

## **Black Iron 161**

### Chapter 161: Returning Home

With a sound of 'Zhi...', a military SUV painted dark green parked in front of Zhang Tie's home. The parking sound was very harsh and loud, and the solid rubber tires left a 2 m long black mark. Hearing that screeching sound, all the passers-by who were walking on the sidewalks with parasol trees were startled.

When they turned their heads and caught sight of the two Norman Empire's military officers in the car, they did not dare to have another look at them; instead, lowering their heads, they hurriedly turned and left. Several gentlemen in tall hats even took off their hats and gave a salute to the two military officers.

In a wholly new pair of military boots, Zhang Tie opened the door of the vehicle and with agility jumped off the car.

Although it was only a day since he had returned home last, he felt like having a dream: when he left yesterday, he was a suspect; now, he came back as a Norman Empire's military officer.

"Remember, you have five days of holidays left. You have to greet battalion commander Reinhardt in Iron-Blood Camp in five days. The commander is not kind man, he alone in the entire No. 39 Division dares to butt heads with Colonel Leibniz. If you commit a crime and get caught by him, even Colonel Leibniz won't help you out!" Adviser Vessie warned Zhang Tie.

"Thanks for the warning!" Zhang Tie expressed his appreciation to adviser Vessie.

He was about to leave, when he suddenly thought of something. He then asked adviser Vessie straightforwardly, "You should know about my affair. I want to seek for an opportunity to deal with Samira these days as there's discontent between us; if I want to get back at him, what should I do?"

After hearing Zhang Tie's words, adviser Vessie was a bit stunned. However, realizing that Zhang Tie dared to ask him something like this in such a straightforward manner, he suddenly felt very happy inside as Zhang Tie hadn't treated him as an outsider. At least he hadn't set a mental defense against him nor was afraid of him reporting this thing to Colonel Leibniz.

After accompanying Zhang Tie for an entire afternoon, especially taking him back to Colonel Leibniz with the new uniform, from the surprised expression of Colonel Leibniz, he immediately understood that Zhang Tie will have a very bright future. Perhaps Colonel Leibniz was already thinking about promoting Zhang Tie to a higher position just now, although he hadn't opened his mouth.

In army, where friendship between comrades in arms was very important, nobody would be unhappy with having one more brother.

"Do you know the only principle that is followed in the military management system of the Norman Empire in the newly occupied zones?" Adviser Vessie inquired.

This question made the fresh second lieutenant of Norman Empire shake his head.

"In the occupied zone, the soldiers of the Norman Empire are always right. The truth is always in the hands of the Norman Empire's soldiers. This is the only principle that is followed in the military management system of the Norman Empire! If a bright and brave youth, a potential elite military officer who had been looked upon by the Battle God was framed as the enemy and potential insurrectionist, it would be regarded as the greatest insult to the entire empire, all the soldiers across the empire, and even the Battle God himself," Adviser Vessie told Zhang Tie in a very serious way.

Hearing this answer, Zhang Tie smiled. 'Who was the motherf\*cker that said Norman Empire's soldiers are all barbarians and butchers, who was the motherf\*cker that said Norman Empire's hierarchy system is inhumane. Norman Empire is so cute, and so are its troops. I look so handsome in this military uniforms of the Norman Empire, heh... heh... heh...'

After bidding farewell to adviser Vessie, Zhang Tie checked himself over from head to toe. Finished, he arranged his military hat and the walking sword over his waist before knocking on the door in a passionate way.

Beside the door of his house, Zhang Tie found that the rice brew store had not been opened for a few days as some dust had fallen onto its door. If it was opened everyday, mom would have certainly cleaned it up.

Today, after circling a small half of Blackhot City, Zhang Tie felt that the atmosphere in Blackhot City was much more tense compared to before. The market also looked depressed.

According to Vessie, the army of Iron-Horn Army of 300,000-odd soldiers was in a stalemate with the Brilliant Feathers of Sun Dynasty which contained roughly the same amount of soldiers in City of Machine Kalur. After gaining eight cities of the Andaman Alliance each, the Norman Empire and Sun Dynasty ended their temporary 'honeymoon'. They were not fighting against the City of Machine, the real fat, one that owned above 30% of the overall manufacturing capability of the entire Andaman Alliance.

The Norman Empire and Sun Dynasty both felt confident about occupying it. Compared to the lightning war before, the two armies' ferocious confrontation now became the true reason for why Blackhot City was tensed.

As for the lightning war against the Andaman Alliance, adviser Vessie described it as a rapid march and armed travel since the Norman Empire's army had met almost no resistance. The Andaman Alliance was simply not in the same level as the Norman Empire. So as long as the Norman Empire's army came close to a city's walls, everybody inside would make the wisest decision.

By contrast, the confrontation with the Sun Dynasty's Brilliant Feathers was a true battle.

However, all these things had nothing to do with Zhang Tie.

Zhang Tie then knocked on the door of his house, awaiting, both tensed and excited. His parents would certainly be very happy to see him come back home safe. But he was not sure of what they would think when they saw him wearing a set of the Norman Empire's military uniforms.

In this age, soldiers died early in all lands. After Zhang Tie's eldest brother Zhang Yong had turned himself into a crate of bone ash, he knew that his parents could not stand another event like this. In

their eyes, if he could serve in the army while staying safe for several years before returning to Blackhot City, and then sought out a stable job, marrying a woman to deliver his kids, that would be perfect.

So Zhang Tie didn't know whether they could accept his current status.

The moment he knocked, he could hear footsteps hurriedly moving towards him from inside—the door was soon opened.

His elder brother Zhang Yang stood behind it.

As Zhang Tie has guessed, at the sight of him standing in a military uniform of the Norman Empire, Zhang Yang's eyes and mouth opened wide, and he froze on the spot for some time.

Seemingly realizing what Zhang Tie was doing, Zhang Yang made a move that was really outside Zhang Tie expectations.

He forcefully grabbed Zhang Tie inside before stretching out his head to look around outside the door. After that, he hurriedly closed the door.

"Do you want to die? Don't you know that you'll be killed if you pretend to be a soldier of the Norman Empire? Several days ago, it was a bit chaotic in Blackhot City. Some bastards got their hands on several sets of the Norman Empire's uniforms from a makeup room of a theater.

"They then put them on and plundered the city. In the end, they were caught and hung to death!" Zhang Yang's face paled, and he lowered his voice to urge Zhang Tie, "Hurry up, take it off in case someone notices. Ah... you've taken a whole set of a second lieutenant, including the boots and the walking sword. You're too audacious! Hope you didn't cause any trouble... Hurry up, take it off and hide everything! It's not funny at all!"

After glancing over Zhang Tie's clothes for a while, Zhang Yang's face turned even more white. He even wanted to peel them off his brother's body by himself.

Moved, Zhang Tie hurriedly stopped his elder brother, looking at him with an unexpectedly serious expression. "Elder brother, there's nothing wrong with my clothes, I'm now a second lieutenant of the No. 39 Division of the Norman Empire's Iron-Horn Army. I came back in the car of the No. 39 Division's headquarters.

"What? You've become a second lieutenant of the Norman Empire?"

Zhang Yang was stunned. Based on their mutual understanding of over ten years, and judging from the tone and expression, he realized that Zhang Tie was not cheating him. His mind then became a mess. His little brother was just taken away by the soldiers of the Norman Empire on charges of treason, so how could he return as a military officer of that same empire a day later? What a joke!

"I will explain it to you after a while, where are dad and mom?"

"Inside!"

There were voices coming from further in house, so Zhang Tie patted his elder brother's hand and walked inside. Before entering the room, he heard a familiar voice shouting loudly.

"... Who knows why Zhang Tie was caught by the red-hide dogs of the Norman Empire this time! I heard he has committed a great crime. If it's really like what you've said, it would be good for him to come back today. If he doesn't, I'll take my daughter back tonight, in case she'll get involved with whatever might happen to your family.

"My daughter has not enjoyed anything since she married your son. If she would have to suffer bitterness together with your family also, we could never allow it as her parents. It's so chaotic outside, the ruling power changes so rapidly, even the Andaman Alliance was over in such a short period of time. Who knows what will happen tomorrow?

"So I'll tell you the truth, even if Zhang Tie returns, as you have only one house in Blackhot City, the rights to it should be clarified at this moment. Zhang Tie and his wife in the future should not live here too. This house cannot accommodate two families. I heard that the Norman Empire also follows the eldest son succession system. So we have to clarify this thing..."

"Dad..!" elder sister-in-law shouted out with embarrassment inside the room.

"Shut up, you're forbidden to interrupt your seniors, us. We should clarify this thing as early as possible. As your belly is growing larger, Zhang Tie has also grown up. We have to clarify this thing now. Otherwise, we might even quarrel with each other more fiercely because of this thing in the future. Additionally, the engagement between you and Zhang Yang should be fixed at this time. No more wait..."

The familiar voice belonged to elder sister-in-law's father. Hearing all this, Zhang Yang looked pretty embarrassed, face becoming all red. The moment he wanted to rush in, he was held back by his brother.

Zhang Tie gave a smile, expressing that he didn't mind what he was hearing. After that, he coughed while opening the curtain and walked inside the room.

Chapter 162: Basic Aura Yeast

Many people were sitting inside the room, including Zhang Tie's dad and mom, elder sister-in-law, and a man who looked like her but was several years older. At the sight of him, Zhang Tie knew that he was her elder brother.

'Elder sister-in-law's family members might have come here to pour out their true thoughts when they heard about what happened to me. It's somewhat impulsive. In contrast, dad and mom are silent.'

When such an event had happened to Zhang Tie, although the relatives by marriage put it a bit straightforwardly, it was not completely unjustifiable.

While they were talking inside the room, Zhang Tie opened the curtain and entered. At the sight of him wearing a dark red military uniform of a second lieutenant, everybody was startled. Only dad and mom, hearing Zhang Tie's cough, became spirited and stood up from the chairs. Of course, as his parents, they could identify Zhang Tie's voice very well.

Elder sister-in-law's family members were given a fright, and their faces paled, especially her dad's, who was just swearing at the red-hide dogs. At the sight of one orthodox 'red-hide dog' in the room, he almost slid off his chair.

"Dad, mom, I'm back!"

Facing his excited mom and dad, Zhang Tie hurriedly moved forward and hugged both of them. Unlike others, his parents had first noticed Zhang Tie himself before having their eyes fall to his military uniform. Seeing it, his parents reacted similar to his elder brother—they immediately became worried.

"Where did you get this set of clothes from? Take them off right now. It's not funny at all..."

His dad's face also turned pale at once.

Zhang Tie hurriedly moved a step back with his heels close to each other. 'Pa!', he stood at attention and gave a solemn salute to his dad and mom with his right hand at the level of his eyebrows.

"Newly promoted platoon leader of Iron-Blood Camp, the No. 39 Division of the Iron-Horn Army from the Northern Border Military Region Zhang Tie is here to report to you, dad and mom! Your son has become a glorious military officer of the Norman Empire!"

"Stop kidding!"

Zhang Tie's dad glared at him, looking a bit infuriated.

It was clear to Zhang Tie that he could not make himself understood quickly, so he directly pulled out a Norman Empire's Military Officer Certificate that he had received today and put it into dad's palm.

"Here's the Military Officer's Certificate that I've received in the No.39's Division's headquarters this noon. If it's fake, I will replace it for a true one. Waiting for your check, dad and mom."

In the Norman Empire, soldiers' position was superior to all the other people. All of soldiers' utilities were very fine. As for military officers of the Norman Empire, one could identify their social positions from the fine-making of Military Officer Certificate in Zhang Tie's hand.

His certificate was a dark green mini book, in the center of which was a dragon-shaped relief of the Norman Empire made of silver. The dragon-shaped relief was very delicate, and under it were two crisscrossing long swords which were surrounded by leaf-like patterns.

Soon after taking the booklet, Zhang Tie's dad identified that it was true. The cover was mainly composed of a special animal's bone glue, several special plant fibers, and some minerals. Although looking trivial, it contained very advanced technology. Its craftsmanship was a top secret, which could not be easily obtained by common small nations.

Across the entire Blackson Human Clan Corridor, there were less than five nations which had this technology. Thankfully, the Norman Empire was one of them. The technology called 'all-purpose plasticity in Black Iron Age' originated from the Eastern Continent. The technology adopted by the Norman Empire was more advanced than that adopted by other nations, making it outstanding in the Blackson Human Clan Corridor.

Zhang Tie's dad knew how it was produced, so the moment he touched the Military Officer Certificate, he knew that it was true.

Opening it, he saw the same 'all-purpose plasticity material in Black Iron Age', although being a bit different in color and texture from the one on the cover. The texture inside was more like that of paper. But it was smoother.

The page contained Zhang Tie's photo, his name, detailed descriptions of his looks and physical features, his job responsibilities, and rank. Above the photo was an embossed stamp, and under the photo was a double-layered watermark. Zhang Tie's official rank was clearly written on it: Second Lieutenant, platoon leader of Third Platoon, Fifth Company, Iron-Blood Camp, No. 39 Division of the Iron-Horn Army, Northern Border Military Region, Norman Empire.

The Military Officer Certificate couldn't be more real. Zhang Tie's dad then became dumbfounded by how his son could become a military officer of the Norman Empire after being taken away by soldiers for treason. That reversal was really too quick!

Zhang Tie's mom also grabbed the Military Officer Certificate out of curiosity and took a serious look at it.

When his mom was looking, Zhang Tie turned back and smiled at the elder sister-in-law's family members who had long been standing up at a loss of what to do next.

"Uncle, aunt, elder brother, don't be that polite, just take a seat."

"You... you... you... you're Zhang Tie?" elder sister-in-law's father, who had been very talkative moments ago, barely stammered out.

"We've met the last time when you've come here. Uncle we've talked to each other at that time!"

When Zhang Tie met his elder sister-in-law's father last time, he was losing temper and shouted at him, "None of your Zhang Family is good!". Reminded of it, the man immediately remembered it. When he came to Zhang's family to ask for engagement, he truly had met Zhang Tie. Gradually, he connected that Zhang Tie to this one in the Norman Empire's second lieutenant's military uniform.

The moment he remembered the boy, he felt his legs go soft, and he almost sat onto the ground. Everybody knew that what he had just said now had been heard by Zhang Tie, including that sentence of 'red-hide dogs'. The first one who had used this sentence in Blackhot City had been hung on the gibbet by those same red-hide dogs. After hanging for several days, the corpses of those people could not even be found anymore.

"Zhang Tie..." The elder sister-in-law with her constantly bigger abdomen hurriedly moved two steps forward. "My dad was raving just now, please don't care about that..."

"What did uncle say?" Zhang Tie shrugged his shoulder like knowing nothing. "Because I was talking with elder brother outside the door just now, I heard nothing at all. I've come back to tell dad and mom that I'm okay, and to tell you all that I've been given a military officer's dorm. It has good conditions, much better than those of the attic. Two days later, I'll move away from home. Additionally, elder brother and elder sister-in-law, your wedding ceremony should not be prolonged anymore..."

Hearing Zhang Tie's explanation, everybody stared at him with complex expressions. At this moment, even his dad and mom could feel that their son seemed to have grown up.

Afterwards, in about an hour, the atmosphere became more harmonious, and everyone sat around, listening to Zhang Tie's 'story'.

In survival training, he was favored by Captain Kerlin and was presented with a book called Iron-Blood Fist. In the loner's survival training, he was struck by a lightning bolt. Not only surviving it, he could also cultivate at a faster speed after that. Additionally, he could form Iron-Blood hidden strength without encountering any obstacles.

With Iron-Blood Fist and Iron-Blood hidden strength, he obtained the nice treatment of the Norman Empire's army after being caught. After the misunderstanding that he was framed was solved, he was recruited by Colonel Leibniz, the head of No. 39 Division, and joined the army. According to the laws and traditions of the Norman Empire, he immediately became a second lieutenant...

This process was simply a strange adventure. Everybody was struck dumb with astonishment. As to the dangers that he had met in the survival training and the event in the 'club' last night, Zhang Tie didn't mention them in case of his parents' concern.

Finally Zhang family had a dinner with elder sister-in-law's family members and arranged the marriage on the table. After that, elder sister-in-law's family members left with satisfaction.

Afterwards, Zhang Tie was immediately grabbed by his mom, and she started to ask him with all seriousness about how he was struck by the lightning bolt and his present physical condition. Only after confirming that he was really okay, did she and his dad become completely reassured.

Once the supper was done, Zhang Tie pretended to be jubilant when he talked about the whole military officers' dorm thing in the Iron-Blood Camp.

"Dad and mom, I'm telling you, I can even take hot water baths in the military officers' dorm. That's just too convenient. There are all sorts of services in there for me. Even special people who will wash clothes for me. A few days later, I'll move there to register in the Camp..."

Hearing Zhang Tie's words, his dad and mom forced out their smiles.

"Dad and mom, give me a smile..." Zhang Tie used the old method of hugging his dad and mom as he kissed them on their faces. "Aren't you happy about your son's bright future?"

"Happy, of course, I'm happy. But..."

His dad felt reluctant to say it, yet he couldn't hide it either.

"I know what you're worried about. Trust me, your son's life is most valued. Wherever I go, I won't show off. Additionally, the No. 39 Division is stationed in Blackhot City. Even if I move away, I can still come back to see you at any time.

"Your son has grown up now. It's time for me to go out. I have an objective. When I save enough money, I'll certainly buy a big house for you both. You'll be able to sit in the balcony and watch the sunset everyday..."

Before going to bed, Zhang Tie kept performing as a cute kid at home, trying to make his dad and mom happy. In that solemn Norman Empire's military uniform, he looked very attractive, especially when he vividly talked about the funny things in the survival training.

From his performance, his dad and mom, who had been frowning, finally relaxed. Especially when they heard that Zhang Tie had enticed three girls at the same time. His mom then finally burst out laughing and flicked at his forehead.

"You? I will thank the god if you're not alone. If you're that able, you should bring the three girls back home one day!"

"Fine, I estimate that, not counting elder brother's, I alone will bring 50-60 women home to call you mom. Then your daughters-in-law will give birth to more than 100 kids for you. After that, you and dad will do nothing but manage Zhang's kindergarten!"

Just from how far he went with his joke, his dad himself wanted to kick his butt...

With Zhang Tie's gag, Zhang house was filled with laughter once again.

After washing himself, Zhang Tie still returned to sleep in his attic. In the three months he attended the survival training, the room was well-kept by his mom. Knowing that Zhang Tie would come back today, she had even placed a new set of quilt and cotton-padded mattress for him. Having been dried under the sun's light during daytime, they still smelt like sunshine and warmth.

After removing his disguise that he had made for mom and dad, Zhang Tie stood still in this familiar attic for ten minutes. He carefully glanced over everything in this room. Not until then did he finally understand what he could not take with him to the dorms. Once he left this place, his parents' home, he would still be missing its every inch.

After standing still for quite a while, Zhang Tie took a deep breath. He then comforted himself inside that no matter what, one had to face reality.

Reminded of reality, Zhang Tie locked on the arched door in his mind and disappeared from the room.

...

—Handsome and Magnificent Castle Lord, welcome to the Castle of Black Iron!

—The fourth evolution and mutation of the yeast fluid has been completed. The process has succeeded and you have obtained the basic aura yeast. Please check it!

The moment he entered the Castle of Black Iron, the second tip almost made Zhang Tie jump up. After failing three times in the past three months, that bottle of yeast fluid he had brought had finally completed its first evolution and mutation, resulting in a wholly new bottle of yeast fluid...

Chapter 163: Fruit of the Creator

Zhang Tie couldn't wait to open the Living Beings and Communities Management Panel of the Castle of Black Iron. He selected the Micro-organisms Management Projects under Carbon-Based Living Beings



and Communities Management Item and further checked the latest mutation and evolution process of yeast fluid.

The familiar semi-translucent dialogue box appeared in front of him. Besides that bottle with yeast fluid inside, there were several photo samples of the control groups.

The photo samples of the first comparative group were about the yeast individuals under microscopes before and after evolution and mutation.

Before mutation, the microorganisms looked as common as water drops or beans of oval or irregular round shapes. They were semi-translucent and different-sized. However, after mutation, they looked greatly different in shape. In Zhang Tie's eyes, the microorganisms after the mutation were like miniature gourds which looked pale emerald and brought one a sense of vitality.

The comparative samples were the sample comparisons about the gene and DNA between two yeasts. The vertical photo samples of genes and DNAs of the two yeasts were revolving in the dialogue box in a very vivid way. However, Zhang Tie had a headache since he didn't know what the hell were those photos at all. Intuitively, he only felt that the DNA sequence of the yeast after mutation was longer than before.

Under this comparative group of photos were several more comparative groups. Those samples were more micro, seemingly having went deeper into the differences between the internal sections and chromosomes of the two yeasts' DNA. Only a slight glance was enough for Zhang Tie to feel like he was reading an alien language; he couldn't understanding anything in the photo samples or what was written next to them.

Almost at the end of the entire text, he finally saw several paragraphs that he could almost make sense of.

—Basic aura yeast is a wholly new yeast species after mutation and evolution. The viability of this yeast in oxygen-deficient environment is 25% higher than that of the original yeast. In common environment, this yeast's fermentation time is 8% less than that of the original one. Besides, it can produce 27% more kinds of enzymes and 18% more of them quantitatively with 31% higher activity.

—Note: Higher energy and aura affinity means that the yeast can extract and convert more life energy and aura of the leavening during fermentation. The yeast's energy and aura affinity value is 1, which indicates that the amount of energy and aura that can be extracted and converted in fermentation accounts for 1% of the total content of the leavening.

—Based on its super high energy and aura affinity value, the system named it as basic aura yeast. As the creator, you, the castle lord can also rename it in the management panel.

—The life template of this yeast has been recorded by the system. If you need, the system can present it at any time.

...

After reading this, Zhang Tie started to have a more concrete understanding of this new yeast, especially the part that the yeast could extract and convert life energy and aura from the fermented food.

Zhang Tie remembered that when he was suffering from minor illnesses or bruises, his mom would always feed him some yeast fluid made of fruits and vegetables. He would then recover very fast. He didn't need to eat other medicines anymore.

Previously, he didn't understand why, but now, reading that paragraph, he immediately understood the reason. It must be the life energy and aura that was extracted and converted from various enzymes that were formed from the fermentation of the shattered fruits and vegetables mixed with sugar and yeast.

If Miss Daina was beside him, Zhang Tie was sure that she could explain it to him better. In his eyes, any question concerning living beings could be solved by her.

Zhang Tie didn't think too much at this moment, neither did he feel how great this new yeast was. After all, yeasts were trivial and could be easily obtained. He had only input a few aura and merit values and energy into a vial of common yeast fluid for four times during the past three months. After failing three times, he had finally succeeded.

When he thought of the yeasts, the only thing that Zhang Tie was concerned about was whether he could use this new yeast to make better rice brew and improve his family's business.

After chatting with mom and dad, he knew that in the past three months, because of the sudden change in the situation and the arrival of the war, the prices of grains in Blackhot City had almost risen to twice their size. Now, although the market had slightly recovered, the highest prices of grains were still roughly three times what they were before.

Before Zhang Tie attended the survival training, his dad had used the money given by Zhang Tie to buy several bags of rice and some raw materials for rice brewing. Soon after the prices of grains surged, the sales volume of rice brew declined. So the rice were left, thankfully, because of which his family members did not have to starve.

No matter what, although it was trivial, the new yeast might be helpful to the rice brew business of his family, so Zhang Tie felt a bit pleased with himself.

Having not checked the basic attributes of the Castle of Black Iron for a long time, he then opened the basic attributes panel.

—Castle of Black Iron

—Length: 1 Krosa

—Width: 1 Krosa

—Aura value: 31637

—Merit value: 6338

—Basic energy storage: 712

—Special output: basic aura yeast

The aura value and basic energy storage were still within Zhang Tie's expectations. The basic energy storage had remained unchanged for a long time after completing one time's topographic

transformation and the last two times' evolution and mutation of yeasts. These were the remaining points out of the 4000-odd basic energy value that he had accumulated through mining. It delighted him that the aura values in the Castle of Black Iron increased over 1000 per day now.

However, the surging merit value greatly startled him. He remembered that after several times' consumption, the last time he checked, it was only a bit more than 1000, which even included him saving Salvey. How could it have become over 6000 so quickly? The sudden increase of more than 5000 merit points was greater than what he had obtained after killing Snade and Huck. What was happening?

Zhang Tie hurriedly opened the log of merit value and checked it with great care.

—Do the righteous thing for the Gods. You have ended the evil souls in the cell on the underground floor 3 in Blackhot City prison. By spreading the Gods' mercy in the secular world and punishing the evil people, you have obtained 5179 merit points as a compensation.

Zhang Tie was so happy that he almost jumped into the air. After shutting off the log's and attributes' window, he rushed towards the small tree jubilantly.

On the same twig where the last Fruit of Brilliance had grown up was hanging another golden and round Fruit of Brilliance.

—Fruit of Brilliance has become ripe. Usage: Pick and directly eat it. Notice: The fruit cannot be taken out of the Castle of Black Iron. After twelve hours of having been picked off the tree, its energy and vitality will gradually decline.

'Is this the award for killing those scumbags that day? It's too cool!'

Zhang Tie burst out laughing before touching a button on the top of the dialogue box. He then saw the familiar words, seemingly telling him about how the Fruit of Brilliance was formed.

—The deteriorating glorious rays will definitely be used after the death of the sinners. The soul of the sinners shall return to the Dark Land, while the glorious rays of the soul shall remain. The glorious rays are a force that is granted to the soul by the Creator and should not be desecrated. The glorious rays belong to the brave men who spread the righteousness of the Gods. As a brave fighter who brandished your blade against evil, you will earn glorious rays as you judge evil. The glorious rays of the soul will coexist within you, making you stronger.

'It must be because of that.'

Zhang Tie shut off this dialogue box with satisfaction and picked the Fruit of Brilliance without any hesitation. After sitting down with legs crossed, he threw this fruit into his mouth and broke it with one bite.

What happened next was the same as when he ate the first Fruit of Brilliance. Zhang Tie felt his body become completely translucent while the gold fog from the Fruit of Brilliance constantly rose up from his mouth and the inside of his body. Afterwards, they converged by wisps into a swirling golden fog in his mind. It gradually became denser and much brighter as it expanded.

'Yeah, yeah, yeah!'

Zhang Tie's soul was cheering, expressing an inexpressible delight.

Finally, when the wisps of golden fog completely converged into that golden radiance in Zhang Tie's mind, his spiritual energy surged to thrice its size at once.

If Zhang Tie's spiritual energy was a slim bamboo before, that bamboo had become a thick and stout tree now. With the addition of the spiritual energy of the scumbags in the dark cell, Zhang Tie increased his spiritual energy by three times. Along with the one brought by the nine Wild Wolf Seven-strength Fruits, his present spiritual energy was at least 30-40 times greater than the one he had before having the small tree.

Zhang Tie's hidden strength surged once more.

Opening his eyes, Zhang Tie felt that the world had become much more vivid and real, like a layer of thin silk had been torn from in front of his eyes.

After picking himself up from the ground, Zhang Tie felt more energetic while a powerful strength flowed across his body. That powerful strength brought him a lot of confidence; He felt like there was nothing that could not be made by him in this world.

Such a fruit was really great. Even if that bastard Samira suddenly became adorable in Zhang Tie's mind.

'Without being screwed by that guy, how could I have gotten this Fruit of Brilliance?'

After a surge of his spiritual energy, Zhang Tie abruptly felt that there one more fruit on the tree. He somehow knew it through an uncertain and indescribable spiritual sense without even having to look at it.

It was a whole new fruit in the shape of a tiny emerald green gourd. It reminded Zhang Tie of the yeast that he had created just now.

—Fruit of the Creator. Usage: Pick and directly eat it. Notice: The fruit cannot be taken out of the Castle of Black Iron. After twelve hours of having been picked off the tree, its energy and vitality will gradually decline.

—All the creations are related to infinite karma. Because of you, the basic aura yeast microorganisms appeared in this world from nowhere. They were created by you. Therefore, they belong to you. You are the father and god of this creation. The Fruit of the Creator will allow you to control all the basic aura yeast microorganisms in this world based on the material existence rule that the microorganisms follow. From now on then, your will and orders will decide their existence.

Although Zhang Tie had experienced so many surprises today, he still couldn't have imagined that the greatest surprise would appear last. This Fruit of the Creator was Zhang Tie's biggest achievement today. Because he had created the new species—basic aura yeast—he was the father and god of this basic aura yeast.

From today on, after eating this Fruit of the Creator, all the basic aura yeasts would listen to his orders. This was the most powerful control, based on the material existence rule that was followed by this kind of micro-organism.

Zhang Tie didn't know what was the most powerful control based on the material existence rule; however, he would control a new species which was also a great and a magnificent thing for him.

With curiosity and piety, Zhang Tie picked the tiny gourd-like emerald green fruit from the small tree and ate it.

After that, the moment he closed his eyes, numerous messages from the tiny gourd impressed themselves into Zhang Tie's mind by patches, while that special energy in the tiny gourd also converged with Zhang Tie's spiritual energy.

After ten minutes, Zhang Tie opened his eyes. This time, his spiritual energy hadn't increased anymore. Instead, his eyes were ravished with joy. He finally understood what was the most powerful control as he felt that he was the God, the God of the trivial yeasts of only several micrometers in diameter that he had created.

Merely with his pure spiritual energy and thoughts, he could completely control those yeasts.

'If it was not a vial of yeast fluid but a different species such as a pack of smart wild wolves or other advanced magical beasts, would I become the inherent deity of the new species which would have been created through mutation and evolution in the Castle of Black Iron..?'

When this thought suddenly flashed across Zhang Tie's mind, even he himself didn't notice that a new emotion budded in his heart. It was an emotion called - Ambition!

Chapter 164: Circumcision

Zhang Tie's revenge plan had been aborted on the next day of his release. When he prepared to aggressively seek revenge against Samira, he found out that despite him locating Samira's Business Group's base, the man had already hidden himself away.

When Zhang Tie was set free and promoted to be a second lieutenant yesterday, Samira learned of it the same evening; the Military Administration of Blackhot City had canceled his business group's supplier certificate. Scared by such an abrupt change, Samira had rolled away all the money of the Business Group and disappeared on the same evening without even giving notice to his employees.

When Zhang Tie arrived there, he found those employees were seeking for their boss, no one able to locate him. There were also many people who were bustling outside, asking for payment and goods from Samira's Business Group. The moment they found out that Samira's Business Group's supplier certificate was suddenly canceled by the Military Administration of Blackhot City, the partners rushed here; pitifully, they were still one step late.

Seeing this scene, Zhang Tie could only sigh that Samira was too cunning. Merely over one night, this guy had already slipped away.

Failing to catch Samira, Zhang Tie had to leave the base of Samira's Business Group.

Unexpectedly, only after a few days of his return, he had already managed to scare Samira away. Thinking of this, Zhang Tie became a bit arrogant.

A couple of days later, he would leave home and go to register in the Iron-Blood Camp, so the days left at home became precious. He had to hurriedly arrange and deal with his previous affairs: Donder, Iron-

Thorns Fighting Club, Hit-Plane Brotherhood, and the three girls, Pandora, Alice, and Beverly, in the short period of time left to him.

Additionally, that damned circumcision operation concerning his 'sex happiness' should also be dealt with. Otherwise, after registering in the Iron-Blood Camp, Zhang Tie was afraid that he would have less time to do that.

From adviser Vessie, Zhang Tie had learned some information about the situation outside. Besides that confrontation between the Norman Empire's army and Sun Dynasty's army in Kalur, the entire Blackson Human Clan Corridor seemed to be being pushed to be chaotic by a dark force.

Many places had broken out in small-scale wars. Some small forces were annexed by bigger forces. Blackhot City was lucky enough to get included into the map of the Norman Empire, as in other places, there were many casualties everyday in the wars, and such a chaotic situation in general.

The next day, Zhang Tie found an abacus at home. He spent an afternoon to impart the oral skills of the 'mental arithmetic by abacus' to his elder brother and asked him to copy all the content in the book.

After learning that the 'mental arithmetic by abacus' could improve his spiritual energy and accelerate its recovery, Zhang Yang opened his mouth so widely that it could even hold a chicken egg inside.

After trying it, Zhang Yang could immediately sense how 'mental arithmetic by abacus' improved and helped to recover one's spiritual energy.

With his experiences and insights in the past years, of course Zhang Yang understood how precious this 'mental arithmetic by abacus' was. In this age, any method that could be used to improve one's spiritual energy would be regarded as the top secret which could not even be purchased by money.

On the third day, Zhang Tie put away that handsome military uniform, and instead put on a proper set of plain clothes. He left home in the early morning, slid into a hospital introduced by Hista, and completed the circumcision operation at the cost of 54 silver coins.

After taking off his pants together with his underwear and lying down on the operation table, a 30-odd plump and tall nurse lifted Zhang Tie's 'bird' with two fingers and cleaned off the fresh pubic hair under it. The shaving knife was very sharp. When it touched under Zhang Tie's abdomen, he felt all chilly. Having not made this operation before, Zhang Tie was scared that the aunt would directly cut off his 'bird'. He really did not know how this operation would go.

"Hehe, that's fresh!" When shaving his pubic hair, the aunt ridiculed him with a smile. "Many kids have already taken this operation when they were just born. This is called capistraton. What's pitiful boy is that you did not discover this problem before. But when you wanted to be a man, you realized it cannot work!"

The aunt hit it directly, leaving Zhang Tie, whose pants and underwear had been taken off, lying on the operation table, feeling embarrassed all over. He had not been that embarrassed since he was born.

After shaving his pubic hair, the aunt brought a basin of water before washing it. Zhang Tie was overly embarrassed during the entire process. When she moved his 'bird' back and forth, the relentless guy abruptly became as hard as iron. Seeing that, the nurse kept giggling while washing it.

"I did not imagine that you've got such a great 'root'" Saying this, the aunt forcefully flicked his 'bird' using two hands, leaving an unexpected stimulative to Zhang Tie, whose face turned red all over in a split second.

'I've been played by an aunt?' After experiencing it for the first time, Zhang Tie felt hot blood rushing downside, making the thing below as hard as iron.

When a man's hot blood rushed down, he would find every part of the woman before him beautiful. Like now, this 30-something nurse in Zhang Tie's eyes became a bit enchanting. All in a sudden, the nurse's chest, waist, and bottom were full of an alluring sense of mature and sexy woman.

Instinctively, Zhang Tie moved his hand to her bottom.

It was very huge and soft. Although scared by his own audacious move, Zhang Tie truly felt it very stimulative.

The nurse only cast a glance at him with a smile. She then continued to help him clean it. During the process, Zhang Tie's heart pounded as he felt very stimulated by touching the nurse's butt using one hand with a layer of white nurse uniform in the middle.

Soon after, she cleaned it up. The nurse then forcefully patted Zhang Tie's untamed thing like punishing it down. "Wait a moment, the doctor will come soon!"

Then, she took the water away. Lying on the operation table, Zhang Tie was still recalling that nice feeling in his hand. This was his first time touching such a mature woman. Compared to Alice, Beverly, and Pandora, a mature woman seemed to have another special taste.

The wait passed by quickly. After lying on the table for a few minutes, a doctor came in.

It was a male doctor in a mask and hat. Zhang Tie couldn't clearly see his face. After sterilization and anesthesia, in less than ten minutes, Zhang Tie became senseless. He could only feel a bit of icyness on that thing. After a circle cut, the entire operation was completed.

Once the doctor left, the nurse carefully daubed medicine onto his wound before bundling it using gauze. Afterwards, she told Zhang Tie that he could put on his pants and underwear after getting off the table.

When he sat up, Zhang Tie looked at his thing, which was as ugly as a mummy bundled in a gauze with only the head exposed. The red-white scene was really dazzling—it was really too ugly! Additionally, covered in gauze, it felt heavy and uncomfortable, at least not as free as usual.

"Here is the gauze and medicine. Three days later, you can change medicine and the gauze by yourself. If you recover fast, it'll be okay in a week or so. Before it recovers, you should not do too many excessive activities. Watch your health. Wear loose pants so as to lessen the rubbing against it. Before going to bed, drink less. Additionally, don't think about doing bad things; otherwise you will suffer a lot!"

After telling him about the taboos, she handed a small roll of gauze and a vial of medicine to Zhang Tie. "The anesthetic effect will disappear after a while, so it'll be a bit painful for the next few days. Stand it!"

"Thanks!" Thinking of his aggressive move not long ago, Zhang Tie abruptly felt embarrassed. "Er... back then... sorry about that!"

"No need..." The nurse smiled carelessly. "Once stimulated, you kids will always be curious about doing something. That's very normal. However, at least that indicates that I'm still enchanting..."

Looking at the smiling nurse, Zhang Tie learned it that mature women would become beautiful by smiling.

"Er... will it be very painful after the anesthetic effect disappears?"

"It will feel painful for a few days. But it's still bearable. It will be okay if you don't let blood rush towards it and make it hard." Saying that, the nurse touched Zhang Tie's head. "Today, one more bad brat was made capable of bullying girls. Remember to treat well your beloved girl!"

"I know!"

Zhang Tie felt embarrassed, and scratched his head before smiling awkwardly.

After chatting with Zhang Tie for awhile and telling him about the taboos, the nurse arranged the items on the operation table and twisted her waist away.

Walking out of the operation room, Zhang Tie suddenly realized that he could be a man like others in a few days. He then felt his life being filled with sunshine and wonderful things...

...

The anesthetic effect started to disappear five minutes after Zhang Tie had left the hospital. The wound started to feel painful. But after surviving through the countless agonizing experiences in the numerous miserable practices in the Trouble-Reappearance Scenes, Zhang Tie cared nothing for this bit of pain.

During the last hour, he had removed the biggest obstacle in his path of becoming a man and bravely flirted with a nurse. Such an experience made Zhang Tie feel unbelievably proud of himself.

He felt so good, knowing that his spring will come soon. In one more week, he would be a real man, a man who could defeat women.

After leaving the hospital, Zhang Tie walked straight towards Doner's grocery store near the railway station of Blackhot City.

Under the military control, many places in Blackhot City became somewhat depressed since soldiers in dark-red military uniforms of No. 39 Division could be seen patrolling everywhere around the city. However, unexpectedly, that flea market beside the railway station was more bustling than before. The population flow there was at least 30% greater than before.

Donder remained unchanged the past three months. When Zhang Tie entered the grocery store, he found the man with his head lowered, calculating on an abacus before an account book.

Chapter 165: A Gift to Donder

Hearing Zhang Tie's cough, Donder raised his head from behind the counter. However, he didn't show any surprise, just revealed his teeth.



"Brat, you've come back here. Do you want me to invite you for a lunch?"

"Yea!"

Zhang Tie revealed an innocent smile and honestly nodded.

"No way!"

Donder's face immediately looked as hard as the door plank of the grocery store.

"If so, I will go then. Previously I thought that if you invited me for a lunch, I'll give you something as a payment for your care for me in the past years..."

After saying that, Zhang Tie pretended to leave.

"Heh heh. You want to cheat me with this trick. Brat, don't forget that I taught it to you. I've already played and become tired of this trick dozens of years ago..."

Donder smirked behind the counter, seemingly having seen through Zhang Tie's lie.

Without saying anything else, Zhang Tie just pulled out of the original book from one pocket inside his coat and waved it before Donder. With only one wave, he was sure that Donder must have already clearly seen the capitalized Chinese characters on the cover.

As was expected, when Zhang Tie pretended to leave again, Donder stopped him from behind the counter. "Wait a moment..."

Zhang Tie then turned back and stared at Donder with a smile. "How about that, you've changed your mind?"

"Wait a moment, I'll have somebody send the alcohol and dishes to our store. We'll talk here then. After two months, you look changed. You're taller now..."

Donder revealed a big smile.

Waving his head, Zhang Tie said, "Immortals Gathering Hotel!"

"What?" Although with that same smile on his face, Donder jumped up from like having been poked. He became infuriated and swore, "Bastard, do you know how much it would cost me to have a meal in Immortals Gathering Hotel? That is the most expensive Chinese hotel in Blackhot City. As it's chaotic now, the price of a meal there would be at least twice of one before!"

Zhang Tie didn't care one bit what Donder was talking about. Turning away, he went through the door.

"How about Delicacies House? That's also a nearby Chinese hotel. The dishes there are also good!"

Donder hurriedly rushed out from behind the counter.

Zhang Tie turned back and repeated for Donder's benefit, "Immortals Gathering Hotel!"

Donder gritted his teeth and glared at Zhang Tie, intending to find something in the latter's expression, but Zhang Tie looked calm, that's all. After struggling for quite a while, Donder finally compromised, "Brat, you win! If you dare to cheat me, I'll beat the sh\*t out of you!"

Zhang Tie laughed loudly and pulled Donder away.

"Wait a moment, I've got a few pages not calculated yet!"

Zhang Tie walked over there. He took up the grocery's account book, and only after a simple glance, he started to jostle down numbers on the result column. Then he turned to another page, and with another glance, he wrote down a couple more numbers, after which he turned to the third page and scrawled down the rest of the results.

In less than ten seconds, he had calculated all the three pages which would have taken Donder ten minutes to finish it.

"It's done!"

Putting down the pencil, Zhang Tie patted his hands.

"Bad\*ss, what are you scrawling on my account book..."

Dumbfounded for a while by what Zhang Tie was doing, Donder rushed over there, glaring at Zhang Tie with the solemnity of a funeral ceremony. After that, he hurriedly took up the abacus and started to calculate the numbers.

In less than three minutes, Donder's expression had changed. On the first page, none of the numbers written down by Zhang Tie were wrong.

'How could he be that fast? Even with mental arithmetic, one could not know all the results with merely one glance.'

Donder had no idea that Zhang Tie's mental arithmetic by abacus had reached a level that could not even be imagined by the boy himself after surging three more times. With merely one glance over the numbers, the answers appeared in his mind, which was one hundred times sharper than the common mental arithmetic in modern times.

"Do you believe me now?" Zhang Tie waited to the side until Donder twisted his face and looked at him with a doubtful expression. "Don't worry about the other calculations. Don't waste anymore time!"

"When did you learn such sharp mental arithmetic?"

"That's not mental arithmetic, but a side effect of Mental Arithmetic by Abacus..."

"Side effect?" Donder asked with disbelief.

"Side effect!" Zhang Tie confirmed, nodding his head.

Donder finally revealed a big smile on his face. "Well, Immortals Gathering Hotel!"

...

Immortals Gathering Hotel was the most advanced Chinese hotel in Blackhot City. Before everything, eating here for Zhang Tie was almost as difficult as climbing into the sky. The lowest per capita consumption here was never less than one gold coin.

Before the entrance to the Immortals Gathering Hotel were a pair of stony lions with Chinese characters. It was heard that the architectural style of the entire hotel was Chinese classical style: gray tiles, cornices, verdant trees, and red windows. The architectural style was unique in Blackhot City.

On the Horizontal Board were three Chinese characters 'Immortals Gathering Hotel' and two huge vertical columns with two Chinese couplets on them:

—Under a half burned oil lamp, one holds half a cup of alcohol and enjoys a fraction of happiness in the human world, though half-drunk.

—With immortal pals, friends, dishes, and alcohol, one invites fairy maidens to share the drink in the immortal house.

These couplets surrounded the three Capitalized Chinese characters in the middle: Immortals Gathering Hotel!

There was only one hotel like this in the whole of Blackhot City.

After entering through the gate of the Immortals Gathering Hotel, they saw a rock garden with rivulets flowing down and across. Two rows of blondes with plump breasts greeted them in skintight cheongsam[1] with openings reaching their thigh.

The moment Donder and Zhang Tie entered, the two rows of blondes bowed together towards them, saying in an orthodox Chinese 'Welcome', which really shocked Zhang Tie.

Ever since he was born, it was his first time seeing so many foreign girls speak Chinese in unison.

The pale yet elegant skintight cheongsom, black high-heel shoes, snow white legs, and the plump breasts that were exposed through their 'V-shaped' collar when the blondes lowered their heads almost made Zhang Tie's head spin.

Donder walking in front did not pay attention to the bowing women since he was used to it. However, Zhang Tie abruptly felt his legs go soft and almost fell down.

"What's wrong?" Donder glanced at Zhang Tie with uncertainty. "Weird, what's wrong with you today?"

At this time, cold sweat had already covered Zhang Tie's forehead. Just now, when he caught sight of the lined pairs of plump breasts, his untamed thing reacted, causing a sharp pain between his legs. Just having been circumcised, that spirited thing pained Zhang Tie so much that he almost went down and squatted on the ground.

"It's okay, it's okay!" Zhang Tie said with a trace of fear and wiped off the cold sweat from his forehead.

After, he slowly picked himself up.

'I forgot about this!'

Zhang Tie swore inside. His original plan was to let Donder bleed by spending a lot to invite him to the Immortals Gathering Hotel, the most expensive hotel in Blackhot City, which Zhang Tie had no chance to have ever visited before. Unexpectedly, he was almost killed by the cheongsam blondes outside the hotel.

With narrowed eyes, Donder glanced at Zhang Tie, then the beautiful and sexy greeting girls. Immediately, he revealed a shadow of obscene smile at the corner of his mouth.

Straightening, Zhang Tie didn't dare to look around anymore, just followed Donder inside.

"I want a quiet chartered room. Two more waiters to help lift my younger fellow who has something wrong with his body!" Donder ordered. For some reason, he emphasized the words 'younger fellow'.

With a blow of fragrant wind, two blondes arrived and started to lift Zhang Tie's arms enthusiastically.

Before refusing them, the moment he smelt the fragrance, Zhang Tie was greatly pained again and squatted down. It was his turn to glare at Donder this time.

"You're doing this on purpose, aren't you?"

"What are you talking about? What am I doing on purpose?" Donder rebutted with an innocent expression, shrugging his shoulders.

"You must have known about my thing. You dare to say that you don't know what I'm talking about? You're just playing with me!"

The blondes standing aside stared at the two people quarreling at the entrance of the Immortals Gathering Hotel with eyes wide-open.

"Do you mean you've had circumcision today?" Donder pretended to think about it for a quite while before he shouted it out. It was so loud that even people from 30 m away could hear it.

After his scream, many blondes standing nearby burst out laughing when they caught sight of Zhang Tie's awkward look squatting down on the ground. Afterwards, they realized that it was impolite to do that, so they forcefully stood it. However, they started to glance at that place under his abdomen.

'Revenge, this was definitely revenge. Donder the bastard loudly revealed my secret in public to shame me, forcing me to change to another place. I'll make him pay for it!'

Zhang Tie gritted his teeth and picked himself up from the ground without peering at the beauties nearby anymore, instead, he shouted out loudly, "Where's your most expensive chartered room? Take me in, I'm hungry!"

This time, it was Donder's turn to twist his face.

Several minutes later, in a luxurious chartered room of Immortals Gathering Hotel, Zhang Tie started to order dishes. Each dish he ordered would make Donder's fat face painfully quiver. When he ordered the eighth dish, Donder started to gaze at him with fury.

"Bad \*ss, can you even eat so many dishes?" he painfully screamed out.

Zhang Tie didn't ignore him but asked a waiter standing next to him, "Can I take them away if I can't eat them all?"

"No. The food and dishes in Immortals Gathering Hotel can only be taken away in your stomach," the waiter politely answered.

"Alright. I'll then just taste some more..."

Zhang Tie laughed loudly and ordered eight more dishes before stopping with satisfaction.

By the time he did so, Donder was already gasping with red eyes on the other side of the table.

The older man asked, "Have you finished then?"

"Yes, I have!" Zhang Tie gave him a big smile.

"Well, it's my turn now!" After saying that, Donder turned to the waiter. "Please send me two blondes. I want the coquettish ones with little clothing."

After saying that, Donder glared at Zhang Tie who was also ferociously glaring at him.

"I've forgotten, I want lark-dragon soup!"

Zhang Tie gritted his teeth and added one more dish.

"Two blondes are too few, I want two more: one on our right side, and the other on our left side. That would be more interesting!"

Donder gnashed his teeth.

"We have to drink alcohol. I want one bottle of Cloud-Immortal Alcohol!"

Zhang Tie clenched his teeth.

"We have to have dancers for alcohol. Go fetch me one voluptuous dancer here, the sexier, the better!"

Donder added one more dish for Zhang Tie.

The two then furiously glared at each other while panting like fighting roosters, killing intent filling their eyes, the reason for which could only be understood by them alone.

Feeling not right in the room, the waiter silently slid out...

Several minutes later, along with dozens of yummy dishes came a group of charming and plump blondes, accompanied by two qin [2] and drum musicians.

This meal was very painful for both Zhang Tie and Donder. Donder's heart bled for the high costs while Zhang Tie felt real pain in his wounded flesh.

It took them over an hour to finish this meal; they both looked pretty rigid by its end. Donder's fat face twitched every now and then while Zhang Tie's sweat kept rolling down his forehead. This meal almost made the two of them faint.

In the end, looking at the awkward expression of the opponent, one of them forced a smile and then the two of them burst out laughing at the same time.

Donder waved his hand to let all the dancers and musicians move away.

"Brat, you win. I've not been madder at anyone in the past dozens of years. I feel that many years younger being around you. How about that? Do you still hurt now?" Donder asked.

"Thankfully, I found that drinking alcohol can relieve pain and transfer one's attention! Later on, if anyone dares to say that you're mean, I'll spit all over his face. This meal will cost you at least 5-6 gold coins."

Zhang Tie also relaxed and leaned against the chair. The past hour was really a torture for him. It was no different from suffering a criminal penalty and more torturous than staying in the dark cell.

"5-6 gold coins? Rustic. It's not enough to even pay the women. Plus the dishes and two gold coins' chartering fee, it will at least cost me 15 gold coins!" Donder widely opened his eyes as he shouted loudly.

Zhang Tie sighed inside as 15 gold coins were even higher than his dad's one-year salary. When he was driven angry just now, he hadn't realized that, but after recovering his composure, he started to realize that it was a really great harm to Donder. It would take his grocery store at least two months to make 15 gold coins at a normal speed.

So after hearing that, Zhang Tie felt embarrassed and scratched his head. After thinking for a while, he directly pulled out of the book from inside his coat and threw it to Donder, who was sitting on the opposite end of the table.

Donder solemnly took it and seriously skimmed it from beginning to end. As a person who excelled at making calculations on a real abacus, of course, he understood the basic principles of Mental Arithmetic by Abacus.

"Hmm, this is a mental arithmetic based on virtual abacus. It's fashionable and one level superior to directly calculating on a real abacus. You didn't cheat me, brat. This meal is worthwhile!"

After reading the entire book, Donder satisfactorily nodded before putting it into his coat.

Hearing Donder's reply, Zhang Tie smiled, shaking his head.

Donder was stunned.

"What? Am I not right?"

Zhang Tie didn't speak but pointed at his own mouth, shaping his mouth in silent words 'spiritual energy'.

Since Donder had taught him the lip reading skill, which was a communicative skill used by many pioneers, Zhang Tie was sure that the older men could clearly understand what he was saying.

They were in a chartered room in a hotel, so Zhang Tie had to be careful. Now even if someone was eavesdropping, he could not hear anything about the secret.

As expected, seeing Zhang Tie's mouth shapes, Donder was dumbfounded. His eyes popped out with disbelief.

So Zhang Tie continued by moving his lips, "By practicing mental arithmetic by abacus, you can improve your spiritual energy. I've tried it. This might be the easiest way for everybody to grasp the secret to improve one's spiritual energy..."

Shocked, Donder picked himself up from the ground where he had crashed next to the table. He opened his mouth, seemingly wanting to shout out from amazement, but he knew better and covered his mouth with a hand.

In any place, any method that could be used to raise one's spiritual energy would be very important.

He then just gazed at Zhang Tie without even winking.

Zhang Tie nodded seriously.

...

After departing from Donder and returning home, it was almost dark. On the way back home, Zhang Tie took a look at the grains store. He found that the price of 25 kg of rice had truly risen to 10 silver coins, which was twice as high as three months ago. Such a high price would definitely lay a heavy burden on many commoners. Although it was not very severe, not to the point of the sky collapsing anyway, such a high rise had already greatly influenced many families' daily lives. They started to live in a more frugal way.

In the afternoon, Zhang Tie had also went to the Iron-Thorns Fighting Club. What made him disappointed was that the gate of the fighting club was tightly closed this time. It seemed to have been suspended for a few days.

In the past month, many things in Blackhot City had changed.

Avenue Bright, the most prosperous place in Blackhot City seemed to have lost its original brilliance. Almost one third of the stores had been closed. As to the rest, although they opened, they weren't as sought out as before.

In the entire Avenue Bright, many roadside stores and houses were marked with transfer and for sale.

The prices of fixed assets in Blackhot City like real estates started to sharply decline; many people were dumping them. In contrast, the prices of daily necessities like food, weapons, and medicine materials had started to surge. Even prices of resources like coal, iron, and steel had started to slowly raise. This was the current condition of Blackhot City that Zhang Tie saw after circling around for half a day. It did not look like a promising sign.

When Zhang Tie slowly returned home, he found that the door of his house was encircled by a great many people, making the outside of his house noisy. It seemed that someone was stirring up trouble there...

...

Chapter 166: Duel

Bagdad looked outstanding among the crowd because of his height. Besides him, Zhang Tie also caught sight of Barley, Hista, Leit, and Doug. With the exception of Sharwin, all the other members of the Hit-Plane Brotherhood had gathered here.

There were more than 30 people circling the door of his house, making it noisy over there. Besides the members of the Brotherhood and the group of Gods Bliss Association, Zhang Tie also saw Captain Kerlin and Mr. Zerom along with the other two teachers of the Temporary Supervision Committee. As for the other people, some of them were onlookers while the rest were loudly shouting.

After taking in that scene, Zhang Tie knew that the event of when he had broken Zuhair's neck in the canteen of Wild Wolf Castle had finally broken out after a few days' development.

Judging by how much time had passed since everyone returned to now, the duel was about to start. Zuhair's family would have had enough time after receiving the notice of their boy's death to figure out Zhang Tie's background, and most likely, prepare well to start a duel with him.

A bunch of people were surrounding the house. Someone wanted to rush inside, but Zhang Tie's elder brother forcefully held them back with an excuse that Zhang Tie was not home. However, there were still someone who didn't believe that and tried to use force to enter the house to find him.

A person jumped at Zhang Tie's elder brother, shouting out loudly, "Call Zhang Tie out. He killed my younger brother. Now, according to the rules of the Norman Empire, I would like to challenge him to a duel. Don't be as timid as a rabbit!"

"Come out, come out, call the killer out! If Zhang Tie doesn't come out, we will go in!"

Many people started to clamor.

"Zhang Tie is definitely not at home. Wait a moment, don't be impulsive..." Barley tried to reason with the crowd.

Several teachers of the Temporary Supervision Committee in the survival training stood a bit farther away with neutral stances. They didn't take sides with either of the two parties. According to the rules of the Norman Empire, their role now was only act as witnesses of a fair duel between Zuhair's family members and Zhang Tie. This was also one of the aftermath tasks of survival training.

"Zhang Tie must have hidden himself. He wants to escape from the duel. Let's rush inside to catch him!" someone started to loudly shout from the crowd, inciting others to break through.

"Who dare to come in, this father will slay him here!" Zhang Tie's elder brother roared, immediately pulling out the long sword on his waist and pointing it at those who wanted to rush into the house.

Seeing Zhang Tie's elder brother pulling out his long sword, the one who was jumping up in the crowd did not hesitate to pull out his own long sword too. At the same time, the sounds of 'ceng', 'ceng', 'ceng' could be heard everywhere. Many people had already pulled out their long swords, bringing a dense smell of iron in the air. Seeing this, some onlookers hurriedly ran away.

"Who said I was hiding?"

At the most dangerous moment, Zhang Tie's voice could be heard. Everybody turned their heads to see him slowly walk towards them on the sidewalk.

At the sight of him, his elder brother looked a bit worried, while the eyes of the members of the Brotherhood were filled with concern. In contrast, the inciters' eyes were filled with pleasure at his misfortune.



The crowd separated, allowing Zhang Tie to calmly walk through.

"You're Zhang Tie?"

At the sight of Zhang Tie, that person who had been in confrontation with his elder brother turned back and ferociously glared at him.

Judging from that person's face, which was a bit similar to Zuhair's, Zhang Tie guessed who that person was.

"You're Zuhair's elder brother?"

"Right, was it you who killed Zuhair in the survival training?"

"Right, he deserved to die, so I killed him!" Zhang Tie calmly admitted it.

Hearing that, the person walked towards Zhang Tie, a long sword in his hand...

At that moment, a hand stopped him. Zerom had moved to stand between the two.

"It is your right to start a duel with Zhang Tie; Zhang Tie cannot refuse it. However, the duel has to proceed with fairness. Private killing in revenge is definitely forbidden, unless you want to be a murderer who is wanted across the Norman Empire. "

That person then stopped and glared at Zhang Tie with a death-filled look before forcefully returning his long sword into the sheath on his waist.

During this period, Zhang Tie greeted the surrounding friends and relatives with a smile, including Captain Kerlin and the teachers of the Temporary Supervision Committee. His careless look made the guys who were casting furious glare at him gnash their teeth.

"Zhang Tie, in the survival training, based on the rules of barbarous survival training of the Norman Empire, you killed Zuhair in public, so you should face any request for a duel from anyone of Zuhair's blood-tied relatives within three generations. You cannot refuse it. I have to warn you that in the duel, like how when you killed Zuhair, Zuhair's family members will not assume any responsibility if they kill you!" Zerom warned Zhang Tie once more with a solemn expression.

"Thanks for you warning, Mr. Zerom. I accept the request for a duel from Zuhair's family at any time and any place!" he calmly said, his expression not changing at all. Since the day he had killed Zuhair, he was waiting for today.

Zhang Tie's calm made even Mr. Zerom and Captain Kerlin, who had been staring at him, a bit startled. With the exception of Zhang Tie's elder brother, nobody at the present, including Zerom and Captain Kerlin, knew that Zhang Tie had encountered many things since he returned home two days ago. Now, he was not the same boy of before.

"According to the dueling rules of the Norman Empire, long-ranged weapons like bows and arrows, javelins, hidden weapons, and crossbow bolts, as well as pets, riding, and poisonous substances are prohibited. Each dueler can only bring two weapons at most. I have to warn you of this in advance; it was especially requested by Zuhair's family members!" a teacher standing nearby warned Zhang Tie once again.

"I know!"

Zhang Tie nodded.

"Now that you've agreed, here is the duel certificate. You two sign on it. According to the laws of the Norman Empire, the duel will start seven days after the signing of this certificate. It will be held at your school, the Seventh National Male Middle School. You two have one week to prepare for it. During the period, according to laws of the Norman Empire, if either of you runs away from this duel, he will become a wanted man across the whole Norman Empire. After being caught, the one that had escaped would be lowered to become a guilty slave while his family members' status would also be degraded. "

After saying this, the teacher pulled out a drafted duel certificate from his pocket and let Zhang Tie and Zuhair's elder brother sign on it.

After a ferocious glare at Zhang Tie, Zuhair's elder brother took the pencil and signed his name without any hesitation.

When Zhang Tie took the pen, his elder brother rushed and shouted loudly, "I will participate in this duel on behalf of my younger brother!"

"No, this duel can only be accepted by Zhang Tie himself. No one else can represent him!"

With a shake of his head, Captain Kerlin stretched out his arm to stop Zhang Yang who was driven to a bout of impulsiveness.

"Bighead..!" the members of the Brotherhood started to shout in unison.

Zhang Tie just smiled at them, who cared about his well-being, before signing his name on the duel certificate without any hesitation. When he did so, he learned that Zuhair's elder brother was named Sodor.

After Zhang Tie signed his name, Sodor burst out laughing. Glaring at Zhang Tie, he sniggered, "Brat, you've seven days left, pray for yourself. Seven days later, I'll break your bones before chopping off your head to make you pay for Zuhair!"

"Idiot!"

Zhang Tie showed the whites of his eyes, not caring about the man before him at all.

'What's Sodor's level, LV 4, LV5, or LV 6? Ma Long in the dark cell looked much more powerful than him. I don't need to worry about the duel with him at all!'

After achieving their goal here, Sodor and his men left. They were no longer afraid that Zhang Tie would escape anymore. If he ran now, they would be even happier as a guilty slave and the family that contained a guilty slave would suffer a lot.

As Sodor and his men left, Captain Kerlin and the other teachers who had witnessed and arranged the signing of the duel also left in case of gossip.

When Captain Kerlin was about to leave, Zhang Tie called him, "Captain Kerlin!"

"I'm not captain anymore, call me Instructor Kerlin!"

The one-eyed man forced out a helpless smile. The City Guard had already ceased to exist except in name. The one-eyed man felt shamed by letting others call him captain anymore. The appellation that he liked before sounded a bit jarring now.

"Thank you!"

Zhang Tie sincerely bowed in front of the one-eyed man. If this person hadn't presented him the book of Iron-Blood Fist skill, although alive, Zhang Tie would have never been set up this well.

Scratching his head, the one-eyed man asked, "What for?"

"Do you remember what you told me on that night when I was recuperating in the Wild Wolf Castle? Because of a couple reasons, I've become that one in a hundred now!"

Zhang Tie believed that the one-eyed man could understand what he was talking about.

As expected, upon hearing Zhang Tie's words, the one-eyed man became stunned for awhile before widely opening his eyes and staring at Zhang Tie, like having seen a ghost.

Finally, the one-eyed man took a deep breath to recover his composure. "Perhaps this was the best decision that I've made in my life. I'll be expecting to see your performance seven days later!"

After saying this, he glanced at Zhang Tie again before leaving. Most of the onlookers already left by now.

This left only the members of the Brotherhood outside Zhang Tie's house.

As soon as they heard that Sodor was here to request a duel with Zhang Tie, Barley and the other members of the Brotherhood had rushed over. In the past two days, the news that Zhang Tie had killed Zuhair spread like wildfire. It went not only through their school, but others, too. The event became the biggest news among the students that had attended this survival training in Blackhot City.

The Brotherhood always kept an eye on how this event was developing. Previously, they had set to gather tomorrow, but unexpectedly, Sodor, the elder brother of Zuhair, had decided to find Zhang Tie trouble today. In case their friend might suffer a big loss when he met Sodor, they hurriedly followed the mass here to boost their companion's morale.

Knowing that Zhang Tie had something to explain to his family members, Barley and the other members of the Brotherhood also left after warning Zhang Tie to be careful.

But before Barley could leave, Zhang Tie had pulled him close to whisper something in his ear. Upon hearing the words, Barley popped out his eyes.

Zhang Tie had told him two things: first, he was already LV 4 now and had formed Iron-Blood hidden strength; second, he was a second lieutenant of No. 39 Division of Iron-Horn Army of the Norman Empire.

...

Even after leaving the Zhang house several hundreds meters behind, Barley still felt his head humming. At the same time, his legs felt soft, like stepping onto cotton. While Hista and Bagdad were concerned and discussed the duel in seven days, only Leit found that Barley was a bit absent-minded.

On a path with fewer people, Leit asked, "Barley, what did Bighead tell you just now. You don't look good."

Woken up by Leit, Barley shook his head before looking around and realizing that they were already far away from Zhang's family.

"It's not convenient to talk about it just now. Bighead told me two things, he wanted me to tell you not to worry about his duel!"

"What?"

Everybody curiously stared at Barley .

Barley made a hand gesture for the four people move closer to him. Afterwards, he repeated the two things that Zhang Tie had told him which made all the other animals dumbfounded...

...

The moment Zhang Tie returned home, he saw his mom's worrisome look. Without any hesitation, he directly knelt down in front of her when he entered the house.

"Mom, sorry, you son made you worried once again..."

Previously, as Sodor and his men were shouting outside the door by requesting a duel with Zhang Tie, his mom had heard them all, including how Zhang Tie had killed Zuhair in the survival training. Touching Zhang Tie's face and seeing him kneeling down in front of her, his mom immediately burst into tears.

Although he had described the survival training life as simple and interesting as living in the suburbs, nobody knew how much bitterness and how many dangers he had experienced. What happened today broke the white lie that Zhang Tie had fabricated before his dad and mom, exposing the troubles that he had experienced in the survival training to them.

"Tell me how you've suffered a lot and encountered many dangers in this survival training, even almost losing your life! Mom knows your temperament. If not being forced to that degree, you would never kill anyone!"

Zhang Tie nodded and tears slipped down his cheeks. "They didn't want me to come back alive. I didn't want to be set up or see mom cry holding my ash case everyday. So I killed him. Will you forgive me, mom?"

"It's all my fault, I couldn't even protect my own younger brother, leaving you to be bullied by others..." Zhang Yang's tears also fell down his face, and he knelt down in front of mom. "Mom, just condemn me!"

"I will not condemn either of you. Zhang Tie, well done..." Touching her sons' faces, their mom also started crying as she spoke in a tone as hard as iron and steel. "Remember, from today on, no matter who wants to kill you brothers, even if the emperor, kill them all! Your dad and I are very satisfied with

you two. As long as you two can survive, your dad and I will feel like we've not lived in vain. If there's something wrong with you brothers' lives, your dad and I will not feel like living on either.

"So if you meet something that endangers your lives, don't care about your dad and I, just look after yourselves and live on well. This is what we would like to see most. Remember, you're from Zhang family, and you are Chinese. We Chinese is one most honorable human race, and the reincarnation of the Heaven's Dao. As a big family, Zhang is an honorable family name. We Chinese Zhang prefer to fight to death instead of kneeling down to seek for survival, in the sky or under the ground. Nobody can bully our Zhang family in this world..."

#### Chapter 167: It's Yours

The day after circumcision was most insufferable. Before the untamed thing's head was completely exposed, as long as he put on his pants and took a walk, the friction between its head and the underwear would stimulate Zhang Tie so his body quivered all over. So he had to be meticulous even for a walk.

Besides, the wounds also started to hurt.

It was estimated that the anesthetic effect wouldn't completely wear off instantly, so he didn't feel very painful on that very day. However, on the second day, after all the senses had absolutely recovered, the impact of the operation was fully displayed. Thinking back to that he and Donder had even got in a fight in the Immortals Gathering Hotel, which left him to be tortured by several women fetched by Donder, Zhang Tie's sweat beaded all over his forehead. If it was today, he would never do it as it was too foolish.

Two days later, he would have to leave home and register in the Iron-Blood Camp. Six days later, he would face the first duel in his life.

Considering that it was not comfortable to move, Zhang Tie had to stay at home honestly.

In the eyes of dad and mom, he had truly grown up this time.

Zhang Tie's dad was also taking a rest today. Due to various reasons, the factory that he worked in suffered from an inefficient capacity utilization rate this last month.

Dad said that some Norman Empire's engineers were employed in their factory. They were commissioning several new installation modules on the assembly line of the factory. After the installation of the modules, the factory would produce uniformed steel components. The Norman Empire's engineers said the components were the composite modules of a battle castle. After that, half of the production capacity in his dad's steel mill would be used to produce the composite modules of battle castles.

After devouring Blackhot City, the Norman Empire had started to digest the production of Blackhot City on all aspects. The output of those overtaken productions had only one target - preparing for the war.

This made Zhang Tie slightly muddle-headed. Did it mean that the decision makers of the Norman Empire were preparing for an incoming even bigger war? Zhang Tie recalled Zerom's words from the survival training, 'the chaotic world is coming', and his heart pounded swifter with a feeling of urgency.

Sometimes, what was known by big figures would not be known by small figures. This was small figures' grief. The science teacher called this information asymmetry, which indicated the asymmetry between real forces, benefits, and people's rights.

It was said that before the Catastrophe there was a miraculous tool called the Internet. It could help people to keep in touch with each other even hundreds of millions miles away. Everyone could share their news with other people. The Internet could connect everybody on the entire continent. People could easily acquire large amounts of knowledge from the Internet and also learn what happened across the entire continent, even in the most remote areas.

That was humanity's first time using magic called science and technologies to construct an information sharing platform that covered all the human kind. The largest advantage of this kind of platform was the reduction of the information asymmetry between benefits and real forces due to different knowledge levels between people of different standing, greatly advancing social fairness. Commoners all liked this Internet and used their every effort to develop this Internet. However, some big figures who wanted to use information asymmetry to maintain their ruling position and vested interests hated it very much and did all they good to destroy it.

This battle didn't end until the appearance of the Catastrophe and the Star of the God, which grabbed away the marvelous Internet from human beings forever, sending them back to the age of extreme information asymmetry...

After the operation, Zhang Tie stayed at home for two days, during which he calmly lived with his family members and recuperated.

He didn't plan to go outside these days if there was nothing urgent to deal with. Every second at home was precious for him. However, on the early morning of the third day after he took the circumcision, a little boy brought a letter to Zhang Tie's house. Reading it, Zhang Tie had to put on informal clothes and go out again.

It was Donder who had written the letter, asking Zhang Tie to come to the grocery store today no matter what.

The calligraphy of the letter was very familiar. There was even a very hard to locate hidden mark that Donder had taught him to identify whether the letter was true or not.

The little boy said that the boss of the grocery store had given him one silver coin to deliver the letter here.

Zhang Tie didn't doubt the little boy's words, but he became somewhat curious about when Donder had become this generous. A silver coin? If it was a normal day, that mean guy would not even pay ten copper coins.

After telling his family members, Zhang Tie went out. He spent several copper coins for a trolleybus and arrived at Donder's grocery store in less than 20 minutes.

The grocery store had not opened today, leaving only one door half opened, seemingly waiting for Zhang Tie. He entered and saw Donder counting something with another person over the counter.

"Wait a moment, I'll soon be free!" Donder told Zhang Tie after turning a head to see his entrance. He then continuing counting the items in the store.

Zhang Tie knew the person who was working together with Donder. He was Faires, a guy as thin as a monkey and the boss of another, bigger grocery store near the flea market of the railway station. In the past two years, as he had looked with interest at Donder's grocery store's location, he had tried many times to buy it, but previously, Donder had never agreed. Yet judging from the present scene, Donder must have sold his grocery store to him this time.

For some reason, Zhang Tie felt that Donder's personality was totally different from before.

Zhang Tie then calmly waited for more than ten minutes before the two shop owners finished counting the goods.

After that, Faires satisfactorily covered his account book and said in a tentative way, "Mr. Donder, the records on your account book well match the items in your grocery store. You know, as Blackhot City is suffering from a depressed economy and many stores have already closed, many rich men have also left. Therefore I might not give you as much as before!"

"What's your price!" Donder calmly asked.

"60% of the previous price; plus your store and the goods inside, 300 gold coins in all; how about that?" Faires's eyes glittered with a shadow of cunning as he observed Donder's expression.

Hearing this price, Donder still kept silent while Zhang Tie almost jumped up. Even though the Blackhot City had experienced the crisis, the business of this grocery store was not influenced that much.

On the contrary, its business even improved in the past three months. Due to the large amount of human flow near the railway station, this place was even more bustling than before. Even if the Blackhot City's properties were a bit devalued, the items in this store were already worth a lot by themselves. For instance, that powerful rat poison and those crystals. 300 gold coins were really too low.

Donder opened his mouth. "400 gold coins!"

For some reason, Donder, who was always complaining normally, only reported his quotation, nothing more.

Faires tried his best to calmly observe Donder's face with a pair of brown eyes for over ten seconds, seemingly wanting to see through something. In the end, he didn't even bargain anymore, just nodded. "Fine, 400 gold coins!"

After that, Faires called the notary who brought the transaction text. Donder then took out the certificate of the store while Faires took out 400 gold coins, the notary fee, and other taxes. Soon after, they completed the trade.

"I need a lad who knows this place. The first year, I'll pay you 35 silver coins a month; the second year, you'll receive a trading bonus. If you can do it well, I'll promote you to a manager. How about coming over to help me?"

Out of Zhang Tie's expectation, after the trading, Faires thought about employing him to continue working here for him.

"Thanks, I've got another job!" Zhang Tie politely refused.

Faires felt pity as he stared at Zhang Tie. "Never mind, if you want to work here, I'll welcome you at any time! It's really difficult to foster a lad who knows what he's doing!"

"Let's go then!" Donder told Zhang Tie after putting away his purse. They then left the grocery store.

Donder looked strange today. Zhang Tie felt like saying something the whole time, but he had forgotten how to open his mouth. Although Donder selling his grocery store had nothing to do with him, not knowing the reason for it, still left Zhang Tie unsatisfied.

After walking roughly 50 m with Donder, Zhang Tie finally couldn't stand it anymore. "Why did you sell the grocery store?"

Donder turned his head and peered at Zhang Tie. He then shook his head. "I thought that you could hold it a bit longer, but it seems that you're still not that stable!"

'Bastard!' Zhang Tie swore in his mind.

However, since he had already asked the question, he didn't need to pretend anymore, so he immediately argued, "Do you mean that I've made you go bankrupt by that meal? If it's true, I'm very sorry!"

"You can make me go bankrupt by one meal of over 10 gold coins?" Donder cast a contemptuous eye onto Zhang Tie. "That consumption yesterday is normal, you're really a rustic from the remote area of Blackhot City. I've even been to a place where a cup of water would cost 100 gold coins!"

A cup of water would cost you 100 gold coins? Zhang Tie's mouth twitched as he felt that Donder was boosting. "There has never been such a place in this world. 100 coins would be equal to my dad's 89 years' salary!"

Zhang Tie had an expression of clear disbelief.

Donder kept silent, walking on ahead of Zhang Tie. After 10 more minutes, he guided Zhang Tie before a six-story apartment building that occupied over 200 square meters on the Avenue Monet in the east of Blackhot City.

"How about this building?" Donder asked Zhang Tie.

"Not bad!" Zhang Tie casually answered.

"Then it's yours from now on!" Donder also casually said.

Zhang Tie stared dumbfounded.

Chapter 168: Ugly Stone



The exterior wall of the entire apartment was made of dark red bricks and gray stones, which looked pretty cool and clean. In the balcony of each floor, there was a flaxen windowsill. On the rails of the windowsills, many potted plants were placed. The gate of the apartment building was facing Avenue Monet. Walking out of the gate, you needed to go down over ten stairs before reaching the sidewalk. On both sides of the stairs, one could see a part of the first floor apartment close to the avenue. Besides, there were two parterres filled with red maples and Chinese roses.

The pitch-black wrought iron gate of the apartment looked pretty firm and delicate. The brass handle was very clean. Generally, everything in this apartment building matched a man of good standing who had received a good education and had a nice income in Blackhot City: clean, fresh, graceful, the surrounding environment was neither dirty and chaotic nor brilliant.

In Zhang Tie's mind, the traders that went about soliciting business deals in bulk commodity exchanges, doctors that carried out circumcision operations for him, teachers like Zerom and Captain Kerlin at school, the graceful businessmen who had small business in Blackhot City and that notary he met today should live in such an apartment.

There were numerous apartment buildings like this one in Blackhot City, tall or low. They were mostly favored by renters. That bastard Hista dreamed of having such an apartment one day so that he could collect rents every month. With the money, he could then indulge with women everyday.

Seeing Zhang Tie dumbfounded, Donder added, "What? You're scared to be seen an idiot with only such a small apartment building?"

Zhang Tie stared at Donder with disbelief. "Are you kidding me? Have you eaten something wrong or what? I knew that you were not right when I caught sight of you today. I'll check if you've caught a fever or something..."

Saying this, Zhang Tie pretended to touch Donder's forehead, only to get a 'Pa' sound from Donder who slapped his hand away.

Donder then cast a ferocious glare at him. "Bastard, as I've said, you're really rustic. This apartment only cost me several thousand gold coins when I bought it several years ago. It's cheaper now. Someone would spend it by a few meals. It's nothing at all. You really think it's something that big?"

When Donder mocked Zhang Tie, he walked up the stairs of the apartment building with a sound of 'dong dong dong'. After taking out a key, he inserted it into the lock and rotated it two circles before opening that gate.

"Come on in, I need you for something!"

Scratching his head, Zhang Tie followed Donder in.

Behind the gate was a thick door mat. The apartment was paved with a clean gray wooden floor. Entering it, Zhang Tie raised his head up and caught sight of a beautiful layer of triangular glass ceiling, from where sufficient sunlight could reach inside the room. The spiral stairs inside could directly lead to the roof. From the second floor upwards, each floor would contain two apartments, face to face with each other with an aisle between them.

Donder didn't go upstairs, instead, he passed by some tall green plants on the left of the stairs before opening a door of a residence.

The moment Zhang Tie entered, Donder locked the door from inside.

This was a residence on floor 1. Its furniture: sofa and various other things inside the room were well prepared. All the furniture gave a fresh wooden fragrance.

Before Zhang Tie could enjoy them carefully for a bit longer, Donder had already led him into a tranquil study after passing by an aisle. The moment Donder pressed a hidden switch, a bookcase had slid way, revealing a door behind it. After opening this door, Zhang Tie saw stone stairs stretching down towards a basement.

On the walls of the staircase hung expensive ten thousands-year fluorite lamps which rendered the entire basement pale green.

"After entering here, remember to close the door of the basement. After doing so from inside, the bookcase outside will automatically slid back to its original place and all the safety settings will be triggered on. Even if someone wants to break it from outside using force, it would cost them a long time..." Donder explained, turning back his head while walking first.

'Bang!'

After closing the door, Zhang Tie heard a heavy and dreary sound made by the door of this basement, like a safe being closed. He had not imagined that the thick room door was made of steel, its surface only brushed with a layer of wood paint.

The basement was very large, covering more than 100 square meters. It had a look of a temporary asylum. There was a table, several lockers, big and small, and some other items. What was out of Zhang Tie's expectation was that there were no less than four wardrobes of different sizes here, and a huge mirror. What did Donder prepare so many clothes here for? To enjoy them in front of the mirror by himself?

Donder walked towards a chair and told Zhang Tie to sit down as well.

At this moment, Zhang Tie was completely filled with curiosity. Everything that the mean boss of the grocery store did today was filled with a sense of mystery.

"I know you must have a lot of questions now!" Donder said, staring at Zhang Tie.

With a sense of depression, Zhang Tie scratched his head. "What are you doing this for today? I feel like you've become stranger!"

"Because I have to leave the Blackhot City soon. I have to deal with the things here!"

"You want to go?" Shocked, Zhang Tie stared at Donder. "Why?"

"Because of you!" Donder looked at Zhang Tie with a smile. "Previously, I didn't know when I could leave Blackhot City. But because of you, I will do so soon. Do you know that I've not been back home for three decades? Previously, I thought that I could only have a chance to go back home when I was old enough. But because of you, I can do so several decades in advance. So I have to thank you!"

"Because of me?"

Zhang Tie became even more surprised.

"Can you not widely open your eyes and point at your own nose? This looks is too rustic!" Donder smiled. "Do you remember that that you have given me? Do you know its real value?"

"Hmm, this book can improve one's spiritual energy. It should be very precious!"

"It's not just precious!" Donder shook his head. "Do you remember that story about an ugly stone that I've told you before. That is an ugly store."

Zhang Tie could still clearly remember the story about an ugly stone. It was one of the stories that Donder had told him. Once upon a time, an ugly stone was found by a stonemason in a mountain village. Because that stone was very hard, the stonemason then used it as a stone anvil. He found it was very useful and kept using it for dozens of years.

One day, a greater blacksmith came to the village and found that stone too. He felt that the stone might be an iron ore. Therefore, he cut off a small piece of it and took it back. When he returned home, he made it into a horseshoe and sold it for dozens of copper coins. The blacksmith was very satisfied about it.

After the blacksmith left, another, even greater master swordsmith felt that the stone might be an aerosiderite. Therefore, he also cut off a piece of it and took it back home. He then built it into a precious sharp sword and sold it for several hundreds of gold coins.

Later, an even greater master clockmaker found that aerosiderite and cut off a piece of it. He used the metal inside it to create several pocket watches in the series of aerosiderite. He finally sold them for thousands of gold coins.

After the arrival of the master clockmaker, a carving master found that piece of stone and directly took away the remainder of it. After a delicate carving, he got tens of thousands of gold coins from it.

Finally, the value of the stone was identified by an emperor. After smelting the stone again, the emperor extracted the metal from inside the stone and made it into the seal of the empire, which was worth hundreds of millions of gold coins...

This story told that the same thing would have different value in different people's eyes.

Zhang Tie understood it, but he also became confused at the same time.

"Like how human exercise their muscles, one's spiritual energy is mainly carried out through visualization. The things being visualized to exercise one's spiritual energy are top secret knowledge. Additionally, all the visualizations are a deep conscious activity which demands ardor and need extremely high spiritual stability and sustainability, which pose a very high requirement for one's willingness and endurance.

"Previously, I've never seen anybody who could exercise spiritual energy before twelve years old. Neither have I heard of any method of cultivation that could improve kids and youths' spiritual energy. Although 'Mental Arithmetic by Abacus' looks simple, it can help a person start exercising spiritual energy from six years old, or even from five.

"Besides, its threshold is very low, making it available for almost everybody. Although the effects of the 'Mental Arithmetic by Abacus' is weak, through visualizations and improvement of one's spiritual energy, people could lay a solid foundation for the further exercise requiring superior spiritual energy. This is the true value of 'Mental Arithmetic by Abacus', a method that could be learned even at a very young age to improve one's spiritual energy. Additionally, it's a beginner's textbook for improving one's spiritual energy. Do you understand it's value now?"

"Hmm... it really seems a bit useful to improve one's spiritual energy since young!"

Zhang Tie smirked.

"A bit useful?" Donder gaped at Zhang Tie, his voice high.

Infuriated as if having been insulted, he jumped up from the chair and fiercely flicked Zhang Tie's forehead with a finger.

"Bad \*ss, are you an idiot or what? For idiots like you, it's a bit useful. However, have you ever imagined its effect if 10 million people, 100 million people, 0.1 billion people, or several billions of people, even tens of billions of Chinese people could learn it?"

"It could help many people who could not improve their spiritual energy any more to easily exercise it so that they could easily improve themselves and break through the bottlenecks in their cultivation. It could enable many Chinese youths to lay a solid foundation for a good spiritual energy, which could help them a lot in their future development.

"Do you know how many genius' and powerful men would be seen among Chinese in the future, you idiot!"

Donder flicked Zhang Tie's forehead once again before sitting down, heavily panting.

Chapter 169: News about the Holy War

Looking at Donder who was so excited, Zhang Tie became stunned as he had not imagined that such righteous words could come from that mean guy. What made him even more amazed was that the book that he had picked up from the roadside stall could play such a huge role.

Everything that had happened today made Zhang Tie muddle-headed. Soon after, he recovered his composure, realizing a lot of useful information from Donder's words.

First, the cultivation of spiritual energy mainly relied on visualizations. However, before the secret of 'Mental Arithmetic by Abacus' was discovered, it seemed that the greater part of methods being used to cultivate one's spiritual energy were very sophisticated and hard to master. It was an especially tough challenge for young people and kids not yet twelve years old as they didn't have a stable temperament.

Second, for a common boss of a grocery store in Blackhot City, it was not his place to care about the survival and development of Chinese. Their rise and fall were several millions of miles away from his daily life.

"Does me giving you the book mean so much?" Zhang Tie asked.

As for Donder's explanation, if it was heard by someone in Blackhot City or the Norman Empire, that guy would join the list of missing people in less than two days with nothing of his presence remaining. How could he brag in such an exaggerated way by using hundreds of millions, even billions, of Chinese people?

"F\*ck, of course I cannot, but the organization behind my back can!" Donder calmly replied.

"The organization behind your back?"

Zhang Tie was surprised. He finally understood that everybody had their own secrets, including him and even Donder, that mean guy.

"Of course!" Donder answered full of pride. There was a strange brilliance to him, almost a sense of honor, that Zhang Tie had not seen before. "My status is very trivial in my organization, and I'm just an eye and an ear of my organization in Blackhot City. Do you understand it?"

Zhang Tie finally understood that Donder was a spy of his organization responsible for collecting intelligence in Blackhot City .

"How is your organization when compared to the Norman Empire?" Zhang Tie asked out of curiosity.

"Have you seen those ten thousand year fluorite lamps hanging on the wall?"

Zhang Tie nodded.

"If the Norman Empire was one ten thousand year fluorite lamp, my organization would be the shiny sun in the sky!" Donder solemnly said.

Zhang Tie was shocked once again.

"No doubt about that. If we can encounter each other in the future, you will know that I have not cheated you! Because of 'Mental Arithmetic by Abacus', I've made great contribution to my organization. As a result, my organization dispatched me back to the Eastern Continent. My mission in Blackhot City has been completed in advance, and I finally have the chance to go back home!"

"Aren't your organization in Blackson Human Clan Corridor?"

Donder smirked. "Blackson Human Clan Corridor is a Hebrew expression. Among Chinese, it is called Waii Peninsula or Waii Subcontinent. It is only a small area on the entire Kun'ang Continent, an uncivilized area which is far away from the axis of the world and revolves around it. Do you know what is an uncivilized area to Chinese? You should understand that a really huge dragoon will not play with water in a shallow pond. As for me who is just dreaming of not having to starve to death, I was dispatched here to just watch the weather change!"

Zhang Tie stared at Donder, feeling uncomfortable about what he had said about the uncivilized thing.

"As for Chinese like you who have long been dispatched to an uncivilized area, when you're alive, if you don't come for a pilgrimage in the east or visit the place where gathers the most Chinese, if you don't go to have a look in the area where your bloodline roots in so as to experience the honor and brilliance of the Chinese clan that you have not tasted before, you will have spent your life in vain!"

What Donder said made Zhang Tie long for that unknown glory. He asked, "Are you leaving here for the Eastern Continent?"

"Yea, tonight I will leave Blackhot City for Kalur by train. When I arrive at Kalur, someone will pick me up over there. I will then take an airship. During the trip, I'll transfer several stations by other vehicles. If I don't get stuck somewhere in the middle, I'll see the Eastern Continent in one and a half months."

Zhang Tie's face fell slightly. "Will I see you again?"

Since Donder was almost a master to him, realizing that guy was going to leave soon, Zhang Tie felt a bit reluctant to part with him. In a split second, every memory that he had with this guy flashed across Zhang Tie's mind. Instinctively, he felt like crying.

"This is the most important thing that I want to talk with you about, today!" Donder looked solemn. "You should remember what I've told you today. No matter what, you have to leave Blackhot City along with your family members in two years, though the sooner, the better. You must move to settle down among Chinese nations in the southeast of Waii Peninsula first.

"Afterwards, you should seek for a chance to move all of your family members to the Eastern Continent. The entire world is going to be in great chaos. Hundreds of millions of lives will soon be burned into ashes. Waii Peninsula is not a long lasting area. For the sake of you and your family members' lives, you have to leave as soon as possible!"

"Why?"

Zhang Tie's heart pounded.

"Because the holy war between human beings and demons will start soon!" Donder gloomily said.

"A holy war?"

Zhang Tie was startled. Soon after he understood what Donder was talking about, his face immediately twitched.

Holy war? That phrase was able to startle everybody.

Given the history and relevant knowledge that Zhang Tie had learned about the holy wars, there was only one word that could be used to describe those two previous holy wars: Destroy!

Terrifying demons poured out of the underground world like locusts which could immediately sweep over human cities and nations one by one. Every place that demons passed by would become mountains and seas of bloody bodies, no single person left alive.

The first holy war broke out about 600 years ago. At that time, the human race, which had just recovered a bit, was almost completely destroyed by demons. At school, when giving an introduction to the first holy war, the science teacher only said several things: the amount of human casualties was 27 billion and over 600 human nations and regions were destroyed by demons.

The first holy war lasted roughly 70 years, over three generations. After this holy war, the total amount of human beings was only over 10 billions, which indicated that two thirds of people had died in the first holy war.

The second one broke out about 300 years ago, which was also called the one hundred years holy war. It lasted for over 110 years. The amount of casualties of human beings in this holy war was 48 billion. Over 1000 human nations and regions were destroyed by demons. Compared to the first holy war, the second one was much more miserable as many human races were completely eliminated by demons. Numerous human families were broken apart.

Each holy war between the human race and the demons would be a catastrophe of the entire human race.

When the respected science teacher was talking about the previous two holy wars, he even choked several times in class. Compared to any other kinds of wars, in holy wars between the two races, people had to save themselves. As for demons, humankind was their most delicious food whose fresh blood, muscles, and brains were the favorite food of all demons.

After each holy war, each black-and-white photo taken by historians and war correspondents about any place that once was occupied by demons was like vivid hell for those still alive.

Zhang Tie once saw the black-and-white photos that were brought to the classroom by the science teacher. That cruel scenes in them made Zhang Tie and all the other animals in his classroom sick. They had all lost appetite for lunch...

Holy war was a nightmare for each person, lasting over 100 years!

According to the previous two holy wars, the third holy war would probably be even more tragic than the previous ones. It would last longer while many more areas would be involved. As a result, more people would die in the third long lasting holy war.

"Go to the east. The most powerful Chinese clan is where the hope of the humans lies in. Even if all the humans on the Kun'ang Continent died in this holy war, the Eastern Continent could still support the last few people!" Donder said.

The dialogue with Donder before he left Blackhot City unlocked many puzzles in Zhang Tie's mind. He abruptly understood why so many things happened in Blackhot City in the past two months: why the Andaman Alliance would be destroyed over night, why the prices of the grains on the market had started to surge since months ago, why Zerom said that the chaotic world would arrive.

It was because privileged big figures who had the right to write the history of Blackson Human Clan Corridor had accelerated their preparations for the incoming holy war. Before the arrival of the holy war, the alleged emperors and chancellors were nothing different from squirrels who were busy trying to save up for the winter.

How long was left before the third holy war between the human beings and demons would break out? According to Donder's judgment, it would at least take five or twenty years at most before it finally broke out. But this short period before it began was for big figures to accomplish the warm-up mobilization which concerned the lives of the human clan.

Donder told Zhang Tie that many nations and families on the continents had already prepared for over 100 years for the third holy war between the human beings and the demons. However, no matter how

well they had prepared. When the third holy war really broke out, all the preparations might not be enough.

Before the arrival of the overwhelming demons, nobody knew whether the steel and iron fortresses that they had built would be as weak as a piece of paper which would be easily broken by demons. Nobody dared to firmly say that the strategic materials that they had prepared could help them stick till the end of this holy war.

Before leaving, Donder gave Zhang Tie the following things: the real property transfer certificate of this apartment building, a lot of key belonging to it, several deeds of house property, 400 gold coins, and a strange resin card with many small holes on it. The older men told Zhang Tie that if he arrived at the Eastern Continent, he would definitely be able to find him using this card.

Besides these items, Donder also left Zhang Tie with a book about 'cross-dressing'. Everything in this basement was for 'cross-dressing', including various props, materials, and clothes. There was even a hidden tunnel in the basement which led to a perennial chartered room of an underground bar.

That underground bar ran around the clock. As many people went there, nobody would notice him even if he accessed that chartered room from here.

As the third holy war would not break out soon, Donder hoped that Zhang Tie could well prepare and gain enough money to move his family members to the Eastern Continent, using the things provided by him.

This was the expenditure left for Zhangs' escape. This amount of expenditure would allow a poor student like Zhang Tie to be one of the possessing class.

Donder didn't care about this wealth at all. He said this was only a bit money, which was just a trivial compensation for him to thank for Zhang Tie's gift of 'Mental Arithmetic by Abacus'. The organization that he was serving had awarded him many times more than this amount of wealth for his discovery of the 'Mental Arithmetic by Abacus'. Therefore, Donder told Zhang Tie not to feel reluctant for receiving such a bit of wealth.

After leaving the apartment building, Zhang Tie walked on the Avenue Monet for a long time. He felt muddled-headed as he hadn't yet recovered his composure from everything that he had experienced today. Not until he turned to the avenue where his house was located and a little boy ran the bells on a bike, happily passing by, did Zhang Tie become clear-minded.

Seeing the innocent and joyful smile of that little boy and hearing the crispy rings of the bell, Zhang Tie almost immediately broke through a translucent glass wall that was before him, since he could finally see the entire vivid and free world again.

The holy war thing should not be a concern to a trivial person like him. No matter what, when he realized something bad was going to happen, he would run away along with his family members. This amount of wealth would even be enough for him to move his beloved girls like Pandora and the members of the Brotherhood away to the Eastern Continent.

Zhang Tie revealed a smile when he thought of the wealth left by Donder and felt very good.



'I'm rich, I'm rich! As a charter man of an apartment building, I'll get a gold coin per month. Hista cannot imagine that I've made his dream come true, hahahaha...'

The entire Blackhot City suddenly became brilliant!

Humming all the way, Zhang Tie returned home. The moment he entered, he saw three guests: Alice, Beverly, and Pandora. They looked as beautiful as wax dolls and were chatting with his mom. Seeing Zhang Tie come in and his mouth falling open at the sight of them, the girls smiled at the same time.

Zhang Tie's mom glared at him with mixed moods. "My idiot son told me that he had found three girlfriends in the survival training, I didn't believe that until the three beautiful girls came here for him now."

With such a son, his mom felt both happy and worried. She became upset although being a bit excited: Zhang Tie was not that fickle in love and adorable in girls' eyes. How could he bring back three girls merely in the survival training?

"Guoguo[1] has really grown up!"

His mom became gratified and dejectedly sighed inside...

Zhang Tie didn't know that the news that he would start a duel with Sodor in two days had spread wide through many schools of Blackhot City. Few people knew that he had become a second lieutenant of the Norman Empire; it had only spread in a small circle. In many people's eyes, a show between a fresh graduate and a LV 4 warrior was truly attractive.

However, Zhang Tie didn't really have this thing on his mind. For him, the beginning of the life in Iron-Blood Camp was the most important thing in his future...

Not until Donder had left did Zhang Tie realize that he had forgotten to ask about his ability to throw lances so precisely, because the news that the third holy war between the human beings and the demons would soon break out was too appalling.

Chapter 170: Preparations

Five days passed quickly. Although Zhang Tie's wound after the circumcision had not recovered yet, and he had only changed fresh dressing for his wound only once, his holiday would soon be over.

The last few days, the good news was that Zhang Tie's untamed thing was not that sensitive any more. It had become accustomed to the contact with his underwear and pants.

The bad news was that Zhang Tie found out that he had become famous among the animals of Blackhot City. In the eyes of many people who didn't understand him, Zhang Tie seemed to be an evil and terrifying thug, a homicidal maniac who could break his classmate's neck in front of over one thousand people in the canteen of the Wild Wolf Castle.

Those people didn't care about what Zuhair and Glaze had done to him, they just spread what he had done to Zuhair in all schools across Blackhot City.

On the first day when Blackhot City was included into the territory of the Norman Empire, Zhang Tie had already utilized the game rules of the Norman Empire's barbarous training to kill his own classmate in front of the public. Such an impression would not be good in the eyes of the gossipers.

Besides, there was gossip that the disappeared Glaze was also killed by Zhang Tie. Although they had gotten it right, Zhang Tie didn't plan to admit to it, just leaving them to guess. No matter what, he would not lose even a hair.

On the evening of the day when Donder left, after sending Pandora, Alice, and Beverly back home respectively, on the way back, Zhang Tie considered how to tell what he had experienced today to his family members.

When he came back home, he found his elder sister-in-law had went to bed as she was pregnant and had easily fallen asleep. Zhang Tie then called his parents and his elder brother and explained why Donder had presented him with the apartment building and the amount of gold coins to him.

Seeing Zhang Tie pull out a purse which contained 400 'locomotive' gold coins, the other three people of Zhang family were shocked for quite a while.

"You mean that Donder gave you this money?" Zhang Tie's dad asked Zhang Tie with eyes wide open.

"Yea, and a six-story apartment building in Avenue Monet. That building was bought by Donder several years ago. He was always living there. Today he transferred it to me. The formalities had been dealt with. Donder said this was a trivial compensation for my gift of , which helped him render great meritorious service to his super great organization.

"He was ears and eyes of that organization in Blackhot City. As he was now dispatched back as a part of the compensation that his organization awarded him with, he then left these items to me!" Zhang Tie honestly explained, putting his hands on his knees.

After hearing Zhang Tie's explanation, his parents and elder brother became silent. Although Zhang Yang knew that could improve one's spiritual energy was a very precious mysterious knowledge, he had not imagined that this book could play such a great role.

Through Donder, everybody learned the value of , which was simply a beginner's book for everybody to practice their spiritual energy, greatly lowering the threshold for them to cultivate and improve their spiritual energy. It could even help many people who could not cultivate or improve their spiritual energy any more to improve their spiritual energy once again. It was a book of great value that could not be underestimated.

"What else did he leave or say to you besides these things?"

After being silent for several seconds, his dad stared at Zhang Tie in an unprecedentedly solemn way.

"He said that the secret of should not be revealed to anyone else besides our family members in case of bringing disaster to our family. Oh, he also gave me one card that I could use to contact him if I came to the Eastern Continent in the future!"

Saying this, Zhang Tie took out that resin card with many irregular small holes on it. He was still confused about how to use this name card.

His dad took a careful look at it after taking it into his hands. His frown then slowly disappeared. Finally, he became completely relaxed and let out a long sigh before nodding to Zhang Tie's mom.

"Dad, you know this item? What's it used for?" Zhang Tie asked, looking at his dad's changing expression.

"This is a name card!"

His dad smiled.

"A name card?"

Not only Zhang Tie, even Zhang Yang who was gazing at that strange card became startled. He took that card from his dad's hand and carefully observed it for quite a while. Zhang Yang couldn't find even one word on it. How could this be a name card?

Both brothers became suspicious.

"Of course. This is the most advanced name card, which is not for people, but for large-scale steam-driven calculators. The round holes on this card are a machine language that can only be identified by a large-scale crystal steam-driven calculator. This is an ID card that is used in long-distance remote communications requiring decoding by Xuan Yuan-6 steam-driven calculator in Eastern Continent.

"If you insert this card into any long-distance crystal remote communication equipment in any city of the Eastern Continent, you will be able to contact Donder..."

His dad took back the card from Zhang Yang's hand, carefully checking it even with a yearning expression.

Large-scale steam-driven calculator? It was Zhang Tie's turn to be dumbfounded. This thing was too advanced so he'd only heard about it at school. Even the teacher who had introduced it to them hadn't seen it before.

According to the teacher's comment, steam-driven calculator was based on steam-driven difference engine, which was used two generations of calculation inventions ago. The steam-driven calculator was the greatest machine that humanity had created so far.

Zhang Tie knew that a difference engine was a machine that could carry out sophisticated difference calculations and was invented by mathematician Babbage during the first industrial revolution before the Catastrophe. The mathematician gained his inspiration from a steam-driven jacquard engine, inventing the steam-driven difference engine, which could calculate through movements of gears. Sadly, after it was invented, the difference engine didn't catch too many people's attention. Due to some unknown reasons, it was then refrigerated by people.

In the second industrial revolution before the Catastrophe, electricity-driven computers that calculated by transistors instead of gears with the same calculating function were invented. Therefore, the steam-based difference engine was completely forgotten.

Closely followed by the invention of the computer came the Catastrophe. After it, those still alive realized that if they wanted to survive for longer, they had to own a calculating tool which could

calculate faster and more precisely than human brains. Therefore, the steam-based difference engine that had been refrigerated for over 10,00 years was discovered again.

Among the previous 17 cities of the entire Andaman Alliance, there was only Kalur, the city of machine, who could use steam-based difference engines. There were only two steam-based difference engines across the Andaman Alliance. One was put in Kalur, serving as the most powerful calculating core that supported the manufacturing industry across Kalur, while the smaller one was put in the Andaman City, the capital of the Andaman Alliance. It was said that it was used by the Andaman Alliance to manage its huge family business.

Between steam-driven calculator and steam-driven difference engine, there was a steam-driven analytic engine, which was a much more powerful machine based on steam-driven difference engine. Accordingly, steam-driven calculator was more powerful than a steam-driven analytic engine. It was the representative of the greatest manufacturing capability of human beings. Across the entire Blackson Human Clan Corridor, not only large-scale steam-driven calculator, even a large-scale steam-driven analytic engine could not be produced.

"Dad, how do you know so much about it?"

Zhang Tie stared at his dad with doubt. This card was not even seen by Zhang Tie's teachers at school. How could his dad explain its usage so clearly? Besides, his dad looked too strange. Why did he let out a deep sigh after seeing the card when he looked worried about Donder's status before!

"Hmm... hmm... your dad has heard about it from others before!"

Zhang Tie felt that his dad was really not good at telling a lie. At such an age, when he was telling a lie, he would always scratch his head, which was known to all the other members of Zhang family.

Zhang Tie looked at him with doubt once again. The moment he wanted to open his mouth, his mom interrupted him.

"Guoguo, what do you plan to do with that apartment building and that money left by Donder?"

Mom's words directly caught Zhang Tie's attention.

"Needless to say, of course, I will hand them all to you too, letting you to be renters and enjoy it for the rest of your lives..." Saying this, Zhang Tie immediately became highly spirited. "As my elder brother is going to get married, he and my elder sister-in-law should have a new residence. Even if I live in another residence in the apartment building, there are still 9 residences in the apartment building, which could bring you over 10 gold coins a month. This income is much higher than dad's salary.

"The rice brew business at home is lacking, while my elder sister-in-law is going to give birth to a baby for our family, so this apartment building is very necessary. As for the money, I will give it to my elder brother. Since he is going to retire from the military service, with that amount of money, he can do some business, which would be much better than working for other people!"

In order to not worry his dad and much too much, Zhang Tie didn't talk about the incoming holy war. The moment Zhang Yang opened his mouth, he caught sight of Zhang Tie's shake of the head. Due to the tacit agreement between the two brothers in the past decade, Zhang Yang immediately shut up as he knew that Zhang Tie would tell him something alone later.

After thinking for a while, his dad and mom exchanged glances with each other, then nodded.

"The apartment building is yours, we will look after it for you, since I'm afraid that you won't have enough time to deal with it. As your dad and me have been used to living here for the past dozens of years, we don't want to move anymore. If you want, you can move there. If you have a residence to stay in Blackhot City instead of having to rent outside, your dad and me are reassured..."

His mom revealed a benign smile. "As for this money, I will put it away for you. When your elder brother needs it in the future, I'll give it to him as a loan from you!"

Knowing his dad and mom's intention, Zhang Tie didn't say anything. However, he insisted to give the rents to them as part of his filial piety. In the end, they nodded and agreed to take one third of the rents, leaving the rest to Zhang Tie himself.

Everybody then became satisfied with the distribution of the wealth.

After his dad and mom went to bed, Zhang Tie silently pulled Zhang Yang aside and whispered to him about the incoming third holy war. Hearing this news, Zhang Yang's face immediately twitched as he finally understood why the Blackhot City and Andaman Alliance became chaotic in the past two months.

"Elder brother, I will leave the 400 gold coins to you. This is a critical moment for you and me to pass through the incoming difficulties. We don't need to discuss how to distribute it anymore. I have little time left at home as I have to serve in the Iron-Blood Camp; the City Guard of Blackhot City will soon be revoked, the Iron-Horn Army only considers to keep several military officers. Adviser Vessie told me that the rest of the military staff as well as the soldiers will have to retire.

The Iron-Horn Army will recruit and train a new batch of soldiers their own way. So you'll surely have to retire in a few days. After that, you can use the money to get a business and gradually mediate relationships for our family. You should seek for a path for our family to survive in the Chinese nations in the south; otherwise, if anything urgent really happens, although we two can directly escape, how about our dad, mom, elder sister-in-law and that incoming baby?

"So we should prepare for what's coming as early as possible. Elder brother, as long as you can find a path for our family out of here, we can move our dad, mom, elder sister-in-law and the incoming baby first..."

The brothers' hands tightly clasped each other, and Zhang Yang gloomily nodded.

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Time flew past, and it was time for Zhang Tie to register in the Iron-Blood Camp of No. 39 Division...