

Canon 51

Chapter 51: If Time Could Stop At The Moment When We First Met

Ding Dang!

...

Zhou Shu threw the last saber into the large wooden box beside the smelting furnace.

The sound of rustling pages came as the Legendary Armament Canon appeared in front of Zhou Shu.

A new page finally appeared!

Upon seeing the contents of the page, Zhou Shu was slightly stunned.

Am I that lucky?

With a thought, a new forging formula appeared in his mind.

A moment later, he completely absorbed the forging formula, and a smile appeared on his face.

This time, I can earn another sum of money, and I can finally pay off the debt I owe for building the 0th Workshop.

"Superintendent, someone is looking for you!" Haitang's careful voice came from outside.

"Didn't I say not to disturb me?" Zhou Shu said.

"I heard that the sound of metal striking stopped..." Haitang explained. "And the person who came to find you is Sir Mi—"

"Mi what?" Zhou Shu mumbled as he opened the door.

Outside the door, a graceful middle-aged man was standing there with a smile.

Upon seeing Zhou Shu, he even cupped his hands slightly in greeting. His every move was elegant and graceful.

Zhou Shu sized up the handsome face. "What's your name?"

Haitang: "..."

Mi Ziwen: "..."

"My surname is Mi, and my name is Ziwen." Mi Ziwen laughed.

"Mi Ziwen?" The information Zhou Shu had seen on the assassination list flashed across his mind.

Mi Ziwen was a genius in the art of war, and he was suspected to be the successor of Great General Meng Bai. His coachman was the son of the Minister of War of Great Wei and had been hiding in the Mi family for ten years...

Mi Ziwen didn't notice that Zhou Shu was lost in thought and instead continued, "I am here on the orders of the great general to inspect the weapons. At the same time, I'm helping the general deliver something to you, Superintendent Zhou."

"How is your coachman?" Zhou Shu was in a daze. For a moment, he didn't hear what Mi Ziwen said and subconsciously said the words in his head.

As soon as he said it, he regretted it!

As expected, Mi Ziwen was stunned, and his eyes flashed. "You know about it?"

"Yeah." Zhou Shu braced himself and nodded. His mind raced, wanting to find an excuse. Should I say I heard it from Sun Gongping?

As expected, countless thoughts flashed through Mi Ziwen's mind. Superintendent Zhou has a close relationship with Teacher. He even knows about this matter.

Without waiting for Zhou Shu to explain, he said with a bitter smile, "I've embarrassed myself in front of you, Superintendent Zhou. The person I knew for more than ten years was actually a spy from an enemy country. I must be blind."

"General Mi, you must be joking." He didn't ask, so Zhou Shu didn't rush to explain. He smiled awkwardly. "It's hard to predict people's hearts. Even if we spend all our time together, we still can't guarantee that we can see through a person's heart."

"Yes." Mi Ziwen sighed. "But after all, we were together for so long. Now that things have really happened, I still feel a little sad."

Mi Ziwen treated Zhou Shu as his teacher's illegitimate son, not as an outsider.

Otherwise, Mi Ziwen usually wouldn't reveal his emotions too much in front of outsiders.

"If time could stop at the moment when we first met, what caused the sorrow of the painted fan in the autumn wind?" Zhou Shu replied.

Mi Ziwen was stunned. He mumbled, "If time could stop at the moment when we first met, what caused the sorrow of the painted fan in the autumn wind?"

"Good poem. I didn't expect Junior Brother to have such literary talent."

Because Mi Ziwen was lost in his thoughts, he blurted out the words 'junior brother'.

"What?" Zhou Shu raised his eyebrows.

"Sorry, I misspoke." Mi Ziwen said hurriedly. Since his teacher didn't admit it publicly, he couldn't reveal it.

"Superintendent Zhou, we hit it off right from the start. Why don't we become sworn brothers?" Mi Ziwen said.

Zhou Shu and Haitang were both stunned.

Hit it off right from the start?

Become sworn brothers?

Do the people of Great Xia all call this feeling hitting it off right from the start?

Zhou Shu was confused. He couldn't tell at all where he and Mi Ziwen hit it off.

Is he implying that both of us are extremely handsome?

We've only exchanged a few words, and you want to become sworn brothers with me? If we've known each other a little longer, wouldn't you want to marry me...

Bah!

Haitang was even more shocked than Zhou Shu. Zhou Shu's understanding of Mi Ziwen was limited, but Haitang was different.

She was someone close to Yin Wuyou, and she knew the influential characters of Great Xia like the back of her hand.

Mi Ziwen came from the famous Mi family of Jiangbei. Since he was a child, he was talented and intelligent. He studied literature and once came in the top three in the imperial examination. He studied martial arts and was talented in the art of war. He was directly accepted as General Meng's personal disciple.

For such a person, as long as he didn't die, it was inevitable that he would be conferred a rank of nobility and become a minister!

Furthermore, after Great General Meng, he would be the best candidate for the commander-in-chief of the three armies of Great Xia!

What about Zhou Shu?

He was just the superintendent of a small Forging Division workshop. Although the princess thought highly of him, the difference between him and Mi Ziwen was even greater than the difference between him and the princess.

Haitang thought, What does Sir Mi see in Superintendent Zhou?

She blinked her eyes and looked at Zhou Shu. Her face immediately turned slightly red. Superintendent Zhou is indeed quite good-looking...

"Well..." Zhou Shu said hesitantly. "General Mi, aren't you a little hasty? We just met—"

"Hasty? No." Mi Ziwen shook his head. "The moment I saw you, Superintendent Zhou, I felt that we hit it off well. It doesn't matter how long we've known each other. What matters is our hearts.

"Could it be that you feel that I am not worthy to be your brother?" Mi Ziwen said in a deep voice with a stern face.

Zhou Shu shook his head. Not worthy?

Of course not.

Even if he didn't know Mi Ziwen's true identity, the assassination list clearly stated that Mi Ziwen was suspected to be the successor of Great General Meng Bai.

Those who had the qualifications to be on the assassination list were not ordinary people. Furthermore, this Mi Ziwen was the successor of Great General Meng!

Who was Great General Meng?

The commander-in-chief of the three armies of Great Xia, the well-deserved number one person in the military. In his previous life, he would be the chairman of the Military Commission.

How could his successor be an ordinary person?

Becoming sworn brothers with such a person was definitely a profitable business.

Zhou Shu thought quickly and then saw Mi Ziwen's eager expression. "Since you are so kind, General Mi, then I shall accept."

"You're still calling me General Mi?" Mi Ziwen was overjoyed. "I'm a few years older. You can call me Big Brother Mi from now on."

"Big Brother?"

"Yes!" Mi Ziwen smiled happily.

Zhou Shu was somewhat speechless. Why is he so happy like he picked up a hundred taels of silver?

Why do I feel like I suffered a loss?

A big brother for no reason?

"Big Brother, if we become sworn brothers, don't we need to drink chicken blood and kowtow to the heavens..."

"What's all that for?" Mi Ziwen asked. "But you and I are sworn brothers, so logically, we should hold a banquet and announce it to the world."

He thought for a moment. Teacher might not want to get too involved with Zhou Shu on the surface. If I make things too big, Teacher might be unhappy.

"But I have to prepare for an expedition recently, and I'm busy with military matters. Let's talk about this later."

"Official business is the most important. The banquet is not important." Zhou Shu hurriedly said. He didn't want to make such a big fuss.

Mi Ziwen was someone on the assassination list. If the news of them becoming sworn brothers spread, who knew what those spies would do regarding him?

"Big Brother, my background is lowly. If the news of us becoming sworn brothers spreads, I'm afraid it will affect your reputation. so I think it's better not to publicize this matter," Zhou Shu said after some consideration.

Unexpectedly, Mi Ziwen nodded. "We'll do as you say, Second Brother. We're brothers, and we don't have to care about the unnecessary and overly-elaborate formalities outside."

Zhou Shu frowned. Second Brother, why does this form of address sound so awkward?

What is this? If we're brothers, so be it. What is the meaning of adding the 'second'?

But then again, can't I be considered cozying up to a bigshot now?

It isn't too much to call him the successor of the chairman of the Military Commission, right?

If anyone dares to talk nonsense with me in the future, I will slap them directly. If they dare to resist, I will tell them that my big brother is Mi Ziwen!

At the thought of this, Zhou Shu laughed in his heart. Calling him big brother in exchange for the perks isn't a loss.

"Second Brother," Mi Ziwen continued. "I came in a hurry today and didn't bring anything with me.

"I'll give you a gift next time. I see that the conditions here are a bit crude. I have some banknotes here. Take them first and buy whatever you like.

"I'll help you purchase more things when I return from my expedition. How can the brother of Mi Ziwen stay in such a shabby place?"

Mi Ziwen took out a stack of banknotes and stuffed them into Zhou Shu's hands.

How can Teacher's bloodline stay in such a place? he added in his mind.

Zhou Shu held the stack of banknotes, completely surprised.

Big Brother is so generous?

My 0th Workshop is built pretty well. Why do you call it shabby?

But I like such a big brother!

"Big Brother, you're too kind." A smile appeared on Zhou Shu's face as he put the banknotes into his clothes. "Big Brother, please come in. Haitang, serve tea, good tea!"

Haitang looked confused. Tea? What tea?

"You're welcome, Second Brother." Mi Ziwen shook his head with a smile. "Business is more important. I wonder how the forging of the Huben Sabers, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, and Horse Slaying Sabers is coming along? If there are any difficulties, you can tell me. I will explain it to the general."

Look, this is a real big brother, Zhou Shu thought.

He smiled. "Everything is going smoothly. I guarantee that everything will be delivered on time. Don't worry, Big Brother."

"A batch of weapons has been forged. Big Brother, you can check and take them with you first. It's also good to let the soldiers familiarize themselves with the weapons in advance."

“Good, as expected of you, Second Brother.” Mi Ziwen was overjoyed. “I almost forgot. The great general asked me to bring you some martial arts secret manuals. Previously, I didn’t know that it was for you, so I didn’t gather enough. Later, I will definitely find a few good martial arts secret manuals for you!”

Mi Ziwen was like a Child of Wealth. He took out a few martial arts secret manuals and stuffed them into Zhou Shu’s hands.

Zhou Shu smiled even more happily. Although he didn’t need martial arts manuals, no one would complain about having too many good things. If he didn’t need them, he could give them away.

“Come, Big Brother, let me show you my workshop..” Zhou Shu pulled Mi Ziwen’s arm and warmly welcomed him into the 0th Workshop.

Chapter 52: Give Me More Sworn Big Brothers Like Him

“Big Brother, these are the weapons we’ve finished forging.” Zhou Shu led Mi Ziwen to the storeroom and pointed at a few large boxes.

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“Our 0th Workshop has just been established, and we don’t have enough manpower. Also, our cooperation isn’t very good yet, so the forging efficiency isn’t high,” Zhou Shu explained.

“But the situation is improving. Within a month, we will be able to complete the mission assigned by the great general. There will be no problems.”

Mi Ziwen nodded while looking at the completed weapons and was actually quite surprised.

Before coming to the Forging Division, Mi Ziwen had done his homework. To be honest, Meng Bai’s mission of forging 3,000 Huben Sabers, 1,000 Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, and 500 Horse Slaying Sabers seemed rather tough to him.

Although he didn’t know much about forging, he was a general after all, and he had a deep understanding of weapons.

Putting aside the Huben Saber, sharp weapons like the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber were definitely not easy to forge.

This kind of craftsmanship was not something an ordinary Forging Apprentice could master. If there wasn’t enough manpower, how would the forging quantity increase?

In such a short period of time, the 0th Workshop actually produced so many Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and Horse Slaying Sabers. My brother is truly capable.

But he’s Teacher’s son after all. Isn’t it normal for him to have such ability?

“Second Brother, to be honest, before coming here, I didn’t expect you to be able to forge so many weapons,” Mi Ziwen said with a smile. “Initially, I thought if I was able to get three hundred Horse Slaying Sabers before going out to battle, I would be confident in surprising the barbarian army.

“Now, you are the one who gave me a surprise.

“Based on your current progress, you should be able to complete the great general’s mission within a month.”

“I don’t want to challenge military law. I have to do it even if it costs me my life.” Zhou Shu took the opportunity to complain.

Mi Ziwen smiled without saying anything and changed the topic. “Second Brother, the Horse Slaying Saber you forged is indeed extraordinarily powerful. This saber is enough to ensure the safety of Great Xia for fifty years!”

“Is it that exaggerated?” Zhou Shu smiled foolishly. This big brother I got so easily speaks so nicely.

In Zhou Shu’s previous world, the Horse Slaying Saber was indeed very powerful. Anyone who had one automatically became a powerhouse.

But there were high-level martial arts in this world. No matter how strong a standard weapon was, it was still unable to withstand a single blow compared to ranked weapons.

Of course, this didn’t mean that standard weapons were useless. Although there were high-level martial arts in this world, the majority of people were still ordinary people. For example, in the three armies of Great Xia, the Country Protector Army was composed of ordinary people. And the number of soldiers it had far exceeded that of the Demon Executing Army and Fiend Eradication Army, which was formed of ranked martial artists.

Even in this world of high martial arts, there were not many strong ranked martial artists, and ordinary people could still hold high positions in this world. For example, the generals of the Country Protector Army. Even though they were not ranked martial artists, they still held high positions.

Zhou Shu would not belittle himself just because he had forged standard weapons, but he would also not be arrogant because of this.

Even though this world’s unranked martial artists also had great prospects, the powerful ranked martial artists still had more authority.

In terms of weapon forging, it was the same. Ranked weapons were the real deal.

“Big Brother, if you say that, I will become proud,” Zhou Shu said.

“Second Brother, you don’t lead soldiers, so it’s normal that you don’t know the function of the saber.” Mi Ziwen shook his head. “I’ve personally used the saber you created. I know its power very well. Anyone who has been on the battlefield will definitely not neglect its function.”

“Big Brother, you’ve used the saber?” Zhou Shu said in surprise. He didn’t care about the battlefield at all.

In any case, he had no intention of going to the battlefield. He was just a Forging Apprentice. Even if a large-scale war broke out and everyone became soldiers, he would only be a logistics soldier. Why would he go to the battlefield?

He suddenly recalled that the Horse Slaying Saber had completed a kill previously, and the Legendary Armament Canon had rewarded him with the Golden Bell Shield. Does it have something to do with this new big brother of mine?

"That's right." A complicated look flashed across Mi Ziwen's eyes, but he still nodded and said, "Second Brother, you're not an outsider, so I won't hide it from you."

"Not long ago, our Great Xia seized a secret list belonging to the enemy. This secret list recorded the information of the enemy's spies lurking in our Great Xia."

"After obtaining the secret list, in order to prevent the spies from obtaining the news, the Imperial Court used the great strength of the three armies to seal the information. Before the spies could react, they were all captured."

"Speaking of which, it's a bit embarrassing, but I also had a spy lying in ambush."

Mi Ziwen smiled bitterly. In his heart, he treated Zhou Shu as his teacher's illegitimate son, but he didn't feel like airing his dirty laundry.

"That spy had lurked around me for more than ten years. Perhaps to gain my trust, he saved me many times."

"Although he had ulterior motives, kindness is kindness, and hatred is hatred."

"For the sake of my country, I couldn't let him go. But I also couldn't bear to see him being tortured by the authorities. Thus, I took action to send him on his way. What I used was precisely the Horse Slaying Saber you forged."

Mi Ziwen seemed to have finally gotten the chance to talk about this. He talked non-stop about what had happened. He didn't even hide the matter of the secret list. Of course, he didn't mention the contents of the secret list.

After hearing Mi Ziwen's words, Zhou Shu suddenly understood. He was the one who had thrown the secret list to Cheng Wanli, so he knew its content.

After piecing things together, he knew that there had definitely been a battle that outsiders didn't know about.

"Second Brother, you don't think that I'm soft-hearted, do you?" Mi Ziwen said with a bitter smile. "That spy of mine has an extraordinary identity. If I could have captured him alive, we would definitely have been able to obtain a lot of intelligence about the enemy. But because I couldn't bear to..."

Zhou Shu shook his head. "Humans aren't like grass or wood. How can we be emotionless? If I were you, I would have done the same."

"Killing him was to fulfill the duty of the country. It was also to fulfill the friendship you've had for the past ten years."

"Second Brother, do you really think so?" Mi Ziwen was surprised.

"Of course." Zhou Shu nodded seriously.

"I was right about you!" Mi Ziwen was very moved. He grabbed Zhou Shu's shoulder and said, "No wonder I felt like we connected at first sight, Second Brother. It turns out that our hearts are connected..."

"Big Brother!" Zhou Shu hurriedly interrupted him. If you don't know how to say it, then you shouldn't say anything. Two grown men talking about connecting at first sight...

"Have all the spies from the enemy nation been cleaned up?" Zhou Shu changed the topic.

"Some were killed while resisting. Most were captured alive," Mi Ziwen said.

"This time, we had the help of an expert. After obtaining the secret list, we quickly sealed off the news. Most of the spies didn't receive the news and were captured before they could react."

The expert you speak of is right in front of you, Zhou Shu thought.

"These spies have all been sent to prison and will be executed in a few days. Before I set off, I have another mission, which is to supervise the execution," Mi Ziwen continued.

"Supervise the execution?" Zhou Shu asked curiously.

Mi Ziwen looked at Zhou Shu as if he was looking at his real brother. He patiently explained, "Usually, executions wouldn't have anything to do with me. But the execution of spies is different from ordinary executions.

"These spies were all painstakingly trained by Great Wei. If we kill them, Great Wei will definitely retaliate strongly. And the officer in charge of the executions will definitely be the target of their revenge."

"Then, Big Brother, aren't you in danger?" Zhou Shu said.

Hearing Zhou Shu's concern for him, Mi Ziwen smiled happily and continued to explain, "There are definitely some dangers, but the spy I killed has an extraordinary status in Great Wei. Even if I don't supervise the execution, I can't avoid Great Wei's revenge.

"Since that's the case, we might as well let Great Wei take revenge on me alone."

Mi Ziwen raised his head proudly. At this moment, he looked more like the famous genius in the secret list.

"Second Brother, it's not that I'm boasting, but I, Mi Ziwen, have some ability. It won't be easy for Great Wei to kill me!"

Zhou Shu believed his words. Mi Ziwen was one of the top talents on the secret list. How could such a genius be so easy to kill, especially when he knew that the Great Wei would take revenge.

"Big Brother, if you're going to supervise the execution, I have a presumptuous request. I wonder if—" Zhou Shu suddenly had a thought.

"There's no need to stand on ceremony between us brothers. If you have anything to say, just say it." Mi Ziwen smiled. "In the capital of Great Xia, there aren't many things that I can't do. Even if I can't do it, there are still people who can."

How could Teacher sit back and do nothing about Second Brother's matter?

Other than usurping the throne, what else can Teacher not do?

Mi Ziwen was very confident about this.

He now firmly believed that Zhou Shu was Meng Bai's illegitimate son.

If Zhou Shu and Meng Bai knew, who knew how they would feel. The two of them had only met a few times. Meng Bai was taking care of Zhou Shu purely out of love for talents...

"Then, I won't stand on ceremony." Zhou Shu waved his hand. "Big Brother, aren't you going to supervise the execution? You will have executioners there, right? I'm thinking, can you let those executioners use Horse Slaying Sabers to carry out the executions?"

Mi Ziwen was startled and asked doubtfully, "Use Horse Slaying Sabers?"

"That's right," Zhou Shu said. "When I was developing the Horse Slaying Saber, I envisioned it as a weapon of slaughter. How can a weapon of slaughter not see blood?"

"Sabers can only be considered true weapons after seeing blood. Big Brother, you will be going to war soon. If you can let the sabers see blood in advance, I think it will be beneficial to your soldiers who use the sabers."

Zhou Shu randomly came up with a reason. After all, he was the creator of the saber, so he could say whatever he wanted.

Mi Ziwen didn't doubt Zhou Shu's intentions and nodded. "Since it's a weapon, it does matter whether it has seen blood or not.

"It's fine. I don't care what weapon is used for the execution. The sharpness of the Horse Slaying Saber is no less than an executioner's blade. I will take care of it."

Zhou Shu was delighted. The more kills the Horse Slaying Saber completed, the more benefits he would receive. There were over a hundred spies on the assassination list. Even if only half of them were publicly executed, there were still dozens of them.

How many levels could dozens of people raise his Golden Bell Shield?

This big brother of mine is really not bad.. He gave me money the moment we met, and now he's giving me cultivation. Give me more sworn big brothers like him!

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Chapter 53: He Has to Call You Uncle

Mi Ziwen asked his entourage to bring along the weapons Zhou Shu had forged. He was about to leave the 0th Workshop when he suddenly stopped and turned around. "Second Brother, since you mentioned the execution, when the time comes, if you're free, you should come to the execution ground to take a look."

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"I have to go too?" Zhou Shu said in surprise.

Why would I go?

Didn't you just say it?

Anyone who supervises the execution will be marked by Great Wei.

Great Wei is a powerful country that's not inferior to Great Xia. How could it be good for them to hate me?

My arms and legs aren't like yours, Mi Ziwen. You are the successor of Great Xia's God of War, Meng Bai. If I'm targeted by Great Wei, how can I protect myself with just the title of Mi Ziwen's sworn brother?

This title will make Great Wei hate me even more!

"You don't have to go." Mi Ziwen smiled. "This is just my suggestion.

"Second Brother, although you forge, you shouldn't neglect the importance of the Martial Dao. A person who does not know martial arts won't be able to forge good weapons."

"What does this have to do with me going to watch the execution?" Zhou Shu asked.

Forgers had to understand the Martial Dao. He understood this point. After all, weapons were meant for martial artists. If forgers didn't understand the Martial Dao, how could they forge good weapons?

"As you said before, a weapon must see blood before it can become a true weapon. A true martial artist is no different.

"Second Brother, you don't have many chances to kill enemies in the capital. It might be useful to go to the execution ground to take a look." Mi Ziwen smiled. At least it can train his courage, right?

In the military, he had seen plenty of new recruits who were scared stiff after seeing a dead person for the first time.

So that's how it is. Zhou Shu heaved a sigh of relief. He really wasn't afraid of blood.

In this life, he had already killed people. At the very beginning, he had felt miserable for many days after killing the Forging Apprentice with ill intentions. Now, he no longer felt much even after killing dozens of men in black.

Even Zhou Shu didn't know whether he had become more cold-blooded or more mature than his previous life.

However, he knew that he didn't like killing people. But he didn't like being killed even more. If someone threatened his life, he wouldn't hesitate in the slightest.

"Alright, I'll go take a look when the time comes," Zhou Shu replied. "But Big Brother, you will be there on official business, so I won't disturb you when I'm there. I'll just watch from outside the execution ground with others."

“As it should be.” Mi Ziwen nodded. He didn’t want to expose his relationship with Zhou Shu.

If Teacher knows about it, who knows what the consequences will be?

Since Teacher doesn’t want to acknowledge Second Brother, perhaps he has other plans. I became sworn brothers with Second Brother on impulse. Who knows if it will disrupt Teacher’s plans?

After calming down, Mi Ziwen regretted his carelessness.

But now that they were sworn brothers, there was no point in regretting it. He couldn’t just turn his back on him. That would really offend him.

Mi Ziwen left the 0th Workshop with a bitter smile.

Zhou Shu’s feelings weren’t that complicated. Having a big brother didn’t affect him much.

If there was something, it would be that he became rich!

Becoming rich could solve many problems!

Therefore, Zhou Shu was very happy!

How generous! Zhou Shu counted the banknotes that Mi Ziwen had just given him. When he received them, he had only felt a thick stack. At the time, he hadn’t thought much about it. But now that he counted them, it really didn’t disappoint!

There were twenty banknotes in total, each worth a hundred taels. All together, they were worth 2,000 taels of silver!

According to the prices in his previous life, 2,000 taels of silver was almost equivalent to four million yuan!

Zhou Shu felt as if he had won the lottery. This big brother had given him four million yuan on the first meeting, and he had even said that he didn’t bring anything this time and would give him another gift next time.

Is this the happiness of the rich?

“Haitang, is this big brother of mine very powerful?” Zhou Shu turned to ask Haitang.

Haitang was the princess’s maid before, so she probably knew some things that ordinary people didn’t.

Haitang was actually still in a daze.

She had been assigned by the princess to stay with Zhou Shu. To be honest, Zhou Shu, the mere superintendent of a Forging Division workshop, was not worthy of her attention.

As the princess’s trusted maid, even the ministers of the court had to be polite to her.

But now, she really felt that she couldn’t see through Zhou Shu.

Sir Mi actually became sworn brothers with him?

Is it possible that he really has some strengths that I don’t know?

Not only does Her Highness value him so much, but even Sir Mi became his sworn brother?

Haitang was extremely puzzled.

“You mean Sir Mi?”

Haitang shook her little head. What am I thinking? What do these things have to do with me? I’m only a little maid, so I just have to complete Her Highness’s mission properly.

“Of course. Sir Mi has a powerful background,” Haitang said. “He’s the son of the first wife of the Mi family, one of the eight great families of Great Xia. He has been talented since he was a child. He studied literature and came top three in the imperial examination. He learned martial arts, and Great General Meng valued him and took him in as his disciple, inheriting the great general’s art of war and martial arts!”

“A master of both civil and military arts? Is he really that good?” Zhou Shu was flabbergasted. The assassination list only recorded Mi Ziwen being suspected of being General Meng’s successor. There was no more information. The suspected information was now confirmed by Haitang!

“That’s for sure.” Haitang nodded solemnly. “Superintendent, Sir Mi may be young, but he’s already...”

Haitang spoke a series of terms—rank, official rank, and noble rank—but Zhou Shu didn’t know much about them.

In short, Mi Ziwen had a family background, status, and a bright future. He was definitely not much inferior to Yin Wuyou!

“The Mi family has a lot of rare mineral mines. For a lot of forging materials, the Mi family is the exclusive supplier. A few thousand taels of silver is nothing to the next head of the Mi family,” Haitang continued.

Two thousand taels of silver was a massive amount to ordinary people. But to some people, it was really nothing.

Mi Ziwen was one of them.

“Heh, my big brother is so rich. In that case, won’t I be rich in the future?” Zhou Shu laughed unconcernedly. “Come, Haitang, we’ll split half. These are for you!”

Zhou Shu divided half of the banknotes and stuffed them into Haitang’s hands.

“Although Her Highness sent you here, and you’re not a formal member of the 0th Workshop, since you’re here, you’re one of us.

“Take the money and spend it however you want. Our 0th Workshop has money!”

Haitang’s eyes widened, and her little mouth opened, but she couldn’t make a single sound.

Is this Superintendent Zhou’s specialness?

He gave away one thousand taels just like that?

The reason Sir Mi doesn’t care about the two thousand taels is because he can afford it.

Superintendent Zhou, you used to be just a Forging Apprentice, and now you're just a minor official.

Are you trying to bribe me into betraying Her Highness?

Impossible!

How could I, Haitang, be bribed with money?

Haitang's petite face became incomparably resolute. She was just about to return the money to Zhou Shu when he turned around and walked out.

"Superintendent Zhou, where are you going? Wait for me!" When Haitang thought of her mission, she no longer cared about the money and hurriedly chased after him.

"I'm going to the Divine Constable Bureau to collect a debt. Why are you following me?" Zhou Shu looked helplessly at Haitang, who was closely following him. "You're on vacation today!"

He really didn't need anyone to serve him. Although it felt good to have a pretty little maid by his side, it was still troublesome.

If not for Haitang following him, he could have used his cultivation to rush to the capital. But now, he could only walk there slowly. Not to mention whether it would tire him or not, it was a waste of time!

"No, Her Highness told me to follow you closely," Haitang said stubbornly.

"Did Her Highness ask you to serve me or monitor me?" Zhou Shu said angrily.

"Serve!" Haitang said without hesitation.

"I've never seen any maids who don't know how to do anything..." Zhou Shu couldn't help complaining.

"I—" Haitang's face turned red, and she almost told the truth.

She was not a palace maid who did chores!

She was the princess's personal maid and bodyguard. She was responsible for protecting the princess!

There were palace maids to do chores like laundry, cooking, and cleaning!

But she couldn't tell him this!

The princess had said that she was to hide her identity and stay beside Superintendent Zhou as an ordinary maid. On the one hand, she was responsible for protecting him. On the other hand, she wanted to see if there were any undiscovered spies around him!

Haitang didn't understand why the princess didn't want her to tell the truth, but she had to follow the princess's orders!

"Alright, follow me if you want."

Although Yin Wuyou had said that Haitang would serve, he didn't really dare to order her around like an ordinary maid.

Who knew why the princess had sent someone to his side? But he didn't think that the princess really cared about his life.

"But let me say this first. I'm going to the Divine Constable Bureau to collect a debt. If they beat me up, you'll be implicated," Zhou Shu intimidated Haitang.

Haitang pursed her lips. "You're going to the Divine Constable Bureau to look for Sun Gongping, right? He won't dare to hit you."

"You know that I'm going to look for Sun Gongping? Why won't he dare to hit me?" Zhou Shu said strangely.

Besides Sun Gongping, who else do you know in the Divine Constable Bureau? The 0th Workshop has never provided weapons to the Divine Constable Bureau, Haitang thought.

Previously, under the orders of the princess, she had been paying attention to the movements of the 0th Workshop. Zhou Shu's background was clean, and besides Sun Gongping, he had no other dealings with the Divine Constable Bureau.

"If he sees you now, he will have to call you uncle. If he dares to hit you, he will be disrespectful." Haitang had a smile in her eyes.

"Who will have to call me uncle? Sun Gongping? What do you mean?" Zhou Shu was really puzzled.

Chapter 54: Who Gave You the Confidence?

"Sir Mi's cousin is Marquis Weiyuan's wife. Sun Gongping is her son, and you are Sir Mi's sworn brother," Haitang said while twiddling her fingers.

...

Zhou Shu was speechless. She makes it sound so complicated.

Isn't Mi Ziwen Sun Gongping's uncle?

Sun Gongpin's identity is truly extraordinary.

But in comparison, mine seems even more extraordinary.

When he thought about how Sun Gongping would have to call him uncle, Zhou Shu couldn't help laughing. He really wanted to see Sun Gongping's expression when he heard this news.

"Haitang, do me a favor." Zhou Shu chuckled.

"What favor?" Haitang asked doubtfully.

"Don't tell Sun Gongping that Sir Mi is my big brother yet," Zhou Shu said.

"Why?" Haitang subconsciously asked. But before Zhou Shu could reply, she continued, "Don't worry. I won't speak carelessly."

She had received professional training. She would never say things she shouldn't.

As the personal maid of the princess, she had heard countless secrets. If she hadn't kept her mouth shut, she would have died long ago.

Half a day passed when they finally arrived at the Divine Constable Bureau.

"I'm going in to handle some matters, so you don't have to follow me. Go stroll around the city and come back in two hours," Zhou Shu said to Haitang.

"I can't—"

Haitang was just about to speak when Zhou Shu interrupted, "The grand minister asked you to serve me, so you must listen to me! Go!"

Then he walked into the Divine Constable Bureau.

Haitang was stunned for a moment. Zhou Shu should be very safe in the Divine Constable Bureau, so I might as well take this time to report to Her Highness.

Sir Mi and Zhou Shu becoming sworn brothers is a huge matter. I have to inform Her Highness as soon as possible!

At this thought, Haitang no longer hesitated. She turned her body and nimbly leaped over the wall. In the blink of an eye, she had already disappeared. She was much faster than during the journey to the Divine Constable Bureau.

Walking all the way from the 0th Workshop with Zhou Shu, Haitang had felt suffocated!

Zhou Shu walked more than ten meters into the Divine Constable Bureau when someone jumped out and shouted, "Who dares to trespass into the Divine Constable Bureau!"

"I am Zhou Shu, the superintendent of a Forging Division workshop. I've come to look for Sun Gongping, Divine Constable Sun." Zhou Shu cupped his hands.

When the man heard this, he nodded and muttered something as he brushed past Zhou Shu. He had no intention of verifying Zhou Shu's identity.

Zhou Shu felt somewhat speechless as he watched this person disappear before his eyes.

Is the Divine Constable Bureau so casual?

Aren't they afraid of people sneaking in?

He had forgotten that in a place like the Divine Constable Bureau, people with ulterior motives would hide. Who would walk right into a trap?

Zhou Shu continued to walk in. After walking for another ten minutes, he met another person. This time, he took the opportunity to ask where Sun Gongping was.

When he found Sun Gongping, Sun Gongping was wielding a thick rod as tall as a person. The rod turned into shadows, bringing with it surging air waves.

Seeing Zhou Shu arrive, Sun Gongping swung the long rod in his hand in a circle, then slammed it heavily onto the ground. A crisp sound reverberated in the air.

Sun Gongping casually tossed the long rod to a distant weapon rack. He wiped the sweat off his face and asked doubtfully, "Old Zhou, why are you here?"

"To find you, of course," Zhou Shu said.

"Looking for me? Could it be that you've already developed the weapon?" Sun Gongping said in surprise. "Let me see. What weapon is it?"

"How can it be so fast!" Zhou Shu said in annoyance. "I haven't seen the customization fee yet!"

"Hehe!" Sun Gongping chuckled. "You can't blame me for that. Old Ma hasn't approved the money yet. I can't possibly pay for it myself, right? Even I can't bear to eat a meal at the Drunken Immortal Inn every day!"

"I'm not here for this," Zhou Shu said.

He couldn't be bothered to argue with Sun Gongping about this matter. Daily meals from the Drunken Immortal Inn had just been a passing remark.

"Great Divine Constable Sun, I wish to meet your Divine Constable Bureau's boss. Can you help me pull some strings?" Zhou Shu said seriously.

"You want to see Old Ma?" Sun Gongping asked bewilderedly.

Zhou Shu had already learned from Haitang that the boss of the Divine Constable Bureau was called Ma Fengzhang, the Old Ma that Sun Gongping had mentioned.

Ma Fengzhang was the Divine Constable Bureau's commander and a third-rank Grandmaster. At the same time, he was also a second-rank official of Great Xia. His position was extremely high.

"Yes!" Zhou Shu said.

"It's not that easy to meet Old Ma." Sun Gongping frowned.

Old Ma was a third-rank Grandmaster and a second-rank official. Although he didn't put on airs, he was not someone that anyone could meet.

Although Zhou Shu was the superintendent of a Forging Division workshop, he wasn't qualified to meet Ma Fengzhang under normal circumstances.

The only exception was the superintendents of the first 36 workshops of the Forging Division. These people were all at least Forging Masters, and their statuses were worlds apart from that of Zhou Shu.

"Just tell me if it's possible. If not, I'll think of another way," Zhou Shu said.

"It's not impossible, but you have to tell me first. Why do you want to see Old Ma?" Sun Gongping said. If he, Sun Gongping, wanted to make something work, nothing was impossible.

"I wish to discuss a collaboration with Commander Ma," Zhou Shu said.

"Collaboration?"

“Yes, I can only tell you the details when I see Commander Ma. Don’t worry. This collaboration will only benefit the Divine Constable Bureau.”

“Old Zhou, what gave you the wrong impression?” Sun Gongping said.

“What makes you think that you can discuss a collaboration with Old Ma?”

“Just because I asked you to develop a customized weapon?”

“I’ll tell you the truth. Although standard weapons may be useful to the Divine Constable Bureau, they’re not that important.

“The Divine Constable Bureau’s main strength is ranked martial artists. What we need the most are also ranked weapons.

“If you can forge a ranked weapon, you are barely qualified to discuss a collaboration with Old Ma. Now...”

Sun Gongping shook his head. He was not looking down on Zhou Shu but was stating a fact.

Collaboration required both parties to be equal in strength or authority. To put it bluntly, both parties had to be useful to each other.

What use did Zhou Shu have for Ma Fengzhang?

Forging?

There were simply too many workshops in the Forging Division that could forge standard weapons.

“Whether we can collaborate or not is up to Commander Ma,” Zhou Shu said. “You just need to help me pull some strings. As for how to convince Commander Ma, that’s up to me.”

“Are you serious?” Sun Gongping asked with a deep voice.

“Your question is interesting. Did I walk dozens of kilometers to the Divine Constable Bureau just to joke with you?” Zhou Shu said.

“Can you give me a definite answer? It’s getting late. I still have to rush back to the Forging Division!”

“If you want to see Old Ma, no one else will be able to let you meet him,” Sun Gongping said. “But am I an ordinary person? Just wait and see!”

With that, he strode off in a certain direction.

Zhou Shu stayed where he was and looked around casually. Finally, his gaze fell on the rod that Sun Gongping had just waved.

In the past, he didn’t know that Sun Gongping was actually a rod user. He had thought that Sun Gongping was good at using sabers or swords.

But there were also swords and sabers on the weapon rack. Perhaps he knew a bit of everything.

While Zhou Shu was lost in thought, Sun Gongping had already returned. Beside him was an elegant scholar who looked to be in his thirties.

This person was Ma Fengzhang!

As expected of the young marquis, he could invite whoever he wanted. Last time, it was Yin Wuyou, and this time, it was Ma Fengzhang. Anyone else definitely wouldn't be able to invite them.

"You want to see me?" Ma Fengzhang didn't put on any airs. As soon as he saw Zhou Shu, he smiled. "Zhou Shu, Superintendent Zhou, I've long heard of your great name."

"Commander Ma, you've heard of me?" Zhou Shu asked curiously.

"Of course," Ma Fengzhang said with a smile. In the assassination list, the only genius he didn't know was Zhou Shu, who had suddenly appeared on the list.

After obtaining the assassination list, Ma Fengzhang had specially investigated Zhou Shu. Naturally, he couldn't find anything. Zhou Shu's background was extremely clean. His three generations of ancestors were all Forging Apprentices of the Forging Division. He had a good background...

"I heard from Gongping that you want to discuss a collaboration with me. I wonder what kind of collaboration it is?" Ma Fengzhang asked with interest.

Zhou Shu glanced at Sun Gongping without saying anything.

Ma Fengzhang understood. "Gongping, go out for a while."

"Me? Go out?" Sun Gongping couldn't believe it. I'm being told to leave? What the hell!

I'm the middleman!

"Go out." Ma Fengzhang said gently but firmly.

Sun Gongping's face fell, and he swallowed the words he was about to say. If Old Ma lost his temper, nothing good would happen.

He glared fiercely at Zhou Shu and walked out.

Zhou Shu shrugged, unconcerned. Sometimes, knowing too much might not be a good thing. He was helping him.

After Sun Gongping left, Ma Fengzhang sized up Zhou Shu and continued, "You can say it now. Here, you don't have to worry about eavesdropping."

This was the Divine Constable Bureau, and Ma Fengzhang was personally overseeing this place. If he said that there was no need to worry, then there was indeed no need to worry.

Ma Fengzhang sized up Zhou Shu while Zhou Shu also sized up Ma Fengzhang.

The great commander of the Divine Constable Bureau had an aura as deep as the ocean. He was the strongest person he had seen since his rebirth.

But looking at him, Ma Fengzhang didn't seem to see through his cultivation.

Zhou Shu heaved a sigh of relief in his heart. Although he had never learned any aura concealing techniques, his Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique was a cultivation technique focused on the physical

body. As for the Golden Bell Shield, he had only reached the first level. His true qi cultivation was extremely shallow, so it wasn't strange that Ma Fengzhang couldn't see through his cultivation.

"Do you want to discuss collaboration with me as the superintendent of a Forging Division workshop? Or do you want to discuss a collaboration with me as yourself?" Ma Fengzhang said with a faint smile.

Zhou Shu nodded in his mind. As expected of the Divine Constable Bureau's boss, he can see the problem with a single glance.

It was completely different to collaborate with him as the superintendent of a Forging Division workshop or with him as himself.

He took a deep breath and went over his previous thoughts before speaking.

Chapter 55: Development Is the First Priority

"Old Zhou, what did you talk about with Old Ma?"

...

Two hours later, Sun Gongping escorted Zhou Shu out of the Divine Constable Bureau. He nudged Zhou Shu with his shoulder as the two of them walked side by side.

"It's a secret," Zhou Shu said.

"That's not nice of you," Sun Gongping exclaimed. "I treat you as my brother. What are you hiding from me?"

"It has nothing to do with whether or not you treat me as a brother," Zhou Shu said. He added in his mind, I'm your uncle, nephew.

What he had told Ma Fengzhang was somewhat taboo. It wouldn't be good for anyone if too many people knew about it.

"It has nothing to do with you. Besides, if I tell you, it won't work," Zhou Shu casually explained.

It would have been better if he hadn't tried to explain. The more he tried to explain, the more confused Sun Gongping became. He felt as though a hundred claws were scratching in his heart. "Why don't you tell me in secret, and I'll pretend I don't know?"

"Can you keep the secret?" Zhou Shu asked.

"Yes!" Sun Gongping nodded like a chicken pecking at rice.

"Me too!" Zhou Shu said.

On top of a tall building in the Divine Constable Bureau, Ma Fengzhang had his hands behind his back while watching Zhou Shu walk out of the Divine Constable Bureau's main gate, and the corners of his mouth curved up slightly. What an interesting young man. If not for his clean background, I would really suspect that he's a spy from some country.

He's just a forging genius. Which country would be willing to use him as a spy?

Strategic cooperation, interesting...

...

After Zhou Shu returned from the Divine Constable Bureau, his days became as boring as when he was still a mere Forging Apprentice.

Every day, he would start forging from when he woke up in the morning until he went to sleep at night. He didn't leave the workshop for a single day.

The only change was that he now had another job, which was to test the work efficiency of Zhang Yibei and the others.

In the past, when he was just a Forging Apprentice, Zhou Shu only needed to immerse himself in forging. After becoming a superintendent, Zhou Shu gradually had a better understanding of how the Forging Division's workshops operated.

Not looking at the first 36 workshops of the Forging Division since they were already at a completely different level of existence...

In the remaining 72 workshops, there were tens of thousands of Forging Apprentices. Some were in charge of forging, some were in charge of refining ores, and some were in charge of repairing and mending. In short, each workshop had its own jobs.

In the past, Zhou Shu thought that since a Forging Apprentice could forge a weapon or two a day, wouldn't the entire Forging Division be able to supply tens of thousands of weapons a day?

How many soldiers did Great Xia have to have in order to use these weapons?

Later, when he became a superintendent, he learned that among the tens of thousands of apprentices, only a portion of them were in charge of forging standard armaments. Furthermore, standard armaments were not only swords and sabers but also bows and arrows, spears, armor, and so on.

The land area of Great Xia was several times larger than that of China in his previous life. Just the number of soldiers guarding the country numbered in the millions. Even if there was no war, the loss of weapons during training was not a small number.

Not to mention, there was never a lack of wars at Great Xia's borders.

Zhou Shu and Ma Fengzhang had reached a strategic cooperation. Compared to the superintendents of the Forging Division's workshops, he had one more source of obtaining information.

The more he knew, the more he understood the difference between a Forging Master and a Forging Apprentice.

If a Forging Apprentice was an assembly line worker of a weapon factory, then a Forging Master was a technological talent who studied missiles.

There was no comparison between the two.

Forging Masters were never born from Forging Apprentices. They had their own inheritance system.

This was also one of the reasons why the Forging Division didn't place much importance on apprentices.

No wonder the higher-ups didn't seem to notice when Xiao Zongshui and the other superintendents oppressed the apprentices.

Thinking back to his previous experiences, Zhou Shu cursed in his heart.

It was not that the Great Xia Imperial Court didn't value talents, but rather, it didn't value Forging Apprentices as talents...

Even someone like Zhou Shu, who had already shown his talent in forging, was only worth nurturing for the Great Xia Imperial Court. He was still not that important.

Before he became a Forging Master, no matter how talented he was, he was only a Forging Apprentice.

No one could guarantee that they could become a Forging Master.

Even if one was talented as a child, they might not necessarily grow up to become a genius. There was no shortage of such examples everywhere.

Of course, Zhou Shu was not an ordinary Forging Apprentice. The Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, and Horse Slaying Saber he had developed had extraordinary significance to Great Xia's military.

Otherwise, Yin Wuyou wouldn't have directly promoted him to be the superintendent of the 0th Workshop, and Emperor Yuan Feng and Meng Bai wouldn't have paid much attention to him.

This was equivalent to directly promoting an assembly line worker to a national cadre and even gaining the attention of the country's chief and Military Commission's chief.

The path of a forger is fraught with difficulties. The path of a martial artist is not that easy either.

Zhou Shu had also obtained some information regarding martial artists from Ma Fengzhang.

Great Xia had an extremely strong martial arts culture, and almost everyone practiced martial arts. But it would already be considered good if even one out of hundreds of them managed to become a ranked martial artist.

This was equivalent to a lot of people going to school. There were not many who could actually get into the first-class universities.

Furthermore, although becoming a ranked martial artist would allow one's status to be above others, this status didn't come without conditions.

In Great Xia, all ranked martial artists had to either join the Demon Executing Army, Fiend Eradication Army, or the Divine Constable Bureau. At the very least, they had to become consecrated by the Divine Constable Bureau.

Want to be a free man?

Sorry, but ranked martial artists, with the exception of wanted criminals, had to be taken in by the country. They were all either under management or cleaned up. There was no third option.

It was impossible to use force to become a tyrannical tycoon in Great Xia.

And although there were many benefits in accepting the country's recruitment, there were also many obligations.

All the ranked martial artists in the Demon Executing and Fiend Eradication armies had missions they had to complete.

The Divine Constable Bureau was the same.

To put it simply, ranked martial artists had higher statuses and better treatment. But at the same time, they also had to face dangers that ordinary people didn't have to encounter.

Unless one's martial prowess surpassed that of a country, there was no such thing as a martial artist who could look down on the Imperial Court.

So what if one was a first-rank martial artist?

The emperor of Great Xia was a first-rank martial artist, and there were also many first-rank martial artists in the Imperial Court. If anyone dared to rebel, they would still die.

It's a good thing that I was cautious enough not to reveal my Martial Dao cultivation. Otherwise, I'd have to carry out dangerous missions frequently.

Zhou Shu rejoiced. He had originally thought that if he displayed his talent, Great Xia might nurture him.

From the looks of it now, although he might be nurtured, the risks were not small either.

Once he showed his Martial Dao cultivation, even if the Imperial Court took care of him for his talent in forging, he would still have to carry out certain tasks.

It's safer to be a forger. There's no need to fight and kill. Zhou Shu was very satisfied with his current choice.

One day, when my cultivation level surpasses the first rank, I will reveal my cultivation.

My Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique has already reached the eighth level. The saber intent of the Heavenly Saber Art has also achieved lesser mastery. Only this Golden Bell Shield is at the first level.

Zhou Shu calculated his current capital. At the first level of the Golden Bell Shield, its only use was to reduce the pain when he was beaten.

To Zhou Shu, this was completely useless.

To him, only by cultivating to the twelfth level of the Golden Bell Shield and attaining an invincible body would he not die even if others punched and kicked him, slashed him with swords, burned him, drowned him, didn't allow him to eat and sleep, and even poisoned him. Only then would he be truly safe.

I wonder what benefit the Horse Slaying Saber will bring me from this execution.

Counting the days, it was almost time for the execution Mi Ziwen mentioned.

Mi Ziwen had promised Zhou Shu that he would let the executioners use Horse Slaying Sabers for the execution. This way, he would definitely be able to reap some benefits.

He just didn't know what level his Golden Bell Shield could reach with this execution.

And about Great Xia's military parade that Ma Fengzhang mentioned—

Zhou Shu thought of another thing that Ma Fengzhang had told him.

The emperor of Great Xia had already given him special permission to participate in Great Xia's military parade. The news would be announced very soon, and at that time, it would probably cause him a lot of trouble.

In the history of Great Xia's military parade, there had never been a Forging Apprentice who participated in the parade.

The bird that sticks out gets shot. Even in the peaceful world of his previous life, he still had to face cyber violence when he became famous, let alone here.

I have to think carefully about how to show enough strength not to let others look down on me while keeping a low profile...

Before this, he didn't show much of his abilities and was already on the assassination list of Great Wei. If Great Xia hadn't handled it well, there might have already been people coming to assassinate him.

Zhou Shu now had a very clear understanding of himself. Although he had some strength, it was absolutely not to the point where he could act as he pleased.

It was never wrong to keep a low profile.

After I finish Great General Meng's mission, I have to go talk to the grand minister.

The 0th Workshop must make its own mark. I don't want it to become a sweatshop like the 97th Workshop...

After obtaining so much information from the Divine Constable Bureau, Zhou Shu began to consider even more things.

He wanted stability and development now.

In this world where experts were everywhere, blindly seeking stability was not a good choice. When it was time to do something, one had to do it. Only by truly becoming stronger could one truly be at ease. Otherwise, everything would be like a rootless tree without water.

The 0th Workshop was his foundation. He wanted to achieve some things here so that he could have a stable footing.

If the grand minister agrees with me, that would be great.

How can I make her agree? I wonder if I can reason with a woman?

If I can't reason with her, at most, I'll use my beauty boy trap—

Zhou Shu gritted his teeth. No matter what, I have to get Yin Wuyou to agree with my idea.. Otherwise, I won't be able to carry out my subsequent plans.

Chapter 56: On the Execution Ground

The capital, entrance to the market...

...

Zhou Shu mingled into the noisy crowd as he watched the heavily armed soldiers escort the prisoners into the execution ground.

Mi Ziwen was sitting on the execution platform in the middle of the execution ground, looking elegant and easygoing.

Behind him stood a row of soldiers wielding sabers. These soldiers were tall and muscular, looking extraordinarily mighty.

But in Great Xia, being a muscular man did not mean that he was strong. On the contrary, only those who didn't look very strong, such as Mi Ziwen, were likely to be real experts.

"Stand in front of me." Zhou Shu used his shoulder to block the people around him, giving Haitang space.

He now felt that the reason why Yin Wuyou sent Haitang to his side wasn't for her to serve him but to find a master for me.

She didn't know how to wash and cook, but she was still too young to warm the bed!

Yet no matter where he went, she had to follow him.

Most of the time, it was Zhou Shu who took care of her, just like now!

"I told you not to follow me. What's there to see at an execution? When you see the beheadings later, be careful not to have nightmares at night!" Zhou Shu said angrily.

Haitang blinked and secretly rolled her eyes. It's not like I haven't killed anyone before. Why would I be afraid of beheading?

"Then, why are you still here?" Haitang asked. After spending a few days together, she gradually felt that Zhou Shu wasn't a bad person. Many times, how should she put it? Yes, he was very gentlemanly...

"Am I the same as you? I'm a man, understand?" Zhou Shu glared at her. "Besides, my big brother is supervising the execution. Don't I have to come support him?"

Haitang's face darkened. Do you really need to come support Mi Ziwen in such a place?

"Haitang, do you think these people are all the spies that Great Wei planted in Great Xia?" Zhou Shu looked around the execution grounds. There were less than a hundred prisoners kneeling in rows, at most sixty to seventy.

This was fewer than Zhou Shu had imagined.

He had originally estimated that there would be at least a hundred people.

Right now, there were only sixty to seventy people. He didn't know how much benefit they could bring him.

"Definitely not." Haitang glanced at Zhou Shu as if he was an idiot. "How could the spies be cleaned up? There must be some who are hidden deeply and haven't been discovered by the Divine Constable Bureau."

Zhou Shu thought about it and realized that this was indeed the case. Back then, there were only a few dozen spies recorded in the list. Even with the ones Great Xia had discovered without his help, it was impossible that they were all the spies of Great Wei.

"Haitang, let me ask you a question. Let's see if you know," Zhou Shu said.

"What?" Haitang said without turning her head, examining the spies with interest.

"Where do the ordinary executioner's blades come from? Are they also from the Forging Division?" Zhou Shu asked. He realized that executioners probably killed the most frequently here. If he could forge a blade for them, wouldn't it be faster for him to gain cultivation?

"They're definitely from the Forging Division," Haitang said. "All the weapons in Great Xia come from the Forging Division, and commoners are forbidden from privately forging weapons. However, I don't know which workshop is providing them."

Zhou Shu nodded. Just as he was about to ask something else, he suddenly heard Haitang speak excitedly.

"There's actually a ranked martial artist captured!" She pointed at a prisoner from afar.

"Is that so?" Zhou Shu followed her finger and looked over. A man in his forties or fifties was kneeling there with his head lowered. His hair hung down and covered his face.

In fact, most of the prisoners on the field looked like him. He couldn't even tell who was who.

Zhou Shu had originally not paid too much attention. But after being reminded by Haitang, he carefully observed and indeed noticed a surge of energy within the prisoner's body.

But the power seemed to be restricted.

"Can't a ranked martial artist be a spy?" Zhou Shu said.

"That's not it." Haitang shook her head. "It's just that it's not that easy to capture them alive. Even if they can't escape, it's easy for them to end their own lives."

There's nothing remarkable about being a ranked martial artist, Zhou Shu thought. It's not like they're high-ranked martial artists. Those eighth and ninth-rank martial artists are actually not that powerful.

At least, if he encountered a ninth-rank or eighth-rank martial artist, he had the confidence to capture them alive.

"Look, it's starting!" Zhou Shu's eyes lit up, and he said happily, "Big Brother Mi is indeed a trustworthy person!"

Haitang glanced at Zhou Shu in surprise, not knowing why he was so excited.

Aren't they just using the Horse Slaying Sabers he forged to carry out the execution? Is there a need to be so happy?

Could it be that the sabers will become sharper after seeing blood like he said?

Haitang didn't know much about forging, but even she knew that once a weapon was successfully forged and sharpened, it could only get damaged and wouldn't become stronger.

... Unless they were divine armaments that could be nurtured by martial artists.

The Horse Slaying Saber is just a standard weapon. How could it become sharper just because of blood?

Although she didn't believe it, Haitang still looked curiously at the Horse Slaying Sabers in the soldiers' hands. She wanted to see if these sabers would change after killing someone.

She didn't know if Mi Ziwen took Zhou Shu's words to be true, but he was indeed prepared to use the Horse Slaying Sabers to carry out the execution.

Furthermore, he didn't even use executioners this time. The executioners were members of the Horse Slaying Team he had just formed.

These soldiers were strong men that Mi Ziwen had specially selected from the Country Protector Army. He was preparing to form a Horse Slaying Team that would play a special role on the battlefield.

And their equipment would be Horse Slaying Sabers!

The reason he had arranged for these people to carry out the execution this time was firstly, he had promised Zhou Shu, and secondly, he wanted them to familiarize themselves with the Horse Slaying Sabers before they left for battle.

After all, the Horse Slaying Saber was a new weapon. They had never used such a weapon before.

Before going out to battle, they were told to use the Horse Slaying Sabers to kill people once and familiarize themselves with the weapon. They could also experience the bloodiness of the battlefield and not pee their pants in fear due to the cruelty of the battlefield.

Lines of soldiers marched onto the execution ground and stood behind the prisoners.

Their faces were expressionless as they gripped the long handles of the Horse Slaying Sabers with both hands. The blades gleamed coldly under the scorching sun.

The surrounding commoners had never seen the Horse Slaying Saber before. Now, they looked at the mighty blades and started discussing.

“Superintendent Zhou, be careful!” Haitang’s voice suddenly sounded in Zhou Shu’s ear. “If anything happens later, remember not to stray too far from me!”

Zhou Shu looked at Haitang in surprise, then looked around.

There’s nothing unusual going on.

Did Haitang discover something?

Zhou Shu wasn’t a slow-witted person. After so many days, he had long realized why Yin Wuyou had sent Haitang to his side.

He, Zhou Shu, was also a famous person on Great Wei’s elite assassination list. As the grand minister of the Forging Division, Yin Wuyou naturally couldn’t sit idly by.

She had most likely sent Haitang to his side to protect him!

This could be seen from Haitang, a maid who didn’t know how to do anything but had the cultivation of an eighth-rank martial artist.

How could Zhou Shu not suspect something after the person who was protecting him said that?

But even though he secretly sensed the surroundings, he still didn’t discover anything unusual.

Logically speaking, he was more powerful than Haitang.

Why is Haitang able to discover the abnormality but not me? Zhou Shu was somewhat uncertain and puzzled.

Haitang didn’t answer. Her petite face looked around warily, and her hands were already tucked into her sleeves.

Zhou Shu could faintly sense fierce cold qi coming from her sleeves. It turned out that her pair of daggers were hidden in her sleeves.

“This is the capital of Great Xia. Would anyone dare to raid the execution ground?” Zhou Shu said with a smile.

Before he could finish speaking, a ray of light appeared out of nowhere and landed on the execution ground.

This light shot toward Mi Ziwen.

“Big Brother!” Zhou Shu exclaimed.

Mi Ziwen seemed to hear Zhou Shu’s voice. He turned and smiled at Zhou Shu, then raised his hand and struck out.

Dazzling white light shot out from his palm like a sharp blade and collided with the other white light.

Boom!

Powerful qi flew in all directions and fell onto the surrounding crowd like sharp knives. The soldiers in charge of the execution, including the prisoners, all seemed to have been stabbed by countless sharp knives. Their clothes were torn, and blood flowed out from the wounds.

The prisoners screamed loudly, but the soldiers holding the sabers stood straight and motionless as if they were uninjured.

“It’s an assassination! Run!” someone suddenly shouted from the crowd around the execution ground.

The scene instantly became chaotic.

Zhou Shu felt the crowd surge toward him like a wave. He didn’t dare to exert too much force. In his daze, he was already pushed over the barricades by the crowd and landed in the execution ground.

“Superintendent Zhou!” Haitang let out a delicate cry and leaped into the air. Like an agile swallow, she rushed toward Zhou Shu.

At this moment, a black shadow darted out from the crowd and stabbed at Haitang with a sharp blade.

“Be careful, Haitang!” Zhou Shu yelled.

Two streaks of white light flew out from Haitang’s sleeves, and two crisp clangs rang out. She blocked the opponent’s attack. But at the same time, she also fell from the sky, unable to continue and unable to reach Zhou Shu’s side.

Amid the noisy crowd, a few shouts rang out once again. Countless hidden spies holding people as hostages rushed into the execution ground.

“Kill!” Mi Ziwen’s voice resounded throughout the area.

Without any hesitation, the soldiers raised their Horse Slaying Sabers and shouted, “Kill!”

The blades descended, followed by pillars of blood shooting into the sky.. Blood splattered across the entire execution ground.

Chapter 57: Fish Escaping the Net

The Horse Slaying Saber sliced through the air. Heads flew one after another, and blood splattered on the execution ground.

...

Zhou Shu’s eyes turned red. Then a barrage of messages appeared.

[The Golden Bell Shield Technique has increased by 20% because the Horse Slaying Saber you forged effectively completed a kill.]

[The Golden Bell Shield Technique has increased by 20% because the Horse Slaying Saber you forged effectively completed a kill.]

...

[The Golden Bell Shield Technique has doubled because the Horse Slaying Saber you forged effectively completed a kill.]

...

Zhou Shu: "..."

Although the messages flashed by very fast, Zhou Shu still spotted a difference in one of them.

The Golden Bell Shield Technique's power has doubled?

In an instant, Zhou Shu felt the true qi in his body surge. The meridians in his limbs and bones were struck by the powerful true qi until they swelled and hurt.

Sounds of bulls' tendons rupturing came from within his body. The Golden Bell Shield Technique's second level, third level, fourth level...

In just a few breaths, Zhou Shu's cultivation of the Golden Bell Shield Technique broke through several levels.

Especially after the Golden Bell Shield Technique doubled, Zhou Shu broke through to the sixth level!

At the sixth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique, the practitioner was already considered a top-notch expert. Any sharp blade would find it difficult to injure the practitioner unless it pierced through the practitioner's vital points, such as the eyes, ears, mouth, lower body, or important acupoints.

This description was recorded in the Golden Bell Shield Technique. However, the Golden Bell Shield Technique came from a low martial arts world, so the top-notch experts mentioned here were probably not considered top-notch in Great Xia.

He estimated that the top-notch experts mentioned in the description were low-ranked experts in Great Xia.

At the sixth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique, unless a ninth-rank martial artist attacked one of his vital points, he wouldn't get hurt.

Even if it was an eighth-rank martial artist, it wouldn't be that easy to hurt him.

Bang!

While Zhou Shu was feeling the sudden increase in the power of the Golden Bell Shield Technique, he suddenly felt his body tremble. A pair of hands was pressing against his chest.

He opened his eyes and saw a stunned generic face.

Bang!

Another muffled sound rang out as Zhou Shu's true qi surged, and the large force sent the generic face flying backward.

At this moment, Zhou Shu realized that someone had actually taken advantage of the chaos to try to kill him!

He didn't know if the other party was deliberately targeting him or if he was just conveniently attacked amid the raid of the execution ground.

What he knew was that the other party wanted his life!

To anyone who wanted his life, Zhou Shu only had one principle—kill them first!

Regardless of who this person was!

Zhou Shu suddenly stomped on the ground like a ferocious tiger released from its cage and instantly appeared in front of the assassin.

Zhou Shu moved so quickly that the assassin had no chance to react.

Crack!

Zhou Shu's shoulder slammed into the assassin's chest, and the sound of bones breaking resounded. The assassin's ribs were broken, and he was sent flying far away like a kite with a broken string. He crashed onto the ground with a bang, rolled a few times, and then stopped moving.

Blood foamed at the corner of his mouth, and his eyes were wide open. He died with a grievance!

Although Zhou Shu was not proficient in martial arts, he had reached the eighth level of the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique, giving him immense strength. And now he had reached the sixth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique, his skin was like bronze and his bones were like steel.

This assassin had basically been slammed into by a running elephant. With his cultivation, it would be strange if he didn't die.

What a waste! Zhou Shu sighed. If he had used a blade to kill him, he would have been able to use it to his advantage and gain some benefits.

It was a pity that he didn't bring a saber.

Zhou Shu looked around. The execution ground was already in chaos.

Although the people raiding the execution ground had saved some prisoners, most of the prisoners had been beheaded on the spot.

They were already surrounded by a large number of soldiers who had appeared out of nowhere.

Apart from a few ranked martial artists, the rest of the people who had raided the execution grounds had all died under the siege of the soldiers.

Even the few remaining ranked martial artists were not in good shape. If they couldn't break out of the encirclement, they would probably not be able to hold on for long.

Zhou Shu also saw Haitang. She was holding two daggers in her hands while chasing and attacking a spy. Although the spy's cultivation wasn't much weaker than hers, he was still completely suppressed by her and couldn't fight back.

He didn't expect that this little girl was actually so strong when she fought.

The way she swung her pair of daggers was really dazzling.

Zhou Shu suddenly thought of Mi Ziwen and turned to look at the execution stage.

He saw Mi Ziwen standing on the execution platform with his hands behind his back, calmly commanding the army to encircle and hunt. He didn't look like he had any intention of making a move himself.

Seeing Mi Ziwen's appearance, Zhou Shu suddenly realized something. It seemed that Mi Ziwen had already expected people to raid the execution ground.

He had set up a trap, so there was no way these people would be able to escape.

Although Zhou Shu didn't know Mi Ziwen's cultivation level, he could tell from Haitang's description of Mi Ziwen that he was definitely not weak.

Among the spies of Great Wei who came to raid the execution ground, the most powerful ones were only at the seventh or eighth rank. If Mi Ziwen made a move, he would probably be able to finish them off very quickly.

The reason he didn't was that he wanted to use these people to train his troops.

What a pity. If only they were using weapons I forged! Zhou Shu repeatedly sighed.

I missed such a good opportunity just like that!

Had I known Big Brother Mi wanted to set up a trap, I would have provided him with more weapons!

"Superintendent Zhou, why are you sighing?" Haitang's voice suddenly sounded in Zhou Shu's ears.

She had finished off her opponent and rushed to Zhou Shu's side while the other spies of Great Wei were surrounded by soldiers.

After seeing that Zhou Shu was safe and sound, she heaved a sigh of relief. Then she heard him sigh.

"These spies of Great Wei deserve to die!" Haitang said seriously. Great Xia and Great Wei were mortal enemies. For many years, both sides had lost count of how many people had died in each other's hands. This hatred was almost impossible to resolve!

Haitang thought that Zhou Shu sighed because he felt sorry for the spies of Great Wei, but she didn't know that Zhou Shu only felt sorry that their deaths didn't bring him any benefits.

"Haitang, I didn't expect you to be so skilled." Zhou Shu shook his head and changed the topic.

"You, a ranked martial artist, actually condescended to follow me around all day?

"Haitang, you don't have any special intentions for me, do you?"

Haitang's face flushed. "I don't have any! Her Highness asked me to protect you!

"Previously, Great Wei's spies wanted to assassinate some people of Great Xia. Her Highness was worried that you would encounter assassins, and the Divine Constable Bureau and Demon Executing Army and Fiend Eradication Army didn't have enough manpower, so she sent me over!

"After this, the Great Wei's spies shouldn't do anything else for the time being, so I won't have to protect you anymore!"

"That's good." Zhou Shu said casually.

"What did you say?" Haitang glowered.

"Nothing," Zhou Shu said. "I thought you would stay at the 0th Workshop forever."

His tone was devoid of sincerity.

Haitang pursed her lips. Who would be willing to stay in a place full of stinky men?!

Although the 0th Workshop is well built, how can it compare to staying with Her Highness?

"Second Brother!"

While they were speaking, the few remaining spies of Great Wei had already died under the siege. To Zhou Shu's surprise, a barrage of messages flashed in front of his eyes again!

Before he could read them, he heard Mi Ziwen's voice.

"Sorry for scaring you." Mi Ziwen's body swayed as he arrived beside Zhou Shu.

Whether it was intentional or not, there were no soldiers around them. Even the assassin who had died from the collision with Zhou Shu had been dragged away.

"In order not to leak the news, I didn't tell you in advance. I was a little worried just now. Fortunately, Second Brother, you're alright," Mi Ziwen explained.

"It's fine. Big Brother, why are you treating me like an outsider?" Zhou Shu said. "They're just a few sneaky thieves. I wasn't afraid at all. I've already started cultivating the cultivation techniques you gave me."

Zhou Shu hadn't been worried about exposing his cultivation when he killed the assassin. After all, this assassin wasn't a ranked martial artist.

Moreover, he was someone who had comprehended saber intent in the Saber Cave. Even if he didn't have any true essence cultivation within his body, killing an unranked martial artist wasn't an inexplicable matter.

Besides, he could completely attribute the effects of the collision just now to his young and strong body. He was a forger and had nothing but strength!

Just as Zhou Shu thought, Mi Ziwen didn't care too much about Zhou Shu killing an assassin.

"Second Brother, you are quite talented in the Martial Dao. Although you started cultivating a little late, if you work hard, you might be able to achieve something in the future. I will find you some heaven and earth treasures. You might just be able to make up for your years of being behind," Mi Ziwen said.

"Thank you, Big Brother," Zhou Shu said. He could sense that his big brother was truly concerned about him.

"I'm your big brother. You don't have to thank me." Mi Ziwen shook his head and continued, "Second Brother, I'm going to war in a few days. Unfortunately, I didn't complete my mission today, and a rather powerful spy got away.

"I don't have time to continue pursuing this person. Although the Divine Constable Bureau will follow up, this person is very quick-witted and has hidden himself well. I'm afraid it won't be easy to find him.

"This person is ultimately a hidden trouble in the capital. Second Brother, your cultivation is currently too weak. Before this person is captured, it's best you stay in the Forging Division and don't wander around the capital," Mi Ziwen said in a low voice.

"This has nothing to do with me, right?" Zhou Shu wondered. Even if a spy of Great Wei escaped, it has nothing to do with me.

If the spy wants to kill someone, doesn't the capital of Great Xia have plenty of talents?

No matter what, he probably won't set his sights on a mere workshop superintendent.

"It's better to be safe than sorry," Mi Ziwen said seriously. "I will send a few guards to your side later so that you won't have to worry about assassins.. Now, listen to me. The workshops of the Forging Division are much safer than the streets of the capital!"

Chapter 58: Negotiating with the Princess

"I don't come to the capital often anyway," Zhou Shu said. "Big Brother, is the cultivation of the person who got away very high?"

Mi Ziwen's expression was serious as he said in a deep voice, "I exchanged moves with him just now. His cultivation level should be similar to mine, probably around the fourth rank."

...

The fourth rank? Zhou Shu smacked his lips. The fourth rank seems quite powerful. I might not be able to defeat him.

If he could master both the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and the Golden Bell Shield Technique, he wouldn't have to be afraid.

"I understand," Zhou Shu said. "Don't worry, Big Brother. Our workshop is usually very busy, and we don't have time to come to the capital to have fun."

Mi Ziwen nodded and suddenly said, "Second Brother, have you ever thought about changing environments?"

"What do you mean?" Zhou Shu asked curiously.

"If you're willing, I can transfer you to the military, and you can accompany me on this expedition. At that time, if you can gain some military merits, it won't be a problem to get a position."

With him around, it would be easy to become a fifth or sixth-rank deputy general.

Since ancient times, the easiest place to get promoted was on the battlefield.

In the Forging Division, if Zhou Shu wanted to get promoted to the fifth or sixth rank, it would be as difficult as ascending to the heavens.

Xiao Zongshui and Li Hongyuan had been superintendents for decades, and in the foreseeable future, their chances of promotion were extremely low.

Unless Zhou Shu became a Forging Master, the present of Xiao Zongshui and the others was his future.

“No need.” Zhou Shu shook his head repeatedly. Go to the battlefield?

No way!

I’m living well in the Forging Division. Why would I want to seek death on the battlefield?

“I’m doing pretty well in the Forging Division. Besides, I really like forging.”

“Alright. Then, I won’t say anything more. If you ever change your mind, come find me,” Mi Ziwen said.

After speaking with Zhou Shu for a while, he left to deal with the aftermath.

“Haitang, you have accomplished your mission. Will you retire now?” When Zhou Shu turned around and saw that Haitang was still here, he was a little surprised.

“Her Highness wants to see you!” Haitang didn’t answer but said something else.

She looked angry. Zhou Shu was puzzled. How did I offend her?

“The grand minister wants to see me?” Zhou Shu said. “Great, I have something to discuss with her too. Where is she?”

“Follow me!” Haitang turned to leave.

...

Zhou Shu didn’t expect Yin Wuyou to be so near the execution ground.

On the top floor of a tall building, she was sitting by the window. Outside the window, the execution ground was within sight.

Zhou Shu’s heart tightened. Luckily, he hadn’t recklessly revealed his strength earlier. Even though he had killed the assassin, it was still within an acceptable range.

Otherwise, perhaps no one on the stage would have noticed it, but Yin Wuyou definitely would have!

“Grand Minister, how may I help you?” Zhou Shu arrived in front of Yin Wuyou and cupped his hands.

Yin Wuyou turned her head, and a contemplative look flashed across her devastatingly beautiful face.

“You started cultivating the Martial Dao?”

“About that, Great General Meng got someone to give me a few martial arts secret manuals. I casually flipped through them when I had nothing to do, but I still haven’t made any progress.” Zhou Shu said. This was the answer he had long prepared.

"You didn't make any progress, yet you managed to kill someone with a single blow. It seems that you are quite talented in the Martial Dao," Yin Wuyou said lightly.

"I don't know about that, but I'm a little surprised that I was able to knock that person to death just now. Maybe it's because I've been forging all year, and my strength is greater than most people." Zhou Shu shrugged.

"Grand Minister, are you looking for me because of this?" Zhou Shu asked.

"No." Yin Wuyou shook her head and reached out to tuck her hair behind her ears. It was a simple action, but her action was extremely charming.

"Let me ask you something. How is the progress of the forging mission Great General Meng gave the 0th Workshop?"

"It's almost done. We will definitely deliver the weapons in time," Zhou Shu said.

"That's good." Yin Wuyou nodded. "I heard you invented a new weapon forging technique—"

"It's not a new weapon forging technique. It's a new management method." Zhou Shu explained, "If all the Forging Apprentices have mastered the corresponding forging techniques, there's actually no need to use this method. I'm just using it as a temporary measure."

"It's a temporary measure, but it's extremely beneficial to the Forging Division," Yin Wuyou said. "I plan to promote this method in the Forging Division. What do you think?"

"Sure," Zhou Shu said. "Although I don't think it's very meaningful for forging other weapons, you can give it a try."

"I will remember your contributions. Alright, you can leave now." Yin Wuyou waved her hand.

"Oh right, I still have use for Haitang. Let her return to my side first."

Zhou Shu was speechless.

This is it?

You called me over for such a trivial matter?

Am I a man that you can summon as you please?

I won't leave just because you ask me to leave!

"Grand Minister, I have something to report," Zhou Shu said.

"What is it?" Yin Wuyou turned to look at the busy soldiers on the execution ground outside the window.

"Grand Minister, what is your motive for setting up the 0th Workshop? What are your plans for the 0th Workshop?" Zhou Shu asked.

Yin Wuyou looked back at Zhou Shu strangely. This wasn't a question a mere Forging Apprentice would ask.

No, he was no longer a Forging Apprentice but a workshop superintendent.

But to Yin Wuyou, they were both the same.

“What do you think my purpose is?”

“I don’t know what your purpose is, Grand Minister.” Zhou Shu said confidently, “But I don’t think you set up another workshop outside of the one hundred and eight workshops just to add another sweatshop, right?”

“A sweatshop?” Yin Wuyou didn’t understand him, and she raised her brows in confusion.

Zhou Shu knew he had misspoken, so he didn’t say more. Instead, he gave a perfunctory reply. “I mean a workshop similar to the other workshops. Every month, you work as hard as you can and then hand over a batch of weapons...”

“I feel that if that’s all, Grand Minister, there’s no need for you to set up the 0th Workshop. The existing workshops are more than enough to supply the standard weapons of Great Xia’s armies.”

Yin Wuyou didn’t comment but instead signaled Zhou Shu to continue.

Zhou Shu continued, “Grand Minister, that’s why I believe that you established the 0th Workshop not just to increase the production of some standard weapons.

“I don’t know what you think, Grand Minister, but as the superintendent of the 0th Workshop, I have an immature suggestion. I hope you can consider it.

“I personally feel that the Forging Division is lacking a specialized workshop to study standard weapons.”

Zhou Shu calmly said, “Now that the 0th Workshop has just been built, everything will start from scratch. I thought that it would be better to turn it into a research facility for weapons.”

“Research facility? How do you explain the word research?” Yin Wuyou said. She tried her best to look shrewd, but the curiosity in her eyes betrayed her.

“Research is about studying the forging process and finding ways to increase the efficiency of the forging process, then develop new standard weapons or even ranked weapons, including analyzing and disassembling the enemy’s weapons,” Zhou Shu explained.

Yin Wuyou nodded. In the past, the Forging Division had also done these things. But Forging Masters did them based on their own interest.

The concept of this research facility Zhou Shu proposed intrigued Yin Wuyou.

“Are you saying that the 0th Workshop will focus on developing weapons in the future and will no longer take on daily forging tasks?” Yin Wuyou asked.

“Yes.” Zhou Shu nodded. “If we take on daily forging tasks, it will consume a lot of our energy. How will we have the time and energy to develop new weapons?”

“But Great Xia doesn’t need so many new weapons.”

Yin Wuyou’s words almost caused Zhou Shu’s plan to fail before he could carry it out.

Doesn't need so many new weapons?

In other words, developing standard weapons is meaningless to Great Xia?

Alright, I have to admit that Yin Wuyou's words make sense.

After all, this wasn't the Earth of his previous life. Although standard weapons were important, ranked weapons were much more important.

What determined the true strength of a country was still the ranked weapons. Standard weapons were just the foundation.

Right now, the standard weapons of Great Xia were already the most powerful in the entire continent. What was the use of them being stronger?

"You can't say that," Zhou Shu said. "Grand Minister, Great Xia's standard weapons may be ahead of other countries now, but being ahead now doesn't mean that we will always be ahead. If we stagnate and the other countries continue to advance, they will surpass us sooner or later.

"With the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, we won't have to worry about Great Xia for at least a few decades," Yin Wuyou said confidently. "These two standard weapons are already the pinnacle of standard weapons!"

Zhou Shu felt extremely helpless. Even I'm not that confident.

"Grand Minister, researching standard weapons is only temporary. The ultimate goal of the 0th Workshop is to develop ranked weapons!" Zhou Shu clenched his teeth. I can't reason with her.

Could the princess really want my body?

Pfft! Yin Wuyou couldn't help laughing. Her smile seemed to brighten the surroundings.

But she immediately realized that she had lost her composure and stopped smiling. "The 0th Workshop doesn't even have a Forging Master, yet you dare to talk about researching ranked weapons?"

"Grand Minister, life is full of ups and downs!" Zhou Shu said in a low voice. "Don't discriminate against a poor young man. Right now, the 0th Workshop doesn't have a Forging Master, but that doesn't mean there won't be one in the future!"

Yin Wuyou smirked. "We'll talk about the future later. At least for now, you still haven't convinced me."

"What if I say that every once in a while, the 0th Workshop will be able to develop a new weapon?" Zhou Shu frowned.

"In addition, these new weapons will definitely not be inferior to the previous standard weapons. Can this prove the use of the 0th Workshop?"

"Can you guarantee it?" Yin Wuyou said, "Even a Forging Master wouldn't dare to speak so confidently. How about this? If you can develop a new standard weapon that is stronger than the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber, I'll agree to it."

"Are you serious?"

"I never lie!"

"Alright, let's sign a contract first!"

Yin Wuyou: "..."

Chapter 59: It Has to be Worthy of Its Name

This was the first time Yin Wuyou had encountered someone who kept insisting on signing a contract with her.

...

In the past, everyone spoke to her cautiously.

Who would dare to show such disbelief on their faces?

But Zhou Shu had a serious expression on his face.

Doesn't he know that I am the superior of his superior of his immediate superior?

Would I lie to him?

Yin Wuyou signed the contract with Zhou Shu in anger.

She made up her mind. If Zhou Shu couldn't produce results that satisfied her, she would definitely let him know the consequences!

Zhou Shu pretended not to see Yin Wuyou's anger and happily accepted the contract.

It was written in black and white. Yin Wuyou couldn't go back on her word now.

As long as he could produce a new standard weapon, he would be able to let the 0th Workshop develop in the direction he wanted!

"Superintendent Zhou, tell me when you can forge a new standard weapon." Yin Wuyou's tone was a little cold. "I can't just wait blindly until you can produce it. If the 0th Workshop doesn't prove itself, even if I don't mind, the other workshops will have opinions."

Who would dare? If they're unconvinced, they can also produce weapons such as the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber, Zhou Shu thought. But he wasn't stupid enough to argue with the big boss.

He smiled. "Grand Minister, you worry too much. Don't worry. I won't make you wait!"

"Grand Minister, do you have time now?"

"If you have time, why don't you come to my workshop?"

...

Yin Wuyou didn't know what Zhou Shu was up to, but she unexpectedly agreed.

She followed Zhou Shu all the way to the 0th Workshop, where Zhang Yibei and the others were directing a group of Forging Apprentices to transport the newly forged weapons into the 0th Workshop's storeroom.

Looking at the boxes of Huben Sabers, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, and Horse Slaying Sabers, even Yin Wuyou, who had long known, was slightly shocked.

She had asked a true expert and knew the difficulty of forging the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and Horse Slaying Saber.

Back then, she had thought that if Zhou Shu couldn't complete the mission and Great General Meng wanted to punish him, she, the grand minister, would help him plead for mercy.

She hadn't expected him to come up with such a plan.

Since the Forging Apprentices couldn't quickly master the forging techniques on their own, he had to break down the entire process into countless small steps that were easy to master. Then he would get people to command them. This way, the Forging Apprentice wouldn't need to truly master the forging techniques of the weapon to begin forging. It completely reduced the reliance on the individual's forging ability to the minimum.

Thinking about it now, Yin Wuyou still found it unbelievable.

Of course, she didn't know that if not for the difference between the two worlds, Zhou Shu would have even thought of mechanizing forging.

But this world was different from Earth, and the ways of forging were also different. The method of melting iron into molten iron and then using molds to forge was not suitable in this world.

Some familiar mechanical tools from his previous life were naturally irreproducible.

This world didn't need the bellows from his previous life. This world's smelting furnaces had been modified using some method that Zhou Shu didn't understand yet, and a single person could control one.

"You asked me to come here just to show me this?" Yin Wuyou pointed at the weapons.

"Of course not." Zhou Shu shook his head. "Grand Minister, you don't need to care about them. Just let them do their own thing. Grand Minister, please follow me."

After inviting Yin Wuyou into the 0th Workshop, Zhou Shu said, "Grand Minister, we agreed that as long as I can create a new standard weapon that isn't weaker than the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber, the 0th Workshop will operate according to my plans.

"In the future, the 0th Workshop will be in charge of developing weapons, and the 0th Workshop will also have the right to decide which army the developed weapons and equipment will go to!"

"I promise," Yin Wuyou said. "Don't tell me you can forge a new weapon now?"

"Grand Minister, please wait and see!" Zhou Shu smiled slightly and didn't directly answer.

He walked to a smelting furnace and stoked the furnace flames.

Forging weapons was, to a large extent, physical work.

But it was this physical work that Zhou Shu had managed to forcefully create a strange sense of beauty.

Yin Wuyou and Haitang, who were behind him, watched as Zhou Shu swung the hammer again and again. They both felt that his movements were unusually coordinated, forming a different kind of picture with the leaping flames.

This was completely different from what they knew about forging.

“Haitang, has his forging always been like this?” Yin Wuyou asked softly.

Zhou Shu was still wearing the clothes he had bought not long ago. These clothes didn’t look like the short, coarse clothes of Forging Apprentices at all. Instead, they looked fit for a banquet.

“I don’t know,” Haitang replied softly. “Your Highness, when he was forging, he always chased me out the door. I’ve never seen him forge.”

Yin Wuyou nodded and didn’t ask any more questions. Her gaze fell on the weapon under Zhou Shu’s hammer.

Under Zhou Shu’s hammering, the fiery red iron constantly changed shape. The sparks that flew everywhere seemed to have been knocked into the iron.

Gradually, the shape of a blade took shape under the hammer.

Yin Wuyou wasn’t an expert in using sabers. She couldn’t tell whether Zhou Shu had really created a new standard weapon or not.

Is his forging talent really that impressive? He just developed the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber. And he’s really developing a new standard weapon just like that? Yin Wuyou thought.

If Zhou Shu’s forging talent is truly so outstanding, then I won’t be at a disadvantage even if I agree to his request.

Also, should I change my attitude toward him?

With such forging talent, he might really be able to advance to Forging Master in the future. He might even become a Grand Craftsman!

Even though Yin Wuyou was the princess of a country, she felt that it was already a blessing for Zhou Shu to become a Grand Craftsman. Divine Craftsman? That was almost impossible.

Countless thoughts flashed through Yin Wuyou’s mind, but Zhou Shu wasn’t thinking too much.

For him, obtaining the secret forging formula of a weapon from the Legendary Armament Canon naturally allowed him to grasp the forging process of the weapon.

Thus, forging failures didn’t exist.

Therefore, although it was his first time forging it, he looked as though he had carried out the entire forging process countless times. Every step was incomparably accurate without the slightest error.

Under his deliberate restraint, four hours later, a long saber finally took shape under his hands!

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After completing the final step, Zhou Shu reversed his saber and handed the hilt to Yin Wuyou.

“Grand Minister, please review!” Zhou Shu had always addressed Yin Wuyou as grand minister, not your highness.

Yin Wuyou was very satisfied with this title. Being a princess was only her background, and the grand minister of the Forging Division was her position. She didn’t want others to only treat her as a princess. She was prepared to make a career in the Forging Division!

Yin Wuyou narrowed her eyes and reached out to grab the handle of the saber. “Is this your new standard weapon?”

In fact, she only asked subconsciously. Ever since she became the grand minister of the Forging Division, she already knew all the information about the Forging Division like the back of her hand.

The Forging Division’s standard weapon manual didn’t have this saber she was holding. She was certain of this.

In other words, Zhou Shu had really developed a new standard weapon!

Without waiting for Zhou Shu to reply, her gaze fell on the blade. The blade was slightly shorter than the standard long blade, and it had a slight curve to it, its lines smooth and perfect.

Based on its appearance alone, this saber was much more exquisite than the standard long saber and the Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, and Horse Slaying Saber that Zhou Shu had forged before.

The Huben Saber, especially the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber, had extraordinary power, but their outer appearance was coarse. Upon closer inspection, they looked a little rough, and they didn’t really interest a woman like Yin Wuyou.

But the saber in front of her was slender and light, looking exquisite and delicate. Even if a woman used it, it wouldn’t look out of place.

“Have you tried this saber before? How many layers of armor can it penetrate?” Yin Wuyou asked while twirling her wrist and casually swinging the saber around.

“I’ve never tried it before, but the standard weapon that I, Zhou Shu, created will definitely be able to penetrate through three layers of armor,” Zhou Shu said confidently.

Ordinary standard weapons that could only break through one layer of armor were already considered top-grade weapons. Standard weapons that could break through three layers of armor were definitely divine weapons among standard weapons.

The Horse Slaying Saber, which excelled in killing, could break through five layers of armor. This was probably the limit of standard weapons.

Any stronger, and it would be a ranked weapon!

Yin Wuyou looked at the saber in front of her. If this saber could really break through three layers of armor, then Zhou Shu would win.

After all, the strength of a saber didn't just depend on its sharpness. If this saber could break through three layers of armor, then overall, it could indeed be said to be no weaker than the Horse Slaying Saber.

Plus, its appearance was worth additional points.

"I'll test it then." Yin Wuyou brought the saber to the wooden stake beside her and indicated for Haitang to put on three layers of leather armor.

While waiting, Yin Wuyou looked at Zhou Shu. "Does this saber have a name?"

"Yes!" Zhou Shu said. "However, Grand Minister, you should test the saber first. If its power is lacking, then there's no need for it to exist, and it's not worthy of its name.

"The weapons I create must be worthy of my reputation." Zhou Shu proudly raised his head.

Yin Wuyou's heart shook slightly, but she didn't say anything.. Instead, she raised the saber in her hand and slashed the leather armor on the wooden stake.

Chapter 60: Spring Embroidered Saber

Pfft! With a soft sound, three layers of leather armor broke and fell off the wooden stake.

...

Then the blade slashed into the wooden stake, splitting into three parts.

Surprise flashed across Yin Wuyou's pretty face.

She didn't use much strength, but this blade easily split open three layers of leather armor. The sharpness of this saber was definitely not inferior to the Huben Saber!

Being able to maintain such sharpness with this appearance, this saber was no weaker than the three sabers Zhou Shu had developed.

Yin Wuyou looked at Zhou Shu. Although her expression was still calm, a storm was raging deep within her heart.

In just a few short months, Zhou Shu had managed to develop four new weapons. She had never heard of anyone doing this before!

What kind of forging talent was this?

In the past, Yin Wuyou had some doubts about whether Zhou Shu could advance to Forging Master. Now, she no longer doubted him.

In just a few short months, he was able to develop four new standard weapons, and each of them had extraordinary power. If he still couldn't become a Forging Master, then the threshold of Forging Master was too high!

"Breaking through three layers of armor, this is indeed a good saber," Yin Wuyou said. "You've done it. I agree to your previous requests."

Yin Wuyou was indeed the grand minister. She would definitely not break the agreement.

Yin Wuyou admired her father a little in her heart now. Indeed, her own judgment was still a little lacking.

Her father had long since seen through Zhou Shu's potential. This was why he had ignored her advice and listed him as one of the candidates for the military parade.

One had to know that it was unprecedented for a Forging Apprentice to participate in the military parade.

Even for Forging Masters, not all of them had the qualifications to participate in the military parade. They had to pass the selection before they could obtain the qualifications.

When Yin Wuyou first heard that her father had given Zhou Shu a spot, she had thought that it was because her father was taking care of her. After all, she was the one who had promoted Zhou Shu from a Forging Apprentice to a superintendent.

Looking at it now, Father indeed has discerning eyes!

"Grand Minister, you are indeed a trustworthy person!" Since Zhou Shu had already achieved his goal, he naturally wouldn't be stingy with his praise.

After all, he also knew that the contract was merely to console himself. If Yin Wuyou wanted to go back on her word, there would be nothing he could do.

"Now, can you tell me what the name of this saber is?" Pride flashed through Yin Wuyou's eyes. She had kept her word!

"The name of this saber is Spring Embroidered!" Zhou Shu said slowly.

"Spring Embroidered? Spring Embroidered Saber?" Yin Wuyou raised an eyebrow and asked doubtfully, "What does this name mean?"

Whether it was the Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, or the Horse Slaying Saber, the names were all self-explanatory. Yin Wuyou really didn't understand the meaning of the name Spring Embroidered.

Even so, she felt that the name Spring Embroidered was very suitable for this saber.

"Standing tall in embroidered robes in springtime, returning home proudly in colorful official clothes," Zhou Shu said. "This Spring Embroidered Saber was inspired by a good friend of mine.

"That good friend of mine likes to wear embroidered clothes, so I named this saber the Spring Embroidered Saber."

“Standing tall in embroidered robes in springtime, returning home proudly in colorful official clothes,” Yin Wuyou softly recited the two lines, and a glint flashed in her eyes.

“Did you write these two verses?” Yin Wuyou asked.

Although Great Xia was flourishing with martial arts, there were also scholars. Zhou Shu’s sworn brother, Mi Ziwen, had been third in the imperial examination.

“I’m not that capable.” Zhou Shu shook his head. “I heard it from somewhere. I thought these two verses sounded good, so I memorized them.”

“Really? Where did you hear them?” Yin Wuyou asked noncommittally.

“It’s at a restaurant called Restaurant. There’s often a storyteller there, and he sometimes recites poems,” Zhou Shu said casually.

“Did you hear ‘If time could stop at the moment when we first met’ from there too?” Yin Wuyou said.

Zhou Shu broke out in a sweat. How does she know?

He turned his gaze to Haitang.

When he said this poem, only Mi Ziwen and Haitang were present. Mi Ziwen probably wouldn’t tell Yin Wuyou, but Haitang—

Haitang held her head high and puffed out her chest with a self-righteous expression. I was the one who told Her Highness. What can you do?!

Zhou Shu rolled his eyes. What can I do?

“Maybe. I can’t really remember,” Zhou Shu mumbled.

“So, you don’t remember the rest of the poem, either?”

“Grand Minister, I’m just a blacksmith. I’m not good at literature. It’s already very good that I can remember a few lines of poetry. Don’t ask me about the rest of the poem!” Zhou Shu cried out.

Yin Wuyou raised her eyebrows again, but it was hard to tell whether she believed him or not.

She didn’t continue to question him and instead asked, “The friend you mentioned, is it Sun Gongping?”

Zhou Shu braced himself and said, “Yes.”

He was just spouting nonsense. Otherwise, how could he explain the name of the Spring Embroidered Saber?

He couldn’t tell Yin Wuyou that this was the name written in the Legendary Armament Canon and that there was no reason behind the name!

“Sun Gongping is not worthy of this poem,” Yin Wuyou said indifferently.

Zhou Shu was speechless. The princess is really direct.

This poem was something he had read by chance in his previous life. He himself didn't quite understand the meaning of it. It seemed to be saying that when spring came, the young pillars of the country wore embroidered uniforms to return home in honor.

When Yin Wuyou said Sun Gongping was not worthy of this poem, did she mean he wasn't young or was he not a pillar of the country?

Zhou Shu silently mourned for Sun Gongping for three seconds before saying, "Grand Minister, you are right.

"If you don't like it, we can change the name of this Spring Embroidered Saber," Zhou Shu said.

Changing the name of the weapon wouldn't affect the function of the Legendary Armament Canon.

The Huben Saber was also known as the Sharp Standard Long Saber in the Legendary Armament Canon.

"No need. The name Spring Embroidered Saber is very good." Yin Wuyou shook her head and said, "Superintendent Zhou, which army do you plan to supply this Spring Embroidered Saber to?"

Yin Wuyou didn't forget her agreement with Zhou Shu. Zhou Shu had the right to decide which army to supply the weapons developed by the 0th Workshop.

Actually, this was an unspoken rule within the Forging Division. But no one had ever been as explicit as Zhou Shu.

When the Huben Saber first appeared, didn't Xiao Zongshui find Cheng Wanli to promote it?

At that time, the Forging Division didn't interfere much either.

"Grand Minister, please forgive me. I have promised Sun Gongping that this will be exclusively for the Divine Constable Bureau."

"Just like how the Huben Saber is dedicated to the Huben Troops?" Yin Wuyou said.

"Yes." Zhou Shu nodded.

"Do as you see fit. I won't ask too much. But the benefits—" Yin Wuyou said.

"I understand," Zhou Shu said without hesitation. "According to the rules of the Forging Division, all the weapons developed by the workshop belong to the Division."

Previously, Yin Wuyou had returned the ownership of the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber to Zhou Shu, but this didn't mean she would completely break the rules of the Forging Division.

Even in Zhou Shu's previous life on Earth, didn't the company own the results of a single person's work?

Zhou Shu didn't really care about this. In any case, no one could steal the Legendary Armament Canon's benefits from him. He didn't mind giving up on some money.

On the contrary, the sales channels of the Forging Division were very important to him.

If not for the Forging Division, how could he send his forged weapons into the military?

"It's good that you understand," Yin Wuyou said. "However, the Division won't mistreat you. You can rest assured about this."

"I believe you won't let me suffer, Grand Minister." Zhou Shu waved his hand dismissively.

His generosity made Yin Wuyou see him in a different light.

Shouldn't a person who started as a Forging Apprentice care more about money?

He was not one of those aristocratic children who didn't need to worry about their livelihood.

Yin Wuyou inwardly shook her head. Zhou Shu is really getting harder and harder to understand.

And does that restaurant really have a storyteller?

"Superintendent Zhou, I can promise you that the 0th Workshop will be exempted from the forging tasks. However, the 0th Workshop must at least develop or improve a new weapon every year. Otherwise, even if I don't care, the other members of the Forging Division will not agree."

Although Yin Wuyou was a princess and also the grand minister of the Forging Division, she couldn't do everything as she pleased in the Forging Division.

Great Xia had its own laws. If the 0th Workshop couldn't accomplish anything, then even Yin Wuyou wouldn't be able to protect him. After all, the 0th Workshop was spending the Great Xia Imperial Court's money.

"Don't worry. The 0th Workshop won't be a freeloader," Zhou Shu said confidently.

One year to develop or improve a new weapon?

This is too easy.

"Oh right, Grand Minister, I have a presumptuous request." Zhou Shu suddenly thought of something. "I heard that the first thirty-six workshops of the Forging Division all have their own names. Do you think that we, the 0th Workshop, can also have a name?"

The first 36 workshops of the Forging Division were completely different from the workshops after them. They were actually not called workshops. After all, Forging Masters had already broken away from the working class. They were genuine aristocrats. It wouldn't be nice to call them workshops.

The first 36 workshops all had their own names. For example, the 1st Workshop was called the First Class Hall, the 8th Workshop was the Hero Building, the 15th Workshop was called the Ling Xiao Pavilion, and so on.

Zhou Shu was extremely envious. Their names were much better than the 0th Workshop, 97th Workshop, and 108th Workshop.

He had already prepared several mighty and domineering names for the 0th Workshop, but he couldn't announce them to the outside world yet.

"When you become a Forging Master, you'll naturally have the qualifications to let the 0th Workshop have its own name," Yin Wuyou said. "Not now!"

"I can agree to any other requests, but don't even think about this. Otherwise, it will be unfair to the other Forging Masters!" Yin Wuyou's tone didn't allow any room for negotiation.

"Alright," Zhou Shu said. "Let's wait.. I believe I won't have to wait too long to become a Forging Master."