

Canon 34

Chapter 34: Hundred Refinements Steel, Horse Slaying Saber

“Old Zhou!” Sun Gongping tugged at his sleeve and whispered because Zhou Shu was still in a daze.

Zhou Shu returned to his senses and glanced at Zhu Chuanfeng. “Grandmaster Zhu, you are a Grand Craftsman, so it’s normal for you to look down on standard weapons. But if you want to say that standard weapons have reached their limit, then I beg to differ.

...

“As far as I know, although Great Xia’s standard weapons are strong, they are of a single type. The standard long saber, standard long sword, and even the bow are all of the same types.

“While it is easier to forge these standard weapons, it is a loss for the military.

“In my opinion, different military types should be equipped with different weapons. Cavalry have the weapons of cavalry, and infantry have the weapons of infantry. The weapons of the Imperial Guards and the border guards are different.”

Meng Bai nodded slightly, his eyes flashing with praise.

Zhu Chuanfeng snorted. “You ignorant brat, what do you know about the military?”

“Cut the crap. Did you forge a weapon or not? If not, just admit defeat.”

Zhou Shu didn’t know if he was imagining things, but he had a feeling that Zhu Chuanfeng was targeting him.

But thinking about it, he was just a small Forging Apprentice. He hadn’t had any interaction with Zhu Chuanfeng, a Grand Craftsman, so there was no reason for Zhu Chuanfeng to go against him deliberately.

Without much thought, Zhou Shu raised his head and pulled out the weapon soaked in cold oil.

When the weapon appeared in front of everyone, Meng Bai and Zhu Chuanfeng stood up almost at the same time.

Zhou Shu was holding a seven-foot-long weapon. The blade was three feet long, and the handle was four feet long.

With just a glance, people could feel the destructive power of this weapon.

In this world, including Great Xia and the other countries, there were long standard weapons, but they were usually spears or halberds.

Forging Masters had tried forging long-handled sabers before, but all aspects were not satisfactory.

Zhu Chuanfeng was a Grand Craftsman. Even if he didn’t use it, he could tell with a single glance that the saber Zhou Shu had forged was a weapon that had never appeared in the history of Great Xia!

He could even determine that the power of this saber was not inferior to that of the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber!

Is he really a weapon forging genius? Zhu Chuanfeng frowned.

“Show it to me!” Meng Bai said in a low voice. He had only taken a glance at the weapons forged by the apprentices of Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the other superintendents. He didn’t even have the intention of trying them.

“Catch! Be careful!” Zhou Shu casually tossed the long saber over.

“You...” Sun Gongping was shocked, his heart in his throat. *If Old Zhou injures Great General Meng, the three military forces of Great Xia will tear him apart alive!*

Meng Bai laughed. His long arm reached out to grab the long saber’s handle, and then his hand lowered, dispersing his force.

Zhou Shu raised an eyebrow. From beginning to end, Meng Bai hadn’t used any strength that surpassed that of an ordinary person.

“What a heavy saber!” Meng Bai said. His fingers caressed the blade edge, and then he gripped the handle with both hands and hacked down a few times in the air.

“The Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber is more suitable for cavalry to slash and kill on horseback. This saber is freely usable on horseback, land, and water,” Meng Bai said with a grave expression.

“General, you know your stuff!” Zhou Shu gave him a thumbs up.

“However, there are some shortcomings. The Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber weighs seven to eight catties, so it’s easier to use. On the other hand, this saber is more than twice as heavy as the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber. It has much higher requirements on the user’s strength and stamina,” Zhou Shu added.

“General, may you let me take a look?” Zhu Chuanfeng said in a low voice.

Meng Bai casually handed the long saber over to Zhu Chuanfeng and said with a smile, “Grandmaster Zhu, please evaluate it. I think that this saber is indeed a new standard weapon.”

Zhu Chuanfeng’s expression was solemn. He ran his hands over his saber, and his palms began to emit a faint white light.

The biggest problem with forging such a long saber handle with ordinary metals is that the weapon is easily breakable. Furthermore, forging such a long weapon requires extremely high forging skills. Ordinary Forging Apprentices are unable to forge it. Could Zhou Shu’s forging skills already be close to ordinary Forging Masters’? Zhu Chuanfeng thought.

He raised his head and looked at Zhou Shu. “This saber isn’t made of ordinary metals. What material did you use?”

Zhu Chuanfeng’s tone was interrogative.

If precious forging materials were used to forge a standard weapon, the power of the standard weapon would indeed increase significantly. But it would also lose its original intention.

Wouldn't it be more powerful to use precious materials to forge ranked weapons?

Standard weapons were supposed to be inexpensive and good. They were meant to be cost-effective and value for money!

If Zhou Shu had used other materials, then no matter how good this saber was, he would lose this competition.

"Impressive!" Zhou Shu gave Zhu Chuanfeng a thumbs up from the bottom of his heart. Although he didn't like Zhu Chuanfeng, he had to admit that he was quite capable.

With just a touch, he could tell the secret of the saber. The Grand Craftsman lived up to his reputation.

"Did you really add other materials?" Meng Bai said with a deep voice, his gaze slightly disappointed.

If other materials were added, there would be a problem with mass production.

If the manufacturing cost was too high, it wouldn't be a standard weapon. If the manufacturing cost of a standard weapon was too high, why wouldn't soldiers be equipped with ranked weapons instead?

"It's understandable that young people don't want to lose, but cheating..." Zhu Chuanfeng snorted coldly.

"Grandmaster Zhu, I won't take the blame for this." Zhou Shu shook his head. "This saber is indeed not made from ordinary metals, but if you say I cheated, I won't admit it.

"Even if I want to cheat, I need to have the conditions to do so. In this place, would any of you have given me the chance to search for other materials?"

Zhu Chuanfeng looked at the two boys he had left to supervise the competition, and they shook their heads.

For the past ten days, they had been monitoring this place, but they hadn't seen Zhou Shu obtain any other materials for forging.

"Superintendent Zhou, what exactly is going on?" Meng Bai said with a deep voice.

"It's actually very simple." Zhou Shu smiled slightly. "Grandmaster Zhu can tell that this long saber isn't forged from ordinary metals. That's because I used a new material.

"This material is called hundred refinements steel."

"Hundred refinements steel?" Meng Bai's thoughts turned. "Does it have something to do with the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber?"

"That's a way to see it." Zhou Shu nodded.

"The so-called 'hundred refinements' is actually a forging technique. When I was forging the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, I had a preliminary idea, but it wasn't perfect at the time.

“During these ten days, I spent day and night racking my brains and finally perfected the Hundred Refinements Technique further. As a result, I obtained this hundred refinements steel.”

Sun Gongping curled his lips when he heard this. *You spent day and night racking your brains?*

You were obviously sleeping soundly every day and night.

But he was also curious. *It looks like Old Zhou is going to win.*

The so-called hundred refinements steel sounds very powerful. Could Old Zhou really be a genius like me?

Should I consider letting him forge a ranked weapon for me after he becomes a Forging Master?

Sun Gongping rubbed his chin in thought.

“Is the hundred refinements steel you speak of iron that has been processed using the Hundred Refinements Technique?” Zhu Chuanfeng was a professional, so when he heard what Zhou Shu said, he roughly understood what was going on.

Zhu Chuanfeng’s eyes flickered as if he was trying to deduce the effects of this method.

The others didn’t understand what Zhou Shu meant at all. The ‘Hundred Refinements Technique’ and ‘hundred refinements steel’ were too technical for them.

Even the Forging Apprentices didn’t know much.

“That’s right. The Hundred Refinements Technique is to repeatedly heat iron and forge it with a certain technique. This is to reduce the impurities in the iron . Furthermore, through a special method, the carbon content of the iron will be reduced. By repeating this process, hundred refinements steel will be obtained...” Zhou Shu used his own understanding to explain briefly.

As for whether Zhu Chuanfeng could understand or not, sorry, but he wouldn’t explain the details.

This was a secret!

Hundred refinements steel wasn’t obtained by simply forging repeatedly. It also involved a ratio of iron, carbon, tin, and other substances.

If one didn’t understand this, it wouldn’t be easy to forge hundred refinements steel.

Zhou Shu believed that even a Grand Craftsman might not be able to find the perfect formula without thousands of attempts.

Would the Grand Craftsman waste so much time on this?

Obviously not.

This world was different from Zhou Shu’s previous world. Many enigmatic materials for forging weapons were far more powerful than hundred refinements steel. However, these materials were expensive, and only powerful martial artists could afford them.

“Superintendent Zhou, you mean to say that we can use ordinary iron to forge hundred refinements steel?” Meng Bai asked with a deep voice.

“Something like that,” Zhou Shu said. “Grand General, you want to ask about the cost of making this saber, right?”

Meng Bai nodded, and then he heard Zhou Shu say, “Hundred refinements steel is expensive mainly due to labor costs. The cost of this saber should be approximately twenty to thirty taels of silver.”

“So cheap?” Meng Bai’s eyes lit up.

This is cheap? Zhou Shu felt that his asking price was too low. He had originally thought that since the Huben Saber was only five taels of silver, the cost of this saber would be at most twice that.

Selling for ten taels of silver was already profitable, let alone twenty to thirty taels.

After all, the human cost of production of the Forging Division was negligible...

“It’s not too bad,” Zhou Shu said after some thought. “I’ll try my best to reduce the cost, and I should be able to supply this saber at this price.”

“Superintendent Zhou, you are indeed a pillar of the country!” Meng Bai shouted, overjoyed.

“Grandmaster Zhu, who do you think won this match?” Meng Bai looked at Zhu Chuanfeng and smiled.

“The so-called hundred refinements steel is just him deciding on his own. We’ll have to test it out before we know the real details,” Zhu Chuanfeng said coldly. “In this world, things that appear good but are useless are everywhere. Who knows if this saber is really good or not?”

“Grandmaster Zhu, are you saying that I’m blind, or are you saying that you’re blind?” Meng Bai snorted coldly, and a wave of dignity suddenly appeared. “Can’t the two of us tell whether a standard weapon is good or bad?”

“What you see may not be true.” Zhu Chuanfeng’s scalp tingled as he steeled his heart and said, “Even I can’t guarantee that I won’t make any mistakes. This saber must be tested to determine if it’s really good or not!”

“Hmph. Grandmaster Zhu, since you’re so interested, I will accompany you until the end,” Meng Bai said coldly. “Today, I will personally test the saber!”

“Superintendent Zhou, does this saber have a name?” He looked at Zhou Shu.

“Yes!” Zhou Shu said with a serious expression, “This saber is called Horse Slaying Saber!”

“Also known as Mo Saber!”

Chapter 35: I Want Practical Rewards

“Horse Slaying?” Meng Bai muttered to himself. His hands grasped the four-foot-long saber handle, and he laughed loudly. “What a good name! What a great Horse Slaying Saber!”

He took a step forward, gripped the saber with both hands, and struck out like lightning!

...

Meng Bai didn't look young anymore, and there were no traces of Martial Dao cultivation on his body. Even when he brandished his blade, Zhou Shu could feel that the strength he used was a bit weaker than that of an ordinary adult male.

Crack!

There were two wooden stakes erected in the courtyard long ago for the competition. They were each covered with a layer of armor.

The Horse Slaying Saber cut through the two wooden stakes, and even the two layers of armor were cut in half.

"General, have you recovered?" Zhu Chuanfeng stood up abruptly, his face filled with shock.

Meng Bai shook his head, but a gratified expression appeared on his face. "The Horse Slaying Saber is indeed worthy of its name. Even an ordinary soldier can slay a horse with just a little training!"

Meng Bai had sustained serious injuries, and his cultivation had long disappeared like smoke. But even though his cultivation was gone, his Martial Dao skills were still there.

Ordinary people might not be able to cut through two wooden stakes as easily as he did with the Horse Slaying Saber.

Nonetheless, the Horse Slaying Saber's power shouldn't be underestimated.

"Grandmaster Zhu, I have already tried it. Do you still want to try it yourself?" Meng Bai looked at Zhu Chuanfeng with a half-smile.

Zhu Chuanfeng's face was black and blue. He had already been a bit impulsive previously. If he still didn't know to back off now, then he really would offend Meng Bai.

Great General Meng's status in Great Xia was extraordinary. Even though Zhu Chuanfeng was a Grand Craftsman, if he really offended Meng Bai, the consequences would be unimaginable.

"There's no need," Zhu Chuanfeng said coldly. "With the great general as a witness, I hereby announce that the winner of this competition is Zhou Shu!"

As soon as he finished speaking, he cupped his hands toward Meng Bai and then left with the two boys in a sorry state.

"Old Zhou, you won!" Sun Gongping explained in excitement. If Meng Bai wasn't here, he would have shouted out loud.

Meng Bai looked at Zhou Shu with pleasure and nodded slightly toward him. Then he turned toward Xiao Zongshui and the others, and his expression became a bit cold.

"All of you are pillars of the Forging Division. If you can work together to strengthen the weapons of Great Xia, it will be a blessing for Great Xia and its citizens," Meng Bai slowly said.

Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others were drenched in sweat. All of them were dejected as they said, "Great General, you are right."

If even Zhu Chuanfeng couldn't afford to offend Meng Bai, then how could they, mere superintendents, afford to offend him?

"I am not the Forging Division's grand minister. If you are willing to listen to my words, then listen. You're on your own." Meng Bai waved his hand.

Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others were even more terrified as they fell to their knees. "We will follow your orders, Great General, and will definitely not dare target Superintendent Zhou again in the future."

When Meng Bai saw everyone's bodies tremble in fear, a hint of sorrow flashed past his eyes.

How can weapons come from effete people?

Weapons are like people. Seeing the people in the Forging Division, it's no wonder that Great Xia's weapons have degraded year after year.

The princess' shot in the dark and disturbance might really be effective.

Meng Bai looked at Zhou Shu. *This young man really isn't bad!*

He has talent and backbone. When he met me, his attitude was neither supercilious nor obsequious. He managed to create three standard weapons in succession in such a short period. With such talent, being merely the superintendent of a small workshop is a waste.

1

A thought flashed through Meng Bai's mind, and his face couldn't help revealing a smile.

"Superintendent Zhou, have you learned the Martial Dao?" Meng Bai asked with a smile.

A trace of doubt flashed through Zhou Shu's heart. *Could Meng Bai be an expert and have seen through my cultivation?*

But it doesn't seem like it.

Zhou Shu pondered for a moment before replying, "Uh... no."

"As a Forging Master, how can you not cultivate the Martial Dao?" Meng Bai smiled like an amiable elder.

"General, I'm not a Forging Master. I'm just a Forging Apprentice," Zhou Shu reminded softly.

Meng Bai was stunned. *I almost forgot that Zhou Shu is only a Forging Apprentice. Why do I feel that he is more like a Forging Master?*

"Sooner or later, you'll become a Forging Master." Meng Bai smiled. "If you don't cultivate the Martial Dao, how can you understand the attributes of weapons? Only by being proficient in weapons can you know what a good weapon is.

"You are good at forging sabers. Let me ask you. If you don't know any saber arts, how can you forge sabers that can unleash the power of saber arts?"

“The sabers I’m forging now seem pretty good too... Huben, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel, and Horse Slaying...”

Meng Bai was stunned. *What Zhou Shu said is reasonable. I actually have no response!*

“Superintendent Zhou, you are a genius. Your future is not limited to these three sabers!

“What I mean is, if you want to walk further on the path of the Forging Dao, then you have to cultivate the Martial Dao, and the best is to focus on sabers!”

Zhou Shu didn’t understand what Meng Bai meant and quietly said, “But I might have to forge swords in the future...”

Meng Bai choked on his words and decided to ignore what Zhou Shu said. “In the past, you were a Forging Apprentice. Perhaps you didn’t have the conditions to cultivate the Martial Dao, but now that you are a superintendent, you can surely squeeze out some time to cultivate the Martial Dao.

“You must want to say that you don’t have any Martial Dao techniques, right?”

Seeing Zhou Shu’s hesitancy, Meng Bai looked as if he saw through everything. He smiled and continued, “This isn’t a problem.

“You’ve developed the Horse Slaying Saber, which has extraordinary significance to Great Xia,” Meng Bai said seriously. “I have decided to report this personally to His Majesty to reward you!”

Zhou Shu was delighted. *Reward me?*

Will I be rewarded with ten thousand taels of gold?

Meng Bai continued, “I will definitely convince His Majesty to make an exception and allow you to comprehend the saber intent!”

“Comprehend the saber intent?” Zhou Shu was confused.

1

Sun Gongping, on the other hand, had an excited expression on his face as he repeatedly poked Zhou Shu in the back with his fingers.

“Hurry up and thank the great general!” Sun Gongping said in a low voice. “Do you know how rare an opportunity it is to comprehend the saber intent? Even for me, having the chance to comprehend it once a year is a blessing!

“Ordinary people don’t even have a chance!”

Is it that precious? But I don’t need it. Zhou Shu thought. *I know my own matters.*

Zhou Shu didn’t have much hope for his own aptitude. If he tried to comprehend the saber intent, he probably wouldn’t even be able to comprehend a single trace of it.

Besides, did he need to comprehend any saber intent?

He had the Heavenly Saber Art. As long as he used the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber to kill enemies, his Heavenly Saber Art would improve indefinitely.

This was the Heavenly Saber Art. Why would he need to learn other saber arts?

“That...” Zhou Shu muttered and tried his best not to sound offensive. “I’m not interested in comprehending saber intent. Can you change the reward?”

“You...” Sun Gongping gritted his teeth in hatred. He couldn’t get an opportunity to comprehend the saber intent even if he wanted to. *This Old Zhou!*

Meng Bai also frowned. “You don’t want to comprehend the saber intent? Let me tell you. This saber intent was left behind by a senior expert whose Saber Dao is immeasurably deep. If you can comprehend a little, it will benefit you endlessly for the rest of your life.

“Furthermore, let me tell you this. If you want to become a Forging Master, it is impossible for you not to cultivate the Martial Dao.”

Meng Bai’s expression was serious, and he said with a sunken voice, “Did you see Grandmaster Zhu? He has the cultivation of a fifth-rank martial artist!

“The Martial Dao might not be the most important thing for forgers, but without Martial Dao cultivation, one’s Forging Dao will definitely not go far!

“I have lived for so many years, but I have never seen someone who is not a ranked martial artist become a Forging Master!”

Zhu Chuanfeng is actually a fifth-rank martial artist?

Zhou Shu was alarmed to hear this.

Thankfully, Great General Meng came today. Otherwise, if Grandmaster Zhu was really shameless, I would have been in trouble.

A fifth-rank martial artist is absolutely not someone I can deal with right now.

Having thought of this, Zhou Shu glared at Sun Gongping.

This unreliable fellow, if he invited Yin Wuyou over, would there be a need to fear Zhu Chuanfeng?

Sun Gongping was confused. *Why are you glaring at me?*

He glared back.

Sparks flew between their eyes as they turned their heads away and snorted.

Meng Bai didn’t notice their small movements. His expression became serious, as if he had made some major decision.

“No, I can’t let a good seedling be held up just like that!” Meng Bai said in a low voice. “You must cultivate the Martial Dao! You must comprehend the saber intent!

“I still hope to see you become a Forging Master, a Grand Craftsman, or even a Divine Craftsman! The future of Grand Xia’s Forging Division will depend on you.”

Xiao Zongshui and the others were all dumbfounded. *Isn’t this a little too much?*

Zhou Shu is just a young brat. Even if he has some talent, he isn’t even a Forging Master yet. How can he represent the future of the Forging Division?

Him becoming a Grand Craftsman? Which Grand Craftsman wasn’t talented when they were young?

Not to mention a Divine Craftsman!

Zhou Shu was somewhat speechless as well. *Is this old man muddled?*

“Great General, you are too kind,” Zhou Shu said.

“No!” Meng Bai said seriously. “My eyes have never missed anyone, not a single one!

“I will immediately enter the palace to report to His Majesty and have His Majesty issue a decree to allow you to comprehend the saber intent!” Meng Bai said as he walked out, the Horse Slaying Saber in his hands.

“You must comprehend the saber intent. Otherwise, you will be disobeying the decree!” Meng Bai’s voice sounded from far away.

Zhou Shu was dumbfounded. *How can he do this?*

I really don’t want to comprehend any useless saber intent. I just want a practical reward!

2

What are you doing!

“Old Zhou, you’re really something. You actually won!” Sun Gongping patted Zhou Shu’s shoulder with envy.

“You’ve earned a fortune this time. Many people are dying to comprehend the saber intent!”

“Who cares!” Zhou Shu said unhappily. From the corner of his eye, he saw that Xiao Zongshui and the others had already reached the door and were about to slip away.

“Stop right there! If you’re willing to bet, you have to admit defeat. Take out the contracts!

“Otherwise, I will get Great General Meng to talk to you!”