

CASTLE OF BLACK IRON

Chapter 6: Blackhot City



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Translator: WQL Editor: Geoffrey

Zhang Tie had no idea how he was going to stand the hunger until school was over. He completely poured out his lunch earlier when he was beaten by the other members of the Hit-Plane Brotherhood at noon, hence he had no choice but to stand the starvation. When he could no longer stand the hunger, he would drink water like a fish at a water faucet at school between classes. This was also a survival skill that he learned at school in this age. Drinking clean water like a fish could alleviate starvation and slow down the deterioration of physical strength. A person without food and water could survive two days at most, yet a starved person with only water could survive for more than three days. This showed the importance of water.

What made Zhang Tie feel fortunate was that the class this afternoon was collective military drill, the class that consumed the least energy. In the training grounds for the entire afternoon, each undergraduate would wear infantry uniform and light armor and would carry a spear that was longer than three meters on their shoulders for training. They would perform formations and bayonet charges under the orders of the instructor. To be a level 1 pikeman and attain an emblem of a Level 1 pikeman symbolized the beginning of manhood and was the dream of most students when they served the army. Pikemen were the ones in the army that focused on formations and collective cooperation. They can be both the strongest arm and the weakest. A pikeman square matrix solely composed of first-ranked pikemen could

easily defend against the attacks from enemies who were not in formation and had three times their number.

Similarly, a heavy-armored square matrix composed of fifth-ranked pikemen was an important force on the main battlefield. With the citizens of Blackhot City and the millions of inhabitants that surrounded it, only three fifth-ranked heavy-armored square matrixes could be formed. This was the ultimate force used by the Coal, Steel, and Iron Federation (CSIF) to rule the city.

Zhang Tie's physique was not greater than others; he looked thinner and weaker compared to the rest of the group. He didn't really like this profession. Zhang Tie had difficulties when he brandished and pierced with the three-meter long pike, which was heavier than 10kg. In the later stages, whenever he saw his powerless pike, Zhang Tie would always doubt whether he would be able to strike and kill the enemy with such low speed and force. Speaking of the pike, even the damned fatty Barley looked better than him. Zhang Tie gradually felt weak after fifty attacks; however, the damned fatty didn't weaken until more than seventy moves. Clearly, Zhang Tie was the weakest one in the Hit-Plane Brotherhood.

Although he didn't like this profession, Zhang Tie had to admit that even though he disliked it, the square matrix composed of pikemen brought him a great sense of safety. Whenever he stood in the middle of the square matrix conspicuously and looked at his classmates around him, he would always feel a sense of safety. This feeling was very contradictory. It seemed that this was the reason why a small figure like Zhang Tie felt depressed in such an age — on many occasions, you had to depend on those you disliked.

When the afternoon training ended, Zhang Tie felt like his whole stomach and belly was like a sac full of water. Whenever he moved, the water inside would always make a sound which made him uncomfortable. Whenever he attacked, each time he made a slightly fierce, big movement, Zhang Tie would always

feel the water inside his stomach dash to his throat like a rising tide with a weird taste. The moment it made his throat uncomfortable, it would fall back. His hands were always powerless. For several instances, Zhang Tie felt the instructor's sharp stare on him and felt reluctant to leave. Zhang Tie had no other choice but to grit his teeth.

The coach especially paid attention to Glaze. The square matrix with Glaze was the most spectacular among the six square matrixes on the training field. Glaze, a LV 2 soldier, instantly displayed the difference between him and the other green birds. He was as tall as 190cm and wielded a standard military pike that weighed more than 30kgs and had a red-headed flag attached to it. Glaze stood out and commanded the whole square matrix. Under the appreciative eyes of the coach, Grace became very thrilled. He would always wail like a ghost and howl like a wolf for each movement. As a result, the whole training ground was filled with his howls.

Although Zhang Tie despised him to some degree, he would never deny that he would be killed by Glaze within a couple of movements or perhaps in a single move. Glaze truly had the right to be proud. With the exception of Glaze, the rest of the students in the graduating class were just reserve soldiers, not even first-ranked soldiers. Normally, most people would be promoted to first-ranked soldier before the age of 18, namely two years before providing military service. During the eight years of military service, more than 95% of the commoners would retire at the third or the fourth rank, while a few of them would reach the fifth rank. Only professional soldiers and people who survived on the force might reach the sixth rank. Soldiers who were promoted to be fighters could gain respect wherever they were.

The moment training ended, Zhang Tie removed his smelly uniform in the locker room, hurriedly wore his shoes, and rushed out with his hands on his stomach without greeting the other members of the brotherhood, who were

led by Barley. This made the members of the brotherhood embarrassed, as they were preparing to greet Zhang Tie. As a result, they kept staring at each other with a vacant look.

“What’s wrong with him?” the freckled and brown haired Sharwin scratched his head.

“I saw him drink a lot in the afternoon. He might not be able to stand it!” replied Bagdad. As a black man, he was the strongest in the brotherhood. The training this afternoon was very easy for him. Naturally, he was the one with the highest fighting power in the brotherhood.

“Hoho, poor guy!” smiled Leit.

“I am the poor one!” Doug, even now, was still resentful especially when he recalled that he was sprayed with Zhang Tie’s vomit at noon. Doug always felt that he was the laughingstock throughout the afternoon.

“Easy, man. Barley will fetch those silver coins for you!” Hista winked and made an obscene posture that everyone understood. Staring at Barley, he instantly became generous, “We brotherhood members have to eliminate the status as virgin and become true men!”

“Trust me, you will have your benefit!” Barley comforted the sad Doug as he patted him. Seeing Zhang Tie’s shadow, Barley’s fat face shivered painfully when the four silver coins came to mind. He shook his head. “What an interesting guy! Although I have not seen what he’s capable of, I find him to be smart and not bad. He’s a reliable guy! At least I don’t have to worry about being screwed over!” rubbing his chin, fat Barley said in an experienced way.

With the exception of Doug, who was still sulking, the rest of the group nodded.

Zhang Tie rushed to the washroom and had a long piss. He finally became comfortable. Meanwhile, his belly also thundered. Walking out of the

washroom stall, he simply washed his hands and dashed out the school gate. With four silver coins and thirty to forty copper coins in his pockets, he had to find something to eat, otherwise he wouldn't even have enough strength to return home.

There was a bakery a short distance from the school gate. Usually, Zhang Tie could only swallow his saliva whenever he saw the delicious bread. Touching his pocket, today, Zhang Tie was finally brave enough to enter this bakery. He spent 10 copper coins to buy a loaf of brown bread. As he devoured the loaf of brown bread like a wolf and exited the bakery, Zhang Tie instantly noticed Miss Daina.

Miss Daina was always eye-catching. Captain Kerlin and another male teacher were talking about her diligently and gently. Zhang Tie's face even transformed with the bread still inside. Zhang Tie was suddenly stunned when he saw Miss Daina. Captain Kerlin didn't even glance at him, probably because he felt it was too shameful to be familiar with him. However, Zhang Tie didn't realize until they were far away. He instantly turned back and looked at himself in front of the beautiful glass showcase. With the half loaf of bread that he almost choked to death on in his hand, his mouth was opened while his head inclined. Because he continually trained in the afternoon and hadn't stopped his nose bleed yet, two paper balls were stuck inside his nostrils. His eyes were squinted like a crack, and his face showed that he had been beaten by others. He just stood there like an idiot with bread crumbs and saliva hanging at the corners of his mouth. He was clearly slow-witted.

Miss Daina should have seen him just now? Zhang Tie became endlessly frustrated and gloomy. No wonder she didn't even glance at him. He really was slow-witted... Lowering his head, he saw the pair of grinning and wretched leather shoes once again...

The 15-year old depressed teenager felt nothing but frustration.

Seeing Miss Daina leave, Zhang Tie felt the beautiful shadow was becoming increasingly far away from him. At this moment, Zhang Tie didn't even feel like following her silently for a distance. He stood outside the bakery and stared at those passersby. He finally finished the remaining loaf of bread with one bite after another. Then, in a sluggish manner, he walked towards the commercial area that was located in the eastern parts of Blackhot City. His parents had found him a part-time apprentice job through someone they knew. He had to work two hours a day for two days a week before going back home...