

Canon 41

Chapter 41: Change of Mind

“Superintendent, put it down. I’ll do it myself!” Zhang Yibei said softly while trembling.

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Xiao Zongshui rolled his eyes and placed the water kettle in front of Zhang Yibei before continuing to distribute kettles to the other Forging Apprentices.

The superintendent of the 78th Workshop, Li Hongyuan, was pushing a cart of iron materials to the side of each smelting furnace.

As for the other superintendents, some were sweeping the floor while others were moving things. In short, none of them were idle.

On the other hand, the Forging Apprentices were resting. Some were eating while others were drinking water.

At first glance, it was hard to tell who was a superintendent and who was an apprentice.

“Brother Li, are we just going to let that surnamed Zhou do whatever he wants?” one of the superintendents whispered when he passed by Li Hongyuan.

He appeared angry, and there was a murderous look on his face.

As workshop superintendents, although their positions weren’t high, they were the highest authority in their own workshops!

When had they ever done something like this?

In their workshops, were these Forging Apprentices even worthy of serving them tea?

“Or what?” Li Hongyuan revealed the whites of his eyes. “That surnamed Zhou is throwing his weight around now. We offended him before. If we let him catch us again, will we be able to bear the consequences?”

Li Hongyuan carried a basket of iron off the cart and placed it beside a smelting furnace. He was fat to begin with, so when he got busy, he started sweating profusely.

In just two days, he felt as though he had done all the work he had to do in his life.

Every day, Zhou Shu would call them before dawn, and he would only let them leave at midnight.

Their daily work time was longer than that of these Forging Apprentices!

They had almost no time to rest. As soon as they finished their job at hand, Zhou Shu would immediately arrange other work for them.

He even controlled their meal times and bathroom breaks!

If they didn't want to do it, fine. They would have to explain it to Great General Meng themselves!

On the other hand, these Forging Apprentices didn't need to do anything. The only thing they needed to do was receive Zhou Shu's training and learn some weapon forging techniques that they didn't understand.

"Superintendent Li, after distributing the iron, go prepare lunch." Zhou Shu's voice came from afar.

Anger flashed across Li Hongyuan's eyes, but his rationality still made him reply loudly, "Got it!"

"Superintendent Xiao, hurry up. Everyone is sweating so much. If we don't hydrate ourselves in time, our energy will drop. At that time, who will be responsible for the delay in forging?"

Xiao Zongshui suppressed his anger and sped up distributing the water kettles.

Zhou Shu paced back and forth in the factory like a supervisor and occasionally reprimanded the superintendents.

These workshop superintendents were afraid that Zhou Shu would complain to Meng Bai. So even though they were upset, they didn't dare to say anything.

Seeing this, Zhang Yibei and the others had mixed feelings. On the one hand, the people who had oppressed them in the past were now serving them, making them feel rather pleased.

On the other hand, while being served by these people, they also felt uneasy. Would they get revenge later?

"Everyone, take the time to rest. We still have to continue." Zhou Shu clapped his hands and said loudly, "In order to complete this mission, Superintendent Xiao and Superintendent Li have sacrificed a lot. Everyone must cherish this opportunity. No matter what, we must complete this mission!"

"Don't worry, Superintendent Zhou. We'll do our best!" Zhang Yibei and the others exclaimed.

That's right. The leaders had already lowered their statuses and helped them with their chores and whatnot. What reason did they have not to work hard?

Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others cursed in their hearts. Are we doing it willingly?

It's all because of you, bastard Zhou Shu, ordering us around like bulls and horses!

"Dear superintendents, everyone knows how much you have sacrificed for the mission. Thank you!" Zhou Shu continued.

"Thank you for your hard work, Superintendents!" Zhang Yibei and the others shouted sincerely.

Damn it! Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others cursed, but they also all felt strange in their hearts.

It wasn't that they didn't know the Forging Apprentices scolded them behind their backs, but what did it matter?

When Zhang Yibei and the others thanked them for their hard work, they could tell that they were sincere.

They suddenly felt that the Forging Apprentices weren't so vulgar and rude. They could see that the superintendents were working hard.

"It's all for the mission!" Li Hongyuan smiled and waved his hand.

"Go do your work!" Zhou Shu said angrily. "You're just a laborer undergoing reformation through work. Do you really think you are the leader of an inspection team?"

"Why don't you say that you are serving the people?"

Li Hongyuan was a little embarrassed as he continued moving the iron materials. Xiao Zongshui and the others secretly laughed.

He was asking for trouble for trying to steal the limelight from Zhou Shu.

In the factory, everyone got busy again.

Not a single person was idle here, including Zhou Shu himself!

Three thousand Huben Sabers, one thousand Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, and five hundred Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber in a month was almost an impossible task.

They would definitely not be able to complete this mission in such a short time if they used regular methods.

Therefore, Zhou Shu could only take a different path and apply the method he had used when forging Huben Sabers for the Huben Troops.

It was impossible for Forging Apprentices to master how to forge the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber in such a short time.

Even the simplest Huben Saber among the three was something they had yet to master.

Therefore, one person had to command the forging according to the forging formula, and then the Forging Apprentices would follow this person's instructions, just like what Zhou Shu had done before.

But doing this wasn't an easy task. First, the person in charge had to familiarize himself with the forging process.

In order to complete the mission, the thirty or so people in the current 0th Workshop were definitely not enough.

As for Zhou Shu, he didn't have the energy to train more people, so he planned on training Zhang Yibei and the others and then getting them to head to the various workshops to forge.

Now, he wanted to teach Zhang Yibei and the others first!

Fortunately, Zhang Yibei and the others had cooperated with him before, so they were quite familiar with his working style.

Although they couldn't forge the Huben Saber independently, they were already familiar with the forging process. It wasn't a problem for them to command others to forge while looking at the forging formula.

But they had never forged the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber before, so Zhou Shu had to see them forge them first before he could let them go without worry.

The secret forging formula of the Huben Saber had already been recorded in the Forging Division. It was nominally owned by the 97th Workshop. If other workshops wanted to forge it, they had to pay a fee to the 97th Workshop.

The money didn't belong to everyone. It was the property of the workshop. Even Xiao Zongshui was unable to embezzle it. He could only hand over the portion of the profits he had received to Zhou Shu as a way to apologize for what had happened before.

The grand minister, Yin Wuyou, had promised that the ownership of the forging formula for the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber would belong to Zhou Shu instead of the workshop. Every time the Forging Division forged a Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, they would give Zhou Shu some benefits. This was the real money maker.

As for the Horse Slaying Saber, Zhou Shu didn't enjoy such treatment.

According to the rules of the Forging Division, the weapons developed by the Forging Apprentices in the Forging Division's workshops belonged to the Forging Division. The Forging Apprentices would receive a reward, but they wouldn't have all the rights to the forging formula.

The Horse Slaying Saber was like the Huben Saber. The ownership belonged to the Forging Division, and the 'patent fee' would go to the 0th Workshop.

Although Zhou Shu was the superintendent of the 0th Workshop, the 0th Workshop's money was a bit different from his personal money.

For these matters, the Forging Division had its own set of rules. By handing over the forging formula to the Forging Division, Zhou Shu didn't need to worry too much about the subsequent matters.

To him, he wasn't too concerned about these benefits.

Regarding money, it was okay as long as he had enough to spend. He was going to become a Divine Craftsman in the future. He didn't have to worry about not being able to earn money.

Right now, the most important thing was to rely on the Forging Division to promote the weapons he forged and increase his cultivation!

Only by becoming stronger could he feel safe in this world.

While teaching Zhang Yibei and the others how to forge the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber, Zhou Shu also forged several Horse Slaying Sabers.

In the Legendary Armament Canon, he had forged enough Huben Sabers and Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, but he was still lacking in Horse Slaying Sabers.

And thus far, the Horse Slaying Saber had yet to complete a kill. What kind of benefits would it bring?

Zhou Shu was looking forward to it.

"The Huben Troops sure are unreliable. After the last time, they didn't kill any more enemies!"

Thinking of the benefits from the Legendary Armament Canon, Zhou Shu thought of the Huben Saber and the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber.

He had handed over all the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers he forged to Meng Bai, most likely to equip soldiers. As for the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, he would also hand them over to Meng Bai after a month.

Only the Huben Sabers, as well as the hundred Huben Sabers he had forged, were all in the hands of the Huben Troops. Zhou Shu had filled the quota in the Legendary Armament Canon. Even if he forged more Huben Sabers, he wouldn't be able to replace them for the time being.

... Unless the Huben Sabers with the Huben Troops were destroyed!

Ever since the traitor incident, the Huben Sabers had not brought him any benefits for a long time, causing his Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique to be stagnant for a long time.

As Imperial Guards, the Huben Troops had too few opportunities to fight!

Right now, he could only hope that the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and the Horse Slaying Sabers could be delivered to the hands of the soldiers. This would bring him the greatest benefits. After all, weapons were meant to kill enemies.

Zhou Shu now understood that the numbers in the Legendary Armament Canon were a protective mechanism. Once they were full, the weapons he forged later wouldn't give him any benefits even if they completed kills.

Only if one of the first hundred weapons was damaged would another one be able to fill up the quota.

Thus, Zhou Shu had now set a rule for himself. As long as the numbers in the Legendary Armament Canon were full, he would no longer continue to forge that weapon. Only when there was a shortage would he forge one.

After all, he was already a workshop superintendent, so there was no need for him to do any useless work.

"Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu! Everyone gather!" Zhou Shu shouted. There's no need to think much about these things for now.. The most important thing is to complete Meng Bai's mission.

Chapter 42: Don't Forget What It's Like to Be Human after Being a Slave for Too Long

"Superintendent Zhou, why do we have to carve a zero on the handles?" Zhang Yibei asked curiously.

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For three consecutive days, they had barely slept or rested. From the moment they opened their eyes, they began to forge weapons with Zhou Shu, and they only stopped late at night.

As for Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the other superintendents, they took care of all the logistics so that Zhang Yibei and the other Forging Apprentices could focus on forging.

The effect was very obvious. On the fifth day, Zhang Yibei and the others had familiarized themselves with the forging process of the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber.

Now, this group of people could already be leaders and lead other Forging Apprentices to forge.

Of course, the success rate was not necessarily high.

It was impossible to be like Zhou Shu and succeed every time.

But there were a total of 39 people like Zhang Yibei. If they split up, each of them could lead 40 to 50 people to forge at the same time.

As long as they succeeded once, there would be dozens of weapons. If the apprentices led by these 39 people all succeeded once, there would be over a thousand of them.

If everything went smoothly, completing Meng Bai's mission shouldn't be too difficult.

The only drawback of this method was that there were too many people that needed to be mobilized. If the 39 people were assigned 40 people each, it would be over 1,000 people.

If not for Great General Meng's orders, it would be impossible for Zhou Shu to mobilize so many Forging Apprentices.

Among all the workshops in the Forging Division, the largest one only had about 1,000 people. And they also had their daily tasks to complete, so it wasn't easy to mobilize them.

In addition to Meng Bai's military order, Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others were afraid that Zhou Shu would get even with them. This was why they were willing to hand over all their Forging Apprentices.

"This is called branding," Zhou Shu explained. "When powerful forgers forge weapons, they will leave their own imprints on the weapons to show that the weapons are made by them.

"Although we are only Forging Apprentices, we should have this awareness. The zero means these weapons are produced by our 0th Workshop, and our 0th Workshop is responsible for their quality.

"We want everyone to remember that all the weapons produced by our 0th Workshop are of the highest quality.

"Therefore, all of you have to be careful. None of the weapons forged this time can be flawed. Otherwise, it will ruin the reputation of our 0th Workshop!

"Right now, we are just starting out. One day, we will make our name resound like the first thirty-six workshops of the Forging Division. At that time, you will understand what this means."

Zhang Yibei nodded, but he didn't fully understand what Zhou Shu meant.

It wasn't just him who didn't understand. Xiao Zongshui and the other superintendents felt their mouths twitch when they heard this. How dare you compare yourself to the first thirty-six workshops of the Forging Division? In those workshops, the worst are all Forging Masters.

“Superintendent, why do we have to split everyone into three groups? We can work sixteen hours a day!” Sixth Brother Wu asked loudly.

“If I find out that anyone dares to do this, I’ll make them leave the 0th Workshop!” Zhou Shu’s expression sank as he coldly said, “In the three groups, each person will lead forty people and use the same batch of smelting furnaces. Once a group finishes forging, regardless of success or failure, they will immediately rest and switch to the next group.

“Like this, each group will only forge for eight hours a day! They will rest for the remaining time in the day!

“This is an order. If anyone can’t do it, then find another job. Our 0th Workshop can’t keep such a talent!”

Sixth Brother Wu’s face was deathly pale. He didn’t know why Zhou Shu was so angry. When they worked at the other workshops, working 16 to 18 hours a day was normal.

He had only said it to express his loyalty.

The mission was so tight. How could they afford to rest for so long?

They only had to work for 8 hours a day and could rest the remaining 16 hours. This was too extravagant. Even the donkeys in the workshops wouldn’t dare to do this.

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He felt that it was already a blessing to be able to work for sixteen hours a day. Once upon a time, he had to work up to twenty hours a day!

“Superintendent, please rest assured. We will strictly follow your rules,” Zhang Yibei hurriedly said while tugging Sixth Brother Wu’s sleeve, hinting for him to apologize.

Sixth Brother Wu came back to his senses and hurriedly knelt. “Superintendent, I’m sorry!”

Although he still didn’t quite understand, the superintendent was always right. The superintendent would never be wrong!

“Get up!” Zhou Shu said. “I’ve said it before. You rely on your skills to make a living, not on anyone’s favor. Don’t kneel so easily!

“Don’t forget what it’s like to be human after being a slave for too long!”

The Forging Apprentices kept quiet out of fear. They didn’t even dare to breathe loudly.

In the distance, Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others also looked at each other in confusion.

Zhang Yibei and the Forging Apprentices couldn’t figure it out. As superintendents, they couldn’t figure it out either.

To let the Forging Apprentices work for only 8 hours a day and rest for 16?

Were they mobilized to enjoy themselves?

If Forging Apprentices worked this way, how could they complete their forging tasks? Who would do it?

With such working hours, it would be strange if they would be able to forge 3,000 Huben Sabers, 1,000 Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, and 500 Horse Slaying Sabers a month!

Superintendent Zhou was really daring. They were already at this juncture, yet he only allowed the Forging Apprentices to work 8 hours a day.

Even they didn't dare to say that they could rest sixteen hours a day.

Were they still considered Forging Apprentices like this?

Such a relaxed life was probably comparable to that of Forging Masters and Grand Craftsmen.

Zhou Shu didn't care what these people were thinking. To him, forging was both technical and physical work. If Forging Apprentices worked too many hours a day, it would be harmful to their bodies.

Eight hours of high-intensity physical labor was quite a lot of work.

If they worked longer, it might not be obvious in a short period of time. But over time, the Forging Apprentices would definitely collapse.

Didn't his predecessor exhaust himself to death like this?

Therefore, Zhou Shu came up with this three-shift system. The smelting furnaces wouldn't stop, and the three waves of Forging Apprentices would take turns working.

At any other time, he might not have been able to make such a bold attempt.

After all, if it was just the 0th Workshop, even if he wanted to improve the conditions of Forging Apprentices, he wouldn't risk failing the forging mission.

It was different now. With General Meng's mission, he could mobilize all the resources from the 37th to the 108th Workshops, including manpower.

This allowed him to have enough Forging Apprentices. Even if there were three shifts, he could guarantee that there would be enough people forging at the same time.

Only then could he ensure that he could complete Great General Meng's mission.

If he failed the mission, the punishment wouldn't be a joke.

Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others were afraid of Great General Meng's punishment, and so was Zhou Shu. He didn't have any intention of knowing what the punishment involved.

It was through strict, precise calculations that Zhou Shu was certain that he could complete Great General Meng's mission in a month. This was why he dared to make such an attempt.

"Superintendent Xiao, Superintendent Li, did you hear what I said?" Zhou Shu looked at Xiao Zongshui and the others.

"For this forging mission, the 0th workshop will be in charge of everything. I'll send Zhang Yibei and the others to your respective workshops to assist in the forging. You need to ensure the manpower and

other logistics work. As for what needs to be done, they will decide. You are not allowed to interfere, understand?”

“We understand!” Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others said in low voices.

They would need to transfer a large number of people to help with the forging. This way, their workshop’s daily forging tasks would be somewhat difficult to complete.

From the looks of it, they could only increase the number of tasks for the other apprentices.

Zhou Shu’s gaze fell on the superintendents, and he immediately guessed what they were thinking.

He had already considered this problem when he decided to mobilize so many people from their workshops.

“I’ve already reported this to the great general. All the people I’ve taken away will be exempted from their original forging tasks within this month,” Zhou Shu said in a deep voice. “So you don’t need to think about oppressing the other Forging Apprentices.”

“No.” Xiao Zongshui and the others smiled awkwardly. “We just think that your management method might be effective, Superintendent Zhou.”

They actually couldn’t understand why Zhou Shu would do this.

Even though Zhou Shu had explained to them that this would be better for the Forging Apprentices’ health and allow them to work for a few more years, Xiao Zongshui and the others didn’t care.

If the Forging Apprentices were exhausted, they could just recruit more people.

In any case, there was no need to worry about not being able to recruit people for the Forging Division’s workshops!

At most, it would take some effort to train them again.

Although Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the other superintendents had changed recently, it was impossible for them to completely get rid of their previous thoughts.

What Zhou Shu wanted to do was to make them treat Forging Apprentices as individuals. Then he would think of a way to convince the grand minister through the upper-level route. When the time came, he would then promote his management method to the other Forging Division’s workshops.

The premise was that he had to prove that the 8-hour shift method was indeed effective.

Otherwise, if it affected the supply of weapons from the Forging Division, it would affect the survival of the country.

“Superintendent Zhou, since you’ve already reported this to the great general, we will naturally obey your orders,” Xiao Zongshui and the others said. In any case, they just had followed Zhou Shu’s instructions. In the end, it wouldn’t be their responsibility if they couldn’t complete the mission.

“I hope so.” Zhou Shu nodded. “Follow what I said before. Everyone, move out!”

“I will stay here. If there are any problems, send someone to inform me.”

Zhou Shu said in a low voice, "According to the completion of the mission, everyone will be rewarded.

"Of course, all of you won't get it. All the superintendents are rich and overbearing. You will definitely not be interested in my little reward.

"At most, I'll send you a silk banner.

"It will read 'Hardworking and uncomplaining, highly meritorious and respectable, an old steed in the stable still aspires to gallop a thousand miles...'"

Chapter 43: The Genius Approved By The Officials

Hardworking and uncomplaining? Highly meritorious and respectable?

...

An old steed in the stable still aspires to gallop a thousand miles?

What the hell?

Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the others all turned their heads away, ignoring Zhou Shu.

After interacting with him for the past few days, they had long found it strange that Zhou Shu would spout strange words and phrases from time to time. But he had the upper hand.

Even if they were unhappy with him, they had to endure it.

"Superintendent Xiao, bring Zhang Yibei and the others to the 97th Workshop.

"Superintendent Li, Sixth Brother Wu is yours.

"Superintendent Zhang, I'll leave these apprentices to you for now."

"..."

Zhou Shu assigned the apprentices to the various superintendents. "Everyone, follow the plan. If any of the superintendents don't cooperate, tell me. I'll settle it!"

All the superintendents rolled their eyes. They had been working here for so many days. How could they possibly give up halfway?

They only had to endure it for another month at most. All they had to do was work hard. Anyone could do it.

When this mission is over, get as far away from me as you can, Zhou Shu. I never want to see you again!

Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the other superintendents left the 0th Workshop with the Forging Apprentices assigned to them.

After everyone left, Zhou Shu returned to his smelting furnace and prepared to continue forging.

For the past few days, he had been guiding Zhang Yibei and the others, delaying his own forging progress.

He had only forged half the quota of the Horse Slaying Sabers, and he still had a long way to go to reach a hundred.

Just as he picked up his hammer and was about to start forging, he heard a loud voice outside the door.

“Old Zhou, I’m here to see you. Long time no see. Did you miss me?” Sun Gongping entered the room.

“Oh, I haven’t seen you for a few days. Your place has really changed.”

“Why are you here?” Zhou Shu said.

He hadn’t seen Sun Gongping since he had forged the Horse Slaying Saber in public.

At first, he thought Sun Gongping felt guilty for not helping him invite Yin Wuyou and was too embarrassed to come and find him.

But after he thought about it later, Sun Gongping probably wouldn’t feel embarrassed since he was so shameless.

“You don’t seem to welcome me here,” Sun Gongping said. “How sad. I treated you as a brother, but you—”

“Are you trying to say that ‘I cast my gaze toward the moon, yet the moon shines on the gutter’?” Zhou Shu said angrily.

“Hehe, that’s what I meant.” Sun Gongping chuckled.

“Old Zhou, you even have such literary talent?

“‘I cast my gaze toward the moon, yet the moon shines on the gutter’. Not bad, I’ll use it from now on!”

“Alright, stop talking nonsense. Tell me, what is it?” Zhou Shu said. “Don’t look for me if you want to borrow money. I really don’t have money now. Do you see this place? In order to build it, I still owe a huge debt!”

“Look at you!” Sun Gongping rolled his eyes at him. “Don’t worry. I won’t borrow money from you! I’m here to ask you to forge a weapon for me!”

“I knew you wouldn’t visit me for no reason!” Zhou Shu said. “You want me to forge a weapon? Are you kidding me? I’m not a Forging Master yet. I can’t forge weapons of quality.”

Sun Gongping was already a ninth-rank martial artist. To martial artists who had just entered the ranks, standard weapons were not sufficient for them to display their strength. Thus, most weapons used by low-ranked martial artists were low-ranked weapons.

Of course, this was with the exception of those who didn’t have the money to buy ranked weapons...

“I’ve thought about it. Rather than using a mediocre ranked weapon, it would be better to use a premium standard weapon temporarily.” Sun Gongping shook his head.

“So, I’ve decided that before I save enough money to hire someone to help me forge a suitable ranked weapon, I’ll use a standard weapon first!”

"Isn't that easy? Doesn't your Divine Constable Bureau also have standard weapons?" Zhou Shu said. "I remember that the 56th Workshop specializes in supplying standard weapons to the Divine Constable Bureau, right? Sabers, spears, swords, halberds, they are all free for use."

"I don't fancy any of those. They are not worthy of my status!" Sun Gongping waved his hands.

"Old Zhou, we have such a good relationship. Do you think you can help me forge a unique weapon?"

"It should be mighty and domineering, worthy of my identity as a divine constable."

"Look, you helped the Huben Troops forge the Huben Saber, you helped Great Xia's cavalry forge the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, and even the infantry has the Horse Slaying Saber..."

"Our Divine Constable Bureau is much richer than them. If you help us forge a unique weapon, we will definitely be able to offer you suitable compensation."

Sun Gongping talked non-stop.

Zhou Shu was speechless. "Say, Great Divine Constable Sun, do you think it's that easy to develop a weapon? Just because you want it?"

"No, I can't do it!" Zhou Shu decisively refused.

"Don't do that. I came here to talk earnestly with you," Sun Gongping said. "Right now, everyone is saying that you are a rare forging genius in Great Xia. Even His Majesty has acknowledged you. Isn't such a small matter easy for you?"

Zhou Shu looked at Sun Gongping with a strange expression. His gaze made Sun Gongping uncomfortable.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Something is wrong! Something is very wrong!" Zhou Shu mumbled.

"What's wrong?" Sun Gongping asked bewilderedly.

"This isn't your style!" Zhou Shu rubbed his chin. "When have you, Great Divine Constable Sun, ever complimented me like this? If you praise me, the sun will rise from the west!"

Sun Gongping had always prided himself on being a genius. Since when did he ever praise others of being a genius?

"Old Zhou, you're really heartless." Sun Gongping was aggrieved.

"I've always thought that you were very good at forging. Otherwise, why would I treat you as a brother?"

"How can my brother be just an ordinary person?"

"Stop!" Zhou Shu hurriedly said. He's still the same Sun Gongping!

"Tell me what happened first! What do you mean His Majesty has acknowledged me? Why did you suddenly come to me to help you forge a weapon?"

Sun Gongping was a proud and arrogant person. When Zhou Shu suggested that he would help Sun Gongping forge weapons after he became a Forging Master, Sun Gongping had never agreed.

To put it bluntly, this was because he didn't really believe in Zhou Shu.

Now that he had inexplicably come to find Zhou Shu to forge a weapon, there was no way Zhou Shu would believe that there was nothing going on!

With Sun Gongping's vision, he didn't even think highly of ordinary Forging Masters. At the very least, only High-level Forging Masters were worthy of his attention. Why would he take the initiative to look for Zhou Shu to forge a weapon?

"Old Zhou, this isn't a good habit." Sun Gongping said. "I'm here to deliver business to you. Why are you doubting me?"

"Thank you so much," Zhou Shu said. "But right now, I'm too busy to take the Divine Constable Bureau's order. Why don't you hire someone else?"

"Damn it!" Sun Gongping muttered.

"I knew it wouldn't be that easy. Old Ma insisted that I come.

"Alright, I'll tell you. You'll find out soon anyway!

"His Majesty has already given you special permission to participate in next year's Great Xia military parade!

"You are the first Forging Apprentice allowed to participate in the military parade since the founding of Great Xia!

"If His Majesty didn't think you were a rare forging genius, he wouldn't have made such a decision?

"I know what Old Ma is thinking. He wants to build a good relationship with you before you make a name for yourself. I told him that it was unnecessary. We are brothers. Is there a need to build a relationship?"

While Sun Gongping spoke on and on, Zhou Shu was stunned.

He had also heard of Great Xia's military parade before. This was a grand occasion for Great Xia, and it was also a prelude to the Ten Nations Martial Arts Tournament.

The Ten Nations Martial Arts Tournament was held once every ten years, while Great Xia's military parade was held once every five years. This was a system that the Great Xia Imperial Court had set up in order to preserve Great Xia's martial arts.

Next year was the year Great Xia's military parade and the Ten Nations Martial Arts Tournament would be held.

Great Xia's military parade was divided into two parts. One was a military parade, and the other was a martial arts demonstration.

The so-called military parade was the inspection of the weapons and equipment by the Great Xia Imperial Court.

And the martial arts demonstration was for the three military forces of Great Xia to display their strength.

It was similar to the military parades in Zhou Shu's previous life.

"I'm from the Forging Division. Isn't it normal for me to participate in the military parade?" Zhou Shu asked curiously.

"Normal my ass!" Sun Gongping said. "When have you ever heard of a Forging Apprentice being able to participate in the military parade?"

"I've heard of it. I even heard that there was an apprentice who developed a new weapon during the military parade. His Majesty later rewarded him with the secret forging formula of a ranked weapon..."

"Where did you hear this from?" Sun Gongping rolled his eyes.

"How could a Forging Apprentice forge a weapon on the spot?"

"Let me tell you. Although standard weapons are inspected during the military parade, those were all forged in advance by the Forging Division. Forging Apprentices are not qualified to participate in the parade!"

"Only Forging Masters, High-level Forging Masters, and Grand Craftsmen are qualified to forge weapons during the parade!"

"Do you now know how rare it is for His Majesty to allow a Forging Apprentice to participate in the military parade?"

Zhou Shu's eyebrows twitched. He had only heard rumors about the military parade in the past, so he really didn't know the details.

"Is it really rare?" Zhou Shu didn't care that much. With his ability, wasn't it normal to allow him to participate in the military parade?

"You..." Sun Gongping gave him a thumbs up. You're really impressive!

"Cut the crap, Old Zhou. Will you help me or not?!" Sun Gongping said indignantly, "You're looking down on me now that you've managed to get close to His Majesty?"

"Can we talk properly?" Zhou Shu rolled his eyes.

"It's not that I don't want to help, but I can't!"

"It's not that easy to develop a new standard weapon. Even though I'm a genius, I can't forge one just because I want to."

"Besides, there's still General Meng's mission. I don't have time for the next month."

"At most, I promise that when a suitable opportunity arises in the future, I will help the Divine Constable Bureau develop a unique weapon, okay?"

"I'll hold you to it!" Sun Gongping thought for a while and realized that it was indeed the case. How could it be so easy to develop a new standard weapon? Even Forging Masters hadn't produced new weapons for many years.

"A promise is a promise made!" Zhou Shu said.

"You are my good brother indeed!" Sun Gongping laughed heartily. "Let's go. I'll treat you to a drink!"

"No..." Zhou Shu was just about to refuse when he suddenly froze.

A barrage of messages flashed in front of his eyes.

Chapter 44: Is It Difficult to Ride a Horse?

A barrage of messages flashed in front of Zhou Shu's eyes, and he felt as if his dantian suddenly exploded. Waves of violent energy constantly surged out and instantly flowed through his entire body.

...

[You receive a reward of two years of cultivation because the Huben Saber you forged effectively completed a kill!]

[You receive a reward of two years of cultivation because the Huben Saber you forged effectively completed a kill!]

...

In the blink of an eye, Zhou Shu felt a string snap in his body. Then as if he had broken through some sort of shackle, his strength kept increasing.

Zhou Shu could sense his strength constantly increasing, making him feel as though he was floating in the air.

Becoming stronger was addictive!

He had successfully broken through to the eighth level of the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique!

The increase in his strength was not as great as before. But leveling up from the seventh to the eighth level, his strength had undergone a tremendous change.

Reaching the seventh level from the sixth only required 128 years of cultivation, while reaching the eighth level required 256 years of cultivation!

The difference between one level was like heaven and earth.

Without even trying, Zhou Shu could feel his own transformation. The strength he felt in his body could only be described with one word!

When Zhou Shu looked at Sun Gongping again, he felt like he could kill him with one slap...

Now, my strength should be comparable to several Sun Gongpings, right?

“Why are you in a daze? I’ve made reservations at the Drunken Immortal Inn. There won’t be a second time. It’ll be your turn to treat me next time!”

Zhou Shu pursed his lips. “No! I’m not free! Oh right, Great Divine Constable Sun, you are well-informed. Do you know what the Huben Troops are up to recently?”

“Why are you asking this?” Sun Gongping said half-heartedly, “What else can they do? Protect the palace. The Imperial Guards can only patrol all day. What else can they do?”

This was equivalent to not saying anything at all!

How could they suddenly complete any kills if they were patrolling the palace?

The Huben Sabers had just given him decades worth of cultivation, indicating that they had just experienced a battle!

There was no rebellion in Great Xia. How could they have the chance to kill enemies in the palace?

His curiosity diluted the excitement of having just broken through to the next level.

In this world, he didn’t have many channels to obtain information. He was practically blind to the world outside of the Forging Division.

Even within the Forging Division, there were many things that he didn’t know.

He had known almost nothing about the military parade that Sun Gongping had mentioned.

In the end, it was because his foundation was too shallow and he didn’t have any connections. Even if he wanted to obtain information, he might not be able to find a way.

“Great Divine Constable Sun, what did you just say?” Zhou Shu said.

“Huben Troops?” Sun Gongping was puzzled. He felt that Zhou Shu was acting strangely today and absent-minded the entire time.

“No, before that.”

“I’ve made reservations at the Drunken Immortal Inn?”

“Let’s go!” Zhou Shu said straightforwardly. “I’ve thought about it. Work is never-ending. Since you’ve sincerely invited me, I definitely have to accept your invite!”

Sun Gongping was a divine constable of the Divine Constable Bureau and had a mysterious background. If he could build a good relationship with him, it would be easier for him to gather information in the future.

It would be great if he could get to know some people in the capital through him.

“Just the two of us?” Zhou Shu asked.

“Or what?” Sun Gongping asked. “I originally wanted to invite you to listen to music, but Old Ma refused...”

Zhou Shu was speechless. Is he here to treat me to a drink or to spend public funds?

Is he here on behalf of the Divine Constable Bureau to build a good relationship with me?

To think that I thought he really treated me as a good brother!

The guilt in Zhou Shu's heart instantly disappeared. Originally, he had felt a bit guilty for keeping in contact with Sun Gongping in order to make use of him, but wasn't Sun Gongping the same?

Everyone was using each other.

I'm not afraid of being used by others. It's much better than being useless... Zhou Shu consoled himself.

Thinking about it, it made sense. He was only the superintendent of a small workshop in the Forging Division. Although he was a little more handsome, talented, and might have more money in the future...

What else did he have?

Why were others rushing to build a good relationship with him?

Wasn't it because he was useful?

After thinking this through, he no longer felt uncomfortable.

"Is it really the Drunken Immortal Inn? It's not a restaurant, right?" Zhou Shu still remembered the first time he had met Sun Gongping. Sun Gongping had directed him to a small restaurant.

"Hehe, you still remember that restaurant." Sun Gongping chuckled. "I wouldn't mind if you really want to go to a restaurant."

"No, going to a restaurant is no different from eating at the Forging Division!" Zhou Shu changed his clothes and walked toward the capital with Sun Gongping.

The Forging Division's workshops were located on the outskirts of the capital. It was around 15 kilometers away from the capital of Great Xia.

Sun Gongping had come on horseback, but Zhou Shu didn't know how to ride a horse. Also, he didn't have a horse, so they could only rely on their legs.

"I can't believe you don't know how to ride a horse!" Sun Gongping had repeated this sentence countless times.

Zhou Shu flew into a rage out of humiliation. "So what if I don't know how to ride a horse? Did you know how to ride a horse since birth?"

"Hehe, although I wasn't born with it, I was already able to ride a horse when I was three." Sun Gongping chuckled.

"So what? Didn't you just learn it earlier?" Zhou Shu said. "I was just too lazy to learn in the past. It's not that hard to learn how to ride a horse. Give me the horse!"

With that, he snatched the reins from Sun Gongping's hands, stepped on the stirrups, and jumped onto the horse's back.

"Be careful! Don't hurt my horse!" Sun Gongping shouted.

Zhou Shu rolled his eyes and imitated what he had seen in TV dramas. He clamped his legs together.

“Giddy up!” Zhou Shu shouted, and the horse galloped forward. He leaned back and almost fell.

Sun Gongping burst into laughter.

Zhou Shu’s eyebrows rose slightly. He adjusted his body and sat firmly on the horse’s back.

The next moment, he seemed to enter the state of being one with the horse. His body moved up and down rhythmically with the horse’s galloping. No matter how fast the horse ran, he sat firmly.

Level eight of the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique not only gave Zhou Shu divine strength, but his control over his body had reached an inconceivable level.

There was no way he would be dismounted by the horse.

Sun Gongping was dumbfounded as he watched the horse run faster and faster while Zhou Shu sat more and more steadily.

He was left behind.

“I...” Sun Gongping cursed and chased after him.

...

An hour later, Zhou Shu and Sun Gongping appeared at the capital gates.

Zhou Shu’s face was flushed, but he didn’t even need to catch his breath.

Meanwhile, Sun Gongping was covered in sweat and dust.

He had run all the way!

Ninth-rank martial artists didn’t know how to fly or burrow beneath the ground. They would be just as tired when they ran!

“It’s not hard to learn how to ride a horse.” Zhou Shu laughed. “Great Divine Constable Sun, how about selling this horse to me?”

He felt that he really needed a horse. Otherwise, it would be too troublesome to travel between the capital and the Forging Division’s workshops.

“I’m not looking down on you,” Sun Gongping said. “But this horse of mine is no ordinary horse. It’s an authentic Great Wei dragon blood horse. You can’t afford it—”

“Name a price. Maybe I can afford it,” Zhou Shu said.

He didn’t have much money now, but he had the ownership of the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber. This was a money tree.

“One thousand taels of gold!” Sun Gongping said.

“One thousand taels of gold!” Zhou Shu was speechless. One tael of gold was equivalent to 100 taels of silver. One thousand taels of gold was equivalent to 100,000 taels of silver.

How many standard weapons would I have to forge to earn 100,000 taels of silver!

A horse is actually so expensive!

No way! I can't afford it!

"Move! Get out of the way!"

The two of them were slowly walking on the road. Suddenly, there were loud noises behind them. Then a horse galloped over.

"Damn——" Sun Gongping pulled Zhou Shu aside in time to avoid being hit by the galloping horse.

Along the way, the pedestrians avoided the horse. Many of the roadside stalls were knocked over.

"What happened?" Zhou Shu watched the galloping horse disappear at the end of the long street, his heart stirring. "Was that a Huben Troop?"

His eyesight was astounding. Although the horse had only brushed past them, he could still see the knight on horseback wearing the Huben Troops' armor with bloodstains on his body.

He thought about the cultivation increase he received earlier.

The Huben Troops encountered enemies?

Aren't the Huben Troops Imperial Guards?

Zhou Shu looked around. It was peaceful in the capital. Although it was a little chaotic from the galloping horse, it didn't look like a war had broken out.

"Great Divine Constable Sun, the one who just passed by, is he from the Huben Troops? Why did I see blood on him?" Zhou Shu asked Sun Gongping.

The frivolous expression on Sun Gongping's face disappeared, and he became serious.

"I saw it too!" Sun Gongping said in a low voice. "Something must have happened!"

"Old Zhou, go to the Drunken Immortal Inn yourself. Eat whatever you want. After you're done, put it on my tab.

"I'm heading back to the Divine Constable Bureau to take a look!"

While speaking, Sun Gongping had already mounted his horse and rode off.

Zhou Shu: "..."

Is this how you treat someone to a meal?

If I put it on your tab, will it be like what happened last time?

I didn't come out to eat but to socialize!

Zhou Shu mumbled to himself and frowned.

What happened to the Huben Troops?

That knight rushed back on his horse. Is he here to seek help?

In Great Xia, who dares to attack the Huben Troops openly?

[You receive a reward of two years of cultivation because the Huben Saber you forged effectively completed a kill!]

[You receive a reward of two years of cultivation because the Huben Saber you forged effectively completed a kill!]

While he was thinking, two more messages appeared in front of Zhou Shu.

The battle isn't over yet?

Zhou Shu's heart trembled. Suddenly, a thought came to his mind.

He looked in the direction that the knight had rushed from. He could no longer hold himself back and went to take a look!

Let's see who the Huben Troops are fighting!

I won't go too far. If the place the Huben Troops are fighting isn't far, I'll just take a look and come back. I haven't seen the battle scenes of this world yet.

If I can't see them within fifty kilometers after leaving the city, I'll go back to the workshop. If a war breaks out within fifty kilometers of the capital, Great Xia should be able to control the situation...

Chapter 45: They Don't Look Very Strong

"You won't be able to escape. Hand over the name list, and I'll grant you a quick death!"

Less than 50 kilometers from the capital of Great Xia, there was a canyon in the mountains, and a group of black-robed men was surrounding a group of soldiers.

...

Dozens of corpses littered the ground. Some were dressed in military uniforms, while others were dressed in black.

Clearly, both sides had suffered casualties.

But most of them were wearing military uniforms.

"It's you who won't be able to escape!"

The one who spoke was a general covered in blood. If Zhou Shu was here, he would definitely be able to recognize that this person was Cheng Yong, the lieutenant of the Huben Troops who had gone to the Forging Division to find the traitor.

The current Cheng Yong was miserable. His originally shiny armor was now covered in bloodstains, and it was unknown whether the blood belonged to him or the enemy.

There was a cut on his cheek by a sharp blade. The blood had stopped flowing, and his somewhat pale skin was exposed, looking abnormally terrifying.

"This is Great Xia! Since you dare to come here, don't even think about leaving here alive!" Cheng Yong roared with all his might.

"Haha, do you believe that I can kill all of you before your reinforcements arrive?" The leader of the men in black sneered.

"So what?" Cheng Yong wasn't afraid at all. The edge of his Huben Saber was already jagged, and his strength was almost depleted. If he continued fighting, he probably wouldn't be able to last much longer.

But there was no fear in his eyes as he glared at the man in black. "Even if only one soldier lives in the Huben Troops, we will not disgrace Great Xia! Great Xia will avenge us!"

"Haha." The leader laughed.

"Let me tell you. Everyone in Great Xia's capital has been restrained. No one will save you.

"If an army is mobilized, by the time it arrives, we would have already left Great Xia!

"So, you can die now!"

The leader raised his hand. Before his sword fell, Cheng Yong had already raised his Huben Saber.

"Huben Troops, charge!" Cheng Yong roared.

The remaining twenty or so Huben Troops behind him shouted in unison, "Charge!"

The Huben Troops charged toward these men in black.

The leader sneered and swung his arm down.

The number of men in black was almost twice that of the Huben Troops. Without a sound, they charged toward the soldiers.

Both sides collided, and in an instant, flesh and blood flew everywhere. Broken sabers and swords fell with a clang.

In just a moment, countless people from both sides collapsed.

Another deep wound appeared on Cheng Yong's body, and the man in black opposite him was beheaded by him.

The leader narrowed his eyes and slashed one of the Huben Troops several feet away. In a flash, he was already in front of Cheng Yong. With one move, he aimed and slashed toward Cheng Yong's head.

Clang!

Cheng Yong staggered backward, and the Huben Saber in his hand could no longer bear the burden and broke.

There was a flash of sadness in Cheng Yong's eyes, but it immediately turned into determination.

He held the broken saber and glared at the leader in black. He took a step forward and started fighting with him.

A similar scene occurred in every corner of the battlefield.

No one would have thought that there would be such a group of people attacking Great Xia's army at such a close distance to the capital.

The Huben Troops hadn't expected this either.

It was completely out of everyone's expectations. Thus, Cheng Yong and the others had been caught off guard and suffered heavy losses.

If not for the extreme sharpness of the Huben Troops, they would have already died in the hands of the other party.

However, although the Huben Sabers were sharp, their greatest weakness was their toughness.

Logically speaking, the Huben Troops were Imperial Guards, and their daily mission was to guard the imperial palace. Even if the Huben Sabers were not sturdy enough, it shouldn't have mattered.

After all, their battles usually didn't last long.

But now, this weakness was magnified infinitely.

Without reinforcements, Cheng Yong's group was caught in a bitter battle. The Huben Sabers were damaged, followed by the deaths of the Huben Troops.

When Zhou Shu arrived at the scene, he happened to see this tragic scene.

[You receive a reward of two years of cultivation because the Huben Saber you forged effectively completed a kill!]

Along the way, Zhou Shu saw countless messages.

He didn't even bother to sense the changes in his cultivation.

It would take him 512 years of cultivation to reach the ninth level of the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique.

Still, a few decades of cultivation was better than nothing.

Zhou Shu lay on a mountaintop and looked down into the valley. He saw the person surrounded in the center, who seemed to have gone mad. He felt that this person was somewhat familiar. After carefully identifying him, he finally recognized him. Cheng Yong?

Who are these men in black? How dare they attack Great Xia's Huben Troops here!

Zhou Shu felt a chill in his heart and lowered his head even more.

Driven by curiosity, he had left the capital and come all the way here.

Speaking of which, he was also lucky. Great Xia's capital was surrounded by mountains, and there was more than one path. He just wanted to try his luck. Just when he was about to give up, he found Cheng Yong!

It looks like Cheng Yong and his group won't be able to last much longer.

Zhou Shu saw that only Cheng Yong and ten or so people were bitterly holding on, but they were obviously at their limits.

Cheng Yong seemed to be in a daze. He waved the broken saber in his hand and kept shouting, "Kill"!

The leader in black teased Cheng Yong and the other Huben Troops like a cat chasing a mouse.

Why aren't the reinforcements here yet?! Zhou Shu turned around and looked in the direction of the capital.

This place was less than 50 kilometers away from Great Xia. Even he had arrived, so shouldn't the experts of Great Xia already arrive long ago?

There was no movement in the direction of the capital.

He looked at Cheng Yong and the others. It will be a miracle if they can last for ten minutes in their current state.

Zhou Shu furrowed his eyebrows tightly as his heart sank. Should I save them or not?

Zhou Shu stared at the men in black as a thought flashed through his mind. These men in black don't look very strong.

These men in black were able to defeat Cheng Yong and his group because of their numbers. In fact, they weren't much stronger than Cheng Yong's group.

Although Zhou Shu didn't have much combat experience, his Heavenly Saber Art was a combat saber technique to begin with, so he still had the necessary insight.

Save! Zhou Shu didn't think for too long before making his decision.

Although he and Cheng Yong were not very close, they were still acquaintances.

Moreover, they could be considered colleagues. If he really watched him get killed, he would feel uneasy in the future.

Moreover, he reckoned that these men in black wouldn't be able to hurt him. This was Great Xia. All he had to do was wait for Cheng Yong's group to escape to the capital. He expected that these men in black wouldn't dare to chase after them.

It shouldn't be too dangerous.

If Zhou Shu's life was in danger, then he definitely wouldn't take the risk. Although saving people was good, it wasn't worth risking his own life.

After making his decision, Zhou Shu leaped over the mountain and slipped down into the canyon.

Below, the men in black were in the midst of finishing up the fight, and they didn't notice that someone had appeared behind them silently.

"Hmph, since you are so stubborn, then die. I will be able to get the list from your corpses!" With a flash, the leader appeared in front of Cheng Yong and slashed at Cheng Yong's chest.

Cheng Yong dodged with all his might. With a ripping sound, the clothes on his chest were cut by the blade.

His stomach was almost split open.

"The list!" Although he narrowly escaped, his expression changed drastically. A scroll stained with blood fell from his tattered clothes.

He reached for the scroll. The leader in black laughed and slashed at his arm.

Before Cheng Yong could grab the scroll, this slash would cut off his arm.

The leader in black seemed to have already visualized the scene of his arm flying across the air, and a sinister smile appeared on his face.

Ding!

Suddenly, there was a flash of light. A broken blade flew out of nowhere and hit the leader's long blade.

The leader felt a huge impact, and his arm went numb. The long sword in his hand was already gone. He retreated, his face filled with shock.

Like a breeze, a figure appeared in front of Cheng Yong.

The figure held the bloody scroll in one hand and a broken Huben Saber in the other.

The leader's pupils contracted as he stared at this person. "Who are you? Are you from Great Xia?"

The leader was bewildered. Didn't they say that the experts of Great Xia would be delayed for two hours?

"Run. Leave them to me," a hoarse voice said.

Cheng Yong was stunned for a moment before he realized that these words were directed at them.

"Your Excellency, you are—"

He looked at the figure blocking in front of him and felt that he was somewhat familiar. But the other party had a cloth wrapped around his head, only revealing his two eyes and face.

Zhou Shu didn't answer and instead shouted, "Run!"

"Leave the Huben Sabers behind and run to the capital!"

Cheng Yong's expression turned solemn. He wanted to say something else, but Zhou Shu shouted again impatiently, "Get lost!"

Cheng Yong gulped. "Thank you!"

With a hoarse voice, he cupped his hands and threw the broken saber onto the ground.

“Run!” The remaining Huben soldiers put down their Huben Sabers and supported each other as they fled toward the capital at their highest speed.

Although they didn’t understand why Zhou Shu asked them to leave their Huben Sabers behind, they knew that in their current state, even if they stayed behind, they would only be a burden.

Instead, it would be better to escape and bring back reinforcements!

When the men in black saw that the Huben Troops were about to escape, their expressions changed, and they all took a step forward.

Zhou Shu kicked forward, and a Huben Saber flew up from the ground and landed in his hand.

He could sense that this was a Huben Saber he had forged the moment it landed in his hand.

His lips curled up slightly as he looked at the group of men in black.. “Your opponent is me now!”

Chapter 46: Is This How You Treat Someone When You Ask For Help?

Clang! A saber light tore through the sky like a dragon soaring through the nine heavens.

...

The leader in black could only see a beam of dazzling white light.

“Who exactly are you?” he muttered to himself as the long saber above his head broke into two. Following this, blood appeared between his brows and spread continuously like ink-stained paper.

Then he crashed to the ground, dead.

“He’s really weak,” Zhou Shu mumbled.

If the leader hadn’t already died, he would definitely have vomited blood from anger. You’ve already killed me, and you still call me weak?

Zhou Shu threw the badly damaged Huben Saber on the ground and looked at the corpses on the ground. Only then did he feel his lungs churning.

It had only been a short while since Cheng Yong’s group left. They probably hadn’t even reached the capital yet.

Had I known these men in black were so weak, I wouldn’t have gotten them to leave first.

If they stayed, it would have been easier to clean up the battlefield, right?

But then again, there’s nothing to clean up on this battlefield.

The Huben Sabers left behind by the Huben Troops were no longer intact. When he killed the men in black, Zhou Shu had used up all the Huben Sabers.

Killing men in black with one slash and one weapon each was indeed quite satisfying, but it was also quite expensive.

If only they had been Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers or Horse Slaying Sabers...

At least, they wouldn't have broken so easily.

Zhou Shu thought about it and decided to leave these corpses for the Huben Troops to deal with. Cheng Yong's group would probably send people over soon.

In any case, this place was in the wilderness, and no one would come here anytime soon.

At the thought of this, he wasn't willing to stay any longer. He took big strides and headed toward the capital.

Although Zhou Shu had fought a great battle, he didn't feel the slightest bit tired. Instead, he felt as if his entire body was full of energy.

This wasn't surprising. The men in black weren't even ranked martial artists, and they were pitifully weak. To Zhou Shu, they were just ordinary people he could kill with one slash.

Furthermore, killing one had rewarded him with two years of cultivation.

Not only did he not spend much effort, but he even increased his cultivation by decades. How could he not feel good?

In order not to run into Cheng Yong's group, Zhou Shu deliberately took a detour and ran back to the 0th Workshop to change his clothes. Then he ran to the Drunken Immortal Inn.

It was rare for Sun Gongping to treat him, so Zhou Shu didn't want to let go of this opportunity.

While Zhou Shu was ordering food and drinks at the Drunken Immortal Inn, the Huben Troops' commander, Cheng Wanli, and the Divine Constable Bureau's chief constable, Ma Fengzhang, had already rushed to the place where the Huben Troops had been attacked.

"Brother Ma, we came too late." Cheng Wanli looked at the scene of the tragic situation, his eyes full of sorrow.

The corpses of the Huben Troops made his heart bleed.

These were all his sons, sons he had spent so much effort to nurture.

Damn it!

"General Cheng, my condolences." Ma Fengzhang sighed. "The Huben Troops received orders to find traitors, but we never expected them to encounter such a calamity.

"It's my fault. I didn't realize that such a power was lurking in Great Xia. I will seek forgiveness from His Majesty."

"This isn't your fault, Brother Ma. The enemy is too cunning!" Cheng Wanli gritted his teeth. "Who would have thought that they would launch a suicide attack in the capital just to stall for time!"

"I just find it a little strange. They made such a big commotion just to kill Huben Troops? General Cheng, with all due respect, the Huben Troops don't seem to have such value," Ma Fengzhang said.

"I know my limits." Cheng Wanli smiled bitterly. "The Huben Troops aren't worth the enemy spending so much to deal with."

The other party had started a riot in the capital, and more than ten ranked experts had their identities exposed. If it was just to deal with the Huben Troops, it was completely unnecessary.

The Huben Troops were just formed, and there were only a few thousand of them. They were not even ranked within Great Xia's armies.

No matter how they looked at it, dealing with the Huben Troops wasn't worth the price.

"Ask Cheng Yong and the others later, and we'll know why."

"I'm a little curious now. Who saved Cheng Yong?"

Cheng Wanli's gaze fell on the men in black. It was these people who had made his Huben Troops suffer heavy losses. He wished he could kill them again!

"General Cheng, take a look at the wounds on these men..." Ma Fengzhang pointed at the bodies of the men in black.

Cheng Wanli calmed down and looked at the wounds carefully. A moment later, a thoughtful look flashed across his eyes. "This—

"That senior?"

"From the saber intent, yes." Ma Fengzhang nodded.

"General Cheng, it seems that your Huben Troops are fated with this person."

Ma Fengzhang pondered. "What is his motive for hiding in the capital?"

As the head of the Divine Constable Bureau, Ma Fengzhang had an unknown 'god' entrenched in the capital. Just thinking about it made him feel a bit scared.

However, Cheng Wanli didn't seem to care. "No matter what this senior's purpose is, he has no ill intentions toward Great Xia."

"First, he prevented the leak of the Huben Saber's secret forging formula, and now he saved my brothers. He is the great benefactor of my Huben Troops!"

"You missed something else," Ma Fengzhang said. "He even helped you become a ranked martial artist."

Cheng Wanli nodded. "I will never forget this senior's great kindness!"

If not for the blade marks left behind by this senior in the Saber Cave, Cheng Wanli wouldn't have been able to comprehend saber intent and break through to ninth-rank martial artist. To him, this favor had made him a new man.

Ma Fengzhang contemplated for a moment but still couldn't understand.

From the looks of it, this mysterious master had helped Great Xia twice. Furthermore, the Saber Cave and blade marks he had left behind were extremely beneficial to the low-level martial artists of Great Xia. No matter how one looked at it, he had nothing but kindness toward Great Xia.

However, Ma Fengzhang still made up his mind to find out who this mysterious expert was.

It wasn't that he wanted to do anything to the other party. But as the Divine Constable Bureau's head, he could only feel at ease when he had an idea of the uncontrollable factors that could affect the capital.

Let us not mention how Cheng Wanli and Ma Fengzhang dealt with the aftermath.

...

Sun Gongping, in the Drunken Immortal Inn in the capital, was dumbfounded as he looked at the table full of leftovers.

Sun Gongping rubbed his eyes and asked in disbelief. "Did you eat all of this?"

"Didn't you tell me to eat whatever I want?" Zhou Shu shrugged.

"The Drunken Immortal Inn's food and drinks are indeed much better than our workshop's. I accidentally ate a bit more.

"Great Divine Constable Sun, are you going back on your word?"

"If you really want to go back on your word, it's fine. I'll pay the bill myself. At most, when I tell others in the future..."

"Bullshit! I said I'd treat you." Sun Gongping stared at him. "Do you think I won't be able to afford it? Eat! Eat as much as you want! Are you full? If not, order more!"

"Really?"

Sun Gongping was startled. Are you really going to eat more?

"Then, I'll order some more."

Without waiting for Sun Gongping to speak, Zhou Shu called the waiter over and ordered another six dishes. The common thing these dishes shared was that they were filling and expensive!

Sun Gongping's heart was bleeding. Damn it, will Old Ma reimburse me?

If he dares not to reimburse me, I will fight him!

Sun Gongping felt indignant. The food and drinks at the Drunken Immortal Inn were extremely expensive. Even he felt his heart ache whenever he ate here.

Old Zhou ordered so much just because he doesn't have to pay. Can he really eat so much?

The stack of plates is taller than him!

Zhou Shu didn't think too much about it. His cultivation had suddenly increased by several decades, and because his strength soared, he felt hungry.

He was so hungry that he saw stars!

If he didn't eat now, when would be a better chance to eat?

"Oh right, Great Divine Constable Sun, what happened just now? Did a war break out?" Zhou Shu asked even though he knew.

"It's nothing." Sun Gongping started chewing on his food with a vengeance. "Even if a war breaks out, it won't reach the capital. Great General Meng is already preparing to set off.

"Previously, it was just a few small fleas that jumped out to cause trouble. They were already killed."

Sun Gongping said boldly, "They must be blind to have the guts to cause trouble in the capital of Great Xia. If I arrived sooner, I would have sent them on their way first!"

"Is that so?" Zhou Shu was deep in thought. It seems that something indeed happened in the capital, which is why no one went to help Cheng Yong's group.

But from the sound of it, nothing major happened. After all, the Great Xia Imperial Court isn't weak.

"Speaking of which, Old Zhou, there will probably be business coming your Forging Division's way." Sun Gongping chuckled.

"Before I came here, I heard that the Huben Troops have benefited from this disaster. They will probably expand their forces later. When that happens, their demand for Huben Sabers will definitely increase."

Zhou Shu nodded. From what he saw, the Huben Sabers of Cheng Yong's group were all damaged. They definitely needed to purchase a batch of Huben Sabers.

"Old Zhou, you've had your fill of food and drinks. Have you considered the weapon?"

Sun Gongping continued, "This time, not only will the Huben Troops be affected, but our Divine Constable Bureau will also be reprimanded by His Majesty. According to my understanding of Old Ma, the Divine Constable Bureau will definitely make a big move!

"If you can help the Divine Constable Bureau develop a unique weapon, I can guarantee that you will make a killing!"

"Didn't I tell you? Forging weapons requires inspiration." Zhou Shu was dumbfounded. "This isn't something that can be developed just because I want to. Would you dare to use a random saber I forged? A saber not only has to look good, but there are many other professional things involved. You wouldn't understand even if I told you."

"Only useless people find excuses!" Sun Gongping said disdainfully. "Aren't you known as a forging genius? You can't even do such a small thing! Just tell me. Are you going to do it or not!"

Zhou Shu was speechless. When did I become known as a forging genius? It's all because of you, okay? Is this how you treat someone when you ask for help?

"Damn it. Fine, but I have a condition," Zhou Shu said unhappily.. "I really like the food and drinks here. In the future, I'll have them send me a table of food and drink every day, and your Divine Constable Bureau will pay for it!"

Chapter 47: Kill Without Delay

“What? Why don’t you go rob someone?” Sun Gongping widened his eyes. “It’s not like we won’t pay for weapons from the Forging Division. Why should we take care of your meals?”

...

“Great Divine Constable, do you understand what customized means?” Zhou Shu rolled his eyes.

“If you want Huben Sabers or Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, or even Horse Slaying Sabers, it’s not a problem. You can just go to the Forging Division to buy them. Now, shouldn’t you pay extra if you want a customized weapon?”

“I’m only asking for food and drinks. This is already a friendship price, okay?”

The Divine Constable Bureau was the same as Great Xia’s three armies. They could purchase weapons directly from the Forging Division. Naturally, there were certain procedures.

Under normal circumstances, they could choose whatever standard weapons they wanted from the Forging Division. However, the Forging Division would not specially develop standard weapons for them.

Customization services were available in the Forging Division as well, but they were only available to those qualified.

All ranked martial artists in Great Xia could ask the Forging Masters in the Forging Division to forge weapons, and the fees could be very different.

Thus, Zhou Shu’s words were completely reasonable. Even Sun Gongping could only roll his eyes at him.

“Then, when can you develop a weapon?”

“I can’t guarantee you that,” Zhou Shu said. “Perhaps a day, perhaps a month, or perhaps a year.”

“Do you think I’m a fool?” Sun Gongping said angrily. “Goodbye, I won’t see you again!”

Sun Gongping walked away in anger.

After walking away, he heard Zhou Shu shouting from behind, “Don’t forget to pay!”

He stumbled and walked faster.

Zhou Shu smiled as he rubbed his stomach and left the Drunken Immortal Inn in satisfaction.

...

“You mean you seized a list from a traitor?”

In the Huben Troops camp, other than the Huben Troops, the Divine Constable Bureau’s Ma Fengzhang and a few other divine constables were also here.

Cheng Yong was reporting the situation to Cheng Wanli.

"In other words, the enemy made such a big fuss just to regain the list?" Ma Fengzhang's eyes shone as he pondered.

"And the list?" Cheng Wanli said.

"The name list is with that senior." Cheng Yong looked guilty. He had forgotten to ask for the name list back then. Even if he hadn't, he wouldn't have been able to ask for it under those circumstances.

"You!" Cheng Wanli was furious.

Cheng Yong lowered his head in guilt.

"What kind of list is it?" Ma Fengzhang asked. "Have you seen the list?"

"It's an assassination list," Cheng Yong said. "At the time, I only saw a portion of it. I don't remember everything. It's an assassination list targeting the young talents of Great Xia. The talented martial artists and talented forgers are among them..."

Cheng Yong explained what he remembered.

Ma Fengzhang and Cheng Wanli looked at each other and saw the shock in each other's eyes.

If it was just a list of Great Xia's elites, they wouldn't be too surprised. However, Cheng Yong said that there were also specific assassination methods.

Just based on what Cheng Yong remembered, the list included preparations done in advance for assassinations, as well as the hidden traitors around those people.

"The Huben Troops already killed so many traitors this time. I didn't expect there to be so many more hidden ones," Cheng Wanli muttered.

"This is unavoidable," Ma Fengzhang said in a low voice. "Didn't Great Xia also plant many spies in various countries? We won't be able to get rid of all of them. Even if we kill them all, there will be new spies before long.

"If what Lieutenant Cheng said is true, many people are in danger. If we can't get the name list, the consequences will be dire."

Ma Fengzhang's expression was solemn. There were many talented people in Great Xia. If they had to protect each and every one of them, even if the Great Xia Imperial Court could do it, how much manpower and resources would it take?

But if they left this issue alone, how many elites of Great Xia would die in the hands of their enemies?

To Great Xia, this was absolutely an unbearable loss.

Of course, they could also gather all the famous young talents of Great Xia together to protect them. But if that happened, it would affect the affairs of many of them. Furthermore, for how long would they need to protect them?

The best way was to find the name list and get rid of the traitors on it!

“Lieutenant Cheng, let me ask you. Did you see the person who saved you?” Ma Fengzhang asked in a low voice.

Originally, he only wanted to find the mysterious expert out of curiosity, but now, he had to find him.

This list would affect the fate of Great Xia in the next few decades!

“No.” Cheng Yong shook his head. “The senior’s face was covered.”

Ma Fengzhang sighed. The other party is indeed unwilling to reveal his identity.

It won’t be easy to find this person in the capital.

If such an expert wants to hide his identity, who can easily find him?

“General Cheng, we will split into two groups. The Huben Troops will continue to kill traitors. The Divine Constable Bureau will take action and try our best to protect all the known talents of Great Xia. I will enter the palace now and ask His Majesty for help—”

...

The 0th Workshop...

When Zhou Shu returned, the first batch of forged weapons had already been delivered.

Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the rest did not disappoint. More than half of them had succeeded.

These Forging Apprentices could only forge once a day. If they succeeded, they would be able to forge a weapon. If they failed, they could only wait for tomorrow.

However, as there were 40 people forging together, if they succeeded once, they could produce 40 weapons.

This was also the benefit of unified forging.

There are two hundred Huben Sabers and one hundred Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, but not a single Horse Slaying Saber has been forged.

Zhou Shu wasn’t too disappointed. The difficulty of forging the Horse Slaying Saber was higher than the first two, so it was normal that they didn’t succeed on the first day.

This time, in order to complete the mission, he divided Zhang Yibei and the others into several groups.

Ten of them were in charge of forging Huben Sabers. If they succeeded once a day, they would be able to forge 400 Huben Sabers in a day. Three thousand was no problem.

There were fifteen teams each in charge of the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and the Horse Slaying Sabers. The Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers required 1,000, while the Horse Slaying Saber needed 500.

Considering the success rate of forging these two weapons, Zhou Shu had placed most of his manpower on them.

There was still more than half a month left. Based on the current situation, completing the mission wouldn't be difficult.

He put the weapons, as well as the Horse Slaying Sabers he had forged, into the storeroom.

More than half of the Huben Troops' sabers have been destroyed. I'll have to forge another batch to ensure that there will be a hundred Huben Sabers that I've forged out there.

I'm about to max out on the number of Horse Slaying Sabers. I wonder what the next weapon will be. Furthermore, the Horse Slaying Sabers haven't completed any kills yet. I wonder what benefits I'll get? Will it be a cultivation technique, saber technique, or something else?

Zhou Shu's heart was full of anticipation as he decided on the next day's forging task.

Replace the Huben Sabers and max out the Horse Slaying Sabers!

After returning to his room, Zhou Shu was about to go to bed when he suddenly saw the dirty clothes he had thrown in the corner.

The clothes he wore during the day had been stained with blood when he killed the men in black.

I almost forgot about this! Zhou Shu smacked his head and pulled out a bloody scroll from the pile of clothes.

Those men in black attacked Cheng Yong's group for this, right?

Previously, he had conveniently placed this item in his pocket. Afterward, he had forgotten to return it to Cheng Yong. When he changed his clothes, he had casually tossed it here and simply forgot about it.

Out of curiosity, Zhou Shu opened the bloody scroll.

The scroll was made of silk, and the blood on it belonged to Cheng Yong or someone else. It had already been soaked.

He opened it and saw that it was full of words.

"Lu Wenshuang, the youngest daughter of the Lu family in Qingzhou of Great Xia. She broke through to the ninth rank at the age of nine, then she advanced one rank a year and became the youngest third-rank Grandmaster in the history of the land at the age of fifteen. There is hope for her to reach the first rank in the future. Ten years ago, Great Wei sent a girl into the Lu family, and she became Lu Wenshuang's personal maidservant..."

Zhou Shu's eyelids twitched. A fifteen-year-old third-rank Grandmaster?

Sun Gongping is only a ninth-rank martial artist at eighteen. How does he have the face to brag about being a genius?

Speaking of which, Lu Wenshuang's personal servant is from Great Wei?

Zhou Shu had just heard the name of Great Wei not long ago. Great Wei was one of the ten nations on this land and was also an enemy of Great Xia.

They wouldn't be so kind as to send a maidservant to a genius of Great Xia, right?

Zhou Shu continued reading.

“Shi Songtao, 28 years old, a genius Forging Master. At 25 years old, he forged a ranked weapon, the Songtao Sword. He became famous in one battle...”

“Mi Ziwen, 32 years old, a genius military strategist, suspected to be Meng Bai’s successor. His coachman is the son of the Minister of War of Great Wei...”

“...”

Zhou Shu was shocked as he continued reading.

On this list, it seemed that all the geniuses of Great Xia were recorded.

What’s the purpose of the details behind these geniuses’ names?

The son of the Minister of War of Great Wei came to Great Xia to be a coachman?

Why did Great Wei plant so many chess pieces around these geniuses?

Zhou Shu had seen spy movies in his previous life. No matter how dull his reaction was, even he could tell what was going on.

It was obvious that Great Wei had planted spies around these geniuses to deal with them.

The geniuses on this list weren’t ordinary people. If they all died, the geniuses in Great Xia’s would probably be all gone.

“Sun Gongping, 18 years old, the son of Great Xia’s Marquis Weiyuan. His talent in the Martial Dao is outstanding. In order to strengthen his foundation, his father suppressed his cultivation base for five years. Now, he has broken through to the ninth rank and is making rapid progress. Within ten years, he has a chance of reaching the third rank...”

At the end of the list, Zhou Shu saw a familiar name.

Sun Gongping is indeed a genius!

The son of Marquis Weiyuan? The young marquis?

No wonder he knows Yin Wuyou.

There’s more?

The words behind were soaked in blood and a little blurry.

Zhou Shu raised it up and carefully examined it for a while before finally seeing what was written on it.

“Zhou Shu, 16 years old, the superintendent of a Great Xia Forging Division workshop. From a humble background, he was once a Forging Apprentice in Great Xia’s Forging Division’s 97th Workshop. He independently forged the Huben Saber and created the Hundred Refinements Forging Technique to forge the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber. He was promoted to the superintendent of a workshop by the grand minister of the Forging Division. Suggestion: Kill without delay!”

A bright red cross mark appeared on Zhou Shu's name. It was a shocking sight!

Chapter 48: The Dignified Workshop Superintendent Doesn't Even Have A Servant

F*ck your ancestors! Who the hell wrote my name on it! Zhou Shu was furious.

...

I've already kept such a low profile, yet they still discovered me?

These bastards, what is the meaning of kill without delay?

You want to kill me immediately?

Zhou Shu subconsciously looked around. It felt as if an assassin would suddenly appear at any moment.

Fortunately, there are no hidden spies around me.

Even Sun Gongping's paragraph had a note of a traitor. Only his didn't.

But after thinking about it, it made sense. The geniuses on the list all had extraordinary backgrounds, and they had been extraordinary since they were young, so Great Wei had planted spies around them.

In the past, he was just an insignificant Forging Apprentice. Now, he had only become a superintendent for a few days. The other party might not have had time to plant spies around him yet.

No wonder those men in black wanted to kill Cheng Yong. If this list falls into the hands of the Great Xia Imperial Court, the spies of Great Wei will be completely uprooted.

These spies were almost all planted around the geniuses ten years ago. If they were removed, it wouldn't be so easy to place them again.

Sun Gongping, Sun Gongping, I'm going to save your life this time. All it will cost you is a few meals!

According to the list, Sun Gongping had a servant who was a spy from Great Wei. If the other party wanted to attack him, Sun Gongping would probably not be on guard.

I have to find a way to return this list.

Zhou Shu rubbed his chin as he pondered. Those bastards from Great Wei want to assassinate me. When would be a better time to deal with them if not now?

He definitely didn't have the time or strength to deal with so many spies. He could only hand over the list and let the Great Xia Imperial Court handle it.

I can't give it to them openly. It will be dangerous if the spies of Great Wei target me.

Zhou Shu shivered.

At the top of the list, Lu Wenshuang, a fifteen-year-old third-rank Grandmaster, had been targeted. Given so, his current strength was definitely far beneath the other party.

Now, he had already been targeted by the spies of the Great Wei even though he had only revealed his talent in forging. If he revealed his Martial Dao abilities, wouldn't the other party pay more attention to him?

Zhou Shu didn't want the other party to pay more notice to him at all. He wished that the other party wouldn't notice him.

Even a third-rank grandmaster may be assassinated. It seems I'm not strong enough. I need to be at least first rank to be safe.

It looked like he had to speed up the progress of his forging. The Huben Saber had brought the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique, and the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber had brought the Heaven Saber Art. He didn't know what the Horse Slaying Saber would bring him.

General Meng will be heading out in a few days. If I give him the Huben Sabers, he will probably bring them to the frontline. There will be more opportunities for them to complete kills than giving them to the Huben Troops. The same goes for the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and the Horse Slaying Sabers.

Zhou Shu calculated in his heart. The more kills the weapons he forged completed, the more benefits he would receive. He was now thinking that the weapons he personally forged had to be handed over to the combatants in the future.

For Imperial Guards like the Huben Troops, there weren't many opportunities to kill enemies, so giving them weapons was a waste.

Forging could not be rushed, but the matter of the name list could not be delayed.

Zhou Shu looked at the name list again, memorized its contents, and rolled it up.

After some thought, he changed back into his bloody clothes and covered his face, revealing only his eyes. Then he opened the window and jumped out.

Although it was already nighttime in the Huben Troops' camp, the place was brightly lit.

All of the Huben Troops were brimming with killing intent. Fast horses galloped out of the camp as military orders were issued from Cheng Wanli's tent.

The Huben Troops had just been established, and they had already failed their first mission. How could Cheng Wanli, who had just become a ranked martial artist, endure this?

He mobilized everyone in the Huben Troops and went around to capture traitors everywhere, according to the news from the Divine Constable Bureau.

"General, I remember there are still a few people..." Cheng Yong had seen the name list. Although he didn't remember much, for those he did, the Huben Troops had already sent people over.

"These people are all ranked martial artists. The Huben Troops won't be able to handle it," Cheng Wanli said in a deep voice.

"The Divine Constable Bureau has already sent people. If necessary, the Demon Executing and Fiend Eradication armies will also send people to assist!"

"Unfortunately, we don't know where that senior is."

Cheng Yong sighed. "Senior has helped our Huben Troops many times, so he must be a senior of Great Xia. If we can find him, he will definitely return the list to us."

Cheng Yong's face was full of respect. He now knew that after they left that day, the senior had killed all the men in black, killing them one by one with a single slash each, simple and neat.

This was equivalent to the senior taking revenge for them.

Cheng Yong only wanted to kowtow in gratitude to him personally.

Cheng Wanli shook his head. "Senior's thoughts are elusive. Perhaps he doesn't care too much about the list."

High-ranked martial artists had all kinds of personalities. Cheng Wanli couldn't guarantee the personality of the senior who had helped the Huben Troops several times.

Ding!

While the two of them were talking, a white light suddenly pierced through the tent and nailed onto the table beside Cheng Wanli.

Cheng Wanli's body stiffened, not daring to move.

"Even if mountains collapse in front of you, your expression doesn't change. Great General, your self-cultivation is truly admirable!" Cheng Yong exclaimed.

Cheng Wanli cursed in his heart. Calm my ass! I was scared silly, okay!

On the table, a dagger was stabbed several inches into the wood, and the blade was still trembling slightly.

It was this dagger that had just passed over right above Cheng Wanli's head and been nailed into the table. Throughout the entire process, Cheng Wanli hadn't even noticed!

In other words, if the dagger had been aimed at his vital points, he wouldn't have had the chance to dodge!

Inside his own central tent, in the middle of his army, his life was actually in the hands of someone else. Cheng Wanli was furious. It seems the Huben Troops' training still isn't up to standard!

He had forgotten that the Huben Troops and even all of the Country Protector Army were made up of ordinary people. High-ranked martial artists were never their targets. Those people were dealt with by the Demon Executing and Fiend Eradication armies.

"Look at what it is." Cheng Wanli still felt that his limbs were numb and couldn't move. He snorted at Cheng Yong.

Cheng Yong hurried over to take a look and was overjoyed.

"It's Senior!" Cheng Yong yelled and walked out of the tent. "Senior, please wait!"

Cheng Wanli's face darkened. He used to think that Cheng Yong was a steady fellow, but now, it seemed that he had been too kind to him!

Cheng Wanli took a deep breath as the numbness in his body slightly lessened. He reached out and picked up the thing that had been stabbed into the table with the knife.

With just a glance, Cheng Wanli's expression changed drastically.

"Guards!

"Mobilize the entire camp. We are entering the city tonight!"

The main camp of the Huben Troops was outside the capital. The city gates were now closed, but Cheng Wanli couldn't wait for dawn. He had to enter the city immediately. If he didn't hand this thing over to the emperor, he wouldn't be at ease.

As Zhou Shu watched, groups of soldiers leaped out from the Huben Troops' camp. Leading them were Cheng Wanli and Cheng Yong. Zhou Shu smiled.

He retired from his responsibilities and left without claiming any merit or fame.

...

When Zhou Shu woke up, he felt refreshed. He first forged a Horse Slaying Saber to lift his spirits and then went to have breakfast.

Of course, he didn't forget to visit Zhang Yibei and the others and encouraged them in passing.

It was already late in the morning.

When he returned to the 0th Workshop, there was someone standing at the door.

"Greetings, Grand Minister." Zhou Shu cupped his hands in greeting. "Grand Minister, how did you have the time to come here? Had I known you were coming, I would have waited here."

Ever since last time, Zhou Shu hadn't seen Yin Wuyou for a very long time.

As the grand minister of the Forging Division, Yin Wuyou didn't bother with the trivial matters in the workshops, and the workshop superintendents didn't report to her directly.

The grand minister of the Forging Division was the superior of the superior of the superior of the workshop superintendents...

Yin Wuyou nodded noncommittally and examined the workshop with interest.

She was sizing up the 0th Workshop, but Zhou Shu was sizing her up.

Yin Wuyou was wearing a light green dress today. Her long hair was tied up simply behind her back, and her temperament was like that of a fairy. As she stood there, even if she didn't speak, it still looked like a beautiful painting.

"I heard from the craftsmen in the Ministry of Works that the construction of the 0th Workshop cost more than three thousand taels?"

The Forging Division only gave 1,000 taels of silver for the construction expense of workshops. In other words, the cost had exceeded it by 2,000 taels!

"Grand Minister, as the saying goes, if you want to do a good job, you must first use your tools. If this workshop is built well, the mood of the Forging Apprentices will be much better, and the efficiency of their work will naturally be much higher," Zhou Shu said unhurriedly.

"That's why I feel that there was a need to spend this money.

"Besides, I was the one who paid for it. There was no need for the Division to pay. It should be fine, right?"

"It's not a big problem." Yin Wuyou turned around and looked at Zhou Shu with a spirited gaze, sizing him up.

Her gaze made Zhou Shu a little uncomfortable. "Grand Minister, why are you looking at me like that? I washed my face this morning!"

Yin Wuyou pursed her lips imperceptibly. "You are now the superintendent of a Forging Division workshop, not a Forging Apprentice. You can be considered someone of status."

Zhou Shu: "..."

He was baffled and didn't know what Yin Wuyou meant.

"As a workshop superintendent, you don't even have a servant by your side. If word gets out, others will think I, Yin Wuyou, am abusing my subordinates."

Zhou Shu was even more stupefied. A mere workshop superintendent needs a servant?

Xiao Zongshui and Li Hongyuan don't seem to have anyone serving them.

That's not right. There do seem to be odd-job workers in their workshops. Could the grand minister even manage such a trifle and assign an odd-job worker to me?

He was puzzled when he heard Yin Wuyou continue.

"Haitang, from today onward, you will stay in the 0th Workshop and serve Superintendent Zhou!"

Chapter 49: Horse Slaying Saber Completed a Kill

"Haitang, from today onward, you will stay in the 0th Workshop and serve Superintendent Zhou!" Yin Wuyou said lightly.

Then Zhou Shu heard a clear voice.

...

"Yes, Your Highness."

Only then did Zhou Shu notice that there was a pretty little maidservant behind Yin Wuyou!

The little maid looked around fifteen or sixteen years old, about the same age as Yin Wuyou. She had a snow-white complexion and a pretty face.

In Zhou Shu's previous life, she would be the school belle of a high school. How could she be a servant?

When did the Forging Division's workshop have maids?

He had never seen Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, or the other senior superintendents use maidservants in their workshops. As for whether they had maidservants their residences outside, Zhou Shu didn't know.

This wasn't the problem. The problem was, what was the meaning of the princess suddenly giving a maid to a small workshop superintendent?

This maid was clearly Yin Wuyou's own maid.

He remembered that in ancient times, there was a phrase called 'accompanying maid'...

Could Yin Wuyou like me?

Zhou Shu gave himself a slap, waking him up from his beautiful dream. What am I thinking? Other than being a little handsome, what else could make others like me?

"Superintendent Zhou, why did you hit yourself?" A crisp voice sounded in Zhou Shu's ears. The pretty little maid was looking at him strangely.

As for Yin Wuyou, she had already disappeared.

This woman looked like a fairy, and her actions were like a fairy. She came and went without a trace!

"It's nothing. I just wanted to see if I'm dreaming!" Zhou Shu said perfunctorily.

"Then, do you want me to hit you?" The maid was eager to give it a try.

"No, thank you!" Zhou Shu took half a step back and distanced himself from the not-so-reliable maid.

Looking at the little maid, Zhou Shu felt a headache. Yin Wuyou didn't give me a chance to refuse and directly left her here. What should I do now?

This was a workshop of the Forging Division, and there were men stinking of sweat everywhere. Wasn't a beautiful girl here too eye-catching?

Those fellows liked to be topless when they were working. Some of them didn't even wear clothes!

The thought of having this little maid face such a scene made Zhou Shu's eyes burn.

Should I leave her in my place?

Usually, no Forging Apprentice dared to go to his own backyard. But then again, when he was forging, he would often not wear a shirt.

He didn't mind being looked at, but the problem was that the other party was just a young girl. He would feel guilty...

“Um, your name is Haitang, right?” Zhou Shu said. “I don’t need anyone to serve me here. You can go back.”

“I can’t. Her Highness has ordered me. If I go back, I will be beaten to death,” Haitang said bluntly.

Zhou Shu felt a headache coming on. Is she that cruel?

“Alright then. Tell me first. What can you do?” Zhou Shu asked calmly.

“Can you cook?”

“No!”

“Do you know how to do laundry?”

“No!”

“Sweeping the floor?”

“There are palace maids in charge of cleaning the palace. I’ve never done it before!”

“Aren’t you a maid? If you can’t do it, then what can you do?”

“I can dress Her Highness!”

Zhou Shu was completely speechless. Is this a maid or a princess?

She can’t do anything, but you want her to serve me?

Zhou Shu suspected that Yin Wuyou was deliberately targeting him!

“Go back. I don’t need someone to dress me—”

“If I go back, I’ll be beaten to death!” Haitang looked as though she was about to cry, and tears were welling up in her eyes.

Zhou Shu let out a long sigh. What the hell is going on?

When Haitang saw Zhou Shu’s expression, a sly smile flashed across her face.

When Zhou Shu looked over, she frowned again. “Her Highness said that I can warm the bed too...”

Zhou Shu rolled his eyes. He wasn’t a prick. He really couldn’t do that to an underage girl!

“Stop, you can stay,” Zhou Shu said. “But I’ll be frank. The conditions here are incomparable to those in the palace. If there’s nothing important, stay in the backyard and don’t come out casually.”

Recently, Zhang Yibei and the others wouldn’t be working at the 0th Workshop. At most, he would just forge in the factory.

“No, Her Highness said that I have to follow you. I have to serve you closely,” Haitang said.

“Will you follow me if I take a bath or go to the toilet?” Zhou Shu was speechless.

“I’ll guard the door!” Haitang blushed slightly, but she still spoke.

Zhou Shu was really speechless. Is she here to serve me or to monitor me?

Has my successive creation of new weapons finally attracted the attention of the higher-ups?

But that's not right either. With Yin Wuyou's identity, if she really suspects me, she could just capture me and torture me.

Sending a delicate little maid over, isn't she afraid of me hitting her?

Bah!

I'm not a dog!

Zhou Shu rubbed his chin and sized up Haitang. He felt something was off.

Could Yin Wuyou have realized my genius and want to use a beauty trap to tie me down?

If you want to use the beauty trap, you can do it yourself. It will be several times more effective than using this little maid!

"Follow me if you must. But I'll be frank with you. When I forge, you must stay far away from me. Otherwise, I won't be responsible if the hammer injures you." Zhou Shu said in annoyance.

Haitang blinked. "Don't worry. It won't hurt me. I'm very quick-witted!"

...

In an ordinary alley in the capital of Great Xia...

Amid the screeching of wheels, a greenish-gray carriage slowly entered.

The person driving the carriage was a middle-aged man with a common face. The man had a bitter expression, and the wrinkles on his face seemed to be carved by a knife.

The carriage stopped, and the coachman turned around and whispered to the carriage, "Young Master, we're here."

"A'San, you've been with me for twelve years. I'm old and no longer a young master." A sigh came from the carriage.

"Twelve years, nine months, and eight days. Young Master is Young Master. No matter how old you are, you are still Young Master," the coachman said.

"Twelve years, nine months, and eight days. It turns out that every day you spend by my side is so torturous." The voice in the carriage was full of emotion. "You must have been counting the days, right?"

The coachman's eyes flickered. He slowly straightened his back. A moment ago, he was still an honest coachman. But now, he seemed to have changed into another person.

He alighted from the carriage slowly, as if he was afraid of causing a misunderstanding.

"Do you know?" the coachman said in a low voice.

"Eleven years ago, I lost my footing and fell into a river. You were the one who saved me. That time, you almost sank to the bottom of the river.

"Nine years ago, I was assassinated. You used your body to block the assassin for me. The wound on your right shoulder probably left a permanent scar.

"Five years ago, my old ailment relapsed. It was you who rushed five hundred kilometers to invite the divine doctor back...

"Three years ago, I was surrounded by barbarians on White Peak Mountain. It was you who desperately covered my retreat...

"You said that you don't fancy high positions or rewards, and you only want to be my coachman. I respected your thoughts.

"How I wish that all of this never happened. How I wish that this was still the time when I first met you!"

The voice inside the carriage wasn't answering. Instead, the man was speaking to himself.

The coachman's eyelids drooped. "You now know that I have ulterior motives."

"I've always pretended not to know. But now, I can't continue to pretend." The voice was full of sorrow.

"Son of the Minister of War of Great Wei, you were originally also a young master, but you've been suffering by my side for twelve years. Why bother?"

"Now that things have come to this, it's useless to say anything," the coachman said in a low voice. "But I won't surrender just like that!

"Although you've never fought before, I know that you're not as weak as the rumors say. If I have to die, I'd rather die by your hands," the coachman said coldly. With a flip of his wrist, an arm-length dagger appeared in his hand.

His aura continued to rise. Ninth rank, eighth rank, seventh rank!

In the blink of an eye, the aura emitted from his body was no weaker than that of a sixth-rank martial artist!

"Come, let me see how powerful you are!" the coachman shouted. Then he slashed forward with his dagger, and a dazzling blade light struck the carriage like a mountain.

"As you wish!" In the carriage, these words were spoken with impact.

Crack!

The carriage seemed to be struck by an invisible force and exploded into pieces.

An even more dazzling saber light suddenly shot out from the carriage.

Boom!

The two saber lights collided, and the impact dispersed into invisible forces that hit the walls on both sides of the alley, producing crackling sounds.

The expression on the coachman's face froze. His eyes flashed with relief and guilt.

Then a line of blood appeared between his eyebrows.

"Indeed—" As he uttered his last word, his body collapsed to the ground, and his aura gradually dissipated.

A scholarly man in his thirties appeared from the ruins of the carriage, carrying a saber that didn't match his disposition. Tears were flowing out of his eyes. Before they even fell to the ground, they were already evaporated by an invisible force.

"Have a safe journey!" The elegant man muttered to himself. The next moment, he raised his saber and turned around to leave.

...

[The Horse Slaying Saber you forged effectively completed a kill. You are rewarded with the cultivation technique: the Golden Bell Shield!]

The moment the coachman collapsed to the ground, Zhou Shu, far away in the outskirts of the capital, suddenly saw a barrage of messages.

Mysterious information instantly surged into Zhou Shu's mind, causing him to freeze on the spot.

"Superintendent Zhou, what's wrong? Are you alright?" Haitang, who was following by Zhou Shu's side, yelled when she saw him suddenly freeze on the spot.

Zhou Shu didn't notice that at this moment, Haitang was actually emitting the aura of a ranked martial artist.

Her gaze instantly became incomparably sharp, and two daggers appeared in her hands as she looked around vigilantly.

Chapter 50: Something's Wrong

The Golden Bell Shield was cultivated both internally and externally, and it was the best defense in the world! It was divided into twelve levels. At level twelve, not only was the golden halo indestructible, but it would also make one immune to water, fire, and poison. One could even go on without sleep and rest and have endless energy!

...

All of the information regarding the Golden Bell Shield flashed through Zhou Shu's mind. As soon as this information entered his mind, he broke through a barrier within his body.

At the first level of the Golden Bell Shield, all the meridians in his body were unobstructed, and his true qi circulated freely. If he received a blow, the pain would be reduced by half!

Zhou Shu's Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique was already at the eighth level, and his meridians had long since been cleared.

The first level of the Golden Bell Shield was actually of little value to him.

But the Golden Bell Shield could only show its true prowess after cultivating to the sixth level. The first level could only be considered better than nothing.

This doesn't seem right.

Zhou Shu gradually digested the information regarding the Golden Bell Shield in his mind. He was somewhat speechless.

First was the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique, then the Golden Bell Shield...

Does the Legendary Armament Canon want to develop me in the direction of a meat shield?

The image of a muscular bald man who looked like a bronze statue of the Shaolin Monastery appeared in his mind, and he shuddered.

Something's wrong. I want to become a swordsman with fluttering white clothes. Dugu Nine Swords, Flying Immortals... Any one of them would do.

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While cursing silently, Zhou Shu saw Haitang quickly hide her daggers. "What are you doing?"

"Nothing, Superintendent Zhou. I saw that you were in a daze and thought that you were plotted against." Haitang was composed, and her movements were natural.

If not for Zhou Shu's exceptional five senses, he would have thought that he had seen wrongly.

His gaze roamed across Haitang's body as he marveled inwardly.

I have no idea where she hid the two daggers. I can't spot the slightest clue.

This girl doesn't know how to cook or clean. I was wondering why Yin Wuyou sent her to my side. So she's here to protect me!

If Zhou Shu didn't know about the list, he probably wouldn't have thought of this.

But he was the one who had personally handed over the name list of Great Xia's geniuses to Cheng Wanli.

The Imperial Court must have taken action after obtaining the list.

The other elites all had large families and businesses, and there was no lack of people protecting them. Only he, a Forging Apprentice, didn't have any backing.

There were definitely no experts around him to protect him.

Although the Forging Division's workshops were relatively safe, there was no guarantee that there wouldn't be spies of the other party lurking.

To others, Zhou Shu was only an apprentice who had comprehended a bit of saber intent. His martial strength was almost zero.

So Haitang was sent to be my bodyguard!

If not for the outburst earlier on, I wouldn't have noticed her cultivation.

Zhou Shu's own cultivation path was very different from this world's. Therefore, he wasn't very clear about the cultivation levels of the martial artists in this world.

For example, he knew that there were nine ranks of martial artists in this world, but he didn't know how these nine ranks were divided.

Zhou Shu was unable to determine what rank Haitang's cultivation was. But he was certain that her cultivation was inferior to his. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to see through her.

With your small body, it remains to be seen who is protecting who, Zhou Shu thought.

Even so, he still felt warm inside.

In order to protect him, Yin Wuyou even sent someone close to her. This meant that he wasn't abandoned. The Great Xia Imperial Court still remembered him.

Great Xia isn't bad.

Zhou Shu originally didn't have any sense of belonging to Great Xia. After all, he wasn't a person of this world.

But now, his thoughts had changed slightly. The people of Great Xia were not bad.

"Superintendent Zhou, why were you in a daze just now?" Haitang asked. She knew that some high-ranked martial artists had strange magical powers and could directly attack people's minds.

"It's nothing. I just suddenly had some inspiration regarding weapons." Zhou Shu found an excuse.

"You'll get used to it in the future. We're geniuses, and that's how it is. Inspiration often erupts."

"Is it an epiphany?" Haitang said enviously.

"You can put it that way." Zhou Shu nodded. "After this epiphany, I have a new idea about weapons. Perhaps I can forge a new weapon."

"I'm going to give it a try. Go out and stand guard. Don't let anyone disturb me. Otherwise, if you interrupt my train of thought, the forging might fail."

He deliberately made the consequences more serious.

In front of Haitang, Zhou Shu wouldn't dare to unleash his full power. If Haitang saw how fast he forged, what would happen?

Zhou Shu didn't forget the name list. He had already made his name on the list after revealing his talent for forging. His Martial Dao cultivation couldn't be exposed!

Although he didn't know what rank his current Martial Dao cultivation was, he was certain that he was definitely at the top of the younger generation.

As expected, when Haitang heard Zhou Shu say that he might fail if he was disturbed, her small face immediately became serious.

"I will guard the door. With me around, no one can enter!" Haitang said seriously.

"Yes, you must guard it well!" Zhou Shu nodded. "Whether or not I can develop a new weapon will depend on you."

Haitang instantly felt as if a burden weighing a million pounds had suddenly fallen on her shoulders.

Zhou Shu entered the factory and locked Haitang outside.

The Horse Slaying Saber had completed a kill and achieved a breakthrough. Next, it was time to max out the number of Horse Slaying Sabers in the Legendary Armament Canon!

As long as the number of Horse Slaying Sabers became full, a new weapon would appear in the Legendary Armament Canon.

I wonder if the next weapon will be a ranked one.

...

The great general's residence in the capital...

The elegant man who had killed the coachman with the saber stood in front of Great General Meng Bai respectfully.

"Have you settled it?" Meng Bai said calmly.

"Yes," Mi Ziwen said respectfully. "I have disappointed you, Teacher."

"I'd be disappointed if you weren't sad at all." Meng Bai shook his head. "Humans aren't like grass or wood. How can we be emotionless? After all, you two have been together for more than ten years."

"I should have realized his identity a long time ago, but I was unwilling to believe it the entire time. That's why I ended up in such a state." Mi Ziwen smiled bitterly.

"Your temperament is still not decisive enough," Meng Bai said. "You will come with me on the expedition this time. If you still can't change this bad habit, then in the future, it might be better if you devote yourself to books."

Mi Ziwen's face froze. He naturally understood what he was saying. To devote himself to books meant that he would no longer have to lead soldiers to war!

"I understand," Mi Ziwen said seriously.

"That's enough. There's no need to put on such a straight face," Meng Bai said. "Leading soldiers into battle isn't a good thing either."

"Don't stay at home and let your thoughts wander. Help me do something."

"I await your instructions, Teacher," Mi Ziwen said seriously.

"In this expedition, apart from the usual military supplies, I also asked the Forging Division to supply three thousand Huben Sabers, one thousand Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, and five hundred Horse Slaying Sabers. I'll leave these weapons to you. You can figure out how to play their greatest role on the battlefield.

"Now, go to the Forging Division and urge them to see if they're finished.

"Also, pass the beginner martial arts secret manuals that I asked you to collect previously to the superintendent of the 0th Workshop."

A strange look flashed across Mi Ziwen's eyes. I was wondering why Teacher asked me to collect beginner martial arts secret manuals.

From the looks of it, Teacher collected them for the superintendent of the 0th Workshop.

Who is the superintendent of the 0th Workshop? How could he trouble Teacher for such a small matter?

In the past, Teacher never cared about such things.

Mi Ziwen's mind wandered. For a moment, he even thought that the other party might be his teacher's illegitimate son.

If Meng Bai knew what was going on in this student's head, he would probably directly expel him from his tutelage.

"I understand. Teacher, don't worry. I will personally hand the secret manuals to your—"

Mi Ziwen had almost blurted out 'your son'...

He quickly corrected himself. "I will personally hand over the secret manuals to the superintendent of the 0th Workshop.

"Teacher, do you have any message for him?"

"That's it." Meng Bai waved his hand.

He suddenly thought of something. "In addition, bring my name card to Divine Constable Bureau's Ma Fengzhang and have him transfer a few experts from the Divine Constable Bureau to protect the superintendent of the 0th Workshop for a period of time.

"His name is on the assassination list, but he's different from you people. He has just started learning martial arts and doesn't have the ability to protect himself.

"The Country Protector Army isn't strong enough, while the Demon Executing and Fiend Eradication armies are experts in killing but amateurs when it comes to protecting people. The Divine Constable Bureau is more experienced in this."

Meng Bai said with a deep voice, "Tell Commander Ma that before Great Xia's military parade, I do not wish to hear about anything happening to Zhou Shu."

"Yes, Teacher!" Mi Ziwen replied. He was increasingly certain that Zhou Shu, the superintendent of the Forging Division's 0th Workshop, had an extraordinary relationship with his teacher!

The assassination list is full of Great Xia's elites. Why would a Forging Apprentice suddenly appear?

If he's related to Teacher, it would explain his talent.

It would be strange if Teacher's bloodline wasn't that of a genius!

Mi Ziwen had already perfected the entire logic in his heart. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that Zhou Shu was his teacher's illegitimate son.

As for why his teacher didn't acknowledge him, perhaps it was because of his own considerations.

Even though his teacher held a high position in Great Xia, since ancient times, there had been countless cases where one's achievements caused jealousy from one's master.

Although the current emperor was wise, who could guarantee what kind of personality the next emperor would have?

"Teacher, I have a few experts in my family. Should I send them to the 0th Workshop?" Mi Ziwen added.

"No need. The Divine Constable Bureau is enough." Meng Bai shook his head. "You just have to take care of yourself. Don't assume that the assassination will end just like that. Great Wei will not let you off.. You are in greater danger than him."