

I Just Won't Play By The Book - Chapter 1 - : Aren't Basic Attribute Points Attractive?

Chapter 1: Aren't Basic Attribute Points Attractive?

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The scorching sun was high in the sky, and waves of heat hit one after another.

On a trail in the mountains, two girls shared a green oil-paper umbrella as they walked side by side.

The girl holding the umbrella on the left had skin as pale as snow and dark hair. She was slim and tall, her posture graceful. The girl on the right, who was giggling from time to time, had a face like a silver plate. Her eyes were like almonds swimming in water. Despite not having makeup on, her lips were red and her eyebrows naturally dark.

25

They were such a pretty sight to behold that the young disciples around them, who were initially in a hurry to go and practice their craft, couldn't help but stop in their tracks to take a few more glances.

2

"Sister Zijin, didn't Brother Kong agree to accompany us to descend the mountain for our trial? Why must we come all the way to the Order of Blue Heart to seek out an Iron Seal? Wouldn't other people laugh at us, the Order of Water Mirror, for having limited human capital if word gets out?" the one girl asked.

3

The girl in the purple shirt, whom the other girl referred to as Sister Zijin, shook her head slightly. "It's our first time descending the mountain for a trial. Everything must be foolproof. Brother Kong is indeed very capable, but he spends most of his time practicing his craft in the sect and rarely descends the mountain. Furthermore, he has only served as an Iron Seal for a handful of

times. However, just being capable may not suffice for resolving the many issues faced after we descend the mountain.”

“Oh!” The girl in the green shirt nodded after listening. “Then is the Iron Seal we are going to seek out in the Order of Blue Heart very experienced?” she asked.

“As for that, don’t ask questions. You just have to believe in me,” Sister Zijin said.

2

“Fine. I believe that nothing can go wrong as long as I listen to you, Sister Zijin,” the girl in the green shirt said.

“That’s right! Let’s hurry,” Sister Zijin replied.

...

“Achoo!”

“Eh, d*mn. Someone must have been complimenting my handsome looks behind my back. I wonder who it is.”

22

Jiang Beiran rubbed his nose and continued walking forward along the gravel road. When he reached the junction, a commotion suddenly broke out in front.

3

“Hey! Do you really intend to just walk away like that after bumping into me?” one voice said.

“I’m so sorry, Brother. I was thinking about the internal cultivation method that the master has tested us on this morning, and I wasn’t paying attention,” someone responded.

“To me, it looks like you have deliberately bumped into me! Tell me, how do you intend to compensate for my loss?”

14

“Eh? But I...”

Jiang Beiran looked up and saw a tall, burly disciple in his Qi Refining Period acting aggressively. He kept on pushing a junior disciple around. The latter clearly had just joined the sect not long ago.

At the same time, four options appeared in front of Jiang Beiran.

[Option One: Approach them, reprimand the mean senior disciple, and teach him the importance of treating his juniors well. Reward for completion: Hunyuan Cultivation Technique (Black Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Two: Approach them, pull the junior disciple to your side, and say to the mean senior disciple, “How much money do you want? I will pay you for him.” Reward for completion: Thunder Dart (Yellow Grade Middle Tier)]

6

[Option Three: Shout loudly, “Enforcement Master Lin is here!” Reward for completion: Sword of Purple Smoke (Yellow Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Four: Pass by. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

15

‘Not bad. I can get a Black Grade cultivation technique just by reprimanding a mean senior disciple who has just entered his Qi Refining Period. That’s a really good reward,’ Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

‘Option Three is not bad, either. I just need to hide in the crowd and shout that Master Lin is here to get a treasure of Yellow Grade Low Tier. The value for the cost is... really high!

‘Mhmm... Option Two is okay as well. I’ve heard Martial Uncle Xu talk about this Thunder Dart before. It can harvest a life from more than 800 miles away. It is definitely a great murder weapon!

1

‘Nice. All the options are great, so I choose... Option Four.’

28

After making his choice, Jiang Beiran walked by without sparing a glance for the duo. At the same time, a voice that he couldn't be more familiar with rang out by his ear.

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Strength +1]

'Strength again? This is the sixth consecutive time. Why is it as if I have eaten some hormonal pills...?'

15

Complaining with a one-liner, Jiang Beiran continued up the stairs and reached the shores of a small lake.

'Mhmm! It's comfortable here,' he thought.

Feeling the breeze blowing against his face, Jiang Beiran sat on the stone steps beside the lake and closed his eyes in satisfaction.

Just as he was enjoying the breeze that smelled a bit like lake water, he suddenly heard intermittent sobbing coming from beside him.

He opened his eyes and looked. He saw a female junior disciple. She had clearly had just joined the sect recently and was rubbing her teary eyes by the lake, hugging her own legs. The expression on her pretty face showed that she felt wronged.

3

At the same time, three options appeared in front of Jiang Beiran.

[Option One: Take out the Mozi Shortbread in your pocket and hand it to the female junior disciple. Reward for completion: Exquisite Ruler of Eight Treasures (Black Grade High Tier)]

[Option Two: Softly ask the female junior disciple about the matters that have transpired. Reward for completion: Tier 6 Heat-clearing Pill]

2

[Option Three: Turn and leave. Reward for completion: Random skill point +1]

'D*mn!? What kind of demoness is she? The reward for just handing her some pastry is a Black Grade High Tier weapon!?' Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

7

The alarmed Jiang Beiran hurriedly chose Option Three. He then got up, turned, and left. Moreover, he walked at an increasingly fast pace, and finally felt relieved when he was far away from the lake.

13

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Drawing +1]

4

"Phew..."

He breathed a sigh of relief. The alert had been lifted. Jiang Beiran continued walking along his usual route and walked in a big circle around the mountain. He triggered a total of seven Chosen Quests in the end. He received Strength+2, Physique+1, Music Playing+1, Alchemy+1, Formations+1, and Poisonous Magic+1, respectively.

13

'Today is another peaceful day in the Sect of Returning Hearts.'

3

Lamenting internally, Jiang Beiran, who had received plenty of rewards, slowly walked into the canteen. He ordered his favorite Emerald and White Jade Set Meal, which consisted of cabbage and tofu, then randomly found a place to sit.

2

A bite of steamed roll, a bite of cabbage, and the occasional drops of sesame oil. Jiang Beiran munched on happily.

4

“Eh, have you heard about it? Brother Luo Bei from the Order of True Martial Arts was badly wounded yesterday. Order Master Song even asked Master Bu from the Order of Clear Heart to go over in the middle of the night.”

“Brother Luo Bei!? I heard that he has already perfected his Knife Technique of Wind Breaking. Why would he still be wounded so badly? Did he run into some powerful fighters from the demonic cult?”

3

“No. I heard that Brother Luo Bei was wounded badly while he was in the Order of True Martial Arts.”

“Eh!? An inside job!? Then doesn't it mean that someone within the order did...?”

“Shh! Don't be so loud.”

...

Hearing the quiet discussion between the two disciples at the neighboring table, Jiang Beiran shook his head and couldn't help but lament internally, ‘Men are naturally jealous of successful people!’

Stuffing the last bit of steamed roll into his mouth, Jiang Beiran wiped his mouth, cleared his tray, and left the canteen.

‘Where should I go this afternoon? I'm getting tired of always going to Mount Xiaoxiong,’ he thought.

Just as Jiang Beiran stood lost in thought at the entrance of the canteen, a voice that he was very familiar with rang out from nearby.

“Beiran?” it called.

Upon hearing the voice, Jiang Beiran immediately lifted his head and shouted in pleasant surprise, “Brother Lu!?”

“What a coincidence to run into you. I've just come back.” Lu Bogui smiled and waved at Jiang Beiran. “Have you eaten?” he asked.

“Yep, I've just eaten,” Jiang Beiran replied as he jogged over to Lu Bogui.

“Accompany me and eat some more?” Lu Bogui asked.

“Sure.”

1

They returned to the canteen. Lu Bogui ordered a jug of Wine of Cold Springtime and a big platter of beef. He picked a table by the window and sat down with Jiang Beiran.

7

“Brother, you’ve been gone adventuring for so long. Is it that you’ve run into some trouble?” Jiang Beiran asked curiously as he took the cup of Wine of Cold Springtime that Lu Bogui had poured for him.

“Yup. I did run into some small trouble. The Rivernorth area has broken out in war again.”

“Another war?” Jiang Beiran’s hand, which was holding the wine cup, paused mid-motion. “I wonder how many forces will be involved in it this time.”

Pouring another cup for himself, Lu Bogui looked at Jiang Beiran and laughed.. “You need not worry about the masses first. What about yourself? Have you found a mentor?”

1

Chapter 2: This Beginning Is Too Cliched

9

“Brother, it’s not that you don’t know me. I have no great ambition. I just want to be a normal disciple in the Sect of Returning Hearts. However, I did practice the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts and the Sword Technique of One Word properly, and I face no problem when I descend the mountain with the juniors for their trial occasionally,” Jiang Beiran answered.

6

“Alas! You are such a pity.” Shaking his head, Lu Bogui, who understood his junior’s temper very well, didn’t continue asking questions. Instead, he took a little cloth bag from his sleeve and put it in front of Jiang Beiran.

“For you. It’s a birthday present.” After saying so, Lu Bogui smiled and added, “Although it’s a bit late.”

Jiang Beiran’s hand, which was holding chopsticks, paused in motion. He rubbed his nose and felt like sniffing as he said, “Brother, you didn’t even forget about my birthday even though you were away on an adventure. Actually, I’ve forgotten it myself.”

“How could I forget? It’s your 20th birthday this year. I initially wanted to rush back and celebrate with you, but I really couldn’t get away,” Lu Bogui replied.

“Brother...”

Looking at Jiang Beiran’s slightly red eyes, Lu Bogui put a piece of beef into his bowl and sighed softly. “Time flies. In the blink of an eye, you’ve belonged to the sect for five years. I still remember how it was when I first saw you, haha.”

“Yeah... It’s been five years.” Jiang Beiran sighed emotionally as well.

Five years ago, he had suddenly space traveled to this incredibly chaotic mystical world with countless sects all over.

7

Furthermore, the almighty seemed as if He did not intend to provide him with too much time to be mentally prepared. A whole string of very cliched events targeted him, one after another.

Firstly, he was an orphan in this world, living in his uncle’s house back then, and he had to put up with his aunt’s supercilious looks and unrestrained mockery every day.

“What? Can’t I even criticize you for a bit? You’re staying here for free without contributing anything to the household,” she would say.

2

“Even a dog can guard the door. What good are you for?”

5

“Heh, you can’t even wipe the floor properly. You will definitely grow into a useless idiot and continue freeloading in my house.”

3

...

How could Jiang Beiran tolerate this? Since he had space traveled, he was supposed to be the main character! How dare she make him put up with such bullsh*t!?

2

So, he violently smashed the rice bowl in his hand into pieces at dinner. He then pointed at his ugly and fat aunt and angrily scolded her, saying, “I must have failed to commit any good deeds in the past 18 reincarnations to meet such a mean-spirited, pig-like woman like you. Despite looking like a human, you act like a b*tch. I will no longer stay in your house from now on! You can go stuff yourself with sh*t!”

13

After letting his anger out, Jiang Beiran decisively turned and ran out of the incredibly shabby thatched cottage, saying goodbye to his life under another’s roof forever.

But after only one night, Jiang Beiran became listless for no other reason than the fact that he was starving.

2

He ran away because of sheer willpower, but he didn’t even bring along biscuits, let alone money.

So, he spent the night hungry and cold. At sunrise, he lingered in front of a stall selling steamed buns for a whole 20 minutes. He was finally chased off by the stall owner with three well-cadenced iterations of “shoo.”

2

But it wasn't that bad, for there would always be a way out of trouble for space travelers. In the evening, Jiang Beiran had found a corner that could be considered warm to sit down in when a kind-looking Taoist approached him and handed him fragrant sesame biscuits. The man said amicably to him, "Eat, little boy."

6

Jiang Beiran was already extremely hungry and didn't even dare to pretentiously reject the offer, so he uttered his thanks, grabbed the biscuits, and munched away ferociously.

"There's no rush. Take your time. I have more here." The Taoist took out a gourd filled with water and handed it to Jiang Beiran as he said, "Alas, my poor boy."

2

"Tha... Thank you, Father." Taking the gourd and gulping down several mouthfuls of water, Jiang Beiran cried on the spot, not knowing whether it was because the biscuits were too tasty or because the water was too cold.

6

After eating two pieces of the biscuits in one go, Jiang Beiran, who finally felt alive, thanked the Taoist repeatedly.

"There's no need to thank me." The Taoist waved his hand, then smiled and asked, "Do you know why I offered only you biscuits despite there being so many starving kids on the streets?"

1

Jiang Beiran shook his head. "I don't know."

"Because I've noticed that your bones are unique, making you talented in martial arts. In less than three years, you will definitely become one of the greatest among the youngsters in my sect, the Sect of Shying Fire!"

5

At the moment the Taoist said this, three options appeared in front of Jiang Beiran.

[Option One: Immediately say, “Please take me as your apprentice, Father.”
Reward for completion: Cultivation Technique of Mystical Fire (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

[Option Two: “I have never seen such a wise person like you, Father. Can I ask you about what kind of place the Sect of Shying Fire is?” Reward for completion: Knife of Raging Fire (Yellow Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Three: Tactfully reject the kind offer of the Taoist. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

‘Aha! The system is here!’ Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

6

Jiang Beiran was so pleased in his heart. The benefits of being a space traveler were indeed great! In an instant, two happy events had happened to him one after another! He had both a wise old man as his mentor and a system.

3

‘Is this the legendary treatment that protagonists receive? It’s really too enjoyable!’

Next, Jiang Beiran started pondering over whether he should choose Option One or Option Two. Choosing Option One might make him seem too eager, but its reward, namely the Cultivation Technique of Mystical Fire, sounded very suitable for a disciple of the Sect of Shying Fire, which the Taoist had mentioned. Clearly, the system must have specifically provided him with it as a matching set.

1

Choosing Option Two would allow him to suck up to the Taoist and make him seem very cautious. Furthermore, the Knife of Raging Fire sounded like it was a good fit for the Sect of Shying Fire as well, so it was also a very decent option.

As for Option Three? Only a fool would choose it! The reward was only one basic attribute point. Not to mention that choosing it would mean rejecting the

freely-given benefits. What use would one point be? It couldn't even be considered a consolation prize.

7

After thinking for a long time, Jiang Beiran still chose Option One. After all, the cultivation method sounded more important, as it might be able to significantly increase the efficiency of his cultivation in the early period.

"Please take me as your apprentice, Father!" After making his choice, Jiang Beiran immediately knelt on the floor and shouted with his sincerest tone.

2

The Taoist smiled slightly, extended a hand to help Jiang Beiran up, then patted him on the shoulder and said, "It's fine if you wish to become my apprentice, but you must pass a trial first."

"Trial?" Jiang Beiran questioned it for a moment, but he immediately said in a serious tone, "I will definitely try my best to pass the trial!"

"Good!" The Taoist nodded with satisfaction, then waved his sleeve and turned. "Then follow me."

"Yes sir!"

[Chosen Quest completed. The quest to seek out a mentor has begun. Rewards will be collected after the quest is completed.]

[Quest Target: Become the apprentice of the Taoist in black.]

'Eh? So, the reward is not immediately given?'

5

Jiang Beiran had initially thought that as long as he shouted, "Please take me as your apprentice, Father!" out loud, he would receive the reward of the Cultivation Technique of Mystical Fire. He didn't expect to just trigger a mission.

'Never mind. There's not much difference. It's good to have something to look forward to, anyway.' Having thought so, Jiang Beiran strode forward and followed the Taoist.

...

After two days of toilsome trekking with the Taoist leading him, Jiang Beiran finally reached the foot of a mountain.

“Beiran, this place is called Mount Lingmao, and it is the location of your trial,” the man said.

1

Jiang Beiran, who was eating biscuits behind him, nodded a couple of times after hearing the man’s words. “Please rest assured, I definitely won’t disappoint you!”

In the two days they spent together, Jiang Beiran had already told the Taoist about how he left his home and had no more family. The Taoist was very sympathetic after listening to his stories and could be said to have taken good care of him along the way.. When Jiang Beiran was hungry, the Taoist would warm biscuits with his Palm of Flame, and when Jiang Beiran was tired, the Taoist would set up a tent for him. This touched Jiang Beiran deeply, and he swore that he would be filial to his mentor after picking up skills!

7

Chapter 3: Working as a Miner Would Really Cause One to Die From Exhaustion

4

Once they ascended the mountain, Jiang Beiran quickly learned the content of his trial from the Taoist.

“Beiran, cultivation is something that requires the endurance of hardship and perseverance, and mining is the best way to hone these two traits. As long as you press on and pass the test of the Guards of the Mountain, I will come to fetch you and welcome you into the sect.”

6

Leaving these words and the motivated Jiang Beiran behind, the black-robed Taoist turned and descended the mountain.

'Sir, I will definitely go all out and work hard to repay you for your kindness!' Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

1

After secretly making an oath in his heart, Jiang Beiran followed one of the Guards of the Mountain into the mine.

However, such ambition was completely extinguished on the second day, for the simple reason that mining was really too tiring!

Before crossing over, Jiang Beiran was just an ordinary second-year student in junior high, who hadn't even attended many physical education classes. His physical fitness could be considered very poor.

After crossing over, his body was not really any stronger. Moreover, the food he ate had little nutrition, and his body could be described as scrawny and bony.

1

Without receiving any training, Jiang Beiran was taken to a mine by two Guards of the Mountain early the next morning. After getting to know several quiet workers, the Guards of the Mountain gave him a basket and a mining pick and told him to work hard.

In Jiang Beiran's imagination, mining would probably be similar to the simulation in computer games where one simply had to smash a piece of ore a few times, making it clang.

2

However, in reality, the foul-smelling, stifling, dark, and cramped environment in the mine shaft shocked him immediately. Not long ago, he was still in junior high school. How could he possibly have experienced such a situation?

3

But the two Guards of the Mountain obviously did not intend to give him time to prepare mentally, and they pushed him towards the trail propped up with wooden planks.

Because of the uneven surface of the trail, Jiang Beiran sometimes walked upright and sometimes walked with his back bent. Occasionally, he even had to roll on his back like a golden beetle, so by the time he reached the mining site, his physical strength had almost been exhausted.

Without any time to rest, he was urged by the two Guards of the Mountain to start mining as soon as he reached the place. As a Chinese saying goes, tasks look easy when someone else is doing them. Back when Jiang Beiran used to watch workers wielding hoes on television, he always thought that surely it wouldn't take that much effort.

1

However, in reality, he was so tired that it felt like his throat was on fire after just a dozen smashes. His hands were like lead, and they felt so heavy that he couldn't lift them up.

“Ha... ha...”

With both hands sore, Jiang Beiran used the mining pick as support, desperately trying to inhale a bit of fresh air. However, the mine shaft smelled like gas, so the more he sniffed, the dizzier he felt.

“Has anyone allowed you to rest? Do you still want to pass the trial?”

Just when Jiang Beiran was about to faint, one of the Guards of the Mountain came up to him and gave him a push.

Hearing the word trial, Jiang Beiran once again took a deep breath and wanted to continue the fight. However, he couldn't lift his hands no matter how hard he tried.

‘Ugh! I'm so useless. I'm sorry, sir. I've let you down as a disciple,’ he thought.

Cursing himself in his heart, Jiang Beiran shook his head and said, “I... I really can't dig any further.”

“How little have you dug, huh? And you're already telling me that you can't dig anymore? Yet you still think someone like you could enter the sect?” the Guard of the Mountain asked.

1

“Yes... I’m useless. I will apologize to the Taoist. I’ve let him down. I’m sorry,” Jiang Beiran replied.

Jiang Beiran sighed deeply after finishing his sentence. He lamented in his heart over how he could be so weak when the protagonists in the novels he had read could clearly demonstrate an incredibly tough will for the sake of cultivation. That crappy system wasn’t exactly helping him.

Jiang Beiran, who had admitted in his heart that he was weak, was about to accept his failure when he felt a sudden sharp pain in his abdomen.

“D*mn it! What a useless idiot. The first few who came in had been working hard for months to get into that stupid sect, yet you dumb piece of sh*t couldn’t make it past the first day,” the Guard of the Mountain said while giving Jiang Beiran another kick.

Jiang Beiran was dumbfounded by the two kicks. He felt a spinning sensation, his head buzzing, and a sense of foreboding hit his heart.

However, before he could figure it out, the Guard of the Mountain squatted down, grabbed his hair, and roared, “Useless idiot! Listen to me properly. Do you really think you are some sort of talented genius who can enter a sect and become an elite? I’ll tell you; you are just a piece of sh*t. Now, mine properly. If you can’t, I will have your life. Do you understand!?”

1

Jiang Beiran shook his head vigorously after hearing this and shouted, “I want to see my mentor, I want to see my mentor!”

“Your mentor? Hahahahaha.” The Guard of the Mountain laughed wildly for a while and asked, “What’s your mentor’s name?”

“My mentor’s name is... my mentor’s name is...”

Jiang Beiran was once again flummoxed. After two days together, that Taoist had never told him his name, and he had never asked.

“My... my mentor is a Taoist of the Sect of Shying Fire! He was the one who brought me here yesterday. I want to see him, I want to see him!” Jiang Beiran replied.

3

“Hahahaha.” The Guard of the Mountain’s laughter became even wilder. Then, he kicked Jiang Beiran in the stomach again. “Still rambling about the Sect of Shying Fire, huh? Dream all you want. I’m giving you two choices now. You can either continue to stand up and mine, or lie on your belly and be kicked to death by me. You only have three seconds to decide.”

2

As soon as the Guard of the Mountain stopped speaking, three options appeared in front of Jiang Beiran.

[Option One: Continue to lie on your belly. Reward for completion: Secret Records of the Green Lotus (Earth Grade Low Tier)]

4

[Option Two: Beg the other party to let you descend the mountain. Reward for completion: Technique of the Earth Fire (Black Grade High Tier)]

[Option Three: Pick yourself up and continue mining. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

“Two!”

3

While Jiang Beiran was looking at the contents of the options, the Guard of the Mountain had already counted to two and kicked him in the stomach again.

At this moment, Jiang Beiran was enlightened! He realized that the content of these options was not important at all; he just needed to look at the reward. The better the reward, the more dangerous the option!

7

Judging from the strength of the kick just now, Jiang Beiran fully believed that the other party dared to kick him to death. If he continued to lie on his stomach, he would definitely die.

5

So, before the Guard of the Mountain could get to three, Jiang Beiran immediately chose Option Three, and with a strong will to live he managed to stand up.

“Very good. See? You still have some strength after all. If you do not want to die, then hurry up and mine! Do you hear me!?”

Although Jiang Beiran’s whole body was trembling at this moment, he still raised his mine pick and smashed it down with all his strength in order to live.

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Physique +1]

Looking at the system prompt floating before him, as well as the slight traces of strength surging in his body, Jiang Beiran froze for a moment.

‘It’s completed directly just like that?’ he thought to himself.

Previously, when he chose [Please take me as your apprentice, Father], the system didn’t give him a reward immediately at all. Instead, it turned into a quest. But now, he just received the reward directly after doing what was in the option.

The difference in difficulty simply left him dumbfounded.

“Why are you zoning out again!?”

Hearing an angry shout from the Guard of the Mountain.... no, the supervisor, Jiang Beiran hurriedly raised his pick and continued to chip at the ore.

Chapter 4: The Right Way Is to Choose the Simplest One

2

Eventually, Jiang Beiran survived. He also knew that he had been cheated, and recognized the fact that he had been tricked into an illegal mine by some biscuits.

11

He laughed at himself for being so stupid. However, he was not resigned to his fate, because he still had the system. He could still turn the tables!

Although the system that had no user manual at all was extremely treacherous, Jiang Beiran thought he had figured out its peculiarities.

Basically, when choosing a quest with good rewards, one must be alert and treat it with extra caution.

The previous [Quest of Finding a Mentor] was one such example. Although the black-robed Taoist was a conman, perhaps not a Taoist of the Sect of Shying Fire at all, the goal of the quest released by the system was only to become his apprentice, and it did not mention what he would be learning during the apprenticeship. A man teaching one martial arts would be considered one's mentor; so would a man teaching one the art of deception.

Having realized this, Jiang Beiran reflected upon his hardships to learn from his mistakes. He thought that if he could have figured it out earlier, he should have acted smarter and tactfully pointed out the black-robed Taoist's scam. Perhaps then the black-robed Taoist would not have sold him to the illegal mine. Instead, the Taoist might have brought him along as he conned his way across the world.

2

However, he behaved like an outright idiot, deeply convinced of every word the black-robed Taoist had said. He even told the Taoist that he was an orphan and had run away from home. It was clearly telling the other party to trick him, as there would be nothing to worry about.

Every time he thought of it, Jiang Beiran felt like giving himself a slap. He would lament over the fact that his sweating and toiling away at the mine now was all a consequence of his stupidity back when he had faced the black-robed Taoist!

But he was no longer the same! He already knew that the system was not here to give him free welfare, so he would definitely be cautious after that!

...

The opportunity came a little faster than Jiang Beiran had imagined. In the second week that he suffered all kinds of inhumane abuse, his body was no longer physically sore to the point he couldn't sleep. He began to plan his escape. At the same time, four options appeared in front of him.

1

[Option One: Use the opportunity to escape down the mountain while the supervisors are drinking and eating at midday. Reward for completion: Forceful Fingers of Whistling at the Moon (Black Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Two: Quietly dig a passage to the outside of the mountain while working in the mine shaft. Reward for completion: Purple-Gold Tiger-Headed Hook (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

2

[Option Three: Rope in other workers with the intention to escape and discuss the grand plan of escape together. Reward for completion: Lotus Armor (Yellow Grade Low Tier)]

1

[Option Four: Hurry and sleep; you still have to get up for work tomorrow. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

4

Jiang Beiran, who felt that he was getting the hang of it again, first excluded Option Four. Then he began to analyze the other three options.

1

For Option One, the supervisors would indeed get drunk at noon and not bother Jiang Beiran and the workers at all, so it did seem like a possible path to take.

However, Jiang Beiran already had a profound understanding of the fact that the most reliable criteria for judgment would be the reward alone, so the four words of “Black Grade Low Tier” instantly made him reject the option.

Having made several choices, Jiang Beiran had already understood the system’s set of grades and levels. From top to bottom, it should be divided into Heaven Grade, Earth Grade, Black Grade, and Yellow Grade, because he had seen rewards of Earth Grade, Black Grade, and Yellow Grade. Each grade was then further divided into three tiers. Namely high, middle, and low.

The previous time, the option of becoming the black-robed Taoist's apprentice only offered a reward of a cultivation technique of Yellow Grade High Tier, and it almost killed him. This time, the reward was of a higher grade, namely Black Grade Low Tier. He was truly afraid that he wouldn't be alive to collect the reward after choosing the option.

Option Two seemed to be of the same difficulty level as the option of becoming the black-robed Taoist's apprentice, judging by the reward, but the content really made Jiang Beiran feel that it was unreliable.

What kind of place was the mine? It was a place of danger, where several supporting frames must be installed for every meter they moved forward to prevent any collapse. Secretly digging a passage to escape? Even if he could do it without being discovered, he was also afraid of being crushed alive halfway through the digging.

The last remaining option, Option Three, looked more plausible in terms of implementation. After a week of mining in the mountains, Jiang Beiran already knew that, just like him, almost all the people mining here were tricked into coming here. The resentment they harbored towards this place was immense.

Moreover, the supervisors here simply did not treat them as human beings. As long as they spotted someone pausing for a while, they would approach and give them a good kick.

Furthermore, despite mining being so difficult, the supervisors only gave them two meals a day. The food consisted of porridge as thin as water and buns as hard as iron, so all the workers could hardly contain their grievances anymore.

Besides, the reward of the option was of Yellow Grade Low Tier, definitely a reward of the lowest tier, which meant that it had the lowest level of difficulty, too. If he couldn't even handle a quest of this level, then he, Jiang Beiran, would be disgraced as a space traveler, and he might as well kill himself by smashing his head into a piece of tofu.

7

"I'll just choose Option Three!" he said.

After making his choice and activating the quest to escape, Jiang Beiran immediately began to prepare his plan for an uprising, during which he made full use of the various advantages he had as a space traveler. With the

proclamation, "Kings and generals are made, not born!" he impressed the workers, who all bowed and worshipped him.

After that, Jiang Beiran said he killed a giant white snake last night while he was drunk, and at night he dreamed of an old woman crying, saying that her son, the White Prince, had been killed by the Red Prince.

The build-up again made the crowd of workers think that Jiang Beiran was the reincarnation of a deity here to save them, so they respected and worshipped him more and more.

4

Seeing that his crew of workers was growing, Jiang Beiran, who was drinking white porridge, laughed into the sky. Sure enough, as long as he was prepared, such a minor quest worth only a reward of Yellow Grade Low Tier would be a piece of cake, no?

Then the next day he was reported.

17

Needless to say, it didn't end well for him. If it wasn't that the supervisors wanted to better torture Jiang Beiran in order to deter those workers who had also dared to have such thoughts, Jiang Beiran would have been beaten to death on the first night.

Ever since then, Jiang Beiran completely switched to his shut-in mode. As long as options popped up in the system, he would always choose the last one, which had basic attribute points as its reward. He never dared to touch the other options again.

3

As a result, Jiang Beiran made it through two very safe months without illness or disaster, so to speak. Other than mining itself, which was still very tiring, no accidents occurred.

So, Jiang Beiran felt enlightened again!

The system was not so much to help him grow as to give him warnings. As long as he kept tapping the simplest option that would reward him with attribute points, he would be able to avoid all kinds of disasters.

Such a state was maintained until a fine sunny morning. Jiang Beiran climbed out of bed and was just about to go to the construction site when he heard a violent explosion by his ear!

At the same time, three options appeared in front of him.

[Option One: Stay in the house and don't move. Reward for completion: Forceful Palm of Swirling Clouds (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

2

[Option Two: Help put out the fire. Reward for completion: Big Spear of Misfortune (Yellow Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Three: Escape amid chaos. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

1

"Hmm!? The options this time around are rather out of the box," he said to himself.

By right, based on the usual train of thought, choosing to escape at such an incredibly chaotic time was definitely the most unwise. After all, the supervisors were not stupid. They knew that someone would certainly take advantage of the chaos to escape, so they would definitely send someone to guard the halfway point of the mountain or the foot of the mountain. And when the escapees were caught, even if they were not killed, it would be almost impossible for them to escape a severe beating.

But in the two months, Jiang Beiran had experienced all kinds of torture and difficulties. It could be said that without the system's various options as hints, perhaps he would have died long ago. So, this time, he still chose to trust the system!

5

"I'll just choose Option Three!"

Chapter 5: What Godd*mn Grudge Do You Have Against Me?

2

Rushing out of the hut, Jiang Beiran's expression was one of shock. He found that the surrounding clouds of black smoke had almost completely blocked his vision. It made him somewhat confused, as he originally thought that the mine pit had exploded. However, at the moment it looked as if someone had set the mountain on fire!

After thinking for a bit, Jiang Beiran hurriedly ran back into the hut and took out a soaked towel. There really was too much smoke. He was afraid that he would choke to death before he could escape down the mountain if he was to rush into the black smoke without thought.

Covering his mouth and nose with the wet towel, Jiang Beiran no longer stopped to consider other matters. He began to dash wildly down the mountain!

With the black clouds of smoke as cover, Jiang Beiran made his way all the way down, and he really did not encounter any supervisor on his way.

"Could it be that they have all gone to put out the fire?" he wondered.

Although he did not know what was happening, it did not prevent Jiang Beiran's mood from getting better and better, and his footsteps also became livelier. One really couldn't go wrong with trusting the easiest option. He was finally going to escape this godd*mn place.

However, just as Jiang Beiran breached the many unguarded checkpoints and was about to reach the foot of the mountain, a burly man who was hurrying along his way and carrying a long knife suddenly ran into him head-on.

The burly man was at first surprised, then burst out shouting, "You d*mn thing! How dare you try to escape!?"

'It's the end of me!' Jiang Beiran thought.

Looking at the bright shiny big knife, Jiang Beiran, who didn't even know how to dodge, could only hug his head and crouch down, his heart already completely filled with despair.

One second... two seconds... three seconds passed. Jiang Beiran, who had been cursing the treacherous system in his heart, realized that it seemed that he... had not been stabbed?

Swallowing a mouthful of saliva, Jiang Beiran plucked up the courage to look up and found that the burly man holding the long knife now had a large hole in his chest. After coughing up several mouthfuls of blood, he fell to the ground with wide eyes.

"He's dead... Dead!?"

Jiang Beiran was not afraid of the dead. After all, he had seen too many of them in the mine these two months, and the deaths were far more tragic than the one in front of him.

What surprised him was why the burly man had suddenly died without any sign.

"Little buddy, are you alright?"

Just as Jiang Beiran didn't know what to do, a hand suddenly rested on his shoulder, scaring him so much that he almost fell on his butt.

"Who is it!?" Jiang Beiran shouted while turning his head, only to see a man in white standing behind him with a smile.

1

The man had black shiny straight hair, thick slanted eyebrows, elongated eyes with black irises and a sharp look in them, thin and slightly pursed lips, angular contours, and a tall, sturdy, but not rugged build. His entire vibe seemed to highlight his chivalry.

At the same time, three options appeared in front of Jiang Beiran.

[Option One: Shout, "Don't come near me!" Reward for completion: Dragon's Whistle of Shying Fire (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

[Option Two: Turn around and continue to dash wildly down the mountain.
Reward for completion: Thirteen-Linked Chain Gun (Yellow Grade Low Tier)]

2

[Option Three: Shout, "Oh great hero, save me." Reward for completion:
Random basic attribute point +1]

5

Without any hesitation, Jiang Beiran directly chose Option Three and shouted emotionally, "Oh great hero... Save me!"

With eyes red from the smoke and streaks of dusty tears down his face, at the moment, Jiang Beiran looked as pitiful as could be.

3

Seeing Jiang Beiran call for help so decisively, the man in the white shirt was surprised for a moment. After all, he had just killed a person in front of the young lad, and most of the young men he had saved in the past would shout, "don't kill me, don't kill me," while backing away.

That's why he deliberately forced out a smile, as he was afraid that he might scare Jiang Beiran. However, at the moment, it seemed that the young lad in front of him was a lot more courageous than he had thought.

"Alright. I'll bring you down from the mountain now." After saying that, the man in the white shirt came up to Jiang Beiran, carried him, and ran towards the bottom of the mountain.

Later, when Jiang Beiran settled down, only then did he slowly learn the story.

The man in the white shirt who had saved him was named Lu Bogui. He was a disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts who had descended from the mountain the sect was located on with his juniors for a trial. The content of their quest was to annihilate the illegal mine on Mount Lingmao.

1

But because several male juniors of his were too conceited, thinking that those on the mountain were just some ordinary people, they did not notify him, the Iron Seal responsible for leading them, and made their way up Mount

Lingmao by themselves. The result was that those supervisors directly activated the Big Mountain-Guarding Formation after discovering them, causing the whole mountain to be burned down.

3

According to Lu Bogui, the Big Mountain-Guarding Formation was very malicious. Its main function was not to defend against foreign enemies, but to burn away all trace of evidence on the mountain with a single fire so that the people who had come could not yield any results with their investigation.

1

Hearing this, Jiang Beiran could not help but feel a cold shiver creeping down his back. If he had chosen to stay put in the room or to help put out the fire, he would probably be cooked until he was well done by now.

After choosing another series of the simplest options, Jiang Beiran was smoothly inducted as a disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts under the referral of Lu Bogui. From then on, he could be considered as having a place to stay...

Putting away his memories, Jiang Beiran said with emotion, "If it wasn't for Brother Lu back then, I'm afraid I would have died on that Mount Lingmao long ago."

2

Lu Bogui smiled and shook his head. "It's my fault for bringing up your bad memories. I shall punish myself by taking a shot."

Watching Lu Bogui drink the Wine of Cold Springtime in front of him in one gulp, Jiang Beiran picked up the cloth bag and said, "Brother, you shouldn't have. Your gift is really too expensive."

"You are being overly courteous with me again. Do you agree that you should be punished with a shot?" Lu Bogui asked.

"Yes. My bad, my bad." Jiang Beiran smiled and also downed a shot of the Wine of Cold Springtime in one gulp.

"Hurry, open it and see if you like it."

“I will definitely like it since it’s from you, Brother,” Jiang Beiran said while opening the cloth bag, and he took out a round bronze mirror with a protrusion in the middle from the bag.

“This is... mirror armor!?” Jiang Beiran said in pleasant surprise.

3

“Yup. It’s just not of very high quality, only of High Tier. You can just make do with it for now. I’ll see if I can ask for a better one for you when I go to Lusville next time.”

1

“Brother, what are you talking about? A mirror armor of High Tier is already very good. I am a little shy to accept it even,” Jiang Beiran said.

After coming to the Sect of Returning Hearts, Jiang Beiran finally realized why the few missions that offered rewards of Yellow Grade martial art techniques or weapons were so devastatingly difficult for him back then. It was because in this world called the Land of the Black Dragon, Yellow Grade treasures referred to magical items that already possessed spirituality. These were great treasures that the average person wouldn’t even think about, and some low-level sects would even consider them their most treasured pieces.

When he first learned of this knowledge, Jiang Beiran really wanted to get ahold of the system and ask it what godd*mn grudge it had against him to attempt to trick him to his death.

2

Because the magical items of the four grades of Heaven, Earth, Black, and Yellow were too high-end, even the young disciples of some big sects couldn’t afford them, not to mention the ordinary people.

So below the four grades of Heaven, Earth, Black, and Yellow, there were still weapons and armor crafted by some famous experts. From the bottom to the top, they were divided into Normal Tier, Good Tier, High Tier, Excellent Tier, and Peerless Tier.

3

An item of High Tier was already considered quite a good treasure, and for a sect disciple to give one away, it was definitely considered a generous gift.

“Don’t say that. Actually, the reason I gave you this piece of mirror armor was also partly to thank you. The bottle of Pills of Lingering Fragrance you gave me last time was very effective. Did you really make them yourself?” Lu Bogui asked.

“Yep.” Jiang Beiran nodded, not hiding anything.

“Then you are really gifted. Why don’t I refer you to the Order of Fine-Haired Grass? You have no desire to practice cultivation anyway.. If you can achieve something in alchemy, your status might rise even faster than mine in the future.”

11

“Brother, it’s not like you don’t know me, I...” Jiang Beiran said.

“Alright, alright. I won’t advise you to advance your position in the future.” Lu Bogui smiled and shook his head.

Seeing the rather disappointed look on Lu Bogui’s face, Jiang Beiran was also very helpless. Actually, it was really not that he didn’t want to advance his position, but because the system’s options made it impossible for him to progress.

3

When he first came to the Sect of Returning Hearts, Jiang Beiran passed the qualification test and became an Outer Disciple, gaining the eligibility to learn the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts and the Sword Technique of One Word.

According to the rules of the Sect of Returning Hearts, as long as an Outer Disciple had mastered the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts and the first move in the Sword Technique of One Word, he would be considered to have passed his first test and become an official disciple. He would then be qualified to apply to enter an order.

As for how the application to enter an order worked, first, we must start by looking at the 24 orders established by the Sect of Returning Hearts. Each of

these 24 orders had its own characteristics, including music, chess, calligraphy, painting, swords, spears, and sticks, and the Outer Disciples could choose one according to their own strengths or preferences.

When Jiang Beiran first heard about this, he was a little surprised, wondering if all sects in the world were teaching people according to their abilities, or if the head of the Sect of Returning Hearts was particularly forward-thinking and knew the importance of having a variety of talents in the sect.

When Outer Disciples passed the first test and became qualified to apply to enter an order, they could choose one of the 24 orders that they liked to find a mentor. As long as they succeeded in doing so, they could learn more advanced internal cultivation methods and martial arts in the order. If they were talented enough, there was even a possibility that a Blue Flag or Black Flag of the order, or even the Order Master, would take them in as an Inner Disciple, whereby they would be able to enjoy an absolute one-on-one elite education.

...

The Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts and the Sword Technique of One Word were among the most introductory basic moves, so naturally, there was no mentor to provide elite one-on-one teaching. Hundreds of Outer Disciples sat down in the lecture hall, and the lecturer was no senior teacher, but a very young-looking Brother.

During the class, Jiang Beiran found that, in addition to their batch of new students, some senior students that seemed to have been there for a long time also attended the class.

There were four classes a week, and the course was over after two weeks. Before leaving, the Brother told Jiang Beiran and the others that the rest would depend on their own practice and understanding.

When it was time for self-practice, Jiang Beiran found that he was exceptionally gifted and was the first among hundreds of Outer Disciples to master the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts. But just as he was about to go and report to Qing Gang, who was in charge of managing them, three options suddenly popped up in front of him.

[Option One: Immediately tell Qing Gang that you have mastered the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts. Reward for completion: Forceful Claw of Achieving Zen (Black Grade Medium Tier)]

7

[Option Two: Continue practicing in silence. Reward for completion: Iron Arrows of the Black Dragon*20 (Yellow Grade Low Tier)]

1

[Option Three: Do nothing. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

“Oh boy... is it so dangerous?” he wondered.

1

Seeing that the first option directly offered a reward of Black Grade Middle Tier, Jiang Beiran was a bit stunned. After all, this reward could basically be directly equated with getting killed.

“Could it be because the nail that sticks up the most gets hammered down?” Jiang Beiran asked himself.

4

Because of the extremely good impression he had of Lu Bogui, plus the fact that the latter had often talked about how good the Sect of Returning Hearts was on the way here, Jiang Beiran had formed the mental image of the Sect of Returning Hearts being a prestigious sect whereby everyone within, from top to bottom, was righteous and proper.

1

But at the moment it seemed that merely revealing some extraordinary talent would lead to death.

But Jiang Beiran thought about it and it made sense. Even in the 21st century, where the judicial system is mature, the streets are full of cameras, and the impressive technology of facial recognition had been developed, there were still people who dare to kill and commit crimes. Of course it would be the

same in a mythical land where even fingerprint technology had not yet been developed.

4

If someone really wanted to kill you, they could simply poison your food, or suddenly kick you in the back when ascending the mountain. They could even directly stab you or something when you went to the toilet in the dark. All those methods would result in a death without evidence, and a detective would be considered a peerless legend if he could even catch two or three real culprits out of 100 such cases.

4

But while Jiang Beiran could still understand why the first option would be dangerous, he couldn't really see why the second option of practicing in silence would bring disaster. But it didn't matter, because he had already chosen Option Three.

6

After that, Jiang Beiran obediently acted as if he was a salted fish with no aspirations in life. Most of the disciples living in the same dormitory area got up around 5:00 am to practice, while he would only get up a couple of hours after the others had done so.

When the others were ready to go meditate after practicing swordsmanship, he also followed along and pretended to meditate for a while.

Over time, he became a useless idiot in the eyes of most of the Outer Disciples. Sometimes Jiang Beiran could even hear their mocking laughs they deliberately let him hear while he was eating.

"I don't know how this kind of person could pass the qualification test."

"Yeah right. Every day he sleeps in until 9 o'clock. Not even my pig can sleep that much."

5

"Forget it. Let's not talk about others like that. We can't blame them for having poor talent, too."

...

Faced with such ridicule, not only was Jiang Beiran's heart calm, he even wanted to laugh a little.

'Isn't this the typical opening for stories where the protagonist started out as a loser? Steady!' he thought to himself.

14

Such learning continued for two weeks, and eventually, a handsome male disciple named Wei Yang came out top. He told Qing Gang that he had mastered the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts as well as the first move of the Sword Technique of One Word.

Amid the envious gazes from the crowd, Wei Yang waved goodbye to his fellow disciples whom he had been studying with for a month and was ready to apply to enter an order.

1

After two more weeks, most of the Outer Disciples of the same batch had mastered the skills required and passed the test. Only thirteen disciples, including Jiang Beiran, were left in the lecture hall.

Another early morning, without any notice, Jiang Beiran discovered that a new batch of Outer Disciples had arrived at the lecture hall.

"What a steady intake of students..."

In just over a month, another hundred Outer Disciples had been recruited, which gave Jiang Beiran a more concrete understanding of the size of the Sect of Returning Hearts.

1

But the other Outer Disciples who were from the same batch as him were not so relaxed. They all had very ugly expressions when they saw the new Outer Disciples because they knew that they had become those that were left behind that they had once ridiculed.

2

...

After that, Jiang Beiran did not stay back for too long. At the end of the first month of the new batch of Outer Disciples' arrival, when there were a few others from his batch left with him, two options appeared in front of him.

[Option One: Remain in the lecture hall. Reward for completion: Palm of Clear Skies (Black Grade Low Tier)]

4

[Option Two: Pass the test. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

It was rare to have only two options, and Jiang Beiran didn't bother to think about why Option One would offer such a good reward. He instead directly chose Option Two.

1

Having found Qing Gang in the hut outside the lecture hall, Jiang Beiran told him that he had mastered the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts and the first move of the Sword Technique of One Word.

Without much reaction, Qing Gang nodded at Jiang Beiran and let him demonstrate the first move of the Sword Technique of One Word, then pressed his palm on Jiang Beiran's chest and asked him to practice the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts.

The moment he practiced the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts, Jiang Beiran immediately thought that if he had chosen Option Two and continued practicing in silence, he would have been discovered to be hiding his talent by this Qing Gang before him. Then there would be no telling what would have followed.

Sensing that Jiang Beiran had managed to practice the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts with difficulty, Qing Gang nodded and said to Jiang Beiran, "Well, you have passed the test.. You are now an official disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts, so you can go and apply to enter an order on your own."

Chapter 7: Sorry, Sister, You Have the Wrong Person. My Surname Is Wang

1

When he first joined the sect, Jiang Beiran had already gotten to know about the 24 orders of the Sect of Returning Hearts. Among them, the Order of Blue Heart, which featured the study of Go, was the one he was most attracted to. This was because he had gained a considerable number of [Go Playing] points back when he was in the mine.

8

During the two months he spent in the mine back then, the easiest options at the beginning all increased basic attribute points like strength or physique, but since the start of the second week, there were new rewards, namely [Basic Skill Points].

These included artistic ones like Music Playing, Go Playing, Calligraphy, and Drawing, as well as technical ones like Alchemy, Forging, Poisonous Magic, and Tailoring. Later on, there were more skills such as Formations, Medicine, Winemaking, and so on.

6

And among these skills, [Go Playing] currently had the highest points for Jiang Beiran.

Sticking to his initial intention, Jiang Beiran, who had passed the test, sought out the Order of Blue Heart according to the sect map that was handed out to everyone at the time of initiation and applied to enter the order.

To enter the sect, one needed to take a test, and naturally, it was the same for entering the order. There were two tests to take in the Order of Blue Heart. One was sparring between disciples, and the other was a game of Go between disciples.

Jiang Beiran had three options pop up in front of him at the beginning of the first sparring match.

[Option One: Defeat your opponent with ease. Reward for completion: Spear of Eight Trigrams (Black Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Two: Cut the opponent some slack. Reward for completion: Gilded Bell of Plum Blossom (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

[Option Three: Suffer a crushing defeat and step down. Reward for completion: Random basic skill point +1]

2

Jiang Beiran, who had been mentally prepared, directly chose Option Three, and then was sent flying out of the ring by his opponent with a single slap after showing all sorts of weaknesses. During the time, he also garnered a lot of disdainful laughter.

48

But during the game of Go, no options popped out from the system, which was rare.

2

In the previous series of summaries and conclusions he made, Jiang Beiran found that options would only pop up from the system at critical moments, and the lack of options meant that the decision was irrelevant and would not have too much impact on the future.

‘So, it doesn’t matter if I win or lose?’ Jiang Beiran couldn’t help but be a little puzzled.

1

It was not until he had entered the Order of Blue Heart with his relatively excellent level of Go playing that Jiang Beiran realized that the Order of Blue Heart’s so-called study of Go puzzles was actually just the icing on the cake. It was nothing too substantial.

It was like, as a student, if you had excellent grades in Chinese, Mathematics, and English, and could play the piano on top of that, then the teacher would praise you for your versatility.

But if you could only play the piano very well, yet your grades for Chinese, Mathematics, and English were a mess, then the teacher would ask you to put other things aside and focus on improving your grades first.

2

In the Sect of Returning Hearts, the equivalent of Chinese, Mathematics, and English would naturally be martial arts.

And because of this very reason, after Jiang Beiran had entered the Order of Blue Heart, there wasn't even have a master who wanted to take him as an apprentice, which led him to eventually become a named disciple of the Order of Blue Heart. That's right. He became someone who was only a disciple in name and had nothing else.

But Jiang Beiran did not care about this. After all, the system clearly meant to tell him that as long as he found a mentor, there would be risks, so there was nothing bad about only being a named disciple. Anyway, he had decided upon his own cultivation route, which was to constantly look for opportunities to trigger the option, thus pulling up the basic attributes. Although only earning one point at a time seemed a bit pathetic, those few points added up, and he would eventually soar high one day!

4

Seeing that Jiang Beiran revealed a bitter smile, Lu Bogui, who knew he had said the wrong thing, hurriedly raised his glass and said, "Right. I almost forgot to say happy birthday to you, Brother."

3

"Many thanks, Brother." After thanking him, Jiang Beiran raised his glass and clinked it against Lu Bogui's.

Satisfied and full of wine and meat, at the entrance of the canteen, Lu Bogui patted Jiang Beiran's shoulder and said, "Then I'll go back to my mentor's place first to report back."

"Alright. Take care, Brother." Jiang Beiran bowed with a respectful expression.

With a wave of his hand, Lu Bogui turned and left gracefully, while Jiang Beiran continued his afternoon shopping time.

In the evening, Jiang Beiran, who had triggered five more options, returned to the Order of Blue Heart. However, he found a pretty female disciple standing at the entrance of his hut.

At the same time, Liu Zijin also noticed Jiang Beiran, who was walking towards her. She hurriedly approached him, bowed, and greeted him, saying, "I am Liu Zijin of the Order of Water Mirror. Greetings, Brother Jiang."

The girl in front of him was very good-looking. Her beautiful eyes lingered, and a smile lit up her peach-like cheeks. As her mouth opened and closed, her breath was like the scent of an orchid, and she was indescribably gentle and lovely.

5

'The danger level is very high!'

9

According to Jiang Beiran's experience of encountering beautiful Sisters in the past five years, it could be said that simply passing them by on the streets was enough for a reward option of Black Grade and above to pop up in the system, and the Sister in front of him was the best-looking one Jiang Beiran had encountered in all this time.

5

Although somewhat surprised that the system didn't give him options this time, Jiang Beiran immediately joined his hand in a salute and said, "Sister, I'm afraid you've mistaken me for someone else. My surname is Wang."

9

"Wang...?"

While Liu Zijin was looking lost, Jiang Beiran had already saluted her once more with his hand and walked forward, passing her.

But before Jiang Beiran could walk away, Liu Zijin caught up, unrolling a scroll in her hand. "It can't be a mistake. Isn't it you in the portrait, Brother?"

'D*mn! Who is it that has managed to capture a tenth of my handsomeness in drawing? The person must have quite a bit of skill,' he thought to himself.

10

Looking at his own portrait on the scroll in Liu Zijin's hand, Jiang Beiran had to explain again, saying, "There are many disciples in the Order of Blue Heart. It's normal to have a few that look alike, but my surname is really not Jiang. I hope that you can find this handsome Brother in the portrait soon, Sister."

1

At that moment, a male disciple came over and shouted to Jiang Beiran, "Brother Jiang, Etiquette Master Cheng asked me to come here and call you over to play a few games of Go with him."

13

After he finished speaking, he noticed Liu Zijin beside them. She was still in a state of confusion. His eyes widened immediately and his mind was instantly filled with the two words, "very beautiful."

Hearing the male disciple shout out the two words "Brother Jiang," Liu Zijin was first stunned, then immediately stood in front of Jiang Beiran and said, "You are indeed Brother Jiang!"

1

Jiang Beiran smiled and shook his head as he replied, "No, Sister, you heard wrong. He called out for Brother Wang."

"No, he didn't!" Liu Zijin said, then looked at the male disciple and asked, "May I ask if he is Jiang Beiran, or Brother Jiang?"

1

As soon as the male disciple heard Liu Zijin asking him a question, he immediately replied energetically as if he was high on drugs, "Yes! That's him, Jiang Beiran, Brother Jiang, the one and only."

10

After lamenting in his heart that the junior disciple was still too young to understand how scary such a beautiful woman was, Jiang Beiran put up another smile and said to Liu Zijin, "Alright, it's me. I was playing a little joke just now, Sister."

After hearing this, Liu Zijin covered her mouth and laughed, saying, “I see, Brother Jiang. You are really interesting.”

8

‘Ha?’

Jiang Beiran was a little dumbfounded. He had thought that even if Liu Zijin didn’t turn to leave directly in anger, she would have questioned him angrily, then he would have an excuse to bail out.

But what he didn’t expect was...

‘She really seems to just find me humorous?’

Knowing that he couldn’t escape this, Jiang Beiran first said to the male disciple, “Go and tell Etiquette Master Cheng that I’ll be right there.”

“Okay.” The male disciple nodded but had no intention of leaving at all, his eyes glancing at Liu Zijin from time to time.

3

‘Alas, the young man is not worthy to be taught.’

3

After lamenting in his heart, Jiang Beiran once again looked at Liu Zijin and asked, “Why have you come to the Order of Blue Heart to look for me, Sister?”

Chapter 8: I Did Not Expect a Sleeping Dragon and a Young Phoenix to Show up Here at the Same Time

5

Bowing at Jiang Beiran, Liu Zijin’s vermilion lips parted lightly. “In three days, I will descend the mountain and have my first trial. I would like to ask you to be our Iron Seal, Brother.”

3

As soon as Liu Zijin's words left her lips, three options popped up in front of Jiang Beiran.

[Option One: Immediately answer, "Sure, it's a small matter. No problem."
Reward for completion: Cultivation Technique of Ancient Qi (Earth Grade Medium Tier)]

23

[Option Two: "What kind of quest have you received for your trial, Sister?"
Reward for completion: Claw of Still Quiescence (Black Grade High Tier)]

1

[Option Three: "I'm busy with my studies, goodbye!" Reward for completion: Random basic skill point +1]

3

When he saw the reward of Earth Grade Medium Tier, Jiang Beiran's eyes were about to pop out. He didn't even read the content of Option Two and directly chose Option Three, replying, "Sorry, I am busy with my studies recently, and as you heard, Etiquette Master Cheng called me over to play Go. The etiquette master is a Go fanatic and definitely won't let me out for four or five days once we start playing. So, please find another person, Sister.

"Farewell!"

After saying that, he joined his hands in a salute, then turned around and left.

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Medicine +1]

"Brother Jiang, when has Etiquette Master Cheng ever played Go with you for more than a day? I..."

13

Seeing that the junior that was helping to run errands was going to ruin his grand plan again, Jiang Beiran quickly covered his mouth and dragged him towards the Pavilion of Blue Heart.

"Uh-uh-uh!"

The young junior who was dragged away had one part pain, one part incomprehension, two parts resentment, and seven parts intense reluctance in his eyes!

3

‘She’s such a good-looking Sister! Let me take a few more looks!’

1

Unfortunately for him, he was not as strong as Jiang Beiran and had no choice but to be dragged along all the way.

“I... have been rejected?” Liu Zijin froze in place, looking at Jiang Beiran making a rapid departure as if he was fleeing, and actually felt her heartbeat inexplicably speed up a little.

9

“Is this what it feels like to be rejected? Since childhood, no one has ever rejected me. This Brother... is so special. No, now is not the time to think about this,” she said.

26

Coming back to her senses, Liu Zijin chased after him, shouting under her breath, “Brother Jiang, don’t rush off. I have not finished speaking yet, Brother Jiang!”

But the strange thing was, although Brother Jiang seemed to be walking normally, he was moving at a faster pace than her even though she was running. She couldn’t catch up despite her attempts.

8

Seeing that Jiang Beiran was about to disappear from sight, Liu Zijin suddenly saw a pretty green silhouette walking towards her, so she hurriedly shouted, “Qiuyao! Quick, stop that Brother! Don’t let him get away!”

1

Fang Qiuyao had come there together with Liu Zijin. However, she was not as patient as Liu Zijin, so after waiting for a while she made an excuse about

getting drinks and then toured around other places. Upon her return, she heard Sister Zijin asking her to stop the Brother who was walking towards her in an urgent tone.

Fang Qiuyao couldn't help but make up one image after another in her mind given the current situation. Her senior must have been faced with all kinds of unreasonable and incomprehensible demands from this person.

"Lecher! What have you done to my Sister Zijin?!" she called.

7

Then, with a clanking sound, Fang Qiuyao directly pulled out her Sword of White Rainbow and stabbed it towards Jiang Beiran.

3

'Indeed, a Sister who could generate an Earth Grade Middle Tier reward. It's so hard to even slip away from her!' Jiang Beiran thought.

1

He hastily dodged Fang Qiuyao's sword, which was thrusting towards him. Seeing that the other party was going to attempt to stab him again, Jiang Beiran said repeatedly, "It's a misunderstanding, a misunderstanding!"

3

"I believe you, my *ss!" Fang Qiuyao said as she made use of the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts and was about to stab again. However, she heard Liu Zijin's shouts from behind.

1

"Qiuyao, stop it! Brother Jiang didn't do anything to me," she said.

Only then did Fang Qiuyao realize that she seemed to have really misunderstood, and looked at Liu Zijin rather confusedly.

Seeing an opportunity to take advantage of, Jiang Beiran hastily dragged his junior along and continued his escape. Before he could take two steps, he heard Liu Zijin shout, "Brother Jiang, can you please let me finish talking first? It's not too late for you to reject me when I'm done."

1

The commotion of the fight just now had already attracted a group of disciples of the Order of Blue Heart and they gathered around. Hearing Liu Zijin's pleasant voice sound as if she had been wronged, they felt a significant increase of chivalry in their hearts, and all gathered towards Jiang Beiran, their eyes full of anger.

16

"I'll be d*mned!"

Seeing that he had no way to slip away, Jiang Beiran felt really desperate. Why weren't these sons of b*tches so chivalrous usually?

Sighing resignedly, Jiang Beiran let go of the almost suffocating junior and turned to look at Liu Zijin.

Seeing Jiang Beiran stop, Liu Zijin hurried forward and bowed again. "I'm really sorry for the trouble I caused you, but this trial is very important to me, so I really hope you can help me."

Liu Zijin's words left the onlooking disciples baffled, and some of the older disciples were even more confused.

'This Jiang Beiran has such a great reputation?'

As a disciple of the Order of Blue Heart and living relatively close together, to say that they completely did not know Jiang Beiran was certainly impossible. But their biggest impression of Jiang Beiran was that this old fella had been a named disciple for a full five years. To put it bluntly, no master wanted him. What could such a person be capable of, for such a pretty young Sister to beg him like this?

2

Hearing Liu Zijin's sincere tone, even Jiang Beiran could not help but soften. But once he thought of that Earth Grade Middle Tier reward, he hurriedly hardened his heart again.

So, he joined his hands together in a salute and said, "Sister, I'm sorry. I also have important things to do recently, and I really have no time to spare."

Without waiting for Liu Zijin to reply, Fang Qiuyao stepped forward first and said, "Brother, you're using such a poor excuse to reject us. Surely you're not afraid, are you?"

Only then did the onlookers shift their gaze from Liu Zijin to Fang Qiuyao, and their hearts were immediately filled with the thought that this Sister was also very good-looking.

Fang Qiuyao's beauty was different from that of Liu Zijin. She was more like a neighborhood girl, with curved eyebrows, a small nose slightly upturned, a face like white jade, and beauty like sunlight at dawn. She wore no makeup, and the only ornament that adorned her was a string of pearls hanging from her neck, emitting a faint glow, which made her skin look even fairer and more jade-like.

8

Just as Fang Qiuyao finished asking, three options popped up in front of Jiang Beiran.

[Option One: Answer immediately, "Are you kidding? How would I be afraid?"
Reward for completion: Secret Treasure in Sleeve (Earth Grade Low Tier)]

2

[Option Two: "I know you are trying to provoke me, Sister, but it won't work on me." Reward for completion: Sword of Sun, Moon, Heaven, and Earth (Black Grade Medium Tier)]

2

[Option Three: "Yes, that's right." Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

4

'D*mn! Another Earth Grade Low Tier reward! F*ck, it's incredible!'

Jiang Beiran really wanted to cry at this time. He did not know why a sleeping dragon and a young phoenix [1] had both showed up here today at the same time. It was going to cost him his life!

Decisively choosing Option Three, Jiang Beiran nodded at Fang Qiuyao and said, "That's right."

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Mind +1]

3

"You!"

1

Fang Qiuyao's beautiful eyes paused. She had clearly thought that no matter how this Brother Jiang was to make excuses to explain that he was not afraid, she had arguments to refute him, but she didn't expect him to just admit it in front of everyone's eyes!

1

"Hmph!" Pouting in anger, Fang Qiuyao walked back to Liu Zijin and said, "Let's go, Sister Zijin. He refused to be our Iron Seal, but there are plenty of people who are willing to take on the position."

But Liu Zijin shook her head and said, "Qiuyao, do not talk like that. We are the ones who have inconvenienced him, and he naturally has his reasons for refusing, so how can we be angry because of it?"

"Oh... I see." Fang Qiuyao nodded her head with a pout.

Seeing that Liu Zijin was so reasonable, Jiang Beiran was also relieved. He thought that the matter had finally come to an end, so he hurried to leave.

But just as the onlookers realized that there was no more action to watch and were ready to disperse, a figure suddenly appeared in the air and landed between Jiang Beiran and Liu Zijin..[1]: Metaphor for two impressive individuals.

1

"Brother Kong?" Liu Zijin shouted with some surprise after seeing the visitor.

3

At the same time, the surrounding disciples of the Order of Blue Heart, who were just about to disperse, instantly focused their gazes on the handsome senior brother who had suddenly descended from the sky.

“Brother Kong?” A disciple of the Order of Blue Heart in the crowd muttered before suddenly widening his eyes. He said, “Could it be the one who is known as the Army Breaking Spear is Kong Annan of the Order of Water Mirror, Brother Kong?”

“Army Breaking Spear? What’s his story?” a few disciples next to him asked curiously.

“How do you all not know this? Three years ago, this Brother Kong went to the Huailin region to cultivate. On the way, he suddenly encountered a chaotic war. To protect the citizens who were escaping, he breached the army of the rebels alone, wielding a Tiger-headed Gold-chiseled Spear. He directly took the army general’s head, causing chaos in the army, and bought time for the people to escape. After the incident, he received the title of Army Breaking Spear.”

9

“So impressive!” The disciple’s eyes shone as he listened, and he looked at Kong Annan with some admiration in his gaze.

“Of course! Brother Kong can definitely be considered the most outstanding disciple in our Sect of Returning Hearts in the past two years, but I have only heard about him before. I never thought I would see him in person today, and he is indeed magnificent and extraordinary.”

Hearing the surrounding disciples whisper about him quietly, Kong Annan smiled, put a hand over his fist in a salute toward the surrounding people, and said, “Greetings to my fellow brothers in the Order of Blue Heart. I am indeed Kong Annan of the Order of Water Mirror.”

Upon hearing this, the disciples of the Order of Blue Heart hurriedly bowed and shouted, “Greetings, Brother Kong.”

After joining his hands in a salute toward the surrounding disciples of the Order of Blue Heart, Kong Annan turned to look at Liu Zijin and said, “Sister, aren’t you going to descend the mountain for your trial in two days? What

brings you here to the Order of Blue Heart instead of preparing for it in the Order?”

1

Without waiting for Liu Zijin to speak, Fang Qiuyao answered first, saying, “We are here to find that... Eh, where is he?”

Fang Qiuyao looked to where Jiang Beiran had originally stood in puzzlement, wondering how such a big target of a person could just disappear.

21

Just when she was about to ask the other disciples of the Order of Blue Heart if they had seen Brother Jiang, Liu Zijin pulled Fang Qiuyao behind her and bowed to Kong Annan. “Greetings, Brother Kong. Qiuyao and I just came here for some errands and are about to go back. What brings you here, Brother?”

“Oh, I...I...I was just passing by and happened to sense your presence, so I came over to take a look,” he replied.

15

“I see. Then if you have something going on, please feel free to be on your way, Brother. Qiuyao and I are also about to go back to the Order,” she said.

“Actually, I am also planning to go back to the Order, so it’s just nice for me to go back along with you two.”

3

“All right, then let’s go back together.” Liu Zijin nodded and took another look at where Jiang Beiran had stood before turning around and leaving.

On the other hand, Jiang Beiran, who had long since slipped away, had already arrived at the entrance of the Pavilion of Blue Heart.

“Phew... Indeed, a sister who can trigger an option with an Earth Grade Middle Tier reward is really terrifying,” he said.

2

The moment Kong Annan had landed just now, while everyone's eyes were focused on the man, Jiang Beiran left the place of potential disputes at a speed so fast that no one noticed.

As for why he ran away so fast, it was entirely because he had suffered a great loss in this regard before!

5

...

The Sect of Returning Hearts had a rule that all disciples had to abide by. That was, they must descend the mountain for a trial every two months. Firstly, it was so that the disciples would not just stay on the mountain all the time, not knowing anything about the human condition and the world other than cultivation.

Secondly, it was to improve the local reputation of the Sect of Returning Hearts. To put it simply, it was to promote the brand name of the Sect of Returning Hearts.

For example, some great heroes would perform good deeds without leaving behind a name, but the disciples of the Sect of Returning Hearts could not leave no name behind.

If a disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts had gotten rid of a group of mountain bandits, it would be necessary to spread the story so that everyone in the region would know that the members of the Sect of Returning Hearts were the ones who had gotten rid of them.

Jiang Beiran couldn't help but lament in his heart that the Sect of Returning Hearts was indeed very good at playing the game when he just learned of the rule and that it was no wonder that the Sect could recruit so many disciples every month.

After receiving the quest of the trial that one would be completing after descending the mountain, generally, the disciples would find some like-minded brothers and sisters to travel together. In addition, the most important thing was to find an Iron Seal to lead the team.

1

In the Sect of Returning Hearts, as long as you had stayed for a year, it meant that you had descended the mountain at least six times for your trials. This in turn meant that you were already a mature disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts. From this moment onward, you had a new obligation. That was, you must serve as an Iron Seal and lead the disciples who had just joined the sect in their descent from the mountain for their trial every two months.

So being an Iron Seal was a tough job that involved being both a bodyguard and a nanny to those new disciples.

The first time Jiang Beiran descended the mountain for his trial, Lu Bogui served as his Iron Seal and brought him to chase away a fierce beast that had often attacked the village. It could be said that the difficulty level was almost nonexistent.

After all, as long as one had learned the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts, one's capabilities would have already far exceeded that of ordinary people, and it was still very easy to fight against a few lions or tigers.

Soon, a year of such peaceful days passed. Regarding the great loss that Jiang Beiran suffered, it all started when he became an Iron Seal.

That time, he became an Iron Seal for a five-member team, consisting of three men and two women. A junior sister among them had very lovely looks and also a very good character, causing the other three male disciples to fawn over her like crazy.

But the junior Sister kept expressing her affection to Jiang Beiran, who gave her a great sense of security, which caused the other three male disciples to be jealous.

1

Later, on the way back, the junior sister plucked up the courage to pull out the handkerchief she embroidered and confessed to Jiang Beiran, and it was in front of the other four disciples. It triggered the other three male disciples so much that they were about to explode!

As for why Jiang Beiran knew they were blowing up from rage, it was because he saw the three options that popped up in front of him.

[Option One: Say yes directly to the junior sister. Reward for completion: Homage Paying to the Phoenix (Earth Grade High Tier)]

1

[Option Two: "Sister, I am entirely focused on my cultivation right now, and I don't want to discuss relationship matters for now." Reward for completion: Palm of Four Symbols (Earth Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Three: "Sorry, I just see you as a sister." Reward for completion: Ring of Coiled Dragon (Yellow Grade Medium Tier)]

6

After reading the three options, Jiang Beiran was completely in shock. It was the first time he encountered three options whereby none of them offered the reward of basic attribute points! Even the poorest one offered a reward of Yellow Grade Medium Tier!

2

"Men are... really all animals dominated by their lower body!!!"

9

Roaring in his heart, Jiang Beiran tearfully chose Option Three, and rejected the junior sister by saying, "I just see you as a sister." However, the junior sister was not the least bit discouraged by the rejection and firmly stated that she would one day make him see her differently.

3

This also made Jiang Beiran understand why there was no option with basic attribute points. It was because the question was a killer in itself! No matter how he answered, the three male disciples would hate him!

12

But no matter how depressed Jiang Beiran was, after making the choice, the corresponding task followed, which was to dispel the three disciples' hostility toward him or just kill them directly.

1

“I must have really screwed the pooch!”

2

Chapter 10: If I Have No Sword, I Cannot Protect You

In addition to disciples of civilian backgrounds like Jiang Beiran who were brought in, descendants of major Houses were also among those who were able to join to Sect of Returning Hearts for cultivation.

Jiang Beiran’s luck was extremely good, winning three jackpots in a row. In a small team of just five people, there was the son of a government official, the son of a rich family, and the son of a hero and all three of them hated him.

2

“I’ll be d*mned!”

Jiang Beiran, who was investigating the three junior Brothers’ lives, felt like he was going to break down, and at the same time, he felt enlightened!

The world was targeting him, targeting him very, very specifically!

7

But since the incident had already happened, he could only face it. Jiang Beiran felt that he was no longer the ignorant person he was back then. As a year had passed, he had already saved up a considerable number of attribute points and skill points, so he felt that he had a fighting chance even in the face of a quest with a Yellow Grade Middle Tier reward!

...

The son of the hero was named Wu Qingce. His father was the hero Wu Fengmian, titled Hand of Flying Leaves, famous in the Zhandong region. He was a master of concealed weapons, which made it difficult for people to defend themselves.

He was the first to seek Jiang Beiran out after returning to the Sect of Returning Hearts, but he did so in a straightforward and proper manner. That

was, he directly delivered a letter of challenge to Jiang Beiran's doorstep, and the winner would be able to pursue the junior Sister.

Although Jiang Beiran had explained countless times that he really was not interested in the junior Sister, Wu Qingce had a one-tracked mind and insisted upon a fight. Jiang Beiran could either accept the letter of challenge and commit to showing up three days later in the grove at the foot of Mount Qingtian or have Wu Qingce fight him directly on the spot.

Faced with this kind of a hothead, what else could Jiang Beiran say? Other than swearing in a bunch of vulgar words in his heart, he could only accept the letter of challenge with a smile on his face.

But in the three-day gap, Jiang Beiran did not wait idly, either. He felt that instead of waiting for the other two to challenge him at his doorstep or take action against him in secret, he might as well take the initiative and find a way to deal with them first.

So, he first approached the disciple from the rich family.

The disciple from the rich family was named Lin Jiuge, and he was the son of Lin Jingxiang, the richest man in Ningyong County. He could be said to have grown up pampered with the finest clothes and food, and he had seen enough of the prosperity in the world. He came to the Sect of Returning Hearts to practice cultivation purely on a whim. Besides, he also wanted to give his father something to be proud of, so that he could be more confident when asking for pocket money in the future.

When he found Lin Jiuge, the latter had just finished practice. The disciple from the rich family was quite courteous, and on the surface, he still politely bowed at Jiang Beiran and shouted, "Greetings, Brother Jiang." It's just that his voice sounded a bit strange.

And Jiang Beiran replied with a sentence that he hadn't expected.

"Do you want to discuss about a possible collaboration with me, Brother Lin?" Jiang Beiran asked.

Jiang Beiran found out that Lin Jiuge's family was mainly involved in the transportation business when he was asking around about the latter back then, so he shared the epoch-transcending idea of a newspaper with him during the conversation.

Lin Jiuge immediately applauded the idea after listening to it. He said that he would immediately go home and discuss it with his father and that if his father thought it would work, he would definitely give Jiang Beiran a generous payout. Of course, he would also be alright with following the idea of collaboration via allotment of shares, or whatever it was that Jiang Beiran had said.

Jiang Beiran's reasoning was very simple. Since Lin Jiuge's father could become the richest man in the county, he must naturally be a smart man. If he was smart enough, then he would want to collaborate with the man who could come up with such brilliant ideas in the long run. If he wasn't so smart, then Jiang Beiran would just consider it as an investment to complete this Yellow Grade Middle Tier quest.

7

After the matter of collaboration was settled, Lin Jiuge's attitude obviously became respectful, and he continuously expressed his admiration for Jiang Beiran as if it was a gushing torrent of river water. When addressing the latter as "Brother Jiang," it no longer sounded sarcastic like before.

So, Jiang Beiran took the opportunity to ask him about news regarding the last of the three, the son of a government official, Wang Yu'an.

But Lin Jiuge told him that they had just happened to arrive together to take up a trial quest and were then grouped together by the Flower Crown in charge of arranging the trial. He did not know Wang Yu'an before the trial and only knew that he was the son of Wang Bingquan, the county lieutenant of Chuanan County. However, he had heard of this Wang Bingquan, because his efficiency of solving cases was very high, and so he was loved very much by the local people.

Upon arrival in an unfamiliar region, the most important thing was of course to make out who was in charge of the place, so Jiang Beiran had carefully studied the names and positions of the officials for a while.

A person with the position of county lieutenant would be in charge of security, and his status would be just below the county magistrate. In modern times, the position would be equivalent to that of the Director General of the Public Security Bureau, which could be considered a very powerful role.

After saying thanks to Lin Jiuge, Jiang Beiran was just thinking of what to say to Wang Yu'an when seeking him out, when the young man showed up at his doorstep.

"Greetings, Brother Jiang."

Wang Yu'an could definitely be considered a modest gentleman in terms of image, and generally, people would probably have a good impression of him just from seeing his polite smile.

"What brings you here to see me, Brother Wang?" Jiang Beiran inquired, joining his hands in a salute.

"It's rather embarrassing to say, I..." Wang Yu'an scratched his head, then said, "I came to ask you something, Brother Jiang. Do you really not like Sister Lin at all?"

"Of course it's true. Didn't you all see it that day?" he replied.

"Then... Can, can I ask you, Brother, why is Sister Lin attracted to you? Can... can you teach me?" Wang Yu'an asked.

Looking at Wang Yu'an's flushed cheeks, Jiang Beiran knew that he must have worked up the courage to find him and ask about it. He also understood that teaching the junior Brother to pick up girls seemed to be the only way to dispel this junior Brother's hostility towards him.

Worried that refusing him would lead to more trouble, Jiang Beiran agreed and began to use his vast experience gained from observing other people in romantic relationships.

Back in junior high school, he liked to browse through blogs everywhere, so he could be said to have seen all kinds of lover's prattle.

For example, "If I have no sword, I cannot protect you. If I hold a sword, I cannot hug you.

2

"No weapon inflicts greater pain than a torn wound.

"If you break her wings, I will destroy your entire heaven for sure," and so on. He had read a lot of them.

These words had wowed an entire generation, even in their internet age, let alone the people in ancient times where even sending a letter was a huge hassle.

Wang Yu'an's eyes simply lit up after hearing about it, and he almost directly bowed to honor Jiang Beiran as his mentor.

1

"I'll teach you these first. If they don't work, I'll think of another way," Jiang Beiran said.

Wang Yu'an thanked him repeatedly and said that if he could get together with Sister Lin, he would definitely give Jiang Beiran a big red packet filled with money. After saying that, he left with great enthusiasm.

...

Soon, the third day came. A fully prepared Jiang Beiran arrived at the grove according to the address written on the letter of challenge. He was ready to use Wu Qingce as a touchstone of his capabilities after a year of various additions to his attribute and skill points.

However, the other party was indeed the son of a hero. On the surface, he was a new disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts, but actually, he had long been well-trained in the art of concealed weapons. His flying needles made Jiang Beiran scream worse than Ziwei [1] did.

But Jiang Beiran also showed capabilities far stronger than what Wu Qingce had perceived. Back when they descended the mountain for the trial, Wu Qingce had found out that Jiang Beiran had only cultivated the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts to the second level, which meant that he was only at Level Two of the Qi Refining Period.

However, in the actual battle, Jiang Beiran's strength and resistance to beatings were far beyond the capabilities of someone at Level Two of the Qi Refining Period, causing Wu Qingce's rhythm of attack to be completely disrupted.

Also, Jiang Beiran was using poisonous magic and consumed enhancement drugs. Eventually, he managed to win with a series of disorganized attacks, knocking Wu Qingce to the ground.

2

[1]: A female character in a famous Chinese drama series, My Fair Princess, which had a scene where she was poked with needles.

1