

Chapter 18 - Scholar Tree Wood Nurtures Ghosts

“Then there doesn’t really seem to be a difference between me and regular practitioners of martial arts?”

“Of course there is a difference. Due to their frail constitutions, regular people often cannot intake overly strong or nutritious medicines. Not only will it bring no benefit, but it’ll even be detrimental instead. I didn’t tell you this from the beginning because your body was still frail. It would have been useless if I told you anyway.”

“You’ve been slowly fixing this over the past few days, and you managed to refine a sliver of true qi. As such, you’ve basically fulfilled the basic requirement. I just happened to be thinking of ways for you to make money, but I can save some of that trouble now. However, this amount of money probably won’t last you for too long.”

Li Qingshan understood the differences as well. He could eat more ginseng than regular people without having to worry about developing ulcers or nosebleeds. His body was like a cauldron. He would use his ability to refine and absorb all the vitality that went into his body so that nothing went to waste.

This also meant that Li Qingshan needed to buy a tremendous amount of ginseng. However, regardless of the day or age, ginseng would always be an expensive medicinal herb.

However, he needed to eat ginseng like carrots. He would probably run out of money no matter how much he had.

Just how much ginseng could he buy with the silver that amounted to a little over a thousand taels? He could not help but consider this problem!

After lamenting, Li Qingshan had to admit that this was not bad news. The rate at which his strength grew would reach a whole new level.

For a single breakthrough in strength, regular people would need to search for rare spiritual pills and wondrous medicines, which might not necessarily be effective in the first place. However, all he needed to eat was easily found and obtained, and his strength would constantly grow. Who knew how many people would be envious of him if they knew, so how could he be dissatisfied?

As for the gold and the silver, there would always be a way. Once he was powerful enough, would money still pose an issue?

“This little ghost is pretty interesting.” The black ox arrived behind Li Qingshan and used its round eyes to stare at Xiao An, who hid behind Li Qingshan. He had always been hiding there, quietly sticking out his head to study the black ox out of curiosity.

Xiao An was frightened into hiding once again, afraid of facing the talking bovine. Although the black ox did not possess anything terrifying like a murderous or a vicious aura, he basically avoided it out of instinct.

“Are you talking about Xiao An? There’s nowhere for him to go right now, so I’m going to take care of him for now. You wouldn’t mind it, would you?” Li Qingshan said casually. If the black ox did mind, he obviously would not mention it right in front of Xiao An.

“She used an incomplete piece of paper, yet she actually managed to refine a ghost slave. Moreover, it is a ghost slave that can wield objects. Unbelievable. Either this old woman is a genius at refining ghosts, or this little ghost’s spiritual constitution is rather special. However, seeing how the old woman had been refining for all these years and sacrificed so many experimental subjects with only one case of success, it must be the latter.”

Li Qingshan looked at Xiao An. What was peculiar about him? Though, a little ghost was something extremely bizarre in the first place.

The black ox said, “This might be your best spoil from that battle. Why don’t you accept him as a ghost slave? This child might be of great use to you in the future.”

“What ghost slave? He’s just a kid. I’ve already promised him his freedom.” Even during the most difficult of times, Li Qingshan would never betray his morals. For example, he had refused to sell the black ox to cover his travelling expenses. It was even more impossible for him to do so now.

The black ox felt like he had spoken too much, so he yawned. “Whatever you want. However, now that he has lost his master, and there’s no one feeding him, he’ll run out of spiritual qi before long. Subsequently, his soul will disperse.”

Soul will disperse! Xiao An blinked his eyes in confusion.

“Ghosts aren’t pets or livestock, so why would they still need to be fed?”

“The dead cannot remain in the living world. Even extremely powerful ghosts cannot withstand mere sunlight. Even a strong gale can destroy them. If every single dead person would leave behind a ghost in the living world, who knows how many ghosts there would be in the world after all this time?”

“Then what should I do?”

Around dusk, Li Qingshan strode through the forest with an axe on his shoulder as a transparent little ghost roamed around him.

He would run far away to the side of the stream and study a fish curiously at times, or fly into the branches and touch a bird at others. However, before Li Qingshan could call for him, he would return to his side like a gust of wind, staring at him eagerly.

Li Qingshan shook his head and smiled back. He had developed a slight sense of responsibility for this child.

However, behind them, the flying bird would seize up and fall from the branch, while the fish in the water would float to the surface with its belly up, indicating that this was not an ordinary child; instead, he was a dangerous ghost.

Li Qingshan combed through the forest carefully and finally stopped before a huge scholar tree that could only be embraced by a dozen or so people. He picked up his axe and began chopping.

He did not know any axe style or blade style, but the Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength included the most basic and profound ways of using his strength. He could handle any weapon in his hand skillfully.

Every swing of the axe landed at the same location heavily.

Wood chips flew, and the huge tree fell.

Li Qingshan paid no attention to anything else. He only cut out a tiny piece of the pith from the very centre and presented it to Xiao An.

Xiao An extended his hand and touched the pith before delight flooded his little face. In the end, he turned into a slight breeze and entered the piece of wood.

Li Qingshan smiled. This was something the black ox had taught him. He had to find an ancient scholar tree that was over a hundred years old. Scholar tree wood could naturally attract yin spirits and were highly beneficial to ghosts. Now that he had tried it, he found it to be true.

As a result, he no longer needed to worry about Xiao An dispersing.

Returning to his house, he sat down on a large rock in front of the entrance and carved the pith into a wooden tablet. After polishing it carefully, he carved the word 'An' onto it before wearing it on his waist. His yang qi as a living person could slowly nourish Xiao An's soul.

He could also borrow Xiao An's yin qi to practise controlling his own qi.

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In the small courtyard, Li Qingshan sat on the ground and constantly called out, "Xiao An, the neck!"

Xiao An hugged his neck, and under the stimulation of the yin qi, the sliver of true qi in Li Qingshan's body began to move, flowing to his neck.

"Right arm!"

Xiao An quickly moved himself and hugged Li Qingshan's arm. Although his delicate face was still pale, an innocent smile covered it. It was like this was an extremely fun game.

Only when the moon had risen beyond the trees did Li Qingshan stand up. At this time, Xiao An backed away reluctantly.

Under Xiao An's assistance, the sliver of true qi in Li Qingshan's body became much more docile. On the other hand, Xiao An's eyes became brighter, no longer as dull as before.

Li Qingshan thought that it probably was not just because of being nourished with yang qi. No matter how clever and sensible a child was, once they were taken away from their parents and abused and beaten freely, they would probably all become dull like that.

Now that he was free, and his life had gradually returned to normal, the liveliness in his heart had begun to sprout.

Xiao An looked at Li Qingshan eagerly. He still could not speak, but his eyes clearly dictated. "Again!"

"Enough. This isn't a game. We'll stop here for today. Maybe tomorrow evening!"

Xiao An nodded obediently. He would never be as mischievous as a regular child, but he was unable to hide his disappointment.

Li Qingshan felt utterly helpless against that. "Fine then. Again!"

Xiao An smiled bashfully, but his ears immediately pricked up.

"Left leg! The back!"