

High Martial 8

Chapter 8: Here, There is No Hope

"A farewell?"

Chen Guodong felt like he had been struck by lightning. His outstretched hand hung in the air. Forcing a smile, his voice trembled slightly, "Why leave all of a sudden? Is it because of the previous distribution of prey? If there's any dissatisfaction, we can discuss it, can't we?"

Anyone could tell he was flustered.

A woman clutching a young boy looked on at the scene in a panic, her mind blank, forgetting to say anything to persuade them to stay.

Chen Fan was equally shocked.

He remembered Uncle Zhang mentioning before that the Wei Brothers probably wouldn't stay long. Who knew it would be fulfilled so soon?

"Brother Guodong, it's not what you think."

A man who resembled Wei Tiangong but was younger stepped forward, though he was a bit too embarrassed to look Chen Guodong in the eye.

"We have no issues with the distribution of prey or with you, Brother Guodong. It was you who encouraged everyone to dig deeper defenses and fend off the fierce beasts."

"Yes, yes."

The two others standing behind the brothers nodded vigorously.

"Then why do you still want to leave?"

Cold sweat poured down Chen Guodong's forehead.

There were already too few adult men in the village, and now four were leaving, including the two Wei brothers. Their departure would be a severe blow to the already impoverished village.

Chen Fan's heart was in his throat.

He, of course, did not want these people to leave.

Wei Tianyuan glanced at his elder brother, who nodded slightly.

"Brother Guodong, then I'll be honest with you. Please don't be angry."

"How could I be?"

Chen Guodong forced another smile.

What he feared most were decisions made after weighing the pros and cons, as they meant there was no hope of persuading them to stay.

Wei Tianyuan took a deep breath and looked Chen Guodong in the eye, "Because staying here offers no hope."

As soon as he said that, it was as if a certain sound of something shattering echoed in the room.

"Brother Guodong, we barely have a hundred people here, less than twenty adult men including a few young boys. The rest are elderly, women, and children. How can a few of us feed so many mouths?"

"It is difficult," Chen Guodong's mouth opened slightly, "but we've kept going until today, haven't we? We can keep going."

"What about us?"

This time, Wei Tiangong spoke.

His eyes were incredibly calm, "A few years ago, the Zhao Brothers from Zhao Family Castle, like us, could only draw a 100-pound hunting bow. But in recent years, with enough fierce beast meat, they've reached the late stage of body tempering and can pull a 300-pound hard bow. If we had sufficient food, we could do the same."

Chen Guodong was momentarily speechless, overwhelmed with guilt.

True, every time the hunting team brought back game, the Wei brothers contributed the most, yet each time they only received a small portion.

"Guodong."

Realizing his words had been too harsh, Wei Tiangong sighed, his tone softening, "Listen to me. Staying here offers no hope. Why not come with us to Zhao Family Castle? There, not only is there more food, but also better living conditions. Most importantly, you can learn some skills to strengthen the body. In these times, only those with strength can survive."

"Yes, Brother Guodong, come with us!"

Wei Tianyuan's eyes were filled with hope.

The two brothers had given so much for the village, with clear consciences.

Now, they wanted to live for themselves, to grow stronger, so their families wouldn't suffer from hunger and cold anymore.

Chen Fan looked at his father, guessing what his decision would be.

Sure enough, Chen Guodong took a deep breath, his eyes moist with tears and a smile, "I understand, Tiangong. Going to Zhao Family Castle is the best choice. How could I blame you? If it weren't for your silent contributions, the village wouldn't have survived until now."

Hearing this, Wei Tiangong and the others breathed a sigh of relief.

Yet, under it all, there was a faint sense of guilt.

"Brother Guodong, you're not coming with us?" Wei Tianyuan asked urgently, realizing the implication.

"No."

Chen Guodong smiled slightly, looking at the houses not far away, "Before the village was established, I promised to lead everyone to survive together. This village is the result of everyone's efforts. It wouldn't exist without each and every one of them.

Now, many of them are gone, like Ah Quan, Da Fei, and Zhuzi, but their families are still here. I can't abandon them."

As his words fell, the surrounding area fell into dead silence, the eyes of all the men present turning red.

Wei Tiangong took a deep breath, his eyes reddening as he reached out to lightly pat Chen Guodong's shoulder, "Brother Guodong, take care."

With that, he glanced at Chen Fan and the others, then resolutely turned and left.

"Brother Guodong, I'm sorry."

Wei Tianyuan bowed, quickly following after his brother.

"Brother Guodong, we're leaving. Take care!"

"Take care."

The other two men also took one last, reluctant look at him before turning to leave.

As several figures disappeared into the night, even the sound of footsteps became hard to hear.

Chen Fan watched his father, standing there like he was petrified, tears welling up in his eyes.

"Sigh."

He let out a sigh in his heart.

While he couldn't fully empathize, he could somewhat understand the complex feelings in his father's heart.

And of course, the village's situation was now even worse.

He needed to quickly improve his level in Basic Archery!

"Let's eat first, Guodong."

The woman said with a pale face.

Chen Guodong ignored her for a long time before nodding.

Though the dinner was considered "sumptuous," the atmosphere at the table was tense and silent.

The woman put several pieces of rabbit meat into Chen Fan's bowl, her heart aching, "Xiaofan, you practiced archery all day today. Eat more."

"Yes."

The usually quiet Chen Guodong also responded, adding a few pieces of meat to Chen Fan's bowl as well, making the little boy next to him drool.

In the boy's bowl, there were only two pieces, plain to see.

"Dad, you should eat more."

Chen Fan, a little overwhelmed, quickly returned the meat to his father's bowl.

After all, his father was the pillar of the family, especially with the Wei brothers leaving tomorrow, making hunting even harder.

"You eat. I have no appetite."

Chen Guodong smiled faintly.

Seeing this, Chen Fan fell silent.

The aroma of the meat in his bowl was overwhelming. Unable to resist, he picked up a piece and chewed it, tasting a wonderful flavor that filled his mouth. The meat was simply boiled with a bit of salt, yet it was delicious enough to make one want to swallow their tongue.

Just then, a message appeared in his mind.

[Potential Points +0.1]

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Chen Fan was stunned.