

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

Chapter 31: The Weak Have No Right to Speak

"Why?" echoed the examiner with a cold smirk, "Do any of you have the right to ask?"

Han Jijyun was not flustered by the examiner's rebuttal. With his usual level-headedness, he said, "Isn't the test over? The examiner at the start had stated very clearly that once we reached the finish line, the speed and stamina test would be over. So we have the right to refuse your command."

Han Jijyun knew that everyone was already on their last legs — some were even having trouble standing, only staying upright out of sheer bullheadedness. Leaving aside attacking the examiner, they may not even be able to take even one more step.

The examiner looked at Han Jijyun, and there was a trace of approval in his eyes. This child was calm and analytical, not easily swayed by an opponent's show of force. In addition, he could defend his stance with evidence, displaying solid logical thinking, and was good at catching on to key points and discovering the logical flaws in other people's speech. Overall, a good candidate for a military strategist.

Still, no matter how much he admired Han Jijyun, he wouldn't change his mind. With a mocking smirk on his face, he said, "Brat, let me teach you all the first rule you need to know to survive in this world — the weak have no right to speak."

He swept a critical gaze over the angry children, and ten pairs of fierce and stubborn eyes stared right back at him. He was satisfied — if they hadn't been angered by his words, then their parents would have raised them in vain.

When the examiner's gaze swept over Ling Lan, he couldn't suppress a soft exclamation — Ling Lan's eyes were the calmest among the ten children, still like dead water, deep and unfathomable. Was he scared silly? Or had he seen through the ruse? Or perhaps he was just unmoved by all this? The examiner frowned, and watched Ling Lan thoughtfully for a beat or two.

What the examiner didn't know was that his gaze filled with killing aura was completely ineffective against Ling Lan. Remember, Ling Lan had grown up under the crushing pressure of Number One's presence. In contrast, this kind of superficial scare tactic was really nothing to Ling Lan.

Reining in his curiosity towards Ling Lan, the examiner's face turned sly, and with an evil grin on his face, he said, "You all can choose to ignore my command. However, your results for the speed and stamina test ... well, sorry, you will all fail." His killing aura dissipated as he said this, as if it had never been there to begin with, but his words were cruel, casually threatening to destroy the children's dreams and ambitions.

These words caused the faces of all the children in Ling Lan's group to fall. They had come brimming with confidence to enrol in this top-ranked scout academy, not to return home with their tails between their legs.

"We have the right to submit a complaint." The expression on Han Jijyun's youthful face was frigid; he was indeed an extremely intelligent child, but no matter how smart he was, he was helpless against this sort of irrational bullshit. His chest felt choked with rage; this was the first time he had experienced the futile anger of the weak and downtrodden.

"No, no, no! Didn't you all read the examination rules? Any child who complains or protests will have their results thrown out for this year — Could it be that you all would like to wait and try again next year?" The examiner laughed as he shook his head, strolling over to stop in front of Han Jijyun, where he then bent over slightly to look the boy in the face with mocking playfulness. With deliberate slowness, he bit out a word at a time, "Smart little repeat student!"

This expression, these words, and this sort of dismissive look — it was all just too infuriating. Damn, this examiner was just asking to be beaten up.

Asking to be beaten up? Ling Lan sweat-dropped, and immediately yelled out in her mind, "*Little Four, are you messing with my thoughts again?*"

Little Four slunk out from a corner, face scrunched up in an unhappy pout. His usually round face now looked like a steamed dumpling as he spoke through pursed lips, "*He's too despicable! Bullying children!*"

Alright, so Ling Lan wasn't even angry yet, but the mentally immature Little Four had already been riled up by the examiner on her behalf. "*Lord, beat him up for me.*"

Ling Lan quirked her lips in a slight smile. "*What's in it for me?*"

Little Four was slack-jawed. He had not expected Ling Lan to ask for something in return for his request. Didn't she know that he was requesting this for her sake?

"*Why?*" Little Four wailed. Wasn't his host angry as well?

"*You said it — you want me to beat him up 'for you'. Since I would be helping you, of course you should give me something in return.*" Ling Lan's self-satisfied smirk made

Little Four think to himself that she was no better than the examiner, a big bully who bullied children.

“But he’s bullying you! Don’t you feel angry?” Little Four couldn’t understand — the examiner was being so mean that even he felt indignant ... why was Ling Lan so calm?

“Bullying me? I don’t feel it.” Although Ling Lan didn’t know why the examiner was being such a hard-ass, still, she could sense no ill intentions from him.

Ling Lan was extremely grateful for all the pressure that Instructor Number One and Number Nine had exerted upon her all these years. They had given her an ability that wasn’t really an ability — being able to sense when someone had evil or killing intent towards her. Of course, according to Instructor Number One, this ability of Ling Lan was still only at the rudimentary level, not really applicable and actually quite useless. If she ever encountered any true experts or assassins, Ling Lan would be dead before she could sense anything.

Ling Lan’s words made Little Four want to tear his hair out — his host was just too insensitive; the examiner’s bullying was already so obvious, like a slap in the face, and she could still say she didn’t feel it?

Ling Lan was just about to reassure Little Four when her expression abruptly changed — she sensed something off in Qi Long’s aura; his spiritual power was fluctuating wildly.

“Help me think of a way to pass Instructor Number One’s exam three days later!” Ling Lan threw out her request, and without giving Little Four any chance to protest, she retreated from her mind-space. There was something wrong with Qi Long and she needed to keep her attention on him.

At this point, Ling Lan’s nerves were taut, on full alert as she leaned slightly forward with both arms held low and slightly bent, one up and one down in a vague cross. Her right leg was shifted back, with her weight resting fully on her heel — this was a basic combat stance that she had learned this year from Number Nine. It was the best neutral resting stance for attacking or defending, allowing the body to move and expend energy with ease.

Suddenly, Qi Long lifted his bowed head and everyone could see his bloodshot eyes, filled with killing intent. However, this killing intent was directed only at the examiner — it looked like the examiner’s taunting of Han Jiyun had thoroughly angered Qi Long, and he was ready to explode.

The examiner sensed Qi Long’s killing intent and leapt backwards with some surprise in his eyes. But by the time he landed, his entire demeanour and stance had changed, and all his eyes held was the anticipation for a fight.

Hollering loudly, Qi Long shot forward like a torpedo, swinging his tightly clenched fists at the examiner. There was a loud crash and then dirt went flying, blocking everyone's vision.

Could it be that Qi Long had actually hit the examiner? Did he throw the examiner to the ground? The other children couldn't see anything clearly and could only look at one another helplessly.

Only Ling Lan had a solemn expression on her face, her brows slightly raised. Though the others couldn't see what had happened due to the dust, Ling Lan had seen everything. Little Four had displayed everything that had occurred between Qi Long and the examiner in her mind, bypassing the problem of the dirt and dust entirely.

Chapter 32: Ling Lan Makes a Move!

Qi Long's punch had missed — the examiner had evaded Qi Long's blow with a tilt of his body, causing it to strike the ground, sending dirt flying into the air.

Even so, the gouge left on the ground from Qi Long's strike, roughly 3 inches deep and 1 metre wide, revealed that the power behind it was definitely no less than the 500 catties Ling Lan had lifted during the previous test.

It was impressive that Qi Long could achieve 500 catties worth of strength with just his own power; this was obviously a purer and more direct reflection of strength as opposed to Ling Lan's performance due to the circulation of Qi.

A flash of pleasant surprise passed through the examiner's eyes — perhaps even he hadn't expected that Qi Long would have such great strength. Even though this level of strength was nothing to the examiner, it had to be noted that Qi Long was still only six years old. There was no question that once Qi Long grew up, his strength would further grow to become even more impressive.

Qi Long didn't stop attacking just because his first attempt struck air. As the others watched, he once again leapt into the air and pounced at the examiner.

Unfortunately, despite all his speed and strength, Qi Long's attacks were full of holes due to his undeveloped combat skills. As such, the examiner was under no pressure whatsoever — if Qi Long were an enemy on the battlefield, the examiner could have killed him with one strike.

As the dust and dirt drifting through the air finally dissipated, the group could finally see the battle between Qi Long and the examiner. They looked on as the examiner blocked all of Qi Long's attacks using just a single hand.

Luo Lang lowered his voice and said to Ling Lan, "I'll go and help Qi Long. We'll count on you to hit the examiner." With that said, he jumped into the fray without waiting for a reply from Ling Lan, using all his might to send a punch flying towards the examiner's face.

Luo Lang's attack forced the examiner to bring out his other arm, and his previously stationary body also begun to move. For a while, the three fought to a stalemate.

Although Luo Lang had spoken very softly, all the surrounding children had still heard what he said. All of a sudden, the trembling in their bodies diminished as they all turned toward Ling Lan with expectation in their eyes, hoping that she could do as Luo Lang said and hit the examiner.

Fine, so the examiner's taunts had thoroughly roused the children's hatred, drawing it onto himself — and the level of this hatred wasn't low, which was why they collectively wished for him to get hit several times so they could vent their anger.

Thanks to Qi Long's attack, Han Jijyun had regained his usual composure, and he now noticed that Ling Lan was the only one among them that was standing steadily. Although his stance was a little strange, it was oddly pleasing to the eye, making one feel that it was natural to stand that way. Though Han Jijyun didn't know what that stance was, he could still tell that it was definitely some sort of amazing combat art.

The children's expectant gazes made Ling Lan feel the pressure even more keenly, as if it was pressing down upon her like a mountain. She couldn't take their heated gazes and so turned to face the spot where the three combatants were — her face twitched minutely as she thought sullenly to herself, why did they all think she could hit the examiner? Could it be that they all knew that she had a learning space in her mind?

Of course Ling Lan knew that this was impossible. These kids had entrusted their hopes to her solely because she was the only one among them who could still move. Naturally, if she could really hit the examiner then that would be the best, but even if she failed ... well alright, they didn't really have high hopes to begin with anyway. This whole attempt was just a shot in the dark; to succeed, they would really have to have the devil's own luck.

On the other end, the examiner had figured Luo Lang out after fighting him for some time. Although his strength wasn't as much as Qi Long's, it was still decent, probably around 100 catties. However, his physical fitness was clearly worse — fighting up till now, Qi Long's attacks only became fiercer and fiercer, while Luo Lang's breathing was showing signs of becoming irregular just after several attacks.

Still, the examiner also knew that Qi Long's current condition was rare — he had pushed past his limits to bring out his latent reserves of energy. In all these years, the examiner had never seen a child who could break past his own limits without outside stimulation from agents — it had to be said that Qi Long was truly talented.

Suddenly, he felt a chill seep out from his bones ... his battle experience warned him of danger and without even having to think, his body jerked to a stop on the balls of his feet, and he used the energy generated from his momentum to change directions and leapt back two steps ...

But it was too late! Before his eyes, a small, delicate white fist appeared, on the verge of hitting his face in the next second.

In the end, the examiner was still the examiner — he crossed his arms within this split second, successfully blocking this seemingly sweet and harmless little fist, which was actually filled with killing intent.

The two made contact with a resounding clap, and the examiner felt a huge wave of energy surge towards him. His body, which had yet to find stable footing, was once again forced to take a few steps back.

Meanwhile, borrowing the energy from the rebound, Ling Lan somersaulted through the air and landed securely between Qi Long and Luo Lang. She was still holding that odd basic combat stance, ready to launch her next attack.

The examiner's demeanour turned serious, all traces of his earlier playfulness gone. He looked at Ling Lan standing there in the middle, and he could actually feel cold sweat breaking out along his back. Who'd have thought that such a skilled fellow was hiding among this bunch of kids? He even knew how to hide his killing intent until the final second before revealing his fangs.

If it weren't for the fact that he had spent many years on the battlefield, gaining much experience and honing his reflexes, he would have certainly been hit by that last move. And although he wouldn't have taken much damage from it, losing face would have been unavoidable.

He cursed silently. Where did such a freakish talent come from? The boy looked so soft and fragile on the outside, with his delicate face and clueless expression — no matter how you looked, he simply looked like a cute, naïve, and innocent little boy who couldn't hurt a fly. And yes, although he had felt that there was something strange about the boy from the start, Qi Long's sudden attack and subsequent performance had grabbed all his attention, leaving the boy to fade into the background.

He would never have thought that this kind of unassuming child would almost make him crash and burn.

Ling Lan's unexpectedly strong display thrilled the surprised children. They would never have guessed that Ling Lan would be able to push the examiner back several steps with just one punch — could it be that their hopes would really be realised?

Han Xuya was an outgoing and passionate girl — her emotions ran high upon seeing the current situation, driving away her fatigue and making her shout out loudly, “Ling Lan, beat him! Beat him!”

On the other hand, Luo Chao was a shy and reserved girl. She merely smiled bashfully in surprise, eyes shining with just a touch of admiration as she stared at that skinny figure standing beside her brother. Although he wasn’t as well-built as her brother and the other boy, in her eyes, he was no lesser than them and was in fact even more reliable.

Ling Lan didn’t know that she had unknowingly caught the budding heart of a pure young girl, romantic feelings twining around her in mistaken adoration — oh, what a mess!

In the invigilation room, the invigilator responsible for room 72 switched his feed to Ling Lan’s room once again out of boredom. Immediately, what he saw was a clear stand-off between the invigilator and the kids, and the atmosphere didn’t seem friendly. Aghast, he thought to himself, what the hell was going on?

His curiosity piqued, he fixed his screen once again on room 72, leaving only a small window at a lower corner of the screen to rotate through the other nine rooms he was monitoring.

Ling Lan signalled with her eyes for Qi Long and Luo Lang to start their attack. She knew that if she was the one to lead the charge, they would definitely not be able to handle the examiner.

Although Ling Lan had learned basic combat skills from Number Nine and had also sparred constantly with Number Nine, it was all just mental practice in the end. There was still a significant difference when it came to real battles in the physical realm.

During her last attack, Ling Lan had already noticed that her physical body couldn’t keep up with her intentions — the examiner would never have had the chance to dodge her attack otherwise.