

Crossing to the Future, it's Not Easy to Be a Man

Chapter 18: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Ling Lan flicked through the options on the screen. There really were all sorts of courses, from harp-playing to chess and various art and literature courses, even embroidery was included. Of course, there were also all sorts of martial combat skills, and even some really strange and bizarre courses she had never heard of before. The points to redeem these courses ranged from one point to several hundreds of points, while some even required up to one or two thousand points and perhaps even more.

The gaming and leisure options were noticeably more expensive, starting from a base redemption amount of 50 points, with the more expensive options reaching up to 5000 points to 10000 points. Of course, this section also had a smorgasbord of options. Take games for example — there were traditional games with retro designs, magic and sorcery games, futuristic apocalyptic games, galactic mecha games, martial combat games, and they actually even had dating simulation games ...

As for the other leisure options, anything you could think of as recreation could be found there. When she had tapped into that category, Ling Lan hadn't even known where to look. There were just too many options.

Hell, was this still a learning space meant for the cultivation of young talent? Why did she feel a corrupting influence emanating from these options?

Ling Lan decisively exited from the recreational categories, and opened up the learning courses. Time was counting down, so she did not have a moment to lose. Since she had to redeem something, she might as well use the honour points she had now to redeem something she needed most at present.

With a rough idea of what she wanted, Ling Lan clicked open the combat category, and then chose the subcategory of defence.

Countless defensive combat techniques and skills immediately popped up on the screen. Ling Lan selected the option to list the skills and techniques according to honour point requirement in ascending order, from the lowest to the highest.

The first skill she saw cost only 1 honour point — Iron Skin. The description below it explained that the skill could turn the skin of a person's entire body into iron, capable of withstanding heavy blows. With mastery, the practitioner's skin would become a metallic colour. Without any hesitation, Ling Lan immediately sent the option flying — how could

a soft and delicate girl like her allow her skin to become metallic in colour? It's not like she wanted to become Iron Woman.

Next were the skills that required 10 honour points to redeem. There were a few more than those requiring 1 point, but when she counted them, there were only about 10 options. Ling Lan found that interesting — there was one skill which cost 1 honour point, and ten skills which cost 10 honour points ... did that mean that there would be fifty skills which cost 50 honour points?

Of course Ling Lan was just thinking about this idly; her full attention was actually upon these ten options before her. She only had ten minutes after all, there was no time to waste.

Eagle Claw? What, mastery meant having claw-like hands? No can do.

Iron Head? She needed to bang her head against hard objects every day? That was just asking for pain and suffering. Dismissed.

Golden finger? Practise by jabbing her fingers at trees every day? Ridiculous. Ignored.

Crippling Legs? Mastery meant legs with exposed veins? Dear god that would be terrifying. No way.

Long-ape Arms? What, mastery meant one's arms would become as long as an ape's? Dammit, even though she would have to live this life as a man, she still didn't want to live as an ape-man. That would be too tragic — no way in hell.

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Why did all these skills either change a person's appearance or require self-mutilation to achieve mastery? Ling Lan complained internally. Just as Ling Lan was about to give up on redeeming any of the 10-point skills, she noticed the final skill on the list — Rabbit Sky Leap.

Rabbit Sky Leap: A conditional skill. Requires a high degree of body flexibility. Minimum requirement of B-rank flexibility, but A-rank and above flexibility recommended.

This skill does not change one's appearance after mastery, but will increase overall strength by three times or more. Precise increments will depend on practitioner's flexibility and intensity of practice. Please observe changes and adjust accordingly.

Practice method: ...

This Rabbit Sky Leap skill captured Ling Lan's heart immediately — it seemed like a perfectly normal skill, no torture or mutilation mentioned in its training method. Besides that, the condition seemed tailor-made for her. The basic nine stances she had been

practicing had focused specifically on increasing a body's flexibility. Instructor Number Nine had clearly stated that once she mastered the nine stances, her body flexibility would be at A-rank.

In general, babies were born with a flexibility of B-rank, but if they didn't practise any sort of physical skill such as the nine stances, their flexibility would decline as they grew older. A regular adult would have a flexibility between D-rank to F-rank.

If one trained in offensive physical skills, flexibility would drop even more, perhaps not even reaching D-rank. Meanwhile, a practitioner of the Balanced Series of physical skills would at most be able to maintain a flexibility of C-rank, with exceptional cases being able to achieve B-rank.

As for the Defensive Series, there were two branches within the set itself — the Endurance Series and the Flexible Series. The Endurance Series focused on increasing a body's toughness, hardening it to increase defensive ability, thus reducing flexibility, which would result in a body flexibility similar to those practicing the Balanced Series. Only the Flexible Series, as its name implied, focused on training up a body's flexibility, and would allow practitioners to achieve a flexibility of A-rank and above.

The basic nine stances that Ling Lan learned were from the Flexible Series. The learning space had automatically assigned the Flexible Series to Ling Lan because she was a girl, and because her natural flexibility had already been very high.

It looked like the learning space also had some recognition of gender, and had been unwilling to produce an iron-muscled woman.

At this point, Ling Lan had already made her decision, but she still cautiously browsed through the skills which required 50 honour points. The quality of the skills naturally increased as the cost of the skills increased, but the associated restrictions and conditions also got increasingly tougher. Many of the skills required a certain level of body strength, resilience, or flexibility, as well as a certain level of physical skill. Ling Lan knew that even if she redeemed these skills now, she still wouldn't be able to practise them for three to five years. After all, her body was just not at that level yet, there was still much more training she had to do first.

Just then, Number One reminded, "There is not much time left, have you chosen?"

Ling Lan smiled and said, "Yes, I choose the Rabbit Sky Leap."

Number One warned her, "The Rabbit Sky Leap only requires 10 honour points. You still have 139 points, what else will you choose? Please choose immediately."

Ling Lan shook her head. "I only want this one. I don't need anything else right now."

Number One sniffed. “You still have so many honour points left. Do you really want to waste them?”

Ling Lan smirked like a little fox. “Will they really be wasted?”

Number One just stared at her placidly. His gaze was steady and indifferent, as if telling her that if she really chose only the Rabbit Sky Leap, all her remaining honour points would be cleared away.

Ling Lan’s resolution started to waver under Number One’s stare — should she just redeem all her honour points now, and just wait to learn those skills later on when she met their requirements?

But then that was also a problem ... Since she had no idea what the learning space would assign her next, if she redeemed her points now and chose something that was unsuitable for her later on, that would also be a waste.

Should she gamble now? Or gamble for the future? Ling Lan struggled over her decision. She lifted her head to look at Number One, hoping to get some sort of hint from him. After all, the reason she wanted to save her honour points to begin with was because of Number One’s earlier words. Had she misunderstood what he was saying?