

CASTLE OF BLACK IRON

Chapter 11: Fool's Gold



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Zhang Tie had already forgotten what had happened to Doug when he arrived at the grocery store. By tomorrow, Doug would definitely be the laughingstock in the Hit-Plane Brotherhood after what had happened. He might never be able to eliminate this stain for the rest of his life.

When Zhang Tie arrived, Donder was greeting guests in the store, so Zhang Tie just stood to the side. After the guests had left, he moved behind the counter and took the broom, rag, and basin to clean the store. After he finished, he used the abacus to calculate the accounts of the past few days. Ever since Zhang Tie started to work here, he found that Donder was becoming lazier and lazier. It would always take him about an hour to finish his work, and it was the same for today.

Seeing Zhang Tie working inside, Donder laid back on his lounge again and kept his eyes closed comfortably.

When Zhang Tie remembered the tea leaves, he started a conversation with Donder.

"Boss, do you know what tea leaf is?"

"Tea leaf?" hearing this, Donder turned with a weird expression. He glanced at Zhang Tie, "That's a very precious and rare drink. Those rich and powerful bureaucrats, who would like to be civilized and pretended to be stylish, always used tea leaves to show off!"

“No, it’s not a drink. I saw others put it directly into their mouths”

“Idiot, tea leaves should be soaked in boiling water. There’s a lot to learn about tea leaves!” Donder raised his voice, “Those nouveau riche always put tea leaves into mouths to refresh their mouths!”

“You said it was expensive!” “Not only expensive, it’s very expensive. A bag of the lowest-quality tea leaves from outside is worth...!” Donder stretched out his hand. “As for higher-quality tea leaves, you should never dream about them!”

“Five silver coins!” it was already very expensive in Zhang Tie’s eyes.

“Five silver coins...” Donder grinned dismissively. “You could only smell them with five silver coins. Five gold coins! It might even be much more expensive!” Zhang Tie was really shocked. No wonder Barley packed the ugly leaves with paper so carefully. Commoners could never afford it.

“So expensive. Why not plant them in Blackhot City? Then we will make a lot of money!”

“It would never be your turn. They were only planted in the Eastern Continent. Those could do business with tea leaves were large business groups and the chambers of commerce!”

“Teacher told us that there were many human countries in the Eastern Continent. Many powerful countries were over there! Some countries even owned thousands of cities like Blackhot City...!”

“Hick, Blackhot City is nothing compared with those cities that dozens of times bigger. You will understand when you visit them. There are human countries predominated by Chinese clans. When I was young...” Donder recalled and longer for that experience. He kept talking and Zhang Tie listened to him carefully. What he said should be true when he talked about his arrival at the Eastern Continent and his knowledge of it when he was young. As for the

following scenes — becoming sworn brothers with strong fighters in accordance with the folklores, cooperating with his sworn brothers to beat the alien clans who threw everything away when they fled, discovering valuable relics with pioneers, exploring the underground world with a great wave of beauties and almost being ** by them, seeing numerous diamonds the size of the head and bullions the size of a house, Zhang Tie was sure that they were tales from common knight novels. Therefore, he ignored them.

While Donder was boasting about when he was discovering the underground world with a great wave of beauties that wanted to marry him to the point where they cried, two guests entered. They were thirty-odd years with experience faces, unshaven chins, and they wore leather boots, copper-cotton wristbands, and riveted half-body armors. They also hung a long sword on their waist and had a box full of steel crossbow arrows on their back. The shoulder armor matched with the hanging buckle of the wind-proof hooded cloak. They really looked like pioneers. During the past year working at the grocery store, Zhang Tie had cultivated a sharp judgement. They must be new pioneers, as Zhang Tie could tell from their equipment. The new pioneers always wore clothes like the regular the regular army, so as to tell others they were pioneering wastelands. They also usually purchased the entire set when buying equipment.

“Can I help you, sir?” Zhang Tie asked politely and professionally.

They glanced at Zhang Tie and looked around. They nodded to each other, as the taller man walked towards Zhang Tie, lowered his body, and said in a low voice, “Where’s your boss? We have business!”

They usually met guests like them. Donder’s grocery store did not only sell goods, but it also purchased goods. Considering their prudence and secretiveness, Donder climbed up from the lounge. While rubbing his hands, he bent his back and walked towards them.

“I’m the boss, what’s up!”

The two stared at him for a while and looked at each other, then they nodded silently.

“Do you receive things?”

“Yes, once they are evaluated. If your goods are too expensive and I cannot afford it, I can introduce someone to you. If you agree, I want 5% as an agency fee!” The two pioneers finally surrendered to Donder’s passion. Looking outside meticulously, they found that nobody was watching inside. One of the two lowered himself to block the line of sight from outside, while the other took out a fist-sized metal mineral from a leather bag of sundies and placed it on the counter.

The mineral was shining, somewhat like gold. It seemed very expensive and frightening. Zhang Tie opened his mouth, saying nothing, he just waved his head.

“This one.....” a pioneer looked at Donder solemnly. “What’s your offer? We can establish long-term cooperation with you if you can give us a proper offer!”

“A copper coin for five kilograms!” Donder offered.

“What? Are you kidding?” with eyes widened, the two pioneers looked at Donder angrily.

“I mean it. A copper coin for five kilograms!” Donder replied slowly, ignoring the red faces of the two pioneers. The shielding man had been impulsive and put his hand on the sword handle beside his waist.

“You must have mistaken it for gold ore. It’s very beautiful like a gold ore!” hearing this, the two were shocked and nodded. The man with his hand on the sword handle also slightly loosened his grip on the sword.

“Hoho, some gold ores are truly similar to it. But pitifully, this is not a gold ore, but a common pyrite. That’s why I offered you one copper coin per five kilograms!”

“Common pyrite?” one pioneer took the shining and beautiful ore into his hand and seemed to not trust that it was as rubbish as scrap iron. The other pioneer seemed to doubt Donder’s words. Seeing their expressions, Donder didn’t say anything to the pioneers. Instead, he spoke to Zhang Tie, “Take out the common pyrite sample in the store!” Zhang Tie turned and fetched a dusty bag from a corner of the grocery store.

He placed it directly on the ground and showed the contents to them. About ten kilograms of goods were poured out, which looked the same as the ore on the counter. Squatting, they took two common pyrites and compared them to the one on the counter. They became depressed like deflated balloons.

“There is a valley in the Red Highland more than a 100 km southwest of Blackhot City. Did you get the ore from there? They are similar to gold ores. In the past, there were pioneers who treated them as gold ores and were made laughingstocks. Never mind, you might see something new. Nobody is all might and knows everything!” Donder explained. This completely broke the last beacon of hope they two pioneers had. They stood up and gave their thanks to Donder in low spirits. Feeling as if they lost face, they left with their heads lowered. When they walked to the gate of the store, one of the pioneers saw the common pyrite that they treasured and cursed furiously. He smacked the common pyrite onto the ground of the street.

“Common pyrite, idiots’ gold, two more idiots are cheated...” seeing them leaving, Donder shook his head and sighed, then went back to the lounge chair.

“Common pyrite, fool’s gold. Two more idiots got cheated...” seeing them leave, Donder shooked his head and sighed before returning to the lounge chair.

Later on, several waves of guests entered and Donder earned more than ten silver coins. As usual, when Donder said, “... I will not provide you supper according to the agreement!”, Zhang Tie knew it was time for him to leave.

“What are Doug and Barley doing now?” Zhang Tie thought to himself when he walked out of the grocery store.

When the dusk drew close, lamplighters were waving bells and lighting lamps on the street. Within ten steps, Zhang Tie abruptly stopped as he saw something shining slightly at the corner of the wall in front of him under the lamp lights...

Oh, it was the common pyrite left by the two idiots. At this time, the common pyrite was found to have been smacked into two halves. Zhang Tie moved forward another two steps...

Oh, there was something inside the common pyrite. It flashed just now. The color was different from the common pyrite under the lamplight. Zhang Tie was curious and moved closer to it. Bending over, he pretended to squat to tie his shoelaces. When he found nobody around, he picked up the two pieces and placed them in his pockets. There was really something inside! Zhang Tie’s excitement rose...