

I Just Won't Play By The Book

Chapter 31: Does Your Leader Always Speak Like This!?

When the five Sisters had finished resting completely, Jiang Beiran led them forward. However, what had just happened seemed to have traumatized them a little, and the five Sisters walked in an unusually careful manner, afraid of stepping into any formations again.

But while they were careful, they still followed Jiang Beiran closely, afraid of falling behind.

Relying upon strong mental power, Jiang Beiran tracked the scent left by the thief all the way out of the woods and soon arrived outside of a cave.

“This should be it,” he said.

Standing at the entrance of the cave, using his perception for a while, Jiang Beiran found that most of those inside were ordinary people. Only one had practiced some cultivation, but he was only at the second level of Qi Refining.

Halting the use of his mental power, Jiang Beiran turned around and said to the five Sisters, “Come, let me test you. What should we do after we are sure that the thieves are in the cave?”

Liu Zijin thought for a while, then spoke first and answered, “Go straight in and capture the leader. This technique is called ‘capturing the ringleader first to capture all the followers’.”

Jiang Beiran shook his head after hearing this. He looked at Liu Zijin with a disappointed expression and said, “You are too reckless. It’s not a war. What’s the use of capturing the leader? The other thieves would still scatter, no?”

After hearing this, Liu Zijin immediately lowered her head and said, “Brother, you are right.” After saying that, Liu Zijin thought of another plan and was just about to say something, but she heard Sister Yu speak first. “Then should we first determine what exits the cave has?”

“Smart. That’s of the highest priority,” he replied.

After hearing this, Liu Zijin and Fang Qiuyao both showed a look of regret, but for not quite the same reason.

After instructing them on some more details, Jiang Beiran nodded and said, “Okay, remember what I just said. Those thieves inside the cave are no match for you. Now do it.”

“Yes!” the five Sisters answered in unison. They began to capture the thieves according to the plan Jiang Beiran had laid out.

Just as Jiang Beiran said, the thieves in the cave were basically ordinary people. They were totally no match for Liu Zijin and the other girls. Soon, they were either knocked unconscious or had gotten on their knees to surrender.

‘Huh... that person actually did not set up a formation in their lair?’ Jiang Beiran wondered.

The reason why Jiang Beiran did not follow the five Sisters into the cave was that he was thinking that there must be other defensive formations. It was much easier to break the formation when one was standing outside than when one was inside of it.

But what he hadn’t expected was that there was no sign of any formation being triggered inside the cave.

‘What a strange person.’

Lamenting in his heart, Jiang Beiran walked into the cave with brisk steps.

‘Mhmm~ They all mastered their strength pretty well,’ he thought.

He looked at the thieves lying on the ground at the entrance of the cave in a disorderly manner. With a single glance, Jiang Beiran knew that they had all been knocked out by one blow, losing consciousness in a very peaceful manner.

When he came all the way to the deepest part of the cave, Jiang Beiran saw several of the Sisters cleaning up the battlefield, gathering the unconscious thieves into one place.

“Good job.” Jiang Beiran looked at them and nodded his head in praise.

“Brother, he is the leader of the group,” Liu Zijin said as she pushed a young man who was tied up over to Jiang Beiran.

“Alright, got it,” Jiang Beiran replied casually.

“Then I’ll continue tying up those thieves,” Liu Zijin said.

“Go.”

After Liu Zijin went away, Jiang Beiran squatted down and looked at the calm young man with curiosity. “How come you aren’t shouting something along the lines of ‘let me go, quick’ like other thieves?” he asked the man.

“Will you let go of me if I do shout?” The young man said as he lifted his gaze and looked at Jiang Beiran.

“Yes. As long as you shout, I will let you go.” Jiang Beiran nodded his head.

“Pfft, don’t act all pretentious over there,” the young man said disdainfully as he turned his head away.

“Oh,” Jiang Beiran said, then sat cross-legged. He closed his eyes and practiced the Rhymed Formula of Returning Hearts.

This made the young leader a little puzzled, not knowing what this man really meant.

“Hey. Now that you caught me, hurry up and send me to the authorities to collect your reward. Why are you sitting here?” the man asked.

“No hurry, no hurry.” Jiang Beiran smiled and shook his head.

And so, a strange silence fell between the two.

After a few minutes, the leader, who finally couldn’t stand this weird atmosphere, spoke up, saying, “Since you can find this place... Are you the one who broke the formation outside...?”

‘Here it comes,’ Jiang Beiran thought.

Based on years of experience in catching thieves, Jiang Beiran came to the conclusion that if he was to question the thieves immediately upon capturing them, most of them would only hold their heads high and say, “Cut the

nonsense. Kill me or cut me up if you please. I do not understand what you are talking about.”

This would make the interrogation very troublesome.

So, Jiang Beiran simply did the opposite by just waiting it out. When their hostility gradually faded, they would initiate a conversation with him.

Opening his eyes, Jiang Beiran looked at the young leader and said, “Did you set up that formation? It’s quite interesting.”

The young leader proudly held his head high and said, “If not for the lack of materials, you would not have been able to escape.”

“Well, the formation does indeed have quite some background. Where did you learn it from?” Jiang Beiran asked.

“Hmph! I’m not going to tell you.”

“Oh.” Jiang Beiran finished speaking and continued to close his eyes and meditate.

“You!” The young leader grew impatient, saying, “Don’t you know how to continue asking questions or negotiate terms with me?”

“You’re trying to teach me how to do something, huh?” Jiang Beiran asked, opening his eyes.

“[...!”

Had he not been tied up, the young leader wanted to rush forward and fight Jiang Beiran to death. This guy was too annoying!

After panting twice, the young leader looked around at the female cultivators still in the Qi Refining Period as they were tying his minions up. He shouted, “Hey! Does your leader always speak like this?”

Liu Zijin and the others were actually holding back their laughter to the point of almost sustaining internal injuries. After hearing the young man’s question, they all chose not to answer and continued to tie people up in silence.

“Brother, we’ll go tie up those thieves at the cave entrance and bring them in as well.”

“Alright, go ahead.” Jiang Beiran nodded his head.

Watching Liu Zijin and the other girls leave together, the young leader, who had his temper worn out, spoke up, saying, “If I tell you where I learned this formation from, would you let me go?”

“No. I’m not interested in the kind of formation that can’t even trap me,” Jiang Beiran replied.

“That’s just my incompetence in learning the craft! This formation is called the Mind-Controlling Formation of Small Multiples of Six. If it is set up fully, even a Mystic King will be trapped if he walks in!” the leader of the thieves said.

“Oh.”

“It’s true! That’s what it says in the book! It’s just that no one taught me and I did not learn it well, otherwise, you definitely wouldn’t have been able to walk out.”

“Book?” Jiang Beiran asked.

Seeing that Jiang Beiran finally appeared to be interested, the young leader nodded repeatedly and said, “Yes! I dug it up when I used to raid tombs! It’s very valuable! As long as you’re willing to let me go, I’ll give you that book!”

“Not interested.”

At the moment, the five junior Sisters walked back in and bowed at Jiang Beiran. “Brother, all the thieves have been tied up.”

“Okay, then let’s go,” Jiang Beiran said as he stood up.

“Hey! Don’t! The formations in that book are really powerful! If you don’t believe me, I’ll show you! It’s in the mountain at the back. It’s real!!!”

Chapter 32: Do People in the Demonic Cult Consume Children Every Meal

‘This method really works every time...’

Jiang Beiran originally just wanted to find out whether his skills in formations were taught by his mentor or if the man was self-taught. He had not expected

that the young man would not only say that he had learned it from a book but also reveal that he had hidden the book in the mountain behind.

'It's true that the nature of human beings is to rebel,' Jiang Beiran thought.

As the young leader howled forlornly, Liu Zijin came up to Jiang Beiran's side and asked in a whisper, "Brother, what should we do next? Escort them to the authorities?"

"No need to go to such lengths. Just go directly to Zebei Town, which is the closest, to report to the officials and bring the constable here," Jiang Beiran said.

"Yes!"

Liu Zijin answered and was about to leave when Jiang Beiran suddenly called out to her and asked, "Do you know where Zebei Town is?"

"Yep. I took note of it on the way here," Liu Zijin said as she nodded her head.

"Okay, then get going quickly."

Looking at Liu Zijin's figure as it quickly disappeared into the darkness, Jiang Beiran couldn't help but feel puzzled.

'This girl obviously has a pretty good memory. How come she always forgets the things I've taught her...? It's also strange.'

Lamenting, Jiang Beiran looked to the remaining Sisters and said, "You guys stay here to watch over the thieves. I'll be back soon."

Having said this, Jiang Beiran then turned and went back to the cave.

The four Sisters answered Jiang Beiran with a "yes" as he walked away, but they did not understand what the senior Brother was going to do.

Then, not long after that, there was a sudden burst of cries coming from inside the cave. Only then did the four Sisters suddenly realize what he was up to!

'The children!'

Just now, they were all caught up in the sense of accomplishment they felt from catching the thieves for the first time. They had completely forgotten to ask the thieves where they had hidden the children.

Thinking of this, the four looked at each other for a while and their cheeks reddened. The reason why Brother had not mentioned this at all just now was probably that he was waiting for them to realize it, yet they hadn't at all.

'We are going to be scolded again...' The four of them sighed in their hearts at the same time.

Bringing out all the children hidden in the vaults, Jiang Beiran gave a sweeping glance over the four Sisters with their heads bowed and said, "Next time, think about what you haven't done before you enjoy yourselves."

"Yes..." the four Sisters answered at the same time.

"Dumb!"

"Waa..." the four Sisters pressed their heads even lower upon hearing this.

While Jiang Beiran was lecturing the four Sisters, the young leader suddenly shouted, "How do you know where the children are kept!?"

"Why should I tell you?" Jiang Beiran asked as he gave the young leader a look.

"I..."

The young leader was confused. Generally, when people heard this kind of question, shouldn't they be loudly bragging about how clever they were? About how this kind of trivial matter would never be difficult for them?

'But why does this person always act otherwise!?' the leader asked himself.

This time Jiang Beiran rescued nine children from the vaults. None of them were hurt, and at the moment they were crying hard for their mothers.

This made the four Sisters' hearts ache for them. The Sisters quickly squatted down, pulling out handkerchiefs to wipe away the tears for the children.

"Hey, the person in charge, are you not curious about where I sold the other children?" the leader asked.

Seeing Jiang Beiran standing there with no expression, the young leader could not help but speak again.

“Sold?” Jiang Beiran laughed lightly, “You should use the word offer, right?”

The young leader was stunned to hear this and asked, “Who the hell are you!?”

“Wang Laowu (Old Five) of the Sect of Returning Hearts,” Jiang Beiran said, putting his hands together in a salute.

“Wang Laowu of the Sect of Returning Hearts? What a man. Do you really know everything?” the man said.

“I’m not omniscient, I just happen to know this,” Jiang Beiran replied.

‘It’s clearly just a very common sentence... but why does it sound so deep?’ the young leader and the four Sisters all thought at the same time.

“So, you know that I work for the Temple of the Asura, yet you still want to get involved in this mess?”

‘So, it’s the Temple of the Asura...’ Jiang Beiran thought.

Actually, when he found out that the leader of the group of human traffickers was a cultivator, Jiang Beiran realized that this matter was not a simple one.

It was common sense that even a cultivator of the second level of the Qi Refining Period was a worshipped being among ordinary people. There was absolutely no need to do things like child trafficking to make money.

So, Jiang Beiran decided to cheat the leader. Unexpectedly, he had really managed to get something out of the man.

Having gotten the answer he wanted, Jiang Beiran smiled mysteriously at the young leader and stopped talking.

This made the young leader’s gaze more and more complicated. He could not help but think in his heart, ‘This Wang Laowu of the Sect of Returning Hearts must be very powerful. He isn’t even worried about offending the Temple of the Asura. How is it that I’ve never heard this person’s name before?’

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

[Option One: Continue to investigate the matter of the Temple of the Asura in depth. Completion reward: Ghost Seal of the Tiangang Star (Black Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Two: Tell the constable about the Temple of the Asura. Completion reward: Heaven-Splitting Nail (Yellow Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Three: Tell the Sect about the Temple of the Asura. Completion reward: Random special attribute point +1]

‘Special attribute point! Nice, good profit,’ Jiang Beiran thought.

Jiang Beiran called this kind of option that would reward him special attribute points a hidden task. Sometimes if the system determined that the incident had been triggered on his own accord, it would provide such an option.

And in terms of difficulty, the options that rewarded special attribute points were the same as the ones that rewarded basic attribute points, so it was quite a good deal.

Decisively choosing Option Three, Jiang Beiran smiled in satisfaction.

At the moment, Fang Qiuyao quietly came up next to Jiang Beiran and asked, “Brother, what is the Temple of the Asura?”

“A demonic cult,” he replied.

Hearing the words ‘demonic cult,’ Fang Qiuyao’s face suddenly changed and she bit her lip. “Those children were sent to the demonic cult!? Then won’t they end up...?”

Jiang Beiran shook his head after listening and said, “In your imagination, do the members of the demonic cult have small children for every meal of the day regularly?”

“Don’t they? Otherwise, why would they capture children?” Fang Qiuyao asked.

“To cultivate the next generation, of course. Children of an ordinary family would generally refuse to join a demonic cult, so they capture some by themselves,” he explained.

“Eh?” Fang Qiuyao was stunned. She hadn’t thought of this at all.

“You would naturally come to slowly understand this after spending some time in the outside world. Many things are not as simple as you think. Things in the world aren’t easily categorized into good and evil,” Jiang Beiran told her.

“Qiuyao understands.” Fang Qiuyao joined her hand in a salute after hearing this.

After hearing her say that, Jiang Beiran replied, “You say so, but do you truly understand what I said? Go think about it slowly.” After saying this, he let out a loud laugh.

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Agility +1]

Fang Qiuyao gritted her silver teeth and snorted. “Right! I’m just not smart!”

“Well, it’s good that you have this self-awareness,” Jiang Beiran agreed with a satisfied expression.

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Cooking +1]

‘It’s too easy to use this girl to brush up on my points...’ Jiang Beiran thought.

In just a few lines of dialogue, Jiang Beiran had triggered the options twice. In short, he could not praise her, or he would be dealt an Earth Grade mission immediately.

“Things in the world aren’t easily categorized into good and evil... Eh, Brother Laowu, you’ve really seen a lot in life.” At that moment, the young leader suddenly sighed very emotionally. “I wonder if you would like to hear me tell a story, Brother Laowu?”

Jiang Beiran shook his head. “Not interested. You better save it for the constable’s office,” he said.

“You! I don’t care, I’m going to tell it!”

I Just Won’t Play By The Book - Chapter 33 - Sometimes Constables Are Not Very Different From Gangsters

Chapter 33: Sometimes Constables Are Not Very Different From Gangsters

Eventually, Jiang Beiran was forced to listen to the young leader finish telling his story. Anyway, the core of it was to play the misery card, whereby he claimed that he too had once had a dream of becoming a famous hero. However, eventually, reality wore away his edges, and he began to work hard for a living, and finally without realizing it... He became who he was now.

But Jiang Beiran didn't feel much after listening to the ending. After all, the level of misery in the young leader's story couldn't even be compared to the ones told by the contestants in talent shows that he heard before crossing over. There was nothing in it to make him tear up at all.

But just as Jiang Beiran was about to yawn out of boredom, a series of sobs and whimpers suddenly came from right next to him.

Turning his head, he saw that Fang Qiuyao had been driven to tears, crying almost more forlornly than the children.

[Option One: Pass your handkerchief to Fang Qiuyao. Completion reward: Meteoric Demon Resolution (Earth Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Two: Comfort Fang Qiuyao softly. Completion reward: Hundred Booms of Royal Mantra (Black Grade High Tier)]

[Option Three: "Only fools and idiots believe in such stories. Which one are you?" Completion reward: Random basic skill point +1]

Decisively choosing Option Three which best fit Jiang Beiran's heart, he hit Fang Qiuyao's straw hat and said, "Only fools and idiots believe in such stories. Which one are you?"

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Calligraphy +1]

"I..." Fang Qiuyao wiped her tears away and thought for a while before answering, "Is there any difference between these two options?"

"Yeah. Idiot sounds slightly better," Jiang Beiran answered.

"You! Hmph!" Fang Qiuyao turned her head, and a large part of the sadness that had just welled up inside her disappeared.

At this point, the young leader shouted defiantly, "I didn't lie. I was really forced to go down this road. If I am given another chance, I will definitely be a good person."

"Well, you can save these words for them." Jiang Beiran finished speaking and pointed behind him.

Looking back in the direction Jiang Beiran pointed, the young leader saw a group of constables running quickly towards them.

"Eh, a word of advice before I go. The Temple of the Asura is not something to be messed with," the leader of the thieves said.

"Oh." Jiang Beiran nodded towards him.

"Hahaha. I really can't understand you, but, surprisingly, I don't hate you much. Wang Laowu of the Sect of Returning Hearts, I'll see you around!"

As soon as the young leader finished speaking, dozens of constables were already standing in front of him.

"Sheriff Lin, these are the thieves," Liu Zijin said, pointing to a group of tied-up thieves on the ground.

The young man in white first joined his hands in a salute towards Liu Zijin, then turned around and took out the brass belt plate identifying him as a constable to show the crowd. Finally, he pulled out a card in front of the young leader and gave it a shake. "Do you see this clearly? According to this order for their arrest, take all of them away!"

"Yes!"

After the process was completed, a group of constables went forward to grab one thief in each hand and dragged them away.

After taking a headcount of the children present, Sheriff Lin once again joined his hands in a salute towards Liu Zijin and said, "The Sect of Returning Hearts really lives up to its name. We have been searching for this group of thieves for a long time, but we had not received any news about them until today. Now, we have finally brought them to justice, and it's all thanks to you, Miss Liu."

“Sheriff Lin, you flatter me. The one you should thank for this matter is...” Liu Zijin said as she looked back, but found that the senior Brother had disappeared.

Looking at Liu Zijin’s somewhat confused eyes, Fang Qiuyao also realized that something was not right.

‘Eh? Where has that senior Brother of mine gone? How could an entire person just disappear? He was clearly standing here just now.’

Realizing that the senior Brother was reluctant to show himself, Liu Zijin put it another way and said, “My Sisters. They are the ones who deserve the main credit for catching this group of thieves.”

“Hahaha. All of you deserve to be thanked, all of you. But now we have to hurry back to deliver the prisoners. If we are late the legal advisor will say that we’ve neglected our duties,” the Sheriff said.

Replying with a single ‘alright,’ the five Sisters followed Sheriff Lin and escorted the thieves to Zebei Town.

Everything that followed was a matter of course. They arrived at the magistrate’s office, took statements, and collected the reward. And thus, Liu Zijin the others boosted the reputation of the Sect of Returning Hearts in this area once more.

When the thieves were all escorted into the jail, Sheriff Lin jogged over to Liu Zijin and said, “This time you all have removed a great evil for Jifu Village. You also relieved us of our burden. In order to show our gratitude, we have arranged for dinner at the Qingfeng Inn for all you ladies of the Sect of Returning Hearts. We hope that you will accept the invitation.”

Liu Zijin was just about to agree when Fang Qiuyao stepped forward and said, “I’m really sorry, Sheriff Lin. The Sect gave us a time limit when we left, and now there is only half a day left, so we won’t be eating with you this time. Let’s meet next time if we have the chance.”

Having said that, she dragged Liu Zijin away and left the magistrate’s court.

Without even an opportunity to stop them, Sheriff Lin could only watch the five female cultivators of the Sect of Returning Hearts disappear in front of him.

“Eh! Why have they left?” a constable asked as he came up behind Sheriff Lin.

“Yes, it is too fast. I didn’t even see their faces,” someone else replied.

“Yeah, too bad. They covered half of their faces, but just from their eyes... Tsk, I dare bet a month of alcohol money that even Qin Wanwan of the Tianyu House is not as attractive as they are.”

“Yeah, they have really attractive bodies... Really...”

“Enough!” At this point, Sheriff Lin bellowed, “All of you are like gangsters. Of course you would scare people away, no? All of you, go and run laps in the backyard!”

“Yes...” several constables immediately responded.

After the constables lined up to go back to the court, Sheriff Lin finally sighed regretfully. Yesterday when he first saw Liu Zijin, he was awestruck and determined that she was definitely the best-looking woman he had ever seen in his life based on the small half of her face outside the veil.

After that, when he was doing his job, he also tried to show his best side, wanting to leave a good impression on her, but unfortunately... he was just about to make a move when she had run away.

“Alas...” With another sigh, Sheriff Lin followed the others and walked back to the magistrate’s court, wishing in his heart that he could see Miss Liu again in his dreams.

At that moment, Liu Zijin had been dragged away by Fang Qiuyao and they were two streets away. Full of doubts, she asked, “Qiuyao, why are you in such a hurry? I still wanted to ask Sheriff Lin in more detail about how they usually do their job so that we can handle these kinds of incidents again in the future.”

“Sister Zijin, don’t blame me. It’s Brother who asked me to do so,” she replied.

“Brother Jiang?” Liu Zijin asked, puzzled. “Is he back yet?”

“I’ve been behind you guys this whole time.” At that moment Jiang Beiran’s voice suddenly sounded, startling Liu Zijin.

“Let me teach you all one more thing. Don’t get too involved with the constables except for the purpose of the case itself. They’re not much better than those thieves.”

“Eh?” Liu Zijin was a bit stunned after hearing that. In her mind, constables were noble beings that kept the strong in check, supported the weak, and protected the people. How could they be the same as the thieves?

Looking at the five stunned little faces, Jiang Beiran continued, saying, “You will slowly understand in the future. In any case, just listen to my words.”

“Yes...” The five Sisters nodded at the same time. Although they still did not understand how constables could be the same as the thieves, they chose to believe in the senior Brother.

Having left the small town, Jiang Beiran spread out the map to take a look at it and said, “Today we will not stay at an inn. Instead, we will camp outside. This is also a kind of exercise for you.”

“Yes.” All five Sisters had no objection.

Chapter 34: Brother Was Clearly So Capable

After finding an open space with flat terrain, Jiang Beiran took out the materials from the storage ring and asked the Sisters to set up camp by themselves.

It was the first time any of the five girls slept out in the wilderness, and they were inevitably a little excited. Yu Guishui looked at the huge canvas on the ground and said to the others, “Why don’t we set up a bigger tent? We can sleep together at night.”

“Sure, sure,” Fang Qiuyao immediately responded.

After hearing this, Liu Zijin also nodded in agreement.

However, after an hour had passed, Jiang Beiran was already making a fire and preparing to cook a meal, and the five Sisters were still struggling over how to set up the tent.

“Weird... I clearly remember that this is how the tent is set up. Why can’t it stay up?” Yu Guizhui held a thick round log, perplexed.

“How about... asking Brother?” Yu Guimiao instinctively looked over towards Jiang Beiran.

“But...” Yu Guizhui was a bit reluctant to speak.

Along the way, the five Sisters had figured out the temper of the senior Brother for a bit. That was, regarding something that the senior Brother had not taken the initiative to help them with, if they went over to ask him, they would be scolded.

At that point, Liu Zijin spoke up. “If we go on like this, I’m afraid that we will really have to sleep on the floor at night. I will go and ask Brother.”

“No!” Yu Guishui suddenly shouted, “This is too unfair to you, Sister Zijin. We can’t always hide behind you. Let me go this time.”

“It’s okay. Brother is actually not as harsh as you think, I...”

“No, I have to go this time,” Yu Guishui said and went walking towards Jiang Beiran.

“Hey!”

Liu Zijin was just about to stop her when Yu Guizhui and Yu Guimiao came up and each grabbed one of her arms, saying, “Let our sister go this time, Sister Zijin. You just wait here.”

“It... It’s fine then.” Liu Zijin could only sit down again with a heart full of disappointment after she finished speaking.

“Snap!”

Breaking a branch and throwing it into the fire, after sensing that Yu Guishui had walked over, Jiang Beiran asked without raising his head, “Before descending the mountain, didn’t your Etiquette Protector teach you how to pitch the tent?”

“Yes... yes,” Yu Guishui replied with her head low.

Although Jiang Beiran’s tone was not very harsh, for Yu Guishui, who had grown up with compliments, this kind of critical question alone was enough to make her feel ashamed of herself. This was why she had been afraid to ask him questions to his face.

“Tell me, what do you not understand?” he asked.

“Those copper components are so fragmented that we really have some trouble telling which ones should be put together,” she said.

“Alright, then. I’ll teach you all again.” Jiang Beiran stood up and walked towards their tent.

Actually, Jiang Beiran had expected that they wouldn’t be able to set up the tent by themselves because the tents in this world were really complicated. They were completely different from the modern tents that could be set up with two poles supporting each other. The tents here had 102 pieces of copper components alone, and there were various ways to combine them, so it was really not easy to set up.

Walking up to Liu Zijin and the others, Jiang Beiran picked up one of the pegs and socket components and carefully explained them to the five Sisters. He then guided them in setting up a large part of the tent.

“Thanks a lot, Brother.”

Looking at their big tent getting set up in the blink of an eye, the five Sisters joyfully said thank you to Jiang Beiran.

At night, after eating and practicing, Jiang Beiran sat in front of the campfire and said to the Sisters, “Go to sleep. I’ll keep watch for you all.”

After hearing this, the five Sisters bowed to Jiang Beiran and said, “Thank you, Brother. Good night.”

They then eagerly went into the tent.

Listening to the laughter coming from inside the tent, Jiang Beiran couldn’t help but smile and shake his head. They didn’t look like they had come out for a trial; more like for an autumn trip.

‘But based on their age, these five are indeed just in the high school years. It’s normal to be naive.’

But by 1:00 am the banter in the tent still didn’t stop, so Jiang Beiran had to stand up and walk to the tent. He said, “It’s late, get some rest. We still have quite a journey tomorrow.”

“Yes!” came the reply from the five Sisters in the tent in unison.

Nodding in satisfaction, Jiang Beiran sat down again on the bench and added some firewood to the campfire. He continued to study more possible ways to improve the Suit of Blending In.

After ten minutes, Yu Guishui, who had been tossing and turning in the tent for a while, whispered, “I can’t sleep!”

“Me too!” Yu Guizhui was the first to respond.

Then the other three girls also said they couldn’t sleep at all.

“Then let’s talk for a while more, shall we?” Yu Guishui suggested.

“But Brother will scold us, no?” Yu Guimiao responded in a small voice.

“Why don’t we snuggle closer and talk in a low voice so that Brother can’t hear us?”

“Good idea!”

Yu Guishui’s proposal was immediately accepted by all the girls, and soon the five of them were face-to-face in a circle.

“That should be fine, right?”

The five Sisters looked at each other and smiled after they finished saying so. Yu Guimiao twisted her head to look at the senior Brother’s shadow on the tent, and after finding that he didn’t move, she said, “Then since Brother can’t hear us, why don’t we just talk about him?”

“Sure!” Yu Guizhui was the first to agree and began speaking about him directly. “Do you guys think that it was Brother who broke that formation yesterday or not?”

Yu Guishui immediately said after hearing that, “No way. Surely no one really believed what Brother said about that formation disintegrating by itself, right?”

“I didn’t!” Yu Guizhui immediately retorted, “I just want to make sure that everyone is thinking the same thing as me.”

“Shh! keep your voice down.” The four girls immediately made a gesture of silence at Yu Guizhui because of her overly excited tone.

“Oh, oh.” Yu Guizhui nodded hastily, then asked, “How do you think Brother broke the formation? I’ve heard Father say that it’s much harder to break a formation after entering it than when you are outside it.”

“Yes, and the formation is so powerful, it didn’t take long for me to feel dizzy.”

Fang Qiuyao immediately continued after hearing that, saying, “Me too. I wonder how the formation works. The more I walked, the dizzier I got, and I felt a wave of panic in my heart as well.”

Yu Guimiao nodded. “Yesterday I was really scared. If Brother wasn’t there, I’m afraid that we would have fallen into the hands of those thieves by now, right?”

“Yes. So, it begs the question, how exactly did Brother break that formation? I remember that Brother is a disciple of the Order of Blue Heart, right? Isn’t it the Order of Starry Arrangements that teaches about formations? And…” Yu Guizhui suddenly trailed off for a bit. “Brother seems to really know a lot. Did you all realize that the straw hats and shoes that Brother prepared for us are also very special? It’s my first time on the streets with no one noticing me.”

“We realized it long ago,” the other four girls replied at the same time.

“Not only that.” Fang Qiuyao wanted to talk about the situation that night where the senior Brother had saved her, but after thinking about it, she didn’t say anything about it. Instead, she said, “I think there’s an 80 percent chance that the pills are also made by Brother himself. Ordinary pills don’t have that fragrance.”

Yu Guishui heard her. She looked at Fang Qiuyao and said, “Speaking of fragrance, the Honey of Various Flowers brewed by Brother is really fragrant. These two days I’ve grown a little reluctant to take off the scorched cloth.”

Then the five Sisters had a lively discussion again, talking about Jiang Beiran’s various actions over the past two days.

Finally, Yu Guimiao concluded, lamenting, “Brother is clearly so capable, so why have we never heard of him for so long after joining the sect?”

After hearing this, Yu Guizhui first secretly glanced at Jiang Beiran's shadow on the tent before whispering, "Why don't... we go and ask him directly?"

Chapter 35: Go Over and Take a Look When You See Injustice

"Crackle!"

A breeze blew by and two sparks exploded in the campfire, startling Liu Zijin, who had just lifted the curtain and stepped out of the tent.

"Why aren't you sleeping yet?" Jiang Beiran asked as he put down the straw hat in his hand and turned around.

Liu Zijin, who had already prepared what she was going to say while inside, replied, "I really can't sleep, so I thought to come out to keep watch with you, Brother, for a while. I'm considering it practice for the future."

As soon as Liu Zijin said this, three options popped up in front of Jiang Beiran's eyes.

[Option One: "Well, are you hungry? Do you want to have a snack?"
Completion reward: Yangming Divine Incantation (Earth Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Two: Take out a short stool for Liu Zijin to sit beside. Completion reward: Technique of the Five Spirits and Ghosts (Black Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Three: "Since it's practice, then you should practice getting used to being alone first. It just so happens that I have something to do, so I'll leave you to it." Completion reward: Random basic attribute point +1]

Quickly choosing Option Three, Jiang Beiran put the straw hat into the storage ring, then stood up and said to Liu Zijin, "Since it's practice, then you should practice getting used to being alone first. It just so happens that I have something to do, so I'll leave you to it."

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Physique +1]

"Eh...?"

Before Liu Zijin could react, she found that Jiang Beiran had already disappeared into the night.

'It seems that Brother really dislikes me...'

Sighing, Liu Zijin sat down on the small chair where Jiang Beiran had been sitting just now, with some mixed feelings in her heart. She was a little upset, but it seemed that she also kind of liked how the senior Brother was so cold.

Not long after, the tent curtain lifted again and the three Sisters of the Yu family poked their heads out in turn and asked:

"Where is Brother?"

"Went back to his tent?"

"Did you get lectured, Sister Zijin?"

Shaking her head, Liu Zijin turned back and said, "Brother said he happened to have something to do and left me alone to keep watch."

"I see..." The three Sisters sighed regretfully at the same time. "Brother is really mysterious."

...

Meanwhile, Jiang Beiran had come to a bit of woods. Just now when he had passed by, he noticed a few good medicinal herbs there. He had originally thought about coming back to pick them some other time, but now he had the opportunity.

He carefully picked a crow-dipper and put it away, and when he got up to look for the next herb Jiang Beiran could not help but feel a pang of emotion inside.

In the past, when he took those new junior Brothers out for the trial, he usually had to find the opportunity to leave the team every day to try and trigger the options. However, this time with these five Sisters, he did not have any trouble with that. He could trigger the options every two or three sentences, and many of them were at least of Earth Grade. Simply put, it could be considered a very dangerous situation.

This also made him more and more determined to stay away from beautiful Sisters, because he believed that were there any male disciples in the team this time, he would definitely have taken up several Yellow Grade, or even Black Grade quests by now.

Two hours later, having coaxed Fang Qiuyao and the rest back into the tent, Liu Zijin stared at the campfire and yawned. She was thinking about how keeping watch at night was not an easy job, as it was really tiring and boring.

“Go back to sleep if you are sleepy. I’ll keep watch for the rest of the night.”

Seeing the senior Brother who had suddenly appeared in front of her, Liu Zijin blinked and was stunned for a moment before saying, “Brother, you’re back? Are you done?”

“Yep.” Jiang Beiran nodded his head.

“Then I’ll trouble you with keeping watch, Brother,” Liu Zijin said as she stood up and walked to the tent, lifting the curtain. However, just before she walked in, she couldn’t help but turn back and shout, “Brother.”

“Speak,” Jiang Beiran answered without looking back.

“No... it’s nothing. Good night, Brother.”

“Mhmm, good night.”

...

At 7:45 in the morning, Jiang Beiran extinguished the campfire, then woke the Sisters up. It must be said that youngsters were energetic. Even though the five Sisters stayed up late yesterday, they still got up as soon as they were woken up, and all of them were glowing and radiant.

After packing up the tent, the group of six set out again on the journey back to the Sect.

“Clang! Clang!”

“Sister, you go first!”

“Hmph! None of you can run away today!”

...

Just as they walked into a stretch of woods, Jiang Beiran suddenly heard sounds of fighting not far off.

Liu Zijin and the girls naturally heard it too but did not make any move, because they had encountered such a situation when they went to Jifu Village. At that time, their senior Brother had not had any intention of helping and had quickly taken a detour.

So, this time they just looked towards the place where the fighting sounds were coming from.

“Let’s go over and take a look,” Jiang Beiran said.

“Eh!?” The five Sisters froze in unison and looked at their senior Brother with an incredulous expression. However, they found that Jiang Beiran had already rushed off in the direction of the fighting noises.

The five looked at each other while lamenting in their hearts that the sun had apparently risen in the west. They then hurried after him.

The reason why Jiang Beiran had suddenly decided to meddle in this kind of irrelevant matter was entirely because two options appeared in front of him when he heard the noises.

[Option One: Leave. Completion reward: Three Major Swamp Gas (Black Grade Low Tier)]

[Option Two: Track the fighting noises and go over to help. Completion reward: Random basic attribute point +1]

The fighting noises were not far from Jiang Beiran and his group. In a flash, they reached the place and saw two groups of people already fighting each other.

Using his mental power to investigate, Jiang Beiran found that the most powerful one in the two groups was only at the third level of the Qi Refining Period, so he said to Liu Zijin and the other girls, “Go separate them. I’ll stand guard for you all.”

“Yes!” the five of them answered then drew their swords at the same time and entered the crowd.

“Who are you!?” a burly man dressed in a grayish-white shirt with a blue turban shouted.

“Liu Zijin, Disciple of the Sect of Returning Hearts!” Liu Zijin replied while parrying a knife with golden silk and large rings, standing guard in front of an injured girl.

“This has nothing to do with your Sect of Returning Hearts, so don’t come and meddle in our business!” the burly man said as he struck at Liu Zijin with a stick. However, Fang Qiuyao easily parried it with a move known as “Floating Lights and Fleeting Shadows.”

Seeing that the newcomers were fairly capable, the burly man could only shout, “Liu Zijin of the Sect of Returning Hearts, is it. Very well, there’s beef between us now. Just you wait!” After saying that, he swept across with his long stick, took a step back, and said, “Brothers, retreat!”

“Yes,” several other people answered and withdrew from the battle. They followed the burly man deeper into the woods.

When the figures of the burly man’s group had completely disappeared, a man in a green shirt who was among the people they had saved bowed to Liu Zijin and said, “I am Gu Qingyue of the Sect of Skies and Clouds. Thank you for your help in this time of crisis. We are deeply grateful for your kindness.”

Then several other people also put away their weapons and thanked Liu Zijin.

Just when Liu Zijin was about to return the salute, she suddenly heard a ‘clang’ sound from behind and looked back in shock and confusion.

“This is called a ‘dart of looking back.’ Next time, when the enemy has retreated, keep an eye out. They may not really have left.” Jiang Beiran put his sword down after he finished speaking, bent down, and picked up a four-pronged dart with two pointed ends and a bulge in the middle. He handed it to Liu Zijin and said, “It’s a nail dart. You can keep it as a souvenir.”

Chapter 36: Bro, You Are Following the Template to Becoming a Protagonist

“Thank you, Brother.”

After taking the nail dart that Jiang Beiran handed to her, Liu Zijin still felt some remaining fear. She thought about how if it wasn’t for Brother blocking the dart for her, it would probably have pierced through her chest.

Next to her, Gu Qingyue saw Jiang Beiran, who had suddenly appeared and blocked the sneak attack. Gu Qingyue hurriedly joined his hands together in a salute again and said, “Good skill! I haven’t asked you your name yet, Brother.”

Jiang Beiran returned the salute and responded, “My last name is Wang, and my name is Laowu.”

“So you are Brother Laowu. My name is Gu Qingyue of the Sect of Skies and Clouds. I was attacked by thieves this time and could only escape thanks to…”

“Polite words can be saved for later. Your companion is injured,” Jiang Beiran said as he looked at the girl whose chest was oozing blood.

Just now, Jiang Beiran had watched from the side as the groups fought. He saw that this girl was only wounded because she was helping Gu Qingyue block the sword, and even after being wounded, she still stood steadfastly in front of him. Jiang Beiran did not believe that there wasn’t anything between the two.

The girl saw Jiang Beiran’s gaze and waved her hand. She said, “It’s only a superficial wound. It’s not a problem.”

“Miss, are you also a disciple of the Sect of Skies and Clouds?” Jiang Beiran asked with a smile.

“Yes. I am Tang Tingshuang of the Sect of Skies and Clouds. It’s an honor to meet you, my savior,” she replied.

“No, I’m just lending you all a helping hand. You shouldn’t call me a savior.” After saying this, Jiang Beiran continued as if he had suddenly remembered something, saying, “I have always heard that the Sect of Skies and Clouds’ Lanling Internal Cultivation Method has a first-class effect when curing injuries. I wonder if you can let me witness it, Miss?”

Tang Tingshuang was momentarily stunned, but quickly replied, “I am not proficient in the craft and have not mastered the Lanling Internal Cultivation Method to perfection, so I would rather not embarrass myself.”

“Oh!” Jiang Beiran suddenly slapped his head and laughed, saying, “Look at my poor memory. Lanling Internal Cultivation Method is not a signature of Sect of Skies and Clouds, but of the Sect of Light and Sky.”

Once the words had left his mouth, the atmosphere was suddenly frozen. The sisters, who had been planning to take out healing medicine to bring to the other party, took a step backward and gathered behind Jiang Beiran.

Hearing this, they naturally all understood what was going on. Who would remember their sect’s signature technique wrong?

Tang Tingshuang even felt herself going numb. How would she have known that this harmless-looking hero who had just saved them would set up a trap for her?

Seeing several of their saviors begin to look at them with hostile eyes, Gu Qingyue hurriedly joined his hands in a salute and said, “Misunderstanding. It’s really a misunderstanding. The six of us are indeed not disciples of the Sect of Skies and Clouds. It’s just that when we are outside, sometimes...”

“Hey, no need to explain to me.” Jiang Beiran waved his hand and said, “I can understand it all. I just want to teach my sisters a lesson. Don’t assume that when you save someone outside, they will tell you everything without reservation.”

Jiang Beiran’s words were calm and light, but Gu Qingyue felt a heavy slap to his face.

It was true that hiding one’s real name when traveling outside was something that many cultivators did, but hiding it from the people who had just saved their lives was rather rude.

“I... I...” With a red face, Gu Qingyue stuttered for quite some time, but somehow, he just couldn’t speak out the second half of the sentence.

But Jiang Beiran did not care at all. He joined his hands in a salute toward Gu Qingyue and said, “Brother Gu, you need not do so. We are just casual acquaintances. Seeing that you are not seriously hurt, we will leave first. Goodbye.”

Jiang Beiran gave another salute after he finished speaking and turned to leave with his five sisters.

“Wait, Brother Wang!” Gu Qingyue suddenly shouted at that moment.

“Is there anything else, Brother Gu?” Jiang Beiran asked as he turned back around.

“My real name is Li Fucheng. I am a disciple of the Church of Blood Inferno... No, I’m the son of the leader of the Church of Blood Inferno,” he replied.

“Oh boy!?! A person from a demonic cult! Even more, the son of the cult leader!?! What are the chances!”

Jiang Beiran was shocked. He had heard his teacher mention the name of the Church of Blood Inferno before. It was a rather famous demonic cult in the Huainan region, and the Ghost Knife of Blood Flame they practiced could be said to alarm the locals at the very mention of it.

But the Land of the Black Dragon was really too big, and there was no magical artifact to allow real-time transmission of information. Because of this, Jiang Beiran had only heard of the Church of Blood Inferno far away in the Huainan region once or twice, and he had not had the opportunity to find out about them in-depth.

Hearing Li Fucheng suddenly shouted out his true identity, several people behind him hurriedly said, “Sir!”

“It’s fine!” Li Fucheng waved his hand at the few people behind him and said, “Brother Wang is right. They have saved our lives, yet we still deceived them. This is not the way of chivalry.”

“But...” Tang Tingshuang still wanted to stop him, but after seeing the determined look in Li Fucheng’s eyes, she did not say anything.

While those on Li Fucheng’s side had erupted, Jiang Beiran’s five sisters were confused.

“Brother, what is the Church of Blood Inferno?” the three sisters of the Yu family, who would ask about whatever they did not understand, asked together.

“I’ve also just overheard the name before. It should be a demonic cult over in Huainan,” Jiang Beiran explained.

“Demonic cult!?” the five sisters exclaimed in unison. This was the first time they had come face to face with people from a demonic cult.

After the shock, the three sisters of the Yu family one by one asked again in a small voice.

“Didn’t they say that people in demonic cults have three eyes?”

“And a mouthful of sharp teeth!”

“And with such a long tongue!”

Looking at Yu Guimiao trying to stretch her arms out, Jiang Beiran could not help but laugh. “That’s just folklore. People in the demonic cults are also human. They don’t have three heads and six arms.”

As the discussions on both sides slowly died down, Li Fucheng stepped forward toward Jiang Beiran once again, joining his hands together in a salute and said, “Brother Wang, I hope you can now understand why I find it difficult to announce my background.”

“Naturally I understand, but I wonder why you have come to the Rivernorth region under an alias, Brother Li? Of course, if it’s not convenient for you to say, just pretend I didn’t ask.”

“Alas...” Li Fucheng sighed after hearing this, then said, “To be honest, Brother Wang, I also face a lot of difficulties.”

It seemed that there were very few people for him to talk to. After his sigh, Li Fucheng became very talkative.

“As the son of the leader of the Church of Blood Inferno, everyone from the top to the bottom of the church has high hopes for me. But when I was 13 and finally about to start learning the Internal Cultivation Methods of the sect, I was found to have a body of weak Yang. Not only was I unable to practice techniques in the supreme book of the church, but also even for ordinary martial arts techniques, I require several times the amount of time others spend on practicing to learn.

“After that, Father became more and more disappointed in me, and my two elder brothers also began to gradually alienate me. Several younger brothers

even ridiculed me for being a useless idiot in front of the church congregation. I... Alas..."

At this point, Li Fucheng sighed long and hard, his face full of heartache.

At this time, Tang Tingshuang stepped forward to hold Li Fucheng's hand and said, "No, sir. You are already the most capable in Tingshuang's eyes. This journey, we will definitely be able to find suitable cultivation methods for you, sir."

Jiang Beiran heard this and almost could not help but open his mouth wide.

He had been born into a large family but found himself a natural idiot. He was a disappointment to his father, disliked by his elder brothers, and mocked by his younger brothers. However, he had a woman by his side that was willing to sacrifice herself to block a sword for him and who was providing mutual support.

"It is really the template to become a protagonist!"

Chapter 37: I Feel That You Being a Useless Idiot Is Not the Reason Why Your Dad Dislikes You

'Could this be the reason why the system asked me to come and help? This Li Fucheng has a protagonist template that could help me somewhere in the future?' Jiang Beiran thought to himself.

After coming to such a conclusion, Jiang Beiran suddenly felt that the person in front of him looked a lot more handsome than before.

Fang Qiuyao's tears came up again after listening to Li Fucheng's story. The look in his eyes, especially when he and Tang Tingshuang looked at each other, made Fang Qiuyao feel that such love was really too wonderful.

But once she thought of the senior Brother's words about how only fools and idiots believe in such stories, Fang Qiuyao held back her tears.

Jiang Beiran naturally saw Fang Qiuyao's behavior and laughed slightly in his heart before saying to Li Fucheng, "So, Brother Li, you have come all the way here to prove yourself by building a career in a foreign land?"

After hearing this, Li Fucheng clenched his fist and nodded vigorously. "That's right! I want to impress all those people who once looked down on me!"

'Impress, sure...'

Jiang Beiran thought to himself that this person was, after all, the son of the leader of a demonic cult. Shouldn't he be making those who looked down on him pay the price instead? Why did he sound like a good student when he opened his mouth?

But Li Fucheng had just finished speaking when he suddenly became deflated. His expression fell somewhat and he said, "However, I couldn't even beat those countryside gangsters just now. How can I talk about building a career? Alas..."

Seeing Li Fucheng take the initiative to mention it, Jiang Beiran then asked, "I wonder how you got into conflict with those thieves, Brother Li?"

Hearing Jiang Beiran's question, not waiting for Li Fucheng to speak, another girl behind him said, "It was all my fault..."

But Tang Tingshuang immediately shook her and said, "Sister Ni, that was not your fault. You do not need to blame yourself."

"So... what actually happened?" Jiang Beiran asked curiously.

The girl who was addressed as Sister Ni first looked at Li Fucheng, and only after seeing the latter nod did she say to Jiang Beiran, "So, here it goes. That day, I passed by a field and found a few gangsters bullying an old farmer. I couldn't take it so I taught those two a lesson. After that, I didn't think about it again. Who knew that they had called for helpers to ambush us halfway? If it wasn't for you guys, Brother Wang, I would have really made a big mistake."

'Taught... two gangsters a lesson!?'

Jiang Beiran was confused. Were they really living up to the title of the disciple of a demonic cult by doing this!?

After ranting to himself in his heart, Jiang Beiran suddenly felt enlightened again.

'He grew up in a cult, but acts upright and righteously, and is kind and generous. He really is the like the template of a protagonist!'

Once again sure of his thoughts, Jiang Beiran stepped forward and said to Li Fucheng, "Maybe your father is not as cold as you think, Brother Li."

"Huh?" Li Fucheng's expression was dumbfounded. He was somewhat confused as to why this Brother Laowu, who had never met his father before, would suddenly say this.

Jiang Beiran looked at Li Fucheng and the five companions behind him one by one before saying, "If my guess is not wrong, this is not the first time that you all have been targeted by thieves for helping other people, right?"

"Uh..." Li Fucheng hesitated for a moment, but finally nodded, saying, "Yes."

"Then answer a question of mine. Is this the first time that you and your companions have gone on such a long trip, Brother Li?"

"Yes. We all grew up in the Church on the mountain, practicing hard every day, and we rarely go out," he replied.

"Then do you think that the reason why you were able to safely travel all the way from Huainan to Rivernorth despite all of you being first-time travelers is really that you are capable enough?"

These words struck Li Fucheng like a thunderbolt, and he suddenly understood many of the strange things he had encountered on the way.

"Third Uncle! It must be Third Uncle following us!" he said.

'Huh?'

The answer was so unexpected that it almost threw Jiang Beiran off. He had thought that Li Fucheng would first think that his father was protecting him, but never thought that a third uncle would pop up.

"And this Third Uncle is?" Jiang Beiran asked.

Li Fucheng suddenly looked up at the sky at a forty-five-degree angle after listening and said, "Third Uncle... Third Uncle is the only person in the whole Church who still treats me well."

After saying that, he let his emotions brew for a while before continuing. “Since he knew that I was a totally useless idiot in cultivation, my father soon gave up on me completely. He also distributed all the cultivation resources that originally belonged to me to my other siblings.

“But Third Uncle is always encouraging me. He not only taught me to practice every night but also gave me a lot of herbs, hoping to transform my physique. But unfortunately, I am too weak, and after learning for a long time, I still made no progress. However, not only did Third Uncle not dislike me at all, but he also searched various cultivation methods for me to let me try each of them. When I got ridiculed by the congregation, Third Uncle would also help me teach them a lesson. And, and, Third Uncle he...”

Listening to Li Fucheng speak more and more while becoming more and more excited, Jiang Beiran’s expression grew stranger and stranger. Finally, Jiang Beiran could not help but ask, “Who is this Third Uncle of yours? Why does he treat you so well?”

“Eh?” Suddenly interrupted, Li Fucheng was momentarily stunned. He then replied, “Third Uncle is my father’s brother. He watched me grow up and has always taken care of me and my mother. On that note, I also dragged my mother into this. Because I cannot cultivate my father treats her coldly as well. Alas...”

‘Hey! Wait, wait! I don’t even know where to start commenting now!’ Jiang Beiran thought.

The more Li Fucheng said the more Jiang Beiran felt that his father, the cult leader, had most likely been cheated on. He even felt that the reason Li Fucheng’s father disliked him was most likely not because he was a useless idiot...

Seeing that Li Fucheng was still going to continue reminiscing about how Third Uncle used to take care of him and his mother, three options suddenly popped up in front of Jiang Beiran’s eyes.

[Option One: Remind Li Fucheng to think carefully about why Third Uncle is so good to him. Completion reward: Maha Finger (Earth Grade Middle Tier)]

[Option Two: Silently continue to listen to him. Completion reward: Impenetrable Defense Technique (Black Grade High Tier)]

[Option Three: Go along and praise Third Uncle for being a good person.
Completion reward: Random basic skill point +1]

‘D*mn!’

Jiang Beiran, who knew he couldn’t just continue to listen, hastily selected Option Three. He interrupted Li Fucheng and said, “It sounds like this Third Uncle of yours is indeed a very good man.”

Having said that, he also looked up at the sky at a forty-five-degree angle and said, “Actually, like you, I, too, was born with a physique that cannot cultivate. I also have an uncle who has always taken care of me. Without him, I am afraid I would have died long ago.”

Then, Jiang Beiran also told touching stories revolving around this uncle of his. Basically, the core message was to express that all uncles were like this and that Li Fucheng should not think too much about it.

It wasn’t until the system prompt [Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Poisonous Magic +1] popped up that he finally felt relieved.

But before Li Fucheng reacted, Jiang Beiran’s five Sisters could not hold it in any longer. A long since tearful Fang Qiuyao said in a hoarse voice, “Bro... Brother, I did not know that you have such a hard life these years.”

At the same time, they also understood why the senior Brother was almost unknown in the sect despite being so capable. It was because he was born into a useless body and simply could not cultivate.

Looking at Fang Qiuyao’s tears that couldn’t stop flowing downward, Jiang Beiran sighed silently.

‘Fine. I guess what I’ve been teaching this whole journey is all in vain.’

Chapter 38: From Now on, Let Us All Go Back to Our Respective Orders and Not Interact Again

Even the Sisters were crying. Li Fucheng was certainly greatly moved after listening to Jiang Beiran’s life and encounters. Wiping away a handful of tears hard, Li Fucheng said with emotion, “No wonder I felt a sense of solidarity when I saw you, Brother Wang! I never thought we would have such similar encounters, I... Can you be my big brother?”

As soon as Li Fucheng got the words out, three more options popped up in front of Jiang Beiran's eyes.

[Option One: Agree. Completion reward: Royal Method of Spiritual Attachment (Black Grade High Tier)]

[Option Two: Digress. Completion reward: True Flower of the Phantom (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

[Option Three: Reject directly. Completion reward: Random basic attribute point +1]

'Not bad. Worthy of the man with the protagonist template. In two or three sentences, he triggered two dangerous options. Totally comparable to these beautiful Sisters around me.'

With no hesitation, he chose Option Three. Jiang Beiran shook his head and said, "I am not worthy of you addressing me as big brother. I've said it just now, we are just casual acquaintances and we do not have to have interactions that are too deep. Plus, let me give you some heartfelt advice; do not invest too much emotion in a person you just met, or even empty your heart's content to them. Actually, you do not even know what my real name is."

Hearing this reply from Jiang Beiran, the few people behind Li Fucheng all froze.

'No way! The atmosphere had reached such a point, and he actually refused? And it was such a cold refusal,' they thought.

However, even the Sisters, who had some understanding of Jiang Beiran, all froze, not to mention Li Fucheng's companions. Although they knew that Brother was very cold and distant most of the time, he was actually quite nice to talk to. This time they really did not expect Brother to reject the other party so forcefully.

Li Fucheng, of course, also had not expected himself to be rejected so strongly. For a while, he did not say anything, but after carefully savoring Jiang Beiran's sincere advice, he respectfully bowed and said, "Fucheng has understood."

Nodding with relief, Jiang Beiran came close to Li Fucheng's ear and said, "It is our destiny to meet. I have a suggestion for you. If you want to become stronger, you do not necessarily have to practice cultivation. The Qimen Dunjia also has great potential."

Having said this, Jiang Beiran took out the Book of Eight Palaces and Four Rivers from his storage ring and handed it to Li Fucheng. "Try reading it. You might find it enlightening."

Since he knew that the other party was likely holding the protagonist template, and the system had appointed himself to help the latter out, Jiang Beiran naturally wanted to generate good karma. After all, Jiang Beiran felt that he had probably met the young master of the demonic cult at the lowest point of the latter's life, and further down the road the young man would likely start having a series of miraculous encounters.

Not waiting for Li Fucheng to refuse, Jiang Beiran shoved the book in his arms and then turned to leave, saying simply, "See you next time, if fate wills it."

The five Sisters were still a bit confused, but they immediately turned around and followed their senior Brother.

Touching the Book of Eight Palaces and Four Rivers he held in his arms, Li Fucheng looked at the departing Jiang Beiran and lamented, "Brother Wang is really a strange man."

"He said that this is not his real name," Tang Tingshuang immediately pointed out from beside him.

"A name is just a code used to refer to someone," Li Fucheng said. He then looked at Tang Tingshuang and said, "Let's go. First, we will find a place to treat your wound."

...

"Brother, why did you come over to save the members of the demonic cult this time?"

"Brother, how did you know that they were not from the Sect of Skies and Clouds?"

"Brother, what did you give him when you left?"

Meanwhile, Jiang Beiran had just walked away about a hundred meters. After shouting, “excuse me, sir,” the three Sisters of the Yu family couldn’t wait to ask him questions one by one.

“No comment.” Jiang Beiran answered the three Sisters’ questions with two words.

“Eh, Brother, tell me. I’ll give you a back massage.”

“I’ll massage your shoulders!”

“I’ll massage your legs!”

Seeing that the three Sisters were about to fool around, Jiang Beiran said, “I’ll count to three, then I’ll deduct points from the score of whoever is still fooling around.”

“One.”

The three Sisters were defeated upon hearing this and immediately lined up neatly behind Jiang Beiran.

With a satisfied nod, Jiang Beiran led the Sisters out of the woods.

On the way back, they did not encounter any more accidents. Without making any more stops, Jiang Beiran took the five Sisters to the foot of the mountain of the Sect.

“Before going back, I want to set up an agreement with you,” he said.

Under the stone archway of the Sect of Returning Hearts, Jiang Beiran turned to look at the five Sisters and spoke.

The five Sisters stopped in unison after hearing this and looked at Jiang Beiran.

“First, you may share about what you have learned in an appropriate manner, but do not tell others what I have done.

“Second, do not recommend me to others as an Iron Seal.” As he said this, Jiang Beiran glanced at Liu Zijin.

'I've once again been glared at by Brother... It's so scary, but again...' Liu Zijin thought.

She couldn't help but press a hand on her chest because her heart was beating very fast.

Seeing Liu Zijin tremble in fear, Jiang Beiran was satisfied in his heart. He thought that the effect of his gaze complemented the mental pressure he could produce very well.

Then he continued, saying, "Third, after returning to the Sect, let us each go back to our own Orders and not interact anymore if there is nothing else."

"Eh!?" the five Sisters shouted at the same time after hearing this. The first two requests were a bit strange but they could all accept them. However, this third one was too heartless.

"Of course, I do not have any means to force you to comply. I just hope we can respect each other and separate on a good note. I don't want to end up not even being able to consider you all my acquaintances," he said.

The five Sisters listened and felt another shock in their hearts. They thought to themselves that apparently, they were just acquaintances in the eyes of the senior Brother, not even friends.

"That's all. I hope you can keep the above three clauses in mind. Let's go back to the Sect."

The atmosphere was quite dull when they went up the mountain. Although they didn't talk much during the journey just now, the previous atmosphere had not been this depressing.

In this silence, they climbed to the top of the mountain, and Jiang Beiran brought them to the pavilion where they had stayed before they had left.

"Give me back the straw hats, shoes, and scorched cloths."

The Sisters did not show any reluctance, because they knew that these things were not ordinary, and could even be said to be very powerful. So, they answered, "yes," in unison and returned the Three-Piece Suit of Blending In to Jiang Beiran.

After placing the Suit of Blending In back into the storage ring, Jiang Beiran took out the jade vial they had seen before. “Before we left, I said I would give the best performer a bottle of Honey of Various Flowers as a reward. But, to be honest, all five of you performed much better than I expected. Especially Sister Liu.”

Jiang Beiran finished speaking and handed the vial with the Honey of Various Flowers to Liu Zijin. “You behaved like a captain all the way, and you were also very proactive when you encountered a problem. This quality is rare and valuable. I hope you can keep it up.”

“Eh? For me?” Liu Zijin was surprised. She had thought that the senior Brother must have hated her, but she never thought that he would give such a compliment to her in the end.

“Yep.” Jiang Beiran nodded and looked at the other four then said, “I believe all of you have no problem with it, right?”

“Not at all!” The four Sisters all shook their heads vigorously. The whole time it had been Sister Zijin who was getting scolded for them, which made them feel bad.

“Then... I will respectfully accept it. Thank you, Brother.” Liu Zijin finished speaking and took the jade vial with both hands.

But in her heart, she felt weird. Although she had clearly been praised, she didn't seem to feel much happiness.

Without bothering to observe Liu Zijin's slightly complicated expression, Jiang Beiran walked out of the pavilion and shouted, “Well, let's go. Go to the Order of Law Enforcement to report the completion of the trial.”

Chapter 39: The Correct Way to Handle It After Running Into a Tiger

Jiang Beiran knew that the five Sisters, who had taken off their Suits of Blending In, would surely become the brightest stars in the Sect of Returning Hearts once again. So, he took them to a hidden corner after yet another junior Brother crashed into a tree because he was too fascinated with watching them.

“For this quest, Sister Liu, I have deducted one point from you. Do you have any objections?” Jiang Beiran asked after making the Sisters stand in a row.

“No.” Liu Zijin immediately shook her head.

Nodding, Jiang Beiran looked at Fang Qiuyao again and said, “Sister Fang, you have two points deducted. Do you have any objections?”

Fang Qiuyao was surprised for a moment before she shook her head and said, “No... no.”

The three Sisters of the Yu family immediately looked over curiously after hearing this. From what they could recall, other than talking back to the senior Brother at first, Fang Qiuyao did not seem to have done anything out of the ordinary. How could she have done something so serious that she had two points deducted?

‘Something... must have really happened that night!’

The three Yu Sisters clearly remember that, after they had stayed at the inn for one night, Fang Qiuyao suddenly became much more docile. However, they had been afraid to ask something they shouldn’t, so they didn’t say anything the night in the tent when they had all been chatting.

‘But still... I’m really... curious!’

The three girls widened their eyes and glanced back and forth between Jiang Beiran and Fang Qiuyao.

“If there is no objection, I will go to the Order of Law Enforcement by myself to report the completion of the quest. You all are dismissed. The evaluation will be sent to your mentor afterward.”

“Yes,” five different voices replied at the same time.

“Very good. I hope you can abide by the agreement. Farewell,” Jiang Beiran said.

After saying that, Jiang Beiran joined his hands together in a salute towards the five girls, and then walked towards the Order of Law Enforcement without looking back.

“Eh... Brother really just left like that?” Yu Guimiao blinked her eyes twice. She had thought that the senior Brother was mean with words but had a soft heart, but she did not expect him to be mean with words and have a heart made of iron.

After hearing that, Liu Zijin said, “After listening to the agreement, you should probably understand by now why Brother is hardly known in the Sect, right?”

The four Sisters nodded their heads in unison after hearing this.

...

“So, we’d better abide by it as well. Brother must be the kind of person who keeps to his word.”

As she said this, Liu Zijin felt a pang of nervousness in her heart. She was worried about the person who had recommended Brother to her as an Iron Seal.

‘If Brother finds out, won’t Sister...’

“But...” Fang Qiuyao bit her lips for a moment before she spoke, saying, “Whether we abide by it or not, Brother he... won’t interact with us anymore, right?”

After hearing this, Liu Zijin smiled wryly and whispered, “Brother just said not to interact with each other if there is no reason to after returning to our own Orders. But what if there is something?”

Fang Qiuyao’s eyes lit up after hearing that and she said, “You’re still the smart one here, Sister Zijin!”

Actually, all the way, Fang Qiuyao wanted to find an opportunity to thank the Brother for saving her life, but every time the words came to her mouth, she swallowed them back. She had originally intended to invite the Brother to have a good meal after returning to the Sect and then formally thank him, but she did not expect him to refuse to interact with her. The anxiousness was almost killing her.

‘Next time... Next time I must say it properly!’ Fang Qiuyao swore in her heart.

...

Meanwhile, Jiang Beiran had just stepped into the Order of Law Enforcement and quickly found the Flower Crown on duty that day.

“Hello, Brother Hong. I’ve come to report my quest,” Jiang Beiran said.

Hong Wenrui looked up, smiled, and said, “Beiran, wait a moment.”

Because they were already very familiar with each other, Hong Wenrui only asked a few questions. He then took out a green Iron Seal and stamped it on Jiang Beiran’s order of authorization.

“There is another matter I need to report to you, Brother,” Jiang Beiran said as Hong Wenrui put away the order.

“Oh? What is it?”

“I found out that the disappearance of children in Jifu Village this time is related to the Temple of the Asura, and I think they may take action in the near future.”

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Floating +1]

‘Floating! I’ve finally received this special attribute again. It’s a really good reward!’

While Jiang Beiran was excited inside, Hong Wenrui frowned and said, “The Temple of the Asura? Okay, I understand. I will report this to the Black Flag.”

Jiang Beiran joined his hands together in a salute after hearing this and said, “Thank you, Brother Hong.”

Hong Wenrui immediately returned the salute. “No problem. It is my duty.”

After exchanging courtesies, Jiang Beiran gave another salute and said goodbye. However, he didn’t go back to the Order of Blue Heart directly but left the Sect again.

Now that he no longer had to concern himself with the Sisters, Jiang Beiran leaped up high, his whole body cutting through the sky like a sharp arrow in mid-air. He flew towards the front at an extremely fast speed.

‘Special attribute points are really powerful. Just adding one point makes my ability to adjust myself in the air much stronger.’

With joy, Jiang Beiran continued to accelerate in the direction of Jifu Village.

In just five minutes, Jiang Beiran had landed next to the lair of the gang of thieves he had caught before and arrived at the mountain at the back.

“Shalala...”

Separating a bush, Jiang Beiran observed the traces left nearby.

‘The humidity in these woods is quite high, and the grass on this path is obviously much darker than the rest. This should be the path he often took.’

So, Jiang Beiran then began to advance along the relatively dull grass and followed various other traces and clues.

“Roar!”

Making his way around a large tree, Jiang Beiran was about to continue when he saw a tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards roaring and walking towards him. Its pupils were already constricting into threads. It stared closely at Jiang Beiran, an alien creature intruding into its territory.

“Go, go, go. Don’t bother me.” Jiang Beiran impatiently made a shooing gesture towards the tiger.

The tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards was first stunned, then, with hurt pride, it let out an even more powerful roar.

“Roar!!!”

Seeing the tiger make a pose ready to pounce, Jiang Beiran first sighed, then turned his head and stared at it fiercely with both eyes.

“Meow...”

Instantly, the tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards no longer had an imposing manner. Instead, it shrank its neck back and retreated with all its might.

‘Eh, wait. Usually, tigers quietly make their way around to my back and wait for an opportunity to sneak attack. This fella is a little dumb, eh? Could be that the young leader had kept here to scare anyone from climbing the mountain?’ Jiang Beiran thought.

Thinking that it was very likely, Jiang Beiran immediately chased after it.

The tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards that was preparing to retreat saw Jiang Beiran coming after it, and instantly puffed up all of its fur, turned around, and ran wildly!

But just as it turned around, it found that Jiang Beiran had already arrived in front of it.

“Ow!!!”

This time it scared the tiger so much that it stood upright, its large eyes full of panic.

“Don’t be afraid. I just have something to ask you,” Jiang Beiran said while taking a step forward, stroking the chin of the tiger. “Come, sit down first. Let’s talk slowly.”

The tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards did not dare to move at all after being stroked twice across the chin. It just looked straight at Jiang Beiran.

‘Alas, with only one point of Animal Communication, it is really still very difficult to use the skill. This attribute is literally rarer than Floating. I do not know when I will get the next point,’ he thought.

Lamenting in his heart for a while, Jiang Beiran once again gazed at the tiger and strengthened his mental power, saying, “Sit down. I do not want to repeat myself a third time.”

Although the tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards still could not understand what Jiang Beiran was saying, probably due to its strong desire to live, its hind legs suddenly knelt on the ground. It then touched its front paws together, making a praying gesture at Jiang Beiran.

Chapter 40: Are Cult Members All So Rich Nowadays?

The tiger was considered the smartest of the feline family, so after Jiang Beiran had a friendly chat with it for roughly ten minutes, the tiger, with its head full of bruises, led Jiang Beiran to a tallow tree.

“Ow.” The tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards stretched out its paw and pointed to a location that had obviously been dug up and refilled.

“Mhmm. Good performance.” Jiang Beiran stretched out his hand and patted the tiger’s big head.

“Woo...” the tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards let out a rumble of enjoyment and rubbed its big head hard against Jiang Beiran’s arm.

“Good boy, good boy. Now go to the side,” Jiang Beiran said.

Pushing the tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upwards away, Jiang Beiran walked to the location that had been refilled and squatted down, while two options popped up in front of him.

[Option One: Immediately dig. Completion reward: Green Dragon Out of the Water (Yellow Grade High Tier)]

[Option Two: Make all required preparations before digging. Completion reward: Random basic skill point +1]

“Oh, d*mn!”

Jiang Beiran really hadn’t expected there to be a trap worthy of the system’s pop-up options waiting for him in this pit. After all, the other party was only Level Two of the Qi Refining Period.

‘One really mustn’t underestimate any cultivator. Who knows what strange and big treasure he might suddenly pull out and smash you in the face with.’

Lamenting in his heart, Jiang Beiran took out a piece of Veil of Black Fern with very strong anti-toxicity properties from the storage ring and wore it on his face. He then took out a bottle of Blue Python Juice and poured a little into the soil.

After waiting for about five minutes and putting on the Silk Gloves, Jiang Beiran planned to dig up a bit of soil. It was then that he saw a black and gold centipede as thick as a finger burrowing out of the soil as if it was fleeing for its life.

‘Black Meteor Centipede!?’

Although Jiang Beiran had did not expected to see this thing here, his actions did not slow by the slightest. With a single grab and release, he had dropped the foot-long Black Meteor Centipede into the gourd.

“Nice. It didn’t expect to have a windfall.” Jiang Beiran shook the gourd and smiled.

As far as Jiang Beiran knew, the Black Meteor Centipede was a signature poisonous animal of the Temple of Asura, but generally, only the higher-ups possessed it.

This centipede was extremely toxic. If one was accidentally bitten by it, cultivators below Mystic Spirit level would die on the spot if the injury was serious, or die later if the injury was minor. Meanwhile, cultivators above Mystic Spirit level would not have a good time either if they were bitten.

‘As a mere human trafficker, how could he afford to use such an exotic animal to guard his treasure? It seems that what he said that day about getting the book from tomb raiding was really a lie. It’s good that I didn’t trust him blindly.’

Hanging the gourd at his waist, Jiang Beiran began to dig after he was sure that there should only be this one Black Meteor Centipede around. He soon felt a hard object.

‘There it is.’

The corners of Jiang Beiran’s mouth curled up slightly and he completely peeled away the soil covering it and took out an orange box from inside.

[Chosen Quest completed. Reward: Go Playing +1]

Seeing the system prompt, Jiang Beiran knew that the alarm had been completely lifted.

Dusting off the soil that covered the box, Jiang Beiran looked at the brass lock on it and didn’t know whether to cry or laugh.

‘Dumb*ss motherf*cker... Getting one’s hands on this box meant that one has managed to deal with even the Black Meteor Centipede. Why would this small brass lock pose any difficulty?’

Shaking his head, Jiang Beiran casually inserted a wire into the eye of the lock and moved it around for a bit, then with a “click” sound, the lock opened.

Removing the lock and putting it aside, Jiang Beiran slowly opened the box.

‘D*mn... Is it so profitable to be a minor member for a demonic cult now?’ Jiang Beiran couldn’t help but think to himself as he looked at the three Low Tier Metal Spirit Stones and book of formations in the box.

He had thought that the Low Tier Metal Spirit Stones he had collected last time were already all that the young leader had, but to his surprise, it was only a quarter of it.

‘No wonder more and more young people are now willing to join demonic cults. This is too profitable,’ Jiang Beiran lamented while putting the three Low Tier Metal Spirit Stones into his storage ring. He then picked up the book of formations with [Water Heart Pavilion of Mechanics] written on the cover and flipped it open to take a look. Just this glance raised Jiang Beiran’s interest.

‘Hmm... sixteen earthly branches. It is a formation in the one thousand and eighty combinations. The way it’s written is all over the place. I have to go back and use the simulation to figure this out.’

As he flipped the book to the page in the middle, Jiang Beiran already knew that his trip was not in vain. He would be able to learn a little bit of something new again.

‘It seems that this book of formations and that Black Meteor Centipede have both been given to him by the Temple of Asura. But as an outer disciple, how could he enjoy so many good things? Is the Temple of the Asura that rich?’

For a while, many thoughts popped up in Jiang Beiran’s head. For example, the young leader might be the illegitimate son of some high-ranking person. Or it was also possible that he had stolen all these things from the Temple of the Asura.

‘But it has nothing to do with me after all.’

Ending these groundless speculations, Jiang Beiran stuffed the Water Heart Pavilion of Mechanics book into the storage ring. He then got up and looked at the tiger who had been sitting obediently next to him and smiled, saying, “Do you think I should kill you to silence you?”

The hair of the tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upward all stood on end once more as it listened. It hurriedly knelt down and flattened itself against the ground. Its body could not help but shiver.

“A-woo... A-woo... A-woo...”

Regardless of whether or not Jiang Beiran could understand, the tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upward kept expressing that it was just an ordinary little tiger and would not be any threat to him.

“Wooooo...”

After another pitiful roar, the tiger with a white forehead and eyes slanting upward carefully lifted its eyes and found that Jiang Beiran, who had been standing in front of it, had disappeared at some point...

The next morning, Jiang Beiran got up early and made himself a bowl of lotus seed soup for breakfast. He left the house feeling refreshed.

Yesterday, he had spent the night learning the formations in the Water Heart Pavilion of Mechanics. He had learned a lot of the way of Qimen Dunjia, so his skill regarding the formations became more and more solid.

Turning onto several paths in a familiar manner, Jiang Beiran arrived at the Pavilion of Blue Heart.

Because it was still early, no disciples were playing Go there at the moment.

Walking to the innermost room, Jiang Beiran joined his hands together in a salute and shouted at the door, “Etiquette Protector Cheng, I’m back.”

As soon as Jiang Beiran’s voice fell, the door opened with a bang. A hand reached out from inside and grabbed Jiang Beiran, pulling him in.

“Come, come, hurry up and sit down. I haven’t played against you for two days. My hands are itching.”

An old man with a long beard and white hair spoke while pressing Jiang Beiran into the seat on the opposite side of the table.

Jiang Beiran didn’t want to spoil the mood of the Etiquette Protector, so he nodded and said, “Then I will take the white pieces and go first. Please be merciful, Etiquette Protector.”

“No, no. I’ll take white this game,” Etiquette Protector Cheng said as he knocked away Jiang Beiran’s hand that had been reaching for the white stone set and took it to his side.

Jiang Beiran was momentarily stunned. As the saying goes, to play white is to be respectful. By taking the initiative to take the white pieces first, he was saying, “I am less skilled than you are in Go, so I should take the white pieces and take the first turn.”

But he hadn’t expected that the Etiquette Protector would disregard these norms and etiquette today and forcefully grab the white pieces.

“It seems that the Etiquette Protector has gained a new understanding.”

Jiang Beiran smiled slightly, took the black stone set, and put it by his hand. He then looked at the board with full concentration, waiting for Etiquette Protector Cheng to play the first piece.