and treating the wounds of the military disciples.

Han Tiewi said to the woman, “Ru Xin, thank you for your troubles.”

The school of the Military could handle regular injuries. As a matter of fact, the disciples themselves could recover without any treatment at all. However, if the injuries were slightly more severe, they would ask the disciples of the school of Medicine to help out, preventing any potential lingering problems.

“Since I’m getting paid, of course I have to do my job and leave you satisfied.” Ru Xin smiled gently in a natural and graceful manner. The school of the Military was the school of Medicine’s greatest customer. Rarely did they ever have so much business.

“Senior sister Ru Xin, he seems to be mostly fine,” a muscly man said in a low, muffled voice.

“We have no idea if he has suffered any internal injuries. It’ll be bad if it becomes something chronic. Don’t you think so, little sister?” Ru Xin crouched down and asked Xiao An.

Xiao An felt that Li Qingshan would be completely fine with how his body was built, but she was still worried, so she nodded in agreement.

A green leaf flew out from Ru Xin’s sleeve. It expanded and lifted up Li Qingshan. A green light rose up and encased Li Qingshan. His smaller wounds immediately began to recover.

Even more green leaves flew out from her sleeve, over a hundred of them. They lifted up all the military disciples who were relatively more injured.

This was not a technique, but a spiritual artifact. It was a spiritual artifact that came in a set. Although it was only high grade, it was probably worth even more than regular supreme grade spiritual artifacts.

Ru Xin glanced at Li Qingshan on the leaf and pursed her lips. His body was so powerful that it basically exceeded all regular understanding. It was very much worth studying.

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Han Tiewi turned around and entered the martial arts hall. To the very back sat Han Anjun, who held a bronze, three-legged cup for drinking alcohol. To his sides were ten seats, nine of which were occupied. Only the seat to Han Anjun’s right was empty.

All of them were eighth or ninth layer Qi Practitioners, while the vicious-looking, bulky, bald man to Han Anjun’s left was impressively at the tenth layer Qi Practitioner.

The bald man said, “General, why won’t you give us permission to fight? Why must we let that kid run amok in such an arrogant manner?”

The eight other people were furious too. They had watched helplessly as Li Qingshan defeated all of their fellow officers alone before a public audience. If it were not for Han Anjun’s power and influence, they would have run out of patience a long time ago and interfered.

Among the academy, apart from the primary disciple, there were a total of ten disciples who held the greatest status. They were known as core disciples. The nine of them were truly valiant soldiers and generals. They possessed the strongest battle prowess in the entire school. If any one of them had joined in on the battle earlier, it would have been possible to change the outcome.

Han Anjun said sternly, “Just outnumbering him is not enough, is it? You even want to bully the weak too?”

The bald man refused to relent. “They were all empty-handed, so how could they properly unleash the power of the encirclement? If they fought in actual battle with real weapons, he would have died long ago.”



Han Anjun placed down his bronze cup heavily. "I think the one arrogant is not him, but you lot! In a real slaughter with anything and everything allowed, he can kill his way in here in under half an hour. You all seem so skilled and capable during training, but when it comes to actual battle, you show your true colours and descend into a complete mess. This is embarrassing, utterly embarrassing! All of you piss off and spend three days reflecting on yourself."

The quiet Han Anjun suddenly spoke up, scolding them violently. All of them fell silent from fear and left under Han Anjun's orders. Only Han Tiewi remained.

Han Anjun's expression gradually eased up. He let out an extremely rare smile. "Tiewi, well done. This is the bit of motivation that they need. They can't keep thinking they're stronger than the disciples of the other schools just because they have it a little tougher every day."

As the leader of the school of the Military, his senses for certain things were far sharper than Liu Zhangqing's. Under the facade of peace, something seemed to be growing tense again. War was near.

His exact objective was to borrow Li Qingshan to fiercely temper the military disciples so that they could prepare for any potential turmoil. Embarrassment was better than losing their lives. He was not afraid of embarrassing the school of the Military. Dead people felt no embarrassment.

"I didn't think he could make it all the way up like this." Han Tiewi frowned. He did not doubt Li Qingshan's ability to charge all the way up, but making his way up step by step after sweeping aside everyone had taken him by surprise.

"His body tempering techniques are something else. It's just a pity that he's not a disciple of my school of the Military. Otherwise, our chances of winning the martial arts competition of the nine prefectures would increase by thirty percent at the very least." Han Anjun let out a sigh just like the slovenly daoist priest.

Out of the prodigies who had appeared during the entrance examination, Li Qingshan would be the greatest if he were evaluating them. Both Chu Tian and Yu Zijian paled in comparison to him. Although Xiao An's talent was monstrously high, she was not necessarily suited for the path of the military. However, Li Qingshan was basically born to be a soldier. He liked fighting and killing, yet he also possessed courage and sharp wit.

Han Tiewi said, "He's not a disciple of the school of the Military, but you still can give him some guidance, general."

Han Anjun said, "That's what I have in mind too. I'll leave this to you for now!"

Only when the big fish was violent enough could the group of small fish be prompted into action, erupting with unprecedented potential and becoming even more united. And, even without this reason, they were reluctant to see someone with such great potential like him being wasted away in a place like the school of Novels.

"Yes, sir!"

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Li Qingshan woke up from his dream. White blankets covered him with white walls, tables, and chairs around him. The curtains swayed in the breeze as sunlight poured in from the windows.

A pure-white lily was placed by his bed, giving off a faint fragrance. The weather had cleared up before he knew it, allowing the warm sunlight to pour in.

Li Qingshan stretched a little; he felt that various parts of his body still ached slightly. However, he felt extremely happy too. Sure enough, compared to writing novels, this lifestyle suited him better. It was best if he just gave up on that unrealistic idea!

He closed his eyes and sensed the various parts of his body. They were all fine. His depleted dantian began to build up true qi again too.

True qi originally followed a process of circulation. Having overexerted it, his recovery rate was extremely gradual, but his true qi's quality did increase.

He had benefited quite a lot from this battle. Although he did not receive a single word of advice from Han Anjun, he had comprehended plenty of things.

He was a genius for actual combat. He radiated with charm in battle and battle would also unlock his potential. Although none of the military disciples seemed like his opponent, the moves they unleashed, the tricks in how they used their force, and even the feeling when he was struck by them brought him great benefit.

Ru Xin walked in from outside. "You're awake."

Li Qingshan's eyes lit up. Another beauty, and a beauty at the tenth layer. Sure enough, there were plenty of fish in the sea. He really struggled to understand what Hua Chengzan was thinking.

Though, if he actually had to compare them, the person standing before him was slightly worse than Gu Yanying. He had no idea why he felt like that. Perhaps it was the truth, or perhaps it was his deep impression speaking, which he had gained from suddenly seeing a supreme beauty after spending over a decade trapped in the countryside.

Wasn't there a story just like this? A scholar had eaten a bowl of lotus starch in a farmer's home whilst in abjection, and he found it to be utterly delicious. Afterwards, he became a high-ranking official and tried the lotus starch made by all the renowned chefs in the region, but none of it tasted like before. In the end, he found the same farmer's home as before and ate it again, but it no longer tasted like before anymore.

He was very interested in finding an opportunity and testing whether this story was true or not for himself.

"I'm Li Qingshan. May I ask for your esteemed name?"

"How could I, Ru Xin, not know about the infamous fellow Li's name?"

Were there surnames like Ru? Li Qingshan was perplexed. He looked around. "Where's Xiao An?"

"She has been called back by the One Thought master. It's not like you're riddled with illness either, so there's no need for her to remain by your bedside constantly." As Ru Xin said that, she sat down by the

bed and pressed her hands against Li Qingshan's bare chest. His bluish-green robes had been ripped to pieces during the battle.

Her hands that were as soft and smooth as jade slid from his chest to his belly. "Your wounds healed very quickly. The vitality your body contains is simply shocking."

"I ate some unknown fruit when I was young, and I just became so robust afterwards." Li Qingshan casually made up a lie. Is she interested in me? Heh, she must have witnessed my valiance in the school of Military. She has been drawn to me by my bearing.

Whatever, I can't just let her do all the work. Li Qingshan had always been a person who did whatever he wanted. He grabbed Ru Xin's hand. "I still have to thank you for treating my injuries with so much care."

Ru Xin's face stiffened. She tried to pull her hand back, but it was stuck. Her face reddened slightly, and it was not out of embarrassment, but anger. She had plenty of suitors in the academy, but there really were few as shameless as him.

Li Qingshan thought his charm had already reached Hua Chengzan's level.

Ru Xin said sternly, "Sir, if you don't let go, I'll have to call out."

Only then did Li Qingshan let go of her. He was surprised. "Didn't you touch me first?"

"I'm the doctor, and you're the patient. That's something that comes first. What? Do you like it like that, being massaged by someone? Though, I need to say it is an option. That is one of the services our school of Medicine provides, but it costs money." Ru Xin lowered her head with a faint smile. She seemed extremely moving.

Li Qingshan was both excited and disappointed. "Alright. How many spiritual stones is it?"

"Lie down. I'll go make some preparations." Ru Xin smiled enchantingly and left.

A while later, a man covered in muscles barged in. He asked with a thunderous bellow, "You want a massage!"

Li Qingshan was stunned. "Isn't it... Isn't it supposed to be..."

"How can senior sister Ru Xin do manual labour like this? Come here!" The muscly man cut right to the chase and began slamming Li Qingshan's back with his iron palms that could split boulders.

"Not bad."

A while later, Li Qingshan stood up and praised from the bottom of his heart. The muscly man was truly a disciple of the school of Medicine. He seemed rough, but his hands were extremely nimble and careful, whether it be while kneading, pinching, slapping, or pressing. He completely relaxed Li Qingshan's body and also channeled his body with Yi Wood true qi brimming with vigour.

Li Qingshan felt relaxed. All of the bruises on his body had vanished too. It was worth the sum of spiritual stones.

The muscly man bellowed, "Thank you for your patronage!"

Li Qingshan stood up and fished out a set of clothes from his hundred treasures pouch, putting them on and making his way out.

Ru Xin smiled. "How do you feel? How're my junior brother's massaging skills?"

"Pretty good." Li Qingshan smiled. The violent slaps from the muscly man had indeed severed those thoughts of Li Qingshan. She was not interested, so he could not be bothered either. It was not like he would die if he went without a woman. There were countless other things he could pursue in life.

Ru Xin was slightly surprised. Originally, she thought Li Qingshan would be embarrassed and displeased, or even furious. She had already prepared some excuses.

However, she never expected him to be so unperturbed, and his gaze towards her had turned back to normal. She instead began to doubt her own charm.

"This must be your first time visiting Benevolence island, right? I'll show you around!"

Since a primary disciple had come, he obviously had to be received by another primary disciple. Although he came from the declining school of Novels, Li Qingshan had already proved to everyone that he deserved such treatment.

They strolled around idly. With a beauty beside him, it was quite interesting.

With nothing better to do, Li Qingshan began to ask about the school of Medicine. "Doctors focus on curing illnesses and saving lives. Saving lives make sense, but do cultivators fall ill too?"

Ru Xin said, "There's nothing we can help them with! We can give them whatever illness we want."

The school of Medicine was not some kind and gentle motherly figure. Instead, they were skilled in poisons and pestilence. Poison naturally referred to various kinds of potent toxins, while pestilence referred to diseases. They collected various kinds of diseases and could kill people without anyone knowing. Among the gods that the school of Medicine worshipped, there were gods of plagues.

"Not funny," said Li Qingshan.

"Really? How strange. No one ever laughs whenever I say that. Whatever. You'll always run into a few freaks. The illnesses of cultivators normally aren't prominent. Instead, they lurk within the body, either damaging the meridians or destroying the balance between the five elements. It might not be life-threatening, but over time, it will affect their cultivation."

"And, aside from illness of the body, there are illnesses of the mind too. I specialise in mental illnesses. Physical illnesses are easy to deal with, but once you become mentally ill, you'll struggle to make any progress at all on the path of cultivation, like commander Hua from the school of Legalism. Don't tell him I said this, but he's afflicted with a mental illness. Saving a cultivator's path of cultivation is basically saving their lives!"

Li Qingshan grinned. "Then why don't you save him?"

Ru Xin said, "His illness has already progressed too far. Doctors can't cure the helpless, just like how buddha can only bring salvation to those who are destined!" Suddenly, she stifled her voice. "Look at

the two over there. Their illnesses have progressed too far too. They're beyond help, utterly beyond help!"

Li Qingshan looked over and saw Qian Rongzhi supporting Chu Tian as they strolled around in the garden, smiling from ear to ear. If it were not for the fact that he knew Qian Rongzhi's behaviour and Chu Tian's personality very well, he really would have believed they were a match made in heaven.

"What illnesses do they have?"

"One suffers from madness, while the other suffers from arrogance."

"That sure matches them." Li Qingshan smiled before changing directions and avoiding them.

Chu Tian was currently in a state of pure peace and bliss, so he sensed nothing. However, Qian Rongzhi immediately sensed them. She glanced over and saw Ru Xin's back. She frowned slightly. This woman was very troublesome.

Li Qingshan mentioned how he had once been interested in coming to the school of Medicine to learn alchemy.

Ru Xin said, "You've made the right choice in choosing the school of Medicine. The school of Daoism only refines pills. We refine medicine too."

"Is there any difference?"

"Refining pills is only for cultivation, but refining medicine can cure illnesses."

Ru Xin brought Li Qingshan to the main dispensary in the school of Medicine to show him around. Sure enough, apart from the dazzling array of spiritual pills, there were also various coloured liquids and powders.

Li Qingshan saw a small box labeled as "Jade Skin Powder". He asked, "What illness does this cure?"

Ru Xin said, "It specially cures the illness of darkness."

"The illness of darkness?"

Ru Xin studied Li Qingshan. "Yep, just like what you suffer from. If you use this medicine, you can become a true pretty face within three to seven days."

Note: If you haven't realised already, the Chinese sense of beauty involves extremely fair skin. To my dark-skinned readers out there, please take no offence. After all, Li Qingshan prefers his skin dark too.

Li Qingshan shook his head. He had already become slightly accustomed to Ru Xin and the words she spouted that conflicted with her appearance and bearing. However, the medicines refined by the school of Medicine were quite interesting. At the very least, the alchemy from the school of Daoism could not create something like the Fluid of Invisibility. He had never even thought of some of the items being sold here.

"And what illness does this cure?" Li Qingshan pointed at the glazed bottle filled with blue liquid at the top.

“You mean the Water of Recollection? It’s just as its name implies. It clearly cures amnesia. If you accidentally forget your surname, you can drink it, and I guarantee you that it’ll be effective. Though, the side-effect is that you might lose your sense of direction.”

Ru Xin said casually, but she saw Li Qingshan’s expression change suddenly.

Li Qingshan said, “You mean it can recall anything? Even your past life?”

Ru Xin said, “Unfortunately, my abilities still pale in comparison to granny Meng’s soup.”

Note: Granny Meng, or Meng Po, is the goddess of forgetfulness in Chinese mythology. It’s said that once you die and enter the afterlife, you drink granny Meng’s Soup of Forgetfulness and permanently forget about your past life so that you can reincarnate. Here, Ru Xin is clearly implying her Water of Recollection is unable to undo the effects of granny Meng’s Soup of Forgetfulness, so it can’t make people remember their past lives.

Just as Li Qingshan felt rather disappointed, he heard Ru Xin say, “Though, as long as it’s something in your head, you’ll definitely be able to recall it once you drink my medicine. Even if you want to know what you ate for lunch ten years ago today, it won’t be an issue.”

“Can I try it?”

“Do I know you? Your surname is Li.”

“Honestly, a hundred spiritual stones for a bottle. There’s no need to look at me like that. You’re flattering me,” added Ru Xin.

Under various forms of speechlessness, Li Qingshan ingested a spoonful of Water of Recollection. The dust-laden matters of the past suddenly shook off their dust and lunged at him, clearly replaying in his mind. There was a page in a book covered in thickly-dotted words.

The first sentence was, “Zhang Wuji turned around...”

### **Chapter 318 - Plagiarising a Novel**

“That’s north!” Ru Xin pointed her thumb backwards.

Li Qingshan could not be bothered with dealing with her. “Just how much are you selling the Water of Recollection for?”

“Hah. I originally refined it for fun, but I never thought I’d actually be able to sell it.” Ru Xin’s smile vanished, and she extended her hand. “A hundred spiritual stones for a bottle. Thank you for your patronage!”

Li Qingshan ground his teeth. “Weren’t you joking earlier?”

Ru Xin said, “And who’s fault is it that you didn’t laugh? This must be very important to you, right?”

“I’m being serious here. Stop messing with me.”

Li Qingshan grabbed her hand. The Water of Recollection was extremely important to him, and it was not just for writing novels. It was for Xiao An too.

“One spiritual stone, two spiritual stones, three spiritual stones...”

“What are you doing?”

“Calculating your fee!” Ru Xin glanced at the hand he held.

Li Qingshan shook away her hand immediately.

Ru Xin smiled. “Forget it, forget it. Doctors treat their patients with the same selflessness as parents to their children. Seeing how anxious you’ve become, I can’t bring myself to charge you. I’ll just give you this bottle of Water of Recollection.”

Li Qingshan asked, “Since when were you so nice?”

Ru Xin said, “Though, promise me one thing.”

Li Qingshan said, “What thing?”

Ru Xin whispered, “When you fight the disciples of the school of the Military again, be more heavy-handed with them. It’s best if you beat them until they’re half-dead!”

“So much for treating your patients with the same selflessness as parents to their children!”

“Children won’t listen unless they’re disciplined.”

“Fine. I’ll be going then.” Li Qingshan casually agreed to it. He accepted the Water of Recollection and stowed it away in his hundred treasures pouch. He was in a hurry to rush back and experiment with it.

“Hold on, three spiritual stones.”

“What three spiritual stones? Didn’t you give it...” As Li Qingshan said that, he saw Ru Xin extend her hand over with a smile. You’re actually charging me!?

“Fine then. Let’s do a hundred spiritual stones then.” Li Qingshan grabbed Ru Xin’s hand and stared straight into her eyes.

“Four spiritual stones, five spiritual stones...” Ru Xin was unperturbed. She began to count.

However, this was not a particularly quiet place. Instead, it was a dispensary where people came and went. Many disciples of the academy came here to buy medicine. When Li Qingshan grabbed Ru Xin’s hand earlier, he had already attracted some attention.

Ru Xin was a great beauty renowned throughout the academy for quite some time now, while Li Qingshan was a prominent figure at the peak of his prominence.

The two of them were both primary disciples too. They held hands and stared at each other in broad daylight, causing everyone to look over and whisper among themselves in discussion.

“Oi, oi, look.”

“Does Li Qingshan have that kind of relationship with senior sister Ru Xin? How courageous of him!”

“Thirty-three, thirty-four...” Ru Xin maintained her smile. She snorted. “You’re actually serious?”

“I think I can afford a hundred spiritual stones.” Li Qingshan wanted to teach a lesson to this improper woman.

“Then let’s go for it. Are spiritual stones really that easy to make?” As Ru Xin snorted; her face blushed slightly, but who knew whether it was from embarrassment or anger.

“Li Qingshan, what are you doing!?”

Two furious bellows rang out from outside the dispensary simultaneously.

One of them was Chu Tian, radiating with five-coloured true qi, while the other person was actually Han Qiongzhi. They both glared at Li Qingshan furiously.

Chu Tian had looked over along Qian Rongzhi’s gaze, and he immediately spotted Li Qingshan. He blazed with hatred when he saw his enemy, and when he saw how he was with Ru Xin, he could not help but follow them over. From the moment he had arrived at the school of Medicine and spotted Ru Xin for the first time, he had begun treating her as his woman.

He saw Li Qingshan holding Ru Xin’s hand the moment he arrived, and Ru Xin actually seemed like she allowed him to do. He immediately felt like he had been betrayed. He was utterly furious, tempted to lash out and kill Li Qingshan with a palm strike.

As for Han Qiongzhi, she heard that Li Qingshan had woken up, so she wanted to come take a look at him. Unfortunately, this visit utterly enraged her. Hua Chengzan stood with his arms crossed with a smile as he stood to her side. This kid sure has some bearing. He seems to be able to get all the ones I can’t get. He could not help but think of Gu Yanying. He shook his head. Impossible.

Li Qingshan was slightly surprised, and Ru Xin took advantage of this to pull her hand back. She said resentfully, “Thirty-five spiritual stones.”

“I’ll pay once I get the remaining portion of the goods.”

Li Qingshan waved his hand. He did not even look at Chu Tian, directly making his way over to Hua Chengzan. “Chengzan, what brought you here? Senior sister Han, long time no see. Why are you glaring at me?”

“Fuck your grandfather!”

Through the use of true qi, the voice clearly rang out in Li Qingshan’s ears. Li Qingshan felt like he had been struck by lightning, as the voice came from neither Han Qiongzhi or Chu Tian. It came from Ru Xin.

He turned around and stared at Ru Xin in disbelief. “What did you say?”

“Nothing.” Ru Xin maintained her gentle smile, standing there elegantly in her white clothes. She seemed like a legendary angel in white.

Han Qiongzhi said, “Li Qingshan, I’m talking to you! I’ve specially come to see you!”

“Oh, thank you. I’m mostly fine. I have some matters I need to attend to, so I’ll be taking my leave first. When I have some spare time, I’ll invite you two to lunch or dinner.” The only thing on Li Qingshan’s



mind about right now was the Water of Recollection. All he wanted to do was go back and experiment with it.

Han Qiongzhi said, "Oi, you..."

Li Qingshan had already flown off on a cloud. His distant voice rang out, "Oh right. Chu Tian, I wish you a speedy recovery."

Chu Tian's face darkened as he held back his urge to attack him. The hundred or so strands of sword qi had caused extremely severe damage in his body. Even after all these days, he had yet to completely adjust to the damage.

He trotted over to Ru Xin and asked in concern, "Senior sister Ru Xin, are you fine?"

"Junior brother Chu, you should be fine now, right? It's all thanks to the care and concern from the three beauties. Hmm? Where are the other two?"

Chu Tian said proudly, "They've both entered secluded cultivation for me!"

Ever since Li Qingshan emerged from secluded cultivation and defeated the genius Chu Tian, it set a trend of secluded cultivation. Everyone wanted to rise up out of nowhere like Li Qingshan.

Ru Xin was rather surprised. She glanced at Qian Rongzhi. "This must be junior sister Qian's idea, right? It must be tough on you."

After a few months of secluded cultivation, they would probably emerge only to find that everyone had changed, and their man had been stolen too! Oh right, the two idiotic girls did not seem to mind sharing their man with others, but they could not rely on others being as stupid as them!

"It's all their own idea. They all feel powerless. They whole-heartedly want to help little Tian. I was extremely touched when I heard about it too. I agreed to help them take care of little Tian for a few days. Please don't misunderstand, senior sister. We're just friends." Qian Rongzhi smiled. Separating those two dimwits from Chu Tian had not taken her a lot of effort.

"I've given them a lot of pills. Their cultivation will definitely improve tremendously this time. As my women, Chu Tian's women, they won't suffer." As Chu Tian said that, he looked at Ru Xin in a hinting manner.

Qian Rongzhi smiled. "Senior sister Ru Xin, little Tian truly is a good man worth entrusting your entire life to."

"Haha, yeah, yeah!" Ru Xin felt slightly disgusted. There were freaks every year, but more than usual this year! Originally, she wanted to warn him a little, but men like him were utterly stupid. There would be no pity at all if he died.

A good man? Heh, then let the bad girl teach you a lesson!

Qian Rongzhi stopped worrying. Alright, this woman won't be causing any trouble for now. Only if all the men in the world were as "good" as Chu Tian.

“I want to write novels!” Li Qingshan rushed through the door and said confidently as soon as he returned to Cloudwisp island.

Under Liu Chuanfeng’s surprised gaze, Li Qingshan returned to his room alone. He took out the bottle of Water of Recollection and placed it on the table.

The bottle stood around three inches tall and was filled to the brim with thick, azure fluid, like liquid memories.

Li Qingshan directly picked it up and took a small sip.

The rather bitter taste spread out from the tip of his tongue. He closed his eyes in a hurry and thought hard, wanting to recall his forgotten memories.

Actually, everyone was capable of remembering every single detail that they saw and heard. However, these useless pieces of information would gradually sink into the depths of their minds. The Water of Recollection basically presented these dust-clad memories before him clearly once more, including every scene, every voice, and every emotion.

Li Qingshan opened his eyes and began to write swiftly. The familiar story reappeared in his hands.

Liu Chuanfeng was in a daze at the entrance of the room. He had no idea what this dear disciple of his was, but he was afraid of interrupting him, so he backed away quietly.

Li Qingshan wrote faster and faster as his right hand gradually turned into a blur. He felt like the ink in the inkstone had run out before he had even written much. He directly ground and filled up a small pot beside him with ink.

The sky was about to darken, and a novel composed of a thick stack of paper covered in illegible handwriting stood on the table. The high quality weasel hair brush in his hand had almost been worn away completely now.

At this moment, the words in his head gradually blurred. The effects of the Water of Recollection were gradually fading away.

Li Qingshan placed down his brush and rubbed his wrist. That’s all for today!

“You wrote all of this!” Having run out of patience a long time ago, Liu Chuanfeng rushed in and reached towards the thick stack of paper on the table.

Smack! Li Qingshan swatted his hand aside. “Don’t touch, I’m not done yet!” As he said that, even he himself felt proud, as proud as when he swept aside the eight hundred disciples of the school of the Military. Although it was all plagiarised, that was just an insignificant detail. Even with his two lives combined, he had never written so many words before!

Liu Chuanfeng said, “Now that’s rare of you. Can you really write something good by writing like this?”

“What I’ve written are things regular people would all love to see and hear. I guarantee you it’ll be even more warmly received than your overly-advanced stuff.” Li Qingshan seemed to have already witnessed a successful path as a novelist unfold right before him.

As long as he had the Water of Recollection, he could take this path smoothly and easily, at no cost to him yet also deriving infinite benefit.

Although the power scaling of wuxia novels was a little low, he never planned on using it for battle anyway. No matter how powerful the characters he created were, no matter how much power of belief he had, he would be restricted by the Divine Talisman of Great Creation as a Qi Practitioner, so the power of what he could summon would be limited too. At most, they would be around the seventh or eighth layer.

To regular Qi Practitioners, being able to summon four or five helpers around the same cultivation was already a very impressive achievement, but with Li Qingshan's strength, assistance like that was almost nothing. It would just be a waste of his power of belief instead.

The power of belief was an important resource. It could turn fiction into reality through the Divine Talisman of Great Creation. Right now, his Divine Talisman of Great Creation was still in its initial stage. As long as he constantly strengthened it, its effects would not be limited to just a few novels.

At this moment, Xiao An walked in from outside. She saw Li Qingshan and let out an innocent smile.

Li Qingshan entered a daze. A question he had never pondered carefully, nor was he bold enough to ponder carefully, entered his mind. Could the Water of Recollection help Xiao An recover her memories?

### **Chapter 319 - A Slight Ripple**

Xiao An was always able to read Li Qingshan's emotions immediately. She tilted her head in confusion.

Li Qingshan chased out Liu Chuanfeng and closed the door, asking Xiao An a vague question about how her cultivation had been going recently.

Xiao An became even more confused. "Has something happened?"

Li Qingshan smiled bitterly and rubbed his head. He had never believed he was an indecisive person, but now he understood the reason why he was not indecisive; it was because he had never encountered a matter he struggled to make a decision over.

Helping her recover her memories and finding her original name and identity had once been one of his wishes. Sending her back home had been the first promise he had made in this world.

However, if the moment for him to fulfil his wish and promise of the past arrived simultaneously, smiling would be the last thing he would do.

"I found something that might be helpful to you." After a while of consideration, Li Qingshan told her the truth. He took out the remaining half a bottle of Water of Recollection and explained its effects to Xiao An.

Afterwards, Li Qingshan discovered that Xiao An was no more composed than him. The hand that held the bottle had even begun to tremble, causing the azure fluid to shake too.

She felt no excitement or joy from being able to recover her memories. She cast her gaze downwards. Her long eyelashes cast a shadow on her large eyes.

“I don’t want to drink it.”

“Why?” Li Qingshan asked despite knowing the answer already. They understood one another so well that they were basically mentally connected, so why wouldn’t he understand what she was thinking? If it were possible, he would rather go without knowing the existence of this medicinal fluid, even if he could no longer gather the power of belief through writing novels so easily.

However, as an adult, he could not let a child indulge in their stubbornness, nor could he indulge in his own stubbornness. He had to do what was “good” for her.

“Stop being so stubborn. Just try it. I tried it earlier. The effects are pretty good, so it might actually be effective on you. Of course, there’s a chance it’ll be ineffective, so don’t expect too much from it.”

Xiao An raised her head and stared into Li Qingshan’s eyes. She said with an expression that could make anyone’s heart ache, “I don’t want to go anywhere, please?”

Li Qingshan gradually made up his mind and turned back to normal. He grinned and pecked her forehead heavily. “I’ll go wherever you go!”

Xiao An closed her eyes. Tilting her head back, she drank all of the remaining fluid in the bottle.

The slightly bitter fluid flowed through her throat and reached her stomach. It turned into a mysterious power, which permeated her body and rushed to her head.

A while later, Xiao An opened her eyes.

Li Qingshan asked, “How is it?”

Xiao An shook her head. “Nothing.”

From the day she began practising the Path of White Bone and Great Beauty, her soul had fused with her bones, and after countless days and nights of cultivation, her bones had already become as tough as diamonds. Not only were they resilient to external forces, but even external powers were unable to seep into them.

As a result, whether it be absorbing the spiritual qi of the world or ingesting pills, they were completely ineffective to her. All they strengthened was a skin bag of appearance. Her only path of cultivation was using fire to devour flesh and blood and refine white bones.

The Water of Recollection was obviously ineffective to her too.

As if he were relieved, Li Qingshan let out a long sigh. “I knew it. None of the medicine refined by that woman is particularly effective. Don’t worry. All you need to do is take it slowly with your memories.”

Xiao An agreed softly. She asked curiously, “That woman?”

“She’s a woman of complete disorder. Don’t worry about her. Here, have a read of the novel I’ve written.” Li Qingshan lifted her onto his knee and showed her the manuscript he had plagiarized laboriously.

Xiao An read through it very carefully. From time to time, she would point out the “strange” parts in the novel. By “strange”, she was referring to the fact that it was a wuxia novel, which was foreign to this world. A lot of the vocabulary and literary references had issues too.

Li Qingshan was troubled once more. As it turned out, plagiarising a novel would not be so easy either. “What am I supposed to do?” He had not read a lot of novels in his life. It had only been a year or two since he left Crouching Ox village, so his understanding of this world was not particularly deep.

Xiao An smiled. “I have an idea.”

Liu Chuanfeng happened to be chewing the end of a brush right now as he wondered just what this disciple of his had written.

Li Qingshan suddenly strode over. “Do you have any novels that I can read?”

Liu Chuanfeng asked, “What do you want to read?”

Li Qingshan said, “Anything but yours. It’s best if they’re by some famous authors, or they’re in fashion right now. Give me everything that you have.”

“What’s wrong with mine?” Liu Chuanfeng immediately refused. He was no longer the Master of Wind and Moon of the past anymore. He immediately pulled out a letter from his hundred treasures pouch. “Look at how they’re praising me.”

Li Qingshan shot him a glare, and Liu Chuanfeng took out a great pile of books with great obedience. There were several hundred of them.

Li Qingshan lifted them up and left immediately. Liu Chuanfeng called out from behind. “Be careful with them! They’re all collector’s editions.”

The One Thought master’s monk robes ruffled as he quietly arrived outside the bamboo residence where Li Qingshan resided. His gaze passed through the layers of the bamboo building, and he saw a large and small figure under the glow of a lone lantern.

Xiao An currently laid on the ground reading novels. She rifled through the pages, reading swiftly. Over a dozen books had already become piled beside her.

Li Qingshan stood around, as if he was thinking of something. He would twist around from time to time, throwing kicks and punches.

He was currently summarising and concluding his successes and failures in the battle today. If he read instead, he would have forgotten the first seven pages by the time he had read ten. However, the battle today played in his mind like a movie, clearly visualising every punch and kick. He could even remember how he had defeated every single disciple of the school of the Military.

Gradually, the figures around him faded away, and the expressions and figures of every military disciple blurred. All that was left was a group of matchstick-like military disciples charging over on the long staircase.

He copied their moves and the way they exerted force. The lantern light projected his shadow onto the wall, which moved about swiftly in the narrow space.

One of them laid still, while the other one moved about. However, this formed an atmosphere that was strangely warm and sweet, which the One Thought master found to be strangely familiar. After quite a while of thought, he remembered that this was the feeling of home.

In order to save lamp oil, his mother sewed and mended clothes under the moonlight, and he ran around chasing fireflies in the courtyard.

The One Thought master dismissed these thoughts in a hurry. He sighed helplessly. How could an ascetic be constantly attached to the idea of “home”?

Over the past few days, Li Qingshan’s performance that had surpassed any regular cultivator’s had instead made him even more worried.

They were not connected by blood. Right now, she was still young, but if she grew a little older and developed those feelings, it would probably become even harder for her to cut him off. She would lose her rationality too. Separating them would become even more difficult.

After hesitating for a moment, the One Thought master turned around and left. He had to enlighten her with his various fellow monks in this upcoming assembly of dharma so that she could cut off her worldly ties.

The rifling of books and the whistling of punches and kicks stopped one after another.

“I’m done.” Li Qingshan’s true qi sank into his dantian as he smiled. If he faced the same battle formation again, he was confident that he could emerge victorious with even greater ease.

Xiao An smiled. “Let’s begin!”

Under the lantern light, Li Qingshan wrote while Xiao An spoke. The two of them gradually edited the novel so that it would conform with this day and age better. Time dripped away unknowingly.

There was no need for them to rack their brains and go to such great lengths. Weren’t they creating memories with every passing moment?

### **Chapter 320 - One Step at a Time**

“Did you really write this?” Liu Chuanfeng held the thick draft and said in disbelief. Even at a minimum, there were a few hundred thousand words there, but Li Qingshan had only used a few days.

“Don’t tell me you copied it from somewhere?”

Li Qingshan said with no confidence at all, “How can you say that? Have you ever read something remotely similar to this?”

Liu Chuanfeng said, “Plagiarism won’t net you the slightest power of belief, no matter how well you’ve copied it.”

Taking the Divine Talisman of Merit as an example, the merit would never misidentify its target no matter how far the cultivator who did the good deeds were, even if there were people who shared the same name and appearance as them. This was the wonders of divine talismans.

Li Qingshan became uncertain. He had copied something from his past life, which belonged to another world. In this world, it should be an original work.

“Alright, then allow your master to take a look and edit it for you.” Liu Chuanfeng leaned over the table and began reading.

Li Qingshan strode away. In the past few days, he had been either copying or editing. Even with Xiao An’s help, it still made him dizzy.

After editing this “maiden work” of his, the One Thought master sent someone to call Xiao An back to the Anāsravā? temple. Apparently, she had to make preparations for the upcoming assembly of dharma.

Xiao An only said she would find a way to get some more pills before leaving in a hurry.

This instead made Li Qingshan rather apologetic. After dealing with the matter regarding the school of Novels, it was time for him to properly gather some resources and prepare for that final step.

Although he called it the final step, Li Qingshan refused to underestimate it. It was very likely that this step would be even more difficult to take than any other steps of the past.

There were many living examples around him of the difficulty. Liu Chuanfeng, Hua Chengzan, Ru Xin, and so on were all at the tenth layer.

There was a dangerous heavenly tribulation involved too. He could not afford to be careless at all.

There were still quite a lot of resources left from his massacre underground, but getting rid of the spiritual artifacts and talismans would be rather difficult, even if the spiritual stones were easier to deal with.

After arriving in the academy, he had once asked Sun Fubai about the school of Miscellany that focused on this business. As it turned out, rarely did they ever purchase these items, and even if they did, they would only pay extremely low prices for them.

The world had been in a state of peace for so long. Fighting and struggling became extremely rare. Without a demand, there was no market for them. And, compared to this, the price of high level pills was constantly on the rise due to the increase in Qi Practitioners and the increasing rarity of spiritual herbs.

And, Li Qingshan had quite a lot of qualms over these items too. He had not exactly obtained them legitimately. If he sold them en-mass, he would probably attract the attention of observant people.

Through his contact with people like Qian Rongzhi and Hua Chengzan, Li Qingshan deeply understood that there were many clever people in the world. Deducing facts from small clues was basically a form of instinct for certain people. He personally believed he did not have this ability. All he could do was be as careful as possible, without leaving behind anything that might give him away.

After a while of thought, Li Qingshan’s gaze gradually became determined. I’ll take one step at a time!

The first step were the missions issued in the Missions hall on Contention island.

Li Qingshan's eyes constantly darted around the bulletin board. Very soon, he locked onto a mission. It came from the school of Agriculture. It was a mission for watering their fields of wheat. It sounded simple, but it clearly stated towards the end that it required the Spiritual Rain technique.

The Spiritual Rain technique was a wide range healing technique. Not only could it heal injuries, but it could also allow people to recover their true qi. In battle, it was something that could play a decisive role. Due to how difficult it was to learn, rarely were there any people who knew it in this day and age.

If it were not for the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression, which allowed him to master any water element technique with ease, he probably would have never bothered with this technique either. Perhaps it was exactly because of this reason that the rewards for the mission were quite plentiful.

It was clearly winter, but Longevity island of the school of Agriculture was brimming with life.

Earth elder Huang sat on a ridge in the fields, smoking his pipe. He circled out a region in the vast fields of golden wheat before him.

"Give me 3.9 centimeters of rain in this region. I'll deduct a spiritual stone for every millimeter you miss, understand?" He did not give Li Qingshan any special treatment, even with his outstanding performance lately.

Li Qingshan said politely, "Understood." He closed his eyes and prepared for a moment. A streak of light rose up from his hands and flew into the air, turning into a large region of spiritual drizzle that fell from the sky. The slightly droopy wheat immediately straightened out, as if it was absorbing the spiritual rain.

Earth elder Huang was slightly surprised. Originally, he thought Li Qingshan would have to use the Spiritual Rain technique several times to water such a larger region, but Li Qingshan only used it once. The area he covered was simply startling. And, at a closer glance, the spiritual rain was not off by a single millimeter. It was 3.9 centimeters exactly.

"Well done."

Li Qingshan smiled and accepted the spiritual stones. It sure had been easy for him to make spiritual stones. All he had to do was use a technique once. Apart from watering the wheat fields, there seemed to be missions for watering the medicinal gardens of the school of Medicine too in the Missions hall.

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"You want to learn alchemy from me?" Ru Xin studied Li Qingshan with a strange gaze. His face was filled with sincerity, and he even held a watermelon in his hand.

"This is just a gift for taking me on as a student. If you agree, I can pay you spiritual stones too. Of course, you can't go overboard with the price."

This was Li Qingshan's second step, grasping alchemy as quickly as possible. As for the watermelon, earth elder Huang had picked it from a neighbouring melon field and given it to him for completing the mission perfectly.

"The school of Medicine has classes for alchemy. It won't cost you a single spiritual stone."



“It takes too long.” Li Qingshan shook his head. The classes held by the professors were nice, but in consideration of every single disciple’s ability, they purposefully slowed down the process. They explained complicated concepts in simple words. While it was interesting, it would take too much time. And, the ability of the professors probably paled in comparison to the person before him.

Ru Xin’s mouth was quite foul, but she was still a decent person. After that time, he had asked for Water of Recollection from her two more times, but she refused to accept any spiritual stones at all. And, despite being a great beauty, she had no air of arrogance about her either. She obviously became his first choice.

Ru Xin said, “Let me consider it. Let’s eat the watermelon first!”

They cut open the watermelon, and the red pulp gave off a special fragrance. Li Qingshan took a bite, and it melted in his mouth. It was as sweet as honey, and the spiritual qi within it merged with his sea of qi too.

Li Qingshan thought about how wondrous the school of Agriculture’s arts were. The effects were no worse than regular pills. It was just a pity that he was not a disciple of the school of Agriculture. Compared to refining pills, he preferred farming much more.

Ru Xin was still staring at Li Qingshan. She had produced a notch in the watermelon with her teeth as her pink lips were dyed red. Afterwards, she let out a loud slurp, which interrupted Li Qingshan’s thoughts.

“Can’t you eat a little more quietly?”

Ru Xin said, “Little kids know nothing at all. When you eat watermelons, you need to slurp it.”

Li Qingshan rolled his eyes and placed down the watermelon round. The huge watermelon had vanished into her belly in the blink of an eye.

Ru Xin wiped her mouth with her sleeve. “I refuse!”

“What?”

“I’ve considered it, and I refuse. I’ll see you out!”

“Then spit out my gift if you won’t take me as a student!” Li Qingshan was very tempted to choke her.

“You really want it?” Ru Xin acted like she was about to stick her hand into her mouth, as if she would actually spit it out if he wanted it.

Li Qingshan was slightly disgusted, but he ground his teeth. “Spit it out!”

With a ptui, Ru Xin spat out a melon seed. “You can go back and plant it yourself. What an idiot. Hahaha!”

Li Qingshan caught the melon seed and revealed a look of pity. He shook his head with a sigh. “What a pity, what a pity.”

Ru Xin asked, “How’s it a pity?”

Li Qingshan said, "Originally, I wanted to pay you with a True Spirit pill, but it's a pity someone doesn't want it. I'll go find Juechenzi instead. When it comes to alchemy, the school of Daoism is still the best."

"Hold on, you said a True Spirit pill?" Ru Xin was fazed. True Spirit pills were critical for reaching Foundation Establishment. She was currently at the tenth layer and was toeing this threshold. She could not help but become interested.

Li Qingshan said, "Yeah!"

"You have a True Spirit pill? I don't believe you!" Ru Xin recovered her composure and shook her head with a faint smile.

There was basically no supply of True Spirit pills in the cultivation world right now. The most important medicinal herb for refining True Spirit pills, the Blue Butterfly flower, was basically extinct. Blue Butterfly flowers only grew on top of spiritual stone veins. It was impossible to cultivate them in Spirit Gathering formations.

Across the entire Clear River prefecture, there were truly just a handful of sects and clans with spiritual stone veins. Over many years of mining and excavating, they produced precious little amounts. They did not even have enough to refine the flowers into pills themselves, so it was even more impossible for them to sell them. Despite all the years she had spent in the school of Medicine, she only possessed two True Spirit pills right now. It was impossible for Li Qingshan to be in possession of something like that with his background.

However, little did she know that not only did Li Qingshan possess True Spirit pills, but he possessed more than one too. He was sitting on a great pile of Blue Butterfly flowers as well, and he had even been in possession of a Blue Butterfly flower field in the past.

Li Qingshan did not bicker with her. He casually fished out an embroidered box from his hundred treasures pouch. With a thud, he opened the box and displayed the True Spirit pill inside.

Ru Xin held her cheek and sighed. "In order to pursue your senior sister, you've even taken out a True Spirit pill. Your senior sister is very touched by this gesture..."

Li Qingshan said, "Cut it with the acting. Are you going to teach me or not?"

Ru Xin extended her hands and closed the embroidered box gently. "I'll teach you, but you should probably keep the True Spirit pill for yourself! With how quickly you cultivate, you'll probably need it in just a few years. You can't reach Foundation Establishment without this."

Li Qingshan was slightly surprised. He did not think there was an understanding and considerate side to her.

Ru Xin smiled. "Let's just do spiritual stones. A hundred spiritual stones per a day. I will teach you with great, great care and detail."

"You can just directly say you'll be dragging it out a lot. I am a man of my word, so when my alchemy is enough to refine True Spirit pills, I'll give this True Spirit pill to you. What do you think?"

If he refined all the Blue Butterfly flowers in his hundred treasures pouch into True Spirit pills, they would be worth far more than those spiritual artifacts and talismans, and he had no need to worry about demand either. This was the most important step for his breakthrough to Daemon General.

Li Qingshan extended his right hand, and Ru Xin placed her hand atop it gently. She smiled. "Deal!"

Actually, an agreement like this was like a challenge. Originally, they were supposed to produce a written pledge on Contention island with a witness present, but Li Qingshan was quite unclear with this process, and Ru Xin had not mentioned it either.

Around dusk, Li Qingshan returned to Cloudwisp island and let out a soft sigh. He felt rather exhausted. This was not only because he was learning alchemy, but also because Ru Xin would say some weird things from time to time, giving him a headache. However, under the temptation of the True Spirit pill, she basically put in her best effort to teach him. Her guidance was extremely efficient too, with no need for him to make time to attend formal classes. It had resolved one of the issues troubling Li Qingshan.

As soon as Li Qingshan stepped into the courtyard, Liu Chuanfeng rushed over and grabbed Li Qingshan by the collar.