

### Chapter 40 - Renowned throughout Qingyang

The black ox said, "Do you want to continue? Don't blame me for not warning you. You really might become a demon or daemon."

"As long as I have a clear conscience and do whatever I want, I will have no objections or regrets even if I become a daemon or demon," Li Qingshan said with his head held high. The black ox's words had instead consolidated his willpower, plucking him out of confusion.

The black ox could not help but reevaluate him once again. Even cultivators with great willpower and determination would feel fear and repulsion when they heard that they had descended into demonic practises and would turn into daemons.

Originally, it was prepared to exhort him patiently, but Li Qingshan was largely unaffected, still persevering with his choice without any sign of wavering. It was truly rare. However, this was good too. If he were the type of person to be troubled by something like this, he was not worth worrying over.

In his former life, Li Qingshan lived in an age of information explosion. As a nerd, he mentally fed off various movies and novels day and night. He understood numerous ideologies and had witnessed the most terrifying and grandest of sights.

Barraged by all of this information, his ability to accept and understand was probably unmatched in this day and age. He would not be trapped by any traditional ideologies. This advantage and edge he possessed was slowly showing itself, playing a role that could not be replaced by any ability or treasure.

No matter how great Li Qingshan's talent for cultivation was, it would be difficult to pique the black ox's interest. However, his unique character was completely different. The black ox placed great importance on it. "Come with me!"

An ox and a man advanced through the bends of the pathless mountains.

The black ox did not say where they were going, and Li Qingshan did not ask either. After learning about the Black Wind stronghold's strength from the third boss, he immediately knew that he was not the Black Wind stronghold's opponent right now. He had to become even stronger.

After walking for who knows how long, something suddenly sounded out from the forest. As they travelled further, the rumbling sound grew closer and closer, eventually becoming thunderous in the end.

It was an enchanting sight. The space in front of them suddenly opened up. Off a cliff several dozen meters tall flowed a waterfall. It landed in the pool like a jade dragon, kicking up snowflake-like spray. A large whirlpool revolved at the center of the pool constantly; there were many smaller whirlpools around it.

Li Qingshan stood before the waterfall. Even with his mental fortitude, he felt like the wonders of nature had taken his breath away. "Brother ox, what's this?"

"A waterfall."

“Of course, I know it’s a waterfall. Why have you brought me here?”

“To cultivate, obviously!”

At this moment, a broken branch fell down the waterfall and was immediately sucked into the whirlpool. It smashed into the rocks in the water heavily and was shattered into fragments. If a person had been sucked in, they would be battered to pieces.

Li Qingshan gasped. “In there?”

The black ox said, “This is the fastest shortcut to attaining the strength of an ox. Whether you want to take it will be completely up to you.”

As soon as it had finished talking, Li Qingshan leapt into the deep pool below the waterfall resolutely. As he fell through the air, he thought about the information that the third boss had told him.

The Black Wind stronghold had around three hundred people overall and a total of seven bosses. Of course, this number was six now. Five of them were third-rate masters, while the first boss, who was known as the Black Bear among the people of Jianghu, was a true second-rate master. His name was Xiong Xiangwu, and he could easily take on all the other bosses together.

Li Qingshan’s current martial arts was only at the peak of the third-rate. If he did not use any ambushes or sneak attacks, he could probably take on two bosses at the same time at most. His defeat would be certain if there were three. In such a scenario, he could only flee, so facing the master of the Black Wind stronghold was obviously impossible. He was a colossal figure that Li Qingshan could not defeat right now.

The only good news was that once winter arrived, snow would seal the mountain. If the Black Wind stronghold wanted to engage in any large scale operations, they would have to wait till spring at the very least, which gave him time. He needed to become even stronger in order to stop the Black Wind stronghold and save the Crouching Ox village. He wanted to complete his promise.

Many thoughts flashed through his head. As the water grew closer and closer, Li Qingshan’s valiance was demonstrated. All of his nervousness and fear was immediately pushed aside, and his mind cleared out. He quickly adjusted his falling posture, took in a deep breath, and smashed into the water.

The black ox muttered, “I wanted to tell you to progress gradually and start by meditating under the waterfall.” It immediately experienced a sense of resentment. Xiao An glared at him. The black ox felt slightly unnatural. “Little ghost, don’t look at me like that!”

The violent flow of water battered Li Qingshan. He felt like a tiny boat within a storm, with no control over himself. He could collide into rocks at any time and sink.

Li Qingshan’s reasonable ability to swim was completely useless right now. He used the Ox Demon Forges its Hide to alleviate the pain from the rapids. However, before he could catch his breath, a black mass pressed over.

The raging water pushed him towards a boulder. The huge branch from earlier served as a warning for his potential fate. Even with the Ox Demon Forges its Hide as a means of protection, he could die from

all of his bones shattering. Using the body of a human to contend against the forces of nature was simply too difficult.

“The Ox Demon Stamps its Hooves!” True qi sank into his dantian, and Li Qingshan’s body seemed to grow heavier, suddenly sinking down. Stamping the tough bottom of the pool, he left behind two deep footprints in the rock.

However, at the bottom, the direction of the flow changed once more, pulling him towards the largest whirlpool. He used everything he had to anchor himself firmly to his location, resisting the flow.

He used up his air very quickly. A feeling of suffocation grasped him firmly. In such rapids, it was impossible for him to swim out. As long as his feet left the bottom, the flow would take him away.

His mind blurred very quickly. Even the deafening rumbling seemed to grow distant. Suddenly, he felt a cold sensation on his chest, and his true qi reacted automatically.

Li Qingshan’s mind cleared up. He saw Xiao An pressing his hands against his chest anxiously, using his yin qi to stimulate the true qi.

In the face of death, the true qi suddenly revolved much faster, rushing to his mouth and nose. The feeling of asphyxiation vanished as the innate true qi replaced his air. Li Qingshan had never expected true qi to have such a wondrous use. He nodded at Xiao An in gratitude before gritting his teeth and unrooting himself, letting the rapid flow take him towards the large whirlpool.

Xiao An circled around the whirlpools for a while before suddenly making up his mind and making his way back up the edge of the pool. He knelt down on the ground and lowered his head at the black ox.

The black ox asked, “You want to help him?”

Xiao An nodded firmly.

Liu Hong and Li Long returned to the Crouching Ox village, comforting the villagers before returning to Qingyang city once more.

The hamlet seemed to recover its peace, but the atmosphere of fear and unease lingered. The Black Wind stronghold weighed on their heads like a terrifying mountain. Many of them wanted to flee from the village.

However, the promise Li Qingshan made before he left gave them all hope. At such an important time, the talent of the village, Li Long, was unable to protect him. The important figure from the city, Liu Hong, had only arrived afterwards as well. Only Li Qingshan stood in front of all of them and protected them alone.

Afterwards, the government soldiers of the legends appeared. They took away the heads of the third boss and the several dozen bandits before returning. Qingyang city was shocked. There was actually someone bold enough to anger the Black Wind stronghold. People on both sides of the jianghu, the righteous and the unrighteous, all learnt a name—Li Qingshan.

In the government office, the fat district magistrate ordered the advisor, “Quick, report these meritorious deeds to the prefect. A group of bandits and ruffians have been destroyed the moment I set foot in Qingyang city. Will there still be anyone bold enough to call me useless? Hang the heads of the

bandits on the city walls. Let the citizens of the city understand my power. And, go find that Li Qingshan. I want to thank him in person for saving my life. Also, give him a great piece of wealth!"

The advisor said, "Sir, we definitely should report back to the prefect, but there's no need to hang up the heads. The Black Wind stronghold should not be trifled with. As for that Li Qingshan, he's probably done for."

Indeed, in the eyes of many, Li Qingshan was already a dead man.

Although they praised and admired Li Qingshan's viciousness and martial arts, no one believed he was the Black Wind stronghold's opponent. In Qingyang city, Black Bear Xiong Xiangwu was a figure used to scare children so that they would stop crying. He had been infamous for longer than Li Qingshan had been alive. They were on two completely different levels.

The fat district magistrate hesitated. With such a meritorious deed delivered to his door, it was too great of a pity to not show it off. His beady eyes circled around before he suddenly slammed the table. "I'm an official, and they are bandits. Am I supposed to be afraid of them? Pass on my orders to hang all of the heads on the city walls. I would like to see if these local aristocrats and landowners will still be bold enough to not pay taxes towards dealing with the bandits."