

## **Black Iron 251**

### Chapter 251: Junkmen in the War Zone

It was winter. Forge town was covered by dense fog before the sunrise for quite a long time due to being close to a river.

Zhang Tie woke up after another long sleep in the morning to find that all the wounds caused by Major Franca when he escaped Blapei had completely recovered. Because of the double recovery effect of his preliminary recovery body, although he felt a bit uncomfortable when he went to bed last night, this morning, he felt that his body was as spry as usual.

For the first time, Zhang Tie realized that his preliminary recovery body was extremely great.

It was the fourth day since Zhang Tie left Blapei. Each morning, this small town called Forge would be covered by a dense fog. It was located over 120 km to the south of Blapei and was part of the Kalur war zone where the Iron-Horn Army fought the Brilliant Feathers Army.

One fourth of the buildings in the small town had been destroyed in the war. Many places revealed marks of being charred by white phosphorous gel bombs. Although the remaining three fourths of the buildings were well preserved, all the town's residents had long escaped, leaving nobody at all. It was as desolate as a ghost town now.

It then became a proper place for Zhang Tie to recover.

Today, a great amount of soldiers of the Iron-Horn Army were looking for Zhang Tie all across Blapei, but nobody could imagine that at that night, Zhang Tie had kept running for three hours and had hidden himself in the barren mountains and hills of Kalur war zone.

On the second day, having slightly recovered, Zhang Tie found the small empty town on the riverside. He then found a house there and settled down before taking a good rest to recover like a wild wolf.

In four days, only four days, the wounds caused by Major Franca had completely disappeared.

During these days, Zhang Tie didn't have any contact with the outside, so of course he didn't know what had happened. He could never imagine that the day after he left Blapei, the airship from Huaiyuan Palace of Zhang clan had arrived at Blapei. Nor could he guess that on the same day, Major Franca, who had set him up became a wanted man by the military party of the Norman Empire and became a criminal like Zhang Tie.

From the moment he pulled out his sword in the beer hotel, Zhang Tie had prepared for this situation. Back then, he could choose only one thing between being slaughtered and slaughtering others. Unfortunately, the people after him were neither average guys nor soldiers of the Sun Dynasty whose death could help him gain an Iron-Blood Medal. They were from the most powerful agency in the Norman Empire and worked as law enforcers.

Although there were always numerous law enforcers in humanity's history, even though law enforcers themselves were heinous criminals and scumbags, when something like this happened to him, Zhang Tie finally started to understand why those heroes were forced to be bandits on Liangshan Mountain[1].

Additionally, even if he was an officer of the Norman Empire, he was still not able to explain himself to others. This event originated from the greed of someone who had discovered a bit of his secret. Unless he revealed the secret of the Castle of Black Iron to the public, he could not explain it at all.

So he could only escape as a murderer. The only other thing he could do before escaping was to muddle the waters.

If the Iron-Horn Army was not that easily bullied, they would ensure the safety of his family members in Blackhot City before the secret police caught him and confirmed that he was a traitor. If he was safe, his family members would be safe. If his secret was not revealed to the public, his family members would be safe. That was why Zhang Tie decided to fight the secret police to the end in the beer hotel. He knew that besides himself, anyone who learned of or got his Castle of Black Iron might immediately kill his family members in case of potential dangers.

These couple of days, as he didn't know what happened outside, Zhang Tie was very concerned about the safety of his family members in Blackhot City.

Although being in recovery these days, Zhang Tie was always worried about his family members. The only thing that comforted him was that he gained a new Fruit of Brilliance these days. Although not all of the dozens of secret police killed by him were bad guys as they were just following orders, there were truly some big scumbags among them who undoubtedly were the best nourishment for the Fruit of Brilliance.

After eating the new Fruit of Brilliance, Zhang Tie's spiritual energy increased by 4 points. Compared to before, Zhang Tie's spiritual energy had reached about 62-63 now.

If such a speed was revealed to the public, it would definitely be amazed.

After another increase of his spiritual energy, Zhang Tie felt that his senses became even sharper than before as he could carry on four arithmetic operations on two abacuses in his mind at the same time in a faster and more flexible way.

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Because he had completely recovered, Zhang Tie quickly took action after waking up. He was more alert this time. Before leaving that room he was in, he first accessed the Castle of Black Iron and changed his look and clothes inside.

Several minutes later, an average-looking 20-odd Chinese youth who had killed Samira stealthily flashed out of a deserted room in Forge town.

For Zhang Tie, the most urgent thing was to ask for news. After that, he would find an opportunity to go back to Blackhot City and transfer his family members away in advance. They could not stay in the Norman Empire any more. He had to move his family members to a country predominated by Chinese in the southeast of Blackson Human Clan Corridor. He would have to transfer his family members to the Eastern Continent before the third holy war between humans and demons anyway.

Zhang Tie was carefully walking through the small town which was covered by a dense fog. It smelt refreshing, cold and clean. With each mouthful of breath, Zhang Tie would feel that his lungs and chest had been washed.

These days, according to his observations, besides two teams of scouts from both parties, no troop of above 100 people had been here. However, as this place was in the war zone, Zhang Tie had to be careful. Having experience in fighting here, he knew well that the safer the place you were in felt, the more dangerous it probably was because a great number of people might be hiding in a dark place, aiming at you with their crossbows. At this moment, Zhang Tie didn't want to fight anyone for no reason any more.

But before he could walk out of the small town, a series of footsteps drifted over from up ahead. From the sounds, Zhang Tie judged that there were at least ten people. At the sight of an open door on the side, he flashed inside the room while pulling out his dagger at the same time.

Zhang Tie came to the kitchen of this deserted house and stood close to the window while listening and observing what was happening outside. The disordered footsteps sounded as if they belonged to a group of escaping soldiers who were moving closer to him.

Because there was a small door in the kitchen connected to the courtyard of this house, Zhang Tie chose to hide here. In an emergency, he could avoid being surrounded and escape through that small door.

The kitchen was covered with dust while some millets and utensils like colanders were scattered on the ground.

The strangers soon arrived in front of this house in the dense fog. What amazed Zhang Tie was that they were not escaping soldiers but a group of figures with all sorts of luggage and sundries. They were not beggars, refugees, or roving bandits.

"Austa, Beane, you take someone to search this house. Gaer, Gerry, you take someone to search that house. Keep your eyes opened, don't miss good items. Many houses here belonged to rich lords from downtown who came to the mountains to hunt in the autumn. When they returned home, they would always leave some items that they felt not valuable, especially those in the kitchen and cellar. If someone finds food, we might get full this morning..."

After this order, a number of people poured into the houses on two sides of the road. Around seven to eight people rushed inside the house that Zhang Tie was hiding in. The moment they entered, they started to turn all the items over. After a short moment, the empty house looked if it had suffered from a plague of locusts, having been cleaned by those people.

"Ha, look what I've got? A silver-gilt candlestick..." someone started to happily shout in the parlor outside the kitchen.

"I bet the former owner of this house was a miser. Only those guys who were niggards yet pretended to be rich would buy this cheap fake item..."

"This item is worth at least 10 copper coins in Kalur, someone would like it..." The former voice still sounded happy. "At least we can change it for a loaf of brown bread!"

"You two, go check in the kitchen..." another voice said.

Hearing the gradually getting closer footsteps, Zhang Tie's heart raced and he put his dagger back, making two coughs on purpose in the kitchen...

The moment he coughed, the whole house became quiet.

Zhang Tie walked out of the kitchen and caught sight of seven people in the parlor who were glancing at the kitchen. When they saw Zhang Tie, they all let out a breath.

"Ha... You've got here earlier than we did, you're really brave, what did boss say..."

"The early birds get the worms!" A guy who was holding the candlestick wove it in front of Zhang Tie with a pleased expression, "Sorry about this, although you came here first, I found it first, so it's mine!"

When this person talked, all the others guys clenched their fists, making the sounds of "gazhi, gazhi". At the same time, they cast fierce looks at Zhang Tie, seemingly indicating that if he dared to have any questions about who the candlestick covered with dust belonged to, they would never mind punching him and telling him what was 'strength in numbers'.

## Chapter 252: Return to Kalur

In the afternoon, Zhang Tie followed the team of junkmen and entered Kalur City's control area.

It was a bit ironical that when Zhang Tie arrived at the Kalur war zone last time as a military officer of the Norman Empire, he hadn't even had a chance to enjoy the city's view before having to leave. This time, only after a short period, he came here again as a criminal.

What Zhang Tie saw along the road from the deserted Forge town to the actual control area of Kalur brought him a more concrete sense of the war between the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire.

The closer he got to Kalur City, the more serious the confrontations between the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire were. Judging from the bases, fortresses, and fortifications the two forces had built around Kalur, it was clear that this war which involved hundreds of thousands of soldiers was doomed to be a long lasting competition. Zhang Tie understood this current situation of the Kalur region based on the news he'd received from the junkmen and what he had seen and heard in the military,

Besides the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire, there was another party in the Kalur region that had a say about this war—Kalur, the city of machine, the manufacturing center of Andaman Alliance and the fat which brought about the war between the fierce tiger and the hungry wolf.

The reason that it could become a fat in the eyes of the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire was that it was qualified and had the benefits to be a piece of fat. Compared to Blackhot City, an emerging city which only had a history of dozens of years, Kalur had over 200 years' history which meant a rich accumulation of resources in all aspects. Population, prosperity, manufacturing force, army establishment, actual power and control area of this city all ranked number one in the Andaman Alliance.

Even now Kalur still had a regular army of almost 80,000 soldiers plus the tall city wall and the terrifying city-defense weapons that the city had carefully managed the past 200 years. Such a force was capable of determining the result of this war.

The moment Zhang Tie came to the actual control area of Kalur City, he was shocked by the prosperity here. He even failed to see the city wall within 10-odd km. His eyes were blocked by the huge chimneys that were as dense as woods.

Those chimneys originated from the plants in the controlled area which had already formed a wide industrial zone. Many plants were even connected by pathways hanging up in the air and various tunnels of different sizes. Under the winter sunlight, the black smoke erupting from the chimneys almost dyed the whole sky dark gray. The plants were still producing various items, revealing no sign of depression at all.

Compared to the plants here, the ones in Blackhot City, besides them being on scale, they were as simple and crude as rustic workshops of country moneybags.

What Zhang Tie was seeing right now was just a corner of the actual control area as he was standing in the north.

A single smoking chimney reminded people of pollution while hundreds of tall, smoking chimneys made people feel trivial.

Here, Zhang Tie felt the power of industrial development.

Although people inside those plants were still busy working, outside the plants, hundreds of thousands of refugees poured in from the surrounding areas because of war, causing the whole area to become a bit chaotic.

Walking through the streets, Zhang Tie could see shabby and exhausted refugees queuing up outside plant recruitment points while more men and women were raising boards on the roadside on which were written: 'I'm a tailor; I want to work for food.'

In relatively vacant places on the roadside, refugees had built their tents. Kids' cries drifted over from the insides of many tents.

On the relatively better and cleaner wall next to the roadside were plastered various paper tapes and photos seeking for relatives.

Since this was Zhang Tie's first time being here, he didn't want to attract attention to himself and so insisted in seeing more and speaking less. He kept his head lowered and carried his items while following the other junkmen. Not until the team arrived at the control area of Kalur City did head Fred let out a breath and put back his blue-green flag.

On the way here, Zhang Tie heard many legends. In the past months, many junkmen had not come back after entering the war zone.

There were junkmen who truly made a fortune by discovering some items that had not been taken away by others in some deserted towns or villages. Some even picked up some valuable booty such as excellent weapons or gold coins from corpses in the fields of battle where the two armies had clashed. And some unlucky guys also lost their lives.

It might be very exciting to search for forgotten treasures in the deserted villages and towns surrounding Kalur City, but this was at the risk of one's life. This profession born from war was really akin to licking blood from the blade of a saber for commoners.

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"Have you seen my daughter? My daughter is Selena. Here's her photo. She said that she was going to school in the morning, but she still hasn't come back yet..."

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"Have you seen my daughter? My daughter is Selena. Here's her photo. She said that she was going to school in the morning, but she still hasn't come back yet..."

On the roadside, a 50-odd woman was holding a photo of a girl and pulled at every passer-by to ask the same question. Although she was asking, her eyes were as hollow as if she'd already lost her soul.

Zhang Tie followed the other junkmen and silently passed her.

"This woman is done for. She comes from the south. It's better in the north. It's said that in some southern places, those beasts of the Sun Dynasty would rape every woman they see, aging from small girls to grandmas. Any men who dare to resist would lose their heads. Many of them would even be caught to do labor works, repair roads, and carry items..."

Walking beside Zhang Tie, Gerry let out a sigh. "The tide of refugees coming to Kalur started from the south, but hearing what was happening in the south, the northern people also escaped. They all wanted to escape to Kalur for protection. However, they did not know that with the increasing number of refugees pouring in here, nobody would live well..."

Zhang Tie became silent as he was shocked inside. This was the true, cruel side of war. War would cause the greatest harm to commoners. The war between two countries where hundreds of thousands of soldiers fought had caused such a great disaster, how miserable would it be if the third holy war between humans and demons broke out?

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After walking through the control area of Kalur for less than 20 minutes, Zhang Tie arrived at the junkmen's base. It was inside a large landfill behind the plant district. It was covered with deserted black coal gangue, so Zhang Tie could not tolerate the environment here.

More than one hundred years' wastes like coal gangue were piled up here, so one could imagine the scene here.

In this landfill of coal gangue, there were thousands of tents. At least 10,000-20,000 people lived here. When Zhang Tie followed the team here, he still saw many steam-based trucks that carried coal gangue and poured it inside this place.

The moment the trucks arrived, a great number of kids started running after them. They didn't care about the possible dangers at all. When the coal gangue with low combustion efficiency was poured out, the kids then rushed forward with small kegs and pack baskets and started to dig for the little coal in this coal gangue that could still be used.

The whole refugee camp was covered with dust due to the vehicles and running kids. All of the refugees were huddling together, men, women, old, and young, like ingredients in a pot of porridge.

Soon after they entered the tent area, a 60-odd man came toward them. "Fred, what did you bring this time..."

"So... We went to Forgue and brought back some tableware and something to live through the winter. Quote us a proper price..."

"Something to live through the winter? Many people don't even know how to live through this!" After appraising the items on their backs, the 60-odd man nodded. "Follow me..."

Zhang Tie also followed the others and arrived in front of the old man's tent. He was only carrying several dirty quilts that he had fetched in Forgue town. Besides, he was wearing a half new wool-like coat which didn't seem to match his image well, making him look like a refugee. Seeing him walking with the team, that old man only cast a glance at him before moved his eyes away.

The tent was very large, filled with many items while strong hatchet men were patrolling around. This seemed like a hub of this tent area.

Many people were standing in front of a notice board on the roadside next to this tent. When Zhang Tie passed by that notice board, he saw images of him and Major Franca. They were two orders for arrest under which there were some other orders for arrest. However, because the bonus of the two were the highest-3000 gold coins, they were put on the top.

With just one glance, Zhang Tie memorized the contents on the orders for arrest in his mind.

His heart raced. It was not too shocking to see orders for arrest in the refugee camp as it was close to the Norman Empire; this was just a slum that had not been destroyed by war. What made Zhang Tie really confused though was that Major Franca was wanted by the Northern Border Army while he was wanted by the Orders Review Committee.

This was good news for Zhang Tie. At the sight of this, he recovered his composure and no longer worried about his family members any more. His family members would be protected by the Northern Border Army and would never have to suffer from any danger from the secret police. If not, the Northern Border Army and the Iron-Horn Army would be smacked on their faces.

As Zhang Tie's current age and looks were both far different from that image on the arrest order, nobody guessed that one of the junkmen was the guy on the poster worth 3000 gold coins.

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Zhang Tie sold the items that he brought from Forgue town for 4 silver coins and 37 copper coins.

Each one in the team had to pay a tribute. According to the rule, every person should submit 30% of their income as the protection fee. After submitting 30% of his income, Zhang Tie won a more genial look from Fred.

"How about that? You are brave enough. How about joining us. We can work together!" Fred invited him with an enthusiastic voice that promised 'great undertakings together'...

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Of course Zhang Tie did accept this "promising profession". With the excuse that he wanted to find stable work in the plant, he refused Fred's "invitation". After that, he touched the silver and copper coins in his pocket and left the refugee camp.

Although the secret police's power had not reached Kalur City yet, it didn't mean that he was safe now. Many people would risk their lives here for 3000 gold coins. Generous rewards birthed heroism. If he was caught here, the people could definitely transfer him out of Kalur's war zone. Even the huge airship of the Sun Dynasty could arrive here, let alone a person getting transferred only over 100 km away.

When he was walking through the streets, he kept thinking about that. Even if he was not wanted by the army of the Norman Empire, he could not go back to the troop either. He could not explain the conflict between him and the secret police. Such a great event could never be covered by saying he was struck by a lightning bolt. Then how could he go back to Blackhot City and contact his family members?

Zhang Tie kept walking as he thought.

He did not know for how long he walked. When a building appeared in his vision, he was suddenly shocked.

On the front door of that building was a relief of a mighty four-winged golden roc...

Yes, Golden Roc Bank!

Recalling the services that the Golden Roc Bank in Blackhot City provided, Zhang Tie's eyes brightened up...

### Chapter 253: Shocking News

Identical to what he had seen in the Golden Roc Bank in Blackhot City, when Zhang Tie went inside this one, he also saw many people waiting in the rest zone. The bank guaranteed all the guests' privacy by providing services for each guest in a private room.

The number of people waiting in the rest zone was at least 5-6 times higher than in Blackhot City.

When he passed by the rest zone, Zhang Tie heard a male and a female whispering in the rest zone.

"Darling, will we leave Kalur this time?"

"We will, don't worry, all of our properties and businesses in Angoula have been disposed of, we will move to a more peaceful place this time. We will go to a Chinese country first before moving to the Eastern Continent!"

"Do we have to leave? Our kids are only four years old, I'm afraid that they won't be able to adapt to the outside environment! This long-distance migration would take us a long time..."

"Although I don't know the reason, I know that after this war, the top clans in Angoula who are richer and smarter than us and can see through the situation more clearly are preparing to move their families and businesses. Their family members have been learning Chinese for a while now."



"Everybody sees the Eastern Continent as the ultimate target of this movement. Why would we stay in Angoula? Small fish like us have to follow big fish to avoid dangerous torrents. Additionally, sometimes, if we know the direction, we can even swim faster than them! This is our advantage. We have to take good advantage of it!"

"No wonder you wanted our kids to learn Chinese..."

"To prepare for the movement in the future, you should learn it too..."

Due to them being close by, what the couple from Angoula said was all heard by Zhang Tie, shocking him greatly. Angoula was also a city of the Andaman Alliance and was added to the map of the Norman Empire. If some of the top clans in Angoula were preparing to transfer their family members and wealth, they must have felt something. Based on their deep background and social relationships, they might have smelt the upcoming holy war between humans and demons.

It was definitely possible. After all, there were many smart men in the world. If Donder and the big figures who had launched this war knew it, then others might also know or could speculate it. Before the catastrophe, able men would always try their best to stay in the safest place just like how people used to hide in fortresses and cities with tall walls before wars broke out.

Since the Eastern Continent was very safe, it became everyone's first choice. Donder had also urged Zhang Tie to move to the Eastern Continent as soon as possible. Perhaps even clans like Gregory clan from Blackhot City were also preparing to move. If this holy war would last another 100 years, nobody could know whether the Blackson Human Clan Corridor could survive or not.

Under the jealous eyes of a great amount of people, Zhang Tie, who was dressed as shabby as other refugees, enjoyed the privilege of the Chinese clan once again. He walked directly to the entrance of a golden room, which was set exclusively for Chinese clan, where he was respectfully invited into the room by a 30-odd man in glasses.

The room was similar to the one he'd seen in Blackhot City. It was simple yet delicately designed. After closing the door, the 30-odd man came to the sofa in the room and sat before Zhang Tie.

"Sir, what can I do for you?"

Before opening his mouth, Zhang Tie took a deep breath. Although it would arise the suspicion of the bank staff about his status, Zhang Tie didn't think that the bank which had enjoyed a great reputation among Chinese and had almost 1000 years' history would betray him for only 3000 gold coins. Even Donder the scumbag had praised the Golden Roc Bank for its reliability.

"I need to contact my family members that are far away and gain some information. I remember that you can provide this information for me!"

The 30-odd man then took a deep look at Zhang Tie. "Our bank truly provides such services. If the city where your family members are in have a branch of the Golden Roc Bank, we can start remote communications to help you get in contact with your family members. If there's no branch of the Golden Roc Bank over there, as long as you can provide us the address, we can also transfer your message to them. Additionally, we also provide various information. Based on the situation, the prices for the two

services also change, it might be a bit more expensive than other channels outside. Are you sure you require these services?"

"I'm sure!"

In this age, the remote communications was akin to the wireless telegraph before the catastrophe. However, compared to the wireless telegraph, remote communications were carried out by a pair of twin mirror crystals. Its service fee was calculated by words. It was said that it could be used to transfer codes in terms of long and short signals. After deciphering the codes, people would get the message.

It was almost the same as the wireless telegraph before the catastrophe and could not be popularized at all due to its limits, so people who used this communication means were not average. They were all groups with special powers and background. Only division-level troops in the Iron-Horn Army were qualified to contact their superiors by this crystal remote equipment.

"Well then, please show me the certificate of your payment capacity. The basic amount is 1000 gold coins. After ensuring that you have the capacity to pay, we will provide you with the services!"

Because Zhang Tie had only taken some gold coins when he escaped that day, he didn't have much money or gold checks now. Without any hesitation, he right away took off the Ring of Energy from his finger and put it into the 30-odd man's hand.

"This item should be qualified as the certificate for my payment capacity!"

The man didn't cast any contemptuous look when seeing the average looking ring; instead, he carefully put the ring into a tray covered with flannelette.

"Wait a moment, please, we need to authenticate it!"

Zhang Tie nodded. That man then carried the tray and left the service room through another door.

Zhang Tie patiently waited on the sofa. It would be funny if that rune equipment which even Colonel Reinhardt didn't have was not worth 1000 gold coins. Zhang Tie estimated that this item should not be worth less than 5000 gold coins that Gregory clan had compensated him with.

Several minutes later, another door of the service room was pushed open. This time, it was not that 30-odd man, but a 60-odd man who had a pair of extremely bright eyes. The old man was carrying the tray on which peacefully lay Zhang Tie's ring of energy.

"Young man, can you tell me where you got this ring?"

"Is there any problem with it?"

Zhang Tie slightly frowned.

"There's no problem with this secret-silver ring. It's clean. I'm just curious. It doesn't matter if you don't want to tell me as it won't influence the Golden Roc Bank's services for you!"

The old man smiled as he spoke genially.

'Secret-silver?' Zhang Tie's heart pounded. Not until then did he know that the material of this ring which was heavier than gold was called secret-silver. He had never heard about this material before.

"It's a trophy that I collected from a military officer of the Sun Dynasty on a battlefield!" Zhang Tie honestly replied.

Hearing Zhang Tie's explanation, the old man nodded. After that, he put the tray in front of Zhang Tie and let him check whether the ring was complete as he sat down opposite.

"You want to contact your family members and want to inquire about something here?"

"Yes!"

"What's the address of your family members and the name of contact?"

Zhang Tie then told him his home's address and his dad's name. After saying this, he saw that the old man sitting opposite him instantly looked weird. The old man then glanced over Zhang Tie with a weird expression. Finally, he looked like he had ascertained something in his mind.

"You are... Zhang Tie?"

'F\*ck!'

The moment the old man opened his mouth, Zhang Tie was so amazed that he directly sprung up from the sofa. How could this man know his name when he told him his home address and his dad's name?

Although Zhang Tie was prepared to expose his status before entering, he had not imagined that his status would be identified before he had even contacted his family members.

'How could that be? Is the old man a humanoid difference machine that manages population data? How could he be that sharp...'

"Don't be that amazed, I could guess your status not only due from the address of your home and your father's name or that you're famous now but also because your home is well known across Blackhot City. As the information manager of the bank, of course I know a lot about the recent big events in Blackhot City and Blapei. Even many average people would know it, so how could I not know!"

The old man smiled as he tried to soothe Zhang Tie's tension.

Chapter 254: Shocking News II

"Big events?' Zhang Tie's face turned pale. "Has something big happened at my home?"

"Yea, your home truly had a big event which shocked the whole Blackhot City!"

"Could it be the secret police..."

Zhang Tie was drenched in sweat when he thought of this possibility.

"No, it has nothing to do with the secret police. What surprised people was that your family members are descendants of the Huaiyuan Palace. Several days ago, someone from Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace came to Blackhot City by an airship and carried away your family members!"

Zhang Tie felt as if he was struck by a lightning bolt, leaving him dumbfounded. What he had not imagined was that his family members were descendants of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace.

His dad and mom had never mentioned it before. How could they suddenly have so many relatives? It sounded so great. The clan which could directly fly to Blackhot City from Jinyun Country by airship was definitely not average.

But what was weird was that his dad and mom had not mentioned it to him since he was born. Zhang Tie wondered what was the real reason for it.

After learning that his family members had been safely carried away by Zhang clan, Zhang Tie was really surprised. The greatest concern that was held in his heart these days finally fell down. He felt relaxed and comfortable all over as if he had ignited another burning point.

Zhang Tie, he would not complain no matter how hard and how numerous hardships he had to experience as long as his family members were safe and sound. Being a member of Zhang clan, of course it was 1000 times better than staying in Blackhot City. Previously, Zhang Tie had been racking his mind how to transfer his family members away. Now, all the problems were solved.

The old man kept observing Zhang Tie's face. Once he heard the news, Zhang Tie's expression shifted and changed, just like a big dye vat. When his face finally recovered its composure, the old man told him the other message.

"On the second day of the beer festival, the airship of Huaiyuan Palace was seen in Blapei. They planned to pick you up too, but you were a wanted criminal at the time and nobody knew where you were hiding. Your family members and the people of Huaiyuan Palace stayed for two days but found no clues whatsoever. Finally, they had to leave. Based on the speed of the airship, they might reach Jinyun Country in one week!"

'It turns out that my family members looked for me! They must be very worried after learning that I'm wanted.'

Zhang Tie became a bit worried again.

"Can the Golden Roc Bank contact my family members now?"

"No! At least not now" The old man shook his head. "There are branches of Golden Roc Bank in the territory of Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace. If you want to contact your family members, we can first send the news to Jinyun Country and tell them to pay attention to the news of your family members. When your family members land there, we can then send your message to them!"

"Fine, that's great!" Zhang Tie immediately made a decision. "Please tell my family members that I'm fine; I will soon go to them. They shouldn't worry about me!"

The old man smiled as he drew out a standard form from a drawer on a side of the desk. "For long-distance remote communications, you should pay by words, including the punctuation. Write down what you want to say. We will pass all the content that you write to your family members!"

Seeing the standard form, Zhang Tie revealed a bashful smile. He then picked up a pen and wrote down the names of his dad, his mom, and his elder brother in the top three columns of contact people. After a thinking for a while, he scribbled down the following lines:

—Dad, mom, elder brother, and elder sister-in-law, I'm fine; don't worry about me. I know that you've been taken away by Huaiyuan Palace's airship. Especially mom, don't worry about me. Your son is safe and sound, haven't even lost a hair. I can eat and jump as usual. Elder brother, remember to look after our parents well. If there's any need, what I've told to Donder could be your final reliance. They should know its value. Elder sister-in-law is going to deliver a baby, watch for her body. No need to concern yourself about me, I will come back as soon as possible!

After writing those words, Zhang Tie took another careful look at it to ensure that the message contained all that he wanted to express. He then gave the paper to the old man.

"Hmm, I will have a look. Since you want to send this message to your family members and let our staff pay attention to their whereabouts, it will cost you 36 gold coins!"

"No problem!"

This amount was equal to his dad's three years' salary in the past. If it were before, Zhang Tie would definitely be scared by this figure. But now, although being high, it was still within his capacity. As long as he could relieve his parents' concern, everything he did was worth it.

Such long-distance remote communications tool was really not affordable to average people. Zhang Tie remembered the advanced level of human communications before the catastrophe when human beings had network technologies that he had read of in books in the private library. He then started to sigh inside. If it were sent before the catastrophe, such a message might be worth less than 1/10 of the price of a steamed bun. But times had changed.

"What other problems do you have?" the old man asked Zhang Tie.

"I want to know why Major Franca is wanted."

The old man then told him how the Iron-Horn Army intercepted the airship of Major Franca on the day of the beer festival and discovered that he was missing. "The Northern Border Army of the Norman Empire firmly believe that Major Franca and his subordinates are related to the two missing soldiers of the No. 21 Division, so they delivered the order for arrest!"

'Vicious, really vicious!' This was Zhang Tie's comment inside on Major Franca when he heard that the secret police who had followed him were poisoned to death. 'That guy must've known that if he was intercepted by the Norman-Horn Army's airship, what awaited him would definitely be death. His subordinates were part of what he had done in Blapei, and under the harsh interrogation of the troop even an iron man would tell the truth, let alone those secret police!'

Additionally, the big conflict that he had set off in Blapei by his selfishness directly pushed the secret police in opposition of the Iron-Horn Army. This was definitely not what the big figures of Blapei wanted to see. Even if Franca returned, the higher ups of the secret police would also make a detailed investigation on this event. What waited for him there was also a severe punishment.

'He's too vicious! Perhaps when he was framing me, he had already sought for an opportunity to kill all of his subordinates for the sake of his safety.'

For an unknown secret that could make him unrivaled, for that possible outcome, that man had dared to be that decisive and vicious. Was it worth it?

The viciousness of that man chilled Zhang Tie. He knew that if he was in the position of Major Franca, he could definitely not be as vicious and decisive as the man had been..

That was the difference between people.

"I also want to know whether you can help me go to the Huaiyuan Palace in Jinyun Country. Do you provide this service?"

"Kalur is the most important traffic hub in this region. There's an airship moving from here to Jinyun Country every two months. At the moment, because of the war, many people are choosing to leave this region, so there's always no vacancy. The latest airship left Kalur yesterday. If you want a seat in an airship heading for Jinyun Country two months later, we can book it for you. You can first go to Jinyun Country by airship before transferring to the territory of Zhang clan by other airships."

"It takes two months to order a ticket?"

Zhang Tie was speechless. He didn't want to stay here for two more months. Perhaps before he left, he could stealthily go back to Blackhot City. He had some people he was worried about there. However, it would never take him two months to deal with his concerns in there. Even if he went there by train, it would only take him one week at most.

"Do you have any faster traffic means?"

"Yes, we have. You can rent an airship to Jinyun Country. But at the moment we cannot provide you such a service!"

"Why?" Zhang Tie asked, stunned.

"Because all the airships that were available in Kalur have been rented out by others. Although Golden Roc Bank could dispatch one airship here from another place, we only provide this service for our VIPs. As you are not our VIP, we cannot provide you with such a service!"

"What's the minimum standard to be your bank's VIP?"

"The minimum standard of yellow-level VIP is that you have to deposit over 500,000 gold coins in Golden Roc Bank!" the old man genially answered.

'500,000 gold coins? The minimum standard?'

Zhang Tie let out a sigh. This amount of money was equal to a hundred of his lives based on the compensation from Gregory clan on his value even at a premium. For most average people, one had to work for at least 40,000 years to make 500,000 golden coins.

'F\*ck, this is the minimum standard for yellow-level VIP of Golden Roc Bank that only the nouveau riche like Gregory clan in Blackhot City might able to reach.'

Zhang Tie then instantly stopped his illusion of renting out an airship. Perhaps he could afford an airship flying from here to the Jinyun Country, but at this critical moment when the traffic resources were in urgent need, he was not qualified to request the Golden Roc Bank to dispatch an airship here just for him. The highest service the bank could provide for him was to order a ticket in an airship heading for Jinyun Country two months later.

Zhang Tie was considering whether to order such a ticket.

"Young man, would you like a suggestion from me?"

The information manager of the Golden Roc Bank stared at Zhang Tie with a pair of wise eyes.

"Go ahead please!"

"I feel that you don't need to be in such a hurry to go back at this moment!"

"Why?"

"Hehe, while you're trying to go back, your relatives of Zhang clan in Jinyun Country might be trying to get you back. Although you look isolated now, actually, the situation is not as bad as you think. You've forgotten the most important point."

"What have I forgotten?"

"You forgot that although you are wanted, your back is an unrivaled clan. The Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace is not only a noble clan in Jinyun Country, but also a noble clan among all humans. For all generations, the heads of Huaiyuan Palace have inherited the noble peerage of humanity. The name of Count Changfeng is known across the Waii Sub-continent.

"If you are really a descendant of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace, then the Zhang clan will never allow you to be wanted in a foreign country. If you were really caught, Huaiyuan Palace would lose its face!"

Zhang Tie's eyes popped out as he had not imagined that Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace was so great. The head of Huaiyuan Palace was Count Changfeng, who enjoyed a high reputation among other humans. Thinking of this, Zhang Tie immediately understood that all of his concerns were actually based on his former status and social standing. If he was a member of Huaiyuan Palace now...

"You mean..."

"The head of the secret police is Baron Pompeii, who's also a hereditary noble of the Norman Empire. There are contradictions between Baron Pompeii of Secret Police and Lin Changjiang, the general of the Northern Border Army. Do you think that a baron would fight a count who's also a noble in order to arrest a small figure? If you haven't killed dozens of secret police in Blapei, you would not be wanted at all.

"The secret police did this to save their face. Otherwise, even the imperial households of the Norman Empire would not offend a count for a trivial affair, let alone a viscount of the Norman Empire. I dare to bet with you, as long as you don't run before the headquarters of the secret police to shout loudly that you are Zhang Tie, no secret police in the Norman Empire will dare to find you trouble!

Additionally, as you've left the Iron-Horn Army, perhaps the Iron-Horn Army will deal with your affair in a low-key manner. As long as you don't exclaim your wish to return to the Iron-Horn Army, there would be no problem."

Hearing the old man's words, Zhang Tie suddenly thought it through. It turned out that what he had been most concerned about was just a laughing matter as it was just what the big figures had arranged to the public for their own faces.

If he didn't have the sudden background of Huaiyuan Palace, that order for arrest would be true. With this background plus the conflict between him and the secret police being just a plot designed by Major Franca, it was more a polite eviction order to prevent him from staying in the Norman Empire than an order for arrest.

The Iron-Horn Army had acquiesced that this was the best compromise for the three parties after the order for arrest was released. At this moment, Zhang Tie was actually a transparent person in the Norman Empire that nobody dared to offend even if he was seen by others.

A person would usually experience many unexpected affairs in his life, but the worst case scenario that many people were most concerned with in their lives actually happened at a very low frequency. Zhang Tie's encounter verified this sentence once again. What he had never imagined happened, yet what he was most concerned about was just a dark joke.

Poor Major Franca!

Although Zhang Tie's order for arrest was fake, the one for Major Franca might be very true. Not only the military party of the Norman Empire, even the secret police system was silently searching for him. The trouble he had made in Blapei was really big this time.

'It was really a wise choice to enter the Golden Roc Bank this time,' Zhang Tie mumbled inside.

"I think as long as your parents receive your message, the people in Huaiyuan Palace will know that you are in Kalur; they will definitely contact you and ascertain the details of your pick with you!"

"How will they contact me?"

"Now that you can contact your family members through the Golden Roc Bank, you only need to stay in Kalur for a few more days. They can contact you through the Golden Roc Bank too!"

Zhang Tie suddenly felt bright inside and let out a long breath. He watched the old man sincerely and seriously said, "Thank you!"

"You're welcome, young man. According to the regulations of the bank, you need to pay for talking with me!" the old man said with a wink.

Zhang Tie burst out laughing loudly, "No problem, it's worth!"

"Then, how about 100 gold coins including the 36 gold coins for the message and my inquiry fee?"

"That's fine!"

"What else can I help you with?"



Zhang Tie scratched his head as he glanced at the ring of energy once again. "As I don't have that much money now, can I just mortgage my ring of energy here?"

"No problem!" The old man glanced at Zhang Tie. "If you want to mortgage this ring in our bank, we can present you with credit of 8000 gold coins. This time, the 100 gold coins would be included in your line of credit while its interest in our bank would be calculated by day until you redeem it.

"If you need money, there's a large-scale auction in the Sauls Auction House in Kalur City two days later. You can entrust us to give your ring to the Sauls Auction House for the upcoming auction. If it was sold by auction, the starting price would be above 10000 gold coins. It would be sold at a high price. To mortgage it or sell it by auction, it depends on you!"

"Auction?"

Zhang Tie's heart raced.

"Yes, auction. The annual winter auction held by Sauls Auction House in Kalur is very famous across the Andaman Alliance!"

...

Ten minutes later, Zhang Tie left Golden Roc Bank. Unlike when he entered, when he left Golden Roc Bank, the bank arranged a vehicle to send him to Kalur City as Zhang Tie had decided to sell the ring of energy in an auction.

Although that rune equipment made of secret silver was rarely seen, for Zhang Tie, it was not as effective as simple and heavy gold coins. At this moment, seeing the numerous refugees in Kalur, he realized that it was hard to even move without money.

As long as he had money in his pocket, even if the people in Huaiyuan Palace could not pick him up from here, he still had great resources and freedom of movement. He could go to Jinyun Country by himself. Additionally, Zhang Tie even prepared to slide back to Blackhot City after attending the auction in Kalur.

What was more, besides some eccentric items, there were some items that Zhang Tie was especially interested in, for instance, the large number of golden uangs which were prepared for alchemists...

## Chapter 255: Spiritual Being

Sitting in the vehicle, Zhang Tie carefully watched the weird city wall of Kalur.

Unlike Blackhot City which had tall city wall, Kalur had no smooth city wall like what people usually saw. If the city wall of Blackhot City was regarded as the city's skin, Kalur had a protective coating of steel and iron which was composed of various pipes and bending components like the muscles and fiber tissues under the skin.

Kalur's city wall was composed of overlapping, bending, steaming pipes. All the city-defense equipment of Kalur were also built on these exposed steaming pipes. People standing outside the city wall could easily see the various exposed city-defense equipment linked by steaming pipes—gears, operating arms, various transmission tools, pressure valves, and steaming batteries.

They were weapons of destruction.

The core of Kalur region was Kalur City, which was a huge city built on an extinct volcano. The endless geothermal energy underground brought the city endless power, which was transmitted to the necessary places to support the prosperity of Kalur.

The whole Kalur City was a huge, round and orderly spider web. Circling the volcano, it spread layer by layer, occupying the best area that covered several hundreds of kilometers of the entire Kalur region.

Each place, each road, and each building in the spider web was very orderly arranged. All the farmlands, plants, and residential districts were well divided by roads. Compared to this, Blackhot City was too disordered. The dense and tall chimneys as well as the plants with blue roofs impressed Zhang Tie a lot.

This city felt like a huge machine, each part of which was closely linked by different gears.

Given the prosperity of manufacturing industry, Kalur City was ten times greater than Blackhot City. It was not only the manufacturing hub of the former Andaman Alliance, but also one of the two most important air traffic hubs in Andaman Alliance. When Donder left, his first station was also Kalur where he took an airship and left.

Now, Kalur City felt overpopulated since refugees were pouring in from all directions. Although there was no big trouble, there were always small troubles. From the Golden Roc Bank to all the way to the city control zone and the core zone of Kalur City, job seekers stood with raised boards. Refugee relief points set by Kalur's managers could also be seen everywhere. In airships bases, there were airships constantly landing and setting off, carrying people in and out.

Nowadays, although it was the most chaotic period in Kalur's past dozens of years, the airship companies had the highest trading volume. There were many spies, intelligence agents, and people who had special missions from the Norman Empire and the Sun Dynasty, let alone the refugees.

Recently, Kalur had become another battlefield for someone; dagger, crossbow, and poison their weapons. Each day, unknown corpses would be found in shadowy corners of the city. Besides police, city-guard also joined in the security management of this spider-web-like city, even the militia of Kalur had been mobilized.

This was a civilized and barbarous city full of order and chaos.

As a guest of the Sauls winter auction, Zhang Tie entered the Kalur City. He lived directly in the Sauls Hotel where the auction was going to be held in. Because of the numerous refugees, the accommodation cost in Kalur City was very expensive. The price of a common room in Sauls Hotel had already soared to one gold coin a day. This price was almost five times that of the normal one.

Sauls Business Group was a partner of Golden Roc Bank in Kalur. It managed many businesses, including arsenals, hotels, auction houses, and airship companies. The hotel Zhang Tie lived in was also part of Sauls Business Group.

Zhang Tie lived on the 17th floor. Additionally, this hotel was built on a mountain, so Zhang Tie was able to see the whole Kalur. There was a telescope in the hotel's balcony through which Zhang Tie could see far away.

The original intention of a desktop telescope in the balcony of the hotel would have been for the guests' convenience, to enjoy the beautiful view in Kalur. However, now it made Zhang Tie clearly see the cruelty of war.

On the first day in the hotel, he saw an air battle between the airships of the Norman Empire and Sun Dynasty at dusk dozens of kilometers away through the telescope. During this air battle, the four airships turned into fire balls, dropped from the sky and crashed in the mountainous area surrounding Kalur.

Recently, the fight for Kalur between the two large countries was becoming more and more fierce. Although Zhang Tie could clearly see the air battle, he didn't know how many soldiers were wounded and killed in the mountains everyday. The columns of smoke constantly rising from distant places and the flaring flames that brightened up the skyline at night every day were a warning to Zhang Tie of what was happening outside.

He let out a deep sigh inside.

Because he didn't want to stir up any trouble and wasn't in the mood to wander outside, Zhang Tie stayed in his room for two days. He even ate in the room. During that time, he kept calmly cultivating, polishing his burning points, strengthening his spiritual energy, and constantly killing wild animals in the Trouble-Reappearance Situations in his room. He immersed himself in his own world and very soon two days passed.

On the evening before the auction, when Zhang Tie finished practicing his spiritual energy and the two visualized abacus' dissipated, he felt his spiritual energy increase a bit. At this moment, a rolling message abruptly appeared in his mind.

——The system detected that Castle Lord's spiritual energy has reached the lowest standard required to form a space spiritual being in the Castle of Black Iron.

——Space spiritual beings can assist Castle Lord in managing the Castle of Black Iron, complete orders left by Castle Lord, and answer any of Castle Lord's questions about the Castle of Black Iron and Manjusaka Karma Fruit Tree.

——The following resources are to be consumed to form a space spiritual being:

Basic energy storage: 300

Aura value: 9000

Merit value:60000

——Do you wish to form it?

——Yes or No.

Such an abrupt message stunned Zhang Tie. Soon after that he became excited.

'It seems that the Castle of Black Iron is going to form a spiritual manager for me. But this time, it might require a bit more resources, especially the merit value points. After setting free so many earthworms,

I've only accumulated over 62000 merit value points. If I want to form the spiritual being, almost all of the merit value points would be used up along with half of the basic energy storage. Is it worthwhile?'

After thinking it for awhile, Zhang Tie fixed his eyes on the last half of the sentence introducing the function of the space spiritual being, "...answer any of Castle Lord's questions about the Castle of Black Iron and Manjusaka Karma Fruit Tree. "

'Any questions about the small tree and the space?'

Thinking back of when he had found no information on the yeast in the private library last time, Zhang Tie gritted his teeth and clicked "Yes" in his mind. Even if just for solving his questions about the small tree and the space, he felt it would be very worthwhile. After all, these days he'd had a lot of questions about the small tree's fruits.

—Ascertaining the forming of the space spiritual being!

—Please choose the species of the space spiritual being.

—Human or another?

—Human.

—Please choose the gender of the space spiritual being.

—Male or female.

—Male.

—Please choose the major personality trait of the space spiritual being.

—1. Perfectionist. 2. Affectionate. 3. Ambitious. 4. Artistic. 5. Smart. 6. Honest. 7. Active. 8. Leader. 9. Peaceful.

(Introductions on the nine personalities followed after)

Zhang Tie carefully read the introductions.

'Perfectionist, I'm not a picky man. I don't want this kind of personality. Pass...

'Affectionate. Uhm, it seems a bit nagging. It's enough to have one mom. Pass...

'Ambitious. This one seems nice. I will take a look later...

'Artistic. Uhm, this one seems a bit sentimental, not that smart...

'Smart. Uhm, this one seems good, I will take a look later...

'Honest. This one seems a bit boring. I don't want a stiff guy in such a vacant space. It's not good, pass...

'Active. No need to be that active in the Castle of Black Iron. Pass...

'Leadership. I don't have a hobby of being mistreated. Pass...

'Peaceful. It seems a bit self-constrained. Pass...'

After gazing at Ambitious and Smart for a while, Zhang Tie finally chose Ambitious as the personality of the space spiritual being.

—The features of the Ambition-based space spiritual being:

—He's eager to prove himself at any time. He's very confident. He needs your agreement and praise. He's afraid of being not accepted by Castle Lord. His basic mentality is—if I have no achievements, my life is worthless. He has a strong ambition and likes comparisons. He also likes authority. Additionally, he's also a workaholic who's not good at expressing his inner feelings, also he's very narcissistic and arrogant.

This achievement-based space spiritual being is over energetic. He seeks to prevail over others! He likes to accept your challenges and connect his values and achievements with yours. He will sincerely help you pursue the targets. He firmly believes that he can do everything in this world.

—Do you wish to form it? Yes or No?

—Yes!

—The space spiritual being is going to form!

—It will take twelve hours to form the space spiritual being. During the forming, Castle Lord will not be able to access the Castle of Black Iron.

A night soon passed.

## Chapter 256: A Familiar Person

Early the next morning, soon after Zhang Tie got up and ate the breakfast, he heard knocking on the door.

Opening it, he saw a 20-odd blond girl standing outside.

"Nice to see you, sir; I'm from Sauls Auction House. Here is your costume and mask for attending the auction. It will start at 8:00 am. It's best if you can enter 5-10 minutes in advance. After 8:00 am, the underground gate accessing the auction will be closed!"

Watching Zhang Tie, the blond revealed a coquettish smile. "You have 40 minutes before the auction starts. In this period of time, if you have any requirements, I can accompany you. You can call me if you have any problems!"

"No, thanks!"

Zhang Tie took the items from her tray and closed the door. The moment he closed the door, the girl outside looked a bit frustrated.

The old man in the Golden Roc Bank had told Zhang Tie that as long as he lived there, Sauls Auction House would send a person to invite him in. What Zhang Tie had not imagined was that this auction would start so early.

People who were qualified to attend Sauls winter auction were all rich and noble both in the former Andaman Alliance and now.

Zhang Tie himself entered the auction due to the rune ring. Many girls working in the auctions and hotels were like Mary. They were not bad, but only liked rich and powerful men. They dreamed everyday to become a phoenix. After experiencing the "Mary" event in Blackhot City, Zhang Tie felt nothing weird about these women any more.

The clothes consisted of a black burnoose and a delicate brass mask which could cover one's whole face. The eye part of the mask had two pieces of yellow glass, so people could not even identify the mask-wearer's color of the eye. Zhang Tie tried the mask on and found that the two pieces of yellow glass didn't influence his vision.

There was a number in German Script which was used to identify the status of the mask-wearer on the forehead of the mask. Zhang Tie's number was "E26". In this auction, all the activities that Zhang Tie carried out would be recorded by the number. After the auction, the Sauls Auction House would clear his properties and transfer them back to the Golden Roc Bank. It was a one-stop service.

Sauls winter auction was very secretive which meant that none of the people attending this auction should expose their status. They had to cover themselves tightly before entering the auction. This made the atmosphere very mysterious and excited Zhang Tie. After all, it was his first time attending an auction.

Besides the cloak and mask brought by the girl, Zhang Tie prepared a high-end costume for himself in the shopping mall of the hotel under the suggestion of the Golden Roc Bank. He didn't wear his refugee clothes that he had used to cover his status.

The clothes he wore now were the most expensive ones that Zhang Tie had worn since he was born. The seven-eight pieces including leather shoes and socks cost him over six gold coins in total. Their materials and workmanship were all very good. Although they were not the best, at least they made Zhang Tie look like a rich man.

Actually, Zhang Tie still owed more than 100 gold coins' service fee to the Golden Roc Bank. Along with the interest, they would finally be deducted from the final price of the rune ring today. The auction commission of the Sauls Auction House was 2% of the final auction price. As to whether the Golden Roc Bank would share a bit more profit from the auction commission of this ring, Zhang Tie didn't know.

After putting on the mask and the cloak which could even cover his hair, Zhang Tie looked in the mirror and couldn't recognize the person in the mirror at all.

The space spiritual being would form into being after 11 am, which was still over three hours away from now.

On the 17th floor of the hotel, besides Zhang Tie, there were other people who would attend the auction. Soon after he walked out to the corridor, under the leadership of the staff of the auction house, Zhang Tie took an exclusive elevator and descended one floor by another.

When he arrived at the 12th floor, the elevator stopped and two more people like Zhang Tie entered. They were also going to attend the auction. Besides a beautiful girl who was operating the elevator, the

other three just exchanged glances with each other. They didn't even greet one another, causing the atmosphere to be a bit weird.

"Ding!"

The elevator stopped and its doors opened. There was a deep, luxurious underground tunnel in front of Zhang Tie. The ground was covered with a red carpet and on both sides of the tunnel bright lamp lights were lit. Two rows of ceremonial usherettes were standing at the entrance of the elevator.

"Welcome to the underground facility of Sauls Auction House, the auction will start in the underground house here. Wish you great achievements!"

When the three of them walked out of the elevator, three ceremonial usherettes walked towards them and guided them to the entrance of the auction house one by one. The entrance was like the lobby of the hotel. It was magnificent with several steam-driven ventilating fans leisurely running at the top of the auction house, refreshing the air inside.

Two teams of warriors in gorgeous armors stood guard, making it look very mighty. Zhang Tie carefully sensed it and found that all the warriors were above LV 6. This made his heart pound and he gave a high evaluation for Sauls Business Group's power. He thought inside, as the partner of Golden Roc Bank, this business group was really special.

"Sir, do you need a voice-changing pill?" the ceremonial usherette asked Zhang Tie after guiding him in. "If you use the voice-changing pill, your voice will be unable to be identified by others for twelve hours!"

"Fine, give me one, please!"

Voice-changing pills were put at the entrance of the auction house. The other two people who had descended together with Zhang Tie also received one.

After opening the wax sealed package by pinching it, Zhang Tie saw a white bean-sized pill. Since the other two people directly ate it, considering that pill was provided for all the attendees for free, Zhang Tie ate it too.

The pill instantly dissolved in his mouth with a bitter taste. After swallowing the liquid of the pill with his saliva, Zhang Tie felt that his throat was a bit cold. He then coughed and found that his voice had become much lower.

There was a main auction hall and some mini auction halls in the auction house. This auction would be held in the main auction hall. When he arrived, Zhang Tie received a brochure on the items that were going to be sold in this auction.

There were already some people in the main auction hall who were sitting in their seats according to their numbers. Zhang Tie glanced over the main auction hall and found it was like a mini opera stage as all the seats were surrounding the stage in a fan-like pattern. There were over 300 seats in total, above which were more advanced and hidden rooms which allowed more special figures to attend the auction.

Coming to the seat marked E26, Zhang Tie sat down and took a careful look at the brochure with the items to be sold. There were many classifications on the brochure. Zhang Tie soon found his target from the item "animals/pets".

——Number MC 1368

——Name: Golden uangs.

——Quantity: 20 groups, 2000 in a group.

——The starting price of each group is 300 gold coins.

——Point of Delivery: Kalur City.

Zhang Tie's ring of energy was part of special equipment.

——Number B136.

——Name: Ring of Energy.

——Introduction of the equipment: made of secret-silver. As a rune equipment, it can increase the recovery of the wearer's physical strength by 4%.

——Quantity: 1.

——Starting price: 12000 gold coins.

——Point of delivery: Sauls Auction House.

'I've not imagined that such a small rune ring could be that valuable.'

Zhang Tie was stunned inside.

While Zhang Tie was broadening his vision by studying the brochure, the auction's starting time drew closer and more and more guests entered and took their seats. Then, the entire house became boisterous. All the guests were wearing masks. Besides their partners, nobody else knew who others were.

When there were only five minutes left till the start of the auction, a noise drifted over. Zhang Tie turned his head in the direction the noise had come from and looked at the entrance of the auction hall. He then became slightly shocked.

A 50-odd man with a gloomy face walked inside. He was holding a golden mace and wore a red pastor-like robe of the Sun Dynasty. There was a pattern of three moons on his red robe, reminding everyone of his status— he was a three-moon muling of the Sun Dynasty.

He didn't wear a mask or a cloak, and so did the two powerful military officers of the Sun Dynasty behind him. Entering the auction house, the three of them glanced at the noisy population with a cold expression before turning towards a rented room.

The guests were shocked by the first VIP; however, two minutes later, when a general of the Norman Empire who was wearing a mustache entered with two military officers, nobody was shocked any more.

Except for Zhang Tie.

He saw Reinhardt following that general. In a mask, Zhang Tie opened his mouth, but he uttered no word.



A general of the Norman Empire, Reinhardt, and the other military officer went to a rented room upstairs too.

The auction then started...

## Chapter 257: The Prelude of the Climax

Entering the auction house in such a high-key and straight forward manner, the representatives of the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire immediately made the atmosphere of the house a bit tense. Although the guests on the seats below the chartered rooms didn't whisper to each other, under their brass masks, many people exchanged glances with each other and had special thoughts inside.

Wondering whether the representatives of the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire were here to display their existence or for the items on the brochure or just a small episode of fighting for Kalur, many people had made the decision inside that as long as the items were wanted by the figures in the two chartered rooms upstairs, they would give them up.

Among them, perhaps what Zhang Tie was thinking would scare everybody else. It was out of expectation to see Reinhardt here, but what Zhang Tie was thinking about at this moment was that red-robe muling who was holding a gold mace.

For others, this red-robe muling might symbolize authority, power, terror or make some feel like flattering him. The old man was totally a walking treasure trove.

F\*ck him...f\*ck him...f\*ck him...

A voice kept shouting inside him. The moment Zhang Tie thought of the benefits of killing the red-robe muling, his heart would beat heavily. What were the benefits to killing this old guy? At least tens of thousands of merit points; a Fruit of Brilliance that could make his spiritual energy surge or a Fruit of Judgment.

The introduction of the Fruit of Judgment reappeared in Zhang Tie's mind immediately, leaving him deep in thought.

"—The people who profaned celestial beings in the name of other celestial beings and those who did evil acts in the name of celestial beings are doomed to be judged. Their existence does the greatest harm to everything beautiful and kind, they were the greatest profanity to gods. Their dirty lives and deeds shall be ended by sabers and swords. This is the condition for bearing a Fruit of Judgment, and the biggest award from gods to a dauntless man who dares to wave his saber towards the forces of darkness. Ah! The brave man who spread the glorious light of the gods' over his mother land. Please take this reward and use the strength gifted by it to judge those who profane the gods so as to relieve the people's fear of celestial beings. Gods don't need their fear as fear is the food of ghosts. According to the law of creation, the more judgments you make, the more power you will have to judge with."

'F\*ck him!' Zhang Tie made the decision at once. He decided to find a chance to kill that old man after the auction. He would have a higher possibility to kill a red-robe muling in Kalur City than on the battle field. It was difficult to kill him while accompanied by two powerhouses of the Sun Dynasty. Zhang Tie

might even encounter many unpredictable dangers. But how could he succeed if he didn't even try? How could he have raised big achievements without being willing to risking his life?

The binding skill brought by the Fruit of Judgment saved Zhang Tie's life at the critical moment and helped him reverse the situation. Zhang Tie would never feel that it was too much to have such powerful items.

Having formed the killing intent inside, Zhang Tie couldn't stand to look back at the red-robe muling of the Sun Dynasty. He then slowly took a deep breath...

...

"Thank you all for attending this Sauls Auction House's annual winter auction." When it was 8 am, the auctioneer, in a set of black ceremonial robe immediately appeared. Perhaps he also knew that these figures didn't have the patience to listen to his crap, after greeting them, he directly started the auction's procedures.

"The first lot today is a crystal pyramid..." Soon after his voice faded, the image of this crystal pyramid had been displayed on the screen in the back by the projector on the auction block, "This crystal pyramid is a nature-born treasure that forms in class-5 water. After opening and polishing the class-5 crystal, you will get the most essential core of this class-5 crystal pyramid. The direct coverage range of its crystal energy field is 1.8 m. I'll not mention its function on polishing burning points as you all know. The starting price of this item is 500 gold coins. The lowest increase of each bid is 10 gold coins. Now, start!"

Soon the price of the crystal pyramid broke through 1000 gold coins and was finally fixed at 1250 gold coins.

Zhang Tie took a deep breath. It was his first time seeing money spent like flowing water. Additionally, it was also his first time to see such an advanced crystal pyramid. Previously, the most advanced crystal that he had seen was "class-4 electric generator crystal." He saw it in the office of manager Hance of the Iron-Thorn Fighting Club. A class-5 crystal was at least 10 times more valuable than that of a class-4 crystal and rarely seen.

Zhang Tie's heart pounded. Even though he had not sold his ring at this moment, he could still make bids at the auction. His largest bidding limit was the starting price of his ring—12000 gold coins.

From the brochure, he knew that there were a total of 11 class-5 crystal pyramids. Therefore, he was not hurry. He just waited there to see the final prices of the other class-5 crystal pyramids.

Based on final price of the first class-5 crystal pyramid, the final prices of the other class-5 crystal pyramids all varied from 1000-1300 gold coins according to their sizes and qualities. They were auctioned in a fast and efficient manner. When it came to the 8th one, Zhang Tie also quoted and finally got one weighing 5.7 kgs at the price of 1280 gold coins.

As it was his first time to spend over 1000 gold coins for one item, Zhang Tie's hand even sweated when he raised the board. Meanwhile, his adrenaline heavily secreted. When his final price was fixed, Zhang Tie felt relaxed inside and a bit exhausted.

This time, I spend dad's total salary after 100 years Zhang Tie mocked himself while feeling extremely excited.

In this age, among all the auctions, crystals and stones would always cost the most. This group of class-5 crystal pyramids was just used to warm up the auction. Later, the other crystals and stones would be constantly auctioned.

Even though by scanning through the brochure and listening to the auctioneer's brief introduction on those items, Zhang Tie had already learned a lot and widely broadened his vision.

Previously, the guests downstairs were worrying that the representatives of Sun Dynasty and Norman Empire would butt in; unexpectedly, after 2 hours, when a great amount of items had been auctioned, neither of the two people in the chartered rooms upstairs had opened their mouths. They just silently watched. Therefore, the guests downstairs became reassured and started to frequently quote price, making the whole auction house more and more boisterous.

Now, Zhang Tie realized that he was totally an outsider of the auction house as the prices of those crystals and stones would always be worth thousands even tens of thousands gold coins. The crystal pyramid that he had got was just the cheapest one.

The first small climax broke out on the first alchemical object. The moment it was displayed, most of the bidders kept their wits about them.

"This is a sun-stone necklace created by a master alchemist. Its marvelous effect had been completely activated by the master alchemist. This necklace had two attributes: first, courage, which could make the wearer immune to the negativity and despair caused by some spiritual control skills and cure and alleviate the symptoms of melancholia patients second, crits, which could recover in 7 days. Every 7 days, this necklace could bring a 120% of battle qi crits for wears below LV 10. The starting price of this necklace was 21000 gold coins. At least 100 gold coins for each bid. Bidding starts now."

The moment the auctioneer stopped talking, the first person shouted a price of 25000 gold coins. Closely followed by other offers. The final price was fixed at 58000 gold coins, breaking the record of the highest value item in this auction.

During the process, while masked, Zhang Tie's mouth was agape in shock while staring at those auctioneers who treated gold coins like nothing as that golden, shiny sun-stone necklace on the auction block went to its new owner. Zhang Tie seemed to become petrified.

Sun stones were not expensive as it was just a semi-gemstone. Judging from the price, it could not even match the pure rubies and sapphires that he had gifted to Beverly, Alice and Pandora. Many jewelry stores in Blackhot City sold various ornaments made of sun stones. By comparison, those ornaments were very cheap. Even being made of the best sun stones and pure gold, most of their prices were only several or several dozens of gold coins. The sun-stone hairpins, necklaces and rings worn by the girls in the rose association were even cheaper, which only cost them several even 10-odd silver coins.

However, the starting price of this sun-stone necklace was 25000 gold coins!

Its final price was 58000 gold coins!

Even if they were both sun-stone ornaments. Why were the price differences so sharp. The only reason was that the sun-stone necklace came from a master alchemist. The mysterious attributes and energy of that sun stone had been activated, making it so amazing. Therefore, although they were all made of sun stones, one was average while the other was top tier.

This was really magic. Even calling it the Midas touch which turns all to gold couldn't describe an alchemist's ability.

It was Zhang Tie's first time being shocked by an alchemist's achievement. A huge wave raised in the youth's heart. Faintly, Zhang Tie heard a voice from the depths of his inner heart, an aspiration that he had never experienced before...

This sun-stone necklace only pulled open the prelude of the hidden climax in this auction.

Chapter 258: Dreaming to be an Alchemist

None of the guests sitting downstairs had noticed that since the first product of a master alchemist was displayed, the red-robe muling of them Sun Dynasty and the general of the Norman Empire expressions had become increasingly grim. It seemed that they were becoming a bit nervous and paying more attention to the following items being auctioned today, especially to that product from a master alchemist.

Not only the people in the chartered rooms, even many guests downstairs were startled. For some reason, the number of products from master alchemists seemed to be a bit more than usual today. They knew that the products of master alchemists were rarely seen in the auction house in the past years. What happened this year? Who was that generous?

Zhang Tie skimmed through the brochure and found that introductions on the products of a master alchemist were the simplest.

——There were several more products of master alchemists to be auctioned today. At the request of the client, we have to keep these items a secret before the official procedures start. Therefore we won't tell you the details here. Thank you for your attention.

After the sun-stone necklace, there were some more products of a master alchemist to be auctioned.

The second product of a master alchemist was a Pato-stone ring which was used to make people calm and more quick-witted. As the favorite of all the field commanders and other professions concerning intelligence, this ring was fixed at the final price of 49,000 gold coins.

The third product of a master alchemist was a pair of earrings made of nickel-iron meteorite, which were used to increase focus and rapidly enter a meditative state. This product could reduce one's chance to be affected by a devil when in meditation by 50%. Therefore, it was also a treasure of cultivators and was finally taken away at the price of 52,600 gold coins.

The fourth product of a master alchemist was a forehead ornament made of lazurite. Its effect was to nourish and mobilize one's spiritual energy as well as increase one's perception. Therefore, it broke a new record——62,800 gold coins.

When the lazurite forehead ornament was displayed, the atmosphere in the house became heated as nobody would have imagined that four pieces of a master alchemist would appear in this annual Sauls winter auction. In the past, there were only one or two pieces. What happened today? What was even stranger was that all the patterns of these items were for women. They seemed to be one set of ornaments for a woman.

'That's impossible! Even the queen of the Norman Empire would not be that exaggerating by having such set of priceless ornaments made by a master alchemist' Many attendees mumbled inside.

Even if Zhang Tie had felt something wrong with this auction as a hidden flow and restlessness was silently in an upsurge. As a result, when they heard that there was another product from a master alchemist, many people were shocked as they sprung up from their seats. At the same time, the sound of someone taking a deep breath had drifted throughout the auction house.

"The following item also comes from a master alchemist. It's a pair of bracelets made of garnet with its special properties completely activated. It is definitely the favorite of all the women as it could maintain one's beauty and keep one's youth. Additionally, it could improve one's skin, increase one's vitality of qi and blood as well as the health of the organs that are concerned with the female reproductive system..."

Zhang Tie's eyes then fixed on the projection wall behind the auction block with the auctioneer's gesture. The photo of that pair of garnet bracelets had been enlarged by many times, allowing people to see its details.

In Zhang Tie's eyes, it was not a pair of average garnet bracelets. It looked purple among the garnet red, making it completely like the average ones. However, what was weird was that on the surface of the garnet were some mysterious fine grains that penetrated from the inside. Zhang Tie had not seen the same grains on other average garnets. If this pair of bracelets were not large enough, those mysterious, fine grains could almost not be noticed by Zhang Tie from his position.

Could it be the mark left by the master alchemist after tapping and activating the abilities of the stones? This seemed to be the only difference between them and those average garnet bracelets which could be bought at the price of 10-odd silver coins besides that this pair of garnet bracelets looked more brilliant than average ones.

He was right.

"As you can see, these three stone flowers have been activated by the master alchemist on the pair of garnet bracelets, which represents that the three special properties and abilities of the garnet stones had been activated. As the first lot that has three attributes in this auction, it could not help you fight or cultivate; but it could make a woman more beautiful and healthier. Therefore, the starting price of this pair of bracelets was 38000 gold coins. Each mark-up should not be lower than..."

Before the auctioneer finished talking, a person on the 2nd row in front of Zhang Tie couldn't wait to open his mouth, "50,000 gold coins!"

"You'd like to take away this pair of bracelets with only 50,000 gold coins!"

"56,000 gold coins!"

"58,000 gold coins..."

"60,000 gold coins..."

In a short while, the price of that pair of garnet bracelets had surged over 70,000 gold coins, which price had scared off many people who had offered at the beginning. But there were still some rich and powerful guests were bidding for that.

As a classical Chinese allusion went—touch a stone and turn it into gold. Only immortal beings in the the Chinese myths and legends could make that. However, at this moment, seeing the average-looking garnet stone turning into an item which was tens of thousands more expensive than the gold of the same weight, Zhang Tie felt it was never too exaggerating to describe it using the above classical Chinese allusion.

Sitting on his own seat, Zhang Tie kept trembling at each mark-up. It was not because of fright, but because of his own excitement.

"100,000 gold coins!" A person sitting on the first row of the auction house abruptly stoop up. After this offer, that person moved away her cloak and hood. Meanwhile, she took off the brass mask on her face. When she turned back, everybody saw a 40-odd woman's face who looked still enchanting. She had rosy cheeks, bending and long eyes. Beside this, she also looked sharp and had a killing intent. She glared at all the guests behind her and aggressively said with a smile, "This mother will have this pair of bracelets. Who dares to grab it from me?"

"Black widow!" Some guests behind him took a breath of air while someone mumbled.

The auction soon restored quiet.

Although Zhang Tie didn't know her true status, judging from her look, it seemed that many people knew her status. Additionally, this woman seemed also terrifying. At least nobody wished to offer more than 100,000 gold coins to buy a pair of bracelets at the cost of offending this woman.

Seeing nobody else uttering any voice, the woman turned back and fixed her eyes on the auctioneer without saying anything more. Taking the small hammer, the auctioneer forcefully swallowed her saliva, "Someone offers 100,000 gold coins. Is there any higher offer? No? 3, 2, 1, sold!"

As the small hammer smashed down, that woman called black widow took a seat again. By then, the auctioneer's forehead had been covered in drops of sweat.

"The next item is the last product of a master alchemist in this auction..."

Hearing the auctioneer's words, all the guests became startled, causing an uproar.

"What? One more product from a master alchemist? Is this Sauls winter auction the exclusive one for master alchemists?"

"That's impossible. It's been the 6th one. Even in greater auctions, people could also hardly see so many products from master alchemists in one auction!"

"If we were notified earlier that so many products from master alchemists would be auctioned this time, we would have been more prepared. The Sauls auction house should notify us at least 1 month in advance so that we could have prepared an appropriate amount of funds. What's your purpose of not notifying us before the auction?" Many people started to complain about the Sauls auction house.

"If I was notified one month in advance, I would never have given up that pair of Pato-stone rings!"

"The Sauls auction house has to give a proper accounting!"

"We need justice!"

Zhang Tie looked around the auction house in an interested way. Even the two people beside him became so excited as they stood up and loudly complained. These people were blaming the Sauls Auction House for not having fulfilled its obligation to provide them with accurate details. As each of the product from the master alchemist would cost tens of thousands gold coins, even 100, 000 gold coins. It was not a small amount of money for anyone at present. For some people at the present, if they didn't have it prepared well in advance, it would be hard for them to even afford one product.

The auctioneer in the stage became pretty embarrassed as she could not respond to so many complaints at the same time. When the crowd became increasingly more furious, causing the auction to be unable to continue, a 60-odd man abruptly appeared in the stage.

When the old man appeared, the auctioneer hurriedly retreated to the backstage. Meanwhile, Zhang Tie also noticed that even though the auction became a bit disorder, from the beginning, the representatives of the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire sitting in the chartered rooms upstairs hadn't make any expressions at all.

"May I have your attention please..." The old man looked around the house. Hearing his words, the furious and complaining crowd instantly became quiet. Many people seemed knowing the status of this old man, "As the director of Sauls Business Group, I'm very regretful about your troubles in this auction. But I have to honestly tell you that as the sponsor of this auction, we were only made aware that a batch of alchemical products would be auctioned here one day ago. Therefore, we didn't have time to share that information with all of you. Additionally, until 10 minutes before the start of this auction when this batch of alchemical products were escorted to this auction house did we didn't know what they were. We're also shocked by them. However, we cannot refuse the owner's request for keeping these alchemical products a secret.

"Who?" A low voice drifted from a brass mask, "Who's the commissioned auctioneer of this batch of alchemical products? Such a request and attitude was rude for Sauls auction house. We want to know whose request is it that the Sauls Business Group could not refuse!"

Standing in the stage, the old man took a deep breath, "It's the Selindor Clan which entrusted the Sauls auction house to auction the former alchemical products, including the final pair of alchemical products!"

Hearing his reply, the whole house became quiet. The Selindor Clan was also the famous Iron-Gate Clan, the ruling clan of Kalur City. The development of the entire Kalur region greatly benefited from the painstaking effort of the whole Iron-Gate Clan for many generations. Zhang Tie remembered that when they attended the survival training, the "Iron-Gate T21" crossbow carried by Fatty Barley was produced by the Selindor Clan. Magnificently situated in Kalur City, this clan was also the most powerful military supplier and machines manufacturer in the former Andaman Alliance. Compared to this clan, the Gregory Clan in Blackhot City was just a rural nouveau riche.

For some reason, Zhang Tie faintly felt that something big would happen in this auction today.

"If you have no more questions, we'll come to the last alchemical product today. Because this alchemical product is very special and has not been auctioned in the history of Sauls auction house, perhaps you have not really seen such an alchemical product from such a short distance, therefore, when it is displayed after a while, please keep calm and not attempt to move closer to watch or touch it in case of unnecessary troubles and dangers. For this, we will take steps, sorry for that!" After saying this, the old man clapped. Instantly, a team of full-armored soldiers walked out from the backstage as they surrounded the stage and basically isolating the auction block from the guests.

After this team of soldiers formed a perimeter, two people in white gloves lifting one silver metal suitcase respectively walked onto the stage from backstage. After that, they carefully put the suitcases onto the display case of the auction block. They then opened the suitcases and adjusted the items in the suitcases from a horizontal position to a vertical position for convenience so that everyone could see them clearly. Meanwhile, the projector on the auction block had magnified the two items' images in a clearer way.

Given from the look, the two items were like two huge "ostrich eggs" made of special material. Their hulls were covered with black and white spiral grains. Nobody knew what they were. At least Zhang Tie became completely muddle-headed when he saw the two "ostrich eggs". He wondered what precious items they were that could arise the auction house's attention so much.

Among them, only the two military officers of the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire in the chartered rooms upstairs changed their faces at the sight of the two "ostrich eggs". They then lowered heads to talk with their own general or red-robe muling.

"You should have heard about the two items. Especially in recent days, the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire respectively threw 1 or 2 of these items into the opposite cities!" The old man obscurely explained. After a short quiet, the house suddenly became noisy.

"What? You mean they were alchemical bombs——the only thermal weapon in the Black Iron Age?"

A high-pitched voice sounded while everyone else was shocked. Even Zhang Tie eyes popped out of their sockets.

"Right, the two items are alchemical bombs——the only thermal weapon in the Black Iron Age, also the last alchemical items today. By now, the explosive equivalent of the most powerful alchemical bombs made by alchemists in the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire were respectively 350 kgs 500 kgs of TNT. However, the explosive equivalent of each of the two alchemical bombs you can see here are 1 ton of TNT."

Saying this, the director of Sauls Business Group in the stage forced a bitter smile as he stretched out his hand, "Don't ask me what does it mean by explosive equivalent and TNT as I don't know them either. These words were technical terms used by alchemists to measure the power of alchemical bombs. They came from the age before the catastrophe which were strictly regulated. I'm just echoing what the books say. I asked a professional about the power of a 1 ton TNT explosive equivalent before I was here. I was told that such a bomb could destroy the whole auction house, the Sauls hotel above it and all the people inside!"

Hearing such an explanation, everybody including Zhang Tie were shocked.



After looking around, the director of Sauls Business Group continued, "The starting price of each bomb is 1 gold coin. Two persons' bidding are available at the same time . Bidding starts now..."

1 gold coin for 1 alchemical bomb with terrifying power?

Are you kidding me? You might not be able to buy such terrifying weapons at the price of 100,000 gold coins. Because all bombs are strategical weapons in the hands of the country and big powers. Nobody would actually sell them at all, let alone buying one at the price of 1 gold coin. Alchemists were both terrifying and awesome because in this age only they could produce this kind of terrifying killing weapons that almost didn't belong to this age.

None of those at the present were idiots, almost in a split second, they understood why they could see the representatives of the Norman Empire and the Sun Dynasty here and why two alchemical bombs to be auctioned at once?

"1 gold coin!"

"1 gold coin!"

When the whole house became so quiet that even a needle dropped onto the ground could be heard, two voices drifted from the two chartered rooms upstairs. Besides, nobody else dared to bid. Even those people who had complained loudly that they had not prepared enough money and missed the possibility to buy an alchemical product also became as quiet as a stone. They seemed not having seen the "great bargain" at all.

"1 gold coin, 1 gold coin, two people had bidden. Is there any higher offer? No? Well, that's the deal!"

The hammer hit down, making a sound that was more crispy than any time before like a lonely applause after a performer finished a lonely performance on the stage of the theater.

At this time, the people inside the chartered room upstairs had already walked downstairs, "We need to check the item" The red-robe muling who was holding his gold mace in a distant expression just now looked as black as charcoal. Observant people could even see that red-robe muling was holding his gold mace for forcefully that his finger even looked white.

"Sure!" The director of Sauls Business Group nodded while the soldiers left a path for him.

Seeing one military officer of the Sun Dynasty walking over there, the general of the Norman Empire also nodded to that military officer beside him. Therefore, the military officer of Norman Empire also arrived there in a short moment.

Under the gaze of the crowd, the two military officers started to check the items in the silver suitcases. In less than half a minute, the two military officers in solemn expressions nodded to the red-robe muling of the Sun Dynasty and the general of the Norman Empire respectively. After leaving 1 gold coin respectively, they arranged well the bombs and left the auction block with suitcases.

After that, the representatives of the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire left.

At this time, all the guests cast their eyes onto the director of Sauls Business Group. Even Zhang Tie understood that this auction was just a tool that the Selindor Clan used to send a message and demonstrate its strength.

It was not a simple auction, but a big event that could influence the situation of the Kalur region and the process of the war between the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire. There were two key information points on this big event: first, the Selindor Clan had gained the support of a master alchemist, whose ability was far greater than that of the top alchemists in Norman Empire and Sun Dynasty.

Everybody was watching that person on the auction block and waiting for him to say something. Even as a silent prop and a witness, they all had the right to know something.

As was expected, under their expecting eyes, the director of the Sauls Business Group finally revealed a message.

"The Iron-Gate Clan will announce today that their next clan head is — Alexia Selindor. Alexia Selindor had married a master alchemist when she was learning in the Oriental Continent. Everything of Iron-Gate Clan including Kalur City would be under the protection of that master alchemist. Those alchemical products auctioned today were small gifts sent from that master alchemist to the Iron-Gate Clan"

The whole auction house became silent once again.

After a long while, someone among the guests sighed, "Then, the war between the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire on Kalur would almost come to an end!

...

At this moment, that voice and that aspiration in Zhang Tie's mind became clearer than ever.

This was a dream that Zhang Tie had been striving for since he was born for the first time, a dream that made Zhang Tie's blood boil.

In the dream, Zhang Tie was greater than having the Midas touch which could turn stone to gold.

He could save the whole city...

He could change a war...

He could be the largest reliance and honor of everybody beside him...

...

The auction continued. Finally, Zhang Tie ring of energy was sold at the fixed price of 21600 gold coins, making Zhang Tie's purse bulging once again.

Soon after Zhang Tie's ring was sold, a line appeared in Zhang Tie's mind.

——The space spiritual being of Castle of Black Iron has formed into being. The management panel of Castle of Black Iron has completed the first intelligence upgradation. Spiritual connection and interaction between Castle Lord and the Castle of Black Iron through the space door has been established...

Soon after this line disappeared, Zhang Tie had felt that his spiritual energy in his mind was shocked as a great amount of spiritual energy started to pour into that strange arch door in his mind. At this moment, that arch door was completely like sponge, it constantly absorbed his spiritual energy inside. In less than 1 minute, there was only a wisp of spiritual energy left in Zhang Tie's mind.

When Zhang Tie's spiritual energy was almost completely dried, that marvelous arch door slightly trembled as its color suddenly became verdant and full of vitality.

It was not comfortable as his spiritual energy was drained in a fast way. In the past short minute, Zhang Tie had a splitting headache. He even felt frustrated. However, after that marvelous arc door changed its color, Zhang Tie felt that he had established a deeper and closer contact with the Castle of Black Iron.

Previously, he felt that he and the Castle of Black Iron were in two different worlds separated by the arch door. Only after he pushed open the door could he feel the inside of the Castle of Black Iron. However, now, that arch door seemed having disappeared as the entire Castle of Black Iron had integrated with him on the perceptions.

#### Chapter 259: Heller and His Subordinates

The primary auction in Sauls auction house lasted 4 hours in the morning. According to the arrangement, the subordinate auctions would start at 2:00 pm, each of which would last half an hour. There was a 15 minutes' break between each of the two subordinate auctions so that all the guests could easily choose their own subordinate auctions to attend at their will.

The subordinate auction for animals and pets would start at 2:45 pm. Therefore, Zhang Tie had almost 3 hours before it started.

Until he left the auction house at 12 pm, Zhang Tie was still thinking about what had happened in the auction house previously.

This time, the Iron Gate Clan really had silently reversed the situation of Kalur. By then, the fat calf that was Kalur had become a ripe for the taking. Although the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire both had the strength to engulf it, in this age, even the greatest lunatic would not choose to blatantly plunder a master alchemist's family property as spoils of war.

Because the revenge of a master alchemist who could produce alchemical bombs that was equal to 1 ton of TNT explosive equivalents would definitely be 10 times more severe than that suffered from the average people in Kalur City if they engulfed the whole Kalur City. No idiot would do that. In this age, each alchemist was a hornet's nest, especially this guy who could casually make a pile of alchemical items and seemed to have countless reserves money and a great amount of followers. Sometimes, this kind of person was even more destructive and terrifying than an army.

Perhaps the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire would still investigate whether the Selindor clan had really found a master alchemist as to be its backer through other intelligence channels. Even only for face, the war between the Iron-Horn Army and the Brilliant Feathers on Kalur would not instantly come to an end. They had to find a proper reason. Whereas, this primary auction brought a wisp of hope for peace to Kalur which had been clouded due to the war. From today onwards, the two powers' skirmishes in Kalur region would sharply reduce before this war finally came to an end.

Zhang Tie felt this was a good matter. Because most of the people that died on the battle field were commoners from two countries, while the party that suffered the most in this war was the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Kalur. The earlier this war came to an end, the fewer people would die.

Perhaps some big figures would feel not happy, but in this world, when rich ones encountered something, the ones suffered a loss would always be the poor; when big figures fought, the small figures would always be beaten up.

Zhang Tie thought about it for quite a while and found it was a bit interesting. From finding the army of the Norman Empire attacking the Blackhot City on the New Crescent Prairie to attending the fight between the Iron-Blood Camp and the army of the Sun Dynasty and witnessing the Iron-Gate Clan reversed the situation of Kalur, Zhang Tie found that he had witnessed and experienced each important stage of this war since he attended the survival training in the Wild Wolf Valley. During this process, he matured.

...

After returning to the room, the moment Zhang Tie took off his clothes and mask, the serviceman of the hotel had pushed in the dining car.

"Sir, please enjoy yourself. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

After sending in Zhang Tie's lunch, that serviceman stood well in the room.

"What's your monthly payment here?" Zhang Tie asked the serviceman.

"Plus tips, almost 1 gold coin!" The 20-odd year old serviceman honestly answered.

Zhang Tie then took out his last gold coin, after weighing it in hand, he flicked it to that serviceman, who instantly grabbed it with an ecstatic expression, "Thanks, sir, you're too generous!"

"I want to ask about something from you"

The serviceman instantly changed his face while he hurriedly put the gold coin onto the dining car like having touched something hot, "Sir, we have regulations. We can't reveal the information on the guests in the hotel. Once discovered I might lose my life!"

"Not for information on the guests in the hotel, but any information on the representatives of the Norman Empire and the Sun Dynasty who had just left the auction house. You help me ask about whether they were still in Kalur City now. I think it's not too difficult of a task"

The serviceman then looked relaxed as he hurriedly grabbed that gold coin from the dining car again and put it into his own pocket, "It will take me some time!"

"It doesn't matter, you have 1 hour, when you come back to tidy up the tableware, I think you've already dealt with it!"

The serviceman then left...

In the primary auction, Zhang Tie had thought twice before making the final decision to kill the representatives of the Sun Dynasty by rushing into danger. However, he had not imagined that the auction would be full of climaxes. After getting one alchemical bomb, the representatives of the Sun Dynasty had left, reminding Zhang Tie that his first hunting plan might have failed. Although he knew that the red-robe muling had a low possibility of staying in Kalur City now, Zhang still wanted to verify it and see whether the gods would give him this chance to kill them.

After finishing lunch in less than 10 minutes, Zhang Tie closed the door and pulled down the windows before going to the bathroom. According to Zhang Tie's observations, the bathroom would be the last place under the surveillance. Even though there were hidden surveillance channels, they were arranged in the parlors and bedrooms; In a contrast, with such a narrow space, a bathroom where everything inside was easily seen was safer and more secret. Having been very careful, Zhang Tie had been accessing the Castle of Black Iron in the bathroom these days. Since experiencing that event with Major Franca, Zhang Tie had become more cautious.

...

"What does the space spirit being look like?"

Before entering the Castle of Black Iron, Zhang Tie became curious.

...

"Handsome and Magnificent Castle Lord, welcome to the Castle of Black Iron. I'm the spirit being of Castle of Black Iron. My name is Heller!"

This time, Zhang Tie entered the Castle of Black Iron in a much easier way. Almost the moment he focused his attention he entered. When he entered the Castle of Black, Zhang Tie saw a 40-odd year old man in a set of delicate black ceremonial dress and bow like a steward standing in front of him.

This man respectfully bowed to Zhang Tie.

At the sight of this man, Zhang Tie didn't feel genial but jealous.

Zhang Tie swore that he had not imagined a man could be that handsome and beautiful. He deserved all the descriptive words possible to describe a handsome man. Each line and detail on his face and body seemed having been delicately carved by the creator. This man had the face and temperament like that of Apollo. At the sight of this man, the first word in Zhang Tie's mind was not handsome but challenging. This guy was simply challenging everyones imagination to their limits on perfect and handsome men. From his appearance and temperament, this man was definitely perfect. If this man was moved outside, Zhang Tie confirmed that wherever he went, he would be surrounded by a great amount of women and their screams. If any woman passed out at the sight of this man, Zhang Tie wouldn't feel it strange at all.

This guy was absolutely the enemy of all the men!

'F\*ck, how could a man be that handsome?' As it was his first time to feeling bashful since he was born, Zhang Tie started faintly complaining about that to himself.

"You say you are...Heller?"

"Yes, my lord!"

"Uhm...are you a man?" Zhang Tie asked such an abnormal question.

"I'm the life created in this space. I'm the manifestation of the space functions. To be strict, my full name should be smart spiritual being control unit of the Castle of Black Iron. My DNA was 99.97% similar to that of human beings. You can treat me as humanoid life. My task is to assist Castle Lord and to

manage the Castle of Black Iron as well as solve all of your questions about the Castle of Black Iron!" Heller respectfully answered.

"Then, can I bring you into the real world?"

"No, because the laws of space and creation that grant me with life are different from that of your world. My entire life and all the basic energy particles that form my body are part of this space's laws and are closely related to this space; therefore, I cannot leave this space independently!"

Good! Hearing this answer, Zhang Tie let out a sigh unconsciously. If this handsome guy wandered everywhere in the world, other men would not have women any more.

During the process of chatting with Heller, Zhang casually looked around, what amazed him were the 3 people digging the earth beside the vegetable field.

"Erm... what about those 3 people?" Zhang Tie became surprised as he pointed at the 3 persons doing farming work.

"They are the spirit servants being created in this space together with me. They are my subordinates and completely follow my orders!" Heller explained.

"Your subordinates?"

"Of course, there are so many things to do in the Castle of Black Iron. Do you think I alone could finish all the things, my lord?" Heller asked.

"Haha, buy 1 get 3 for free!" Zhang Tie felt pretty good all of a sudden.

Having not met them previously, Heller called the 3 people over. They immediately stopped what they were doing and rapidly ran over here. When they came in front of Zhang Tie, they directly knelt down in front of Zhang Tie and started to his shoes in the most humble way, which startled Zhang Tie.

"Lord, I'm your loyal slave servant A'gan!"

"Lord, I'm your loyal slave servant Edward!"

"Lord, I'm your loyal slave servant Aziz!"

## Chapter 260: Clearing Up Doubts

Zhang Tie carefully watched A'gan, Edward and Aziz who were kneeling down in front of him. The three people all appeared to be between the ages of 20 and 30 years old. Among human beings, with the exception of the Chinese, men of other races would look older when they became mature. In the words of Donder, they would age faster than those of the Chinese race. Therefore, A'gan, Edward and Aziz looked older than their actual ages.

A'gan was black with thick lips. Even his hair was black. Edward was white with stout limbs, giving him a strong build and appearance. Azia was a bit delicate with curled hair, who looked a bit younger than the other two people. They all wore common linen undershirts and looked like farming servants in manors.

Compared to Heller whose look made others bashful, the three people looked a bit more like commoners. Therefore, Zhang Tie slightly released a sigh of relief.

"What were you doing just now?" Zhang Tie asked.

"We were hoeing. Steward Heller instructed us to reclaim a good field of 60 mu [2] in the Castle of Black Iron." The three replied in unison showing that they have been well trained.

"Can you till the land?"

"Of course!" The three answered in unison once again.

"With the exception of this, what else can you do?"

"We've have many skills that can be used!" The three answered in unison for the third time.

"I'm also a carpenter and manson. I'm good at building houses!" A'gan answered firstly.

"I'm also blacksmith and cook. I can make delicious food and create items!" Edward answered.

"I can look after flowers, grasses and livestock. I can also brew various alcohols!" Aziz answered.

Well, I'm a land lord now. Hearing the three spirit servants' answers, Zhang Tie felt that the Castle of Black Iron was becoming more like a manor. He was the lord; Heller was the steward. He also had his spirit servants. But this was also great, at least he didn't have to till land any more.

He waved his hand towards A'gan, Edward and Aziz. They then obediently went back to till the land.

"Can I take three of them into my world?" Another question suddenly flashed across Zhang Tie's mind.

"No, like me, all the lives formed in this space can't leave here as we are a part of the Castle of Black Iron!" Heller shook his head.

"Erm...do you need to eat?"

"We also need to consume food and have proper rest. Our living and energy receiving patterns are no different from those of people in your world. Therefore, I hope Castle Lord could allow us to use the houses that you have built and all the materials inside. I've got a plan. If you agree to my plan, I will greatly change the Castle of Black Iron. It's really too simple and crude." Heller said with great ambition while his eyes radiating shrew lights, dreaming of a beautiful future in the Castle of Black Iron.

"No problem. You can allocate all the items here at your will!" Zhang Tie wove his hand.

"I will definitely not let Castle Lord down!" Because of Zhang Tie's trust, Heller showed a smile for the first time.

"Will my fruits on the small tree be safe?" Glancing at the small tree beside him, Zhang Tie thought of an important problem. If the ripe fruits on the small tree were picked and eaten by the 3 guys in advance, that would be a great loss.

"Don't worry. For all the lives in this space, the Manjusaka Karma Fruit Tree is a top existence in this space, which enjoyed the strongest protection from the space rules. Except for Castle Lord, nobody else

could pick the fruits. Any living beings that are hostile to the small tree will be excluded by the laws of this space and turned into ashes!"

Speaking of the small tree, Zhang Tie thought back to the trip into the Castle of Black Iron before Heller was formed. He was told that Heller might be able to answer some questions about the small tree. In a split second, Zhang Tie's questions about the small tree reappeared.

"Can you answer my questions about that small tree?"

"It's my honor and the meaning of my existence!"

"Well, my first question is that why can I not get the Fruit of Brilliance until I kill those heinous people. Why can't I receive such a fruit by killing others, even on the battlefield?"

"According to one of the universal laws, gathering the lives of sentient species cannot make an individual grow stronger by promoting self-destruction and fighting against each other. If any one killed by you could lead to a Fruit of Brilliance or other fruits, the foundation and universal law to balance the survival of this race would be broken. Therefore, you could only get a Fruit of Brilliance by eliminating the ones whose souls have been corrupted and would influence the survivability of your race. This reflects the universal law."

"What about the Fruit of Judgment?"

"Those people's souls have been corrupted. Additionally, they were still profaning the gods in the name of celestials and doing evil things in the name of gods. Such actions are seen as horrendously evil. Therefore, you can get both the Fruit of Brilliance and the Fruit of Judgment by eliminating those people! They are also the only two fruits that you can get from killing human beings"

Zhang Tie's eyes suddenly brightened up as he thought about a possibility, "Do you mean that I can get more fruits from those species which pose a greater threat to human beings?"

"Not quite. It's not that you could get more fruits from them, but you could get more from them. You could get the halo of their souls, namely their spiritual energy from those people who have corrupted souls; you could also get the seven strengths from wild wolves while the Seven-Strength Fruit formed by the seven strengths also include the spiritual energy of those wild wolves!"

Zhang Tie suddenly became enlightened.

"Speaking of the Seven-Strength Fruit, I've got one more question. What are the conditions to form Seven-Strength Fruit? I can get this kind of fruit from other animals except for wolves?"

"The animals that could bring you Seven-Strength Fruit have to meet the following conditions: first, this animal must be mammal. Only a mammal's seven strength could integrate with yours. Secondly, this animal must be hostile to human beings. Third, it has to be free both physically and spiritually when it's killed. Only when the above three conditions are satisfied could you get the Seven-Strength Fruit!"

"What do you mean by 'this animal is hostile to human beings'? How could I judge whether an animal is hostile to human beings?"

"That's very simple. There will be many records on this species killing and eating people!"



Heller's explanation immediately solved Zhang Tie's many questions on the wild wolf Seven-Strength Fruit. Previously, he thought that he could get Seven-Strength Fruit from killing many kinds of animals. There were even a lot of weird thoughts in his mind, such as buy a great number of livestock and kill them to get Seven-Strength Fruit accordingly. Now, he knew that the Seven-Strength Fruit could only be formed by killing animals which met the above three conditions. Only a few animals could meet these conditions. It was really a matter of luck to gain Seven-Strength Fruit.

Zhang Tie had already been thinking about heading for the New Crescent Prairie again. If he could get some huge wolf Seven-Strength Fruits, it would definitely improve his real strength a lot. However, based on the current situation, he might not have such a chance in a short period.

"I will participate in the subordinate auction for selling golden uangs in the afternoon. Can you tell me how many golden uangs I need to set free before I gain a Fruit of Redemption?"

"2584!" Heller answered.

Hearing Heller's reply, Zhang Tie's heart raced as 2584 was just the number on the 18th place of the Fibonacci Numerical Array. "Is there any relationship between the forming of Fruit of Redemption and the Fibonacci Numerical Array?" Thinking of this, Zhang Tie spoke it out.

"Of course, the number of lives to be saved to form Fruit of Redemption accordingly changes with the species. It's related to many factors!"

"What about people? If I save people, will I also get the Fruit of Redemption accordingly?"

"Yes, you will!"

"What kind of Fruit of Redemption would I get if I save people?"

"I cannot answer this question, because it belongs to the most mysterious domain. With the exception of you, nobody could give you the answer!" Heller watched Zhang Tie in an interested way.

"I remember that I've saved a person when I attended the survival training in the Wild Wolf Valley. Why is there no Fruit of Redemption on the small tree? Even if it's not ripe, it should have formed at least!"

"Because all the fruits have to meet the lowest conditions to manifest. The more advanced the fruit is, the stricter conditions it will require. As the conditions to manifest the Fruit of Redemption have not been reached at all, therefore, you've not seen it."

"Can you tell me how many people should I save to manifest a Fruit of Redemption accordingly?"

"1346269!"

Zhang Tie was dumbfounded. A fruit that could not be manifested before saving more than 1,300,000 people. What the hell! Additionally, it's just the standard to manifest it. How many more people should he save to make it ripe?

'All right, just forget this question!'

With his current ability, if he continued to ask, it was nothing different than seeking for insult and reducing his own enthusiasm. A guy who was still wanted had to be careful at all times so he should

better forget this great undertaking by saving millions of people. Would this be considered by the emperor of the Norman Empire as a reason to pardon him?

"Fine, the last question. Are there really gods?"

"I can not answer this question!"

"Why?"

"Because I don't know either!"

Zhang Tie became speechless...