

Black Iron 1621

Chapter 1621: Fame

It was bustling at the station of East Datang City. Whistles of trains could be heard every once a while. With the sound “Tshh”, the locomotive of the train was releasing the pressure of its boiler by blowing white steam. As a result, the rail and platform near the locomotive were suffused with white mist.

After daybreak, the entire city had woken up and recovered its vigor, including this railway station.

“Childe Liu, see you!”

The train conductor saw Zhang Tie off the exit of his compartment with a big smile. After hearing his words, Zhang Tie replied with “hmm” as he got off the train and left the railway station leisurely.

Not until he left the railway station and stood at the exit of the railway station among the people did Zhang Tie let out a sigh. He then started to squint at this city.

The exit of this railway station was composed of two stories of roads. The roads above were overline bridges made of steel structure, which looked like huge centipedes. After leaving the railway station, the travelers had to go to the overpasses for the taxi. Along the staircase of the overpasses, they would see over ten lines of yellow-green taxis waiting orderly in an exclusive station. Only after a short while, they would leave there by taxi.

The roads below were underground metro system.

Both two stories of roads were in order.

Among all the super large cities across the country, the underground metro system was taken as a symbol of the prosperous history of the city. As the underground metro system needed a pretty high cost, ordinary Class A cities didn't have underground metro system; instead, only those super large cities which had seen its prosperity for over 100 years and especially reached a great scale in commercial prosperity and population could have such underground metro systems, in which pattern, the underground space of these cities could be fully utilized.

It was said that Datang City grew more and more prosperous under the rule of Xuanyuan Wuji the third prince of Emperor Xuanyuan. Therefore, this city proved the administrative ability of Xuanyuan Wuji as it glittered like a medal on the third prince's breast.

It was of great significance for Zhang Tie to kill third prince. As long as it was revealed, many people would be involved. Therefore, the fewer people knew it, the better. That was why Zhang Tie didn't inquire intelligence about Xuanyuan Wuji through Jinwu Business Group or other channels. After leaving the station of East Datang City, Zhang Tie felt very strange about the place and its people. Zhang Tie didn't even know the trace of Xuanyuan Wuji; nor did he know how Xuanyuan Wuji look. Zhang Tie only knew that Datang City was the private city of Xuanyuan Wuji. According to the regulation, all the princes had their own cities. After growing mature, those princes were forbidden to leave their private cities without the consent or order of Xuanyuan Hill.

Although being noble, princes' freedom was limited. After gaining their private cities, many princes could only spend most of their time over there. If any prince violated the regulation, the censorate of

Xuanyuan Hill would submerge that prince by impeaching him. Given this point, after growing mature, princes were not even as free as commoners.

However, they were much freer than emperors who were even forbidden to leave the chief gate of the imperial palace. As each bounty land would cover over 6 million square miles, as long as those princes were not too ambitious, it's enough for them to stay in their own city for their whole lives. Additionally, as most of their bounty cities were in prosperous prefectures or provinces, they would not feel bored at all. As bounty cities were the private properties of princes, they could manage it for free.

In peaceful time, many national ceremonies and campaigns would be held in Xuanyuan Hill and the Imperial Palace of Emperor Xuanyuan annually. During these periods, princes could attend parties over there. In addition, as royal members, princes were always invited to attend public events such as paying a visit to foreign countries; attending foreign events held by Foreign Affairs Ministry; even paying a tour inspection to the other places and showing their condolence to disaster areas on behalf of imperial households or attend special tasks at the order of Emperor Xuanyuan, etc..

However, as Emperor Xuanyuan had disappeared and the third holy war broke out, the current overall situation was rather sensitive. As a result, princes were forbidden to leave their own bounty cities or the prefectures where their bounty cities belonged to.

Not like other princes who indulged in sex and drinks all day, as a prince known as able and diligent, Xuanyuan Wuji spent most of his time in a deal within various affairs in Datang City. Even though he was not in Datang City, his private mansion was also located in Datang City, from where his schedule could be acquired. That was why Zhang Tie came to Datang City.

After standing at the exit of the railway station, Zhang Tie followed the others onto the overpass, then off it to the taxi station before getting on a steam taxi.

"Man, I am hiring your taxi for one day. Take me around today. Show me all the tourist sites and amusement centers. Keep the changes..." Zhang Tie gave a gold coin to the taxi driver like a playboy as long as he entered the vehicle from the back.

"That's great, childe. You've got the right person. As I've been a driver for over 20 years, I'm familiar with every nook and corner of this city!"

Facing such a person who treated gold coins as silver coins, the slightly bald driver at his 40s became spirited at once. After taking the gold coin, he answered Zhang Tie as he drove out of the station.

"Childe, is this your first time in Datang City?"

"Yes!"

The taxi driver glanced at Zhang Tie with a smile from the rearview mirror as he said, "Haha, childe, given your noble look, you must be full of knowledge. There's one place in Datang City that you have to see!"

"What is it?"

"Talents' Pavilion!" the driver instantly started to introduce it to Zhang Tie, "Childe, don't you know the famous Talents' Pavilion in Datang City? Across Jinghe Prefecture, Jiang Zhou Province even other

immortal provinces, many erudite people would come to Datang City especially for Talents' Pavilion. As long as your poem, song, essay or a common administrative measure could rank the top of the list in Talents' Pavilion for one month, you might be able to see the third prince within one year and become his VIP. That's a shortcut to privilege. Third prince is the incarnation of the legendary deity of imperial examinations and literary affairs. The prosperous Datang City greatly benefits from third prince..."

Zhang Tie had not imagined that even a taxi driver admired Xuanyuan Wuji so much...

Chapter 1622: Talents' Pavilion

"The river comes from west in turns; I am startled by the featured scenery. Hundreds of houses gather here to form a county; although having no city walls, they lean against a mountain. The shadow of the sail is looming in the river not far away from the maple leaves. Water gurgled near my bed. In straw rain cape, I am close to Yan Ling; pitifully, I could only look at the crystal river and pass by...What a nice poem! This poem could at least stay in the list of Talents' Pavilion for one year. It's said that it was written by a talent surnamed Xu in Xintong City. Not bad! Not bad..."

"Look at this one. I feel this poem is more artistic. The wild wind blows my white coat; I move on the river by boat. As the sun sets in the distance, green contours of mountains undulate. Feeling cold, flowers drop their heads; being tired, birds twittered occasionally. After seeing smoke rising, I anchor my fishing boat and come to Zhuxi Temple..."

"I don't agree with you, brother Ou. If this poem appears in a remote hotel or a residence of a hermit in the deep mountain, it would be amazing. However, it appears in the Talents' Pavilion. Therefore, I think the poet perhaps want to show off his talent; instead of aiming to be a real hermit. I would not vote him..."

"You're right, brother Li; you're right..."

In the afternoon, after circling around the city for a few hours, Zhang Tie was finally sent to the Talents' Pavilion in Datang City cordially by the taxi driver. Through the constant introduction of the taxi driver, Zhang Tie gradually learned more about Datang City and Xuanyuan Wuji and acquired a lot of useful information.

Xuanyuan Wuji's position in Datang City was like that of Zhang Tie in Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory. Each action of him would be eye-catching. Therefore, Zhang Tie easily got the message that Xuanyuan Wuji was in Datang City these days from the taxi driver.

According to the taxi driver, at the end of each year, the adorable third prince would host philanthropic campaigns like providing porridge and money and giving condolence to soldiers, civilians and students in the city. Therefore, Xuanyuan Wuji would always stay in Datang City in the entire December. After hearing this message, Zhang Tie finally felt relaxed.

After making a plan to pay a secret visit to the third prince's mansion tonight and kill him when possible, Zhang Tie finished his lunch in a hotel before being led to the Talents' Pavilion by the taxi driver. With the attitude of doing as the Romans do, Zhang Tie started to wander in the Talents' Pavilion.

Talents' Pavilion was a vast octagonal traditional Hua building. Being located in the west of Datang City, Talents' Pavilion was in a hill not far from Datang Learning Academy. It was surrounded by beautiful scenery. No ticket was required to enter the Talents' Pavilion. Instead, each one could get a ticket for free at the entrance. As many people came here, after receiving tickets, they would vote for their most favorite works, political opinions, poems or essays of those "talents" by putting their tickets into the ballot boxes under the creators. In each fixed period, the ballot boxes would be opened and the tickets would be counted. Those with more tickets would rank higher on the list and would win chances to be promoted to high-level officials.

On the taxi, Zhang Tie had been told about the game rules in Talents' Pavilion. After entering it, Zhang Tie felt strange watching those literati concentrating on those works.

As for Zhang Tie, the so-called Talents' Pavilion was just a trick that Xuanyuan Wuji used to buy the hearts of people at the bottom of the society and control the public opinions. As he wanted to fight for the throne, Xuanyuan Wuji had to act like a "sagacious emperor". Such a trick would work more or less. However, the so-called talents in the Talents' Pavilion were actually some bottom literati in Datang City and nearby provinces or prefectures. What about those knights of Taixia Country if these people could be called talents? Real knights always neglected these things. A real knight didn't need to show off his literary talents for fame and wealth here.

These literati had a big say at the bottom of society, who could influence many people's opinions. That might be the reason that Xuanyuan Wuji played such a trick.

In a world dominated by knights, literati who only thought about reading instead of cultivating their battle strength would not enjoy high positions. Even if these literati could make some achievements in literature, most of them could at most be some grass-root clerks and officials. Very few of them could become the trusted subordinates of third prince like Fang Qingming on His Majesty's side. Right because of this reason, so many literati were longing for showing off their talents in the pavilion as they all dreamed to be the very trusted subordinate of the third prince and provide political suggestions to him.

Zhang Tie was not interested in poems and essays; however, he was clear about the function of Talents' Pavilion. Standing behind those literati and listening to their comments, Zhang Tie revealed a despised look as if he was watching some kids building a castle using sand.

"Bro, I wonder about your noble opinion..." One of the literati in front of Zhang Tie asked when he caught Zhang Tie's contemptuous look and became irritated. Hearing his words, all the other literati in front turned around and fixated onto Zhang Tie at a stroke.

"Haha, I have no noble opinion; I have no noble opinion. Now that these poems and essays could be displayed here, they are nice for real..." Zhang Tie replied with a big smile as he cupped his hands towards them and intended to leave. Because Zhang Tie didn't feel like wasting time with these humble literati at all.

"Bro, you're so presumptuous!" One of those literati was instantly driven mad by Zhang Tie's response, although Zhang Tie didn't have malicious intent. As a result, all of them were glaring at Zhang Tie as if Zhang Tie had insulted their belief. "These poems and essays are all top works among hundreds of millions of works. Bro, you might be erudite; how about showing us...We want to broaden our vision..."

“When I watched the snow last year, I got a poem by accident. Its name is *Falling Snow*. If you want to hear it, this humble man would read it for you...”

“Hmm, go ahead. I would like to appreciate your good piece...” a literati said with a sneer.

After looking around, Zhang Tie cleared his voice. After that, he read his poem under the gaze of all the others, “What is flying in the sky? There’s a pile in the east, another pile in the west. Is the Jade Emperor building the Imperial Palace? Screening lime yo, screening lime!”

After Zhang Tie finished his poem, all the onlooking literati were petrified as their faces turned purple, quivering all over...

It appeared that Zhang Tie’s interest was aroused. Before those people opened their mouth, he continued, “This humble man got another one when I watched the lightning bolt in the sky. Its name is *Singing the Lightning Bolt*. Glad to hear your comments about it. Ahem, ahem. I suddenly see a fiery chain in the sky as if the Jade Emperor is smoking; if Jade Emperor doesn’t smoke, why is there a fiery chain...Eh, brothers, brothers, don’t run away; I’ve got some more...”

Those literati who intended to make Zhang Tie embarrassed were severely injured by Zhang Tie’s two poems. Soon after Zhang Tie finished his second poem, those literati had covered their faces with sleeves and left there as they didn’t feel like talking with Zhang Tie any more.

Zhang Tie pretended to persuade them to stay; however, those literati paced up in case of being influenced by the bad luck brought by Zhang Tie.

Shaking his head, Zhang Tie smiled and was going to leave. Unimaginably, a burst of applaud sounded behind him.

“What nice poems! What nice poems...”

Zhang Tie turned around as he saw a hermit-like middle-aged literati in white robe clapping his hands.

“Young brother. Your poems look coarse; however, they’re of great charisma. If charisma only is considered, your poems are much better than all the others in the Talents’ Pavilion...”

After hearing the middle-aged literati’s comment, Zhang Tie knew that he was not jeering at him. Given his personality, Zhang Tie started to like him.

“Haha, to tell the truth, the two poems are not created by me; instead, I read it from a book by accident. The writer is a rude soldier of Hua people before the Catastrophe...”

“Oh, I see!” the literati replied as he continued, “Young brother, now that you could admit it frankly, you must be a straight-forward man. It must be your first time in Datang City. Me too! Young brother, how about traveling around the city with me...”

“Nice...” Zhang Tie replied with a smile too.

Chapter 1623: Lord Fairysea

The human relationship was marvelous. Zhang Tie had not imagined that he could get acquainted with a friend in Datang City even after disguising himself.

The literati in white robe was Lin Yichen. After encountering with each other in Talents' Pavilion, the two people traveled around the pavilion together, then Steles Tower, Feathered Temple and Dragonhiding Cave. When the night was going to fall, the two people had a drink in Rainflower Building at the bank of Swordswashing Lake.

To be honest, Zhang Tie had read a lot of books and acquainted with many top figures in Taixia Country such as Meng Shidao and Zuoqiu Mingyue, ect.. However, the personality, rich learning and intelligence of Lin Yichen convinced Zhang Tie for real.

In the Talents' Pavilion, Lin Yichen commented those talents' poems and essays in a humorous, incisive yet modest way.

Among Steles Tower, Lin Yichen told all the allusions, anecdotes and inscriptions on the tablets. When it came to calligraphy, he became excited as he directly dipped the rainwater under eaves of the Steles Tower using fingers and performed 81 variants of one Hua character...

In the Dragonhiding Cave, Lin Yichen introduced the history of the explorations about the dragon, starting from the Hua totem before the Catastrophe to the image of a dragon on Western Continent, from the legends of the immortal dragon in far-ancient times to the virtual image of the dragon of knights in this age. Zhang Tie learned a lot from him and figured out many things...

After traveling around Datang City for half a day, although he couldn't figure out the background of Lin Yichen, Zhang Tie was sure that this person was unusual.

"Come on, Brother Lin, I will propose a toast to you..." Zhang Tie made a cup of spirit for Lin Yichen in the Rainflower Building. Closely after that, he took his cup and said, "Brother Lin, I know you're unusual. It's our fortune to meet each other in this city, cheers..."

"Hahaha, I'm unusual; young brother, you're unusual too. It's our great fortune to meet each other in Datang City among hundreds of millions of people across the country..." Lin Yichen burst into laughter as he threw a glance at Zhang Tie with a smile. Closely after touching his glass with Zhang Tie's, he bottomed up together with Zhang Tie.

"Brother Lin, why are you here in Datang City?"

"I'm here for a person."

"Oh, Brother Lin, do you have relatives or friends here?"

"Neither relatives nor old friends!"

"Then it must be your enemy!"

"Not enemy either!"

"You make me puzzled. Brother Lin, have you found him?"

"I made a prediction using Eight Diagrams last year. According to its implication, I would encounter the very person in Datang City. Therefore, I travel to Datang City from afar. Although I've met the person, he was far worse than that I imagined. Previously, I wanted to take him as my apprentice; unimaginably, that person shares the same branch with me and even have greater achievements than me. He would

have a bright future. Therefore, I feel embarrassed proposing to take him as my apprentice...” Lin Yichen said as he suddenly heaved a sigh, “As for an emperor, it’s easy to establish an army of thousands of people; but it’s hard to get a good general. As for me, it might be harder to find a proper apprentice. Someone just waits there for his apprentice; however, I could only look for apprentice myself. If my apprentice lacks flair in cultivation, he would meet a bottleneck in the future and could barely break it. As a result, such an apprentice could only make limited achievements in his life and could inherit all of my profound learning...”

“What a pity!” Zhang Tie sighed with a smile, “I’m afraid that if that person could meet Brother Lin a few years ago and becomes your apprentice, he would laugh out in dreams!”

“Nothing to pity about. It’s destiny. Although I don’t have an apprentice, I feel also lucky having one more friend who could have a drink with me. It’s nice if I have an apprentice; if not, I won’t feel sad. Isn’t it also a pleasure in our lives? Come on, cheers...” Lin Yichen burst into laughter as he cheered with Zhang Tie again.

Zhang Tie rented the entire top floor of the Rainflower Building, where they would not be disturbed by others. After drinking 18 jars of top-quality rain-flower liquor, it was already deep night. Lin Yichen then picked himself up while wavering his body. At this moment, one piece of bizarre secret knowledge crystal appeared in his hand. Closely after that, he gave it to Zhang Tie, saying, “I’ve not had such a drink with anyone for many years. I’m so happy to have a drink with an able young brother here today. Here’s my little gift. Keep it as a souvenir...”

Zhang Tie didn’t look into the crystal; instead, he took out a top-quality nanobead from his inner pocket. When he took that crystal, he gave the nanobead to Lin Yichen, saying, “As a vulgar person, I don’t have anything valuable but this bead. Brother Lin, you can keep it as a souvenir too. There’re some spears inside that I usually used and some home-made medicament. Hopefully, I could see Brother Lin again in the future...”

“I gift you a piece of crystal and you gift me a pearl. Thanks, young brother...” Lin Yichen instantly took the nanobead as he continued, “As each banquet would come to an end, before leaving, I’ve got one suggestion for you...”

“Brother Lin, please...”

“In the future, no matter which step have you reached, don’t forget about your original intention. If you could make it, you would be the real hero!” Lin Yichen watched Zhang Tie with gleaming eyes as he continued, “All the billions of people in Taixia Country are the beloved ones of you and me. With such great abilities, if we couldn’t safeguard these beloved ones, we would be surplus and be finally eliminated in accordance with the universal law...”

Zhang Tie was shocked as he instantly stood up and made a deep bow towards Lin Yichen, saying, “Brother Lin, thanks for your precious warning. I would bear it in mind for sure...”

“Hahaha, see you...” Lin Yichen bottomed up as he laughed and sang towards the sky, “Autumn wind the desolate; you wave the flowers and twigs; thin frost the white over the earth, you make cicada silent; swallows you leave north for south, flapping your wings towards the lingqiu Hill...”

In the long tunes, Lin Yichen dropped his glass and strode out of the Rainflower Building, white robe swaying in the wind. Then he entered the sky and disappeared in the distance, leaving his song reverberating in the sky...

Zhang Tie had not imagined that he could encounter such a great person in the Talents' Pavilion, who could have a drink and talk with him. That was fate! Zhang Tie watched the sky with eager leisurely. Who dared call himself a talent in front of Lord Fairysea?

Zhang Tie then threw a glance at the piece of crystal in his hand while some words instantly appeared in his mind explosively like a lightning bolt—*Deities Killing Swordsmanship*. It was unrivaled swordsmanship of divine dominator in which the user could directly break the void above the opponent's mind sea using spiritual swords...

In the nanobead that Zhang Tie gifted Lord Fairysea, there were ten jars of top-quality all-purpose medicament that he brewed in Castle of Black Iron and nine golden spears.

"Aah...knight...knight..." The waiter who served liquor stared at the disappearing Lord Fairysea as he stammered.

Zhang Tie turned around. The moment the waiter caught Zhang Tie's eye light, his dumbfounded look had disappeared as his memory about Lord Fairysea was erased by Zhang Tie. After being puzzled for a couple of seconds, the waiter had recovered his composure as he said, "Sir, here's your liquor..." When he put down the jar, the waiter looked at the empty chair and glass in the opposite and asked Zhang Tie, "Yi? Where's that guest..."

"He's got something urgent to deal with and has left. Check out..." Zhang Tie waved his hand while a handful of gold coins appeared on the table with clatters...

"Aah, it's too much, sir..."

"Keep the changes..."

After leaving the words, Zhang Tie walked out of the Rainflower Building.

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The taxi driver had long left. Zhang Tie walked at the bank of Swordswashing Lake alone as he felt a bit confused. It was an accident for him to encounter Lord Fairysea in Datang City. When the two divine dominators stayed together, their strong qi fields responded to each other like two fierce tigers on both sides of a hedge. No matter how well both parties hid, they still sensed the identity of the opposite. As a result, Zhang Tie's plan of killing third prince met a bit of uncertainty.

'If I kill the third prince at this moment, the others might not know that; but Lord Fairysea would know it for sure. Perhaps Lord Fairysea had already noticed why I come to Datang City from Youzhou Province in another look in the current situation.'

'What should I do? Do I continue my plan?'

After walking around half of the lake, Zhang Tie gradually became determined as before. 'As long as Lord Fairysea is not on the same side of Imperial Alliance, it would be fine for me to kill third prince. Given

the last words of Lord Fairysea, he might be warning me that I should stick to my bottom line—As long as I don't do harm to the country and the people, I would be his friend; instead of his enemy.

'Is it harmful to the country and its people by killing third prince? Of course not. In the holy war, third prince who wants to usurp and Imperial Alliance are the culprits who do harm to the country. Undoubtedly, domestic turmoils and consumption could be avoided by killing third prince and collapsing Imperial Alliance.'

'If Lord Fairysea wants to prevent me from doing something in Datang City, he would not give the *Deities Killing Sutra* to me. Now that he gives me Deities Killing Sutra, he must not want to interfere with my own plan.'

'In fact, Lord Fairysea has not asked me my purpose in Datang City even though I've asked him about his purpose here.'

Right then, Zhang Tie quivered all over for a second as he instantly thought about a possibility, 'Lord Fairysea might...might have long known the conspiracy of third prince and Imperial Alliance. He might have known everything, including the black invitation cards and why I come here in another look?'

'He has to die! But I have to make a good plan. No loophole is allowed!'

As Zhang Tie made his decision, he found he had already come to the front of a super high grand hotel at the bank of Swordswashing Lake...

Chapter 1624: Paying a Secret Visit to the Third Prince's Mansion

At midnight, Zhang Tie flew out of the window of a luxury room on Floor 38 of the grand hotel on the bank of Swordswashing Lake as a little black beetle towards the third prince's mansion in the center of Datang City...

In the daytime, the taxi driver had already shown Zhang Tie around the third prince's mansion. Under his lotus flower eyes, Zhang Tie had already seen through the entire mansion and bore the location and routes of the third prince's mansion in mind.

The entire Datang City had been in sound sleep. Besides the streetlamps and the lamplights in a few buildings, the entire city had been in silence, being utterly different than the bustling scene in the daytime.

It had been a long time since Zhang Tie used his little beetle as his incarnation last time. When he turned into a little black beetle again, Zhang Tie felt that sense of freedom coming back.

At above 100 m in the air, the little beetle loomed and flew towards the third prince's mansion like a speck of dust after being applied with super hiding rune. It only took Zhang Tie over 20 minutes to meet the third prince's mansion that he had seen in the daytime.

Located in the center of Datang City, the third prince's mansion occupied 2.4 square miles or so. With a camp on one side, the entire mansion was on very strict alert. In the air, Zhang Tie saw all the road lamps outside the mansion bright as teams of soldiers were patrolling around the mansion, leaving no dead angles across the mansion at all.

Of course, in Zhang Tie's eyes, these guards were nothing but decorations. What Zhang Tie worried most were those hidden powerhouses beside Xuanyuan Wuji. Given Xuanyuan Wuji's deeds, Zhang Tie didn't believe that this guy didn't have high-level bodyguards or had not considered about being assassinated. Before the move, Zhang Tie had to get hang of these messages for the sake of sec-kill. The more messages he acquired about the mansion, the calmer he would be in action.

Right above the heads of a team of patrolling soldiers, Zhang Tie easily entered the high wall of the mansion. Then, he slowed down and flew towards the residential area of servants in the periphery of the mansion.

Only after a short while, the little black beetle had already arrived there and entered one bedroom.

Two servants were in sound sleep on two beds. It was pitch-dark inside. After entering the room, the little beetle flew around the bed for a short while before disappearing. Zhang Tie then appeared in the room like a looming spirit.

The two servants were both tough guys. Zhang Tie then put his hand onto the forehead of one of them while reading his memory in recent months.

Soul reading skill would bring a side effect to the one being read. If Zhang Tie read all the memories of this person, this guy might become an idiot. If he only read two months' memory, the side effect of Soul Reading Skill could almost be ignored under his control. As for the person whose memory was read, he just made a bit longer yet spirit-consuming dream.

The first one being read was a gardener who had worked in the mansion for almost 2 decades.

After reading two months' memory from this gardener, Zhang Tie gained a lot of useful messages such as the topography of the entire mansion including the location of the inner court, the residential area of waiters and maids, the residence of guards, the residence of the family members and trusted subordinates of third prince, the residence of Xuanyuan Wuji and who in the mansion usually touched Xuanyuan Wuji.

Additionally, this gardener had encountered Xuanyuan Wuji when pruning flowers and plants in the garden. When he was pruning withered twigs, Xuanyuan Wuji and some followers suddenly negotiated from the back parlor. At that time, this gardener was so scared that he instantly bowed towards Xuanyuan Wuji on one side and remained still. Before lowering his head, he even threw a glance at Xuanyuan Wuji and bore his face in mind.

—Being tall and strong, Xuanyuan Wuji wore a light yellow boa silk robe, which felt very oppressive. He looked like Xuanyuan Changying except for slimmer eyes, thinner lips and higher cheekbones.

The above was the look of Xuanyuan Wuji.

After acquiring these messages, Zhang Tie didn't stay in this room any longer. As the other one was also a gardener, he would not gain more information from the first one. Therefore, Zhang Tie didn't waste time anymore. In a split second, Zhang Tie disappeared like a spirit, leaving no trace in the room. Closely after that, the little black beetle reappeared and flew out of the vent through the window of the room.

A few minutes later, Zhang Tie appeared in a residential area not far from this room, where lived maids who could move in the inner court.

As these maids could encounter Xuanyuan Wuji more frequently, they must know more information about the inner court and the people beside Xuanyuan Wuji. Like tonight, even though many people had fallen asleep, some maids were still on duty in the inner court, waiting for orders at any time.

Only after ten more minutes, the little black beetle had flown out of the residence of these maids before heading for the residence of those guards.

Guards in the mansion were in three shifts. While some guards were patrolling at night, the others were sleeping.

All the guards of Xuanyuan Wuji were above LV 10. However, they were just commoners in Zhang Tie's eyes. Each guard could have a single room like a dorm, which was much more advanced than that of gardeners. Zhang Tie easily entered those guards' rooms. After reading two months' memory of two guards and one LV 14 team leader of guards, Zhang Tie knew the mansion even better than elders who had lived in the mansion for dozens of years.

After integrating with this information, some problems that he had to face before killing Xuanyuan Wuji occurred to Zhang Tie's mind.

First, Xuanyuan Wuji was not a weak literati; instead, he was a powerful knight who cultivated the emperor-level *Xuanyuan God Sutra*; of course, an ordinary black iron knight was trivial in Zhang Tie's eyes; however, a black iron knight who cultivated emperor-level secret knowledge must arise his attention. Zhang Tie was clear about that. Given his realm, Zhang Tie could defeat Xuanyuan Wuji in an overwhelming manner; however, he didn't know whether Xuanyuan Wuji had mastered any trump card to protect himself in an emergency.

Second, there were also powerhouses beside Xuanyuan Wuji, two shadow knights and two earth knights who were called Four Kingkongs by the guards in the mansion. One of the two shadow knights was employed by Xuanyuan Wuji, especially for his safety. The other three knights were arranged by Xuanyuan Wuji's mother, Madam Jiang in the Imperial Alliance of Emperor Xuanyuan, who was from the powerful Jiang Clan of Heavenly Stars Palace. Undoubtedly, the four of them were all loyal to him. When he launched a strike, he had to confront with these powerhouses.

The last but not the least, he had to consider the mysterious figure beside Xuanyuan Wuji—Xue Fucius.

This Xue Fucius had a strange background, which was also the hot topic of commoners in the city. According to the servants in the mansion, Xue Fucius' background was as follows—After being awarded Datang City, Xuanyuan Wuji had started to build Talents' Pavilion. After Talents' Pavilion was completed, the trivial Xue Fucius who wandered across the country for learning came to Datang City and became famous for his essay *The Hymn of Jianghe River* in the Talents' Pavilion. As a result, everyone across Datang City read it, raising the cost of paper. Because of this hymn, Xue Fucius directly became the VIP of Xuanyuan Wuji; he even became the latter's clerk, who was responsible for approving all the letters in the mansion on behalf of the third prince.

However, in Zhang Tie's eyes, the story of Xue Fucius could only cheat ordinary literati and servants in the mansion. Zhang Tie just took the legend as sh*t. It might be possible if Xuanyuan Wuji was a common prince who was interested in poems and essays; however, Zhang Tie was clear about Xuanyuan

Wuji's target. How could a prince who keeps thinking about fighting for the throne of Taixia Country favor an old man who only excels at pieces and calligraphy?

Was there any story more fabricated than this one in this world? If it was real, all the demons might be vegetarians.

As Xue Fucius was always with Xuanyuan Wuji, Zhang Tie realized that this old man might be the largest obstacle for him to kill Xuanyuan Wuji...

Chapter 1625: A Semi-sage Knight

As Zhang Tie had arrived at the third prince's mansion and acquired the details about the daily life of Xuanyuan Wuji in his mansion, Zhang Tie would not leave here even if there was a lion on the road in front of him.

If he wanted to know the real battle strength of Xue Fucius, besides having a direct fight with him, Zhang Tie could also choose to observe or test him.

In a split second, Zhang Tie had worked out a method. It was time for Zhang Tie to show the power of his *Great Wilderness Sutra*.

There was only one animal in this world which could last over one hundred million years. It could always be found with people. It was cockroach who had a special name Xiao Qiang among Hua people.

Although cockroaches had wings like other insects, ordinary ones couldn't fly at all; instead, they could only glide. However, after the Catastrophe, as long as there were enough cockroaches, a few of them would experience a slight mutation. As a result, their flight ability would be strengthened as they could fly 300-500 m for a time. Additionally, the mutated ones were good at hiding themselves, which granted them greater viability. Some of them could even change their body colors or turn semi-transparent. Such mutated ones were called flying cockroaches. They were like special forces among cockroaches.

By applying the Great Wilderness Sutra, it only took Zhang Tie a few seconds to fetch some flying cockroaches after circling around the mansion for a while. After that, Zhang Tie applied a super hiding rune to those flying cockroaches so that they were hardly discovered. Then, the little black beetle led those flying cockroaches towards the residence of the third prince.

The residence of the third prince in the mansion was called Moonviewing Pavilion. Everyone in the mansion knew that sometimes third prince would get off and view moons at midnight or deal with public affairs and documents in the Moonviewing Pavilion. Therefore, the residence of Xue Fucius Guanlan Court was neighboring Moonviewing Pavilion for the sake of the third prince.

Under the leadership of the little black beetle, some flying cockroaches were flying across the tiled roofs and twigs. As they couldn't fly too long, they had to take a rest in each hundred of meters.

After using the leapfrogging tactic for a few times, Zhang Tie finally led some flying cockroaches to the periphery of Moonviewing Pavilion.

The periphery of Moonviewing Pavilion looked open. It was a bamboo wood 200 m away from Moonviewing Pavilion, with an open grassland in between. They were connected with hollow, elegant

corridors and a low, colorful parterre. In Zhang Tie's eyes, such a design was for the sake of assassination; especially in the evening, after Xuanyuan Wuji went to bed, if someone wanted to be close to Moonviewing Pavilion, he had to pass such a distance in between. As a result, he had to expose himself especially to the powerhouses beside Xuanyuan Wuji.

There was only an accessible rockery between Guanlan Court and Moonviewing Pavilion.

After arriving at the bamboo wood, Zhang Tie stopped. For the sake of safety, he silently drilled a cave on bamboo which had insects inside and had his little black beetle hide inside, only exposing its head to observe the situation over Moonviewing Pavilion.

When Zhang Tie drilled inside the bamboo, those flying cockroaches were all resting on bamboo leaves and ready for the coming task.

It was pitch-dark in Moonviewing Pavilion. Xuanyuan Wuji appeared having fallen asleep. At this moment, at least two of the four Kingkongs would guard in Moonviewing Pavilion. Xu Fucius's residence was also pitch-dark on one side.

Bamboo shadows began to sway on the ground by the hint of a breeze in the still night air.

Right now, Xiao Qiang special forces, go!

The first batch of two flying cockroaches then bounced off the bamboo leaves at the same time as they extended their wings and glided in the nightcape with the help of the wind. They flew towards the Moonviewing Pavilion and Guanlan Court, one after another dauntlessly.

Widening its eyes, the little black beetle hid in the bamboo as it observed the situation in Moonviewing Pavilion and Guanlan Court.

The little black beetle was actually the best agent of Zhang Tie; however, as Zhang Tie had been used to it, if it was hurt, Zhang Tie would feel painful about that. Therefore, Zhang Tie fetched some cannon fodder to replace it. If these Xiao Qiang special forces were safe, it would not be late for him to use the little black beetle by then.

Under the gaze of Zhang Tie, the two flying cockroaches soon flew over 100 m long in the night breeze. After a few seconds, when they were about 50 m away from Moonviewing Pavilion and Guanlan Court, the two flying cockroaches turned into ashes almost in 0.01 second as if they had flown into an invisible furnace, leaving two sparkles in the air. Closely after that, they had perished with the wind...

Zhang Tie was shocked inside.

It was a sage-level knight; no, it was a semi-sage knight. It was the strength of a semi-sage knight which was close to the realm. Zhang Tie had seen the same strength from the Sincerity Garden of Meng Shidao in Xuanyuan Hill.

There was a semi-sage knight beside Xuanyuan Wuji.

The moment the two flying cockroaches perished, a shadow knight with sparkling triangle eyes in gloomy look and black robe appeared. After flying around Moonviewing Pavilion as fast as a lightning bolt, the knight in black robe glanced around with gleaming eyes. After finding no abnormal situation, he disappeared again.

This shadow knight in black robe was Jiang Qianchou the grand elder of Jiang Clan of Heavenly Stars Pavilion, one of the four Kingkongs beside Xuanyuan Wuji.

Of course, the strength of semi-sage knight couldn't be executed by Jiang Qianchou. Nor could Xuanyuan Wuji and the four Kingkongs beside him would do that. That semi-sage knight must be Xue Fucius! As Zhang Tie thought, he fixated onto Guanlan Court which was in dark.

This person was a semi-sage knight beside Xuanyuan Wuji. Xue Fucius probably was a figure from the three top sects of Imperial Alliance who had changed his real name, look and identity. Besides protecting Xuanyuan Wuji, he was also responsible for communicating with Xuanyuan Wuji on behalf of the three top sects.

With the help of such a semi-sage knight, Xuanyuan Wuji even escaped from the chase of a sage-level knight.

After gaining such a discovery, it was unnecessary for Zhang Tie to investigate it any more. The little black beetle then came out of the bamboo hole and flew back to Zhang Tie's hotel while the remaining cockroaches also flew away.

...

Over 20 minutes later, the little black beetle flew back to the room of that grand hotel on Floor 38 at the bank of Swordwashing Lake. After that, Zhang Tie appeared quietly. Standing by the window, he was watching the beautiful lake and mountains calmly.

What a competitor! Zhang Tie had not imagined that Xuanyuan Wuji could have such a great trump card in defense.

Zhang Tie was not afraid of Xue Fucius. In his opinion, Xue Fucius probably was one elder or deputy head of the three top sects who declared to enter secluded cultivation. It was normal for a knight to enter secluded cultivation for dozens of years in this stage. During this period, Xuanyuan Wuji favored him in the name of Talents' Pavilion, which didn't arouse people's doubt at all.

However, because of Xue Fucius, Zhang Tie's plan of assassination might alter.

Previously, Zhang Tie planned to kill Xuanyuan Wuji by a secret skill of *Bloody Soul Sutra* in this look and disappear. Given the current situation, it was almost impossible for him to kill Xuanyuan Wuji facing the protection of a semi-sage knight without using the ability of a divine dominator. However, as long as he revealed his ability of a divine dominator, even idiots would doubt him. As a result, Jinwu Palace, Iron-Dragon Sect and his relatives and friends would have endless troubles. That was not what Zhang Tie wanted.

'How could I kill Xuanyuan Wuji without arousing others' suspicion?'

Zhang Tie was thinking about it while squinting his eyes by the window. Only after a short while, a whim had occurred to his mind...

'I probably expose my ability of divine dominator if I kill Xuanyuan Wuji facing the protection of a semi-sage knight. If I don't want to arouse any suspicion, I have to be in an eye-catching place when Xuanyuan Wuji was killed. In this way, even if Xuanyuan Wuji was killed by me, nobody would doubt me. Of

course, it's also not good if Lord Fairysea becomes the suspect. Perhaps Lord Fairysea doesn't care and has his way to prove his innocence; it's vile for me to do that. If I make him as a scapegoat soon after receiving his gift, it would be embarrassing for me to see Lord Fairysea later...'

'Therefore, the best moment to kill Xuanyuan Wuji is on the day of the duel in the Gobi Desert!'

'When my original being fights the sage-level knights of the three top sects on the Yin Hai of Gobi Desert, I would seize the opportunity to kill Xuanyuan Wuji using my substitute.'

'I'd better die together with Xuanyuan Wuji.'

'I only need to alter the original plan a bit to make Han Zhengfang and his son and Heavens Reaching Church the scapegoat...'

'It seems that I should stay a few more days in Datang City and make a considerate plan!'

Zhang Tie gradually revealed an icy smile...

Chapter 1626: Time Flies

Time would not wait for anybody. The 906th year of Black Iron Calendar was a relatively peaceful year in Taixia Country since the third holy war broke out. This year, Since Immortal Qianji killed a heavenly demon knight and several shadow knights at the bank of Weishui River, the attack of demons on the east was curbed. As a result, the human army and demon army were in stalemate across the year. Although skirmishes still happened every day and the combat between ground troops in Helan Mountain continued, there were very few combats that over 1,000 knights joined.

Such a situation was relatively peaceful than that two years ago.

Although the fire ceased at the bank of Weishui River, fiery oil became hot across the country this year. Over 16,000 fiery oil production bases were increased this year. Across the country, Xuanyuan Hill, major clans and local governments all held great expectation and passion about fiery oil. As fiery oil production bases spread over the country, in the banner of combating demons and safeguarding Taixia Country, a tide of new industry represented by fiery oil planes and weapons officially came into being. The entire country started to burst its energy like a machine being started with fiery oil.

Only in one year, independent air cavalries corps had been established in each province, at least their framework had been formed. The top four armies of Taixia Country had been ready for establishing wholly new full-mechanized corps. Such a grand situation might only be matched by those industrial revolutions of humans before the Catastrophe. Many people would like to share profits from this pie, including rune alchemists and traditional mechanical engineers as they all racked their minds to invent fiery-oil instruments or weapons. Therefore, a myriad of fiery-oil weapons and machines appeared across the country...

Only in one year, there had been over 100 kinds of dual engines in Taixia Country. Besides, a large quantity of fiery-oil engines also appeared in order to fit various types and demands. The varieties of planes in the air also surged to hundreds from only a few. Even many provincial armies were matched with planes in local types. The top four armies which were well known by its powerful system and production ability started to develop new types of fiery-oil planes and weapons independently.

In order to unify the outfits and logistic supply system of provincial armies, Xuanyuan Hill had to deliver strict, unified supply standards about fiery-oil weapons and equipment to the top four armies. Provincial armies and top four armies were forbidden to use illegal fiery-oil weapons or equipment.

Nobody would deny the fact that Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory was the holy land of air cavalries. However, the industrial production capacity in Youzhou Province and Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory was poor. As long as the items produced by Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory were pushed into the market, they would soon be imitated by other provinces, prefectures and clans who had greater industrial production capacity. The latter might even bring more, better variants.

When the tide of the industrial revolution was in its climax, provinces and prefectures across Taixia Country started to face sharply different problems brought by famine.

In those provinces and prefectures being severely afflicted by famine, local governments had already opened the official storage to relieve the disaster while local officials were in panic. By contrast, the 2-year famine facing some provinces and prefectures had been relieved. Unimaginably, Youzhou Province and Fiery-Dragon Bounty gained an unprecedented harvest last year. Those official fields of Ninghe Prefecture that Zhang Tie rent brought a bumper harvest to the entire prefecture, which further stabilized and relieved the famine facing Yanzhou Province. As a result, all the forces across Northeast Military Region were gazing at Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory and Ninghe Prefecture. Before the grains of Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory and Ninghe Prefecture entered the warehouse, most of them had been purchased at high prices by people dispatched by major clans across the country.

Northeast Military Region recovered its vigor firstly from the famine that spread over the country. Therefore, Cheng Honglie the commander of Northeast Military Region was even awarded by Xuanyuan Hill and became a good model for the other military regions across the country.

In the same year, Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace was not peaceful. After Immortal Qianji recovered and returned to Youzhou Province from Xuanyuan Hill, his “disappearance” became a popular topic across the country. Closely after that, Zhang Taixuan the head of Huaiyuan Palace was possessed by a devil when in cultivation and committed suicide. Then, Huaiyuan Palace split up and Zhang family of Jinwu Palace became independent. After that, Immortal Qianji gained Dongtian of Great Wilderness Sect in South Border and three top sects of Taixia Country sent black invitation cards to Iron-Dragon Sect, which aroused the fury of the rest of people...

In such restless situations, the year 906 of Black Iron Calendar passed by silently and the 907th year arrived in an irresistible way...

...

On January 18, after the new year, it was still snowing heavily in Xuanyuan Hill. In the weapons testing field of the base of God’s Decision Army, one of the top four armies of Taixia Country in the east of Xuanyuan Hill, Xuanyuan Changying, some generals of the top four armies and the commander-in-chief who came to Xuanyuan Hill for submitting his report were sitting in a rainshed temporarily built on a hill and watching the programs prepared by His Majesty...

In a royal prince’s robe with dragon pattern and a cloak made of fiery fox’s hide, Xuanyuan Changying looked pretty awe-inspiring in wind and snow.

“Your Majesty, they’re coming...” After being warned by a general of God’s Decision Army, Xuanyuan Changying took his telescope and looked at the sky in the north, followed by the some commanders of military regions. The others directly looked over there by gleaming eyes.

By the telescope, Xuanyuan Changying saw two lines of black points in the sky at over 10,000 m high flying towards them in heavy wind and snow. Only after a short while, the image in the telescope had been recognized as two lines of planes.

Being utterly different than the earliest air cavalry planes produced in Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory which had been matched for air cavalries at the frontline of Weishui River, these planes were absolute giants.

Each plane was longer than 70 m, wider than 60 m and higher than 8 m. On each wing, there were four high-power engines.

There were totally 8 planes. Like two rows of big birds, they were more shocking than airships. Undoubtedly, they could move faster than airships.

Watching the increasingly clearer planes in the sky, all the commanders at present changed their looks. As for these high-level officers of Taixia Country, they had been used to airboats and airships; however, it was their first time to see such huge planes.

Only after a short while, the two rows of planes had arrived above the Weapons Testing Center. In their earsplitting booms like trains running in the sky, everyone at present saw each plane opening an exit at their bottom and starting to lay eggs. The moment the eggs touched the valley between two mountains, fiery dragons had rushed into the sky while covering over 6 square miles’ land...

The burning fiery dragon melted ice and snow and burned the land red. Some iron frames standing in the valley gradually turned red and soft as they started to melt. At the same time, a dark gray smoke started to suffuse over the entire region.

Even though it was far away, people on the top of the mountain could still feel hot waves from the burning fiery dragon.

Over 10 minutes later, when the fiery dragon and the dark gray smoke disappeared, the valley had been scorched black, leaving no vigor anymore.

All the commanders were petrified by such a drill. Each of them was clear about the significance of those planes. Each of them was estimated to carry over 50 tons of ammo, which was even higher than that of heavy airships. However, their speed was many times faster than airships. Such planes were definitely sharp weapons at the battlefield and would cause a great loss to the ground demon corps in only one air raid. No matter how fast ground demon corps could move, they could never match that of such huge planes. Therefore, such planes could fix the loophole of airships in an air raid. Even if they were not used for the air raid, they could also bring great convenience to logistic troops in transportation.

It was not an end yet. With the warning of a general of God’s Decision Army, all of them transfixed onto the end of the valley in the far.

Right in the end of the valley, a square formation of forty odd-looking semi-caterpillar track heavy trucks was driving forth.

They were strange because of rows of huge pipes above them.

When they were about 20 miles away from this valley, the forty heavy trucks parked at the same time. Closely after that, they started to raise their pipes towards this valley.

After reaching an angle, their pipes stopped moving. After half a minute, huge “rockets” were shot out of those huge pipes with flames. They fell in the same region of the valley which had been burned black, covering it with high-temperature flames again...

“Commanders, how do you feel about the two sharp weapons?” Xuanyuan Changying put down his telescope as he asked those high-level officers with a smile...

Chapter 1627: The God’s Will

After bidding farewell to those commanders and returning to the imperial palace, it was already dark while the snow turned lighter. With full ambition, Xuanyuan Changying felt pretty satisfied with what happened today.

It was his first time to ask the commanders of military regions to submit their work report to him since he was in charge of supervising the administration of the country. All the commanders had arrived, which meant that they rooted for Xuanyuan Changying to a certain degree. As a result, Xuanyuan Changying was very happy.

What was more, he revealed some trump cards in the Weapons Testing Center of God’s Will Army. Watching those officers’ awe-stricken looks, Xuanyuan Changying felt as cool as drinking iced sour plum soup in hot summer.

If he wanted to ascend to the throne, he had to win the sincere support of these high-level officers. If these officers didn’t show enough respect and awe to him, it would be very difficult for Xuanyuan Changying to make it. Even if he could, his imperial decrees might not take effect at all. In history, from home and abroad, too many emperors were mere figureheads and always cheated by chancellors. Xuanyuan Changying didn’t want to be such an awkward emperor. Otherwise, it would be meaningless for him to be an emperor; instead, he was just a puppet, which was not even as powerful and cool as a provincial governor.

In big and steady steps, Xuanyuan Changying passed by many winding corridors, on the way, all the guards, maids and female officials and butlers hurriedly gave way to him.

The plum garden had been covered with silver snow while plum flowers were opening brilliantly with a faint fragrance. However, Xuanyuan Changying didn’t feel like enjoying the beautiful scenery. Only after a short while, he had come to his study room near the plum garden.

After waving his hands towards some bodyguards, Xuanyuan Changying took in a deep breath as he tried to remain a bit relaxed before pushing open the door and entering the study.

“Mr. Fang, as you’ve imagined, all the commanders were startled by the destructive effects of those new weapons. When I was bidding farewell to them, some of them even wanted to meet me alone...”

The copper crane was spurting out the faint fragrance of burning eaglewood while the brazier made the room much warmer. In long fur coat, Mr. Fang was browsing official documents behind a table. The moment he saw Xuanyuan Changying, he hurriedly sprung up as he bowed towards Xuanyuan Changying.

“The greatest virtue of an emperor lies in victory. Your virtue becomes more expensive in these chaotic times. All the commanders are the most practical and experienced high-level officers and the backbone of Taixia Country. As long as Your Majesty show them the hope of humans in this holy war and your efforts, Your Majesty would be a wise emperor in their eyes. All the commanders would prop for Your Majesty to stabilize the overall situation facing Taixia Country for sure...” Mr. Fang said with a smile as he had already seen through everything although being not at present.

“I was also petrified by the earth-shaking power of those new weapons. They could boil the mountains and rivers in a split second...” Xuanyuan Changying said as he took a seat. At the same time, he let Fang Qingming sit down too.

“Xuanyuan Hill is converged with many masters. Taixia Country has numerous able craftsmen and the best industrial production capacity. Given the overall national strength of Taixia Country, it’s not difficult for us to develop these mass destructive weapons as long as we have fiery oil. Plus Your Majesty’s concern, your subordinates would complete it carefully at a high speed. The top four armies shall be matched with such weapons step by step. Corps in Western Theater of Operations shall also share some of them. In a few years, the strength of ground demon corps would be offset by our new weapons. Even if Taixia Country couldn’t establish such a corps of LV 9 soldiers, we don’t need to fear demons. By then, the holy war would recover balance...”

“You’re right, Mr. Fang. Fiery oil would definitely bring us long-term profits. As it could save people, it has great meritorious service!” Xuanyuan Changying commented as he made a cup of tea for himself...

Mr. Fang hurriedly stopped His Majesty as he said, “Your Majesty, the tea has been cold. I’ve drunk the greater part of it...”

“It’s fine. I’m not that fragile!” Xuanyuan Changying said as he bottomed up the tea water. Closely after that, his facial expression became slightly frozen before turning vivid.

The tea water was not cold yet, but it tasted special. After drinking it, it tasted like ordinary tea leaves at the beginning. However, as it entered his throat, a flexible aura stayed at his mouth and tongue before suffusing over his body. Gradually it tasted sweet and aromatic endlessly...

Xuanyuan Changying was proficient in teatism while all the tea leaves in the imperial palace were of top quality provided by all the provinces with the territory of Taixia Country. However, this tea water tasted different than any others that Xuanyuan Changying had tasted. Its flexible taste was unforgettable.

Watching Xuanyuan Changying’s look, Fang Qingming revealed a bitter smile inside as he realized that he couldn’t keep those tea leaves anymore. He felt regretful bringing these tea leaves into the imperial palace. Since he came back from Youzhou Province, Fang Qingming would drink a few tea leaves gifted by Immortal Qianji every day. As a result, when he drunk other tea water, he always felt like lacking something. As he had been used to drink such a kind of tea, he brought them into the imperial palace to enjoy himself. Unimaginably, this secret was discovered by His Majesty.

“Sir, what kind of tea it is? There’re totally 23 varieties of top-quality teas across the country. Each of them was unforgettable. However, this tea tasted utterly different than them. This tea is as unique as pure gold and jade. Despite its simple look, it had its specialty and flexible aura. With a long aftertaste, could intoxicate my spirit and lubricate my qi and blood. I wonder when did our country start to produce such a kind of top-quality tea?” Xuanyuan Changying asked Fang Qingming as he widened his eyes.

“Aah, it’s gifted by Immortal Qianji when I paid a visit to Fiery-Dragon Bounty Territory at your order, Your Majesty. It’s said that it’s planted by Immortal Qianji in Eighteen Xuantian Peaks. Only people in Iron-Dragon Sect could enjoy it. Therefore, it unknown to the public...” Fang Qingming could only make an explanation helplessly. After checking His Majesty’s look, he could only say, “Your Majesty, if you like, I’ve got some more at home; I will bring 1 kg to Your Majesty...”

It was actually not planted by Zhang Tie; instead, this tea had long been existing in Eighteen Xuantian Peaks. It was not a top-quality tea either. After Zhang Tie had his disciples bury the ashes of Bloody Sacrifice Furnace under those tea trees, these tea leaves gradually evolved and became the favorite of elders and disciples of Iron-Dragon Sect.

His Majesty didn’t know about its background. After hearing that it was related to Zhang Tie, besides being shocked, he became silent for a while before heaving a long sigh, “Is there any news about Immortal Qianji recently?”

“Since he received the black invitation cards, it’s said that Immortal Qianji has been in secluded cultivation!”

“Really?” Xuanyuan Changying played with the teacup as he continued, “Air calvaries would be an independent force this year. If Immortal Qianji is here, he could be the commander of this air force, which would meet the expectation of the people. Pitifully, the three top sects are too presumptuous...” Xuanyuan Changying put the teacup onto the table forcefully. Closely after that, he watched Fang Qingming with a bit of hope as he said in a gloomy tone, “Mr. Fang, have you discovered which one do the three top sects root for through carding the reports from all parties these days, the third younger brother or the ninth younger brother...”

“I indeed discovered something; however, I need to verify it...”

“Oh, really?” Xuanyuan Changying was shocked by Mr. Fang’s answer.

Fang Qingming then turned around and withdrew a report from a thick pile of documents before giving it to Xuanyuan Changying.

After taking it, Xuanyuan Changying found it was from Zhifang Palace of Youzhou Province. ‘Youzhou Province again?’ The royal prince frowned slightly...

The report contained over 10,000 words, which included all the events in Youzhou Province over the past two months, large or small. Xuanyuan Changying paid special attention to a paragraph which was marked in red by Mr. Fang. Huaiyuan Palace announced on January 17 that Lan Yunxi would marry Xuanyuan Wuji...

Datang City was the bounty city of Xuanyuan Changying’s third younger brother. Xuanyuan Changying was also clear about the relation between Huaiyuan Palace and Zhang Tie. However, Xuanyuan

Changying still didn't imagine that he could see the name of Huaiyuan Palace here. After Immortal Qianji left Huaiyuan Palace, Huaiyuan Palace was just an ordinary clan, which was not eye-catching anymore. Since Jinwu Palace was founded in the latter half of last year, Xuanyuan Changying had not heard about Huaiyuan Palace for a long time as everyone was paying heed to Jinwu Palace. They gradually forgot about Huaiyuan Palace. No matter what, there were too many ordinary clans like Huaiyuan Palace across the country. Although being a bit well-known in a local place, Huaiyuan Palace was nothing but sh*t as for Xuanyuan Hill. Nobody would care about such an ordinary clan.

Additionally, Xuanyuan Changying felt strange about the name of Lan Yunxi.

"Lan Yunxi was the daughter of Zhang Taixuan, the former head of Huaiyuan Palace. It's said that she has an exceptional flair. Later on, she joined Taiyi Fantasy Sect and became a popular candidate of the goddess of the sect. However, after the event of Zhang Taixuan, she left Taiyi Fantasy Sect and returned to Youzhou Province as the new head of Huaiyuan Palace. Now that Huaiyuan Palace has released this news to the public, it means that Taiyi Fantasy Sect has already agreed that Lan Yunxi had given up the chance to be the goddess of the sect..."

"It's my third younger brother behind the three top sects?" Xuanyuan Changying's eyes turned cold at once.

Shaking his head, Mr. Fang said, "It's still uncertain given this message. It might also be a puzzle made by the three top sects. They intend to influence our judgment by this female disciple. A few days later, Zhang Tie would fight the sage-level knights of the three top sects, I believe that the three top sects would expose some loopholes. Your Majesty, you only need to stay calm to make the preemptive move..."

"Yes, the date would come in 11 days!" Xuanyuan Hill said as he pinched the report. After being silent for a short while, he told Fang Qingming, "Mr. Fang, please go there on behalf of me again..."

"It's my pleasure, Your Majesty..."

...

At the same time, Zhang Tie was standing in his room at the hotel in Datang City and watching the heavy snow and the frozen Swordswashing Lake. He remained still for over one hour like a stone statue while the flying snowflakes and those happy ones skating on the lake looked lifeless...

One hour ago, he received the news that Lan Yunxi would marry Xuanyuan Wuji too.

What a ridiculous God's will!

Chapter 1628: The Gathering

The duel would take place on Yin Hai, Gobi Desert in the west of Taixia Country between 3 pm and 5 pm on January 29, the 907th year of Black Iron Calendar...

Located in the west of Taixia Country, Gobi Desert precisely referred to the vast unpopulated zone in the north of Bingzhou Province and the west of Suizhou Province. This place belonged to a wild province

within the territory of Liaoan Military Region of Taixia Country. It was so barren and desolate that only sands could be found here, it had a special name—Sand Province (Shazhou Province).

Yinhai in Gobi Desert was not an ocean, but a huge basin covering 600,000 square miles. Long long ago, Yinhai was a vast inland lake which faced Yinshan Mountain. This lake existed at least before the Catastrophe. However, after the Catastrophe, nobody knew why the huge inland lake suddenly disappeared overnight, leaving a barren, concave basin. Now, shells and trace of water erosion in the withered region could still be seen in the basin. Whereas, no water existed here anymore.

Yinhai's sudden disappearance aroused many bizarre, terrifying legends; plus the desolate and hot environment, this region had become a real, unpopulated zone in Taixia Country. It was one of the most desolate regions among the wild provinces across the country. Even in the former two holy wars when Military Region deteriorated to a battlefield, the demon army still didn't feel like crossing the vast Gobi Desert for opening another battlefield so as to fight Taixia Country in two lines at the same time.

Nobody could cross this vast desert except for knights. Over 6,000 miles from east to west and from south to north, water was more precious than gold. As it was in summer, high temperature, sandstorm, thirst, hunger, despair, endless sands and those dangerous scorpions and insects in sands could easily eliminate any lives. This was the land of loneliness of Taixia Country.

However, this lonely land was not alone anymore since January 20 as so many airboats, airships and knights arrived from all directions. Gathering above Yinhai, they all waited for the earth-shaking fight, which was going to happen here in a few days.

Some knights would like to support Immortal Qianji; the others were just curious about the coming duel.

Even those famous actors or actresses' concerts or performance in a Class A city would attract numerous visitors and supporters, not to mention the duel between the most powerful human knight and the sage-level knights of three of the top six sects which might not be watched in hundreds of years. As a result, the whole world was shocked as knights and fighters were all longing for eying this top-level duel.

Since the black invitation cards were delivered 100 days ago, those knights or fighters had come here from all directions out of curiosity.

As a result, the space above Yinhai became unprecedented, boisterous.

Between January 20 and 25, thousands of airships and airboats and over 10,000 knights had arrived there. Starting from January 25, more and more knights arrived, some came alone; some came in units; especially those knights from major clans or sects who came here in teams. Some knights came here by airboat, some by airship; the others even took enough water and dried grains here...

On January 27, the airboats of super clans and top six sects also arrived there one after another three days in advance...

...

Hair as dark as knight and eyes as blue as the ocean, Pandora in black longuette was standing on the highest deck of her airboat facing the strong wind at tens of thousands of meters high as her long hair swayed like a waterfall and black flame behind her.

The airboat moved so fast that the rising and falling sandy area flashed backward. Relatively, the sand dunes turned turbulent.

Pandora was watching the ground calmly with her blue eyes as she was as turbulent inside as the sand dunes below.

As the princess of Demons-killing Valley, one of the top six sects of Taixia Country, Pandora's identity was more distinguished than many secular princesses. Besides, she could own many things that many worldly people couldn't even imagine.

Today, her qi was not as same as that of the black iron knight in Earth-elements Realm anymore; instead, a looming qi was surrounding her, making the strong wind at such a high altitude tender.

However, no matter what, Pandora still wore that black seal finger ring on her right third finger.

At this moment, Pandora lightly stroked the black seal finger ring as her mind went back to the unknown railway station in Blackhot City on a heavily rainy night many years ago, where a young man and a young woman made a pledge while dropping tears...

That night, Pandora kept one sentence in mind—She hoped that she could marry him one day; she hoped not to see the man going to the battlefield alone. No matter where that man was going, she wished to go together with him, hand in hand, even if he was going to hell. She hoped that she could always stand on his side decisively. Even if he died, she still expected him to die in her arms and see her face in the end...

Over these years, whenever she stayed in the tower of time alone, Pandora would stroke this finger ring, in which way she could pluck up her courage with warm expectations.

As for Pandora, the greatest loneliness in this world was not the long periods in the tower of time, but the sadness caused by the separation of two beloved ones.

Hopefully, there was no more.

In this world, some things would change every day; the others would remain unchanged forever.

At this moment, Pandora heard footsteps from behind as she turned around, calling, "Grandpa..."

A powerful old man with convex forehead and silver hair in black robe appeared on the highest deck, causing the strong wind within hundreds of meters to disappear at once.

The old man watched Pandora with a favorable yet concerned look as he asked, "Are you sure? You know, the felicity blessing skill of Wu Clan's Heavenly Wish Bloodline could only be applied once in your life. If you apply it to yourself, you would make progress in your cultivation base smoothly by conquering all the difficulties. It's just a matter of time for you to promote to a sage-level knight..."

Shaking her head, Pandora smiled as she answered, "It's meaningless if I only live for myself. I feel he needs me for real this time. Therefore, I came here. No matter what, I won't regret. Grandpa, I think you must have not applied felicity blessing skill to yourself either, am I right?"

After hearing Pandora's question, the old man became silent for a second as a complex look flashed by as if he was recalling. After a short while, he burst out laughing, causing wind and clouds to surge,

saying, "Good, that's my granddaughter. Your temperament is as same as me. Seize your love even if you step on blades..." The old man heaved a sigh slightly after a short silence as he continued, "But Zhang Mushen has already married so many women. He's not as innocent as before. Are you sure he would still treat you as same as before? Is he worthwhile?"

"He told me there was a legend in Hua people. If a man really loves a woman, he would appear in front of her by colorful clouds. He had promised to appear in front of me in this manner when I could marry him one day. This time, he must know that I would come and he would definitely appear in front of me in this manner and tell me that he remains unchanged..." Pandora said with a strong belief as she blinked her blue eyes.

Watching her eyes, even as a sage-level knight, Wu Dingtian could only sigh inside. 'How could she believe in such a naive appointment? It was not performance. Even if Immortal Qianji is something, I don't think he could display the naive, fairytale scene in legend. Could Zhang Tie fire colorful crackers for her at this moment...'

"Here come the representatives of Heavenly Fortune Sect..." Wu Dingtian suddenly turned around and looked at the left side of the airboat with a shrewd eye light as he heard the notice...

Hundreds of miles away, another magnificent airboat was approaching from another direction...

...

Some people were also standing on the highest deck of the airboat of Heavenly Fortune Sect and watching the vast yellow sandy dunes...

In front of the group of Heavenly Fortune Sect were three handsome, vigorous young men. Due to protective battle qi, strong wind also detoured around their bodies. The corners of their garments didn't even move.

"Senior fellow apprentice Feng, is that Yinhai in front?" A young man with a resolute look turned around as he asked Feng Cangwu on his side.

Feng Cangwu looked more mature with a beard over his lips. Given his qi, he was already an earth knight. After hearing that young man's words, Feng Cangwu heaved a sigh full of frustration as he said, "Hmm, it's Yinhai in front of us. When you see your dad in a couple of days, you'd better not call me senior fellow apprentice in front of your father. Although you've promoted to black iron knights, if you call me senior fellow apprentice, I would lose face in front of your father as we've got acquainted with each other for so many years..."

Chapter 1629: A Special Affection

At noon of January 27, when Pandora and Demons-killing Valley arrived above Yinhai, an airboat was also slowly declining in the airport outside Datang City in the heavy wind and snow.

It was hot over the Gobi Desert; by contrast, Datang City was snowing heavily.

Climates varied in different regions. Therefore, people also had different feelings, one like fire, the other like ice.

Standing by the window of her cabin room, Lan Yunxi watched the increasingly clearer city in a slight, vacant pattern. This city was more prosperous than any city in Youzhou Province and was larger than the size of all the cities under the affiliation of Huaiyuan Palace. Additionally, the owner of this city was a young, able prince. At this moment, the magnificent buildings and the crowd which were waiting to greet her on the ground in the heavy wind and snow became meaningless in Lan Yunxi's eyes. Even though she became the female owner of this city, Lan Yunxi still felt irrelevant with this city.

The wedding engagement between Xuanyuan Wuji and Lan Yunxi was a pure trade. The agent for this trade was Taiyi Fantasy Sect.

Not everyone would speak highly of this trade; even her master privately persuaded her to consider it prudently. All the elders of Huaiyuan Palace opposed it firmly. However, Lan Yunxi still stuck to it or follow the arrangement of Taiyi Fantasy Sect. In this trade, she treated herself as a commodity. In exchange, Huaiyuan Palace would become an imperial relative of Taixia Country.

Xuanyuan Changying didn't lack women. As for him, beautiful and able women became as meaningless as gold coins in the pockets of rich businessmen; they couldn't even match his tools or decorations. However, besides her look and ability, Lan Yunxi carried a great bloodline.

Besides the bloodline in cultivation base of Zhang Clan, Lan Yunxi also awakened a heavenly bloodline, which was very rare and could only be awakened by women. After awakening it, she could enable her babies to carry forward the powerful genes of their father and even break through the levels of original ancestral bloodlines to a certain degree.

This ancestral bloodline was called Gold and Jade Good Fortune. Among all the heavenly bloodlines, this one was the strangest and rarest one. As this bloodline didn't work on herself but on her babies, the number of women who awakened this bloodline was even fewer than that of sage-level knights in Taixia Country.

Lan Yunxi was found to have awakened this bloodline when she had menses at the age of 14. Because her menses was golden for the first time and carried a special fragrance, from then on, it became the top secret of Huaiyuan Palace.

Across Huaiyuan Palace, besides Zhang Taixuan the father of Lan Yunxi, nobody knew this secret, including clan elders.

After Lan Yunxi joined Taiyi Fantasy Sect, Taiyi Fantasy Sect had known her secret.

Lan Yunxi only thought about exchanging her felicity for the future of Huaiyuan Palace; instead of considering that Xuanyuan Wuji would like to gain something else through this marriage.

As for Lan Yunxi, she had experienced the cruelest thing in the world. Therefore, nothing else could bring her greater pain or harm.

It was sacrifice and self-torture to a certain degree. However, in pursuing it, Lan Yunxi felt abnormal pleasure through revenge.

She wanted to see the furious, sad and tearful look of the man. If possible, she even wanted to see him kneeling down and begging for her forgiveness...

However, she couldn't see none of them now...

When she agreed with this marriage, the black invitation card of Taiyi Fantasy Sect had not been sent to Iron-Dragon Sect. When Iron-Dragon Sect received the black invitation card from Taiyi Fantasy Sect, the marriage between Xuanyuan Wuji and Lan Yunxi had already been fixed. It was also Taiyi Fantasy Sect which declared the date of this marriage officially.

She knew that man was in secluded cultivation in Iron-Dragon Sect these days. She also knew that the man would face a life-or-death duel above Yin Hai two days later. As a result, Lan Yunxi became helpless and frustrated. She couldn't even figure out how the relationship between this man and her sect deteriorated so fast.

That man killed her father!

That man split up the clan that she wanted to safeguard!

Now, that man was going to have a duel with the sage-level knight of the sect which helped her a lot!

It seemed that her vengeance would be realized by her sect soon. Lan Yunxi felt that she should be happy; however, she felt vacant facing this strange city. The cold air even made her suffocate and breathless.

'Am I wrong? Am I sorry to anyone?'

Lan Yunxi asked herself inside with eyes closed when the airboat landed. However, the answer that she gave to herself let her take in a deep breath. When she opened her eyes, weakness had disappeared in her eyes.

"Miss, we've arrived!" Elder Muyu said behind Lan Yunxi.

"I see!" Lan Yunxi didn't turn around; instead, she just said calmly, "I will come out soon..."

"Fine!"

Apparently, it was just a meeting between Lan Yunxi and Xuanyuan Wuji before their marriage. In fact, it was a negotiation about the trade. As for Lan Yunxi and Elder Muyu who came to Datang City together, they were not here as guests; instead, they were more like paying a visit to a foreign land as envoys. For the sake of the dignity of Huaiyuan Palace, Elder Muyu had argued with the butler of the third prince's mansion in Datang City through remote-sensing communications for over half a month. Elder Muyu didn't give any concession to this trade.

Although they were arguing about details, it was concerning about their dignity.

Previously, the third prince's mansion would like to pick Lan Yunxi up by airboat; however, Elder Muyu refused it; instead, Elder Muyu rent one airboat from Golden Roc Bank for Lan Yunxi. With the death of Zhang Taixuan, the provincial governor's private airboat of Zhang Taixuan was confiscated. Nor was there any relationship between Jinwu Palace and Iron-Dragon Sect. Therefore, Huaiyuan Palace also gave back the private airboats of elders to Iron-Dragon Sect. As a result, airboat became a luxury for Huaiyuan Palace again. If they wanted, they could only rent it.

Previously, the third prince's mansion requested Lan Yunxi's airboat to directly land in the square inside the mansion; however, Elder Muyu persisted in having it land at the airport outside Datang City and entering the third prince's mansion by car.

Previously, the third prince's mansion would like to have Lan Yunxi live in the side courtyard of the mansion; however, Elder Muyu said it was not reasonable as he rent the highest-level hotel in Datang City as her residence and only allowed the third prince's mansion to arrange some maids for her in the hotel.

Elder Muyu gave no concession to any other details, like the entry or departure time.

With strong self-respect, Lan Yunxi and Elder Muyu behaved like envoys of a small country paying a visit to a large country.

After checking her look inside the airboat, Lan Yunxi left the cabin door leisurely in noble cloak.

The prince's mansion dispatched a team of guards, a butler and eight luxury sedans to welcome Lan Yunxi's team. Actually, such a specification of personnel at the airport was also urged by Elder Muyu.

The butler of the third prince's mansion was an average-looking old man in gray hair, who looked pretty kind. However, his eyes were heart-piercing. Not until he saw Lan Yunxi walking out of the airboat did the butler come over there and slightly bow towards Lan Yunxi. After that, he straightened up and said calmly, "His Majesty especially told me to welcome Miss here. Please get on the car..."

After seeing Elder Muyu slightly nod aside, Lan Yunxi got on the same vehicle with Elder Muyu.

After that, the fleet left the airport for the third prince's mansion.

"Miss, I still hold that Xuanyuan Wuji is not only for the ancestral bloodline that you've awakened by marrying you. You'd better watch out..." Elder Muyu told Lan Yunxi secretly by battle qi as he watched the scenery of Datang City.

The driver was only a common fighter. Even if he was a knight, he could not hear their communication either.

"Elder Muyu, what else do you think Xuanyuan Wuji could get from Huaiyuan Palace except me?" Lan Yunxi made a self-deprecating smile as she asked Elder Muyu secretly.

Elder Muyu became speechless. After a short while, he heaved a sigh helplessly, saying, "Miss, if you persist it, I don't know what to say either. Perhaps we have something; however, we don't know that we have. If..."

"That person is already irrelevant to Huaiyuan Palace. I don't want to hear his name anymore..." Lan Yunxi changed his face as she interrupted Elder Muyu.

Then, the vehicle recovered its silence.

As the guiding vehicle had the mark and banner of the third prince's mansion and traffic control was executed, this fleet moved smoothly and fast in the heavy wind and snow. Only after a bit more than one hour, they had already entered the prince's mansion from the main gate...

Chapter 1630: In the Prince's Mansion

After coming to the mansion, the moment Elder Muyu and Lan Yunxi got off the vehicle, the butler and an arrogant middle-aged female official with a tall bun in green imperial longuette had come over here.

The woman then started to look at Lan Yunxi from her foot to her head in fastidious eyes as if she was checking a commodity.

Watching her deed, Elder Muyu's eyebrows instantly rose. Noticing his furious look, the woman made a cold harrumph as she moved her eyes above their heads.

"This is the ceremonial official of the prince's mansion. She is in charge of many affairs beside His Majesty!" The butler introduced that female official to Lan Yunxi and Elder Muyu with a glassy-eyed look.

Hearing his introduction, the female official slightly nodded towards Elder Muyu and Lan Yunxi as she said distantly, "My family name is Feng. You could call me Feng Shangyi in the mansion. Miss, as you've traveled a long way and it's heavily snowing and windy outside, how about taking a bath and changing to a new set of clothes? After that, I will take you to His Majesty..."

Average people might not understand the meaning of this request; however, Elder Muyu was clear about it. It was almost like how major clans selected maids or concubines. In the name of taking bath, they were actually checking her body.

Elder Muyu had not imagined that Lan Yunxi would receive such a poor treatment here. The moment the female official finished her words, Elder Muyu had asked the butler out of fury, "What do you mean? We've not negotiated about that..."

The butler didn't argue with Elder Muyu; instead, he just replied with a casual smile, "There're always regulations as long it's concerned about His Majesty. As it's arranged by Feng Shangyi, I have no say in that..."

"His Majesty is a prince. Given his noble identity, we must have regulations. Not like those remote and rustic small families, every woman has to follow my order before meeting His Majesty..." Feng Shangyi jeered with a cold harrumph.

Elder Muyuan still wanted to argue something; however, Lan Yunxi stopped him by hand as she said, "After such a long trip, I really feel a bit tired. It's not bad for me to take a bath and a nap..." After that, Lan Yunxi watched Feng Shangyi calmly, saying, "Please be my guide..."

Feng Shangyi replied with a cold harrumph, saying, "Follow me". After that, she turned around and left. After taking a look at Elder Muyu, Lan Yunxi also followed that female official away.

The butler remained silent as he had a servant lead Elder Muyu to the side parlor for a short rest by taking a look at him.

Clenching his fists, Elder Muyu felt fully indignified. However, he couldn't lose temper here; instead, he could only bear it. Watching the high wall of the third prince's mansion and the arrogant looks of those servants, Elder Muyu felt a bit desolate. When Elder Mushen was with them, how honorable was

Huaiyuan Palace! Even being in Xuanyuan Hill, Elder Mushen was still the VIP of the royal prince. Even the royal prince had to treat Elder Mushen politely and call him brother. Royal prince even gifted an imperial mansion to Elder Mushen. After Elder Mushen left Huaiyuan Palace, even the incumbent head of Huaiyuan Palace would be humiliated by the servants of the third prince's mansion...

Whose fault was it? Was it Zhang Taixuan's fault? But Zhang Taixuan had died. It's meaningless to complain about him. Was it Elder Mushen's fault? When he remembered Zhang Tie, Elder Muyu didn't feel hateful about him at all. Not only Elder Muyu, but even the other elders of Huaiyuan Palace were also speaking highly of Elder Mushen. To think it carefully, since he promoted to a knight, Elder Mushen had made the greatest meritorious deeds and borne the greatest hardships in Huaiyuan Palace. However, Elder Mushen didn't complain about it at all. Nor did he scramble for power. What Elder Mushen had done couldn't even be made by the former head of Huaiyuan Palace. When they thought that Elder Mushen was forced to establish Jinwu Palace, all the elders of Huaiyuan Palace felt extremely sorry and shameful about that.

The servant led Elder Muyu in a winding corridor for a while. Before they arrived at the side parlor, at the sight of a person in front, the guide hurriedly gave way to him by moving aside. As Elder Muyu was thinking about something, he only took a look at the one in front. However, when they passed by each other, the one in front suddenly rammed against him using his shoulder forcefully and fiercely. Elder Muyu didn't even have time to avoid it.

In a split second, Elder Muyu was irritated as he rammed against the stranger too by stabilizing his balance.

With a muffled sound "bang...", Elder Muyu was forced to retreat three steps backward while the rude man remained still. Besides being numb in half body, Elder Muyu felt bloody and suffocated as he changed his face at once...

'It's an earth knight.' Elder Muyu realized it when they rammed against each other.

The stranger sneered at Elder Muyu as he apologized which sounded more like an irony, "I'm sorry to ram against you. Are you okay? Do you need my help..."

Mouth closed, Elder Muyu swallowed his blood back as he glared at that person, chesting out, saying, "I'm fine...may I know your name, Your Excellency?"

"Hahaha, I'm Jiang Feng, a humble guard of His Majesty!" that earth knight replied as he squinted at Elder Muyu, arms crossed, asking, "It's said that a pretentious elder of Huaiyuan Palace keeps arguing with Butler Liu tentatively. It must be you..."

"Right, I'm Zhang Muyu of Huaiyuan Palace. So what?" Elder Muyu looked straight into Jiang Feng's eyes fearlessly, chesting out.

Even facing an earth knight, Elder Muyu was still fearless with a strong qi field.

"Hehhehheh, it's fine. But I've got a suggestion for you. There're strict regulations and many powerhouses in the prince's mansion. Many places are forbidden in. Outsiders have to be careful and do as the Romans do. It's not like Youzhou Province or Huaiyuan Palace. You'd better not take the regulations and temperament that you've formed in the tiny clan to the prince's mansion..." Jiang Feng

said gloomily. After throwing a glance at Elder Muyu whose face turned black, he laughed and walked away. At the same time, he shook his head with a sneer, "Huaiyuan Palace? Haha..."

With a red face, Elder Muyu almost charged at Jiang Feng. However, he didn't have a reason to stir up trouble at this moment. It was not pitiful if he died for justice and respect; however, it would mean greater indignation for Lan Yunxi and Huaiyuan Palace. When he thought about Lan Yunxi who was in the prince's mansion alone and the poor situation facing Huaiyuan Palace, Elder Muyu could do nothing but grit his teeth and clench his fists.

The side parlor was in a remote place. After coming to it, Elder Muyu stood by a window and watched the sparrows under the eaves with sadness and fury. After the maid served a cup of tea and left the parlor, Elder Muyu finally spurted out blood over the snowy garden.

Some sparrows were scared away by flapping their wings, leaving an area of scarlet color over the snowy land.

Elder Muyu didn't notice that one of those sparrows circled around the garden and gazed at the scarlet blood stain on the ground for a short while before flying away...

...

Lan Yunxi was taken into a bathroom by Feng Shangyi; where some maids in imperial robes were waiting aside orderly.

All the women inside the prince's mansion were almost most excellent; even maids could match Lan Yunxi in frame and look.

After Lan Yunxi arrived, Feng Shangyi threw a glance at those maids. They exchanged glances with each other before walking forward to take off all the clothes and pendants of Lan Yunxi. After Lan Yunxi took a bath, those maids checked each inch of her skin in the name of wiping water for her.

In this process, Feng Shangyi stood aside and inspected each inch of Lan Yunxi's skin with a stern and fastidious look like an examiner. She didn't nod until the maids cleaned water for Lan Yunxi as she slightly nodded and commented rigidly, "Skin as smooth as milk with no birthmark or scar; exceptionally fragrant; soft and orderly hair; no gap in between after pulling your legs together; even a piece of paper couldn't be inserted in; plump yet not broad breasts; you could serve His Majesty on bed; tender yet not weak waist, you could deliver babies even sons. You don't have any one of the 36 ominous pigmented naevi. Besides, you have one pigmented naevus which symbolizes that you could deliver a noble son. Not bad, not bad..."

At this moment, nobody knew what Lan Yunxi was thinking about. After Feng Shangyi checked her body, Lan Yunxi asked distantly, "Is it okay now?"

"Although the virgin symbol is still on your arm, I still need to check it. All the women who serve His Majesty should be virgin. Lie down on the bed over there and open your legs..."

After Lan Yunxi lied down, Feng Shangyi walked there and checked her virginity carefully. After that, she let Lan Yunxi put on her clothes.

In the process, Lan Yunxi just watched the roof in a glassy-eyed look.

After dressing up, Lan Yunxi finally met Xuanyuan Wuji.

...

In the prince's costume, Xuanyuan Wuji was sitting in the main seat. The moment Feng Shangyi took Lan Yunxi in, Xuanyuan Wuji had started to observe Lan Yunxi from her foot to head with gleaming eyes. After Feng Shangyi came to his side and murmured to him, Xuanyuan Wuji revealed a strange smile.

"I've not imagined that Zhang Taixuan has such a beautiful daughter; not bad, not bad..." Xuanyuan Wuji burst into laughter.

Under the extremely aggressive eye light of Xuanyuan Wuji, Lan Yunxi sat decently and calmly in an inviolable manner as she replied, "Thank you, Your Majesty. You must have known my intention here!"

"Go ahead, what's your condition?" Xuanyuan Wuji asked casually as he watched Lan Yunxi. Besides presumptuous eye light, he was not too lecherous and behaved like what a prince should do. As a prince, he didn't lack women.

"If I marry Your Majesty, please confer my dad as state duke!"

"Hahaha, that's easy!" Xuanyuan Wuji agreed with her at once. Although living people could not win honor easily, as a dead man, Zhang Taixuan could be easily conferred with the title of state duke as long as Lan Yunxi married Xuanyuan Wuji. "What else?"

"One tower of time for each kid of ours as the compensation for delivering babies for Your Majesty..." Lan Yunxi said calmly. Although it was shameless for her to bargain with Xuanyuan Wuji in this case, Lan Yunxi remained pretty calm.

"Hahaha, don't you feel it's too excessive?" Xuanyuan Wuji asked distantly with a smile.

"It might be a bit excessive for others to pose such a condition, but it's not for me. If our kids could completely inherit the ancestral bloodlines of Your Majesty and make a further breakthrough, Your Majesty's sons would be more powerful than that of the royal prince, isn't it the God's providence? Won't the throne of Taixia Country be taken by the most powerful one?"

With a shrewd eye light, Xuanyuan Wuji and Lan Yunxi looked straight into each other's eyes for half a minute. Xuanyuan Wuji then recovered his composure as he continued, "You're audacious!"

"If not, how dare I marry a would-be emperor?"

"Fine, I agree. It's just a few towers of time. What else?"

"Longwind Business Group should serve imperial households!"

"Hmm! Any more?"

After thinking for a while, Lan Yunxin shook her head. Not knowing why, after meeting all of her purposes, she felt empty.

"Hmm, that's a deal. After fixing the date of marriage, I will have people notice you. It should be within this year!" Xuanyuan Wuji suddenly revealed a smile as he shifted the topic, "As my fiancée, you could stay a few more days in Datang City. Let's go hunt together on the 29th day of this month!"

'The 29th day of this month? Winter hunt?' Lan Yunxi became silent for a second. Actually, Lan Yunxi had tried her best to avoid this day; unimaginably, Xuanyuan Wuji chose this day for hunting.

"This is a good day. It's the last winter hunt this year. I like to see those animals with sharp claws struggle in the snow land in vain..." Xuanyuan Wuji said with a smile, revealing his snow-white teeth...

...

The meeting only lasted less than 10 minutes before they fixed the "trade".

When she left Xuanyuan Wuji, Lan Yunxi felt empty. Although they had fixed everything, Lan Yunxi still didn't feel good at all. It was more like losing something; instead of gaining anything.

When Lan Yunxi saw Elder Muyu again, she found his look was poor.

"What happened?"

"Nothing!" Elder Muyu said as he shook his head. In the eyes of Elder Muyu, Lan Yunxi didn't look good either. "Let's go back..."

"Hmm!"

The two people then got on the vehicle and set off for their hotel. On the vehicle, Lan Yunxi told Elder Muyu what conditions she had reached with Xuanyuan Wuji and that Xuanyuan Wuji invited her for hunting two days later.

Not knowing why, Elder Muyu felt a bit improper when he heard the news.

"Miss, if you don't want to do that, we could go back to Youzhou Province right now..."

"It's just hunting. Why not?" Lan Yunxi said calmly as she watched the scenery outside the window, "Perhaps time could be a bit faster this way!"

After being silent for a short while, Elder Muyu said, "Elder Muyuan and Elder Muray should be in Yin Hai, Gobi Desert now. They would watch the duel. If there's any news, they would notice me at once..."

Tilting her head, pursing her lips, Lan Yunxi watched the snow scene silently as her face turned white like snowflakes at a stroke...