

High Martial 5

Chapter 5: Bitter? Not Bitter.

"How long do you think he can keep this up?"

Taking a break, a few young men gathered together and whispered.

"At most two days."

"Two days? I think he'll barely make it through one. Didn't you notice his right arm can't even lift properly after less than an hour? To be honest, he might give up this afternoon."

"Your words remind me of when I first practiced archery for a day. That evening, I couldn't even hold my bowl, and my fingers peeled."

"Heh, who didn't go through that? Comparatively, practicing shooting is easier. If we had handguns, that'd be perfect," another young man giggled foolishly.

"In your dreams! The price of firearms is sky-high due to those greedy merchants. A small bullet costs several pounds of food. It's outrageous!"

As they chatted, the topic drifted away from Chen Fan.

In actuality, Chen Fan was indeed exhausted.

His body was already weaker than most, and each time he drew the bow fully, it took almost all his strength. After more than ten continuous attempts, his right arm trembled as if it no longer belonged to him.

The only positive was that his skill level had increased significantly.

[Basic Archery: Lv0 (28%)]

Once, he almost hit the bullseye, which instantly boosted his progress by 5%.

Chen Fan took a deep breath, raised his numb right arm again, and drew the bowstring. However, this time, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't draw it fully.

The next moment, the arrow slipped and flew only three or four meters before sticking into the ground.

"Are you an idiot? Can't you rest when you're out of strength?"

A man with a limp called out.

Chen Fan turned around, giving him an embarrassed smile. "You're right, Uncle Zhang. I'll take a break first."

Sighing, he thought, hastening brings no success. He wanted to increase his skill level quickly, but his body condition just wouldn't allow it.

"Come over here, let me massage your arm."

The man with the limp spoke again.

This time, not only Chen Fan but even the few young men sitting nearby were stunned, thinking, "We didn't get this treatment when we practiced archery!"

"Tsk."

The man with the limp sneered at them. "You call that practicing archery? Weak and feeble. Anyone would think you were fluffing cotton instead."

The group immediately blushed from embarrassment.

Though they did slack off a few times in between... it was because their arms were sore and they couldn't muster the strength.

"Well," Chen Fan hesitated, "Uncle Zhang, that's not necessary."

"If you don't want to struggle with pulling up your pants in the bathroom later, I don't mind." The man with the limp shrugged.

Chen Fan winced and reluctantly said, "Then, I'll trouble you, Uncle Zhang."

"You should have agreed earlier. Quit whining." The man with the limp hobbled over, grumbling all the while.

Despite his rough words, it was clear to anyone not foolish that he genuinely cared.

Chen Fan extended his right arm, and soon felt a wave of relief and comfort flooding in. The previous fatigue seemed to vanish, and he regained control over his right arm.

This lasted for about twenty minutes. Chen Fan tried to pull back his arm several times, only to be stopped by Uncle Zhang's stern gaze.

After the massage ended, feeling guilty, Chen Fan quickly said, "Thank you, Uncle Zhang, for your hard work."

The man with the limp waved it off. "What I did is nothing compared to what your father did for the people in the village."

Chen Fan paused, understanding the implied meaning.

Uncle Zhang was likely referring to his father tirelessly ensuring everyone's survival in the village, regardless of age or gender.

"Kid, take some advice from Uncle Zhang. Archery isn't easy to master. Even if you can hit bullseyes now, in the wild, the targets are moving. It's hard to hit them."

He glanced at the longbow, speaking earnestly.

"Uncle Zhang, I understand. But if I give up now, wouldn't it be all for nothing?" Chen Fan replied calmly, looking him in the eye.

It had taken considerable effort to get his Basic Archery progress to nearly 30%. Giving up now would mean starting over and wasting all that effort.

"Fair enough."

The man with the limp nodded and, telling him to keep at it, walked away.

Of course, the other young men had it tough.

Watching his retreating figure, Chen Fan thought to himself, this Uncle Zhang might seem rude and coarse, always cursing, but deep down he's a very meticulous person. If not for his limp, he'd probably be his father's right-hand man.

Sighing softly, Chen Fan picked up his bow and arrows and headed towards the target.

Stringing and shooting arrows repeatedly might seem monotonous to others, with no visible feedback.

But for him, each perfectly executed shot slightly increased his skill level. The closer he got to the bullseye, the more his skill level surged!

This filled him with energy, and he corrected his posture with each shot. As a result, the physical exhaustion became bearable.

"I must have underestimated this kid."

The man with the limp watched for a moment, nodding slightly.

Just the spirit of striving to do better each time makes him stand out in the village. Perhaps he really can persevere?

Time ticked by, and Chen Fan went home at noon for lunch. Of course, lunch wasn't any different from last night's dinner—a bowl of thin porridge.

Upon learning that Chen Fan was practicing archery, the woman gave him an extra ladle of porridge.

"Xiaofan, if it's too hard, you can take a break."

She looked at Chen Fan's reddened hands, her heart aching.

While she was glad he was sensible and willing to share his father's burden, she was more worried. If both father and son went out hunting and something happened, how would she manage with just her and a child?

But Chen Fan shook his head with a smile. Hard? Not at all, he was actually enjoying it.

After quickly downing the porridge, he rushed off to practice archery again, leaving behind a worried mother and a bewildered younger brother.

"Alas, there's no choice. Time is tight, and every minute counts,"

Chen Fan sighed. The camp was already fragile. Another blow could be devastating. His past experiences taught him that misfortunes never come singly. He had to grow stronger quickly.

As he walked briskly, he glanced at his attribute panel.

After a morning of practice, his Basic Archery skill level had reached 52%. If all went well, he'd level it up to Level 1 by sundown.

At that point, significant changes would surely occur!