

I Just Won't Play By The Book

Chapter 11: In Cliches, the One That Seems the Least Likely to Be the Culprit Is Usually the Culpri

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“Ahem... I see now that the junior Sister must have fallen for you, Brother, because she saw your hidden capabilities. Alas, I was unable to see it,” Wu Qingce said, lying on the ground with a bitter smile.

Beside him, Jiang Beiran was pulling needles out of his body with a twisted expression while teaching Wu Qingce what love was by example. Finally, he wrapped up the lesson with a sentence famous throughout the ages.

“Brother Wu, there are plenty more fish in the sea,” Jiang Beiran said.

1

“There are plenty more fish in the sea... Plenty more fish in the sea? What a good sentence, there are plenty more fish in the sea!” Wu Qingce repeated.

1

After laughing out loud for a bit, Wu Qingce forced himself to get up, clasped a hand over his fist in a salute towards Jiang Beiran, and said, “Qingce has learned from your knowledge and wisdom, Brother, and I am very impressed!”

After that, he even apologized profusely for his recklessness and said that he was willing to do anything to make up for his offense.

Seeing the lost sheep turn back from the wrong path, Jiang Beiran was also very pleased. He patted Wu Qingce's shoulder and said, “It's just sparring between Brothers. No offense is taken. But I do indeed have a favor to ask you. That is, don't let word of today's incident get out. Just treat it as a secret between you and me.”

Having already known that the system could not always provide an option that would allow him to get away scot-free, Jiang Beiran also understood that he

would have to be more low-key. Otherwise, the world would be too malicious to him.

“Brother, you really do have a big heart. Qingce has learned a lesson,” Wu Qingce replied.

After saying this, Wu Qingce made a vow, promising that he would never tell anyone about the matter.

“Alright. Now hurry and lie down. I’ll help you to expel the poison and heal your injuries,” Jiang Beiran said.

“Brother, you are also skilled in medicine!?” Wu Qingce asked, incredibly surprised.

“I know a bit of medicine, a bit,” Jiang Beiran said as he opened a leather pouch and took a golden needle out from it.

But just as he found the right acupuncture point and was about to stick it in, Wu Qingce suddenly shouted loudly, “Brother, be careful!”

Immediately, Jiang Beiran felt himself being yanked downward violently, while a sharp pain came from his chest.

“Brother? Brother!? Brother, hang in there!

“Who’s the coward out there! Show yourself and fight me for 300 rounds if you are capable!”

These were the last words Jiang Beiran heard before he passed out.

When he woke up again, Jiang Beiran found himself lying in a room full of herbal fragrance and quickly learned some of the story.

The first thing was that the arrow he had been shot with was poisoned, and if Wu Qingce had not sent him to the Order of Clear Heart in time, he would most probably have died.

Then there was the fact that the Order of Punishment had sent someone to investigate the matter and told him that the truth would soon be revealed.

However, Jiang Beiran knew in his heart that them saying that the truth would soon be revealed or something was just to comfort him. Although he had only been in the Sect of Returning Hearts for a year, he had heard about no less than a dozen of these kinds of incidents where disciples were secretly attacked. And that number was only counting the cases he had heard of.

There was nothing that could be done, in this era with no fingerprint technology, no probes, and no Conan [1]. The cost of committing a crime was just too low.

5

Just as Jiang Beiran was thinking by himself for a while about who the culprit could be, the Yellow Grade Low Tier quest suddenly popped up. At the same time, it showed [Wu Qingce (√)] [Lin Jiuge (√)].

2

After thinking about it for a moment, Jiang Beiran understood that the ticks meant that he had dispelled the hostility of these two people towards him, so he was only left with Wang Yu'an as a possible culprit.

1

"It's true that you may know people's faces but not their hearts!"

It must be said that, prior to the incident, Wang Yu'an really scored a very good impression with Jiang Beiran. First of all, he had the image of a modest gentleman, and his father was an official loved by the people, so his family education should have also been very good. Furthermore, when he spoke, he would blush and appear shy.

All kinds of things concerning Wang Yu'an really made him seem totally harmless.

Before seeing the system prompt, Jiang Beiran had first analyzed whether or not Lin Jiuge was just agreeing to his newspaper plan for show while still secretly plotting his demise.

1

'The one that seems the least likely to be the culprit is usually the culprit. How could I forget this cliché?!' Jiang Beiran thought. He let out a long sigh of frustration, lamenting that he was still too young.

2

At the same time, he also understood that, although his current capabilities were indeed much stronger than they had been back when he was in the mine, the system also based the difficulty and reward of the quests on his present capabilities. This meant that, as long as he made a slight mistake, there was still the possibility of losing his life.

After a good bit of introspection, Jiang Beiran began to think about how he should fight back. After all, the tables had been turned at the moment, and he was the one with a huge advantage.

As the system had given him a hint, Wang Yu'an's act as a pure virgin boy had been revealed, but he did not know that Jiang Beiran had targeted him. Because of this, his vigilance would instead be relatively low at the moment. Jiang Beiran even believed that Wang Yu'an was ready to follow up with his act.

'Next time I'll just ask him to meet me in a deserted corner and stab him to death with a sword,' Jiang Beiran thought.

6

After two months of h*llish life in the mines, Jiang Beiran was no longer a soft-hearted person. When it came to the sort of person who wanted to kill him, he would never hesitate when fighting back.

2

"But I'm afraid that his father will come looking for me..."

If a county lieutenant who specialized in law and order was looking for his son's murderer with all his might, it would be totally different from a normal constable trying to solve a case.

'So, this fella is the biggest challenge in the Yellow Grade Middle Tier quest...'

After that, Jiang Beiran spent half a month in bed recuperating. During that time, he did a lot of thinking. He had already come up with a plethora of ideas on how to fight with Wang Yu'an, both mentally and physically, after he recovered.

But just as Jiang Beiran was thinking about everything so intently that he was losing a lot of hair over it, one day at noon, the system's prompt suddenly popped up and told him that the quest had been failed.

"Fail!?"

2

Jiang Beiran, who was just thinking about the best way to destroy the corpse so that it would be unlikely to be found, was totally confused. How had he failed?

1

The previous two quests also ended in failure, but at least he knew why. This time he was really quite confused. He hadn't even had an actual fight with that Wang Yu'an. How had he failed!?

It was not until two days later that Jiang Beiran learned the reason from Wu Qingce, who came to visit him.

Wang Yu'an had died. He had died on the way back to his hometown from unknown reasons.

'Dead!?' How did he die!?' Jiang Beiran wondered.

10

In an instant, Jiang Beiran had a mental breakdown. He had spent a lot of effort to settle the cases of Wu Qingce and Lin Jiuge and had to lie in bed for half a month because this son of a b*tch had secretly plotted against him. Furthermore, according to Master Zou of the Order of Clear Heart, it was extremely difficult to completely remove this poison from him. He could not cultivate or exercise vigorously for three months afterward, or he would likely be left with some lingering effects from the illness.

After paying such a huge price, Jiang Beiran was determined to complete the quest and obtain the Yellow Grade Middle Tier reward, but this was the result!? Such bullsh*t!!

4

Standing beside him, Wu Qingce saw the extreme sorrow in Jiang Beiran's expression that he was forcibly kept from showing. He could not help but lament in his heart that Brother Jiang was really a caring and righteous person. Despite only serving once as their Iron Seal, hearing the news of the death of Brother Wang caused him such heartache.

'Indeed, the Brother I consider perfect in my heart!' Wu Qingce thought.

1

[1]: Conan Doyle, the author of Sherlock.

9

Chapter 12: Here Comes a Big One After the Small One Had Just Left

1

Contemplating the lesson that he had learned while ignoring the pain, Jiang Beiran analyzed the quest again and found that the most likely time for him to have completed it would have been when Wang Yu'an first came to him. If he had not been so naive as to think that teaching the latter some moves to pick up girls would have fixed the issue, he could have done something that suited Wang Yu'an's fancy as he had with Lin Jiuge.

1

The other thing was that Jiang Beiran found that he still underestimated how low the cultivators in this world could stoop, attempting to kill a fellow disciple just to court a girl. They were simply a world away from him, a modern man, in terms of his values and respect for the law.

10

Of course, in addition to the conclusions he came to after the incident, Jiang Beiran's deepest insight was...

Cherish life and stay away from beautiful Sisters!

18

He didn't want to ever encounter a situation where even the easiest option gave an item of Yellow Grade Middle Tier again. Wasn't it nice to slowly save up attribute points!?

4

Putting away the memories, Jiang Beiran took a step forward and entered the Pavilion of Blue Heart.

...

At night, in the Order of Water Mirror, next to Fuxian Lake.

A mellow tune played on a pipa sounded from the water's surface. The sound seemed coarse and deep at one time, while a moment later it sounded melodious and fluent, yet crisp and clear. Even later, it sounded incredibly melancholy and sorrowful, but the several types of sounds seemed so harmonious when they blended together.

"Who is the person who has dared to aggravate my Jin'er?" someone asked.

1

Seeing the visitor, Liu Zijin hastily put down the pipa and got up to bow, saying, "Law Protector Yu."

In the darkness, Yu Manwen nodded. "Jin'er, you are playing the pipa better and better. However, because you are playing it so well, it is easier for people to hear your emotions from the sound it makes. Now tell me, who is the one that has dared to bully my most lovely disciple of the Order of Water Mirror?"

After hearing this, Liu Zijin shook her head hurriedly and replied softly, "No... no one is bullying Jin'er."

After hearing this, Yu Manwen spoke in a sad tone, saying, “Alas! My little Jin’er has grown up in the end. She is not telling me when she has something on her mind anymore.”

“I did not! Law Protector, there really isn’t anyone bullying me, it’s just...” she started to say.

“Just what?” Yu Manwen took advantage of the momentum to pursue the question.

“It’s just that I met someone whom I found interesting,” she replied.

“Oh? And who is it?” Yu Manwen became interested at once.

“Oops! I... I remembered I haven’t done my homework for today. Goodbye, Law Protector!” Liu Zijin said. She then picked the pipa up and ran away as if she was fleeing something.

1

Watching Liu Zijin quickly disappear into the darkness, the corners of Yu Manwen’s mouth curled slightly. She was very curious about the person Liu Zijin had said she was interested in.

“Hmm... as the Law Protector of the Order, I shouldn’t interfere too much with the little secrets in the disciples’ hearts. However, I’m just afraid that the cute little disciples in our Order might be cheated. It’s better to check it out,” she said.

The next day, after asking around, Yu Manwen quickly found out that Liu Zijin had gone to the Order of Blue Heart the day before. She learned the name Jiang Beiran from Fang Qiuyao.

“Jiang Beiran...” Softly reading the name out loud once, Yu Manwen’s expression showed a trace of confusion. ‘It doesn’t ring a bell at all,’ she thought.

She had assumed that the person who could make Jin’er so concerned had to be one of the elite disciples of the sect who had achieved fame and success at a young age, but she really had no recollection of this Jiang Beiran.

Curious, Yu Manwen went to the Order of Law Enforcement, which was responsible for managing the disciples' records.

"Law Protector Yu? What brings you here today?" In the Order of Law Enforcement, a man of short stature looked at Yu Manwen and greeted her.

"So, you are the one on duty today, Old Lu? Then it makes things easy. I'm here to view a disciple's records," she answered.

"No problem. Just tell me which disciple has drawn you to personally check his records, Law Protector Yu. I will find it for you immediately," Old Lu said.

"The disciple is named Jiang Beiran."

"Jiang Beiran?" Lu Kangping clearly showed a surprised expression for a moment.

"Do you know him, Old Lu?" Seeing that Lu Kangping seemed very surprised, Yu Manwen pursued the question.

"I don't actually know him, but Law Protector Xu also came to me once to view this disciple's records," he replied.

"Xu Wenjing of the Order of Ink and Language?" Yu Manwen asked.

"That's right." Lu Kangping nodded. "I remember it was around last year. He also came specifically to check the records of this Jiang Beiran."

1

'Quite interesting...' Now Yu Manwen's curiosity was even more piqued. She urged Lu Kangping on repeatedly, saying, "Then, Old Lu, hurry and bring this disciple's records for me to see."

"Alright. Wait a moment." Lu Kangping turned around and went into the archives after he finished speaking.

After about ten minutes, Lu Kangping came out with Jiang Beiran's records and handed them to Yu Manwen.

After thanking him, Yu Manwen opened Jiang Beiran's records and began to read them carefully.

“This is too...”

After reading all the information in the records, Yu Manwen found that this Jiang Beiran was not even an ordinary disciple, yet had been a named disciple for five whole years. How unmotivated he must be.

But the records had a special highlight. That was, in that whole five years, when Jiang Beiran served as an Iron Seal for new disciples, they had never failed their trial quests.

To be fair, many Iron Seals in the Sect could do this. After all, the trials given to new disciples descending the mountain were not too difficult, and the ability of the Iron Seal was only tested when a relatively large change in circumstance was to occur occasionally.

So, it was not hard for a capable Iron Seal to never fail. But as a named disciple considered to be among the least capable, Jiang Beiran could also do it...

‘It’s rather strange... Rationally speaking, Order Master Zhang should not be so clueless. Why would he just let such an interesting little fellow be a named disciple?’ Yu Manwen wondered to herself.

Watching Yu Manwen’s expression change non-stop, Lu Kangping, who was beside her, laughed. “At that time, Law Protector Xu was also full of confusion when he looked at the records. That’s why I had a particularly deep impression of this Jiang Beiran,” he said.

‘Has Xu Wenjing gotten a head start?’ she thought.

4

Immediately returning the records to Lu Kangping, Yu Manwen waved her hand and said, “Thanks, Old Lu. I’ll treat you to a meal next time.”

After saying that, she left the Order of Law Enforcement.

Looking at Jiang Beiran’s records in his hand, Lu Kangping smiled and shook his head, lamenting that Law Protector Yu’s reaction was exactly the same as Law Protector Xu’s.

...

'Alas, today's yield is not very good. I surprisingly only triggered the options five times. It seemed that I have to find time to descend the mountain for a trial. It's getting difficult to profit off the Sect of Returning Hearts,' Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

3

In the evening, Jiang Beiran, who had completed his daily patrol of the mountain, returned to the Order of Blue Heart. However, just as he walked over to his hut, he saw a lady of distinguished appearance standing at the door.

'How is it that here comes a big one after the small one has just left...? These two days have seen too much hustle and bustle,' he thought.

Quietly taking two steps back, Jiang Beiran was just thinking of pretending that he had not returned, when he heard a mellow and melodious voice shout, "Jiang Beiran, where are you going?"

3

Jiang Beiran's footsteps stopped when he heard this, and he turned around to bow. "I have suddenly figured out the solution to the final phase of a game of Go, so I want to go back to the Go pavilion."

1

"Is that so? Why do I feel that you are trying to escape after seeing me?" Yu Manwen asked while walking towards Jiang Beiran.

"How could that be? You've misunderstood," Jiang Beiran said as he smiled and bowed again.

"Lying without even blushing a little; you have very good mental strength." After saying that, Yu Manwen smiled and asked, "Do you know who I am?"

9

Chapter 13: This Disciple Is Really Too Miserable

There was a total of twenty-four orders in the Sect of Returning Hearts, and each order had positions such as Order Master, Law Protector, Order Judge, Order Etiquetter, Order Enforcer, Sword Protector, Seal Protector, Black Flag, Blue Flag, et cetera.

2

Moreover, this world did not have the Internet or photo albums or anything of the sort. Because of this, many disciples could not even tell the senior members of their own orders apart, let alone those from the other orders.

And just as Jiang Beiran was about to join his hands together in a salute and answer, three options appeared before his eyes.

[Option One: "I don't know." Reward for completion: Breaking Force of Rolling Thunder (Black Grade Low Tier)]

1

[Option Two: "I guess you are Sword Protector Yu of the Order of Water Mirror." Reward for completion: Sword of White Mist (Yellow Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Three: "I'm afraid that even in the entire Sect of Returning Hearts, one cannot find another person with such outstanding grace and posture. You must be Sword Protector Yu of the Order of Water Mirror. I have long admired you." Reward for completion: Random basic skill point +1]

7

Jiang Beiran was surprised when he saw the three options. He was indeed different from the other disciples because he spent all day wandering about the mountain. Thus, he had seen far more people and incidents than those disciples who spent all day immersed in intense training.

But he had originally planned to go with the flow and act like most disciples, who didn't know much about the people in the other orders. However, he hadn't expected that to be the most dangerous option.

Although he was puzzled, Jiang Beiran still did not hesitate to choose Option Three. He bowed and said, "I'm afraid that even in the entire Sect of Returning Hearts, one cannot find another person with such outstanding grace and

posture. You must be Sword Protector Yu of the Order of Water Mirror. I have long admired you.”

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Fishing +1]

Jiang Beiran’s words were by no means *ss-kissing. Law Protector Yu, who was standing in front of him, had a curved and slender body and her stride was graceful. She wore a long blue dress with her hair combed up, a few bead ornaments adorning her bun. A pearl hung before her forehead. Her jade-like skin had a translucent scarlet tinge, her brows were like crescent moons, and her eyes were bright like the stars. She was definitely one of the top-ranked beauties in the Sect of Returning Hearts.

5

After listening to Jiang Beiran’s respectful reply, Yu Manwen could not help but be surprised. She came here thinking that this Jiang Beiran must be a disciple who liked to hide his talents, so he would definitely behave like most disciples who knew nothing about the senior management of other orders, regardless of whether he really did know her or not. It turned out that she was wrong.

1

‘And rather honey-tongued as well,’ she thought.

After reassessing Jiang Beiran in her heart, Yu Manwen nodded and said, “You are rather well-informed, but as far as I remember, I don’t think I have seen you before. How did you recognize me?”

Jiang Beiran bowed again and said respectfully, “I had the honor to listen to you play the zither at Mount Xiyue before, Law Protector Yu. You played the zither to utmost perfection, as if one could hear a tiger chuff but not roar, or an ape mourn but not cry. It’s unique and graceful, mournful and mellow. I deeply admire your skills.”

4

Yu Manwen couldn’t help it and her eyes brightened. She said with a slightly excited expression, “Hear a tiger chuff but not roar, or an ape mourn but not cry. That’s a really good line. I have unexpectedly found someone who

understands my music in the Order of Blue Heart. Interesting. Very interesting.”

As Yu Manwen spoke, she closed her eyes and shook her head for a while before continuing to say to Jiang Beiran, “Since you are so honest, then I will not hide anything from you, either. I came to find you today because I have a few things to ask.”

“I will tell you everything I know,” he replied.

“Good!” Yu Manwen nodded her head in satisfaction. “You have been a named disciple in this Order of Blue Heart for five years, yes or no?”

“Yes. I am foolish and really have no talent in cultivation, so I have let several mentors down,” he said.

“Do extend your hand to me,” Yu Manwen instructed.

‘She still wants to test my abilities...’ Jiang Beiran thought.

With an internal sigh, Jiang Beiran stretched his right arm out towards Yu Manwen.

Yu Manwen’s slender fingers tapped on Jiang Beiran’s spiritual pulse, and she soon wore a somewhat complicated expression.

‘Surprisingly, he is really only at Level Five of the Qi Refining Period?’ she thought to herself.

In the Land of the Black Dragon, to become strong one must first refine Qi, and the basic Internal Cultivation Methods of the major sects were created for this purpose.

2

Generally, as long as one could pass the sect’s aptitude test, then even if one’s talent was relatively poor, one year would be enough for one to cultivate until Level 10 of the Qi Refining period. Thus, they would break through and become a Mystic, opening up the path of cultivation towards the goal of becoming a Mystic Emperor.

But this Jiang Beiran had been in the Sect of Returning Hearts for five years, yet he was only at Level Five of the Qi Refining period. This meant that he had absolutely no talent at all.

Watching Yu Manwen's increasingly complex expression, Jiang Beiran was very calm, because he had long been used to it. Yu Manwen was certainly not the first person to test his strength, and would definitely not be the last.

9

Jiang Beiran had not worried about being detected after the first time he was tested because he found that the strength points, physique points, agility points, etc. awarded by the system were of a completely different structure from the combat power in this world. Even if his strength was sky-high, these masters could not detect it at all.

So, from that moment onwards, Jiang Beiran was enlightened! He and the people of this world were from completely different settings. If he really had to fight, he would certainly be completely underestimated. This kind of position could definitely be considered the one with the greatest potential as he could make use of his perceived weakness as a disguise!

3

With a soft sigh, Yu Manwen relaxed her fingers and looked at Jiang Beiran again, this time with eyes full of regret.

Jiang Beiran saw her expression and immediately cooperated by looking up at the sky at a forty-five-degree angle, showing a resigned smile.

7

This smile almost made Yu Manwen's heart ache so much that she wanted to hug Jiang Beiran.

3

It was too tragic! Despite being able to pass the aptitude test of the sect, he turned out to be completely useless at cultivation. This was a very rare occurrence that might not even happen once in a hundred years. Yu Manwen simply could not imagine how much this child had suffered and how much hardship he had endured in the fiercely competitive and socially Darwinist

Sect of Returning Hearts. She had even come here to look for him with a condemning attitude just now. How wrong of her to do so.

'No wonder he wanted to run away when he saw me. He must have already experienced this many times and didn't want to end up being looked at with sympathy again. That's why...

4

'What a strong, determined boy,' she thought.

Turning her head to secretly wipe away the tears flowing from the corners of her eyes, Yu Manwen changed her expression to one without any emotion and asked Jiang Beiran, "Can you tell me how you managed to ensure that your junior Brothers and Sisters pass the trial every time you serve as an Iron Seal?"

1

"Nothing more than caution. I observe and think a great deal before making any decisions. This way, many misfortunes can be avoided," he answered.

"Well said." Yu Manwen nodded with great satisfaction. "This is what the trials down the mountain are really intended to teach you. It seems that you have fully grasped the essence of it, Beiran."

"Law Protector Yu, you flatter me. I am just aware of my weakness, so I must be a little more cautious than the other Brothers," Jiang Beiran said.

"Eh!" Yu Manwen waved her hand. "You shouldn't say that. Being strong is not only characterized by having great combat power, but also by having a strong mind. Even though you are only at Level Five of the Qi Refining period, you have been able to ensure that all of your Sisters and Brothers pass the trial. It is impressive. Very impressive!"

"Thank you for the compliment, Law Protector Yu. I will definitely redouble my efforts in the future."

"Good! As a token of my trust in you, I have decided to appoint you as the Iron Seal of my most beloved disciple, and you are to help her complete her first trial quest."

Chapter 14: I Have Seen Through Your Thoughts

'The script must be wrong!!!'

Jiang Beiran was flabbergasted. He had clearly chosen the easiest option, Option Three! How was it that he still ended up being scammed!

1

From the moment he had found out that the person who had come was Law Protector Yu Manwen of the Order of Water Mirror, Jiang Beiran knew that it must be a follow-up from the trouble that Liu Zijin caused yesterday. So, he thought that the options given by the system would continue to help him through this disaster. He'd never thought that things would circle back around and wind up back at the same point again.

3

One must know that being the Iron Seal to Liu Zijin was an option of Earth Grade Middle Tier!

"No, no. It must be that we have yet to reach the last page of the script. Surely the system would not scam me like this," he said.

2

Hearing Jiang Beiran suddenly react so strongly, Yu Manwen glared at him with her almond-shaped eyes and asked, "Why? Are you unwilling?"

Jiang Beiran was just about to answer when three options appeared in front of him.

[Option One: "Thank you very much for your trust, Law Protector Yu, but I really have something important going on lately. I can't leave the Order of Blue Heart." Reward for completion: Force of Dragon Severing (Black Grade High Tier)]

[Option Two: "It's not that I don't want to, but recently I have gained a new understanding of the blocking moves in the Go puzzles, so I want to stay on

the mountain and play a few more games with the Order Etiquetter so that I can thoroughly understand it.” Reward for completion: Mystic Technique of Lotus (Yellow Grade Low Tier)]

3

[Option Three: “Of course not, it’s just that I am a bit flattered.” Reward for completion: Random basic skill point +1]

18

‘It is really trying to scam me!’ he thought.

Although Jiang Beiran had been living with this system for five years and could generally analyze the reasoning behind the options it gave, there were still times when he encountered such situations that left him completely baffled.

2

After a quick analysis of the three options, Option One meant that, if he was to be too perfunctory with the Law Protector, the reward of Black Grade High Tier implied that there would be considerable trouble that came from it afterward.

Option Two meant that if Jiang Beiran could make the reason clear, it would be much better than being perfunctory, but there was still some risk.

But what Jiang Beiran couldn’t understand was that agreeing to be an Iron Seal for Liu Zijin would be the best option. Yesterday it was clearly...

Thinking about everything that happened yesterday, a lightbulb suddenly turned on in Jiang Beiran’s mind. He became enlightened!

The reason why choosing to become the Iron Seal for Liu Zijin yesterday would get him an Earth Grade Middle Tier reward was not because of how difficult her trial would be, but that if he had chosen to help her, then the Brother Kong, who descended from the sky yesterday, would probably have come looking for trouble with him.

5

And this Brother Kong was probably the reason why the option would reward Earth Grade prizes.

‘So, if I agree to Law Protector Yu’s request here, there would be some reason for that Brother Kong to not be jealous of me?’ he wondered.

1

After more or less finishing the general analysis, Jiang Beiran chose Option Three and, while joining his hands in a salute, said to Protector Yu, “Of course not, it’s just that I am a little flattered.”

2

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Music Theory +1]

The reason why Jiang Beiran analyzed the options so carefully this time instead of choosing the easiest one mindlessly like before was because many experiences made him realize that, once he triggered the Earth Grade reward option, he had to be careful with the subsequent handling. Otherwise, it would be like the incident with the junior Sister where the easiest option was also an event with a high difficulty level instead of rewarding attribute points.

3

That’s the last outcome he wanted to see!

“Mhmm!” Yu Manwen nodded in satisfaction. “Then the matter is settled. I will bring my disciples to you the day after tomorrow.”

“Yes. I will obey your orders, Law Protector,” he replied.

Hearing Jiang Beiran agree so readily, Yu Manwen was satisfied in her heart. After all, she knew that the reason why Liu Zijin was in a bad mood last night must be due to being rejected.

So, she was a little worried that Jiang Beiran would be unwilling to take on the job and find some nonexistent excuse to fool her. In that case, she would have had to find some way to spur him on.

4

But from his current behavior, it seemed that the disciple still respected her as the Law Protector very much.

Other than the initial sympathy she felt for Jiang Beiran earlier, Yu Manwen now found Jiang Beiran more and more to her liking.

“Beiran, I see that you are proficient in music and literary skills. Plus, you are a disciple of the Order of Blue Heart, so your Go skills should also be excellent, right?” she asked.

“You flatter me, Law Protector Yu. I have only dabbled in them a little, and I am in no way proficient,” he said.

“No need to be modest. I can understand what you are thinking. Is it that you feel that you can’t break through in terms of cultivation, so you plan to seek achievements in other fields?” Yu Manwen asked him.

Looking at Yu Manwen, who looked like she had already seen through his thoughts, Jiang Beiran went along with her and said, “Law Protector Yu, you are really sharp-eyed, seeing through these little thoughts of mine.”

“Haha! Beiran, you really speak well. It doesn’t require a sharp eye. Surely anyone with a discerning eye can see?” Yu Manwen patted Jiang Beiran’s shoulder and looked at him with eyes as gentle as water to encourage him. “Actually, you don’t have to despair about cultivation at such a young age. I have heard of many masters who encountered various difficulties when they first refined Qi, but eventually, they soared to the heavens after breaking through the bottleneck! And they end up becoming a powerful master.”

2

“Thank you for your encouragement, Law Protector. I’ll keep it in mind,” Jiang Beiran said.

“Mhmm. I’m saying this to you in hopes that you wouldn’t devote all your time to the arts, and instead spend more time practicing the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts. Come to me if you do not understand anything. I will definitely teach you properly,” she said.

2

'This...' Jiang Beiran didn't know whether to thank her or not. After all, in the Sect of Returning Hearts, the boundaries between the orders were still quite clear. As a disciple of the Order of Blue Heart, if he was to go to the Law Protector of the Order of Water Mirror for guidance, would it not be a slap in the face to the many senior members of the Order of Blue Heart?

Seeming to sense Jiang Beiran's hesitation, Yu Manwen smiled and said, "Tell me the truth. Has Zhang Heqing ever come to test your capabilities?"

Jiang Beiran shook his head and said, "The Order Master has not done so, but Sword Protector Feng came to test me once."

"What did he say?"

Jiang Beiran replied with a smile, "Sword Protector Feng said that everyone has their own strengths and should do what they are good at in order to get twice the result with half the effort. I feel that this statement is very reasonable, so..."

"He's bullsh... Ahem." Yu Manwen coughed slightly and shook her head. "No wonder you have been a named disciple in Order of Blue Heart for five years. It seems that Feng Yulong represented the senior management of the Order of Blue Heart to test you, and he directly dismissed your path of cultivation."

"Sword Protector Feng also did it out of kindness. After all, at that time it had been three years where I..."

"Hey!" Not waiting for Jiang Beiran to finish speaking, Yu Manwen interrupted him, saying, "Sword Protector Feng's words do have a point, but he is not entirely right. After all, you are only 20 years old. I've heard about people who broke through to become a Mystic at the age of 30 and still ended up becoming a warlord. Believe me, you still have plenty of opportunities."

Not giving Jiang Beiran a chance to answer, Yu Manwen continued, saying, "If you really want to cultivate properly, just come to me. I'll cover for you if anything happens. At most, I'll directly transfer you to my Order of Water Mirror, and I expect that your Order Master Zhang will not say anything."

Jiang Beiran listened to this and quickly waved his hand. “Actually, the management in the Order are quite caring towards me, but I am more interested in Go at the moment. That’s why...”

“No need to speak further.” Yu Manwen shook her head at Jiang Beiran. “I know these are all your protective colors. You can’t hide that disappointed look in your eyes from me when you mention cultivation. You’re just using the study of Go to numb yourself, am I right?”

8

Seeing Yu Manwen give him another look as if she had seen through his thoughts, Jiang Beiran really wanted to shout out loud, ‘I’m not. I didn’t!’

5

Chapter 15: Why Are There Three More?

Jiang Beiran was confused. He did not know whether it was because their brains worked differently or because his acting skills were not up to par. Clearly, the way he had been acting just now and his gaze were trying to express the fact that he had given up on the path of cultivation and wanted to seek development in other areas. Why couldn’t this Law Protector Yu understand that?

Jiang Beiran was really worried that she would forcibly push him to cultivate. Then, surely it would affect his grand plan to use his perceived weakness as a disguise?

2

But at the moment, this Law Protector Yu was obviously clinging on to the wrong idea, so Jiang Beiran could only wait and see. It would be alright for him to take no action and find a way to shirk it in the future. After all, he had always been good at slipping away.

1

“Then wait for me at the entrance of the Order of Law Enforcement the day after tomorrow at seven in the morning,” she said.

1

Yu Manwen left him with these words and then departed gracefully.

“Ugh...”

After Yu Manwen had walked far enough away, Jiang Beiran let out a long sigh.

‘I wonder who disclosed my information to that Liu Zijin, which led to so much trouble for me,’ he thought to himself.

2

Since the incident of the junior Sister, Jiang Beiran would carefully select the new disciples every time he served as an Iron Seal supervising them.

No female disciples, no disciples from a significant background, no disciples that looked treacherous, no disciples that were too handsome, etc...

5

Although it was not guaranteed that he could find such a team of new disciples every time, most of them were not far off from his requirements.

And every time, after completing the trial quest, Jiang Beiran would also instruct them not to recommend him to other junior Brothers and Sisters, as he was worried about this kind of thing happening again.

“It is true that only one’s own self is the most reliable...” Jiang Beiran said.

Sighing, Jiang Beiran pushed open the door of his hut and walked in.

Two days passed quickly, and as promised, Jiang Beiran appeared at the entrance of the Order of Law Enforcement on time.

“Beiran, this way.”

Jiang Beiran was just about to look around when he heard Yu Manwen’s voice coming from nearby.

Looking in the direction of the voice, Jiang Beiran saw Law Protector Yu smiling and nodding at him. Liu Zijin, who had her head down, and Fang

Qiuyao, who had her face turned away, stood on Yu Manwen's left and right respectively.

Today, Liu Zijin was wearing a loose, thin turquoise summer blouse and a pleated skirt with scattered flowers and mist on its design. Her shoulders looked narrow and her waist thin, giving her exquisite heart-shaped face a demure, fairy-like aura.

4

Looking at the Brothers passing by, who couldn't help but steal a glance at them, Jiang Beiran strongly resisted the urge to sigh.

In the past five years, he had only brought female disciples down the mountain for their trial a handful of times, and all of them were forcibly added to his team by the Flower Crown. He shied away even more from pretty ones like Liu Zijin. Yet at the moment, he had not just one but two in his team.

1

'I am really going against my principles completely...' he thought.

Lamenting this fact in his heart, Jiang Beiran went forward to bow to Yu Manwen. "Greetings, Law Protector Yu."

"Mhmm. You are well on time. I believe you have met these two beloved disciples of mine by my side, right?" she asked.

"Yes." Jiang Beiran nodded, then joined his hands together toward the two in a salute and said, "Sister Liu, Sister Fang."

When she met Jiang Beiran's eyes, Liu Zijin was a little flustered. After all, she knew very well that the senior Brother had been forcibly dragged here by the Law Protector because of her. So, he might secretly be incredibly annoyed with her at this moment.

'It seems that this is how it feels to worry about being disliked by someone... It feels really bad,' Liu Zijin thought.

But no matter how apprehensive she was in her heart, Liu Zijin still quickly bowed and said, "Greetings, Brother Jiang. Thanks in advance for your trouble this time."

On the other hand, Fang Qiuyao casually joined her hands in a salute towards Jiang Beiran and shouted, "Greetings, Brother."

After both sides had greeted each other, Yu Manwen suddenly waved towards the direction of the pool not far away and shouted, "Girls, stop frolicking there and come over to meet your senior Brother."

9

'There's still more!?'

16

Jiang Beiran felt his heart constrict as he heard her words, and a sense of foreboding crept up.

"Coming!"

Looking towards the pleasant voice, he saw three identical-looking young girls running towards them.

5

'No way...' he thought.

6

Liu Zijin and Fang Qiuyao were already enough of a headache for Jiang Beiran, and the three girls running towards them at the moment were also stunningly beautiful.

All three had an oval-shaped face, long, thin eyebrows, and animated eyes. All of those characteristics gave them elfish and playful vibes. Furthermore, they had bright eyes and white teeth, as well as an exquisite complexion. They were indeed three outstanding beauties.

3

"This is Jiang Beiran, Brother Jiang, whom I told you all about. Follow him closely this time round after descending the mountain and listen to his words. Do you understand?" Yu Manwen said.

“Yes, Law Protector,” the three of them answered. They then looked at Jiang Beiran at the same time and bowed gracefully, all speaking at once.

“Greetings, Brother Jiang. I am Yu Guishui (Yu Guizhui) (Yu Guimiao) of the Order of Water Mirror.”

6

Although Jiang Beiran was on the verge of having a breakdown, he forced out a smile and returned the greeting. “Greetings, three Sisters.”

2

After the three Sisters were standing behind her, Yu Manwen smiled and said to Jiang Beiran, “Beiran, I’ll trouble you this time. We have many female disciples in the Order of Water Mirror, and we are lacking a reliable senior Brother. Seeing that you are capable, you can take on more work and bring a few more Sisters down the mountain for adventure.”

3

“Yes, ma’am,” he replied.

2

“Mhmm. Then the rest is in your hands.” She nodded towards Jiang Beiran. Yu Manwen turned around and left after instructing Liu Zijin and the girls to listen to Brother Jiang.

Just as Yu Manwen left, the three Sisters, who had just now been standing obediently side by side, immediately surrounded Jiang Beiran and asked at the same time, “Brother Jiang, what kind of cultivation techniques are you good at? (Brother Jiang, what kind of weapons do you like to use?) (Brother Jiang, when you fight, do you like to move your left leg or your right leg first?)”

9

Looking at three faces full of curiosity, Jiang Beiran gave them a look and said, “Go back to where you were and stand properly! No talking without my permission, let alone moving around.”

1

The three Sisters who had been reprimanded froze in place and were somewhat stunned for a while.

At that moment, Fang Qiuyao, who was beside them, spoke up. “Eh? Now you’re acting all high and mighty as an Iron Seal? Weren’t you too cowardly to even agree to the request two days ago?” she asked.

Giving Fang Qiuyao a sidelong glance, Jiang Beiran said, “Circumstances have changed. Since I am now your Iron Seal, I must be responsible for your safety. At the same time, you must also obey my orders. Do you understand?”

“What if I say no?” Fang Qiuyao stepped forward and challenged him.

4

“You can try.” As Jiang Beiran finished his sentence, he glared at her, and an invisible force instantly enveloped Fang Qiuyao.

“I...” Fang Qiuyao, who was engulfed by the forceful aura of Jiang Beiran, wanted to open her mouth to make a retort, but a sense of fear arose in her heart.

3

‘Strange... What’s going on, why should I be afraid of him? He’s obviously just a coward who will admit that he’s afraid in front of everyone. How would he have this kind of powerful aura!?’ she wondered.

But no matter how unconvinced she was in her heart, Fang Qiuyao did not dare to continue to speak up and challenge him in the end, and resentfully turned her head away.

The three Sisters of the Yu family had also finally realized that the senior Brother in front of them did not seem to be as gentle as he initially appeared, so they retreated to their original positions and stood properly.

Nodding in satisfaction, Jiang Beiran raised a finger and said, “In my team, there is one rule you must abide by, and that is to listen to my command in all operations. Do not act rashly when you encounter anything. Understand?”

“Understood.” The five girls nodded their heads at the same time, although their voices sounded a little sparse.

“Good. So, now I will give you the first order. Immediately go back and change all your clothes into those made of coarse cloth or hemp garment. If you don’t have any, go to the Order of Law Enforcement to borrow some.. An hour later, assemble here again, and whoever is late will have two points deducted from her marks,” he instructed.

10

Chapter 16: Natural Beauty Is Difficult to Give Up

Because of the intake of disciples from various families with significant backgrounds, there was never a shortage of pr*cks among the new disciples of the Sect of Returning Hearts. The marking system was a useful weapon given to the Iron Seal by the Sect to restrict those sorts of disciples.

1

After the Iron Seal helped the new disciples pass the trial quest, he or she could rate the new disciples’ performance in the trial out of a total of five. If the Iron Seal gave a score of less than three, it would indicate that the disciple’s performance in the trial was very poor.

However, due to the fear of being retaliated against for giving a low score, or the fact that some Iron Seals would use the score to threaten the disciples undergoing the trial, etc., there were times when the score could not be fully trusted.

But if it was an Iron Seal with a good standing in the Sect and a good reputation among the Flower Crowns who gave a low score to a disciple undergoing the trial, depending on the reason why they gave that score, the disciple’s mentor and the senior staff of the Order would have a bad impression of the disciple in their hearts. In the worst cases, the disciple would be punished by the Sect.

Meanwhile, Iron Seals who dared to give a low score either had relatively strong personal capabilities or were from a relatively powerful background.

The Sect also had rewards for Iron Seals who were not afraid of retaliation and dared to give low scores. First, such Iron Seals would leave a good impression of impartiality and bravery in the minds of the Sect’s higher-ups.

That was because what these Iron Seals were doing was tantamount to identifying the hidden bad eggs of the community for the Sect.

Secondly, the resources provided by the Sect would be channeled more towards such Iron Seals to a certain degree in order to encourage such behavior.

2

Of course, the disciples undergoing the trial could also go to the Order of Law Enforcement to issue a complaint about the unfairness of their Iron Seal in giving out the scores. After which, there would be a follow-up investigation by a Flower Crown specifically responsible for such matters. If it was indeed true that the Iron Seal was threatening the disciples undergoing the trial with their scores, or had given low scores for other reasons such as personal grudges, then the Iron Seal would be severely punished by the Order of Law Enforcement.

On the contrary, if it turned out that the disciple undergoing the trial was telling treacherous lies, then that disciple would be punished more severely than he or she would have been initially, and might even be expelled from the Sect directly.

6

For hundreds of years, the Sect of Returning Hearts had been using this set of rules among new disciples. Although there were still many loopholes, in most cases it was still very fair and effective.

Hearing Jiang Beiran use the evaluation score to establish authority even though the trial had just begun, Fang Qiuyao immediately dissented. "What right do you have to go so far as to restrict our freedom regarding the clothes we wear?! Does it have anything to do with the quest itself?" she asked.

Jiang Beiran gave Fang Qiuyao a sweeping glance, expressionlessly raised a finger, and said, "First, in the future, if you want to speak, you must first address me as Sir and get my permission before you may do so. Otherwise, I will deduct a point from your evaluation score."

5

“Second, your clothing is, of course, related to the quest. We are descending the mountain for a quest, not a tour. Blending in with the crowd and keeping a low profile is our main directive on how to act. Is that clear?”

Fang Qiuyao’s mouth twitched after hearing this and she muttered in a low voice, “Huh, you’re just being a wimp. There’s no need to put it so nicely.”

Although she was not convinced at all in her heart, Fang Qiuyao did not dare to just leave, either. After all, Jiang Beiran had been personally invited by their Law Protector to be their Iron Seal, so the Law Protector would naturally approve of his evaluation to an extraordinary extent. She did not want to leave a bad impression on the second-in-command of the Order after only her first trial quest.

“May I ask if we can only choose between coarse clothing or hemp garments?” Liu Zijin suddenly asked at that moment.

Jiang Beiran heard her, frowned, and said, “I said it just now that before speaking, you must address me as Sir. Do you not understand? I, therefore, deduct one evaluation point from you, and two points will be deducted next time if you forget about this again.”

2

Listening to Jiang Beiran’s anger-laden rebuke, Liu Zijin felt her heart beating even faster than back when she had been rejected the last time.

8

‘Is this... what it’s like to be reprimanded? Ever since I was a kid, even my dad has never reprimanded me like this. It feels... so special,’ she thought to herself.

24

“Hey! This violent temper of mine!” Fang Qiuyao said.

1

Seeing Liu Zijin being yelled at, Fang Qiuyao couldn’t hold back any longer. She was just about to open her mouth and yell back, but Liu Zijin pulled her away.

“Qiuyao, don’t be like this. It is indeed my fault,” Liu Zijin said.

“But he...!”

Without waiting for Fang Qiuyao to say it out loud, Liu Zijin shook her head at her and said, “Speak no more.”

“Okay...” Fang Qiuyao agreed with a pout.

After placating Fang Qiuyao, Liu Zijin once again looked at Jiang Beiran and shouted, “Sir!”

“Speak,” Jiang Beiran responded.

“May I ask if we can only choose between coarse clothing or hemp garments? I don’t have any clothes made of these two materials, and I’m not really keen to borrow someone else’s clothes to wear...” she said.

Jiang Beiran shook his head. “No. I just said that blending into the crowd is very important for us to act, and most commoners down the mountain can only afford coarse clothing and hemp garments. If we dress up too luxuriously, it will easily attract the attention of others. Do you understand what I mean?” he asked.

“Yes, I understand,” Liu Zijin replied.

“Sir! (Sir!) (Sir!)”

1

As soon as Liu Zijin finished her sentence, the three Sisters of the Yu family next to her shouted in unison.

“Speak,” Jiang Beiran said.

“Can we wear any style of coarse clothing or hemp garments?”

“Must we wear shoes made of straw?”

“Must we wear a straw hat?”

1

After listening to the three Sisters' questions fired in rapid succession, Jiang Beiran replied, "Next time, ask the questions one by one." Then he answered in turn, "For clothes, wear the ones of the most common style. As for shoes and hats, I have arrangements to be revealed later. Go and complete my initial order first."

"Yes! I see."

"Are there any other questions?" Jiang Beiran scanned the five of them with his eyes once, and when no one answered, he said, "Since there are no questions, go and execute my order quickly."

"Yes!"

Watching the five junior Sisters turn and leave, Jiang Beiran sighed softly.

Generally speaking, he would normally not be so strict when he was the Iron Seal, but at the moment, it was an unusual situation with five ticking time bombs around him. This forced him to strictly enforce a militaristic style of management. Otherwise, any one of them would cause a big problem if they were to stir up trouble.

1

Jiang Beiran had been waiting in the same place for about twenty minutes when the five girls came back toward him at the same time. They had all changed into the black hemp garments uniformly issued by the Order of Law Enforcement.

'Holy sh*t... is this the so-called phenomenon of natural beauty being difficult to give up!?' he thought to himself.

Jiang Beiran had a mental breakdown. He realized that even though the five girls had changed into the most ordinary hemp garments, it still did not affect their stunning beauty in any way. In fact, the clothing even added a sense of unexplainable temptation, causing Jiang Beiran to simply want to shout, 'I really can't f*cking handle this job!'

8

After mentally vomiting blood, Jiang Beiran braced himself and began to think about what was next.

1

First, he could basically be sure that the five junior Sisters in front of him were young ladies from rich families who knew nothing about the hardships of the world. That was because, in this incredibly chaotic Land of the Black Dragon, most people could not even afford to feed themselves sufficiently. Only those who had power and influence could afford to buy silk and satin.

The five girls in front of him were obviously either from rich or powerful families. Otherwise, how could they not even have a single piece of coarse clothing or any hemp garments in their luggage?

Furthermore, judging from their expressions, it could also be seen that they were very unused to wearing clothes of such texture, as all of them were frowning deeply.

“Alas.... this team will be really difficult to lead.”

5

Chapter 17: What Is Equal to Weaving Plus Formations?

Actually, Jiang Beiran had thought a lot about the issue of clothing.

First of all, if the girls all wore silk or satin upon descending the mountain, it could indeed deter some scoundrels. Out of the fear that Liu Zijin and the girls were descendants of some major families, those crooks would not dare to act rashly.

But while the risk of scoundrels would be lessened, Jiang Beiran could not stop the lust-driven young men hailing from families of significant backgrounds.

With the beauty of the five women, if they were given free rein to show off their looks however they liked, God knew how many royals, nobles, heroes, and officials they would attract. By the time the trial ended, Jiang Beiran estimated that he would have triggered at least a dozen Yellow Grade quests.

3

Who could withstand such a situation!?

But now that they had changed into rough hemp garments, they also completely failed to achieve the effect Jiang Beiran had imagined, which was to blend into the crowd and stay low profile. Instead, it was like throwing five plump sheep into the wolf pack.

1

Thinking about it, with five stunning beauties in civilian attire, surely it would provoke the men down the mountain so much that they would beat the idiotic brains out of one another.

‘Alas, it seems that the stuff I’ve made really must be put to use. I just hope they would not realize what is special about it,’ Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

1

Sighing in his heart, Jiang Beiran looked to Liu Zijin and the rest of the five and said, “Very good. You all came back within the stipulated time. It is a good start for us all. Now come with me, and I’ll help you get the rest of the items.”

At that moment, Jiang Beiran’s authority as an Iron Seal had been completely established. After hearing his instructions, even Fang Qiuyao, who was the most unconvinced in her heart, simply twitched her mouth while still following obediently.

They reached an unoccupied pavilion not far away, and Jiang Beiran took five straw hats and five pairs of shoes made of straw from his storage ring.

The ring was a gift that Jiang Beiran had received when he first joined the sect. It had the word “Heart” engraved on it.

When Jiang Beiran first got it, it could be said that he worshipped the Sect of Returning Hearts to the extreme. They were actually giving out items like this, which seemed like something only the protagonist would have in a novel, as a free gift for newbies.

But only later did he slowly learn that in the world, as long as one was a cultivator, almost everyone has a storage ring. The only difference was the size of the space within. For example, Jiang Beiran’s storage ring had about the same capacity as a sack. That was the standard size of the storage rings carried by most cultivators.

This storage ring was also as convenient as Jiang Beiran imagined. Everything except for living things could be stuffed into it.

7

Seeing the hats and shoes made of straw that Jiang Beiran had taken out, Fang Qiuyao's brow furrowed again. However, this time, she didn't say anything. She now considered Jiang Beiran as part of her trial, and she just had to endure this one time.

'In the future, even if I am scolded to death, sent to die outside, or driven out of the Order by the Law Protector, I will never have this man be my Iron Seal again!' she thought to herself.

5

Putting the straw hats and shoes in front of the five junior sisters, Jiang Beiran smiled and said, "It's a very hot summer. These are the heat protection products I prepared especially for you all. Do put them on, and tell me if the shoes are not the right size. I will help you modify them."

3

Although Liu Zijin did not like the style of the straw hat very much, she still nodded politely and said, "Many thanks, Senior Brother." She then picked up a straw hat and a pair of shoes.

After sitting to one side to change into the shoes of straw, Liu Zijin put the hat onto her head out of habit.

'Huh...'

The moment she put the hat on her head, Liu Zijin suddenly felt the scenery in front of her become blurred, but she soon recovered.

Beside her, Fang Qiuyao, who had just finished collecting the straw hat and shoes, took a look at Liu Zijin and blinked, somewhat puzzled. She didn't seem to feel the usual aura that Sister Zijin gave her, but when she looked more closely, she felt nothing wrong.

'It's probably because it's the first time I have seen Sister Zijin dressed like this. But Sister Zijin is indeed pretty, even when dressed like this!' Fang Qiuyao thought to herself.

Jiang Beiran nodded in satisfaction after seeing Liu Zijin change into the straw hat and shoes.

'Very good. The hidden formation is running very smoothly. Her aura has been completely changed,' he thought.

After taking on such a difficult task from Law Protector Yu, Jiang Beiran certainly wouldn't just sit by and do nothing to prepare for it. During the two days he waited, he developed this Suit of Blending In that fused the art of weaving together with the science of formations.

Simply put, he wove the "Qi Hiding Formation" into the straw hat and shoes so that they would become a mobile formation that could create a layer of illusions around the wearer. The effect was to significantly tone down the wearer's presence. As long as the wearer stayed in a crowd, it was difficult for them to be noticed.

4

When all five of them had put on their Suits of Blending In, Jiang Beiran took out five pieces of green Seared Cloth from the storage ring and handed them the cloths.

The Seared Cloth was a kind of heat protection item commonly used by the people in the Land of the Black Dragon. It was made by processing the roots of a plant similar to a plantain banana into strands of thread and then weaving the thread into cloth. When worn on the face, it could shield one from sunlight and dispel the heat.

2

Of course, the Seared Cloth made by Jiang Beiran naturally had special features. The weaving method that had integrated the science of formations allowed it to be connected to the critical point of the "Qi Hiding Formation" on the straw hat, thus strengthening the effect of the Suit of Blending In.

"Excuse me, sir!"

At that moment, the three sisters of the Yu family had raised their hands and shouted simultaneously.

Jiang Beiran pointed to the Sister Yu standing in the middle and said, "You may ask first."

"What is this in your hand, Brother?" Yu Guizhui asked as she stepped forward.

"Eh? Have you never seen it before? It's a Seared Cloth used for protection against the heat," he told her.

"Seared Cloth?" Yu Guizhui widened her eyes in curiosity.

Jiang Beiran looked at the others again and found that they were also bewildered. Obviously, none of them had ever seen one.

'Alas, these ladies are really living a life in a different dimension from the common folk,' he thought.

"You will know its benefits when you wear it on your face," Jiang Beiran said as he handed the Seared Cloth to Yu Guizhui. He then looked at the other Sister Yu and asked, "What about you? What's your question?"

"Oh, it's all right. My sister has already asked the question for me," she replied.

Then Jiang Beiran looked at the only remaining sister and asked, "Is your question also the same?"

"Yep." Yu Guimiao gave a forceful nod.

"Okay. Then you all can try wearing it together." Jiang Beiran took out two more pieces of Seared Cloth and handed them over to the girls.

"Wow, it smells good." At that moment, there was a glow in Yu Guizhui's eyes. She was already wearing the Seared Cloth. Her small nose kept twitching as if she wanted to inhale more fragrance.

The other two Yu sisters also hurriedly put on the Seared Cloth after hearing this. Sounding surprised, they both said at the same time, “It smells really good.”

In order to prevent Liu Zijin or Fang Qiuyao from arguing against wearing the Seared Cloth, Jiang Beiran deliberately soaked the ones he had made in the Honey of Various Flowers that he had brewed. He used a formation to keep the scent within a certain range so that onlookers basically could not smell it.

Seeing the pleasantly surprised expression of the three Sisters of the Yu family, Liu Zijin and Fang Qiuyao also could not help but feel curious. They walked up to Jiang Beiran and collected the remaining two pieces of Seared Cloth.

“Really, it smells especially fragrant when you put it on. Bro—?” Liu Zijin was just about to ask something when she hastily covered her mouth. Although she was somewhat looking forward to being reprimanded by Brother Jiang once more, if another two points were deducted, she would outright fail.

2

“Excuse me, sir,” Liu Zijin said quietly.

Jiang Beiran, who saw Liu Zijin’s reaction, was very satisfied in his heart and nodded. “Speak.”

“May I ask what the scent on this Seared Cloth is?” she asked.

After Liu Zijin asked the question, the three sisters of the Yu family also looked at Jiang Beiran at the same time, with similar curiosity written on their faces.

Chapter 18: It Seems Like He Is Indeed a Very Capable Brother

Under the gaze of four pairs of curious eyes, Jiang Beiran took out a jade vial from the storage ring and said to them, “This is the Honey of Various Flowers that I brewed by myself. It is made by gathering the essence of various flowers. Its aroma can help you refresh your minds and stay awake.”

“Wow, Brother, you even know how to brew your own honey?”

1

“Brother, can you show me what this honey looks like?”

“Brother, can I taste this honey?”

Staring at the faces of the three sisters of the Yu family, who had surrounded him, Jiang Beiran coughed hard and gave them a sharp, sweeping look.

“Em...” The three sisters, who knew they had violated the rules, hastily retreated to their original positions.

Nodding, Jiang Beiran opened the vial containing the Honey of Various Flowers and then looked at the three sisters and said, “This vial of Honey of Various Flowers in my hand contains the extracts of Plum Blossom with Locked-In Coldness, Cherokee rose, Blossom of the Fine-Haired Grass, Fire Tree, and other plants. It is very effective in nourishing the blood and the qi, nourishing the skin, and retaining beauty and youth.”

6

When they heard the last four words, the three sisters of the Yu family and Liu Zijin’s eyes immediately shone brightly. Even Fang Qiuyao, whose head had been turned away and was not looking at them, could not help but perk up.

Seeing their reaction, the corners of Jiang Beiran’s mouth curled up slightly. “Sisters, it seems that all of you are very interested in this vial of Honey of Various Flowers that I hold in my hand. So how about this? I can give a bottle of it to the sister who performs the best in this operation.”

4

The three sisters of the Yu family immediately cheered after hearing this. Although they were not sure whether or not the effects that Jiang Beiran had listed were true, either way, it was free. Because of that, they more or less believed him a little, and the smell of the Honey of Various Flowers was really good. It was better than any makeup products they had bought.

Putting the Honey of Various Flowers, which had already worked its charm, back into the storage ring, Jiang Beiran looked at the five girls. “How is it? Do the shoes fit? No need to address me this time. Just answer directly.”

1

Yu Guishui opened her mouth and replied, "Mine...seems to be a little tight."

Jiang Beiran took a quick glance at Yu Guishui's feet, roughly determined the size, and said, "All right. Take them off and give them to me. I'll help you modify them."

"Thanks for your help, then, Brother," Yu Guishui said as she took off her straw shoes and handed them to Jiang Beiran.

Taking the straw shoes from her, Jiang Beiran directly pulled out a piece of sedge [1] from the storage ring and started to continue weaving.

As she watched the straw shoes grow bigger at a speed detectable by the naked eye, Yu Guishui blinked and said with astonishment, "Brother, you are so clever with your hands."

5

On his other side, Yu Guishui also came closer and said, "It's not just a matter of being clever with one's hands anymore, is it? What kind of weaving method is this? How can you continue to weave directly onto a pair of already woven straw shoes?"

But Jiang Beiran did not answer. Instead, he silently continued to weave and then handed the straw shoes to Yu Guishui after they were done. "It's done. Try them on again."

With an incredulous expression, Yu Guishui took the straw shoes from him and carefully put them on to see if they fit.

"Wow, they really do fit now. Brother, you're amazing," she said.

Seeing that the other two sisters were about to cheer again, Jiang Beiran quickly shouted, "Okay, don't be noisy. Do the rest of you have any problems with the straw shoes?"

The four remaining girls all shook their heads.

'They all have the same shoe size,' he thought to himself.

1

Jiang Beiran had woven a bunch of pairs of straw shoes initially as backups, so they were all the same small size. That meant they would also be convenient for him to modify if they turned out to be too small. However, now it seemed that modifications were not necessary.

“Since everything is fine, let’s set off to the Order of Management to pick a trial quest,” he told them.

“Yes, sir!”

With five sisters who no longer looked so glamorous, Jiang Beiran felt much less pressure. At least the brothers who would pass them would not look back so often.

Entering the Order of Management with familiarity, Jiang Beiran heard someone call his name as soon as he walked in.

“Brother Beiran?”

Hearing this familiar voice, Jiang Beiran immediately turned around and joined his hands in a salute and then said, “Good day, Brother Qin.”

Joining his hands in a salute toward Jiang Beiran as well, Qin Muyuan smiled and asked, “Here to fulfill the duty of Iron Seal again?”

“Yes.” Jiang Beiran nodded and then turned to the five sisters and introduced them, saying, “This is Qin Muyuan, Brother Qin, a very responsible Flower Crown.”

Flower Crowns were managers in the Order of Management who were specifically responsible for issuing trial quests and performing the subsequent investigation on whether or not the scores given out were fair. They were generally selected by the Virtuous Tablets of the Order of Management from among outstanding Iron Seals, so most of them were relatively young.

Once, a Virtuous Tablet had wanted to promote Jiang Beiran to be a Flower Crown as well. However, Jiang Beiran’s cultivation level was too low to convince the public, so he had to reluctantly give up.

“Greetings, Brother Qin.” Liu Zijin and the rest of the five girls bowed together.

When Qin Muyuan heard the five sisters greet him and saw them bow, he was suddenly surprised, and he could not help but feel a little strange.

'Have those five sisters been standing behind Brother Beiran this entire time?' Qin Muyuan wondered.

But even so, one must not lose one's manners, so Qin Muyuan didn't dwell on it for too long before joining his hands together and returning the salute. He said, "Greetings, Sisters. I am Qin Muyuan of the Order of Ten Thousand Swords."

When both sides had gotten acquainted, Jiang Beiran joined his hands in a salute to Qin Muyuan and said, "Brother Qin, this time, I am the Iron Seal of these five sisters. Please issue us a trial quest."

Qin Muyuan was once again surprised. He had known Jiang Beiran for several years and had the impression that Beiran never brought female disciples down the mountain for trials. However, this time, he was bringing five of them in one go?

3

Looking at Qin Muyuan's incredibly surprised expression, Jiang Beiran wanted to spill the beans, but he knew it was useless to complain. Instead, he simply continued and said, "Thank you, Brother Qin."

Only then did Qin Muyuan respond with a nod. "All right. Follow me."

After going through the whole process of taking up a quest, which Jiang Beiran was very familiar with, Qin Muyuan told Jiang Beiran about the current trial quest.

"Jifu Village of Longshan Town has recently seen a number of child abductions. The villagers are all very anxious. You all may set off today to go over and investigate this matter," Qin Muyuan explained.

Having said so, Qin Muyuan placed a piece of paper filled with words on the table.

"Yes, I will follow the order." After responding, Jiang Beiran took out an iron seal with his name from the storage ring and pressed it down hard on the paper. This meant that he would be responsible for the matter as an Iron Seal.

“I wish you all the best on your trip, Brother Beiran.” After saying this, Qin Muyuan felt that something was wrong. It was as if he suddenly remembered something when he said to the five sisters, “I wish the same to you all, Sisters.”

‘Strange. Why do I keep forgetting about these five sisters? Could it be that they have practiced some kind of Qi suppressing technique? That’s really impressive, to be able to reach this level at such a young age,’ he thought.

6

“Many thanks, Brother.” Liu Zijin and the rest immediately bowed toward Qin Muyuan.

“All right. Remember to listen to Brother Beiran during your journey there. He is one of the few outstanding Iron Seals in our Sect of Returning Hearts. You will definitely be able to learn a lot from him,” Qin Muyuan told them.

“Yes,” the five girls answered at the same time. However, what they were all thinking was completely different.

Liu Zijin was not very surprised nor astonished, because she had originally come to find Jiang Beiran on purpose after learning how capable he was.

Fang Qiuyao was a bit disdainful. She thought that Jiang Beiran was praised by so many people just because he was a wimp, but that he actually had no real ability at all.

2

Meanwhile, the three sisters of the Yu family grew more and more curious about Jiang Beiran. At first, they hadn’t really cared when Law Protector Yu had said she had found a very capable Iron Seal for them. After all, it was just an Iron Seal. They believed that there wasn’t much difference between one Iron Seal or another. The job was just to bring new disciples around and complete some very easy trials. How capable could he be?

But after meeting him, Jiang Beiran’s actions made them believe that this brother seemed to have an endless bag of treasures, able to produce everything from it, and that he also had a pair of clever hands well beyond their imagination.

Just now he had even earned such vigorous praise from a Flower Crown.

“It seems like...he is indeed a very capable brother?”

[1]: A type of grass.

Chapter 19: The Brother Is Still a Fairly Reasonable Person (Crossed Out)

As a seasoned Iron Seal, Jiang Beiran had been to many villages and towns near the Sect of Returning Hearts. However, they did not include Jifu Village, which was where they were going this time.

Although Jiang Beiran had not been there, he had written down all the information concerning the surrounding villages and towns.

Jifu Village was considered one of the more populous villages in the Rivernorth region, with a total of more than 1200 households in the village and a population of more than 7500 people. Many households had four or five children.

In this era with no surveillance, child theft could be said to be happening every day. The local government simply could not deal with the large number of cases, and official documents regarding missing children had been stacked up in several piles in a warehouse to collect dust.

So, most of the time the government welcomed the sect disciples coming out of the mountains and performing acts of chivalry. As long as they did not take things too far, the officials would turn a blind eye.

...

After planning the route and bringing the things required, Jiang Beiran's team of adventurers officially set off towards the foot of the mountain.

After descending the mountain, Jiang Beiran found that the five Sisters were unusually excited, looking around as if everything was new.

But fortunately, Jiang Beiran had already established a firm enough authority, so the five girls were not too reckless.

As practitioners of cultivation, they all could travel much faster on foot than ordinary people. It took them just one hour to cross the prairie and arrive at the first stop Jiang Beiran had planned, which was Luoxia Town.

Before entering the town, Jiang Beiran once again reminded the five Sisters not to wander around. The five women nodded repeatedly and said yes with very sincere expressions. Only then did Jiang Beiran nod and bring them into the town together.

“Yo!! Persimmons from tall trees! Not sour or bitter at all!! Exchangeable if found otherwise!”

“Radish and pears!! Exchangeable goods!”

“Heyyo, honey!! Candied haws!”

It was dusk, the liveliest time on the streets. Each vendor was trying their best to sell their goods by yelling over the others.

“Rice, millet, cowpeas, and mung beans! Porridge made from white rice flour!!! Sugar buns and pea buns!”

Finally, after hearing the calls from the vendors, Yu Guimiao could no longer control her yearning and shouted, “Excuse me, Sir!”

“Speak,” Jiang Beiran answered.

“I want to eat that pea bun,” Yu Guimiao said as she pointed at the stall full of bamboo steam drawers.

“Okay. How many do you want?” Jiang Beiran asked as he nodded his head.

1

Hearing Jiang Bei Ran agree so readily, Yu Guimiao couldn't help but be surprised. She had thought that the Brother, who had always seemed to be a stickler for rules, would definitely not agree, or that even if he did that it wouldn't be so easy.

‘Actually, the Brother is still a fairly reasonable person most of the time,’ she thought.

Feeling regret in her heart, Yu Guimiao raised two slender fingers and said, "Two would be good."

"What about you all? Do you want some?" Jiang Beiran looked back at the other Sisters and asked.

The two remaining Sisters of the Yu family immediately said they also wanted some. Liu Zijin followed and said that she wanted to try it. Only Fang Qiuyao did not say a word.

Jiang Beiran nodded after collecting their answers. He then walked to the stall and asked, "Boss, how much for a pea bun?"

Seeing a customer approach, the owner of the stall happily lifted a steam drawer and said, "Freshly baked hot pea buns, one penny each."

"Alright. Give me eight." Jiang Beiran took a blue money pouch from his waist and counted out eight coins then handed them to the boss.

Because the storage ring could only be used by cultivators, in order to keep a low profile, Jiang Beiran did not want to use the ring in front of others and show off. For this reason, he had on him all the backpacks and hanging cloth bags that one would expect a traveler to have.

"Alright! Eight pea buns!" the boss yelled after receiving the money. He then wrapped the eight buns with a lotus leaf, showing well-practiced skill. He handed them to Jiang Beiran and said, "Mister, hold it well. Do come back again if you find it delicious!"

Nodding, Jiang Beiran took the lotus leaf packet and walked back to the five Sisters.

Yu Guimiao took off the Seared Cloth and sniffed then said with anticipation, "Wow, it smells so good." After saying that, she wanted to reach out and grab them.

But Jiang Beiran raised his right hand and dodged Yu Guimiao's hungry pounce.

"There's no rush. Wait until we get to the inn first, then we can eat. Now put the Seared Cloth back on."

With a reluctant 'oh,' Yu Guimiao instantly crossed out the conclusion, 'the Brother is still a fairly reasonable person' that she had just come to while thinking earlier.

Quietly stuffing the lotus leaf packet into the storage ring, Jiang Beiran continued to walk towards the inn with the five Sisters.

As they walked, Fang Qiuyao suddenly felt that something was wrong. She had gotten used to the feeling of being in the limelight since she was a child, and wherever she went, she was always the brightest star in everyone's eyes.

But at the moment, when she was walking on the street, no pedestrians gave her a second glance. Even the vendors calling out had not turned their eyes to her.

1

'Something is wrong!' she thought.

Thinking of this, Fang Qiuyao couldn't help but look up at Jiang Beiran. She knew that the situation must be the work of this wimpy Brother.

'It seems that my earlier feeling that Sister Zijin was different from her usual self was not mistaken. He must have done something to the straw hat or the Seared Cloth.

'But... what kind of tampering could make us completely unnoticeable? This wimpy Brother really has some brilliant tactics when it comes to being a coward,' Fang Qiuyao thought to herself.

9

Although she realized that Jiang Beiran must have done something to the straw hat or Seared Cloth, Fang Qiuyao did not intend to expose him, because usually she also disliked the lust-filled eyes of those men looking at her. They made her very uncomfortable. Instead, this feeling of having no one look at her at the moment was very new to her.

1

'Never mind. I'll give this wimpy Brother a break for now. I'll settle the score with him after I return to the Sect.'

1

“Bang!!”

“Clang!” “Clang!”

Just as Jiang Beiran was looking for the location of the inn, a shattering sound suddenly came from ahead.

Immediately after that, an incredibly mean-spirited voice followed.

“How dare you set up a stall here without paying the rent! Are you tired of living?”

Looking in the direction that the voice had come from, they saw that a stall selling bean curd had been completely overturned. A middle-aged man with a face full of stubble was staring at the people who had overturned his stall with a resentful expression.

1

“Oh ya? You still dare to stare at me? F*ck you!” one of the young men in blue shouted angrily as he kicked at the middle-aged man.

“Argh!” The middle-aged man screamed miserably as he was kicked in the head, then shouted, “The government and that Liu Sandao both charge us rent! We’re just a small business. How can we afford to pay you so much money?!”

“Hey, how dare you talk back! Beat him up!”

As the young man said this, a few other young men swarmed in on the middle-aged man and started punching and kicking him.

The surrounding vendors just watched in silence. Some even took a few steps back, as if they were used to such things.

“This is too much!”

Just then, Fang Qiuyao had shouted angrily and was about to pull out her Sword of White Rainbow.

1

At the same time, three options popped up in front of Jiang Beiran's eyes.

Chapter 20: There Are More Options to Take Advantage of Down the Mountain

[Option One: Approach and help the owner of the bean curd stall. Reward for completion: Breathing Technique of Five Cycles (Black Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Two: Ask the other stall owners nearby about the reason behind the incident. Reward for completion: Soul Stealing Finger (Yellow Grade Middle Tier)]

3

[Option Three: Stay away from this place. Reward for completion: Random basic skill point +1]

After so many years of practice and experience, Jiang Beiran knew one thing well, and that was to never underestimate anyone. Even if the other party was an insignificant person with a cultivation level far lower than him. When someone really grew to hate you, it was possible for them to do anything, whether they administered poison, hired an assassin, set up a trap, or whatever else they could think of. In short, it would be impossible to defend oneself against such attempts.

Furthermore, even a single person could pose such a big threat, not to mention a faction. Every faction that managed to survive in a region for a long time more or less had some background or special methods. Otherwise, it would have been destroyed over and over again long ago.

Also, having confirmed that the world was absolutely targeting him, Jiang Beiran knew that the likelihood of events that would normally have a small probability of happening was now infinitely higher. For example, some people looked ordinary on the surface, but secretly had a Mystic King for a brother. These kinds of incidents were just completely unreasonable.

2

So, for Jiang Beiran, the options he had just encountered in front of him could be said to be commonplace. Almost every town would have a number of rampant landlords or ruthless rogues like these.

Although rogues were sometimes considered a subset of chivalrous heroes, they were actually just a group of scoundrels. Most of the time, they would be bullying the weak by relying upon their physical capabilities and exploiting the residents, but sometimes they would be sentimental and perform the occasional chivalrous act.

When he first encountered these rogues, Jiang Beiran felt that they were like the heroes of Mount Liang [1]. They were the ones helping the people fight against the terrible officials, yet they were also the ones drinking alcohol without paying. Some of the more egregious ones would even open a shop selling buns with human flesh as filling or conduct some other illegal business.

But these incidents did not prevent them from calling themselves chivalrous heroes.

As usual, he quickly chose Option Three. Jiang Beiran grabbed Fang Qiuyao, who was ready to rush forward, and said, "I've said it many times already; without my orders, you must not act rashly."

Fang Qiuyao's face was full of indignation over being held back. She turned around to glare at Jiang Beiran ferociously and then said, "Since you're still a disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts, isn't it our duty to fight for righteousness!?"

Having expected such reaction from Fang Qiuyao, Jiang Beiran replied, "The reason why your Law Protector entrusted you all to me is that she wants me to teach you how to be chivalrous and fight for righteousness in this Land of Black Dragon."

"Hmph! I think you are just timid and cowardly!" Fang Qiuyao replied.

At that moment, Liu Zijin stepped forward, pulled Fang Qiuyao back, and said, "Qiuyao, we are new here. We are not familiar with the place, and we don't have much worldly experience, so it's better to listen to Brother Jiang first."

"I..." Fang Qiuyao took a deep breath after listening and finally snorted coldly, returning to her initial position. She stood behind Jiang Beiran again with a stern face.

'Alas, you are still young after all,' Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

Jiang Beiran actually did not really dislike Fang Qiuyao's hotheaded yet warm-hearted nature. After all, it showed that she was very kind at heart. However, it was unfortunately really hard to survive in this chaotic world with kindness alone.

2

"Let's go. We should not stay long at this place of conflict," he said.

Based on Jiang Beiran's understanding of the system, since Option Three clearly stated he should stay far away from here, it meant that more troublesome things would definitely follow.

Fang Qiuyao snorted coldly again upon hearing this, but she still followed Jiang Beiran as she was forcefully dragged along by Liu Zijin.

Different from the mindsets of both Fang Qiuyao and Liu Zijin, the three Sisters of the Yu family were even more curious about Jiang Beiran at this moment.

One must know that those young talents who followed the women in the past were all eager for more good opportunities like this to show off their skills. Some of them would even direct and perform a good show of fighting for justice, which made the Sisters tremble with laughter as if they were watching a monkey show.

But this Brother Jiang in front of them really had no desire to show off at all, and they did not know whether he was really very wimpy... or was it that he hid his true personality deep down inside?

"I'm really curious!"

The three Sisters of the Yu family locked their eyes on Jiang Beiran's silhouette at the same time.

After turning around several intersections in a row, Jiang Beiran and the others finally found a relatively clean-looking inn. The system's prompt sounded at the same time.

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Forging +1]

3

“Waiter, are there any empty rooms left?”

Walking into the lobby, Jiang Beiran stopped a waiter and spoke to him.

The waiter, who was busy serving wine, was stunned. He had clearly been paying attention to the entrance of the shop at all times, but surprisingly, he completely hadn't noticed these customers coming in.

1

‘The boss will scold me again if he finds out,’ the waiter thought to himself. He snuck a peek at the counter and was relieved to find that the boss didn't seem to be looking in his direction, so he quickly said to Jiang Beiran, “Due to my bad eyesight, I have failed to provide timely service. Please forgive me for the delay. There are still many vacant rooms. Which one would you like to stay in? In this inn, we have Rooms of Heaven Grade, Rooms of Earth Grade, Rooms of Mortal Grade, Side Rooms, Crude Rooms, and Bunkhouses. If you want, I can show you one by one.”

1

Jiang Beiran was just about to open his mouth to reply when he saw three options pop up in front of him.

[Option One: Stay in a Room of Heaven Grade. Reward for completion: Eighteen Breaking Techniques of Cheng (Black Grade High Tier)]

[Option Two: Stay in a Room of Earth Grade. Reward for completion: Sword of Greenish Brightness (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

[Option Three: Stay in a Room of Mortal Grade. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

‘It's true that there are always more situations to take advantage of down the mountain. It hasn't been long since we walked into the town and already the options have appeared twice,’ Jiang Beiran thought.

Jiang Beiran had encountered these kinds of options several times. The reason why choosing a room could trigger a Black Grade High Tier treasure was also very cliché, and was that it was very likely they would encounter royals and nobles out traveling. Those sorts of people would insist that you give up a specific room for them.

Jiang Beiran had seen this kind of thing too many times in the inn, and these sons of b*tches were also very disgusting. Even if you readily gave the room to them, they would stop you and sneer, "You son of a b*tch. Do you think you are also worthy of staying in a Room of Heaven Grade? You've really dirtied my mood for this outing. How about this; imitate a dog and bark three times, and I will be kind enough to let you go."

5

And this was not the end. Even if you really gritted your teeth and accepted the humiliation, these people would still find various ways to continue to screw you over. At any rate, they just had to find fault with you, and then look at your miserable appearance and laugh so as to obtain the perverted satisfaction of being superior.

But this was also the reason why Jiang Beiran did not choose to set up a tent outside far away from the crowd but to come to this place where the good and the bad mixed. After all, the attribute points were too attractive. He did not want them to go to waste. Anyway, after so many years, he had not yet encountered a situation whereby all options provided by the system were of high difficulty when dealing with these small daily matters.

1

After choosing Option Three, Jiang Beiran asked once more regarding the Sisters' intended rooming arrangements and finally settled on getting three rooms. One room was for Jiang Beiran himself, one was for Liu Zijin and Fang Qiuyao, and one was for the three Yu Sisters.

Although Jiang Beiran reminded the three Sisters of the Yu family that the bed in the Room of Mortal Grade certainly could not fit three people in it, they all said they had their own way to make sure they fit, so Jiang Beiran could only agree to it. After all, they could always get another room if it was not big enough.

Led by the waiter, the six people first came to the Room of Mortal Grade for Jiang Beiran.

With a creak, the waiter pushed open the door. The room's simple bedding and the square table with missing corners immediately made the five girls frown in unison.

Without waiting for the girls to complain, Jiang Beiran looked at the waiter first and was just about to tell him to leave them when the options popped up again.

[Option One: Simply tell the waiter to leave. Reward for completion: Total Annihilation of a Thousand Troops (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

3

[Option Two: Tip the waiter with five coppers. Reward for completion: Random basic attribute point +1]

‘Feels good.’

Jiang Beiran, who had triggered another option, was enjoying it immensely. But at the same time, he also lamented that there were really traps everywhere down the mountain.

2

The option of tipping the waiter was not one that Jiang Beiran had encountered many times, but judging from his experience, the waiter in front of him was not the main reason for the Yellow Grade High Tier reward. Rather, it was because this act of not tipping him could potentially cause a series of chain reactions that would eventually lead to trouble.

Of course, it was all in Jiang Beiran’s mind, after all. He had no intention of tempting death just because of curiosity.

Choosing Option Two, Jiang Beiran took out five coppers from his front pocket and said to the waiter, “Why don’t you leave us first? I’ll call out for you if we need anything.”

The waiter’s face filled with pleasant surprise. He accepted the coppers, nodded repeatedly, and said, “Hey, thank you, Mister. If there is something you need, just ring the bell to get my attention. I will be there right away.”

“Alright.” Jiang Beiran nodded his head.

“Then, Mister, rest well. I’ll be on my way.”

[1]: The group of protagonists in the famous Chinese literature, Outlaws of the Marsh.