

High Martial 7

Chapter 7 We Are Here to Say Goodbye

Indeed, just as the limping man predicted, even as night fell, those young fellows had not returned.

The camp that was filled with a stifling atmosphere of despair not long ago, was now echoing with laughter and the aroma of cooked meat coming from all over.

"Grrr."

Chen Fan's stomach growled involuntarily; he had long been hungry. The one thing driving him to string his bow repeatedly was the sight of the Basic Archery progress bar inching upward bit by bit.

Upon reaching Level 1, he could distinctly feel that pulling the bow to full draw was no longer as strenuous. He could shoot a series of ten arrows before feeling his arm ache, yet still had excess power left.

The bad news was, each time he shot an arrow, the skill level increased by less than 0.5%, even when hitting the bullseye, it barely surpassed 1%.

In other words, at a minimum, he would have to shoot a hundred arrows, all hitting the bullseye, to raise Basic Archery from Level 1 to Level 2.

It was at least two to three times harder.

"No problem, take it slow."

He said to himself, it's just a matter of one or two days, plus, what if he counted nighttime practice as well?

"You kid, so absorbed in your practice that you don't even notice night falling."

The limping man's voice broke in.

"Uncle Zhang."

Chen Fan awoke from his daze, turned to look at him, scratching his head.

The limping man's gaze softened. All afternoon, with nothing else to do, he had watched Chen Fan practice and grew more and more astonished.

Because he realized, this kid's archery seemed to be improving at a phenomenal rate!

In the morning, he was clearly still a novice, taking ages to adjust his stance. But by the afternoon, his stance was not only standard, every three or four arrows, one would hit the bullseye.

If he hadn't witnessed it himself, he wouldn't have believed that he was a beginner.

The other young people who also started archery could take two days just to luck into a bullseye, never hitting the mark again thereafter.

"Well."

He tried to remain calm, saying, "It's getting late, I should go check the entrance, you should head back too, come back tomorrow morning."

The drifting aroma of meat also made his mouth water. Even if he could only get some leftovers, it was better than nothing.

"Alright, Uncle Zhang, you go ahead."

Chen Fan nodded, hesitated for a moment, then said, "Uncle Zhang, can I light a torch here and practice a bit longer?"

The limping man's eyes widened as if hearing something unbelievable.

"You, you want to continue at night?"

He was truly stunned. He had seen hardworking people before, but none so diligent.

Not just those young folks, but the entire village had none more diligent than this lad.

"Yes."

Chen Fan laughed heartily. "Going back at night, I can't sleep anyway, might as well keep practicing. Uncle Zhang, would it be a problem? If it is, then forget it."

He sighed inwardly.

The limping man waved a hand, saying, "It's no trouble, I'll light a torch here for you, practice if you like."

"Thank you, Uncle Zhang!"

Chen Fan was overjoyed.

At this rate, by tomorrow, his Basic Archery level should reach Level 2.

Just then, the sound of footsteps came from afar, approaching. Both looked up instinctively.

Only to see a middle-aged man, holding a piece of meat, walk over.

"Father!"

"Guodong!"

They cried out simultaneously.

Chen Guodong nodded; it was clear he was in a good mood today, a rare smile on his usually stern face.

"Ah Ren, this is for you."

He handed over a nearly two-jin piece of hind leg meat.

The limping man's eyes reddened as he looked at the meat in Chen Guodong's hand, moved. "Guodong, why bring it over yourself? And such a good piece?"

"It's nothing."

Chen Guodong waved a hand, "The young people in the village need your guidance. The future of the village depends on them. You work so hard; it's only right you get this meat. Everyone understands; no one would object."

The limping man reached out to receive it only then, saying, "Today was a good harvest?"

"Yes."

Chen Guodong's smile deepened, "Today we were lucky, we caught two desert rabbits. The big one weighed nearly fifty jins, skinned, it was still over forty jins; the small one more than thirty jins. Each household gets a jin of meat, and those contributing more get an extra share."

"That's great."

The limping man smiled, sighing, "I hope every day brings such a harvest."

"Indeed."

Chen Guodong nodded.

There was a brief silence before he turned to Chen Fan, with a smile. "Xiaofan, come home with me, the meat is ready, just waiting for you."

"Yes, Dad."

Chen Fan replied, looking forward to it.

After saying farewell to the limping man, Chen Guodong and his son walked along the uneven dirt road.

"Your mother said you spent the whole day practicing archery? Came here right after lunch?" Chen Guodong asked as they walked.

"Yes."

Chen Fan replied, feeling a bit uncomfortable being alone with his father.

"How do you feel?"

"I think it's alright?"

Chen Fan asked tentatively.

"Good then."

Chen Guodong nodded, "If you really want to keep practicing, I'll ask Uncle Wei and his brothers to guide you. Today's harvest is thanks to them."

"Okay."

Chen Fan nodded.

The limping man had mentioned that the Wei brothers could draw a hundred-jin bow and had excellent shooting skills. Getting their guidance would undoubtedly benefit him.

"Well."

Chen Guodong fell silent again after speaking.

Luckily, home was just ahead, around the bend.

However, Chen Fan squinted his eyes as he approached, noticing several middle-aged men in his house, besides his mother and brother, standing or sitting, clearly waiting for his father.

Could they be here to celebrate?

He wondered, feeling an inexplicable unease.

"Tiangong, Tianyuan, what brings you here?"

Chen Guodong looked surprised, quickly stepping forward. "Great timing, have you had dinner? Join us."

His mother was startled but quickly smiled and echoed, "Yes, yes, dinner's ready, please, have a seat."

After all, today's catch was thanks to the Wei brothers' remarkable archery; otherwise, how could they have caught the fast-footed desert rabbits on their own?

But the visitors exchanged glances before the balding, tall man in the lead, Wei Tiangong, spoke up.

"Guodong."

Wei Tiangong took a deep breath, "We're here to bid you farewell."