

CASTLE OF BLACK IRON

Chapter 9: The Attic



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The only natural source of light in the attic was from the triangular window at the foot of Zhang Tie's bed. It was a little bit bright in the daytime, but when night fell, the attic was dim just like it was now.

With the faint moonlight outside and his familiarity with the attic, Zhang Tie lit the oil lamp inside the attic. In order to save oil, Zhang Tie lowered the lamp flame to the smallest possible. Hence, the soybean-sized flame flickered as it brought some light and warmth to the attic.

After adjusting the lamp, Zhang Tie directly threw himself onto the bed without removing his shoes. He stared at the sharply pointed roof with the faint light and noticed a small web woven by a spider in the corner of the beam. Gazing at the poor spider and its web that could hardly capture a fly, Zhang Tie instantly felt pitiful.

The shaking of bed boards downstairs became clearer as Zhang Tie laid down, which made it harder for Zhang Tie to cultivate. Lying on the bed bored, Zhang Tie tossed and turned; his heart felt like it was being scratched at by a cat. He was bored to the point that he began to count the shaking from his elder brother's room downstairs. When it came to around 700, the sound accelerated all of a sudden, and dozens of seconds later, everything returned to silence. Zhang Tie then gasped and recovered his composure; however, Zhang Tie himself was amazed, as he had found his right hand holding on to the untamed thing below him. It was already very hard. It seemed that he had

already unconsciously done the manual one-cylinder piston movement for quite a while.

Could it be that he had been affected by the members of the brotherhood?

He pulled out his right hand from the trousers as if he had touched a red-hot metal and recovered his composure after some time. Unlike the others, Zhang Tie especially felt guilty about what he did. His father once talked to him about this topic solemnly when he was twelve. As the Chinese clan was shorter and smaller than other clans physically, the average Chinese soldier didn't have the advantage in traits like speed and endurance. However, in this age, it was evident that physical differences between soldiers and their opponents were always fatal, especially between soldiers between LV1 - LV3, and normal soldiers. Take Zhang Tie for example, he was well developed for being in the Chinese clan; however, in school, Zhang Tie was slightly below average in both height and physical strength. In the brotherhood, Zhang Tie reluctantly admits that he's similar to the pudgy Barley and Sharwin in height, but Barley was much fatter and stronger than Zhang Tie. The physical difference between the Chinese clan and other clans would be very clear before they became true soldiers. Although the higher the rank the soldier the less important the physical difference would be, physical disparity seemed like a huge gap that could never be overcome.

In Blackhot City, in order to narrow down the physical differences between the Chinese clans and others, the most important thing was to quickly become a soldier and raise your rank so as to protect yourself. The higher the rank the less physical difference there would be. The wider the future road the easier you would survive in this world. However, in order to become a Lv 1 soldier and constantly improve your occupational rank, the more important it was to ignite the meditation flame on each burning point inside the body. Everybody had to experience it. In this age where all clans fought against each other, it

was the most important standard used to measure personal value. Physical quality was critical for burning the meditation flames and each manual one-cylinder piston movement would damage the health of the teenager, as it might consume a lot of energy and vitality which would make it harder to ignite meditation flames. Teenagers who always made that movement would be weak both physically and mentally.

“Masturbation is a chronic suicide process that is hardly observed; therefore, whatever others do, you should never be influenced. There are legends that anyone being obsessed with this will damage his health, be unfortunate, and live a poor life!” as his father ended with this, he made Zhang Tie promise to never be influenced by this malicious habit as he heaved a deep sigh...

Of course, as for what happened last night, his father explained, “When seminal fluid is full, it overflows automatically.” He told him that this was a natural phenomenon and wouldn’t damage his physique too much.

When his father’s admonition came to mind, Zhang Tie hurriedly pulled out his hand. Thankfully, he hadn’t violated the rule too much. He recovered his composure after a period of time before getting off the bed and moving towards the window. Peering out the window, he saw his elder brother leaving the house with a woman. He had already put on the uniform of the city guards of Blackhot City and was sending the woman home. Judging from her shadow, she should have been the daughter of Mr. Wang, the boss of the tailor store on this street.

Feeling someone watching him, his elder brother turned his head, raised his jaw, and smiled at Zhang Tie, who was peering out the window. Zhang Tie pretended to flick his fists as he saw them off in the dimly lit street. A handful of crystal sand was placed on a small plate by the windowsill. An ordinary double-headed white crystal was in the crystal sand. The crystal was naturally born and was barely qualified to be a low quality Class-2 crystal. It could be

changed in the crystal sand just like a battery before the Catastrophe; however, it was much more convenient than a battery. Although the Class-2 double-headed crystal could never match the pyramid-based one Zhang Tie sold today, it was still the best cultivation material that Zhang Tie had.

With the crystal in hand, Zhang Tie took off his shoes and sat on the bed with his legs crossed, as if he was doing yoga. Ignoring the weird odor from his feet, he put his hand in front of his stomach and aimed one end of the double-headed crystal to his navel. He then closed his eyes and began to cultivate.

The process of cultivation was simple yet boring. Firstly, one had to slow their breathing and gather their spirit and consciousness to their navel, following the “Qi” that they inhaled. This process was repeated until they touched the existence of the burning point in the “shrine” in the navel. After touching it, “rub” this burning point with your spirit and consciousness in a rhythm and gaze at it like a fly on a rotten meat until one day, the flame of meditation at this burning point would be ignited, symbolizing that they were now a Lv1 fighter and an adult.

In this age, if a man could not even ignite the meditation flame at the burning point in the “shrine”, then he would be seen as disabled and slow-witted. This was the law of survival in the Age of Black Iron.

Zhang Tie felt that the point in the navel was like a piece of gold underneath the sands. When he was in meditation, he firstly swept the sands using a broom to show the burning point. His consciousness was like sandpaper which he used to constantly rub and polish the piece of gold until one day, he would burn it like drilling wood to make fire. Then, he did it...

He learned to how to cultivate from school. It started back in preliminary school where he could learn the method for free. As his teacher always said, the burning point was the largest secret on the human body. Besides the visible burning point in the navel called the “shrine”, other burning points were

all invisible and could never be touched without reaching higher levels. However, even now, people could still not figure out how many burning points there were on a human being, and what these mysterious burning points were used for. It was still a secret on how to explore and touch more burning points on the human body, and how to accelerate the cultivation of these burning points for everyone everywhere. The powerful sects, schools, shrines, and legendary fighters were all safeguards and the beneficiaries of this secret.

Almost a fifth of all the people in Blackhot City could only ignite the meditation flame on the first burning point at the “shrine” throughout their lives...

For commoners like Zhang Tie, it was extremely difficult to enter meditation. He had to constantly adjust his breath to reach it. After half an hour, Zhang Tie entered meditation and finally touched the shrine burning point in the navel. He then began to inject his spirit and consciousness into this burning point constantly. Zhang Tie felt his navel start to generate heat slowly. The burning point gradually showed up, and finally, being “polished” by his spirit and awareness, it slowly grew brighter and brighter. The light finally became as large as a grain of rice as it shone blue. Meanwhile, the crystal in his hand was linked to the burning point after the burning point was ignited. It was an energy that would usually never be touched. At this time, the energy was slowly injected into the burning point from one end of the crystal. Influenced by his spirit, consciousness, and the crystal, the blue light gradually became brighter and brighter. The light started to gradually brighten up the surrounding darkness like a star in the pitch night sky. Although it was faint, it always brought him a beacon of hope.

After a long while, Zhang Tie felt that his spirit and consciousness had already been dried up and exhausted. He had reached his limit, and thus, he woke from his meditation. With several hours of practice a day, he could barely feel any evident progress. For Zhang Tie, he could not feel the progress without

several weeks or months worth of accumulation. He evidently felt the change of the color of the burning point. In these years, Zhang Tie had experienced red, orange, yellow, green, and indigo from the beginning of his cultivation. He had to reach blue and purple before igniting the meditation flame. It would take him one and a half year to accomplish the other stages according to experience. His cultivation speed was almost even with most commoners who would ignite their meditation flame in the shrine on the first year in the army post graduation, which was the most important point in their lives.