

Black Iron 261

Chapter 261: A New Ability

After only staying with this spiritual being for half an hour, Zhang Tie had understood this person's general character and temperament and what was behind his ambitious personality.

Although Zhang Tie felt that he had done well, Heller was still not satisfied with the current situation in the Castle of Black Iron. Therefore, the ambitious steward had formulated a plan. The first step was to create a self-sufficient supply of food in the Castle of Black Iron and reclaim 60 mu of farmable field.

The second was to develop the all-round forestry in the Castle of Black Iron. He wanted the Castle of Black Iron to produce at least 5000 points of aura value a day, several times more than before.

The third step was to form a fresh water lake of more than 100 mu and a wetland of above 100 mu, aiming to build a three-dimensional ecosystem that was more suitable to the survival of species inside.

The fourth step was to build a real castle inside which matched Zhang Tie's status—the Castle Lord as Heller found the current log cabins were too embarrassing.

The above four steps were just Heller's short-term objective to make the Castle of Black Iron more like a manor and more inhabitable.

Hearing Heller's plan, Zhang Tie felt his shin cramping; especially when he heard the third step—a fresh water lake of 100 m and a wetland of the same size, Zhang Tie almost frothed at the mouth. God knew how much basic energy storage it would take to accomplish such a topographic creation. He was wondering whether he could collect enough basic energy storage to complete the topographic creation even by carrying mining ores for another six months.

However, as the Castle Lord, Zhang Tie didn't feel like disappointing Heller. To tell the truth, Zhang Tie found Heller was very useful. Therefore, he could only ask the question in an obscure way.

"Erm...your plan is very good. But have you considered as to whether the basic energy storage inside the Castle of Black Iron could support your plan!"

Heller watched Zhang Tie with an amazed look. "Won't Castle Lord solve the the problem of basic energy storage for the development of the Castle of Black Iron? Besides aura value points that could be produced by the plants inside the Castle of Black Iron, won't other basic energy storage and merit points come from Castle Lord's achievement from the outside?"

Heller's amazed eyes made Zhang Tie bashful once again. With the exception of his looks and personality, Heller was also very enterprising, which, in contrast, made Zhang Tie feel that he was just a rich second generation.

"I mean that although I could acquire some basic energy storage from outside, that could only be done on the premise that the Castle of Black Iron was not exposed. Actually, each time I carried those materials into the Castle of Black Iron to throw them into the pool of chaos, I was taking a risk. With my current ability, I cannot ensure that anyone wouldn't hurt me and my loved ones once they know my secret. Am I clear?" Zhang Tie put it in a straightforward manner.

"This is truly a problem!" Heller thought it for a while before revealed another fascinating smile, "But I don't know whether Castle Lord has noticed that with trips after the Castle of Black Iron had completed its upgrade—the interactive mode between the Castle Lord and the Castle of Black Iron through the space door has been established! At this moment, has the color of that space door in your mind has become verdant?"

"Yes, it has!" Zhang Tie recalled that information in his mind when he was in the auction before nodding, "You reminded me, I still don't know it means by 'Spiritual connection and interaction between Castle Lord and the Castle of Black Iron through the space door has been established' even now.

"It means that from now on, Castle Lord can directly send the items from outside to the inside of Castle of Black Iron or take the items inside out of the Castle of Black Iron. You don't have to access the arc door any more. You only need to hold an item and interact with space door of the Castle of Black Iron using your spirit. That item would then be automatically absorbed in or spat out. Items that are absorbed into the Castle of Black Iron would fall into your designated place or directly into the pool of chaos while the items that are spat out of the Castle of Black Iron through the space door would appear in your hand!"

Zhang Tie eyes seemed to have popped from their sockets.

"Castle Lord, don't be that amazed. It's just the most basic, portable storage function of the Castle of Black Iron. Previously, when you integrated with the Manjusaka Karma Fruit Tree, this function had already been started. However, at that time, the creator of this space hadn't expected that your spiritual energy would be that low. Therefore, this function was always unavailable until your spiritual energy reached the minimum requirements for activating this function!"

Zhang Tie finally understood, but he still couldn't fully accept it. Previously, he was wondering why he had to add basic energy storage into such an advanced space equipment by doing labor work like accessing the Castle of Black Iron in such a time-consuming and labor-intensive way. It turned out that that was because his low spiritual energy could not start these basic functions of the Castle of Black Iron at all just like how a weak kid could not even rotate the wheel and engage the gear of a car. This was really the most aspiring news today, "You mean I don't have to access the Castle of Black Iron to move in the items in and out?"

"Right, that's the basic space storage function of Castle of Black Iron. Based on your current spiritual energy, any item that you could move could be freely moved in and out of the Castle of Black Iron. Although this process would also consume your spiritual energy, compared to the former situation that you took items in and out by yourself, in this way, you could reduce the consumption of spiritual energy by 50%!"

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Several minutes later, after Zhang Tie left the Castle of Black Iron, Heller officially took over the management on the mutation and evolution of the three living beings in the Castle of Black Iron—bees, earthworms and the basic aura yeast that has experienced mutation and evolution once.

Of course, the first round of mutation and evolution of the bees had failed. For the second round, Heller suggested to increase the input of aura value points in the queen bee. For earthworms, if they could

succeed in one round of mutation and evolution, in Heller's words, the task of fertilizing the fields in the Castle of Black Iron would be their job. To realize this, Heller also changed the evolutionary pattern on earthworms from that of a collective pattern to an individual pattern. He would choose three earthworms and input 3 merit value points and 300 aura value points into each of them several times. The possibility of success would be higher in this way. Once it succeeded, the earthworms would gain greater reproductive abilities and reproduce a large amount of earthworms in the Castle of Black Iron.

For the evolution of the basic aura yeast, Zhang Tie didn't pay too much attention to it. After the yeast successfully evolved, it would be 100 times more difficult for them to complete the second evolution. Therefore, in a short period, Zhang Tie could almost ignore them.

As a space spirit being, Heller had great freedom to manage the Castle of Black Iron. But all the usage on the basic energy storage, merit value points and aura value points of Castle of Black Iron had to be approved by Zhang Tie in advance. Therefore, the Castle of Black Iron was still under the control of Zhang Tie.

The moment he thought there would be some people working for him in the Castle of Black Iron from today on, Zhang Tie really felt like being a landlord. The best part, Heller and his three subordinates didn't need compensation...ha...ha...ha

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Zhang Tie then reappeared in the bathroom in the hotel.

Standing there, he looked around the bath covered with beautiful Mosaic tiles. After rolling his eyes, he took up soap from the sink of the bathroom before connecting his spiritual energy with the space door. At this time, the space door felt like a mirror. After casting his spiritual energy onto the space door, it would "project" a weird and unstable wave onto Zhang Tie's hand. After adjusting it several times, that weird wave became stable and fully "locked" onto the soap in Zhang Tie's hand. Zhang Tie felt like he had put his hand into a storage compartment. Once he loosened his grip, the soap in his hand would drop off.

Several seconds later, the soap in Zhang Tie's hand suddenly disappeared like performing conjuring tricks and appeared on the table of the lab in the Castle of Black Iron. Several seconds later, the soap reappeared. After that, it disappeared and reappeared once again. Zhang Tie was so excited that he tried this for many times like a kid. He found that the spiritual energy that he would consume to carry a small soap in or out of the Castle of Black Iron was so low that it could even be directly ignored. Finally when that soap disappeared from Zhang Tie's hand, it directly fell into the pool of chaos in the Castle of Black Iron and served as a bit of basic energy storage for the Castle of Black Iron.

Seeing a mouth-rinsing glass in the bathroom, Zhang Tie took up the glass as he started to focus his spiritual energy onto that spring in the Castle of Black Iron through the marvelous arc door. Gradually, something amazing happened as a lot of water directly poured in the glass from the air which even flowed out, causing Zhang Tie's hand and sleeve to become wet.

The water then stopped pouring in, leaving the water level at the mouth of the glass waving back and forth. "Bottoms up!", Zhang Tie burst out laughing loudly.

This basic storage function of Castle of Black Iron was marvelous. Truly marvelous!

Leaving the bathroom, Zhang Tie whistled and returned to the parlor. He glanced at the clock hanging on the wall of the parlor and found it was almost 1:00 pm. Therefore, Zhang Tie pulled down one end of the service rope of the parlor, the other end of which was connected to the information desk on the same floor by a fine copper pipe.

2 minutes later, that serviceman who had received Zhang Tie's "tip" pushed open Zhang Tie's door with a dining car and entered.

"How about the news?"

"The representatives of the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire had hurriedly left Kalur City in cars after they left the auction house, one to the north gate of Kalur, the other to the south gate of Kalur."

"Well, it's okay. You can take away the tableware on the table and leave" Zhang Tie waved his hand.

After gaining 1 gold coins so easily, the serviceman happily cleaned up the dining table and left politely.

"It seems that the plan to hunt the red-muling of the Sun Dynasty would fail. But, I've achieved too much today. I'd better be not get too greedy."

"Before returning to Jinyun Country, I'd better not make any trouble."

Thinking of it in this way, Zhang Tie instantly felt relieved.

As there was a subordinate auction in the afternoon, after looking at the time, Zhang Tie took a seat in the room quietly and started to recover his spiritual energy by practicing mental arithmetic by abacus.

After what happened today, Zhang Tie realized that his spiritual energy was far more important than he had imagined as spiritual energy was required to polish burning points, activate the Trouble-Reappearance Situation, form the binding chain, and even to use the basic space storage function of Castle of Black Iron. Perhaps, there were many more functions of spiritual energy to be used for...

Chapter 262: News

The man who travels far knows more——this was what Donder always said before. After attending the auction in the morning, Zhang Tie truly understood the meaning of those words. Therefore, he was determined to attend that subordinate auction in the afternoon even if they didn't auction anything else except for golden uangs.

For Zhang Tie, an average juvenile who had grown up in Blackhot City since he was born, this auction was definitely a good opportunity to broaden his horizons. If not for selling that rune ring, it might take Zhang Tie many years to attend such an auction.

The first subordinate auction at 2:00 pm was exclusively for medicament and medical pills. In this auction, Zhang Tie caught sight of the low-level and medium recovery medicament. The low-level recovery medicament was auctioned in terms of batches. Each batch of low-level recovery medicament contained 50 vials. The bottom price for each batch of low-level recovery medicament was 1200 gold coins. The selling price for most low-level recovery medicament was about 1800 gold coins. In this subordinate auction, there were 86 batches of low-level recovery medicament that would be sold. After

the bidding for the first group, the following offers and auctions went by very quickly. Most of the first offers in the following rounds would be close to the transaction price. Therefore, the 86 groups of low-level recovery medicament were soon sold.

Low-level recovery medicament could cure most bruises. As Zhang Tie had the preliminary recovery body, he didn't need these low-level recovery medicament. However, he was concerned about his friends in Blackhot City, therefore, Zhang Tie bought one batch of low-level recovery medicament in the price of 1860 gold coins.

Medium recovery medicament was also sold in terms of batches with ten vials in each. The starting price was 1400 gold coins for each batch. The final transaction price was about 2100 gold coins.

What made Zhang Tie curious was that he had not seen advanced recovery medicament in the auction.

"Grandpa, why is there no advanced recovery medicament at this auction?" A person in a brass mask sitting in front of him turned his head and asked a person dressed in the same way sitting beside him. Obviously, Zhang Tie was not the only one who was in doubt.

"Perhaps, this grandpa and grandson also here to broaden their horizons." Zhang Tie thought inside.

"Only a few alchemists can produce advanced recovery medicament. which would have long been ordered by those big powers the moment they went to the market. These items could rapidly cure one's wounds and save people's lives. Last year, a few advanced recovery medicament were still auctioned here, yet no more this year. At the same time, the price of low-level recovery medicament and medium recovery medicament also rose by 30% and 50% respectively in the last year and fewer flew into the market, alas..." The old man finally let out a sigh.

"How could that be?"

"Because winter is coming." The old man said in a low voice.

When the old man said this, the others beside also heard it. However, they all kept silent.

After the golden uangs, Zhang Tie saw some more marvelous medicament, among which, he caught sight of a set of concealment agents. A set of concealment medicament was composed of pupil-dying medicament, skin-changing medicament, hair-dying medicament and bleaching medicament. After dropping the pupil-dying medicament into eyes, the color of one's pupil would change. After drinking a skin-changing medicament, one's skin color would change. Hair-dying medicament was more convenient. You only needed to comb it onto your hair. Compared to that face-changing mask left by Donder, this seemed to be another way of disguising oneself. Especially the pupil-dying agent and hair-dying medicament, which looked more like woman's cosmetics. Only the skin-changing agent was the true drinkable medicament. The effect of this set of concealment medicament could last 2 months. If you wanted to recover your original look before the concealment medicament lost its effect, you only needed to drink the bleaching medicament. This made it very convenient.

Compared to the former expensive items, this set of concealment medicament was not expensive as its starting price was only a bit more than 100 gold coins. Few people would like to bid for it as they felt it was useless. Therefore, Zhang Tie successfully bought 3 sets of cross-dressing medicament at the cost of less than 400 gold coins in total.

In the next auction, Zhang Tie successfully bought 4 batches of golden uangs. It seemed that many alchemists attended this auction. Therefore, according to the rules of the Sauls auction house, each attendee could only bid for 4 batches of the same items. This made Zhang Tie's plan to buy over 10 batches of golden uangs to raise his real strength all at once in a short period fail.

Additionally, Zhang Tie found that when he raised his board to bid for the third batch of golden uangs, everybody focused their eyes on him. Almost nobody would compete with him as they all turned their heads to watch him, seemingly wanting to see through his brass mask. This made Zhang Tie's heart race as he didn't know that he had stood out so much. When Zhang Tie raised his board for the 4th batch of golden uangs, even wearing two masks, Zhang Tie still felt his face was itchy as the others' gazes made his face feel hot. In addition, even the auctioneer became more respectful to him. Like before, the 4th batch of golden uangs were also bought by Zhang Tie without any competitor.

It wasn't until this auction ended did Zhang Tie know why he became so eye-catching.

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"Master!" When Zhang Tie wanted to leave, some people in the same house walked towards Zhang Tie and held him back. After that, Zhang Tie was surrounded by a great amount of people.

"Master? When did I become a master?" Zhang Tie felt strange as he asked, "What do you hold me back for?"

Because Zhang Tie had eaten a voice-changing pill, nobody could judge his age from his low voice. Additionally, Zhang Tie was not tall. All this made people mistake Zhang Tie as an old man. In this case, they would always feel that Zhang Tie was a master in their heart—old age, aloof, arrogant and lonely.

"We are all alchemists who have attended the auction. We all come from the cities of the former Andaman Alliance. As there's a party of alchemists in the mansion at the top of the hotel, whether we have the honor to invite you there..."

"I'm not a master!" Although Zhang Tie didn't know why they mistook him for a master, but Zhang Tie still told them the truth. Although Zhang Tie was curious about the alchemists' party, he also knew that if he directly went there, he would definitely be revealed by others to the public. He didn't want to have so many enemies who were alchemists and felt they were being made fun of. Looking around the brass masks, Zhang Tie's heart pounded as a thought popped into his head—the master Abyan of Blackhot City might be among them. As he had killed Samira, he must have offended master Abyan. In this case, Zhang Tie didn't dare to attend that party at all.

Zhang Tie was right as Abyan was really among the alchemists, not only that, he was among the crowd before him.

Under the brass mask, master Abyan shone with a weird brilliance. With eyes fixed on Zhang Tie who was also wearing the mask, Abyan was planning something.

"As this master could buy 4 groups of golden uangs in the auction at once, they must be used to make strength-enhancing medicament. If you only wanted to study them, you don't have to buy so many golden uangs at once. Although some red-robe alchemists among us have mastered some secret about some strength-enhancing medicament using golden uangs, only real yellow-robe alchemists could

master the full secret to absorb true strength from golden uangs. It would be our great honor if we could receive even a bit of your guidance!" Saying this, that person bowed towards Zhang Tie once again, while all the other alchemists bowed towards Zhang Tie.

In the world of alchemists, the powerful ones would always be respected. As a red-robe alchemist, Abyan could be called master in Blackhot City, then, as a yellow-robe alchemist who could stand on the brilliant stage of the 7th level of alchemists in the world was qualified to be called master in more places. Additionally, even among the entire circle of alchemists, a yellow-robe alchemist could still garner respect.

Zhang Tie silently swallowed his saliva as he considered how to solve this problem. He couldn't have imagined that only by bidding for some batches of golden uangs would he be brought so much trouble. "How should I deal with this? I shouldn't attend the party." He knew he could not offend so many alchemists at the moment as it could bring him many troubles. If he wasn't bidding for the 4 batches of golden uangs for making strength-enhancing medicament, what did he bid on so many for? If there's truly someone who was able ask him thoroughly on this affair, he would cause quite a stir.

As he could not think out other methods, Zhang Tie could only start the "Cave Barbarian Survival Mode" once again.

"I will not attend your party, I like to stay alone!" Zhang Tie answered without any mood.

"If so, where do you live, master? Whether do we have a chance to visit your mansion to learn from you!"

"I've told you. I don't like to be bothered!"

At this moment, many people had looked disappointed and unsatisfied. In their eyes, they've already been too polite; however, this weird yellow-robe alchemist was really rude.

Having worked in Donder's grocery store for so long, Zhang Tie sensed the dissatisfaction in the air.

"However, as I have met all of you here today, I will not let you down. I've got some experiences which might help you save a bit time on your way ahead!" Zhang Tie said in a solemn way.

"Please!" The other people bowed towards Zhang Tie for a third time.

Thinking of the paragraphs on the Fruit of Redemption that he saw for the first time, Zhang Tie slowly pulled out a sentence, "The secret of the strength-enhancing medicament is not in the genes of the golden uangs but in the extraction of the spiritual fire from golden uangs!"

The moment Zhang Tie said this, the red-robe alchemists including master Abyan were shocked as they bowed towards Zhang Tie for the 4th time in a way 10 times more respectful than last time.

Most of the alchemists in the surroundings were familiar with each other. At the sight of these red-robe alchemists' attitude, they would definitely understand the value of Zhang Tie's tip. Therefore, they also hurriedly bowed towards Zhang Tie. Meanwhile, they firmly bore Zhang Tie's words in mind. "May I have your name, master?" In a brass mask, Abyan moved one step forward as he asked respectfully.

"I won't stay in Kalur City for too long. Therefore, my name is not that important!" Zhang Tie waved his hand like a real powerhouse and didn't ignore these people any more. He then directly walked towards

the gate. As a result, all the other alchemists gave a way to him and saw him off in the most respectful attitude.

Zhang Tie had not imagined that the words that he extracted from the the paragraph on the Fruit of Redemption could really frighten these people. Therefore, Zhang Tie silently let out a sigh.

"Never be that eye-catching any more." Zhang Tie seriously warned himself.

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Soon after he returned to his room, he had received what he had bid for in the auctions—1 crystal pyramid, 1 group of low-level recovery medicament and 3 sets of concealment medicament. The staff of the Sauls auction house who had sent those items here told Zhang Tie that after deducting the price of the three items from the final price of that rune ring, all the rest money money had been transferred to the Golden Roc Bank. Zhang Tie could withdraw the cash over there.

"Where are the four batches of golden uangs?" Zhang Tie asked him, which was also what he was concerned about the most.

"All the golden uangs in this auction come from the exclusive farm of an elder of the Alchemists Association in Carlow Federal. According to the conventions, after the auction ended, the Alchemists Association would carry those golden uangs into Kalur City by airship. It would take 5 days. Therefore, the delivery time of the golden uangs is 5 days later!" The staff answered.

"5 days? That's alright." The seller was that generous, even though it seemed to be a convention. Zhang Tie then agreed. Additionally, he would also wait for the news about his family members in Kalur City during this period.

Zhang Tie then continued to live in the hotel. He only did three things a day—Eat, sleep and cultivate.

On the second day, when Zhang Tie watched the view from afar using a telescope on the balcony of the hotel, he really didn't see the airships of the Norman Empire and the Sun Dynasty fight any more while the columns of smoke in the distance also reduced a lot.

On the third day, no column of smoke could be seen in the mountainous area. At the same time, he heard the news that the Sun Dynasty and the Norman Empire would cease the war.

During this short period, through practice everyday, Zhang Tie had adapted to the storage function of the Castle of Black Iron. Now, Zhang Tie could fill a glass with water from the spring in the Castle of Black Iron in a very smooth manner. He wouldn't let even a drop of water flow out of the glass.

After being completely familiar with this new function, Zhang Tie found that function was limited to a certain degree. For instance, Zhang Tie could not bring living beings into the Castle of Black Iron. Similarly, he could not bring out living beings out of Castle of Black Iron, even a mosquito.

Thankfully, he could teleport plants into Castle of Black Iron through this function and order A'gan, Aziz and Edward to sow them in the field. But he could not move even a grass out of Castle of Black Iron though this function, unless that grass had been pulled out of the soil.

Heller told Zhang Tie that this was the biggest feature of the space storage function. Because the space door in Zhang Tie's mind could only open due to the soul waves of Zhang Tie as a carbon-based life form,

Zhang Tie was the only spiritual life form who could access Castle of Black Iron for free. Other spiritual lives could not be brought in until that space door was opened for Zhang Tie.

On the 4th day, Zhang Tie finally received the news from his family members and the Zhang Clan of Huaiyuan Palace.

Chapter 263: Home Affair

Even if sending messages was expensive, Zhang Tie's family members still kept him up to date on all happenings within the family through remote communications.

Thirty years ago, Zhang Tie's father, Zhang Ping, was just an average member of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace in Jinhai City. Zhang Ping was simply an unknown youth amongst the young talents of the Zhang clan in Jinhai City, let alone across Huaiyuan Palace. He was a commoner in all aspects.

Zhang Ping's father, also Zhang Tie's grandfather, managed a large-scale shipyard in Jinhai City. Therefore, his family was rich and pretty reputable in Jinhai City. Zhang Ping's mother, also Zhang Tie's grandmother, was just the 4th wife. Zhang Tie's father wasn't even the eldest son, but the 3rd son of the 4th wife. Additionally, Zhang Tie's grandmother passed away early on. Zhang Tie's father became less influential. Although Zhang Ping didn't have to worry about living, in a big family with fierce competition, if you lost the concern of an important elder, sometimes you might have to face dangers one would never face before.

Zhang Ping's father was born with a mild temperament. Although his family conditions were not bad, he was average and he possessed no special talents. If he was born in an average household, he might be able to live as he wished. However, he was born in a major power like the Huaiyuan Palace. Therefore, it became Zhang Ping's illusion to live as he wished.

For people like Zhang Tie's father, even though he was average, he was still a descendant of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace, which meant that he was doomed to be involved in various matters.

That year, Zhang Ping was forced to get married. He was selected by the Clansman Pavilion of Huaiyuan Palace. Together with the other 7 male descendants of Zhang clan, he would marry into and live with the bride's family, another big clan in Jinyun Country.

In this day and age, amongst big clans, especially big Chinese clans in countries like Jinyun Country which was under the control of some big Chinese clans, connections through marriage became extremely common yet very important.

It was common because in this age, besides connecting with big Chinese clans through marrying daughters, marrying sons was also commonly seen. For Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace, each year, many male and female youths with other family names would marry in. Meanwhile, many female and male youths with the family name of Zhang would marry into other big clans.

These connections through marriage were very important because it was closely related to how many people among the descendants of Zhang family would awaken their ancestral bloodlines—a great, unique talent of Chinese people. Generally speaking, the descendants of people who had awakened their ancestral bloodlines would also have a very high probability of awakening their ancestral

bloodlines. Even other ancestral bloodlines that their forefathers hadn't awoken the possibility of being awakened. The more descendants of a Chinese clan that could awaken an ancestral bloodline, the greater the clan would become.

Count Changfeng Zhang Huaiyuan, the founder of Huaiyuan Palace of the Zhang clan had awakened a very powerful ancestral bloodline. Therefore, even though the direct line of descendants of Zhang clan were average, they still had the blood of Count Huaiyuan. If they could carry on the family line, they would be very useful.

Any big clan could not be sustained without fresh blood. Therefore, connections between big clans of the equal social position by marriage had also become the important occurrences in order to maintain the vitality of clans and absorb the the bloodline capabilities of other clans.

It was more like bloodline exchange between big clans.

Those who could connect with Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace through marriage were also powerful clans in Jinyun Country.

During this process, those male youths being married in other clans basically met the following requirements: first, they had not awakened the ancestral bloodline as the direct descendant of the clan and had no special talent nor position in the clan; second, they were healthy; third, they looked good and were well-behaved.

Each year, men coming of age among clans who could meet the above three conditions would marry into other clans through drawing lots. This had almost become the tradition of each clan, not being exclusive to Zhang clan.

Unfortunately, Zhang Tie's father met the above conditions when he came of age and was selected through the drawing of lots. Therefore, he was going to marry in another clan on behalf of Zhang clan in a glorious way.

However, Zhang Ping didn't wish to allow this to come to pass as he had already fallen in love with a Chinese girl in Jinhai City. Although the girl was born into an average family, she was diligent, kind and good at making rice brew. The first time they saw each other, they fell in love and pledged to marry each other with parental permission. At that time, the two of them had already agreed to get married in one year. However, hearing the result of drawing lots, Zhang Ping immediately fell into abyss.

Almost no man would like marrying into another clan. Therefore, the process of drawing lots was totally open and fair; the result also became the authoritative order of the clan that nobody could resist. In the early years, even the grandson of an elder of the Huaiyuan Palace could not avoid being selected through drawing lots. He could only leave Huaiyuan Palace with tears in his eyes. let alone Zhang Ping.

As Huaiyuan Palace had very strict family regulations, in front of such a fact, Zhang Tie's father had no chance to struggle or resist.

Having been average for so long, Zhang Ping struggled in front of the decision of Zhang clan and made the bravest decision in his life—eloping with Zhang Tie's mother. Before elopement, in order to escape from Huaiyuan Palace's arrest, Zhang Ping even faked his own death.

Zhang Ping succeeded. Nobody could have imagined that Zhang Ping who was always average before could do this.

Zhang Ping then eloped with Zhang Tie's mother and settled in Blackhot City, which was over 10,000 km away from Huaiyuan Palace. Although they suffered a hard life, they were still happy.

They could have lived on like this except for the accident in which Zhang Tie had awakened his ancestral blood tie during the period that he attended survival training. What Zhang Tie awakened was "precise throw". One the day he ignited his rear end burning point and activated his Strength of Qi and Strength of Blood, Zhang Tie's situation had been sensed by the blood-soul crystal of Zhang clan. Zhang clan searched for him for a long time yet didn't find him on the pedigree of Zhang clan, the Family Elders Association of Zhang clan were infuriated and delivered the order to figure it out. Finally, with the help of the huge family machine of Huaiyuan Palace, the fact of Zhang Ping's false death was figured out. Through some secret channels and clan relationships, Huaiyuan Palace found Zhang Tie's household in Blackhot City.

This time, Zhang Ping really committed a felony.

He refused Zhang clan's order and failed to fulfill his responsibility as a descendant of the Zhang clan. Then, he eloped with a girl by making a false death scene to cheat the Clansman Pavilion of Zhang clan. Although he would not be punished with death, he would suffer an extremely heavy punishment.

After being directly taken away by the elders of Clansman Pavilion from the Blackhot City, the moment Zhang Ping arrived at the territory of Zhang clan, he was immediately taken away by the law-enforcement team of Zhang clan and beaten in the prison of Zhang clan. Thankfully, Zhang Tie's mother, Zhang Yang and Zhang Tie's elder sister-in-law were safe and sound.

Right then, Golden Roc Bank brought Zhang Tie's message to Zhang Tie's family members.

After receiving Zhang Tie's news, Zhang Yang hurriedly went to see the elders of the Clansman Pavilion of Zhang clan and would like to exonerate Zhang Tie's father in the secret of "mental arithmetic by abacus" that Zhang Tie had discovered. When Zhang Yang sent a message to Zhang Tie in Huaiyuan Palace, Zhang Ping was still in the prison as the elders of Zhang clan were still arguing about Zhang Yang's position.

At this moment, Zhang Tie's family were really experiencing hardships in Huaiyuan Palace.

——Dad is in a great trouble now. Huaiyuan Palace had strict, unwavering family regulations. Two uncles have helped us to settle down in Jinhai City and looked after us a lot. Because we haven't gotten your news and father was taken away by others, your mother has been sick and bed ridden. She even called your name in her sleep.

Wishing you a fast return!

By the end of the letter, Zhang Tie burst out tears. He couldn't wait to fly to Huaiyuan Palace to stay with his family and save his father from prison.

Zhang Tie thought that nobody was wrong on the elopement between his mother and father. It was just a matter of stance. Zhang Tie unconditionally supported and cared about his own parents. But he also knew that big clans always had strict family regulations. What his dad had done truly had violated the

family regulations. It would not be possible for the Huaiyuan Palace to just ignore it. Such actions would risk the stability of the clan and prevent its continued longevity. What was the most important for Zhang Tie now was to leave here at once and stay with his family. If he stayed with his family, nothing could not be overcome.

Huaiyuan Palace had also sent a message to Zhang Tie—An airship of the Changfeng Business Group under the affiliation of Huaiyuan Palace would arrive at Kalur in 9 days. After it arrived at Kalur, Zhang Tie could return to the Huaiyuan Palace on it.

Before the airship arrived at Kalur, Zhang Tie estimated that he had enough time to go back to Blackhot City to bid farewell to his friends. This time, Zhang Tie didn't know when he would have a chance to come back to Blackhot City in the future.

The third holy war between humans and demons would soon start, which was gradually beginning to show on many different fronts. Zhang Tie didn't know what would happen in a few years or even tomorrow.

Zhang Tie's premonition was right. When the chaotic world arrived, nobody could tell him what would happen tomorrow. The golden uangs that he had bought in the auction should have arrived at Kalur City on the next morning; yet, they didn't. On the same day, many people heard a more shocking news than that the Norman Empire and the Sun Dynasty waging war towards the former Andaman Alliance several months ago.

—The whole clan of an elder of the Alchemists Association in Carol Commonwealth of the Blackson Human Clan Corridor which consisted of 1876 people was culled over night. All the clan members had been killed.

The clan of this elder of Alchemists Association was the only one which mastered the skills necessary to breed golden uangs and other mutated animals which could be used to produce important medicament. Its disappearance was a disaster to all the alchemists. Without the key raw materials, alchemists across the Blackson Human Clan Corridor would not be able to produce some marvelous medicament, including low-level recovery medicament, medium recovery medicament and advanced recovery medicament and some other medicament that could be used to increase personal strength.

It required an extremely amazing strength to exterminate such a clan with so many powerhouses over night. Even an entire division of an army could not do this over night. However, what was strange was that the killers didn't leave any mark, it was like they simply evaporated into nothing. The elder's clan along with its breeding farms in Carol Commonwealth were directly burned into ashes. The killer's methods were really terrifying.

Since the second holy war between human beings and demons, there had been no elder of Alchemists Association being killed for over 200 years. What was more, this elder's entire clan was eradicated. This was like throwing a bomb into water that already had ripples. Its effect was evident. Even Zhang Tie who was far away in Kalur City also became the victim of this event. As a result, Zhang Tie's Fruit of Redemption based on golden uangs became history.

Hearing this news, all the alchemists in Kalur City became dumbfounded.

The Kalor Commonwealth and the Alchemists Association were infuriated. Two orders for arrest with the highest reward amount of 500,000 gold coins respectively spread over the entire Blackson Human Clan Corridor in one day.

"Is this the prelude of a chaotic world?" Zhang Tie was truly shocked.

On the same day, with the help of the Golden Roc Bank, Zhang Tie stepped onto the train heading for Blackhot City from Kalur City.

7 days later, Zhang Tie returned to Kalur safely. Before he came back from Blackhot City, he even went to Blapei. After leaving Blapei, Zhang Tie went to the base of the Iron-Blood Camp of No. 39 Division. When he left the Iron-Blood Camp, Colonel Reinhardt and Major Guderian even drove Zhang Tie to the Kalur City where they bade each other farewell.

"Hopefully, we will have a chance to see each other again!" Major Guderian tightly hugged Zhang Tie.

"Hopefully, we'll be alive to see you next time!" Zhang Tie took out a caddy from his pocket and gave it to Guderian, "If there's a chance, give this to the Freo's family for me!"

Guderian opened the caddy. It was Zhang Tie's Iron-Blood Medal. Major Guderian nodded as he solemnly took it.

Zhang Tie then tightly hugged with Reinhardt.

"Come on, boy, I feel you might able to form Iron-Blood battle qi!"

"It's not a possibility, it'll happen!" Zhang Tie smiled, "I can tell you for sure that when we meet each other next time, you will not defeat me!"

Reinhardt then burst out laughing loudly...

...

On the 2nd day since Zhang Tie returned to Kalur City, the airship of Changfeng Business Group had arrived. It carried many expensive commodities, tea leaves and silk from the Eastern Continent to trade with some business groups in Kalur City.

On a morning with chilly wind, Zhang Tie boarded the airship for the first time. Then, the airship rose into the air and flew away along the wind...

Zhang Tie, who was going back to Huaiyuan Palace was almost a LV 5 warrior.

Chapter 264: On the Way Back

After his interest in the airship faded during the first two days of flight, the following days gradually became boring. Even above Blackson Human Clan Corridor, Zhang Tie still could not easily see human cities through the porthole.

When he looked down through the porthole of the airship he saw many of the same scenes. Continuous hills, rippling ranges, grasslands and endless forests. Everywhere he experienced was deserted and

sparsely populated. He could not even see big towns or villages, let alone cities. After all, compared to the area of the whole Blackson Human Clan Corridor, the population here was too small. Due to people gathering in the cities in order to be protected by city walls, the chance to see a large-scaled human settlement outside of city walls would be very low.

Boarding the airship, Zhang Tie was placed in a berth cabin. After being bored with the tedious scenery outside the porthole, with the exception of eating and sleeping, Zhang Tie would always stay in his own berth cabin and quietly carried out his cultivation that could never be imagined by commoners.

He took out of the Class-5 crystal pyramid and put it under his bed. When he cultivated, he would sit on the top of the pyramid with a thin bed plate in between. The top of the pyramid was rightly facing towards the surge point on his rear end. Compared to the crystals that he used before, this Class-5 crystal pyramid's effect was much more powerful. With this Class-5 crystal pyramid, he could obviously polish his surge points faster using his spiritual energy.

Even when he didn't cultivate, the special effect of the crystal pyramid still made his cabin full of a comfortable energy and allowed him a clear mind.

The airship that Zhang Tie took was a large-scale hard-type airship which was longer than 200 m and almost as high as 70 m. The normal navigation speed of this airship was 110 km/h, which was a medium speed. Besides Zhang Tie whose status was special, there were 50 more passengers who left Kalur for Jinyun Country, including old, young, male and female. Many of them seemed like a family. At least from their clothing and personalities, Zhang Tie knew that they were the upper class who had received good education.

Zhang Tie was able to guess as to the reason why these people would leave Kalur. These people were all figures with sensitive judgment in the former Andaman Alliance. They had already noticed the potential dangers from this sudden war and many other signals. Therefore, they had started to leave the cities in the former Andaman Alliance and headed for the safer and more ideal places in their minds.

Jinyun Country would probably be the better place in their minds.

On the 4th day after the airship left Kalur, it landed to replenish coal, water and some other materials in a strange city. After rearranging for several hours on the ground, it continued its journey.

Previously, Zhang Tie thought it would be safe by airship. However, the fact was that, in this age, any trip outside the city walls would not be very safe.

On the 6th day, the airship encountered its first attack in the air.

At that time, Zhang Tie was in meditation. The urgent and short steam whistles woke him up. Zhang Tie then heard someone shouting loudly outside the berth cabin, "We are encountering attacks from dangerous creatures. We are encountering attacks from dangerous creatures. Everybody in place. Everybody in place. Passengers are to stay in their cabins!"

After that, Zhang Tie heard urgent footsteps outside the cabin.

If it was before, Zhang Tie would definitely stay in the berth cabin just like other passengers. However, the experience in Iron-Blood Camp had changed him. Zhang Tie hurriedly jumped off his bed and opened the door of his cabin before he ran out with the other people.

As the capsule was 20 m in width, the passageway outside the cabin was not narrow. When Zhang Tie ran out, much of the crew who were in uniform were busy. Some of them rushed to the deck, some rushed to the engine room and the weapon module. At the same time, those passengers who were enjoying the scenery below and taking breath of the fresh air on the opening deck hurried back inside. People who rushed outside like Zhang Tie were only the crew in uniforms.

"What are you here for?" When Zhang Tie reached the entrance to the deck, a 30-odd year old man immediately widely opened his eyes and stared at Zhang Tie. He was the first mate. When he boarded on the airship, he met him. Therefore, they just knew the opposite one's surname was Zhang.

"I was a soldier!" Zhang Tie answered in a low voice, "Perhaps I can help you!"

The first mate then took a careful look at Zhang Tie. Since this airship set off from Jinyun Country, Huaiyuan Palace sent a message to them to pick a person called Zhang Tie back from Kalur City. The first mate and the captain were the only ones on the whole airship that knew Zhang Tie might be a descendant of Zhang clan living on the outside, who was even wanted by the secret police of the Norman Empire.

A person who could be wanted by the secret police of Norman Empire was definitely not an incompetent man. Hearing that Zhang Tie was a soldier, the first mate then nodded only after one second, "Okay, the descendants of Huaiyuan Palace truly should not hide from danger!"

Zhang Tie then rushed onto the deck of the airship together with the first mate. At this time, the covers of the cross bows on the deck had been exposed. Rushing onto the deck, the crew rapidly sat back in their own launching positions to prepare to fire bolts.

Because this airship was mainly used for cargo instead of military purposes, all the cross bows on the deck were manual. The steam-driven power equipment was only used to provide a driving force for the propellers of the airship.

Each launch position was matched with three crewman. The one sitting on the launch position put his feet onto an actuator like the pedal of a bike. Then, he started to rapidly move his feet by stepping downward one after another. Driven by the chains and mechanic gears, he completed the first round of actions including winding up and launching preparations. The whole process took him less than 20 seconds.

"A1 in place..."

"A2 in place..."

"A3 in place..."

"A4 in place..."

After being prepped for firing, all the launchers started to number off loudly. Zhang Tie looked at them from aside. He found this crew had very high military accomplishments. They could even match the regular army airships of the Norman Empire.

After the crew prepared well, the two rows of crewmen on both sides of the deck were on their marks, cross bows and bolts in hand.

"Take it, put it on and buckle up!" The first mate then threw a set of special equipment to Zhang Tie along with a cross bow.

It was a set of leather equipment, which was akin to an armor. After putting it on, he could fasten the safety buckle onto the two metal sliders fixed on the shipboard. Zhang Tie noticed that all the crewmen on the deck were wearing this equipment including the first mate. They all had fastened their safety buckles onto the metal sliders. Zhang Tie then imitated them. After rapidly putting on his clothes, he also fastened his safety buckle onto it.

The moment Zhang Tie fastened it well, the airship which was flying ahead immediately accelerated and turned right by greatly inclining rightward, causing the level of the deck incline almost 30 degrees towards right. Zhang Tie felt a strong wind. At the same time, his feet slid as he hurriedly held a metal handle on the deck to stand stably.

The whole airship drew a huge half arc and adjusted in a direction towards the right. After that, all the crew on the deck saw the dangerous creatures that were attacking the airship.

They were a flock of huge birds dashing downwards from the cloud in the distance. Zhang Tie focused his eyes and found a flock of black birds were flying towards the airship. They were so huge that each of them would be close to 3 m in width when they extended their wings. There were at least 40-50 huge birds.

When they drew closer, Zhang Tie could even see the long beaks of those huge birds.

Standing aside Zhang Tie, the first mate looked solemn as he started to say loudly, "They are Iron-beak Ibis, a LV 4 mutated magical beast. Watch out!"

The airship avoided their attacks consecutive two times. But these huge birds were closely following the airship.

Looking at their beaks that were as sharp as swords, then to the gasbags on the top of the airship, Zhang Tie understood that these Iron-beak Ibis might cause huge damages to this airship.

Although there was a layer of special light-metal protective armor over the gasbags, nobody knew how long that layer of protective armor would stay safe under the continuous attack of those huge birds.

When these Iron-beak Ibis moved about 200 m away from the airship, the cross bows on the deck and inside the airship fired at the same time.

After hearing a light "weng" sound, Zhang Tie saw 6 of the dozens of Iron-beak Ibis spurting blood with feathers flying everywhere. Meanwhile, they dropped out of the sky. The other Iron-beak Ibis then fanned their huge wings and accelerated towards the airship.

In a split second, bolts rained down from the deck. The huge birds were very agile in the air. Though the bolts continued firing, only three Iron-beak Ibis were shot down.

When those Iron-beak Ibis rushed forward, Zhang Tie didn't pull the trigger at once. Instead, he just fixed his eyes on one of them. When it had just avoided from a bolt and was close to 80 m away from the airship, Zhang Tie pulled the trigger.

"Gua!" Among the bird cries, that Iron-beak Ibis was penetrated by Zhang Tie's bolt and dropped out of the sky.

Almost the moment the Iron-beak Ibis fell, Zhang Tie heard a weird chatter. He then turned his head and found the first mate was holding a crossbow and shot down another Iron-beak Ibis by making use of the cover given by the spurting blood.

The first mate seemed not having noticed Zhang Tie's gaze. He then drew the bow and pulled trigger three consecutive times. One second for one bolt. After three bolts, three sprays of spurts of blood appeared in the sky again.

The remaining Iron-beak Ibis didn't rush towards the deck, instead, towards the gasbags. All of a sudden, the jarring sound of rubbing metal drifted above Zhang Tie's head.

The airship was under attack!

Chapter 265: Fight in the Air

Zhang Tie didn't understand that each time the airship passed by the depopulated zone, it would encounter an attack from some dangerous creatures. However, this attack had obviously brought big trouble to the airship.

The Iron-beak Ibis had very clear target—the gasbag covered with a thin layer of light metal armor. This made Zhang Tie fairly apprehensive. These Iron-beak Ibises were like clear-minded killers, who knew where to attack to make the crew the most terrified.

The crew on the deck and all the weapons inside were encountering a problem due to the maximum elevation. Once the Iron-beak Ibises reached above the gasbags of the airship, all the weapons would lose their effects. Therefore, the airship was always doing sophisticated maneuvers in the air and exposed those Iron-beak Ibises which were attacking the airship within the shooting angles of the weapons in the cockpits and on the deck.

The Iron-beak Ibises moved very fast with very clear targets. The airship was like a fierce horse who was harassed and attacked by a flock of gadflies and was dashing and jumping in all directions.

By then, Zhang Tie finally experienced the function of the deck fighting costume which was connected to the airship through safety buckle and fine steel wires. When the airship was finishing those rapid turns in the sky at the speed of above 100 km/h, if, without this safety equipment, everybody could only tightly hold something, let alone fight against those Iron-beak Ibises with weapons.

However, all the fighting became harder less than five minutes later.

Besides the nice combat gains of the first wave of attack, in the later mutual attacks, most of the time, they could not get the proper shooting angles. Most of the crew had poor combat gains. The total combat gains of the four ballista on the deck could not match that of the first mate who used a cross bow. However, the first mate could only hit down less than 8 Iron-beak Ibises.

Besides the first mate, the most eye-catching one on the deck was Zhang Tie. He had hit down 2 Iron-beak Ibises less than the first mate with his cross bow.

Each time when the airship created shooting opportunities for the bolt shooting points on both sides of the airship by maneuvering at the maximum efficiency, Zhang Tie would calmly stand on one side of the shipboard. He would use one hand to firmly hold the hydraulic booster slider weighing over 40 kgs to put it on his belt while the other hand would hold the metal handrail beside him to fix himself. He just kept still like a rock and triggered the bow the moment the Iron-beak Ibises flashed across the board of the airship.

Each time the airship maneuvered towards, left, right, up and down, it could only provide one shooting opportunity for the crew on the deck. The first mate was very proficient when using a cross bow. Therefore, he could send two bolts in one second when the airship turned directions and hit down two more Iron-beak Ibises than Zhang Tie.

Both the airship and the Iron-beak Ibises were moving very fast. Additionally, those Iron-beak Ibises were very smart. Once the airship changed the direction, all the Iron-beak Ibises then kept close to the gasbag of the airship in the fastest speed, leaving only one second for all the crew to shoot each time.

For others, seizing the one-second interval and shoot down the Iron-beak Ibises which were flashing by them at the speed of over 200 km/h, was really too difficult. For most of the people, soon after they caught sight of the Iron-beak Ibises would they lose their opportunities to shoot it.

However, right then, Zhang Tie found that he had adapted to the situation as he could always shoot down an Iron-beak Ibis which was flashing by him each time the airship changed its route. Almost at the same time, when the airship became transiently stable, he then loosed another hand and instantly held the hydraulic booster slider. With a sound of "Kacha", he would have put the next bolt in its place, making the cross bow ready for shooting for the second time.

On the entire deck, Zhang Tie might not be the one with the most battle gains, he was definitely the most relaxed. Much of the crew couldn't stand to glance at this juvenile who was only 15-16 years old.

Zhang Tie was not pretending to be relaxed. He was truly relaxed. With the upsurging spiritual energy, Zhang Tie felt that the speed of the Iron-beak Ibises flying by him was not that fast. In the same period, Zhang Tie even felt like time was slowing down around him. Due to this slowing effect, Zhang Tie could clearly see the flight path of the Iron-beak Ibises. When the others were in a hurry, Zhang Tie triggered his bolt and would always hit the birds down.

Zhang Tie kept shooting down the Iron-beak Ibises one by one just like how he shot rabbits. Besides Zhang Tie, the first mate who was guiding the others on the deck was dripping in sweat.

In the soaring wind, a silver light metal armor with the size of 1 square meters slid off one of the gasbags from the airship. With a sound of "Hu", it flew by the crew on the deck at a very fast speed. When it passed by one arm of a crew on the left of the deck, the edge of that thin metal armor cut it, spraying a spurt of blood.

The crew being wounded kept silent as he still firmly held the cross bow. This time, not only the first mate, everybody else on the deck changed their faces.

Once the protective armor on the gas bags was torn off by the Iron-beak Ibises, the worst situation would arrive. Although the compartment-patterned gas bags were used, when the first piece of protective armor was torn off, the second protective armor would appear. The moment the protective

armor was torn off, some gasbag would definitely leak gas. Although they didn't feel the impact of leaking gas, if it continued to leak gas like that, after a short while, the speed and maneuverability of the airship would definitely decline, which would be the true start of the disaster for everyone.

Once the airship lost its floating ability and was forced to land in the wild where was over 1000 km away from the nearest city. The cost that the Huaiyuan palace from 10,000 km away would spend for completing the relief of this damaged airship would even be able to build a new airship like this, let alone whether they could return to cities alive.

"Zhang Zhitian, Liu Yu, Qian Xitong, you three go upward with your men..." The first mate immediately sent the order.

Soon after he sent the order, ten more people rushed outside when the airship was going to be stable. They were all carrying their cross bows and started to climb up by pulling the rope ladder that was hanging down from the gasbags in three teams.

The moment they climbed up, the airship changed its direction once again. Due to its centrifugal force, the teams on the rope ladders started swinging. As they were several thousand meters high, if they fell off, they would break into pieces. At the sight of this, even Zhang Tie's heart raced.

The moment the rope ladder was thrown out, the crew on the rope ladders tightly held the ropes. When the rope ladders returned, they then started to climb up once again.

Zhang Tie recalled the tales of how sailors would fight in the sea as was told by Donder. He had not imagined that the crew on the airship were almost like those sailors. Sometimes, they were in more dangerous situations.

The sailors fought the sea while the crew of airship fought the sky.

"Cover them!" The first mate loudly shouted.

The Iron-beak Ibises swirling around the airship seemed to have discovered some people climbing upward towards the gas bags from the outside of the deck.

Zhang Tie had not seen Iron-beak Ibises before. However, at this moment, he felt those Iron-beak Ibises were really smart and strange.

The first mate then shot out two more bolts while Zhang Tie also shot out one bolt. At the same time, all the ballista and cross bowmen shoot bolts towards those Iron-beak Ibises which were attacking the teams of crew climbing on the rope ladders.

Five more Iron-beak Ibises were killed.

Under the cover of the others, the crew soon climbed onto the top of the airship through the rope ladders and disappeared within people's vision. After a short while, when the crew on the deck didn't shoot anymore, some Iron-beak Ibises started to fall off from the top of the airship. They had already started the counterattack on the top of the airship.

The Iron-beak Ibises on the top of the airship kept uttering "GUA GUA GUA" while the jarring sound of rubbing metal became less. After another a few Iron-beak Ibises were shot off, fewer Iron-beak Ibises

could be killed. Zhang Tie heard those people were growling when they fought Iron-beak Ibises on the top of the airship. At the same time, he heard people and Iron-beak Ibises wailing due to wounds.

The second piece of metal protective armor fell off. Even Zhang Tie could feel that the airship couldn't move as fast as before.

The first mate's face grew increasingly gloomy. When he wanted to send the second team of people up, Zhang Tie calmly stood out.

"Let me try!"

"You?" The first mate fixed his eyes onto Zhang Tie's calm face while the others' eyes also fell onto Zhang Tie, "You might lose your life!"

"I once served the Iron-Blood Camp of Norman Empire before!" Zhang Tie calmly said.

Iron-Blood Camp of Norman Empire? The first mate's eyebrows jumped a bit and made the decision in a split second, "What do you need?"

Zhang Tie pulled out of a huge steel triangular-headed bolt which was over 1 m in length and 5-6 kg in weight and was specially designed for ballista. It completely mirrored a javelin.

"Give me two boxes of this kind of bolts!" Each box would contain 25 bolts which weighed over 100 kgs...

Chapter 266: Fight in the Air II

Only after serious consideration did the first mate decide to let Zhang Tie have a try because what Zhang Tie had just done represented his true strength.

The two boxes of bolts were soon taken out. At the head and the end of the Jasper box containing huge bolts, there were movable metal buckles that people could hold.

Four crewmen of the airship carried the two boxes of bolts onto the deck at their fastest speed.

"Do you need me to accompany you there?" The first mate asked Zhang Tie.

"No need, but thanks!" Zhang Tie replied as he fastened the movable metal buckles on the top of the two boxes with a part of the iron chain on the deck so that he could lift them up. Under everyone's amazing eyes, Zhang Tie lifted the two boxes weighing above 200 kgs by his left hand as he slightly nodded.

The airship then made another rapid upward rush. After another wave of shooting, two more Iron-beak Ibises were shot down. Before the airship stabilized, Zhang Tie had already started rushing onto one rope ladder from the deck with two boxes in hand and climbed upward.

When he was on the deck, he didn't feel it was cold. However, when he climbed several meters upward, Zhang Tie felt that it was very chilly at the 2000-odd m altitude. His face even felt like it was being stung by the chilly wind. When he lowered his head, he found that everything on the land became much smaller. At this moment, what was under his feet was endless marsh and grassland.

As it was his first time being at such a high altitude, Zhang Tie felt a bit dizzy.

The animals in the marshland and the grassland seemed to not have noticed the fighting above them at all. Zhang Tie peered at the marshland and found an unknown creature which was much taller and bigger than an elephant was drinking at the waterside. In a split second, it was engulfed by a huge mouth from within the water. After that, the terrifying head which was even bigger than two trains sunk in the water once again, leaving the suddenly flying birds and the ripples on the water.

If the two animals were not large enough, Zhang Tie could never have noticed them from such a high altitude. At the sight of this scene, Zhang Tie directly oozed a cold sweat as he started to understand just how horrifying it was in such a depopulated zone so far away from a city.

Zhang Tie didn't know what the hell the animal beneath the water was or its level. Even though that creature had already lurked under the water, Zhang Tie could still feel the two huge icy eyes of that animal were gazing at him. It was watching the airship in the air like watching a prey, making Zhang Tie feel cold inside.

Compared to those unknown living beings in the marshland, undoubtedly the Iron-beak Ibises who were crazily attacking the airship became charming in comparison.

Even though two boxes of bolts hanging on his arm weighed over 200 kgs, Zhang Tie could still easily climb the rope ladder. In the eyes of those crew and the first mate, the two boxes being tied with an iron chain were absolutely like two empty cardboard boxes. Only the tightening rope ladder that was bearing Zhang Tie's weight told everybody else that the weight on the rope ladder had already been over 300 kgs. Each step Zhang Tie made would make an extremely forceful deformation on the rope ladder.

"Cover!" With a loud exclamation from the first mate, the airship turned around again and threw Zhang Tie outward like a swing. At the same time, a wave of bolts flew off the deck and shot towards the Iron-beak Ibises which were rushing towards Zhang Tie. The first mate seized the opportunity and shot twice, shooting down the two Iron-beak Ibises who entered the shooting angles on the deck and wanted to attack Zhang Tie.

"Sh*t!" Zhang Tie swore inside, feeling that these Iron-beak Ibises were too cunning. After seeing the first three teams of crew climbing upward by the rope ladder, they had already known how to hold Zhang Tie back this time.

Was each navigation mission of the airship this dangerous? Zhang Tie wondered. This was also Zhang Tie's first time venturing so far away from a populated area. Previously, both the survival training in the Wild Wolf Valley and the war in Kalur where the Iron-blood Camp fought the Sun Dynasty were not far away from cities. Zhang Tie didn't have an intuitive feeling about dangers in the wild. However, this time, Zhang Tie truly felt why people in this age would like to stay in the cities with high walls.

"Watch out!" Someone below shouted loudly.

This time, there were a total of six Iron-beak Ibises attacking Zhang Tie. Even though three were shot down, there were still another three rushing towards Zhang Tie from different directions. The Iron-beak Ibises' long bills were thrusting towards Zhang Tie like spears. Besides the bills, if he was scratched by

the sharp claws of Iron-beak Ibises, it would be more dangerous than being scratched by the sharp claws of tigers and black bears. After all, they were LV 5 creatures.

Zhang Tie then swung back again and stayed close to the metal armor over the gas bag. With two boxes hanging over his left arm, his left hand tightly held the rope on the rope ladder. Seeing the two Iron-beak Ibises drawing close to him in a split second and intending to attack him, Zhang Tie narrowed his eyes.

When the hearts of the crew on the deck raced, a silver light like a swimming snake suddenly appeared in the air.

When this silver light like a swimming snake appeared, the distance between the sharp bill of the Iron-beak Ibis which was closest to Zhang Tie and the latter was only 50 cm while the distance between the other two Iron-beak Ibises and Zhang Tie was respectively 2 m away and 3 m away.

Zhang Tie was like a live target hanging in the air.

"It's over! If this brat didn't show off and just stayed on the deck, he might be able to shoot off several more Iron-beak Ibises..." Many crewmen who were gazing at Zhang Tie suddenly thought up this.

However, after that, the silver light like a swimming snake appeared.

In a split second, it was raining blood while three Iron-beak Ibises turned into 6 pieces of corpses and dropped off the air. Due to wind direction, that blood rain even sprayed and dyed the faces of the row of the crew who were holding cross bows and were close to the shipboard on Zhang Tie's side.

With the exception of the first mate, nobody else had seen clearly how had Zhang Tie launched the attack.

After this round of attack, Zhang Tie accelerated his climbing speed. Moving faster with his feet and hands, Zhang Tie arrived at the top of the airship which was dozens of meters higher than the deck in a short while.

The first batch of the crew which had landed on the top of the airship were all suffering from wounds. About more than 10 Iron-beak Ibises were surrounding these crew and attacking them. Among the wounded crew, two of them had already laid on the metal armors. Buckling up their protective clothing onto the rope ladder, the crew were divided into two groups and were protecting the two lying wounded soldiers from being attacked further by Iron-beak Ibises.

The present fighting scene was very fierce while the fresh blood from both men and birds were spraying everywhere.

As this location was so close to the port side of the airship at the top, Zhang Tie found one protective armor of a gas bag had slid off. Even in the heavy wind, he could still hear the sound of "si...si..." from that place, where the gas was constantly leaking outside of the gas bag. However, being not far from this damaged gasbag, other metal armors that were being attacked by Iron-beak Ibises were also tottering.

"Go to hell!" The moment he climbed onto the top of the airship, Zhang Tie had witnessed a crew member whose face was covered with fresh blood jumping up from the airship. When the sharp bill

penetrated the location between his shoulder and his chest, he fiercely twisted the Iron-beak Ibis's neck before thrusting his dagger into the neck of the Iron-beak Ibis like killing a pig, slicing off its neck by thrusting several times.

The Iron-beak Ibis uttered a wail while flapping his wings crazily and being pulled down from the air. As a result, one person and one bird rolled over and dropped off the airship while spurting blood.

"Zhitian!", the other crewmen screamed loudly, eyes almost popped out of their eye sockets due to grief. His body would definitely break into pieces by dropping off from such a high altitude.

That person and that bird then rolled over towards Zhang Tie, who seized that person using his right hand. That Iron-beak Ibis then dropped off weakly and was blown away by the heavy wind.

After that, Zhang Tie seized the person with his right hand while the 200-odd kgs' bolts boxes were hanging over his left wrist. He then kept climbing upside with his left hand and two feet. When he reached the top of the airship where the slope had gradually become mild, Zhang Tie put that person onto a protective armor before rapidly buckling up the crewman's clothing onto the rope ladder.

At this moment, the other crew at the top of the airship were struck dumb with astonishment by Zhang Tie's sudden appearance and the person and the two bolts boxes in Zhang Tie's hands.

The airship then changed direction once again. A huge inertia almost threw everybody out from the top of the airship.

During this process, Zhang Tie rapidly laid down. He then calmly buckled up his protective clothing onto the rope ladder before twisting his two feet to move over the knots and firmly stepped on them like what the other crew members did.

After fixing his body, Zhang Tie opened the first box hanging on his left arm and held the first javelin-like bolt before throwing it out...

For Zhang Tie, during this bloody fight between him and the Iron-beak Ibises, the most dangerous and challenging period was the dozens of meters from the deck to the top of the airship along the rope ladder. If those Iron-beak Ibises didn't stop him during this distance, after he climbed onto the top of the airship with enough huge bolts, fixed himself and gained a good viewpoint, everything would have been fixed.

One minute after Zhang Tie climbed onto the top of the deck, the first Iron-beak Ibis was penetrated by a spear and dropped off.

"Ah, it's been shot down by the bolt. That kid made it to the top!" Someone shouted loudly while everyone else was shocked.

"I wonder how many Iron-beak Ibises this young man can kill this time?" Thinking of this question, the first mate had already ordered the second team of crew to prepare for climbing onto the top.

Then, everyone looked up in astonishment...

Soon after the first Iron-beak Ibis dropped off, the other Iron-beak Ibises constantly dropped down like dumplings being put in the pot with boiling water.

The airship changed its direction once again.

This enabled people on the deck to have a chance to see what happened to the last two Iron-beak Ibises, which had been scared of being killed and wanted to escape far away. However, before they flew 100 m away, two huge bolts from the top of the airship caught up with them at once.

With two final wails, the world became tranquil.

The whole process since he climbed onto the top of the airship to the end of the fight was less than 3 minutes...

Chapter 267: Loulan City

Three days later, the airship of Huaiyuan Palace landed in the airship base of a strange city in the desert to finish the second replenishment and the first maintenance for the airship after being attacked by the Iron-beak Ibises.

Although the Iron-beak Ibises' attack only paralyzed one gas bag, in order to maintain balance and stability during flight, the helium in the other gas bag being opposite to the paralyzed one was deflated. Additionally, the other gas bag's pressure was adjusted, causing the airship's flying speed sharply reduce by 1/3 from above 100 km/h to 70-80 km/h.

Driving the airship required exemplary skill and technique. Zhang Tie knew how to adjust the airship to maintain stable flight after being attacked by Iron-beak Ibises.

During the past three days, Zhang Tie's status in the airship experienced a subtle change due to that fight with the Iron-beak Ibises. Although he was still a special guest living in the passenger module, most of the crew on the airship had been familiar with him.

When the airship prepared to land in the airship base of this city, Zhang Tie also walked out of his bedroom like the other travelers and arrived on the broad deck of the airship before enjoying the exotic city below.

What was most impressive to Zhang Tie was the 40-50 m high terrifying cacti surrounding the city, which formed the city wall. Looking down from the air, the contour of this city was like that of a green clover. The middle of this clover was filled with strange domed architectures. In the middle of the city, there was a lake of medium size.

The airship base that could allow this airship to land was located beside that lake.

When he left Kalur City, it was winter when the chilly wind blew his face. However, when he arrived here, it was already spring as he saw a warm sun hanging in the sky. Standing on the deck, the passengers had already taken off their clumsy winter clothing.

"We are in Loulan City, the city of the desert. The total population in this city and its surrounding cities was 4,100,000!" When Zhang Tie was glancing over this city below, Zhang Zhitian had already appeared beside him and started to introduce this city for Zhang Tie.

After being saved by Zhang Tie on that day, Zhang Zhitian, who was two years older than Zhang Tie, had already befriended him.

"How are your wounds?" Zhang Tie looked at this young crew member whose skin had become tan due to being exposed to the sun for a long time. Zhang Zhitian had narrow and long eyes. Perhaps because he and Zhang Tie shared the same bloodline, Zhang Zhitian was a bit similar to Zhang Yang, Zhang Tie's elder brother. This guy looked gentle but had unimaginably straight-forward personality.

The moment he remembered how this guy fought that Iron-beak Ibis at the risk of his life on the gas bag, Zhang Tie silently shook his head. A book truly couldn't be judged by its cover.

Hearing Zhang Tie's inquiry, Zhang Zhitian showed a smile as he slightly raised his arm, "After using one low-level recovery medicament and daubing some wound gelatin, I'm much better now!"

"Ah, have you been met with this situation many times before?" Zhang Tie casually asked.

"How could that be? If each flight was that dangerous, the freight airship would be the target of those advanced mutated creatures."

"You mean this situation is rarely seen?" Zhang Tie became slightly dumbfounded.

"Not rarely seen, but extremely rarely seen. I've been in this airship for 3 years. However, I've never been in that situation before. Although I have encountered attacks of some mutated creatures and magical beasts before, I've never experienced such a scenario at all..." Zhang Tie explained to Zhang Tie patiently, "Although in your eyes, this airship could freely fly in the air, actually, the routes of the large-scale freight airships like this one are always fixed. On this route, the airships would not encounter the attack of advanced mutated creatures that could directly threaten the safety of the airship. This was an important consideration when we choose the route. If there were many mutated creatures or magical beasts on one route, the airship would always choose to detour to this route. It's similar to navigation on the sea. Although the sea is vast, you can't go wherever you want."

Zhang Tie suddenly understood, "I also feel strange as those Iron-beak Ibises were so smart. They seemed to know how to avoid being shot from the deck. They especially choose the weakest places on the airship where our weapons could not reach!"

Zhang Zhitian looked at both sides and found that nobody was listening to them. He then lowered his voice and told Zhang Tie, "I heard the discussion between the captain and the first mate. They also felt this attack was weird. In the past years' navigation, we've never seen a trace of Iron-beak Ibises at all. However, we encountered so many of them at once, it was a bit weird."

"You mean someone was manipulating the Iron-beak Ibises?" Zhang Tie also felt a bit amazed.

At this time, after receiving the confirmation signal from the ground, this airship had already lowered its height above the landing platform in the base. When it was several hundred meters above the ground, the airship had already thrown down some huge ropes. After getting the ropes, the vehicles and personnel on the ground became busy. The airship, which was swaying back and forth due to the wind, instantly became stable and started to accelerate its descent.

Soon after looking down, Zhang Zhitian had moved his eyes away, "The Iron-beak Ibis have a sharp and long bill, therefore, their threat to airships could rank top 3 among all the mutated creatures below LV6.

As they suddenly appeared in the previously safe route in large numbers all the officers on the airship judged that someone was behind this event. If we had used a soft-type airship instead of the hard-type airship with an advanced gasbag-compartment design, all of us might not have been able to come back this time."

Zhang Tie took a deep breath. Although he had his suspicions about the event, when his doubt was verified, Zhang Tie still felt shocked inside, "Someone is targeting Huaiyuan Palace?"

"I don't know!" Zhang Zhitian shook his head, "But we will know soon enough. Loulan City, the city of the desert is the most important air hub within 2000 km. After landing in Loulan City, as long as they asked from other airships whether they had encountered something similar, the officers might be able to make a final conclusion."

"If there's really someone targeting the Huaiyuan Palace?"

Zhang Zhitian showed a proud smile, "As long as we return to the territory of Huaiyuan Palace, someone would definitely deal with those offenders! No one could escape crossing Huaiyuan Palace without paying the price!"

Zhang Zhitian's pride that didn't match his age also affected Zhang Tie. Zhang Tie then also showed a smile. This was the confidence when one had a powerful clan on its back. With this confidence, even a young man on an airship of the business group under the affiliation of Huaiyuan Palace was as proud as Reinhardt when he faced enemy. When he thought of Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace and the current situation facing his dad and his own family, Zhang Tie slightly sighed inside.

"Speaking of Huaiyuan Palace, I still don't know it well, could you tell me about it?"

"Sure, I think we will get at least rest 1 day after this replenishment and maintenance. As I'm recuperating, I can talk about Huaiyuan Palace with you!" Hearing Zhang Tie asked him about Huaiyuan Palace, Zhang Zhitian showed a wisp of a smile on his tan face.

"Jinyun Country is a human country mainly composed of Chinese. We, Huaiyuan Palace, have been one of the six major clans in Jinyun Country for many generations. It has 8 cities, covering 500 miles and occupies one prefecture of Jinyun Country. The name of our prefecture is Huaiyuan Prefecture. Each master of Huaiyuan Palace who inherits the title of count Changfeng would be respected by all the members of Zhang clan. The master of Huaiyuan Palace is recommended by the elders of Zhang clan. However, in the past over 200 years, the masters of Zhang clan have been chosen from Donghai City..."

Zhang Zhitian carefully explained it as Zhang Tie started to clearly know about Huaiyuan Palace.

...

After the airship landed at the base, many people on the airship moved about busily. Because the Loulan City was lacking mining resources, they sold the advanced alloys and weapons that they brought from Kalur City, bringing rich profits to the Changfeng Business Group.

After selling those commodities they brought from Kalur, Zhang Tie saw them purchasing a lot of items here. With the introduction of Zhang Zhitian, Zhang Tie knew that there were mainly three kinds of items they would purchase here: ruby; something in a mutated lizard which was used to make crossbows and bolts; and secretion from a special cactus which was used to close wounds.

When various commodities were entering the freight houses below the airship, all the items needed by the airship like water, coal, and food were also replenished.

After landing on the base, the maintenance of the gas bag's compartments were also underway.

After staying in the airship for many days, the moment the airship landed on the base, Zhang Tie could not even walk stably. Under the leadership of a group of familiar crew members, Zhang Tie wandered around the Loulan City as the scorpions and mutated cacti which protected the city deeply impressed Zhang Tie.

In the evening, the temperature suddenly dropped, causing it even colder than in Kalur. The passengers on the airship immediately felt the alternation between ice and fire.

On the same night, the captain, the first mate, and some major figures frowned and sat in the control room of the airship.

"Have you asked about the news?' The captain asked a man sitting beside the desk.

"Yeah, except for us, five airships among the ones that came to Loulan City for replenishment and maintenance in the past three days have encountered the same situation. They were all hard-type airships being fitted with protective armors. After paying great prices, they reluctantly landed in Loulan City. Additionally, some other airships which had appointed by some business groups in Loulan City for delivery didn't arrive on time. All these missing airships were relatively old single-gasbag soft-type airships!"

Sucking his tobacco pipe, the captain narrowed his eyes and asked after a while, "Have you got the latest news about the clan of the elder of Carol Federal Alchemists Association being exterminated?"

"Not yet, although Carol Federal Alchemists Association's arrest warrant has been spread across the whole Waii Sub-Continent, those murderers seemed to have vanished into thin air." Saying this, the man glanced at the captain, "Is there any relation between the two events?"

"I don't know whether there's any relation between the two events but I do know that the world and the routes of airships have become dangerous once again!" The captain relaxed his eyes and spoke in a calm and solemn way, "Repair our airship as fast as possible; contact with those financial groups that have suffered from the attacks from those dangerous creatures and are headed to the same station as us, we will form a group to leave Loulan City!"

"Yes, sir!"

Chapter 268: Promotion and Arrival

The heavy winds were still turbulent at a thousand meters in the air which caused Zhang Tie's clothes to make rustling noises. At this moment, Zhang Tie was running back and forth at the top of the gas bags as if running on the ground without any protective gear.

At this time, the red-snake sword in Zhang Tie's hand seemed like it had truly become a red snake. Each time Zhang Tie slashed out, there was a twisting snake shadow along with a silver light in the air.

Each time the snake shadow in Zhang Tie's hand twisted, there would be a spray of fresh blood in the air, which drove the remaining Iron-beak Ibises into a frenzy.

Being different from the last time when those Iron-beak Ibises would attack the airship, this time, Zhang Tie became the sole target of all the Iron-beak Ibises. Each Iron-beak Ibis in the air seemed to have great hatred towards Zhang Tie as they surged towards him one after the other.

The airship penetrated through the clouds at a speed of above 120 km/h...

The fight between Zhang Tie and Iron-beak Ibises was still underway...

"Is this the feeling of being a level 5 warrior? Is this how Invisible Iron-blood strength feels?"

One hour ago, Zhang Tie had eaten the latest Leakless Fruit, which directly helped him to ignite the 5th surge point on his vertebrate, sending him into the realm of level 5 warriors.

When he was promoted to a level 5 warrior, Zhang Tie felt his bones itch all over like numerous ants were crawling inside. However, he could not reach them by scratching. It was itchy to the extreme and after all his bones cracked, a wholly new sensation appeared.

Zhang Tie felt great strength flowing through each bone, promoting Zhang Tie's Hidden Iron-blood Strength to an entirely new level.

Invisible Iron-blood Strength! The new-born strengths were Strength of Bone and Strength of Marrow.

The number of people who could be promoted from Hidden Iron-Blood Strength to Invisible Iron-Blood Strength counted for less than one tenth in number, even in the entire Iron-Blood Camp of Noman Empire. However, Zhang Tie felt it was as easy as drinking water during the process like he had been well prepared and expectant of it. Even Zhang Tie was confused as to how that could be.

The red-snake sword driven by Invisible Iron-blood Strength started to present an utterly different strength than before. With the exception of a great force, each time Zhang Tie launched an attack, there would be an agile, virtual snake shadow mixed with the sword qi.

Zhang Tie hadn't experienced this feeling of "one with the sword, one with the world" for a long time.

At a thousand meters in the sky, Zhang Tie jumped up almost 3 m from the top of a gasbag while the Red-snake Sword in his hand suddenly opened its bloody mouth like a dragon and engulfed the 5 Iron-beak Ibises in the air at once.

Only one Iron-beak Ibis was left...

The moment Zhang's feet left the ground, the last Iron-beak Ibis had already thrust his javelin-like bill in front of Zhang Tie's chests, aiming to fight Zhang Tie to the death.

During the past days in flight, Zhang Tie had grown very experienced in fighting Iron-beak Ibises. At the sight of the Iron-beak Ibis, he smirked inside as he just slightly tilted his body. In the meantime, the long bill of the Iron-beak Ibis was pinched under Zhang Tie's armpit.

When it stretched its sharp claws towards Zhang Tie, the latter also stretched his five fingers towards the Iron-beak Ibis's sharp claws.

When the bird's claws clashed with the man's hands, the claws immediately broke off, making a 'kacha kacha' sound.

With its bill being pinched, the Iron-beak Ibis couldn't wail but instead quivered all over.

"Heh heh, sorry, as you are the last one today, stay a while!" Saying this, Zhang Tie rapidly clipped the other foot and the remaining wings of the Iron-beak Ibis, causing them to completely break apart.

Being too weak to struggle, the Iron-beak Ibis stared at Zhang Tie with extreme grief and fury. Zhang Tie didn't show any mercy at all. After doing this, he rudely grabbed its bill. Pulling the half-dead Iron-beak Ibis, Zhang Tie ran two steps towards one side of the airship as he seized one rope and jumped off the gas bag of the airship, seemingly ignoring his own life.

Within several seconds, Zhang Tie had already fallen dozens of meters. When that rope automatically returned to the middle part of the gas bag, Zhang Tie lightly landed on the airship for a second as he swung outside once again. After that, the rope returned once again, this time, Zhang Tie loosened his grip while he was thrown onto the deck of the airship and steadily stood on it. The whole process was as graceful as an acrobat in high altitude without any protective measures. Additionally, during the process, the airship was rapidly moving.

What was even more amazing was that Zhang Tie was holding a crippled yet heavy Iron-beak Ibis.

There was nobody on the deck. Zhang Tie directly held the anguished Iron-beak Ibis and entered the cabin. After that, he casually opened a door. Without even taking a look inside, he had already thrown the completely crippled Iron-beak Ibis inside.

No one was on the airship.

Haha, free time!

Zhang Tie trotted onto the third floor from the second floor. The third floor was mainly where the bridge was located. Zhang Tie then entered the bridge.

The bridge of the airship was at the highest position at the head of the airship below the gas bags. The bridge characteristically allowed for a broad vision with the nearly 1m-high and 270-degree circular, translucent and high-intensity glass windows, the driver would almost have no dead angles of vision.

Outside of the bridge were floating white clouds. As nobody was inside the bridge, the airship was moving forward in a straight line.

The door of the bridge was locked from inside. Because of the large-piece of translucent glass on the door of the bridge, Zhang Tie could clearly see the inside. Thinking of how he entered violently every time, Zhang Tie forced a smile.

'Bang', Zhang Tie directly kicked through the wooden door and made a big hole on it. After that, he put his hand inside the hole and opened the door from inside.

Since he entered the bridge, this airship had become Zhang Tie's personal toy.

In the middle of the bridge was a good-quality rudder that could be held with two hands. On both sides of the rudder were a great number of operating levers of different heights and lengths. Below the rudder were two pedals that could be controlled by feet.

These days, after causing this airship to crash over 10 times, Zhang Tie finally understood the functions of these operating levers. Additionally, he learned how to pilot an airship. During these accidents, the most miserable one was when Zhang Tie pulled down the operating lever with a red handle at the very of the rudder, the airship fell down at a free fall speed, causing Zhang Tie's face to turn blue.

After this accident, Zhang Tie knew that the red operating lever was the emergency landing lever. As long as the lever was pulled down, the 12 gas bags of the airship would start to deflate at the same time. As a result, the airship would lose its buoyancy in the shortest time. When Zhang Tie pulled down this lever, he even hurriedly stepped down the steam-driven output pedal, pushing the propeller of the airship to rotate at a greater speed, causing the airship to rush towards the ground at a higher speed. As a result, Zhang Tie lost his life miserably.

This accident left a deep impression on Zhang Tie.

The fact was that as long as a person didn't fear death and had more lives, he could learn anything very quickly.

Zhang Tie drove the airship for over 2 hours and enjoyed it very much. After feeling that time was almost up, Zhang Tie left the bridge. Inside an equipment room beside the bridge, Zhang Tie skillfully carried a parachute bag before rushing onto the deck on the second floor. With a strange yell, he jumped off the deck...

"I'm here, hooah...hooah...ah...ah..."

After several seconds, a small white flower blossomed in the air...

After several seconds, the white flower landed on the ground smoothly...

After another few minutes, the whole world broke into motes of light.

...

Within a bedroom in the airship, Zhang Tie opened his eyes as he lay on the bed comfortably, revealing a wisp of a smile.

Zhang Tie didn't know whether what he had done was a petty trick, but he had some more feelings regarding the use of Trouble-reappearance Fruit.

The latest Trouble-reappearance Fruit was from Iron-beak Ibises. The first scene was on the airship. After fighting Iron-beak Ibises many times in the Trouble-reappearance world, Zhang Tie found that if didn't want to stop if the effective time of the Trouble-reappearance world, he had to make sure the last Iron-beak Ibis didn't die. Under those conditions, the Trouble-reappearance world would not break into motes of light. With the exception of spiritual beings, nothing else was different than that in the real world.

As this Trouble-reappearance world was situated in the air, which was a opportunity rarely seen, of course, Zhang Tie wouldn't want to give up such an opportunity. After dying many times, Zhang Tie

learned how to use parachutes and drive the airship. Additionally, he became more experienced in fighting with Iron-beak Ibises in the air.

Since they left the Loulan City, on the way, they didn't encounter any other dangers. The airship kept moving southward smoothly. Due to always being in a state of cultivation, Zhang Tie didn't know where the airship was currently located.

Today, the moment Zhang Tie exited the Trouble-reappearance world, he heard someone knocking on his door.

Zhang Tie opened the door and found that Zhang Zhitian was outside.

"What's up?"

"We've arrived!"

"What! We've arrived?"

"Huaiyuan Prefecture, we've arrived!"

Zhang Tie was inwardly shocked as he went to the deck together with Zhang Zhitian. On the ground below the airship was a great river that Zhang Tie had not seen before, the width of which might be over 20 km. The whole river twisted for as far as the eye could see and seemed to flow like a huge dragon below the airship. There were many steamers on the river, forming a very boisterous scene. Black smoke columns rose up from the chimneys of the steamers. On the sides of the river, Zhang Tie saw vast golden wheat fields dotted with several lofty castles erected on the plains on one side of the great river.

This initial image of the Huaiyuan Prefecture Zhang Tie imprinted within him the magnificence and richness of Huaiyuan Palace.

"This is Yuanjiang River, which belongs to Huaiyuan Palace. Tonight, our airship will arrive at the Yiyang City, where the headquarters of Changfeng Business Group is located, namely where the Clan Shrine of Huaiyuan Palace and the Head Palace of Huaiyuan Palace are!

"Huaiyuan Palace, I've finally arrived!"

Thinking that he could rapidly unite with his family members in this strange place, Zhang Tie took a deep breath, "No matter what, as I'm here, I will rescue my father from prison!"

Chapter 269: Zhang Clan

In the evening, after two weeks of flight, the airship that set off from Kalur finally arrived at Yiyang City, Huaiyuan Prefecture of Jinyun Country. Huaiyuan Palace of the Zhang clan shared the same name with the Huaiyuan Prefecture as the whole prefecture was the Zhang clan's territory.

For the first time, Zhang Tie felt the power of the Zhang clan. Through Zhang Zhitian's introduction, Zhang Tie knew that over 200,000 members of the Zhang clan were of direct blood relation to Lord Huaiyuan. Strictly speaking, among the crew of the airship, captain, first mate, technicians in the engine

room, Zhang Zhitian, and Zhang Tie were definitely related to each other. Because they were all of the same bloodlines as Lord Huaiyuan, although from different branches of Huaiyuan Palace.

Lord Huaiyuan had eight wives and over 40 sons and daughters. Each of his wife's relatives had a city. The first wife's relatives had Yiyang City, the second had Xince City, the third had Guanxing City, the fourth had Qihai City, the fifth had Fubo City, the sixth had Yunzhou City, the seventh had Jinhai City while the eighth had Taian City. After several hundred years, the eight cities developed to today's scale.

Among the eight cities, Yiyang City was not only the capital city of Huaiyuan Prefecture but also the political, economic and cultural center of the Zhang clan in the entire Huaiyuan Palace.

Yiyang City was a coastal city, the prosperity and scale of which was 10 times that of the Blackhot City. Twenty-one million people were living in this city and its surroundings. Yiyang City was not only the largest port in Jinyun Country, even if it was in the entire Waii Sub-continent, the annual trading throughout Yiyang City could also rank within the top three.

Zhang Tie only learned about the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace through the introductions of others before; however, when the airship drew close to Yiyang City, the power and accumulation of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace instantly impressed Zhang Tie, making him feel trivial in front of his clan.

The dense steamers in the port far away and on the sea and those various airships coming and going in the air were like scenes in the drawings for Zhang Tie.

At the sight of this, the passengers who came together with Zhang Tie from Kalur City were also excited as many of them loudly shouted in poor Chinese, "Yiyang...Yiyang..."

"Do you plan to settle down here in Yiyang City?" Zhang Zhitian asked Zhang Tie.

"I might go back to Jinhai City firstly. I'm not sure whether or not I will stay in Jinhai City later." After thinking for a while, Zhang Tie told Zhang Zhitian.

"This time, I've built up enough accumulate points as I've been on the airship for three years. Therefore, I plan to apply to join the airship troop of the Zhang clan. I want to be a real soldier and a captain in the future!" Zhang Zhitian replied, full of ambition.

"I hope that you're successful in your endeavors." Zhang Tie smiled.

During this period, Zhang Tie had learned about something on the airship. Many young men below 18 years old on the airship were interns. They had to follow the talent training system of Zhang clan. For most juveniles of Huaiyuan Palace, between the ages of 15-18 were the most treacherous period for members of the Zhang clan as the greater part of them didn't finish school but instead entered various industries to as interns. During this period, they would enter society in order to accumulate experiences and qualifications so as to confirm their later developmental orientation. After undergoing the coming of age ceremony at 18, they would become adults when they could enjoy numerous social rights and officially join the clan army as well as being entrusted with official titles and jobs.

Compared to the assembly-line talent education system in Blackhot City, the Chinese educational system in this age was much stricter. Juveniles like Zhang Tie who would be 16 in the new year were unable to join the clan army officially, let alone to be a military officer.

"I heard from the first mate that the talent that you used to shoot down those Iron-beak Ibises with bolts was an awakening of an ancestral bloodline, some sort of throwing skill?" Zhang Zhitian stared at Zhang Tie with sparkling and admiring eyes.

Zhang Tie forced a smile as he realized the difference in cultural backgrounds. This problem had long been puzzling him. However, in Huaiyuan Palace, it seemed that many people knew the reason. Only after performing it once, his talent had already been identified, "It might be that. At the beginning, I didn't know what was going on, as my throwing ability became very precise immediately. I didn't know this was the awakening of Chinese ancestral bloodline before I came back to Huaiyuan Palace. Do any of your friends have the same talent as me?"

"Yes. He's was a classmate at school. When he attended the sports meeting, he suddenly awakened his ancestral bloodline. Although being average in archery, he won the archery competition that year!"

"The ancestral bloodline that he awakened was in archery?"

"Yes!" Zhang Zhitian glanced at Zhang Tie with a weird expression, "Don't you know that one of the two main ancestral bloodlines in the Zhang clan is in archery?"

Zhang Tie felt embarrassed as he revealed a smile, "I really didn't know about that..."

...

The airship finally landed in a base of Changfeng Business Group.

After bidding farewell to some friends that he had made on the airship, Zhang Tie took his luggage and got off the airship with the other passengers who came to Yiyang City for the first time. When Zhang Tie was considering whether he would first buy a ticket to Jinhai City, he had already caught sight of his elder brother Zhang Yang, who was accompanied by two men in black uniforms. Behind them was a sedan.

"Elder brother!" Zhang Tie was thrilled as he hurriedly walked forward. The two brothers then forcefully hugged each other. Zhang Yang was also excited as the last time they met was several months ago. They felt like they had departed with each other during a life or death situation. Whether it was Zhang Tie or his family members, they had experienced too many troubles during this period.

"How's father? Has mother recovered?" The moment the two stopped hugging each other, Zhang Tie had asked two questions.

Zhang Yang firstly looked over Zhang Tie before revealed a smile, "Dad has been back home. Knowing that you're going to come back safe and sound, mom has also recovered!"

Zhang Tie became so happy as his greatest concern had been solved during this period. This was the greatest happiness, "Has dad come back?"

"Hmm, we will talk about the details when we get back home!" Zhang Yang looked at Zhang Tie as he started to introduce the two uniformed men to Zhang Tie, "They are personnel of the Clansmen Pavilion of Huaiyuan Palace!"

The two men nodded towards Zhang Tie in a kind way.

Through Zhang Zhitian's introduction on the airship, Zhang Tie had already known the role of Clansmen Pavilion. This time, he would first declare himself innocent and mend things through the Zhang clan. Otherwise, he would definitely still be a murderer wanted by the secret police of Norman Empire in Jinyun Country.

After introductions, the four people got on the car. Zhang Tie and Zhang Yang sat in the back while the two personnel of Clansmen Pavilion sat in the front. After that, the sedan drove out of the airship base.

Sitting in the sedan, Zhang Tie told his elder brother about what had happened in the Kalur battle zone after he left Blackhot City as he widened his eyes to watch the scenery outside the sedan and exclaimed about the prosperity of this city.

There were so many vehicles on the road while passers-by were walking on the sidewalks and the high-rises were erected right next to each other. The two sides of the road were filled with Chinese ad boards. Additionally, the passers-by had various skin colors, although above 95% of them were Chinese with black hair and eyes. The frolic voices of Chinese kids drifted from the passersby. Seeing such a scene, Zhang Tie who had grown up in Blackhot City became relaxed as he suddenly felt a sense of belonging which originated from his bloodline.

Of course, the alleged Clansmen Pavilion was not that simple. It was the clan management headquarters of the Zhang clan of Huaiyuan Palace. Actually, it was a square plaza of more than 20 floors. The entrance of the plaza was safeguarded by guards. The reason that the two personnel of Clansmen Palace brought Zhang Tie here was to finish the final confirmation about his status. The process was so simple that Zhang Tie couldn't have imagined it going so smoothly in his wildest dreams.

He was taken into a room in the plaza. On the table in the middle of the room was a weird black crystal, which was embedded on a silver base with strange runes. After that, under the supervision of the others of the Clansmen Pavilion, one personnel who had taken him here poked Zhang Tie's finger using a needle, causing Zhang Tie's blood to drop onto the crystal. Soon after that, the black crystal started to glow which symbolized the end of the authentication.

After finishing this process, Zhang Tie took a photo and filled in out two forms. Sitting in the lounge with his elder brother for less than 10 minutes, one personnel who had taken Zhang Tie in gave him a rectangular plate which was carved with sophisticated grains.

The greater part of this plate was made of metal, in the middle of its positive side was inlaid with a piece of translucent crystal, beneath which was the photo that Zhang Tie had taken just now. Below the crystal image was Zhang Tie's name which looked very delicate and special. On the back of the plate were the characters——Zhang Clan of Huaiyuan Palace.

"This item is your ID certificate. You have it preserve it well. If you lost it, the results would be very serious!"

"How?"

"You will be fined 100 gold coins and be punished to do labor work for half a year. Besides, 20 clan donation points would be deducted!"

Zhang Tie let out a sigh. 100 gold coins meant 2500 grams of gold. The 20 clan donation points seemed also to be hardly gained.

"Do you mean this item is more valuable than gold?" Zhang Tie asked.

That personnel who had given the plate to Zhang Tie revealed a smile, "Your status plate contains 7 rare alloys, among which, Hailan iron and peacock copper are 10 times more valuable than gold. This status plate also contained several secret craftsmanships which could not be made anywhere except for within the Zhang clan. You can hardly destroy it. If you destroy it, you would hardly restore it. At least in Waii Sub-continent, nobody could imitate it. The secret grains on the status plate contain the metal identification bar code formed by the steam analyzer in the Clansmen Pavilion, which is the symbol of your unique status and access. Do you think it's important or not?"

Hearing these words, Zhang Tie was so scared that he even became dumbfounded, "What are clan donation points?"

Chapter 270: Hidden Dragon Palace

"Clan contribution points are used to measure the family members' contribution to the Zhang clan's undertakings. To put it simply, you can regard clan contribution points as a special currency that could be circulated among the Zhang clan's subsidiaries and the Zhang families of Huaiyuan Palace.

When you make a contribution to a clan undertaking, you will gain clan contribution points. You can exchange these points for corresponding clan resources, which are only open to clan members. Generally, you can't even buy them with gold coins on the outside!" The personnel of the Clansmen Pavilion briefly answered Zhang Tie's questions.

"Can I exchange contribution points for secret fighting skills" This was what Zhang Tie was most interested in.

"Of course, this is just a single usage of clan contribution points. As you have arrived at Huaiyuan Palace for the first time, you might not know the importance of clan contribution points. You will know soon enough."

"How can I gain points then?"

"I can't explain it to you in one word. There are strict rules and regulations on achieving contribution points. For example, I am serving the clan as a member of the Clansmen Pavilion. Besides a daily salary, I can also gain three contribution points monthly! Those women who could give birth to kids after marrying Zhang clan could gain an eight gold coins' subsidiary and 15 clan contribution points for each kid!"

Women can gain clan contribution points and a gold coins' subsidiary by having children? Zhang Tie finally understood how the clan developed over 200,000 direct bloodline descendants in only hundreds of years.

"I wonder if there is anything else?" Thinking of his parents that were still in Jinhai City, Zhang Tie couldn't wait to go back.

"There's another thing that I have to inform you of. Since you have not come in contact with the clan's orthodox education before and always stayed out of the clan system; the clan has not provided any help for you in your earlier life, even if you've come back to Zhang clan, you still have great freedom!"

"What do you mean?"

"It means that the Zhang clan and you are on equal footing with rights and obligations. Across Huaiyuan Prefecture, most of the members of the Zhang clan at your age were practicing everywhere after graduation. When serving the clan, they are also learning to improve their own talents and abilities. Those young men who have awakened ancestral bloodlines have all gathered in the Hidden Dragon Palace of the Zhang clan due to the regulations. However, you are free to choose whether you enter or not!"

Huaiyuan Palace was the official name of the Zhang clan to the public while Hidden Dragon Palace was an agency of the Zhang clan, which was like the Clansmen Pavilion. Given the name, people would know the property of the agency, Hidden Dragon Palace.

"Do people entering the Hidden Dragon Palace need to strictly follow the clan's orders and lose many personal freedoms?" Zhang Tie asked.

"Yes, those gathering in the Hidden Dragon Palace are all elites of the Zhang clan. Hidden Dragon Palace is almost like a military agency, in which, you will lose many personal freedoms and will have to carry out many dangerous assignments that average people at your age could not accomplish. The casualty rate of clan members who enter the Hidden Dragon Palace to cultivate themselves is 20%, namely, only 8 out of 10 people entering this place come out alive."

When the Clansmen Pavilion personnel said this, Zhang Tie's elder brother looked at Zhang Tie twice with concern, being afraid that Zhang Tie would promise to enter Hidden Dragon Palace.

"What benefits are there in Hidden Dragon Palace?" Zhang Tie casually asked.

The Clansmen Pavilion personnel smiled as he nodded. He seemed to be very satisfied with Zhang Tie's response after hearing his words—He didn't shake his head, instead, he calmly answered the question, "In Hidden Dragon Palace, you will get the most opportunities to gain clan contribution points, where, you could enjoy numerous quality resources of the clan and learn various secret clan knowledge and fighting skills. In the Hidden Dragon Palace, you can also broaden your horizons. Those who could come out of Hidden Dragon Palace alive would basically become talents and elites of the Zhang clan who would assume great responsibilities alone!"

Zhang Tie smiled, "I choose to join the Hidden Dragon Palace of the Zhang clan."

Hearing Zhang Tie's reply, Zhang Yang instantly stood up from his chair to object as he wanted to say something. However, after looking at that personnel of Clansmen Pavilion, he suppressed his desire.

"The headquarters of Hidden Dragon Palace is located on Hidden Dragon Island. If you want to go there, you can go to register next Monday, namely December 5th. If you don't arrive there on time, it will be assumed that you've given up."

"What certification do I need to take"

"None needed, you only need to take this plate over there."

...

When Zhang Tie and Zhang Yang left the building of Clansmen Pavilion, Zhang Yang who had always remained silent couldn't stand it as he started to ask Zhang Tie, "Do you know how much mom and dad worried about you when you were in Iron-Blood Camp? They were really afraid of you being in danger. This time, you could've obviously chosen to not join the Hidden Dragon Palace, why did you choose to join?"

Zhang Tie watched Zhang Yang seriously, "Elder brother, if the holy war between humans and demons break out in the future, in which way do you think it'll be easier for us to survive? Would it be by the power of our family or by the power of Huaiyuan Palace? For our family, you and I could neither get rid of Huaiyuan Palace's clan system nor collapse in at the same time. If I join the Hidden Dragon Palace, it would be for the best as we could respond to any situation!" Zhang Tie patted his elder brother's shoulder, "Don't worry elder brother, since I was alright in Iron-blood Camp, I'll also be alright in Hidden Dragon Palace!"

After considering it for a while, Zhang Yang finally nodded, "If so, you'd better not mention this at home in case of our parents' concerns. You can tell them about this before you leave home two days later."

"Fine." Zhang Tie nodded as he looked at the two sides of the road, "How do we go back home, by train?"

"There's something more convenient than the train!" Zhang Yang wove his hands towards one side of the road. Soon after that, Zhang Tie saw a green car driving from afar and parked in front of them. Zhang Yang told Zhang Tie to get in the car which really startled Zhang Tie as he had not imagined that the car would directly park after being greeted like the carriages in Blapei and Blackhot City.

"Where are you going? The driver in uniform asked the two people in the back seats of the car.

"Jinhai City!"

"Jinhai City is 240 km away from Yiyang City. It will take you 3 hours to get there and 3 more hours for me to come back to Yiyang City, you need to pay 12 silver coins!"

"No problem!" Zhang Yang directly gave the money to the driver.

After receiving the silver coins, the driver immediately drove away.

"What kind of car it is?" Sitting inside, Zhang Tie asked Zhang Yang out of curiosity.

"A rental car, it's convenient, right?"

Zhang Tie nodded as he thought that this was really a prosperous land. Even cars could be rented...

"Knowing that you're going back tonight, mom even made your favorite food for you!"

Zhang Tie felt like crying, "Fine, let's go back then!"

...

Less than 10 minutes after Zhang Tie and Zhang Yang left the Clansmen Pavilion, all the elders who were sitting in the Shrine of Huaiyuan Palace—the forbidden land of Zhang clan had known of Zhang Tie's choice.

"I wouldn't have imagined that this kid's mentality was not bad. As he chose to enter the Hidden Dragon Palace, he has the potential to be an elite!" One of the elders opened his mouth as he slightly nodded.

"According to the intelligence of clan, this brat was also a powerhouse in the Iron-Blood Camp of Norman Empire. He has even been awarded the Iron-Blood Medal in the Iron-Blood Camp. He must have killed numerous people on the battlefield!" Another elder said, "Although the opponents were all common soldiers of Sun Dynasty, he's still not an average person. He has the potential to be an elite!"

"But he's too lecherous. This brat slept with over 80 girls of the Rose Association within one week. That's too cock-and-bull. Thankfully, he didn't make them pregnant, otherwise, it would bring a great trouble to the Clansmen Pavilion!"

"That's trivial. No one can say they weren't romantic in their youth." Another elder smiled, "Hoho, if he's energetic and has awakened an ancestral bloodline, in the worst case scenario, we can gift him some more concubines, letting him make some contributions to extend the clan's bloodline."

"Great!" The other elders touched their snow-white beards as they seriously nodded.

If Zhang Tie knew that he would be a breeding machine in the eyes of the elders of Huaiyuan Palace in the worst case scenario, he wouldn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"It seems that his father, Zhang Ping, is suffering some light punishment this time. If he was set free, someone might imitate him in the future!" Some elder seemed to still be worrying about his father's affair.

"Zhang Ping pretended to be dead as he escaped with a girl. Although this violates the clan regulations, it's not as severe as being harmful to the other people or being unforgivable. Its impact is trivial. Even if we put him into the prison for 100 years, will it benefit the clan? There were also exceptions of which punishments were reduced by performing meritorious deeds. We deal with this affair not especially for the sake of him. As we've deeply learned about the secrets of Mental Arithmetic by Abacus in these days, we all know that this method is very effective in increasing the cultivation of spiritual energy and is of great benefit to the development of the clan. If someone imitated Zhang Ping by pretending to be dead and escaping with a girl from a destined marriage, as long as he could present the item of the same value as Mental Arithmetic by Abacus, it's reasonable to even exempt from his crime. If there are some more people like Zhang Ping, our Huaiyuan Palace will definitely be more prosperous!" The one who said this was the sixth uncle of Zhang Ping who had brought Zhang Tie's family back from Blackhot City. Sixth uncle was the head of Clansmen Pavilion, which was also one branch of Jinhai City of Huaiyuan Palace.

"As all the elders have made the decision. Let's call it an end. Don't mention it from now on!" another elder looked at the two elders who had spoken just now and genially relieved the atmosphere, "Two elders' intentions are all for the sake of the long-term development of Zhang clan. At this critical moment, we should make the sustainability and growth of the clan our largest priority!"

Hearing this elder's words, the two previous elders looked at each other and nodded.

"Recently, there was a number of abnormal turmoil in the Waii Sub-continent. Therefore, we should prepare for the incoming war as soon as possible..."

"Before each holy war, the demons' puppets amongst humans would raise turmoil so as to eliminate the people's overall strength to the largest extent by increasing their mutual suspicion and breaking their unity. This time, many more people would be the sacrifice of demons before the holy war arrives, alas..."
Another elder sighed.