

Canon 111

Chapter 111: A Fight Between Experts

Imperial preceptor? Zhou Shu was slightly puzzled. Great Xia didn't have an imperial preceptor!

...

Although he was somewhat puzzled, he didn't stop.

Or rather, he performed beyond his usual standard. Even he himself could no longer control the saber after he unleashed it.

"Spare his life!" A grand voice came from the post house ahead.

Zhou Shu felt a slight pain in his eardrums, and his mind went blank.

With a cold snort, he visualized the Five Mountains' True Form in his consciousness. The suppressive consciousness of the five towering mountains instantly restored his clarity.

At this moment, the earth-shattering saber beam had already descended.

When the second black-robed man saw that there was no way to avoid this attack, a trace of ruthlessness flashed across his eyes. He threw the first black-robed man on his back up, and then he turned into black smoke and headed toward the post house.

Pfft!

With a light sound, the first black-robed man, whose joints had been dislocated by Zhou Shu, was slashed in half before he could even make a sound.

Blood and internal organs scattered all over the ground. But the saber beam had yet to dissipate as it continued to slash toward the fleeing second black-robed man.

The black-robed man used some kind of divine art to transform into black smoke. There was form, but it was intangible. But when the saber beam landed, the black smoke let out a tragic scream.

At this moment, a golden light flew out from the post house and collided with the saber beam.

Crack!

With a soft sound, the saber beam shattered like glass before dissipating into the air.

Zhou Shu's eyes narrowed slightly. He held the heaven-grade long saber in front of him and looked straight ahead.

The black smoke turned back into the black-robed figure. He fell to the ground in pain and rolled around.

Although Zhou Shu's saber beam had not killed him, the saber intent had still injured him.

If not for the golden light saving him, he would have died just like the first black-robed man.

“Your Excellency, you are too ruthless.” A voice sounded. The golden light that had shattered Zhou Shu’s saber beam transformed into a slightly illusory body. The voice came from this body.

“I asked you to show mercy. Why did you still do it?”

Zhou Shu sized up the golden figure. It was a middle-aged man who appeared to be in his forties or fifties. He had short hair, and his facial features were clearly defined. He seemed extremely determined.

Even though it was a little illusory, it was obvious that this person had been in a high position for a long time, and his aura was extremely intimidating.

Zhou Shu sneered. “Should I show mercy just because you asked me?”

“Why should I listen to you?”

The short-haired middle-aged man was slightly stunned, as if he wasn’t used to Zhou Shu’s way of speaking. After a while, he said, “May I know which expert of Great Xia you are? Although this is Great Xia, your behavior is a little too overbearing.

“Will our people die just by entering your city to visit the night market?”

As he spoke, he took a step forward, and a powerful aura began to gather. It was as if the sky was pressing down on Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu’s pupils shrank. *Impressive!*

He didn’t know what technique this guy was using. This had already surpassed ordinary martial arts.

Zhou Shu had come into contact with many martial artists before. He had always thought that the Martial Dao of this world was similar to the martial arts in wuxia novels. Even if they were stronger, there was a limit.

Just like his Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique, he could compete with Martial Dao experts.

Only now did he realize that those people he had fought with previously were too weak.

The person before him was a true expert!

How could one transform into golden light with just ordinary martial arts?

Although he felt a bit emotional, Zhou Shu wasn’t afraid.

He raised the heaven-grade saber in his hand. He condensed his saber intent, but he didn’t make a move.

“So what if I’m domineering?”

This was the capital of Great Xia, Chang’an!

The commotion just now must have alerted the experts in the capital. Zhou Shu wasn’t afraid of the opponent attacking.

Even if he couldn’t defeat his opponent, he could still hold on for a while.

He didn't believe that the other party would be able to attack without any scruples in the suburbs of Chang'an!

"Is this how Great Xia treats their guests?" the middle-aged man asked with a cold expression. "Since that's the case, I'll take you down and ask the emperor of Great Xia if this is how you treat my Great Wei's diplomatic mission?"

Great Wei's diplomatic mission? Zhou Shu raised his eyebrows and seemed to understand something.

The Divine Constable Bureau's excuse to capture Zhu Chuanfeng was actually true?

Zhu Chuanfeng really colluded with Great Wei?

But then again, Zhu Chuanfeng was a Grand Craftsman. If he really joined Great Wei, Great Wei would definitely welcome him. After all, Great Wei doesn't know that Zhu Chuanfeng was a fake Grand Craftsman!

No wonder the black-robed man wanted to investigate the spy's courtyard. That was where Zhu Chuanfeng's accomplice lived. Do they know what weapons Zhu Chuanfeng left behind?

Just as Zhou Shu thought of this, he saw the middle-aged man reach out toward him.

As he moved, a three-meter-long golden palm suddenly appeared in the sky.

The golden palm seemed to be corporeal, and the palm lines were clearly visible. With a torrential aura, it grabbed toward Zhou Shu.

"That's it!" Now that things had come to this, Zhou Shu's boldness erupted.

This was the first time he was facing a top expert of this world.

Let's see what level the top experts of this world are at!

With a loud shout, Zhou Shu's true qi surged, and his body began to emit a faint golden light.

This golden light was somewhat similar to the golden light of the middle-aged man, but it seemed to be of a higher grade.

At the same time, all the cells in Zhou Shu's body seemed to come alive. The Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique, the strength of dragons and elephants!

The Heavenly Saber Art was a saber art honed through countless bloody battles. When executing it, one had to have an indomitable will to unleash the true intent of the saber art.

Although Zhou Shu completely grasped the Heavenly Saber Intent, he had never faced such an expert before.

Even when he faced the black-robed man yesterday, he had the Golden Bell Shield Technique protecting him, so he wasn't afraid of the black-robed man.

Now, Zhou Shu had the feeling that this middle-aged man condensed from golden light might be able to break his Golden Bell Shield Technique!

There was no way to test this. If it was true, he would die.

An expert's intuition was most likely true.

In the face of danger, Zhou Shu fully unleashed his Heavenly Saber Intent for the first time.

With a loud shout, Zhou Shu slashed out with his saber.

This slash was comparable to the one that killed the black-robed man.

The saber beam was sharp and directly slashed onto the golden palm.

Following a deafening sound, the saber beam shattered, while the giant palm was knocked back a few meters, leaving a scar on the palm!

Zhou Shu took half a step back, his expression grave. His saber was sent flying by the tremendous force. He gripped the hilt of his saber tightly and swung it out in a circle.

The sky was full of saber light, and Zhou Shu's figure couldn't be seen clearly. The saber light continued to fall on the golden palm, and more and more wounds appeared on the palm. Finally, with a loud bang, the golden palm transformed into specks of golden light and dissipated into the air.

A hint of admiration flashed through the eyes of the middle-aged man. He nodded slightly and said, "You have indeed earned the right to be domineering with such a saber technique. But it's still not enough."

He took another step forward, and as his foot landed, the earth shook.

He pushed his palms forward, and two golden palms appeared in the air, pressing down on Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu's expression changed slightly. He already had to make an effort to destroy one giant palm, and he might not be able to destroy two.

He was already clear that with his current cultivation, he was far from being the imperial preceptor's match!

What is his cultivation level?

Second rank?

Or first rank?

Are the first two ranks that much stronger than the third rank?

A thought flashed through Zhou Shu's mind. Without thinking too much, he shouted, "You think you're the only one who can bully others with numbers?"

Clang!

Two more heaven-grade sabers flew out from Zhou Shu's back.

A strange look flashed across the middle-aged man's eyes. *Since when are heaven-grade weapons so easily obtainable?*

Even with his status, he didn't dare to casually bring three heaven-grade weapons with him.

Furthermore, there seemed to be a few more weapons behind this person. *Could they all be heaven-grade weapons?*

Who is he? A prince of Great Xia?

But he had never heard of any prince of Great Xia having such a cultivation level.

A few thoughts flashed through the middle-aged man's mind when he heard Zhou Shu shout.

"Three Sabers Stream!"

His accent was strange, and the middle-aged man almost didn't understand.

The three heaven-grade sabers transformed into three saber projections that slashed at the two golden palms.

The middle-aged man sighed in admiration as he sensed the soaring saber intent.

Such a saber technique could be called invincible in the same realm.

It was only because the other party's cultivation was inferior to his. Otherwise, he might not have the upper hand against this saber technique!

Boom!

When the giant palm and the saber light collided, it was as if an explosion had occurred. An intense cyclone spread out in all directions. For a moment, sand and stones flew everywhere as if a natural disaster had occurred.

Although the middle-aged man didn't have a physical body, he still subconsciously closed his eyes.

When he opened his eyes again, Zhou Shu had already disappeared.

He raised his head and looked again. Zhou Shu was already several hundred meters away, and he was sprinting at an extremely high speed, leaving behind a cloud of dust like a dragon.

The middle-aged man was a little stunned. Just a moment ago, he was still fighting with all his might, and now he was running away?

Who is this person?

Ding Dang!

At this moment, the three heaven-grade sabers fell from the sky and stabbed into the ground.

They were the ones who had transformed their saber intent into saber projections to stop the giant golden palms.

He doesn't even want the heaven-grade sabers? The middle-aged man was even more puzzled.

He raised his hand and was about to take the three heaven-grade sabers for himself.

Suddenly, a bolt of lightning descended from the sky.

Boom!

The lightning enveloped the three heaven-grade sabers.

The middle-aged man's expression changed slightly, and he immediately let out a cold snort. The golden light on his body surged, and he reached out to grab the lightning.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

With a muffled sound, the lightning and golden light dissipated almost at the same time. At the same time, a figure flew out from the post house and reached out to catch a heaven-grade saber.

The figure was clearly the same person as the golden figure from before.

The Great Wei imperial preceptor gritted his teeth and shouted out a name, "Yin Changhao!"

At the spot where Zhou Shu had just stood, a purple-robed figure stood there. This person looked to be in his thirties. He had sharp eyebrows and sharp eyes, but his expression was somewhat arrogant and domineering.

At this moment, he was holding two heaven-grade sabers in his hands. On the sabers, there was still lightning lingering.

"Why are you shouting so loudly? I'm not deaf," Yin Changhao said.

The Great Wei imperial preceptor suppressed his anger and said coldly, "Is this how your Great Xia treats their guests?"

"To our guests, our Great Xia has good wine. But to our enemies, the divine weapons of Grand Xia are the best in the world. We are not boasting," Yin Changhao said nonchalantly.

"Hmph!" The Great Wei imperial preceptor snorted coldly. "War between countries does not implicate the envoys. We are the official diplomatic mission team. My man went into the city to take a look but was killed by someone. You have to give us an explanation for this!"

The Great Wei imperial preceptor's body flickered with golden light as his aura continued to rise, becoming even more terrifying than before.

Yin Changhao wasn't afraid in the slightest. Lightning coiled around his body, and his two heaven-grade sabers danced in the air.

"With his outfit, you're saying that he went for a stroll in the city? Would you believe that?" Yin Changhao said disdainfully. "He probably went to a secret place of Great Xia.

"So be it if he's killed. What explanation do you want?"

"Alright, everyone knows what's going on. I can't be bothered to talk nonsense with you. Give me the saber. I'm going back to sleep. How dare you disturb my sleep in the middle of the night. You people from Great Wei are really inhumane."

Yin Changhao yawned.

"You want to get away with it?" The Great Wei imperial preceptor was furious. "I want to see the Great Xia emperor!"

"Stop shouting." Yin Changhao rolled his eyes. "What can you do if you see my brother? You want an explanation, right? Fine. If you have the ability, go and catch the murderer. Did you take a clear look at the murderer?"

"He's an expert of Great Xia..." The Great Wei's imperial preceptor was furious.

"If you say so, then so be it. Who knows if this is your trick of self-injury? Why don't I know that Great Xia has such a saber expert? That saber intent just now should be at the level of a second-rank martial artist, right? Why don't you look for him yourself? I still have to thank you for helping Great Xia find an expert," Yin Changhao said.

The Great Wei imperial preceptor narrowed his eyes. He wasn't a fool. Great Xia and Great Wei had been fighting for many years. They knew each other's experts very well. They might be able to hide the lower-ranked ones, but it was too difficult to hide the first-rank and second-rank ones.

After all, people didn't advance into experts overnight. It was almost impossible for them not to leave any traces behind.

From what the Great Wei imperial preceptor knew, there was indeed no expert in Great Xia that matched the characteristics of the person earlier.

Furthermore, this person was masked in the capital of Great Xia. Was he really not from Great Xia?

"I will definitely investigate this matter. The people of Great Wei cannot die in vain!" The Great Wei imperial preceptor snorted and walked into the post house.

"Hey, don't be so shameless. Give me the saber!" Yin Changhao shouted.

"This was left behind by the murderer. The murderer might not be someone from Great Xia, so this saber naturally doesn't belong to Great Xia."

The Great Wei imperial preceptor's voice came from afar and Yin Changhao's expression froze.

This old fellow is really shameless!

Anyway, I've snatched two of them. He only has one.. I've won, Yin Changhao thought happily and turned into a bolt of lightning, disappearing in the direction of the capital.

Chapter 112: Great Wei's Diplomatic Mission

Zhou Shu went around the capital. After making sure that no one was following him, he climbed over the city wall and returned to his residence.

...

Originally, he was very sure that he wouldn't be followed. But now, he wasn't so confident anymore.

It seemed that the Martial Dao experts in this world underwent a qualitative change when they reached the second or first rank.

Just like the imperial preceptor he met today.

Later, when he was escaping, he seemed to have seen a bolt of lightning heading toward the imperial preceptor from the capital.

Perhaps the experts of Great Xia had made their move.

Zhou Shu now felt that if there was really an expert from Great Xia deliberately investigating, they might have already discovered his hidden strength.

But after thinking about it carefully, it didn't seem to be the case.

Previously, Yin Wuyou was still testing him. If the Great Xia Imperial Court really discovered his hidden strength, it was impossible for Yin Wuyou not to know.

After all, she was the princess of Great Xia.

I haven't made many moves, so I probably haven't attracted the attention of experts at that level. However, I have to be more cautious in the future.

After thinking for a while, Zhou Shu gradually calmed down. According to the current situation, the possibility of him being exposed was not high.

In any case, even if he was really exposed, it was fine.

The few times he had made a move, he had helped Great Xia. Great Xia shouldn't go so far as to repay kindness with enmity, right?

Actually, Zhou Shu had hidden his cultivation only because it was hard to explain.

If he was really exposed, how could he explain that he had suddenly become so powerful?

People with ulterior motives would definitely keep an eye on him.

He didn't want any more trouble.

If not for this, with his current strength, even if he was exposed, he might not be in any danger. After all, he wasn't weak. Even a first-rank expert might not be enough to deal with him.

I lost three heaven-grade weapons just to witness the strength of an expert. What a loss!

Zhou Shu counted his harvest and felt his heart ache.

Just now, in order to stop the imperial preceptor from pursuing him, he had thrown down three heaven-grade sabers.

He didn't have time to think about it. Now that he thought about it, his heart ached.

They were heaven-grade weapons!

Any one of them was priceless!

It was not an exaggeration to say that even the house that Mi Ziwen gave him might not be able to be exchanged for a heaven-grade weapon!

A house was easy to buy, but a heaven-grade weapon was not.

Even money may not be able to buy it!

Zhu Chuanfeng had the habit of keeping a diary. The Imperial Court already knows about the existence of these heaven-grade weapons. It's impossible to sell them through legitimate means.

Zhou Shu began to think about how to deal with the remaining four heaven-grade weapons.

There was no need to keep them. If he wanted to use a heaven-grade weapon, he could forge one himself in the future.

To him, selling them for money was more worthwhile. Right now, he was perhaps the poorest superintendent of the Forging Division.

I'll think of a way to ask Steward Mi, but how do I ask? It's a problem...

...

Chang'an, inside the palace...

In the imperial study, Yin Changhao sat on a chair casually.

In front of him was the seated Emperor Yuan Feng.

"He killed an expert from Great Wei's diplomatic mission team in front of the Great Wei imperial preceptor?" Emperor Yuan Feng asked with a solemn expression.

"That's right. He cut him in two cleanly," Yin Changhao said. "Brother, you didn't see it, but Xiao Shunzhi was so angry that his face turned black. But he couldn't do anything about it. Anyway, we didn't kill his people. If he's capable, he can find the murderer."

Yin Changhao was gloating.

"You can't say that. After all, he died within the borders of Great Xia..."

"Brother, you think too much," Yin Changhao said impolitely. "The fellow who died was dressed in black. One look and you could tell that he didn't do anything good. Since he's dead, so be it. If Xiao Shunzhi dares to cause trouble, I'll smash his head!"

Emperor Yuan Feng shook his head with a bitter smile. How could matters be so simple between countries?

"Have you seen that mysterious expert?" Emperor Yuan Feng changed the topic. It was pointless to ask this brother about matters between countries. "Who exactly is he?"

"I didn't see him. When I arrived, he had already left. I was only focused on snatching the sabers from Xiao Shunzhi. Afterward, I could no longer catch up," Yin Changhao said.

"But even if I didn't go for the sabers, I still might not have been able to catch up. He isn't willing to reveal his identity, so what if I catch up?"

"No matter what. He has helped Great Xia. Should I attack him?"

"I didn't say anything." Emperor Yuan was speechless.

"You people are always scheming and calculating all day long. It doesn't take a lot to know what you are up to," Yin Changhao said disdainfully.

Emperor Yuan Feng was very helpless toward this younger brother of his. He smiled bitterly and said, "I've never thought of scheming against him. I'm just curious about who he is. Aren't you curious why Great Xia has such an expert?"

"I'm curious. I want to spar with him," Yin Changhao said. "The problem is that you can't find him.

"Tsk ts, this person is a ruthless person. He threw away three heaven-grade weapons just like that! How generous!"

Yin Changhao clicked his tongue in wonder. "Brother, you're not even that generous."

Emperor Yuan Feng wanted to roll his eyes. *Why did you drag me into this?*

"The other party must have left them behind on purpose," Emperor Yuan Feng said. "These two sabers are two of the heaven-grade weapons recorded in Zhu Chuanfeng's secret book.

"The one Xiao Shunzhi snatched away looks like it should also be one of Zhu Chuanfeng's heaven-grade weapons.

"According to Zhu Chuanfeng's records, he should have hidden seven heaven-grade weapons. Could the other four be in that expert's hands?"

Emperor Yuan Feng fell into deep thought.

"So what?" Yin Changhao said. "He killed Zhu Chuanfeng. According to the rules of the martial world, these weapons are his spoils of war.

"I know what you want to say, Brother. Don't even think about it," Yin Changhao said directly. "Xiao Shunzhi didn't even gain any advantage when fighting with him. I think he's tough too. You're not being very nice if you send someone to snatch weapons from such an expert."

Emperor Yuan Feng shook his head. "You think too much. No matter what, I am still the ruler of a country. Is there a need for me to steal a few heaven-grade weapons?"

"Forget it. There might not even be four heaven-grade weapons in the inner vault. It would be strange if you're not envious," Yin Changhao said disdainfully. "I'll give you these two sabers. I'm a good brother, right? But brothers should settle accounts openly. You have to pay for them!"

Emperor Yuan Feng's face darkened.

...

At the same time, in a post house in the suburbs of the capital, Great Wei's Imperial Preceptor Xiao Shunzhi and a young man were sitting opposite each other. Between them was the heaven-grade saber that Xiao Shunzhi had snatched away.

"The divine weapons of Great Xia are truly worthy of their reputation," the youth said emotionally. "Although they are declining, their foundation is so deep that it is beyond one's imagination. A heaven-grade weapon actually appeared just like that."

Xiao Shunzhi nodded. Just to stop his pursuit, he had left behind three heaven-grade weapons. Even Xiao Shunzhi couldn't believe it.

This was just a random expert from Great Xia.

"Master, this time—" The young man hesitated.

"Don't worry. Even if Great Xia has a deep foundation, they have already expended most of it over the years. They have kept to themselves and are no longer outstanding in the path of forging.

"This time, not only are we going to take first place in the Standard Armament Manual, but you are also going to defeat all of Great Xia's Forging Masters!"

Xiao Shunzhi looked at the youth and said confidently, "I have confidence in you on this point."

"I'm afraid that they will send a Grand Craftsman. With my current attainments, I'm still a bit inferior to Grand Craftsmen."

Although the youth said this, he appeared extremely prideful.

Xiao Shunzhi sneered. "If they're really that shameless, that would be great."

"Then, will we proceed as planned?" the young man asked.

"Let's proceed as usual. Although I don't know who that mysterious expert is, if he dares to appear again, I will definitely not let him off!" Xiao Shunzhi's eyes flickered with a cold light.

"Alright! I'll listen to you, Master. After paying my respects to the Great Xia emperor tomorrow, I'll publicly challenge Great Xia's Forging Division until the rankings for the Standard Armament Manual are announced!

"Unfortunately, Zhu Chuanfeng was unable to escape," the youth said regretfully. "Otherwise, we would have been able to grasp more information about Great Xia's Forging Division."

"It's not that easy for a Grand Craftsman to defect." Xiao Shunzhi shook his head. "It's not convenient for me to make a move near Chang'an. It's also because he's too useless. Otherwise, as long as he could have escaped to the post house, I would have been able to protect him.

"Forget it. He's already dead. There's no use talking about this matter anymore. You should focus on your forging. Don't let there be any accidents!"

"Don't worry, Master. There are a few worthy opponents among Great Xia's Forging Masters, and their Forging Apprentices are not capable. Great Xia treats their Forging Apprentices too badly!"

The two of them smiled at one another.

...

Great Xia's Forging Division, the 0th Workshop...

Forging Apprentice Zhou Shu was naked from the waist up, and his muscles were clearly defined. As he moved, his muscles constantly moved along, exuding a special kind of beauty.

The clanking sounds echoed in the workshop.

With Zhou Shu's current strength, it was no longer difficult for him to forge a standard weapon. If he used his full strength, he would be able to forge a standard weapon in less than two hours.

Although there was no difficulty in forging standard weapons, Zhou Shu had never given up on forging.

This was because he hadn't filled up the slots of the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber yet...

After exchanging blows with a true expert last night, Zhou Shu now realized that there was still a gap between him and a true expert.

If he wanted to close or even eliminate this gap, it was practically impossible for him to rely on cultivating on his own. Therefore, this matter still had to fall on the Legendary Armament Canon.

The benefit from the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber was the Breakthrough Pill. To Zhou Shu, it didn't mean much. But he still needed to max out the number of Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers.

If he didn't forge enough Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers, the next weapon on the Legendary Armament Canon wouldn't appear.

He was still wondering what surprise the next weapon would bring him.

Therefore, he was full of energy. He wished he could forge a hundred Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers in a day.

Just as he was getting excited, Grand Minister Yin Wuyou came to the 0th Workshop again.

"What's with that expression? You don't welcome me?" Yin Wuyou frowned when she saw Zhou Shu's unwilling expression.

"Not at all. Grand Minister, you are in charge of the Forging Division. It's very normal for you to come and inspect the work," Zhou Shu said.

"You think I don't know what you're thinking?" Yin Wuyou said exasperatedly. "Are you upset that I interrupted your forging?"

Zhou Shu laughed awkwardly.

Yin Wuyou didn't harp on it and continued, "I've already told the Divine Constable Bureau about the traitors. Don't be so rash next time. Even if you discover traitors, you can't catch them yourself!"

"Got it." Zhou Shu nodded. Strictly speaking, killing five traitors within the workshop was a problem. Workshop superintendents of the Forging Division didn't have any law enforcement authority.

But since there was Yin Wuyou personally vouching for him, it naturally became a small matter.

"I have something to tell you," Yin Wuyou continued, not wasting any time. "Didn't I tell you last time that the Division has a mission for you?"

"What mission?" Zhou Shu asked.

"Great Wei's diplomatic mission team is here in the capital today," Yin Wuyou suddenly said.

Zhou Shu was puzzled. "What does this have to do with me?"

He knew about the diplomatic mission of Great Wei. He had even fought with the imperial preceptor last night.

But he didn't know what the diplomatic mission team's visit had to do with the Forging Division.

"Originally, it didn't have anything to do with you," Yin Wuyou said. "But this time, the main envoy of the diplomatic mission is Great Wei's Imperial Preceptor Xiao Shunzhi, and the deputy envoy is his disciple, Shen Yue!" Yin Wuyou said.

It would have been better if she hadn't explained. This explanation confused Zhou Shu even more.

"Xiao Shunzhi is a Grand Craftsman, and Shen Yue is said to be a rare forging talent."

Zhou Shu finally understood how it was related to the Forging Division. After all, they were in the same profession.

But he still didn't understand why Yin Wuyou was telling him this.

"Shen Yue is famous, but he has yet to advance to Forging Master. He is still a Forging Apprentice, just like you." Yin Wuyou looked at Zhou Shu.

"Grand Minister, are you trying to say that we are both Forging Apprentices, but he is already the deputy envoy of a diplomatic mission, while I am just a small workshop superintendent?" Zhou Shu said.

Yin Wuyou was speechless. *What are you thinking? Are you hinting that I should promote you?*

Rolling her eyes, Yin Wuyou ignored him and continued speaking.

"At today's imperial assembly, Shen Jue proposed competing with the Forging Division's Forging Apprentices!

"He used You Prefecture and Bing Prefecture as the gambling stake to bet with Great Xia's Forging Division. The winner will depend on the ranking in the Standard Armament Manual!"

Yin Wuyou's expression was grave. "If Great Xia gets first place in the Standard Armament Manual, then Great Wei will give up the two prefectures to Great Xia!"

"Are they going all out?" Zhou Shu said in surprise. "His Majesty agreed to such a ridiculous bet?"

A ranking determined the ownership of two prefectures?

One had to know that there were only around thirty prefectures in all of Great Xia.

“There was no way for Father to turn it down!” Yin Wuyou said in a deep voice.

“The two prefectures were originally the territory of Great Xia. However, they were taken over by Great Wei a hundred years ago. All these years, Great Xia has always wanted to take them back, but we weren’t strong enough.

“Now that a chance has appeared, even if Father knows that there was a problem, Great Xia still has to accept this bet!”

Chapter 113: A Bet for Land

Zhou Shu didn’t know much about the history of Great Xia, but he understood what Yin Wuyou meant.

...

Recovering lost land, it was indeed easy for people to get zealous over.

“Great Wei wouldn’t be so kind, right? If we win, they will return the two prefectures to us. What if Great Xia loses?” Zhou Shu asked.

“Since it’s a bet, it’s naturally equal,” Yin Wuyou said calmly. “If the number one weapon in the Standard Armament Manual belongs to Great Wei, Great Xia will give two prefectures to Great Wei.”

Are they crazy? Zhou Shu wanted to curse. He seriously wanted to tell Emperor Yuan Feng that gambling was wrong and illegal!

“What if the weapon ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual belongs to neither Great Xia nor Great Wei?”

“That would count as Great Xia’s loss. But in that case, the stakes won’t be the two prefectures but the Forging Division’s secret weapon forging methods,” Yin Wuyou said solemnly.

“Grand Minister, what makes you think that Great Xia can win?” Zhou Shu said speechlessly. *If Great Xia wants to recover the lost land, they can just fight for them.*

Don’t you think that it’s too much of a joke to use betting?

Besides, what makes you think that Great Xia’s weapon can rank first in the Standard Armament Manual?

As long as they don’t rank first, they’ll lose? Why didn’t I realize before that Great Xia is so confident?

Furthermore, to use a mere standard weapon to decide such a major matter, are they serious?

“You!” Yin Wuyou looked straight at Zhou Shu without blinking.

Zhou Shu even suspected that she would fall in love with him the next moment...

“Don’t—” Zhou Shu took a step back and distanced himself from Yin Wuyou. *Don’t try to seduce me! I won’t fall for this!*

“Grand Minister, don’t say that. This has nothing to do with me.” Zhou Shu repeatedly shook his head. “I’m just a Forging Apprentice. At most, I’m a workshop superintendent and a ninth-rank official. This kind of national affair has nothing to do with me.”

“You are Great Xia’s number one Forging Apprentice. Shen Yue is also a Forging Apprentice,” Yin Wuyou said. “He came to challenge Great Xia. If you don’t step out, who will?”

“Great Xia’s number one Forging Apprentice?” Zhou Shu was dumbfounded. *Since when did I have this title? Why don’t I know about it?*

“Of course!” Yin Wuyou said with certainty. “To obtain the qualification to participate in Great Xia’s military parade as a Forging Apprentice is something that hasn’t happened in Great Xia for hundreds of years!

“Besides, with the Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, Horse Slaying Saber, Spring Embroidered Saber, and Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber, who else would dare to claim they are number one among Forging Apprentices? I feel that Shen Yue is far inferior to you!”

Yin Wuyou’s eyes sparkled as she spoke.

She actually looks like a little fangirl now? Zhou Shu was embarrassed by her words.

Am I really that good?

The number one Forging Apprentice of Great Xia doesn’t sound bad either.

His lips had just curled up when he shook his head firmly.

“Grand Minister, don’t try this with me,” Zhou Shu said firmly. “It’s fine if you want me to forge a weapon. But if you want to compete with someone else, you should find someone better.”

This bet was for Great Xia’s land. It was better to leave such exciting things to others.

It would be fine if he won. But if he lost, his reputation would go down the drain.

Although Zhou Shu didn’t think that he would lose, he felt that there was no need to take the risk.

With what the Forging Division was paying him as a superintendent of a small workshop, was it worth it?

“Among the Forging Division’s Forging Apprentices, is there anyone better than you?” Yin Wuyou asked.

Zhou Shu still shook his head. “Grand Minister, it’s useless to flatter me. Who knows how the Standard Armament Manual ranks standard weapons?”

Standard weapons were different from ranked weapons. Ranked weapons had strict rankings. It was a matter of which was stronger.

But the strength of standard weapons was subjective.

The swords used by cavalry were more lethal than those used by infantry. Did this mean that their swords were better?

Bows and arrows could attack from a distance, so they must be stronger than daggers?

All of this had to be included in the Standard Armament Manual.

The Heavenly Mountain Villa had their own set of algorithms for this matter. Although it could be considered fair, no one knew exactly how it was determined.

In the past, no one paid too much attention to the Standard Armament Manual. After all, standard weapons were not divine weapons. The difference in quality was not that big.

What everyone was more concerned about was the Ranked Armament Manual.

Therefore, in the past, which standard weapons ranked at the top and the bottom, no one would mind or take it seriously.

Who knew what went wrong with Great Wei this time? They were actually using this to bet!

"Since Shen Yue dares to propose that, he must have made some preparations. I don't even know how the weapons in the Standard Armament Manual are ranked. Isn't this making me take the blame? No way!" Zhou Shu firmly shook his head.

"You really won't agree?" Yin Wuyou's pretty face turned cold, and she took a step closer to Zhou Shu. She raised her head and puffed out her chest, her towering parts almost touching Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu's gaze drifted away. As he breathed in the pleasant scent of her body, his mind began to wander.

"No!" However, he still maintained his rationality.

"You have to do it no matter what!" Yin Wuyou suddenly reached out and grabbed Zhou Shu's clothes with both hands. Her pretty face was almost stuck to Zhou Shu's face as she bared her two little canine teeth and spoke fiercely.

Zhou Shu looked at the beautiful face that was so close to him. Her skin was as white as snow, and her veins were clearly visible. It was almost impossible to see any pores.

Zhou Shu felt his body heat up.

He carefully moved back and said, "Grand Minister, mind your status. It is improper for men and women to touch each other.

"Shouldn't both parties be willing? There's no use forcing me."

"Tell me. What must I do for you to agree?" Yin Wuyou said angrily. "Don't you want to help Great Xia win back the You and Bing prefectures at all?"

"Grand Minister, I look in the mirror every morning," Zhou Shu said seriously.

"What, are you saying that you're handsome?" Yin Wuyou snapped.

"Uh..." *Although this is a fact, I'm not saying this!*

"I know what I'm capable of! Recovering lost land is something great generals should do. Who am I? Am I capable of it?" Zhou Shu said.

“You weren’t in the past. Isn’t this your chance now?” Yin Wuyou earnestly advised.

Of course, she could directly give the order and even have Emperor Yuan Feng issue an imperial decree to order Zhou Shu to compete with Shen Yue.

However, forcing Zhou Shu to agree to something like this was definitely not as effective as getting him to agree.

“Zhou Shu, as long as you succeed, it’s not impossible for you to be conferred a rank of nobility and become a minister,” Yin Wuyou said.

“Conferred a rank of nobility and become a minister?” Zhou Shu shook his head. *She’s starting to exaggerate.*

The prerequisite to being conferred a rank of nobility and becoming a minister was to win.

What if he lost?

Why don’t you say that if I lose, the citizens of Great Xia will curse me to death?

That’s not all. Great Wei likes to draw up an assassination list. If I beat their genius, won’t they put my name in it?

When the time comes, there will be people trying to kill me from time to time. How will I live then?

“Grand Minister, I just want to say this. The Standard Armament Manual is about to be released. In such a short period of time, I won’t be able to develop any new weapons. If the weapons I forged previously can make it onto the rankings and luckily win against Shen Yue, so be it. But if they can’t, then I can’t do anything either. Anyway, I can’t specially forge a weapon to compete with him,” Zhou Shu said, not giving in.

Yin Wuyou frowned and said with a pleading voice, “That won’t do. This time, not only does Shen Yue want to get first place in the Standard Armament Manual, but he also wants to suppress Great Xia in every type of weapon. Sabers, spears, swords, halberds, all eighteen types of weapons, he wants to compete with the Great Xia’s Forging Apprentices one by one!”

“He’s so talented?” Zhou Shu was only a little surprised, but he didn’t really care. Knowing more didn’t mean that one understood more.

Someone had to be good if they knew how to forge all eighteen kinds of weapons?

If one didn’t master them, would one become a laughing stock?

Zhou Shu even suspected that this Shen fellow was still a Forging Apprentice now because he was too distracted.

Of course, he might really be a genius. He might have other plans for not advancing to Forging Master.

“Grand Minister, you’ve got the wrong person. I only know how to forge sabers...” Zhou Shu said.

There were no other weapons in the Legendary Armament Canon now.

"You are a genius. It should be easy for you to comprehend the forging techniques of other weapons once you manage to understand one!" Yin Wuyou said with certainty.

Zhou Shu was speechless. *Princess, am I glowing in your eyes? Doesn't that make me seem too heroic?*

Shen Yue might be a real genius, but Zhou Shu was really not a genius...

Without the Legendary Armament Canon, his forging skills might not even be comparable to those of Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the other veterans.

Zhou Shu had a deep understanding of his poor aptitude in his previous life.

Of course, with the Legendary Armament Canon, Zhou Shu wasn't afraid of him.

"Grand Minister, in any case, the winner is decided by the ranking on the Standard Armament Manual. Is there any point in playing so many tricks?" Zhou Shu was speechless.

"If he can suppress the Forging Division with all eighteen types of weapons, Great Xia will lose without waiting for the Standard Armament Manual to be released!" Yin Wuyou said. "Furthermore, if we let him be too awe-inspiring in Great Xia, where would the dignity of Great Xia be?"

"Alright." Zhou Shu shrugged. *As long as you are happy.*

"In that case, Grand Minister, you should go and find some apprentices who are good at forging these weapons instead of wasting your time with me."

"Zhou Shu!" Yin Wuyou was enraged. A beauty was a beauty. Even if she was angry, she was still so beautiful...

"Do you have to go against me?"

How am I going against you? Zhou Shu was confused.

As it turned out, women could not be reasoned with.

"You're mine now. If I ask you to do it, you have to do it!"

After saying this, Yin Wuyou turned around to leave. "Tomorrow, Shen Yue will come to the Forging Division's workshops. If you don't turn up, then just wait and see!"

She left angrily, leaving Zhou Shu speechless.

Aren't you forcing someone to put a square peg into a round hole?

If you push me too hard, I—I will deliberately lose! Zhou Shu thought angrily.

It was only because he couldn't bear to leave the Forging Division that a little girl could threaten him.

Then again, her threat didn't seem all that threatening.

I won't show my face. Just wait and see.

Will the emperor punish me for this?

This isn't the responsibility of a workshop superintendent.

That's right. He was no longer just a Forging Apprentice. He was a workshop superintendent!

In theory, he could even forgo forging standard weapons!

At this thought, he whistled. *Little girl, you're still too inexperienced to fight with me. I won't show up tomorrow. What can you do?*

He didn't have the time to play with Shen Yue. If he had the time, he would rather forge a few more Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber.

There was no benefit in competing with Shen Yue!

Speaking of which, I wonder if the Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, Horse Slaying Saber, Spring Embroidered Saber, or Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber will be able to rank first.

A thought flashed across Zhou Shu's mind, but he immediately tossed it aside.

He didn't want his weapons to be ranked. He knew very well what kind of weapons he had forged. There was no need to obtain affirmation through other people's rankings.

The emperor is unreliable as well. Putting everything else aside, with the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and the Horse Slaying Sabers, the strength of Great Xia's armies has definitely increased greatly. Isn't it enough to recover the You and Bing prefectures directly? Is there a need to bet?

Zhou Shu didn't know much about the state of this world. These were just his thoughts. Who knew what the exact situation was like?

Perhaps an ordinary army wouldn't be able to determine the outcome of a battle.

In the past, Zhou Shu had thought that as long as an ordinary army had enough numbers, they would be able to crush powerful martial artists.

But after he met a true expert, his opinion wavered.

The top experts of this world were much stronger than he had imagined.

Therefore, things with the military might not be as simple as he thought.

Who cares? It has nothing to do with me anyway.

Zhou Shu turned his attention back to the Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers. *I've already forged ninety-three Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers. With seven more, I'll complete the task.*

I'll work harder and try to max it out tomorrow.

After the number of Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers reached 100, a new page would appear in the Legendary Armament Canon.

He wondered if it would be a ranked weapon this time.

He had already forged quite a number of standard weapons. After witnessing the power of heaven-grade weapons last time, he was now looking forward to forging ranked weapons.

Weapons were similar to cultivators. Once they were ranked, it would be a brand new world.

But the forging process of ranked weapons required a lot of external conditions such as forging materials. These were all very expensive. The materials provided by the Forging Division were limited, and it was impossible for them to be consumed freely.

The four heaven-grade weapons he had obtained from Zhu Chuanfeng could be used as the starting capital for his own weapons.

It's a pity I lost three of them. Otherwise...

Zhou Shu thought fiercely, It's all because of that imperial preceptor! Why don't I wait for Great Wei's diplomatic mission team to leave and secretly beat him up? A country's diplomatic mission team should be quite rich, right?

I just don't know how much my cultivation can improve by the time they leave. If I can reach perfection in both the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique, I can give it a try.

Zhou Shu actually began to seriously consider this issue. He wasn't interested in competing with Shen Yue, but he was very interested in robbing Great Wei's diplomatic mission team!

Chapter 114: You're Thinking Too Much

"Great Xia's Forging Division truly lives up to its reputation!"

...

At the entrance of Great Xia's Forging Division's workshops, a handsome young man in his twenties spoke with a smile.

Not far away, Yin Wuyou, Meng Jinguang, and the other three ministers of the Forging Division were expressionless.

"Great Wei's Forging Division isn't bad either," Meng Jinguang said.

Yin Wuyou didn't want to speak on such an occasion. As the number one minister beneath Yin Wuyou, he naturally couldn't remain silent.

No matter how much he disliked the other party, the other party was still an envoy from another country. He couldn't embarrass Great Xia in front of him.

"We can't compare. We can't compare." Shen Yue shook his head and smiled. The others didn't know if he was referring to Great Xia being incomparable to Great Wei or Great Wei being incomparable to Great Xia.

Shen Yue was extremely good-looking. He was wearing a light blue robe with a long sword hanging from his waist, looking carefree and elegant.

Even though they were enemies, Yin Wuyou and the others had to admit that this person was indeed exceptional.

"Your Highness, I heard that your country has a genius Forging Apprentice. As an apprentice, he obtained the qualifications to participate in Great Xia's military parade. I wonder if I have the honor of meeting him today?" Shen Yue looked at Yin Wuyou with expressive eyes.

Yin Wuyou felt a little uncomfortable under his gaze and frowned slightly. "You'll see him."

Shen Yue had been looking at her with a gaze that made her very uncomfortable since they met. Although she was angry, Shen Yue wasn't rude, so she couldn't make things difficult for him.

She only hoped that Zhou Shu could help her teach Shen Yue a lesson!

"I have been learning how to forge since I was a child. At the time, I already knew that Great Xia was a sacred ground for forging. Today, I finally have the chance to witness Great Xia's forging techniques. I am extremely happy." Shen Yue smiled.

"I hope you'll still be so happy later," Yin Wuyou said coldly.

Shen Yue smiled slightly. "I will. Even if I'm defeated today, being able to witness Great Xia's forging technique and recognize my own inadequacies is also a great blessing."

Yin Wuyou walked into the workshop without saying anything more.

Meng Jinguang made a gesture of invitation and followed behind Yin Wuyou. Together, they walked through the door of the Forging Division's workshops.

The Forging Division's workshops were a military factory. This place was like a military base.

Normally, irrelevant people shouldn't even think about getting close.

Although Shen Yue was the deputy envoy of Great Wei's diplomatic mission team, under normal circumstances, it was impossible for him to come into contact with Great Xia's Forging Division's workshops.

But this time, one of the stages of the two sides' betting match was the competition between Shen Yue and the Forging Division's Forging Apprentices.

It was also Shen Yue's request to come here.

In order to take back the two prefectures, Emperor Yuan Feng had gone all out and agreed to this condition.

However, although it was easy for Shen Yue to enter the workshops, it wouldn't be so easy for him to see any secrets.

Things that involved secret forging techniques had long been kept away from sight.

Shen Yue could at most take a look at the construction of the Forging Division's workshops.

A row of forging furnaces had been set up on the spacious square, and the flames in the furnaces were burning fiercely.

Next to the square were ordinary iron materials.

Forging standard weapons only required ordinary iron.

A dozen or so well-built Forging Apprentices stood in a line.

They were the Forging Apprentices whom Yin Wuyou and the others had specially selected. They were all experts from the various workshops.

It was a little difficult for them to develop new weapons, but they were definitely good at forging Great Xia's standard weapons.

Shen Yue's gaze swept over the dozen or so Forging Apprentices, and a hint of disappointment flashed across his eyes.

"I wonder which one of you is Zhou Shu, who forged the Horse Slaying Saber?" Shen Yue asked.

Yin Wuyou's expression changed. *He really didn't come!*

This damn Zhou Shu!

Although she was cursing in her heart, Yin Wuyou didn't show any change in her expression and said coldly, "He's not here. He'll come later."

"That's good." Killing intent flashed in Shen Yue's eyes. "To be honest, Your Highness, the person I want to see the most this time is Zhou Shu.

"The training system of our Great Wei's forgers is different from Great Xia's. The forgers of your country use a master-and-disciple system, and your Forging Apprentices are just skilled workers. The forgers of our Great Wei start from Forging Apprentices. No matter how talented they are, they still need to be an apprentice for three years before they can learn Forging Master skills.

"Let's not talk about the advantages and disadvantages of both systems for now. Zhou Shu was actually able to develop several new weapons despite being just a Forging Apprentice. If he were in our Great Wei, we would have already focused on nurturing him..."

"Are you saying that Great Xia doesn't value him enough?" Yin Wuyou said with a cold expression, but she was also a little flustered.

Is Great Xia really not good enough to Zhou Shu?

It seemed to be true. Zhou Shu had contributed five new weapons: the Huben Saber, the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, the Horse Slaying Saber, the Spring Embroidered Saber, and the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber.

Furthermore, the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber had greatly increased the strength of Great Xia's Country Protector Army.

But what did the Imperial Court reward him with?

It only gave him the title of workshop superintendent.

Now that she thought about it, this reward was definitely not enough.

"I don't mean anything by it," Shen Yue said.

“Perhaps your country has other considerations. After all, the situation in our two countries is different. I’m just saying that if he were in our Great Wei, such a talent would be arranged to study under a Grand Craftsman...”

The more Shen Yue spoke, the more flustered Yin Wuyou became. The bit of resentment she had for Zhou Shu in her heart had long vanished into thin air.

She was a little worried now. *Is Shen Yue here to poach him?*

Could Zhou Shu really be persuaded by him?

Great Xia has indeed treated him unfairly.

With this thought, Yin Wuyou became restless.

She couldn’t wait to find Zhou Shu and explain. It wasn’t that Great Xia didn’t want to nurture him, nor was it that they couldn’t find him a teacher who was a Grand Craftsman. It was just that...

Even she felt that her words were not convincing enough.

Why didn’t I think of this before?

Could it be that the Great Xia’s Forging Division has already reached such a level in suppressing Forging Apprentices?

“Let’s not talk about this anymore.” The corner of Shen Yue’s mouth raised. “Back to the topic. Your Highness, let’s begin. Let me experience Great Xia’s standard weapon forging techniques.”

“Deputy Envoy Shen,” Meng Jinguang said coldly. “To be honest, our two countries’ standard weapons have confronted each other many times on the battlefield. This competition doesn’t seem necessary, right?”

“Minister Meng, you are talking about the past.” Shen Yue shook his head.

“I have never seen the power of your country’s new Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and Horse Slaying Saber.

“Furthermore, Great Wei has a few new weapons that haven’t appeared on the battlefield. This time, we want to compete with Great Xia’s standard weapons.”

Meng Jinguang really wanted to say, ‘If you want to see them, then let’s meet on the battlefield or at the Ten Nations Martial Arts Tournament.’

But he also knew that saying this was just nonsense. The emperor had already agreed to this competition. No matter how much he said, it would only be nonsense.

Fortunately, this competition was only carried out within the Forging Division. Even if the Forging Division lost, the impact was still within their control.

Actually, other than Shen Yue himself, everyone else felt that this match was a little strange.

It was completely unnecessary.

As long as the weapons were forged, they would be included in the Heavenly Mountain Villa's Standard Armament Manual. It could be said that even if Great Xia and Great Wei forged the standard weapons privately, the other party didn't need to know, and this bet could still be carried out.

The competition between Shen Yue and the Forging Division's workshops was simply superfluous.

Yin Wuyou had previously explained to Zhou Shu that Shen Yue was doing this to lower morale in the Forging Division. It was just her own guess. As for the exact reason, perhaps only Shen Yue himself knew.

"Although guests should follow the host's wishes, this competition was proposed by me. Then, let me start first." Shen Yue smiled. "If I don't show some real ability, I'm afraid your country's Zhou Shu won't appear easily, right?"

"That's true. It's normal for a genius who has developed killing weapons like the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber to be a bit arrogant. I can understand."

As Shen Yue spoke, he unceremoniously walked in front of a forging furnace, selected some iron ingots, and threw them into the smelting furnace. Then he started to forge as if there was no one else around.

Shen Yue's seemingly casual words made Yin Wuyou even more restless.

That's right. Why didn't I take such a forging genius seriously before?

Wasn't my attitude toward him a little too bad?

Furthermore, he has developed five new weapons and contributed so much to Great Xia. What did Great Xia do for him?

He was only given the title of workshop superintendent. It seems he even paid for the construction of the 0th Workshop.

Grand Xia treated him like this, yet he was still willing to work hard without complaint. Why?

Yin Wuyou suddenly thought of the poem, and her face flushed red.

Just like Gushe Immortal, they are ethereal and graceful, and otherworldly and unsullied; With myriad flowers in array, who believe in the Dao? The blossoms have been aloof from other flowers; But their nobleness, elegance, and extraordinariness have not been perceived by the earthly world; Only when they return to the Jade Pavilion, can their uniqueness be perceived.

Every time Yin Wuyou thought of this poem, she felt that Zhou Shu was praising her too much. Only now did she understand that this wasn't praising her too much but Zhou Shu expressing his feelings.

Ah, Yin Wuyou, Yin Wuyou, you're really too foolish!

Could it be that he's willing to suffer and stay in Great Xia's Forging Division for my sake?

That's right. Otherwise, why didn't he say anything after suffering so many grievances? Why does he continue to stay in the Forging Division and work hard without complaint?

This poem has already made it so clear. If this wasn't the case, why would he make such a poem?

Why else would he praise me?

Yin Wuyou's face heated up, and her heart was in a mess. For a moment, she wasn't even paying attention to Shen Yue's forging. Her entire being was in a state of panic, and she didn't know how to face Zhou Shu. She didn't know whether to accept him or reject him.

Unfortunately, the forging genius Zhou Shu didn't know what Yin Wuyou was thinking.

If he knew, he would definitely tell Yin Wuyou: *Your Highness, don't flatter yourself.*

I'm staying at the Forging Division because I can use the Forging Division to send the weapons I forge to the military.

Otherwise, how could I get benefits from the Legendary Armament Canon?

As for how Great Xia treats me, I really don't care!

Zhou Shu actually didn't feel wronged. He hadn't even thought about what significance the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber had.

To him, the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber was the Heavenly Saber Art, while the Horse Slaying Saber was the Golden Bell Shield Technique.

As long as they had the opportunity to kill enemies, Zhou Shu had never thought about whether he could use them to earn money.

Speaking of which, it was strange. He had wanted to rob the Great Wei's diplomatic mission team to accumulate funds, but he had never thought of using the standard weapons he had developed to get some benefits from the Great Xia Imperial Court.

In a sense, Zhou Shu had contributed the Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, Horse Slaying Saber, Spring Embroidered Saber, and Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber. But Great Xia's reward for him was indeed not generous enough, and it was even a bit stingy.

Not to mention gold, silver, or treasures, he was only given the position of a ninth-rank official after making such a huge contribution.

Logically speaking, this was already considered a military achievement, and it wasn't a small one at that!

Not to mention giving him a rank of nobility, it wouldn't be too much to confer him the title of marquis!

Although Zhou Shu had never thought about this matter, even if he had, he wouldn't have left the Forging Division.

He never had any hopes of being rewarded. He didn't stay in the Forging Division for the sake of promotion and wealth. He stayed here because the Forging Division was useful to him.

After all, to him, the greatest use of the Forging Division was to serve as a channel.

Furthermore, he was quite comfortable in the Forging Division. His overall impression of Great Xia was also quite good. Most importantly, his body was indeed a native of Great Xia.

At this moment, Zhou Shu was hiding in the backyard of the 0th Workshop, forging weapons.

After the previous spy incident, the backyard of the 0th Workshop had become a restricted area. Even Zhang Yibei wouldn't step into the backyard without Zhou Shu's permission.

Furthermore, Zhang Yibei had arranged for people to patrol the area, fearing that someone would steal weapons from the backyard.

This way, Zhou Shu felt much more at peace, so he let Zhang Yibei do as he pleased.

After Zhang Yibei was punished with two lashes, not only did he not bear any hatred, but he even became more responsible.

This made Zhou Shu understand that blindly imitating the things from his previous life might not be suitable for this world.

Taking care of a workshop was really a skill.

He couldn't be too distant or too close. Just thinking about it gave Zhou Shu a headache.

He really didn't have the talent to be a capitalist!

In comparison, forging was becoming increasingly easy for him.

Compared to managing others, he preferred to forge and become stronger alone.

The final Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber is finally completed!

Zhou Shu gripped the hilt of his saber and excitedly performed a few moves of the Heavenly Saber Art. After working tirelessly for a few days, he was finally done.

Although it was still unclear who the Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers would be distributed to, he had already forged the one hundred sabers. And the Legendary Armament Canon could flip to the next page!

Zhou Shu impatiently summoned the Legendary Armament Canon.

The Legendary Armament Canon flipped rapidly and finally stopped on a blank page.

On the blank page, it was as if someone was writing, and the contents quickly appeared.

This is... The content before Zhou Shu's eyes gradually became complete.. His eyes grew brighter and brighter. In the end, he couldn't help crying out in alarm, *It's actually this!*

Chapter 115: Are You Trying to Get a Share of My Winnings?

"Your Highness, are these the best standard weapons of Great Xia?" Shen Yue said with a face full of disappointment. "If it's only at this level, then I feel that this bet is meaningless."

...

Yin Wuyou, Meng Jinguang, and the others' expressions were extremely ugly.

Shen Yue had only taken four hours to forge three standard weapons: a spear, a saber, and a halberd.

On Great Xia's side, they sent three elite Forging Apprentices to forge weapons. They also used four hours to forge three weapons: Great Xia's standard long spear, standard saber, and standard halberd.

They were the same type of weapons, but it was obvious how much better they were!

The standard weapons forged by Shen Yue were not existing standard weapons of Great Wei but weapons they had never heard of before!

They even guessed that these were Shen Yue's trump cards and also the reason why Great Wei dared to bet with Great Xia.

It had to be said that the standard weapons forged by Shen Yue were indeed more powerful than the original standard weapons of Great Xia.

The difference was about the same as Great Xia's standard long saber and the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber...

In other words, the three weapons forged by Shen Yue had completely surpassed the three weapons of Great Xia.

"Your Highness, I feel that there is no need for us to waste any more time. Please invite Zhou Shu out," Shen Yue said. "I'm not targeting anyone. Unless anyone here can forge a standard weapon of the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber's level—"

Disdain appeared on Shen Yue's face. It was obvious that the standard weapons of Great Xia did not have a place in his eyes.

The expressions of Yin Wuyou, Meng Jinguang, and the others became even uglier.

They knew very well that other than saber-type weapons, Great Xia didn't have any breakthroughs in other types of weapons. Now, the weapons forged by these apprentices were the strongest standard weapons in Great Xia.

Meng Jinguang and the other ministers looked at Yin Wuyou. It was as if they were using their eyes to ask why Zhou Shu hadn't come yet.

The 0th Workshop was Yin Wuyou's personal workshop, and Zhou Shu was Yin Wuyou's trusted aide. Meng Jinguang and the others had never interacted with Zhou Shu before.

Including this incident, it was Yin Wuyou who had directly informed Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu's absence was Yin Wuyou's responsibility.

Yin Wuyou turned a blind eye to everyone's gazes.

She had been angry before, but now, she only felt guilt toward Zhou Shu.

Great Xia had already treated him so badly. There was no reason for him to get involved in this mess.

Right now, she wouldn't take the initiative to ask Zhou Shu to come over, nor would she force Zhou Shu to participate in that bet.

As for whether Great Xia could win or not, it would depend on fate.

Yin Wuyou didn't answer, but Shen Yue didn't give up.

"Could Zhou Shu be afraid?" Shen Yue said. "If that's the case, then—"

"He's not afraid!" Yin Wuyou interrupted. "He has other matters to attend to, so he might not be able to make it back in time.

"Since Deputy Envoy Shen's skills are superior, then today's competition is my Great Xia's Forging Division lost."

Yin Wuyou felt that there was no need to continue this competition. In any case, it had nothing to do with the overall situation. She didn't want to continue accompanying Shen Yue in acting perfunctory anymore. She only wanted to go back and comfort Zhou Shu.

"Grand Minister!" The expressions of Meng Jinguang and the others changed.

Although this competition had nothing to do with the bet, admitting defeat like this would cause the Great Xia's Forging Division's reputation to plummet.

How could she admit defeat just like that?

"Grand Minister, I'll call Zhou Shu over!" a minister said in a deep voice.

Although they didn't really like Zhou Shu, it was undeniable that he was the only Forging Apprentice in the Forging Division who could handle this matter.

Meng Jinguang and the others didn't think as much as Yin Wuyou did, and they weren't worried about Zhou Shu not coming.

He was just a Forging Apprentice and a workshop superintendent. How could they not order him around?

Yin Wuyou shook her head. "I've already made up my mind. No need for nonsense!"

Meng Jinguang and the others were indignant, but they didn't dare to voice it out.

"Your Highness, what you said isn't right." Shen Yue shook his head. "Winning is winning, and losing is losing. Without competing with Great Xia's strongest Forging Apprentice, I won't live up to my name."

"It's fine if you want to compete with him. Minister Meng, bring a Horse Slaying Saber over." Yin Wuyou said coldly, "Deputy Envoy Shen, if you can forge a standard long saber that's stronger than the Horse Slaying Saber, then you've really won."

"Grand Minister!" Meng Jinguang and the others exclaimed.

Although the Horse Slaying Saber was good, Shen Yue wasn't weak either.

In their view, they should call Zhou Shu over and see if he could develop an even stronger weapon.

"Do as I say!" Yin Wuyou solemnly said.

"Your Highness, could it be that Zhou Shu has something to hide?" Shen Yue said with a burning gaze.

Yin Wuyou's face darkened as she said coldly, "Deputy Envoy Shen, watch your words! This is Great Xia, not Great Wei!"

"I misspoke." Shen Yue shrugged with a smile. "I just don't understand. I just want to meet Zhou Shu. Why is Your Highness making so many excuses? With everyone here, are you all still worried that I'll hurt him?"

Not only was Shen Yue a Forging Apprentice, but he was also a fourth-rank martial artist. With his age and cultivation base, he could be considered a genius that only appeared once in a hundred years.

"You are thinking too much," Yin Wuyou said coldly. "I said he has more important things to do."

"Haha, are the two prefectures not important enough? Since when did Great Xia become so generous?" Shen Yue smiled.

Meng Jinguang and the others were also very puzzled. Why was the grand minister like this?

Didn't they agree yesterday that Zhou Shu would come and compete with him?

Did something happen to Zhou Shu?

Countless thoughts flashed through their minds, both good and bad.

"Deputy Envoy Shen, we competed to exchange pointers. Our Great Xia only has these people. Now that you've won, there's no need to be so overbearing," Yin Wuyou said coldly. "Please leave."

"I see." Shen Yue seemed to understand something. "Looks like I have to think of a way myself to meet Zhou Shu."

"Shen Yue!" Anger appeared on Yin Wuyou's face, and she said coldly, "I said before. This is Great Xia, not a place where you can act recklessly!"

Shen Yue shrugged. From the looks of it, he didn't take Yin Wuyou's threat to heart.

Right at this moment, a lazy voice suddenly sounded. "Someone wants to see me?"

He saw Zhou Shu walking toward the crowd.

"It's you, right?" Zhou Shu came in front of everyone and sized up Shen Yue. "You wanted to see me?"

"Zhou Shu?" Shen Yue's face sank slightly, and the smile on his face disappeared.

"It's me." Zhou Shu nodded. "I didn't expect my reputation to spread out of Great Xia. Although I have some ability, you don't have to admire me too much. After all, you can't learn my skills."

Yin Wuyou looked at Zhou Shu, who had suddenly appeared, and a light flashed in her eyes. She was extremely moved. *He came. He finally came.*

For me, he still came to get involved in this mess.

Zhou Shu didn't look at Yin Wuyou. Instead, he continued to look at Shen Yue. "I heard that you are representing Great Wei to challenge Great Xia?"

"You're not a coward anymore? You're finally willing to fight me?" Shen Yue replied coldly without answering the question.

"You've misunderstood." Zhou Shu shook his head. "I'm just here to see how you can be so arrogant."

"From the looks of it, there's nothing special about you. I thought you had three heads and six arms."

"Cut the crap!" Shen Yue said coldly. "Zhou Shu, the other Forging Apprentices of Great Xia's Forging Division are too weak. If you're a man, then fight me. Let the world see if you, the number one Forging Apprentice of Great Xia, are worthy of your reputation!"

"Say..." Zhou Shu pretended not to know Shen Yue's name. "You speak so arrogantly. Those who don't know might even think that you are a Grand Craftsman. If you have the ability, go and challenge a Grand Craftsman. Otherwise, a Forging Master works too."

"We are both Forging Apprentices. Who is stronger? I really don't know where your sense of superiority comes from."

Zhou Shu's words made the surrounding Forging Apprentices nod in agreement. *That's right. We're all Forging Apprentices. What's so impressive about you? If you're really so good, go and challenge a Forging Master!*

Shen Yue narrowed his eyes, his expression cold.

"I thought that the person who developed the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber would be a hero, but it seems that I was overthinking," Shen Yue said coldly.

"Are you provoking me?" Zhou Shu glanced at him out of the corner of his eye. "Do you think I need your approval? What do your thoughts have to do with me?"

"Who do you think you are?"

Killing intent flashed in Shen Yue's eyes. "You don't dare to compete with me?"

"It's not that I don't dare, it's that I'm too lazy to compete with you," Zhou Shu said. "Unless..."

"Unless what?" Shen Yue asked.

"Look, Great Xia and Great Wei are betting on the number one ranking in the Standard Armament Manual. The stakes are the two prefectures."

"As for me, Zhou Shu, I'm also someone with status. If I don't get any rewards from competing with others, wouldn't that be embarrassing?"

"If you want me to give you pointers, sure. Bring out enough stakes."

Shen Yue narrowed his eyes. He didn't mind that Zhou Shu had taken advantage of him with his words. It was not important he was giving him pointers, or if they were competing.

"You want to bet with me?"

Originally, he had used the excuse of coming to Great Xia's Forging Division to exchange pointers in order to probe Great Xia's secrets and suppress their prestige.

Of course, there was another reason. He wanted to see Zhou Shu!

Originally, the outcome of this match had nothing to do with the overall situation.

But now that Zhou Shu had said this, he wouldn't refuse.

"Hmph, what do you want to bet?" Shen Yue sneered.

"Two prefectures are too much," Zhou Shu said in a low voice.

Shen Yue cursed inwardly, *Do you think you are worthy of betting so much with me?*

"One prefecture is more like it," Zhou Shu seemed to be muttering to himself. "Grand Minister, which prefecture do you like the most?"

Yin Wuyou was startled. *Which prefecture of Great Wei do I like the most?*

What does he mean?

"Zhou Shu, if you're afraid, just say it! Don't find any excuses!" Shen Yue was furious.

Using a prefecture as a bet?

Isn't that bullshit?

Even if Shen Yue had an extraordinary status in Great Wei, what right did he have to decide the ownership of a prefecture?

The You and Bing prefectures were agreed upon by the higher-ups, not proposed by Shen Yue himself!

By the same logic, what right did Zhou Shu have to bet with a prefecture?

If he lost, would Great Xia really give up an entire prefecture?

Was this a joke?

"I'm just kidding. You really don't have any sense of humor." Zhou Shu pursed his lips. "You look so poor. I don't think there is much you can bet.

"How about this? I'll be direct. How about we bet ten thousand gold taels?"

"Ten thousand taels of gold?" Shen Yue frowned.

"That's right. If I win, you'll give me ten thousand taels of gold. If you win, I'll give you ten thousand taels of gold. Isn't this fair?" Zhou Shu said. "Are you afraid?"

"Would I be afraid?" Shen Yue sneered. "Who will judge who wins and who loses?"

In the previous match between the Forging Apprentices, the difference between the two sides was too great, so Shen Yue wasn't worried that the people judging would make a wrong judgment.

But if the strength of both standard weapons were too close to each other, then the winner would depend on the judge.

"Are you a layman?" Zhou Shu said disdainfully. "Do we need outsiders to judge this? Unless you're shameless, how can we not know who wins?"

"Hmph." Shen Yue snorted. They had more say in the quality of weapons than outsiders.

If they couldn't even tell the quality of weapons, they were not worthy of being called forging geniuses.

"Very well. I'll bet with you!" Shen Yue said coldly. "I can take out ten thousand taels of gold, but you..."

Shen Yue sized up Zhou Shu. "Are you sure you can afford it? Don't go back on your word later!"

Ten thousand taels of gold was a huge sum even for his status.

If he could really win ten thousand taels of gold, it would be considered an unexpected gain.

"If he loses, I'll pay for it!" Yin Wuyou said before Zhou Shu could speak.

Zhou Shu opened his mouth. *What's the meaning of this? The grand minister is so generous? Are you trying to get a share of my winnings?*

If I lose, you pay. If I win, will you get half of it?

"You don't have to—" Zhou Shu wanted to decline.

Yin Wuyou said without any room for question, "That's right! Deputy Envoy Shen, do you think I can't afford ten thousand taels of gold?"

"Since Your Highness has said so, then I have nothing to doubt." Shen Yue nodded.

"Wait, I haven't agreed yet," Zhou Shu interrupted them. "Shen something? This is a bet between you and me. It has nothing to do with anyone else.

"Ten thousand taels of gold is nothing.

"Don't tell me you don't know? I am the sworn brother of the eldest son of the Mi family, Mi Ziwen. Do you know the Mi family? They are the richest family in the capital. Let alone ten thousand taels of gold, even a hundred thousand taels or one million taels wouldn't be a big deal."

It wasn't easy for him to get a chance to take some money from the Great Wei diplomatic mission team, so how could he share it with others?

He glared at Yin Wuyou and said with his eyes, *We may be familiar with each other, but don't think about stealing my benefits.*

Perhaps Yin Wuyou understood the meaning behind his gaze, so she pouted with slight grievance and didn't say anything else.

"Mi Ziwen's sworn brother? Very good!" Shen Yue gritted his teeth. "In that case, I'll take the ten thousand taels of gold from the Mi family first!"

Chapter 116: You Slay Horses, I Slay Dragons

“Why are you here?” Yin Wuyou asked gently while handing Zhou Shu a water kettle.

...

Zhou Shu looked at her strangely. *Didn't you ask me to come?*

Women, humph!

He felt that Yin Wuyou was acting a little strange today. She seemed to be harboring evil intentions from the way she was looking at him.

She had never spoken like this in the past!

Although she was pretty and had a nice voice, she had always spoken coldly. She was not as gentle as today!

Yes, gentle!

Zhou Shu shuddered. *Is Yin Wuyou plotting something?*

One who is unaccountably solicitous is hiding evil intentions.

Why is she being so gentle to me?

Does she want a share in my ten thousand taels of gold?

Or is that she hasn't given up on getting me to be in charge of Great Xia and Great Wei's bet?

Wariness instantly surfaced in Zhou Shu's eyes, and he silently moved away from Yin Wuyou. “Grand Minister, you ordered me to come. How could I not come?”

Yin Wuyou felt a sharp pain in her heart. *Is he sad?*

Did I hurt him by forcing him to come?

That's right. He has already sacrificed so much for Great Xia, for me. What right do I have to force him?

Tears welled up in Yin Wuyou's eyes as she stared straight at Zhou Shu, looking as though she was about to cry.

Zhou Shu was shocked. *Is she taking a different approach since her previous approach didn't work?*

What's going on today?

Not only is Yin Wuyou acting strange, but Shen Yue is also acting strange.

Why do I feel that he's looking at me with killing intent?

Zhou Shu had cultivated the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form and had even begun to condense his divine sense. He believed in what he felt.

Shen Yue really has killing intent toward me!

Why?

Zhou Shu was very sure that this was the first time he had met Shen Yue.

Could he want to get rid of me because I'm from Great Xia?

This wasn't impossible. After all, Great Wei had created the assassination list previously.

Zhou Shu still remembered that his name was on it.

If this was the reason, then it was normal for Shen Yue to harbor killing intent toward him.

However, he was a deputy envoy. Why would he care about assassinations?

Most importantly, why did he feel that besides killing intent, there was also hatred in his eyes?

Have I offended him before? Zhou Shu was confused.

He hadn't planned to come today. After all, Shen Yue had a reputation. If his five sabers couldn't defeat him, wouldn't it be embarrassing?

Zhou Shu was not interested in being a stepping stone for others.

The reason he came was naturally that he had changed his mind. The reason he changed his mind was very simple. The next weapon had appeared in the Legendary Armament Canon.

Since he was 100% confident, Zhou Shu naturally had to come.

In any case, it was just a matter of time before he forged the weapon. If he could take this opportunity to obtain some benefits, wouldn't it be killing two birds with one stone?

"Are you going to start?" Yin Wuyou was like an obedient little girl as she gently poured tea for Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu felt his hair stand on end. He didn't dare to delay any longer.

"Grand Minister, please," Zhou Shu said. Then he went to a furnace not far away from Shen Yue.

Shen Yue no longer looked at Zhou Shu. He closed his eyes to rest for a moment before opening them.

He was composed.

He was completely focused on the forging.

Even if it was just forging a standard weapon, he had to use 120% of his strength.

A connoisseur's hand could tell the difference.

Zhou Shu could naturally see the change in Shen Yue.

He sighed in his heart. *This pretty boy surnamed Shen really has some ability.*

Great Xia's Forging Apprentices were only skilled workers. Only people like them could be called craftsmen.

Even though Shen Yue was from Great Wei, he wasn't an ordinary person.

The reason he had not advanced to Forging Master was that he was deliberately suppressing himself. It was not because he couldn't become a Forging Master!

Shen Yue's performance made Zhou Shu take this match seriously.

Although he was completely confident, he still had to have the attitude he needed.

In his previous life, it was called the pride of an artisan...

"Minister Meng!" Zhou Shu suddenly said. "Help me bring some iron over. These are not enough."

Minister Meng's face turned black. *I'm your superior's superior, and you're ordering me around?*

However, now was not the time to be calculative. Minister Meng waved his hand, and his subordinate immediately went to make arrangements.

Only ordinary iron could be used to forge standard weapons. As for how much was used, it didn't matter. As long as they didn't use other rare materials, it wasn't against the rules.

Zhou Shu constantly got people to get more iron. The area around his furnace was soon piled up with 50 kilograms of iron.

Even Shen Yue, who was immersed in the process of forging, couldn't help but raise his head and glance in Zhou Shu's direction.

Why does he need so much iron?

Forging a standard weapon shouldn't require that much iron.

Is he worried that the forging won't succeed?

Shen Yue was slightly puzzled. He almost tilted the hammer in his hand. He didn't dare to think too much and focused only on his weapon.

Zhou Shu urged the people around him several times until he was surrounded by 150 kilograms of iron. Only then did he stop talking.

Everyone felt puzzled as they looked at the towering masses of iron around him.

Although Yin Wuyou, Meng Jinguang, and the others weren't forgers, they were the higher-ups of the Forging Division, so they had some understanding of forging.

For the same weapon, the more metal used during forging, the heavier it would be. Correspondingly, the more powerful it would be.

Imagine, who would be more likely to win if a 5-kilogram saber clashed with a 50-kilogram saber?

But the size of the weapon was obvious. Forging a saber that weighed 50 kilograms was completely different from forging a saber that weighed 5 kilograms.

The skill of filling more iron into a fixed volume was a weapon-forging technique in itself.

The Great Xia's Forging Division was indeed capable of forging weapons that weighed 50 kilograms. However, weapons that weighed 150 kilograms were truly unheard of.

“Grand Minister, did Zhou Shu develop a new weapon?” Meng Jinguang asked softly.

Yin Wuyou shook her head and looked nervously at Zhou Shu.

Originally, she had been very calm. But now that Zhou Shu was involved, her heart was in a mess.

She didn’t know what was wrong herself, and she didn’t dare to think too deeply about it.

I’m afraid that he will embarrass the Forging Division! Yin Wuyou thought.

While everyone was guessing, Zhou Shu had already begun to move.

His every move was completely different from that of an ordinary Forging Apprentice. Every movement was precise. Too much or too little strength would be wrong.

Moreover, his actions exuded a sense of beauty.

It made people feel that Zhou Shu was not forging a weapon but dancing...

Little stars appeared in Yin Wuyou’s eyes. He knows how to forge and can write poems. He’s also good-looking. Other than being slightly inferior in martial arts, he simply doesn’t have any flaws.

This competition was conducted within the Forging Division.

In other words, other than the people from Great Xia’s Forging Division and Shen Yue, there were no outsiders present.

Even among Great Xia’s Forging Division, only Grand Minister Yin Wuyou and the four ministers were present. Not a single Grand Craftsman or Forging Master was present.

It was just a match between two Forging Apprentices. It really didn’t interest them.

On the other hand, the ranking of the Standard Armament Manual directly impacted the ownership of the two prefectures. They paid more attention to it than in previous years.

These people didn’t come, resulting in this result.

Other than Zhou Shu and Shen Yue, the rest of the people present were amateurs...

Even the dozen or so carefully selected Forging Apprentices were confused. They couldn’t understand what Zhou Shu and Shen Yue were doing.

Shen Yue buried his head in his weapon, not daring to divert his attention to look at Zhou Shu. Thus, no one could tell what Zhou Shu was doing.

They now saw this as a performance. After all, Zhou Shu’s movements were too beautiful and made people feel that he was very powerful!

“Shen Yue was boasting so loudly just now. It seems he’s losing to Zhou Shu now,” a minister whispered.

Meng Jinguang didn’t want to admit it, but he agreed in his heart. Zhou Shu was indeed impressive.

“Say, which weapon do you think will be ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual this time? Do you think our Great Xia’s Horse Slaying Saber will be ranked first?”

The waiting process was full of anxiety, and the ministers started discussing in hushed voices.

“In previous years, I think there would be a high chance of the Horse Slaying Saber ranking first. However, Great Wei is not a fool. They must have some kind of trump card for them to dare to do this.”

The Horse Slaying Saber had already displayed its might on the battlefield in the southern borders. It was impossible for Great Wei not to have received the news.

Although they couldn't obtain the Horse Slaying Saber, they could definitely understand its might.

Under such circumstances, they still dared to bet with Great Xia. It was impossible that they didn't have any trump cards.

Of course, the imperial family and officials of Great Xia weren't fools. They had definitely thought of this. Since they were willing to agree to the bet, they didn't place all their bets on the Horse Slaying Saber or Zhou Shu.

Great Xia also had its own trump cards.

“I'm looking forward to seeing what new weapon Zhou Shu will forge this time,” a minister said. “It's always refreshing every time he forges a weapon. Who knows. He might be able to forge a weapon even stronger than the Horse Slaying Saber.”

“If it's stronger than the Horse Slaying Saber, then his chances of winning are even higher.”

Yin Wuyou remained silent as she listened to the discussions of the ministers. She was thinking that after this matter was over, she would definitely enter the palace to find her imperial father and seek justice for Zhou Shu.

He had made so many contributions, so shouldn't he deserve more?

This wasn't the way to do things!

Yin Wuyou felt wronged for Zhou Shu.

Did Zhou Shu feel wronged?

Not at all!

Thinking about how he was going to win 10,000 taels of gold from Shen Yue this time, he felt very happy.

What could be happier than earning money?

Money! The kind that didn't need to be returned!

When he thought about the description of this weapon in the Legendary Armament Canon, Zhou Shu couldn't help laughing.

I'm not targeting anyone. I just want to say that all other standard weapons are trash!

Zhou Shu's actions seemed slow, but they were actually not slow at all.

The 150 kilograms of iron was decreasing at a speed visible to the naked eye.

No one paid any attention to it. Otherwise, they would definitely be puzzled. Where did all this iron go?

What they didn't notice was that under Zhou Shu's hammering, a foot-long block of metal seemed to have undergone a strange change. In the end, only a fist-sized chunk remained.

An entire 150 kilograms of iron was hammered by Zhou Shu, leaving behind only iron the size of an adult's fist!

Such an abnormal thing happened in front of everyone.

"What technique is this?" a minister asked in surprise. "Minister Meng, you are experienced and knowledgeable. Has Zhou Shu already advanced to Forging Master? Why do I feel that this seems to be the technique of a Forging Master?"

"It's not a forging technique belonging to a Forging Master." Meng Jinguang shook his head. He didn't understand what technique it was either. "The biggest characteristic of a Forging Master is that they don't use ordinary fire to forge weapons.

"There are many ranked materials that can't be melted by ordinary fire. I think this might be like the hundred refinements steel he proposed before, a technique he created himself.

"Although I don't really understand it, it seems like he hammered out all the impurities in the iron, leaving only the essence within. Using only the essence from a piece of iron, such a weapon forged with the essence..."

As Meng Jinguang spoke, he couldn't help taking a deep breath.

Typically, a standard weapon only required a few kilograms of iron.

Right now, the weapon Zhou Shu was forging hadn't even taken shape yet, but he had already used up 150 kilograms of iron. Not to mention anything else, just the cost of forging this weapon was dozens of times that of ordinary standard weapons.

Meng Jinguang was knowledgeable, but he couldn't imagine what a weapon forged like this would look like.

Meanwhile, after Zhou Shu finished processing the metal, he finally officially began forging.

At this time, Shen Yue had already almost finished forging.

What he forged was also a saber!

It looked like he wanted to defeat Zhou Shu in the domain that he was most skilled in!

The saber forged by Shen Yue was extremely broad, almost two palms wide and about five feet long. The back of the saber was thick, and the blade was thin. One could feel its biting cold killing intent just by looking at it.

The expressions of Yin Wuyou and the others became solemn. This saber's destructive power didn't seem to be inferior to the Horse Slaying Saber's.

It was no wonder that Great Wei was so confident. The saber in front of them might not even be their true trump card, but it was already comparable to the Horse Slaying Saber.

One could imagine how much effort Great Wei had put into making standard weapons!

After Shen Yue finished forging, he didn't leave the furnace, nor did he speak. Instead, he cast his gaze towards Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu's forging had also entered the later stages. Under his hands, the shape of the weapon was already gradually appearing.

Shen Yue could roughly tell that this was another saber that was different from the five standard sabers he had forged previously.

He had indeed developed a new weapon.

Shen Yue's expression was also a little solemn. Not mentioning the might of Zhou Shu's saber, his ability to develop new weapons was already shocking enough. It was no wonder that Great Wei's spies had reported that Zhou Shu should be killed immediately!

Sizzle—

With an ear-piercing sound, Zhou Shu completed the final step of the forging. The saber was soaked in cold oil for a long time. He looked at Shen Yue.

"You're done? That was fast," Zhou Shu said.

"This is your saber?"

"I heard that you've developed the Horse Slaying Saber, which maximizes lethality. Look at my Dragon Slaying Saber. How is it compared to the Horse Slaying Saber?" Shen Yue said proudly.

Pfft! Zhou Shu couldn't help laughing.

Chapter 117: The Pinnacle of Standard Weapons, Great Xia Dragon Sparrow

"The Dragon Slaying Saber?" Zhou Shu laughed until he was out of breath.

...

Shen Yue's expression turned ugly. He didn't know what was so funny!

The saber that I forged is called the Dragon Slaying Saber. What's wrong with it?

Don't you want to slay horses? Then, I'll slay dragons!

Isn't it obvious who's stronger and who's weaker?

When Shen Yue forged the Dragon Slaying Saber, he had treated the Horse Slaying Saber as an imaginary enemy.

To his knowledge, of the five sabers that Zhou Shu had developed, other than the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber, the other three sabers were only slightly better-looking. In terms of might, the best was still the Horse Slaying Saber!

Of course, there was another reason why he used the saber as an imaginary enemy.

"Don't get me wrong. I'm not laughing at you," Zhou Shu explained. "I'm laughing at this saber."

Shen Yue's face turned darker. *Is there a difference?*

"Hmph, is there anything wrong with my Dragon Slaying Saber?" Shen Yue snorted coldly. Although he hated Zhou Shu, he still acknowledged Zhou Shu's abilities.

He was really wondering if Zhou Shu had discovered a flaw in the Dragon Slaying Saber.

"There's nothing wrong with this saber." Zhou Shu shook his head. "I just wanted to say, is it even worthy of being called the Dragon Slaying Saber?"

"One day, I'll show you what a real Dragon Slaying Saber looks like."

Shen Yue's face was as black as the bottom of a pot as he said coldly, "Enough nonsense! Show me your saber!"

His gaze was burning as he stared at the long saber by Zhou Shu's hand.

There was a large ring on the hilt of the sword. It looked like a dragon or a sparrow.

Zhou Shu's lips curled up slightly. "Since you're in such a hurry, I'll let you broaden your horizons.

"This saber is called the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow!"

He raised his arm and pulled out the blade. Cold oil slid down the blade. The blade was bright and clean.

Everyone's attention was drawn to the saber in Zhou Shu's hand.

The blade was three feet and nine inches long. Its back was golden and in the shape of a dragon, and there was a continuous glow on the blade's edge.

Everyone could even hear faint clanging sounds coming from it.

"Great Xia, Dragon Sparrow Saber?" Yin Wuyou muttered to herself.

No standard weapon had ever been named Great Xia before.

But Yin Wuyou didn't feel anything wrong with this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, as if it should be called this.

"Great Xia... Dragon Sparrow Saber?" Shen Yue's expression was solemn. "This is Great Xia's strongest standard saber?"

"No." Zhou Shu shook his head and said indifferently, "It is the strongest standard saber in the world."

Zhou Shu's tone was calm, as if he was stating a fact.

For some reason, when the crowd heard this, they were deeply convinced.

Even Shen Yue seemed to be affected by Zhou Shu's tone. *This Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is the strongest standard saber in the world?*

Oh no! Yin Wuyou thought.

If the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is really so powerful, wouldn't exposing it give Great Wei a chance to react?

What if Great Wei manages to develop a stronger weapon during this period of time?

It's all my fault!

I shouldn't have forced him to compete with Shen Yue!

The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber should have only been made known to Great Wei after it has been ranked in the Standard Armament Manual!

Yin Wuyou was both vexed and proud.

"Is it the strongest just because you say so? I'm dying of laughter." Shen Yue sneered.

Zhou Shu glanced at him as if he was looking at an idiot. "It's not just because I said so. It's the truth.

"Action speaks louder than words. Isn't your saber the Dragon Slaying Saber? If you have the ability, come and slaughter my Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber," Zhou Shu said calmly.

What a joke! The Legendary Armament Canon clearly stated that the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was the pinnacle of standard weapons. It could appease and coax those who are near and far like grass that was swept by the wind, and it could dominate the world with its might!

This was the pinnacle of standard weapons by the standards of the Legendary Armament Canon, not by Forging Masters.

If the Divine Armament Catalog said it was the pinnacle of standard weapons, then it truly was.

Zhou Shu had no doubt about this!

The saber was the king of all weapons, and the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was the pinnacle of the standard sabers. There was no other standard weapon stronger than the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber.

Shen Yue narrowed his eyes. He was a true expert. Even without using his hands, he could tell that the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was indeed a good saber!

His Dragon Slaying Saber might not be comparable!

But he was unwilling to admit defeat just like that.

No matter what, he had to witness the power of this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!

"I'll give it a try!" Shen Yue shouted.

He carried his Dragon Slaying Saber and strode over to Zhou Shu.

"You try my Dragon Slaying Saber, and I'll try this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber! You and I are both experts. We naturally know which is better!"

"There's no need to go through so much trouble. The others might not believe what we say." Zhou Shu pointed at Yin Wuyou, Meng Jinguang, and the others.

"Let's be more straightforward. Use this Dragon Slaying Saber to fight against the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber. The one that gets damaged will lose, and the one still intact will win. It's that simple." Zhou Shu proposed a simple and crude method.

If it was another standard weapon duel, this method would definitely not work. This was because some standard weapons were sharp while others were sturdy. In a clash, it wasn't certain which would be intact.

But the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber and the Dragon Slaying Saber looked the same from the outside. Since their styles were the same, it wasn't a bad idea to decide the winner by making them clash.

Shen Yue frowned in thought for a while before nodding.

Although he had other plans, it was beneath him to cheat during a forging competition.

"Our cultivation levels are too different. Even if I don't use my spiritual essence, you will still suffer," Shen Yue said.

He was a fourth-rank martial artist, while Zhou Shu didn't have a single trace of spiritual essence on his body. It was obvious that his Martial Dao had not entered the ranks.

If he harbored evil intentions, with his cultivation level, he could even use an ordinary standard weapon to damage the weapon in his opponent's hand. However, that would be meaningless.

"Let me try the saber!" Yin Wuyou stepped forward. "My cultivation level is on par with yours, so you can't take advantage of me!"

Yin Wuyou looked at Zhou Shu expectantly.

Zhou Shu felt a little helpless. *Even if you step out now, I won't share the money I win with you!*

He handed the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber to Yin Wuyou.

He knew about Yin Wuyou's cultivation level. Yin Wuyou's true cultivation level was already at the third rank. If Shen Yue really wanted to play dirty, he would be seeking death.

Shen Yue didn't say anything else when he saw Yin Wuyou pick up the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber.

Instead, he and Yin Wuyou raised their sabers at the same time and slashed at each other.

It was just a test. The two of them didn't use their spiritual essence, nor did they use any fancy techniques.

The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber collided with the Dragon Slaying Saber.

Clank!

With a crisp sound, everyone saw sparks fly. Then with a crack, the upper half of the Dragon Slaying Saber fell.

Yin Wuyou took a step forward and brushed past Shen Yue.

The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber in her hand let out a buzzing sound. The dragon on the back of the saber seemed to come alive. The saber was still as good as new!

There was complete silence. Everyone would even be able to hear a needle falling to the ground clearly.

Shen Yue's expression froze.

He had imagined the outcome, but he had never expected it to be like this!

The Dragon Slaying Saber was broken! Broken!

If he hadn't seen it with his own eyes, he wouldn't have believed the outcome!

The Dragon Slaying Saber was personally forged by him to target the Horse Slaying Saber, which Great Xia had displayed its might on the battlefield in the southern borders!

Even if the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was slightly stronger, it would at most chip the Dragon Slaying Saber. Why did the Dragon Slaying Saber break?

Yin Wuyou was also a little stunned. She didn't expect that she could actually sever Shen Yue's Dragon Slaying Saber with one slash.

Shen Yue didn't seem to have an undeserved reputation. Previously, the Forging Apprentices had all failed to defeat him.

This could only mean that the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was strong! Very strong!

"Minister Meng, even a ranked weapon might not be comparable," a minister muttered.

Meng Jinguang was shocked as well. "A ranked weapon is something else. But in terms of sharpness and toughness, ordinary yellow-grade weapons might not even be comparable to this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!"

Zhou Shu nodded in satisfaction.

Just as the Legendary Armament Canon claimed, it was normal for the pinnacle of standard weapons to have such a performance.

"So, Shen something, how do you plan to pay the ten thousand taels of gold? Banknotes or cash?" Zhou Shu said. "Speaking of which, can the banknotes of Great Wei be used here? Don't try to fool me."

Shen Yue had already returned to his senses. He snorted heavily.

I won't do something so shameless.

I will admit defeat. Isn't it just ten thousand taels of gold?

My heart hurts!

Ten thousand taels of gold was equivalent to a year's profit for his family...

Shen Yue endured his heartache and put on a nonchalant expression. "It's just ten thousand taels of gold. I wouldn't go so far as to cheat you.

"I'll get someone to send the banknotes over later. They can be used in Great Xia," Shen Yue added.

Then he looked at Yin Wuyou instead of Zhou Shu, and his gaze paused on the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber in Yin Wuyou's hand. "Your Highness, this matter is settled. I'll take my leave."

"Deputy Envoy Shen, please wait. I will send you off." Meng Jinguang quickly followed. "Otherwise, you will not be able to leave the Forging Division."

Yin Wuyou no longer wanted to feign civility with Shen Yue, so she simply allowed Meng Jinguang and the others to deal with Shen Yue.

She turned her head and looked at Zhou Shu 'lovingly'.

Zhou Shu's heart skipped a beat. "Grand Minister, you were the one who wanted to test the saber, not me!"

What Zhou Shu meant was that he wouldn't share the ten thousand taels of gold with her.

Yin Wuyou nodded and said gently, "I know.

"Zhou Shu, I know you've suffered. Don't worry. I'll definitely seek justice for you. Wait for me!"

After Yin Wuyou finished speaking, she left valiantly with the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber in hand.

Zhou Shu was confused. *What did she mean?*

No, my saber!

Damn it. Even if you're the grand minister, you can't just take away my saber for no reason. How many times has it been?!

It was fine in the past, but this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is extremely expensive!

By the time Zhou Shu discovered that Yin Wuyou had taken away the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, she had already disappeared. Even if he wanted to chase after her, he might not be able to catch up with her.

She could fly.

I can't forge weapons in front of her anymore! This is too much! I wanted to keep the first one for myself!

Every time a new weapon came out, as long as Yin Wuyou was present, she would definitely snatch it away. Zhou Shu finally realized this pattern.

The cost of forging weapons would be recorded in the 0th Workshop's account.

Even if you're the Grand Minister, you can't bully me like this.

If you want to take away the weapon, you have to pay!

Forget it. I'm a man. I won't hold it against you this time! Zhou Shu consoled himself. *Anyway, I've earned big this time. I have ten thousand taels of gold now. I won't have to worry about money for a long time.*

Zhou Shu was actually not short of money. In his daily life, he didn't need to spend money on himself.

Mi Zhifu had arranged everything in the mansion in the capital. Even his clothes were custom-made, and he didn't need to spend any money.

He had no plans to expand his workshop, so he didn't need to spend any money.

But he had to plan ahead. In the future, he would need a lot of materials to forge ranked weapons. Just relying on the supply from the Forging Division might not be enough to satisfy the demand of the Legendary Armament Canon.

If he needed to purchase the materials for forging, then money was absolutely necessary.

It was fine if the Mi family paid for his clothes and food, but he couldn't possibly ask the Mi family to pay for his forging materials.

After taking so many advantages from the Mi family, I have to give my sworn brother a surprise when he returns, Zhou Shu thought.

After receiving the residence from Mi Ziwen, including the daily expenses, Zhou Shu enjoyed it with a clear conscience.

He didn't feel that he had taken advantage of him, nor did he feel that Mi Ziwen had suffered a loss.

The things that he could give Mi Ziwen were definitely more than what Mi Ziwen had given him.

In the past, Zhou Shu might not have been sure. But after he received the benefits from the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber, he was very certain.

The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is already the pinnacle of standard weapons. The next weapon should be ranked, right?

Zhou Shu thought of the Legendary Armament Canon. The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was already so powerful. Could the Legendary Armament Canon have a stronger standard weapon?

Forging the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is a little complicated, and it also consumes a lot of iron. It will probably take some time for me to forge one hundred of them. But there's no hurry. The Standard Armament Manual is about to be released. I wonder if the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber will rank first.

If I knew the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber would appear, I would have agreed to Yin Wuyou's request. But if the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber really ranks first in the Standard Armament Manual, then I can be considered a great contributor to Great Xia, right? What benefits should I get from Yin Wuyou?

...

Zhou Shu was still thinking of getting some benefits from Yin Wuyou, but Yin Wuyou had already rushed into the imperial palace with the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber. She was looking for Emperor Yuan Feng to give Zhou Shu some benefits.

“Father! The sixth one! This is the sixth standard weapon that Zhou Shu developed! Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, Horse Slaying Saber, Spring Embroidered Saber, Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber, and this one, all of them have benefited our Great Xia greatly. With such a great contribution, it’s not too much to make him a marquis, right?”

Chapter 118: Marquis?

Emperor Yuan Feng was a little dizzy from Yin Wuyou’s chatter. He rubbed his glabella. “Zhou Shuang developed a new weapon?”

...

“Father, are you listening to me? If you don’t reward him handsomely for such meritorious service, won’t he be bitterly disappointed?” Yin Wuyou stomped her feet.

“Didn’t you already reward him?”

“Does that count? Father, tell me. If not for the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and the Horse Slaying Sabers, would General Meng have been able to achieve such great results so quickly in the southern borders?” Yin Wuyou said.

“Shouldn’t Zhou Shu deserve some credits? Isn’t this military merit?”

“He contributed so many powerful weapons to Great Xia, but Great Xia only gave him the title of workshop superintendent. Do you think it’s enough for him?”

“Isn’t there something else? Didn’t I agree to let him participate in the military parade?” Emperor Yuan Feng said patiently to his daughter.

“That’s not a reward. He deserves it! He is capable!” Yin Wuyou said.

Emperor Yuan Feng rolled his eyes. “Daughter, whose side are you on? Are you finding fault with your father?”

“No!” Yin Wuyou pouted.

“I’m just stating a fact!

“He has made many great contributions. I think he deserves to be conferred a rank of nobility!

“Father, take a look at this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber! Shen Yue lost so badly that he had nothing to say! I feel that it might even be ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual!”

Yin Wuyou handed the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber to Emperor Yuan Feng.

“Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber?” Emperor Yuan Feng frowned. Not every weapon could claim the title of Great Xia.

He received the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, and his expression changed slightly.

Although Emperor Yuan Feng was not a forger, he was still a martial artist. When he was young, he had put in hard work in the Martial Dao. After ascending to the throne, he used a secret technique to raise his cultivation to the first rank.

He could still tell whether a weapon was good or bad.

“Wonderful saber!” Emperor Yuan Feng couldn’t help praising. “This saber is even better than the Horse Slaying Saber.”

“Father, don’t you think this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is considered a great merit?” Yin Wuyou asked.

Emperor Yuan Feng laughed. “I approve of this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber’s name.”

Yin Wuyou opened her mouth. She never knew her father could be so shameless!

He approved the use of the name of Great Xia as a reward?

“This is going down in history!” Emperor Yuanfeng smiled.

Seeing his daughter’s angry face, he stopped joking and said with a smile, “Daughter, how can I not know about Zhou Shu’s contributions?

“I’m well aware of his contributions. However, I’ve discussed this with the great general and feel that a big tree attracts the woodman’s ax. If we give him too many rewards too early, it might not be a good thing for him.”

Emperor Yuan Feng explained, “It’s not uncommon for someone to achieve success at a young age and then waste their natural endowments. Our intention was to reward him after he officially became a Forging Master.”

Emperor Yuan Feng and Meng Bai were worried that if Zhou Shu, a Forging Apprentice, suddenly became rich, perhaps he would lose interest in forging. If that happened, it would instead affect him and waste his talent.

If he was rewarded after he became a Forging Master, his temperament might become more mature.

If not for Yin Wuyou’s questioning, Emperor Yuan Feng wouldn’t have mentioned these considerations to anyone.

Actually, Emperor Yuan Feng attached great importance to Zhou Shu. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have made an exception and allowed him to participate in the military parade as a Forging Apprentice.

“Father, it will be too late by then!” Yin Wuyou said. “Do you know? Today, Shen Yue revealed his intention to poach Zhou Shu several times! If Great Wei invites him with a high official position and a great salary, what do you think Zhou Shu will do?”

“He wouldn’t dare!” Emperor Yuan Feng shouted coldly.

“Father, you can’t blame him! On one side, he can see that they value him highly. But on the other side, he has repeatedly achieved great merits without getting anything in return. Anyone would hesitate.”

“He’s from Great Xia!” Emperor Yuan Feng frowned.

“Father, that is a moral kidnapping!” Yin Wuyou was already biased. “The empire of Great Xia belongs to you, Father. Zhou Shu is just a mere official! Moreover, it’s not like there aren’t people in Great Xia who are officials in other countries!”

“Zhou Shu is already tempted?” Emperor Yuan snorted coldly.

“No.” Yin Wuyou shook her head. “He’s still loyal and devoted to Great Xia. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have taken the initiative to compete with Shen Yue today and defeat him.

“But Father, we can’t bully him just because he’s loyal. He has made great contributions. We can’t take away the rewards that he deserves just because you and the great general said that you’re doing this for his own good.

“Father, if you don’t reward or penalize people for doing a good or a bad job, then I won’t be the grand minister of the Forging Division anymore! I won’t have the face to see Zhou Shu anymore!

“It’s too disappointing!” Yin Wuyou added.

She kept talking, but Emperor Yuan Feng didn’t find a chance to interrupt.

“I did not consider it carefully.” Emperor Yuan Feng was exceptionally patient in front of his daughter. “I didn’t expect Zhou Shu’s talent in forging to be so outstanding. In such a short period of time, he was actually able to continuously develop new standard weapons, each one better than the last.”

Originally, he had thought that after Zhou Shu trained for a period of time and advanced to Forging Master, he could directly bestow him a noble title.

But who would have thought that in such a short time, Zhou Shu would take out new standard weapons one after another!

His reputation had already spread to Great Wei.

If he still didn’t reward him, it wouldn’t be acceptable.

But what to reward him was a problem.

“I knew it! He’s already made such great contributions. Wouldn’t it be bitterly disappointing if you don’t confer him the title of marquis?” Yin Wuyou replied. “No matter what, Zhou Shu should be conferred the title of marquis!”

Emperor Yuan Feng’s face darkened.

Marquis?

How is that possible!

Becoming a marquis is no joke!

Zhou Shu had rendered meritorious service, but his meritorious service wasn't that great.

Unless the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber could really rank first in the Standard Armament Manual and help Great Xia defeat Great Wei and take back the two prefectures...!

The meritorious service of recovering the lost land would be worthy of conferring him the title of marquis.

However, it was definitely impossible now.

If he conferred him the title of marquis, what if the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual later?

When the time came, would he confer him the title of king?

A Forging Apprentice, a workshop superintendent of the Forging Division, suddenly became a king of Great Xia?

Emperor Yuan Feng found it unbelievable.

Pfft! Wuyou has gone astray! How could Zhou Shu's current achievements allow him to become a marquis?!

Conferring him a rank of nobility is already a huge reward!

"It's impossible to confer him the title of marquis unless the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber can help Great Xia take back the You and Bing prefectures!" Emperor Yuan Feng said.

"However, I am not someone who doesn't know when rewards or punishments should be given. As a workshop superintendent of the Forging Division, Zhou Shu contributed six standard long sabers in a row. His achievements are outstanding, so let's make him a county baron."

"County baron? Isn't that position too low?" Yin Wuyou said unhappily.

She was talking about conferring Zhou Shu the title of marquis, but the emperor wanted to make him a county baron?

Duke, marquis, count, viscount, followed by baron, the difference was several levels.

"Still too low?" Emperor Yuan Feng was speechless. A workshop superintendent of the Forging Division was a ninth-rank official, while a county baron was a fifth-rank official. This was already equivalent to advancing four ranks in a row!

In the history of Great Xia, he was one of the fastest to ascend. Wasn't this enough?

"Six standard long sabers and a divine weapon like the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!" Yin Wuyou said with dissatisfaction. "Are these only worth a county baron?"

"What do you think? How many meritorious deeds do the soldiers on the front lines have to make in order to obtain a noble title? Do you know how many meritorious deeds are required to obtain a noble title?" Emperor Yuan said unhappily.

The titles of Great Xia were not that worthless!

This title was not just a title. It also had a fief!

A county baron would be given a fief of three hundred households!

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that even if he didn't do anything else in his life, he wouldn't have to worry about food.

"Making him a county baron is already a very good reward for his current contributions. Any more would be too much." Emperor Yuan Feng waved his hand. "In that case, I would truly not be giving rewards or punishments where it's due!

"It's not difficult for him to be conferred the title of marquis. I've already issued a decree. Whoever can rank first in the Standard Armament Manual will be conferred the title of marquis!" Emperor Yuanfeng said.

He had indeed issued this imperial decree. This was also to encourage Great Xia's Forging Masters, or even Grand Craftsmen, to develop standard weapons.

After all, it was extremely rare for a Grand Craftsman to be a marquis.

The titles of nobility in Great Xia were all real nobility and could only be obtained through military achievements.

Although Grand Craftsmen were highly respected, not everyone could obtain a noble title. Even if they could, they were usually viscounts and barons. Never were they conferred as counts.

Becoming a marquis was attractive even to Grand Craftsmen.

"Alright then." Yin Wuyou thought about it. It was indeed a bit difficult to confer him a marquis title directly.

However, the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber still had a high chance of ranking first in the Standard Armament Manual.

When the time came, he would be conferred the title of marquis. This was fine too. After all, there were only a few days left.

"Father, if you confer Zhou Shu the title of the county baron, shouldn't there be a baron's manor? I know there's a good piece of land..." Yin Wuyou continued to fight for Zhou Shu's welfare.

The veins on Emperor Yuan Feng's forehead throbbed. He was about to lose his patience!

...

"Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber?" Great Wei's Imperial Preceptor Xiao Shunzhi frowned slightly. He looked at Shen Yue and asked, "Is it really that strong?"

"My Dragon Slaying Saber broke into two upon collision," Shen Yue said with a serious expression.

"Although I didn't get to use it, I can be sure that in terms of sharpness and toughness, even ordinary yellow-grade weapons might not be able to compare to it!"

"In that case, it will be somewhat troublesome," Xiao Shunzhi said in a low voice. "Is it possible for Zhou Shu to join our side?"

"No." Shen Yue shook his head. "I saw him flirting with Great Xia's Princess Yin Wuyou, and they seemed to have an affair. I'm afraid it's impossible that he will betray Great Xia."

"The spies from before had already reported and suggested that we kill Zhou Shu immediately. Unfortunately, our men were eliminated before they could take action!" Shen Yue said with hatred.

Xiao Shunzhi glanced at Shen Yue. "I know you have hatred in your heart, but Shen Ye died for the sake of Great Wei. Great Wei will not forget him. This hatred will be avenged sooner or later. We have a mission this time, so don't mess around."

"If anything goes wrong, I won't be able to protect you!"

"Teacher, Zhou Shu is Mi Ziwen's sworn brother. He threatened our mission again..." Shen Yue said indignantly.

"My every move is being watched by Yin Changhao. If I don't take action, do you think you can kill him?" Xiao Shunzhi said coldly.

"Even if you kill him, can you escape unscathed? How can a genius who can forge such a powerful weapon not have experts protecting him?"

"Even if he didn't have anyone protecting him in the past, now that he has forged the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, as long as the Great Xia Imperial Court isn't stupid, they will be on guard against anyone trying to assassinate him!"

"I'm telling you again. Shen Ye will be avenged! Mi Ziwen will also die! You are not allowed to act recklessly in Chang'an!"

"I understand." Shen Yue lowered his head, but his eyes were full of hatred.

Shen Ye was his elder brother, albeit his elder brother of a different mother. Since Mi Ziwen dared to kill his elder brother, he would destroy the entire Mi family! He would kill everyone around him!

"If the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is really that strong, then our previous plan might not be guaranteed." Xiao Shunzhi did not notice Shen Yue's expression. He pondered for a moment before saying, "It seems that we still have to improve it. We cannot afford to have any accidents!"

"Yes, Teacher." Shen Yue bowed.

...

Forging Division, 0th Workshop...

Zhou Shu was still indignantly complaining about Yin Wuyou when an uninvited guest arrived at the 0th Workshop.

"Divine Constable Yang, why are you here?" Zhou Shu looked at Yang Hong. *People really rely on clothes.*

Yang Hong, who had changed into the Divine Constable uniform, had an ordinary face, but his aura had clearly improved by a level.

"Superintendent Zhou, are you in a bad mood? Who provoked you? Do you need me to help you vent your anger?" Yang Hong said in high spirits.

"Sure. Someone owes me money," Zhou Shu said casually.

"Who's so bold? Tell me. I'll get it back for you!" Yang Hong patted his chest. He was now a divine constable of the Divine Constable Bureau. Who in the capital wouldn't give him some face?

"Yin Wuyou," Zhou Shu said calmly.

"Who?" Yang Hong almost choked on his own saliva. *Yin Wuyou? Her Highness the Princess?*

Can you be more logical?

You want me to ask the princess for money?

Am I tired of living?

Yang Hong wished he could slap himself a few times in his head. *Have you forgotten what kind of person Superintendent Zhou is? You still dare to offer your assistance? You really don't learn!*

"Superintendent Zhou, this..." Yang Hong said weakly.

"Let's get down to business. Divine Constable Yang, you have something to tell me?"

Zhou Shu was only joking, and he naturally didn't expect Yang Hong to ask for money from Yin Wuyou.

"It's the traitor from last time," Yang Hong said after calming down.

"The traitor who caused you to be stained with excrement?" Zhou Shu said.

Yang Hong's face darkened. *Let's not talk about this. We're still friends...*

"Yes, that's the guy." Yang Hong said in a low voice. "I investigated him thoroughly and found some things.. You were the one who reported him, so I felt that I had to tell you."

Chapter 119: They Are Both Members of the Imperial Family, Why Are They So Different?

"Divine Constable Yang, what did you discover?" Zhou Shu casually asked. He was actually not very curious. Although this person was Zhu Chuanfeng's accomplice, his status was definitely not high.

...

Zhou Shu was already satisfied that he had found several heaven-grade weapons from him. As for the rest, he wasn't too interested.

Yang Hong suddenly lowered his voice and said carefully, "Superintendent Zhou, do you know of Zhu Chuanfeng's legend?"

"What legend?" Zhou Shu was stunned.

"The reason Zhu Chuanfeng is where he is today is that he saved a Forging Master back then. Then this Forging Master accepted him as a disciple, and he grew up..." Yang Hong whispered.

Zhou Shu nodded. He also knew about this. Back then, he had carefully read through Zhu Chuanfeng's records. However, now he knew that Zhu Chuanfeng was not a rare forging talent but instead an out-and-out evil fellow.

Most of the weapons under his name had been stolen by him and not forged by him.

Zhou Shu even suspected that Zhu Chuanfeng might not even be a Forging Master!

"Do you know who Zhu Chuanfeng saved back then?" Zhou Shu asked.

When he first saw Zhu Chuanfeng's file, he had discovered that Zhu Chuanfeng's file had never mentioned the name of the Forging Master he had saved.

At the time, Zhou Shu had guessed a few possibilities. But after Zhu Chuanfeng died, Zhou Shu had stopped investigating.

Now that Yang Hong mentioned it, Zhou Shu immediately thought of this.

"Superintendent Zhou, let me tell you. I got a shock when I investigated!" Yang Hongdong looked around. Seeing no one else around, he continued softly, "Guess what relationship the traitor we captured has with Zhu Chuanfeng?"

Zhou Shu rolled his eyes at him. "Divine Constable Yang, don't keep me in suspense. Just say it."

Yang Hong smiled embarrassedly. He was setting up the atmosphere.

Seeing that Zhou Shu was running out of patience, he didn't beat around the bush. "The person we captured was Zhu Chuanfeng's childhood friend from the same village!

"Back then, they saved the Forging Master together!"

"You're saying that they saved this Forging Master together? That doesn't seem right. Since they saved the Forging Master together, why did Zhu Chuanfeng become a Grand Craftsman, while he was only someone who disposed of excrement? The difference is a bit too great," Zhou Shu asked curiously.

"That's right." Yang Hong said emotionally. "If it wasn't for the conclusive evidence, I wouldn't have even dared to believe it! But Superintendent Zhou, don't look down on someone who disposes of others' excrement. His annual income is several times our salary!"

Zhou Shu thought for a moment. This was true. After all, he had taken over the entirety of the Forging Division's excrement. Perhaps he had other random benefits.

"Is that all?" Zhou Shu asked.

If that was all, there was no need for Yang Hong to specially come and tell him.

Even if they were childhood friends from the same village and had saved the Forging Master together, this didn't mean anything.

They had the same fate but different lives. One became a Grand Craftsman, while the other became a sanitation contractor. There was nothing strange about this.

"Of course it's more than that." Yang Hong shook his head. "Superintendent Zhou, don't tell anyone else. This is all confidential information from the Divine Constable Bureau!"

"Don't worry. I won't tell anyone," Zhou Shu said.

"It's true that Zhu Chuanfeng and this person saved the Forging Master back then. But later on, the Forging Master was secretly murdered by them!" Yang Hong said.

Zhou Shu was truly surprised this time. "Weren't Zhu Chuanfeng's forging techniques taught to him by this Forging Master?"

"In the beginning, this Forging Master might have given him some pointers, but he probably didn't really take him in as a disciple," Yang Hong said. "Of course, this is all my speculation. Only Zhu Chuanfeng and this person know if he took in a disciple or not.

"According to my investigation, Zhu Chuanfeng and the person we captured found out that the Forging Master they saved was a wanted criminal. Then they secretly killed the Forging Master and went to the authorities to receive the reward!"

Yang Hong clicked his tongue. "Afterward, I don't know how that old thief fooled others. He used his identity as the successor of the Forging Master to become a Grand Craftsman. He's a talent."

Yang Hong sighed. Zhu Chuanfeng's starting point was rather low. No matter how he did it, becoming a Grand Craftsman was a legend.

"Who is the Forging Master? How did he become a wanted criminal?" Zhou Shu asked.

"Hehe, speaking of which, this matter has something to do with you, Superintendent Zhou." Yang Hong chuckled. This was the main reason he had come to find Zhou Shu.

"What does it have to do with me? How is that possible?! My family's three generations of ancestors were all Forging Apprentices in the Forging Division. Don't you dare insult my family," Zhou Shu said unhappily.

"Superintendent Zhou, let me finish," Yang Hong said unhurriedly. "Back then, the Forging Master, Liang Delong, was involved in the rebellion of Prince Shou. After they failed, he became a wanted criminal."

Zhou Shu nodded. He had never heard of the so-called Prince Shou. It should be something from decades ago. But after thinking about it, he knew that this kind of matter definitely involved a lot of people. It was not strange for the Forging Division to get involved.

But he didn't understand what it had to do with him.

At the time, his father might have just been born.

"This Liang Delong had a posthumous son. In the past, he was lucky enough to escape. For some reason, this posthumous son knew of the cause of his father's death. Thus, he secretly plotted to take revenge.

“But think about it, he was a person who couldn’t see the light of day. At the time, Zhu Chuanfeng was already in the limelight. He wasn’t able to take revenge and instead died in Zhu Chuanfeng’s hands.”

Yang Hong looked at Zhou Shu. He was about to get to the main point.

“When Liang Delong’s son died, he was already married and had a child...”

Zhou Shu felt that this was absurd. *Could it be that the child is me?*

Calculating the time, it seems to match.

Isn’t this too ridiculous?

Yang Hong’s gaze made Zhou Shu feel uncomfortable.

In truth, the identity of this body’s biological parents didn’t affect Zhou Shu much. After all, his soul came from another world.

But if it was really as he guessed, he really wanted to curse.

“Zhu Chuanfeng killed Liang Delong’s son, so he naturally had to eradicate his family completely. His son was exiled, and his wife and daughter were sent to the Education Bureau. Later, his son died in the process of exile, and his wife died soon after, leaving behind her young daughter who grew up in the Education Bureau.”

Yang Hong’s words caused Zhou Shu to heave a sigh of relief. This meant that Liang Delong’s grandson wasn’t him...

“I still don’t understand. What does that have to do with me?” Zhou Shu asked curiously.

“The young daughter of Liang Delong’s son, Liang Hongxiu, is a popular singer at the Education Bureau’s Lichun Courtyard,” Yang Hong said.

“Liang Hongxiu? Lichun Courtyard?” Zhou Shu seemed to recall something as a red figure appeared in his mind. “You’re saying that Lichun Courtyard’s Hongxiu is Liang Delong’s granddaughter?”

Yang Hong nodded, secretly impressed.

Superintendent Zhou is truly a role model of my generation. On the one hand, he is Her Highness’s lover, and on the other hand, he has a lover from a brothel. Most importantly, Her Highness isn’t jealous at all. Amazing.

Liang Hongxiu no longer entertains guests because of him. I wonder how he did it...

Yang Hong was extremely envious.

Zhou Shu really wanted to say that this world was really too small.

He had only visited a brothel once in his life. He didn’t expect Hongxiu to have such a relationship with Zhu Chuanfeng.

Hongxiu, oh Hongxiu, I killed Zhu Chuanfeng. It can be considered as me taking revenge for your father’s death. Even though I saw your body, you didn’t lose anything...

Zhou Shu recalled that in order to forge his alibi that night, he had personally removed Hongxiu's clothes. That snow-white complexion...

I can't think about it. It's a crime...

"What a coincidence," Zhou Shu whispered.

"Right?" Yang Hong said. "Back then, Liang Delong was also a famous forging genius. The Liang family's secret forging techniques were also quite impressive. If he didn't take the wrong step back then, he would most likely be a Grand Craftsman now. As for Miss Hongxiu, she should be the young lady of a prestigious family."

Yang Hong sighed.

"This is life." Zhou Shu also sighed.

The eldest daughter of a Forging family had been reduced to a prostitute in a brothel. One's future was unpredictable.

"Superintendent Zhou, Miss Hongxiu is actually a good lady. If possible, you can buy back her freedom."

Before Yang Hong left, he said something that confused Zhou Shu.

I don't know if she's a good girl. Why should I buy back her freedom?

Just because I've seen...

How baffling!

Zhou Shu only wanted to roll his eyes at Yang Hong.

Zhou Shu didn't take what Yang Hong said to heart. He and Miss Hongxiu were really innocent...

...

For the next two days, Zhou Shu enjoyed two rare days of peace.

Even though it was peaceful and quiet, Zhou Shu didn't stay idle. While he continued to teach Zhang Yibei and the other Forging Apprentices, he also forged Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers.

Forging a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was much more complicated than the previous sabers.

Zhou Shu reckoned that even if he broke down the process, Zhang Yibei and the others wouldn't be able to forge it.

... Unless they had the skill of a Forging Master.

But having a Forging Master forge the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was like using an anti-aircraft gun to hit a mosquito.

After all, no matter how powerful the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was, it was still slightly inferior to ranked weapons.

From the looks of it, the promotion of the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber would be a huge problem. For a long time to come, this Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber could only be forged by Zhou Shu alone.

But Zhou Shu wasn't in a hurry. After all, the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber hadn't been distributed yet. The Grand Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber could wait.

Zhou Shu took his time to forge Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers. When he was fast, he would only be able to forge one every day. If he was slow, he might not even be able to forge one in two days.

A few days passed like this. On this day, before Zhou Shu could begin his daily forging, an acquaintance appeared in front of him.

"Eunuch Zhao?"

The person who had suddenly arrived at the 0th Workshop was Eunuch Zhao, the great eunuch who had previously given him an imperial decree.

Eunuch Zhao had a reserved aura and was an expert. Zhou Shu could feel that he was much stronger than Ma Fengzhang of the Divine Constable Bureau.

"Superintendent Zhou, there is an imperial edict." Eunuch Zhao chuckled.

Zhou Shu was a bit surprised, but he still arranged for Zhang Yibei and the others to burn incense and set up a table, preparing to receive the imperial decree. Thankfully, Great Xia didn't have any rules that he had to kneel to receive an imperial decree. Otherwise, he would have cursed in his heart for a long time.

"Zhou Shu, the superintendent of the 0th Workshop, has contributed the Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, Horse Slaying Saber, Spring Embroidered Saber, and Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber to strengthen the prestige of the Great Xia Dynasty. Today, We confer Zhou Shu the title of county baron and a fief of three hundred households. End of the decree..." Eunuch Zhao announced.

A promotion? Zhou Shu blankly received the imperial decree, his heart full of surprise.

It was a little sudden.

I was promoted just like that?

County baron¹? Why does it sound so awkward? Am I not male to begin with?

A fief of three hundred households, this sounds pretty good.

"Congratulations, Superintendent Zhou. No, I should call you Baron Zhou from now on." Eunuch Zhao chuckled. "Baron Zhou, His Majesty has high hopes for you. This time, he stood up to the masses and bestowed you with a title."

"Thank you, Your Majesty, for your kindness," Zhou Shu said welcomingly.

Eunuch Zhao nodded. "The official uniform and official seal will be sent by the Ministry of Appointments to you, Baron Zhou. In addition, His Majesty has specially bestowed a mansion to you.

"This is a treatment that other county barons don't get."

"A mansion?" Zhou Shu felt like money had fallen from the sky. What was wrong with the old emperor?

Why did he suddenly give him an official position and a mansion? Did someone say something to him?

Zhou Shu didn't think that he had made any great contribution. It was just a few sabers, and he had casually forged them. It didn't take much effort...

"Originally, the Imperial Court does not reward mansions to county barons, but His Majesty thought highly of you, so he made an exception and gave you one. The location and size are quite good," Eunuch Zhao said with a strange expression.

"Baron Zhou, when you are free, go over and receive it."

Eunuch Zhao took a wooden box from the eunuch behind him. Inside were the title deed and keys.

He directly handed it to Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu took it and asked casually, "Is there anything else?"

Eunuch Zhao's face darkened. *Isn't this enough?*

Why is he acting like Her Highness? Is this not enough?

This is already an exception.

How many soldiers at the frontline might not even receive such a reward in their lifetime? What else do you want?

"I was just asking. Just asking." Zhou Shu also realized that he had said something wrong. He smiled and said, "I will definitely repay His Majesty with my life."

Zhou Shu cupped his hands in the direction of the capital.

Eunuch Zhao didn't want to talk to him anymore, so he said, "Baron Zhou, as long as you focus on forging, you will be worthy of His Majesty's reward."

Then he led the young eunuchs away in a hurry. He was truly afraid that he would hear Zhou Shu say something about not having enough rewards.

The old emperor isn't bad. He's much more reliable than his daughter. Zhou Shu held the imperial edict. They are both members of the imperial family, so why is the difference so great? One only knows how to take, and the other... a noble title, a mansion. It feels like it's almost perfect.

Chapter 120: My Neighbor Is the Princess

According to the address on the deed, Zhou Shu found the county baron residence.

...

Unknowingly, he had become a man with two residences in the capital.

This was something he didn't even dare to think about in his previous life.

In his previous life, how would he dare to think about someone giving him a house?

It was simply wishful thinking.

According to the position of this residence, in my previous life, this would be 1st Ring Road.

Zhou Shu stood at the entrance and clicked his tongue in amazement.

This place was only a street away from the Imperial Palace. It was definitely in the center of Chang'an.

The emperor was very generous. This mansion looked even bigger than the one Mi Ziwen had given him, and its location was even better.

This district, this area, belonged to the kind of luxury that people could never dream of buying in a lifetime if they couldn't already afford it at birth. Unless—circumstances...

I can be considered to have entered the upper class now, Zhou Shu joked to himself.

A mansion in the center of the imperial capital was beautiful!

In his previous life, he couldn't even become a house slave if he wanted. Zhou Shu's feelings toward this mansion were much greater than the title.

He didn't really care about the title of baron.

After opening the door with the key, Zhou Shu walked into the mansion.

The mansion was exquisitely built. There were richly decorated pavilions and buildings with all sorts of paintings and furnishings. Zhou Shu couldn't find any flaws.

The only flaw was that it was too big...

It would cost a lot of money to maintain this enormous mansion.

Fortunately, I just won a lot of money from Shen Yue. Otherwise, I wouldn't dare to stay in this mansion.

The residence gifted by Mi Ziwen had a group of servants. But there weren't any in this county baron's mansion.

Speaking of which, why hasn't that Shen kid sent the money to me yet? Is he trying to renege on his debt? I'll rush him later!

Soon, he took a tour of the mansion.

He only had one word for this mansion.

Satisfaction!

After he got the 10,000 taels of gold, he would move here. The conditions here were slightly better than the residence that Mi Ziwen had given him. This place was close to the palace, so there wouldn't be any audacious people causing trouble here...

As Zhou Shu thought this, he locked the door and prepared to leave.

Although this mansion was good, it wasn't suitable for him to move in now. He still had to hire some servants and buy some daily necessities.

Zhou Shu was thinking about what items to buy for his new home while walking out of it.

“Grand Minister? Why are you here?” Suddenly, he looked up and saw a familiar figure.

Yin Wuyou was standing on a white jade staircase, her gaze meeting Zhou Shu’s eyes. She said calmly, “This is my home. Is it strange for me to be here?”

“Your home?” Zhou Shu raised his head in surprise. Under the sunlight, there was a plaque on the door behind Yin Wuyou, and a couple of large words were written on it.

Princess Residence!

What?

The princess residence is next to my county baron residence?

I became neighbors with Yin Wuyou?

Zhou Shu’s face darkened. *The princess likes to take things without paying. Now that I’ve become neighbors with her, will she go to my residence every few days to take my weapons?*

Yes! It’s possible!

I must add a few more locks to the storeroom!

Zhou Shu was on guard.

Yin Wuyou noticed Zhou Shu’s gaze and felt a little displeased. *What kind of gaze was that?*

Vigilance?

Why are you guarding against me?

In order to get this mansion for you, I even resorted to acting cute. I don’t expect you to be grateful to me, but you can’t do this.

“Where are you going?” Yin Wuyou proudly raised her head. “Shouldn’t you be working in the workshop right now? Don’t think that you don’t need to be on duty just because you’re the superintendent of the workshop!”

Zhou Shu: “...”

She’s indeed an evil princess who only knows how to oppress others!

Learn from your father. Look at how generous he is!

A baron title and a mansion!

You only know how to make people work. To think that you look like a fairy...

Zhou Shu couldn’t help complaining inwardly.

But he put on a respectful expression on his face. “Reporting to Grand Minister, I’m not deliberately slacking off. I entered the city to seek inspiration for forging.”

"Inspiration for forging?" Yin Wuyou asked doubtfully.

"Forging a weapon is not done behind closed doors. A sage once said that the appearance of a weapon requires 99% hard work and 1% inspiration. And this 1% inspiration is crucial.

"My job at the 0th Workshop is to develop new weapons. If I sit in the workshop all day, it will only limit my thinking.

"That's why I have to come out often to stimulate my inspiration. Only then can I develop more new weapons.

"In the terminology of our forging industry, this is called a field survey."

Yin Wuyou looked doubtful. "Field survey? Why haven't I heard of it?"

"Grand Minister, you are high and mighty. It's natural that you have never heard of such a small matter."

Zhou Shu said in all seriousness, "That's how I developed those standard long sabers.

"It takes brains to develop weapons, Grand Minister, not just the amount of time I work in the workshop."

Yin Wuyou nodded as if she understood. "You're right. Where are you going for your field survey now? Since I have nothing to do, I'll go with you to broaden my horizons. Since I am the grand minister of the Forging Division, I should understand more about forging. Otherwise, how can I lead the Forging Division well?"

Zhou Shu: "..."

...

"You came here to do a field survey?"

Outside Chang'an's northern gate, a man and woman walked side by side on the official road.

Yin Wuyou looked at Zhou Shu suspiciously.

In the previous two hours, she had been wandering aimlessly in the city with Zhou Shu. She didn't know if he had found any inspiration, but her stomach was almost filled...

... with street snacks...

After wandering around the city for half a day, they left the city again!

"Grand Minister, I've already told you. A field survey is led by feelings without a concrete purpose. I may be inspired after eating candied hawthorn, or I may be inspired after seeing a beautiful woman like you, Grand Minister.

"Even a leaf might trigger my inspiration.

"This is something that doesn't make sense. It's like an epiphany in the Martial Dao."

Zhou Shu was spouting nonsense.

Yin Wuyou blushed slightly and nodded thoughtfully. She understood a little about epiphanies in the Martial Dao. They were something that couldn't be explained.

"Have you found inspiration?" Yin Wuyou asked.

"No!" Zhou Shu said confidently.

How could it be so easy to develop a new weapon?

Even if it took him a year or so to find inspiration, it wouldn't be strange.

Yin Wuyou didn't suspect anything and simply acknowledged.

"There's a post house up ahead. Great Wei's diplomatic mission stays there. Are you here to look for them?" Yin Wuyou said cautiously. She was glad that she had followed him today.

Those people from Great Wei were still trying to recruit Zhou Shu.

She couldn't let Zhou Shu meet them alone!

"If you didn't tell me, I would have forgotten. That Shen fellow still owes me money. Since I'm here, I'll go rush him," Zhou Shu said casually.

"By the way, Grand Minister, why is the diplomatic mission of Great Wei staying outside the city? Isn't Great Xia being disrespectful?" Zhou Shu asked curiously.

No matter what the relationship between the two countries was, they had to be wary of diplomatic issues.

When the diplomatic mission came, Great Xia wouldn't even let them in?

"There's also a post house in the city, but they have to dare to stay there." Yin Wuyou sneered.

There was a first-rank martial artist among Great Wei's diplomatic mission. If he entered the city, he would have to worry about Great Xia killing him.

In addition, Great Xia was also worried that he would wreak havoc after entering the city.

After all, first-rank martial artists had already transcended mortality. The threat they posed was too great.

Similarly, if Great Xia had the confidence to kill Great Wei's imperial preceptor, they would do it even if they had to give it their all.

However, it was not easy to kill a first-rank martial artist. If one wasn't confident, it was best not to attack. Otherwise, the revenge of a first-rank martial artist would be very terrifying.

Therefore, both parties had a tacit understanding that even though Great Wei's imperial preceptor had come to Great Xia, he would stay at the post house outside the city.

In the vast area outside the city, no one could kill a first-rank martial artist who wanted to escape. At the very least, no one in Great Xia could do it.

"Do you think they'll hit us if we just go to their door to collect our debt?" Zhou Shu said.

Yin Wuyou looked disdainful. “They wouldn’t dare! If they dare to touch you, this princess will kill them!”

The princess had a domineering look on her face, which didn’t match her exquisite features. But this contrast made her look extraordinary.

Zhou Shu was stunned.

Noticing Zhou Shu’s expression, Yin Wuyou blushed and unconsciously turned her head away.

“No, this is Great Xia’s territory. If they dare to make a move, I, the grand minister, guarantee that they won’t be able to bear the consequences.” Yin Wuyou changed her form of address to conceal her unnatural behavior.

Zhou Shu was just trying to make conversation. After all, he was with his boss. He couldn’t let the atmosphere get too awkward.

Was he afraid that Great Wei would make a move?

If Great Wei’s diplomatic mission really dared to make a move, he wanted to see if he could snatch back the three heaven-grade weapons that he had thrown there previously!

Zhou Shu still didn’t know that Great Wei’s Imperial Preceptor Xiao Shunzhi had only managed to snatch one weapon, and the other two had fallen into the hands of Emperor Yuan Feng.

As they talked, they got closer and closer to the post house.

When they were a thousand feet away from the post house, they heard a sharp whistle. A moment later, Shen Yue led a few people out of the door.

Obviously, they had stationed scouts around the area.

“Brother Shen, long time no see.” As soon as they met, Zhou Shu spoke warmly. “I’ve missed you so much. A day apart feels like three years.”

Shen Yue was shocked by Zhou Shu’s enthusiasm. *What does he mean?*

Do I have such a relationship with him?

Yin Wuyou frowned. *Is Zhou Shu so close to Shen Yue? That shouldn’t be the case.*

“Your Highness!” Shen Yue paid no attention to Zhou Shu. How could the mere superintendent of a small workshop be worthy of his greeting?

So what if he’s won temporarily? He’s still just a tiny workshop superintendent! Shen Yue thought contemptuously.

He looked at Yin Wuyou and asked, “Your Highness, what brings you here?”

Great Wei’s diplomatic mission had a fixed procedure to negotiate with Great Xia. In theory, it had nothing to do with Yin Wuyou.

He was a little puzzled. The previous competition had come to an end, and both parties were waiting for the announcement of the Standard Armament Manual. Why was Yin Wuyou here at this time?

"I'm not the one who wanted to come. He's the one who's looking for you." Yin Wuyou pointed at Zhou Shu. "I just accompanied him here."

Yin Wuyou took a step back and didn't usurp the host.

Shen Yue frowned as he glanced at Zhou Shu and said in a cold voice, "Your Highness, I am the deputy envoy of Great Wei's diplomatic mission. Your country sent a ninth-rank official to discuss matters with me?"

When competing in forging techniques, he had lowered his status. Otherwise, how could a mere apprentice, even though he was a workshop superintendent, be qualified to stand in front of him?

After losing once, coupled with his hatred for Zhou Shu, Shen Yue seized this opportunity. It was impossible for him to be polite to Zhou Shu, right?

"Shen, are you planning to go back on your word?" Zhou Shu said angrily.

Shen Yue raised his head, disdaining to speak to Zhou Shu.

"Your Highness, if Great Xia has any problems, please arrange for people of equal status to come here. Don't let any random plebeian come here to bark!"

"Who's barking?" Zhou Shu said.

"Plebeian is," Shen Yue said casually.

"Oh, so you're a plebeian," Zhou Shu said.

Shen Yue's expression darkened. When had he ever argued so tastelessly with a commoner?

He, Shen Yue, was also someone of great status in Great Wei!

"Deputy Envoy Shen, if I remember correctly, your position in Great Wei is lower than the fifth rank?" Yin Wuyou said coldly.

The fifth rank was roughly equivalent to an assistant department head in Zhou Shu's previous world. Someone in their twenties reaching the assistant department head level was considered quite an incredible feat on Earth.

"Zhou Shu is a county baron of Great Xia. In terms of official rank, he is half a rank higher than you!

"If you want to say that your ranks are not equal, then it's because your rank is too low!" Yin Wuyou said bluntly.

Shen Yue's raised head stiffened.

Zhou Shu was conferred nobility?

When did this happen?

Why didn't I receive any news?

“Grand Minister, keep a low profile,” Zhou Shu said reservedly. “I’m just a mere baron. It’s embarrassing. Others may think that I’m green and inexperienced.”

“You’re right. You’re worthy of a title higher than a baron.” Yin Wuyou nodded in agreement.

Zhou Shu didn’t expect Yin Wuyou to have the talent to be a sidekick. He inwardly gave Yin Wuyou a thumbs up before looking at Shen Yue.

“Shen Yue, although my position is slightly higher than yours, we are not from the same country. I can’t be considered to be suppressing others with my power,” Zhou Shu said.

“You should pay back the debt you owe me. How many days has it been?”

“If you really can’t take it out, then write me an IOU first. As a man, you can’t possibly not even have a little betting etiquette, right?”

“If you are really that shameless, that’s fine too. I won’t take your money. I’ll even help you promote it for free so that others won’t fall for your tricks in the future.

“If you can’t afford to lose, then don’t bet. It’s not like there’s anyone forcing you.. Not only are you incapable, but you don’t have any betting etiquette. Why are you acting like a big shot all day?”