

## Canon 61

### Chapter 61: Thank You for Your Nurturing

“Superintendent, everyone is here. Please give your orders!”

...

In the square in the front yard of the 0th Workshop, Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the others stood proudly in a line.

Their energy and spirit were worlds apart compared to a month ago.

Compared to the Forging Apprentices in other workshops, they were glowing.

This wasn’t surprising. The Forging Apprentices in other workshops were all working from morning to night, and they were as tired as dogs every day. How good could their complexion be?

As for Zhang Yibei and the others, they only needed to work eight hours a day. Furthermore, they only had to direct other apprentices. This sense of accomplishment was incomparable to other jobs.

Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the others were extremely glad they knew Zhou Shu and were able to move to the 0th Workshop.

They felt that they lived like humans now. In the past, they were animals!

So now, they truly respected Zhou Shu. As long as Zhou Shu said the word, they would do anything.

“Everyone, there’s no need to be so serious. I didn’t gather everyone for anything special. It’s just that we’ve almost completed our mission, and I want to have a chat with everyone.” Zhou Shu motioned for everyone to be quiet with his hands and smiled.

“Before we get down to business, let’s get this straight. How do you feel about spending the last month in the 0th Workshop? Is there anything you’re not happy about?”

Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the others exchanged glances, but no one took the initiative to speak.

Upon seeing this, Zhou Shu smiled and nodded. “Brother Yibei, tell me first.”

Zhang Yibei said fearfully, “Superintendent, you can just call me by my name. My life will shorten if you call me that.”

Then he calmed himself down and said, “After coming to the 0th Workshop, I realized that humans could live like this.

“Superintendent, I’m not flattering you, but I really feel this way. The time I’ve spent in the 0th Workshop is the happiest time of my life.

“Here, I can eat my fill and sleep well. I can return to my wife, children, and a warm bed every day after work. I, Zhang Yibei, didn’t even dare to think about such days in the past.

“Superintendent, if you ask me if there’s anything I’m not happy with, I can tell you with certainty that there isn’t!

“If anyone is still dissatisfied with this, their conscience has been eaten by dogs!”

“That’s right, Superintendent, we are very satisfied!” Sixth Brother Wu and the others shouted.

In a sense, the working people were very simple. As long as they were given some meager benefits, they would be able to work like cows and horses without complaints.

Zhou Shu thought that the current conditions of the 0th Workshop were only average. Whether it was the accommodations or other treatment, they had no essential difference from the sweatshops in his previous life.

The reason Zhang Yibei and the others felt that it was good was that they had been living poorly in the past.

“The 0th Workshop has only just been built, so the conditions are limited. This is the best we can do for now. Even if anyone is dissatisfied, I can’t do anything for now,” Zhou Shu said with a smile.

The size of the workshop was limited. In order to build this place, Zhou Shu had spent all the money he had on hand. If Mi Ziwen hadn’t given him a gift, he would still be in debt to the craftsmen of the Ministry of Works.

As of now, he had no intention to further improve the working conditions of Zhang Yibei and the others.

But apart from improving the working conditions, Zhou Shu had other ideas.

“I’ve gathered everyone here today because I have good news to tell you,” Zhou Shu continued.

“After discussing with the grand minister, I have a clear plan for the future development of the 0th Workshop.”

Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the rest looked at each other.

Plan?

What does this have to do with us?

We’re just Forging Apprentices. Isn’t the planning of the workshop something for the superintendent to worry about?

What does he want us to do? He can just give us instructions. Why does he want to talk to us about his plan?

Zhou Shu shook his head. I have to continue nurturing these apprentices. If they can’t understand their boss, how can the business, no, workshop develop well?

Zhou Shu didn’t want to get himself into a situation where he had to be involved with everything, big and small. It was very necessary to nurture a few capable assistants.

“Does everyone think that the plans of the workshop have nothing to do with you? Do you think that all you have to do is do your job well?” Zhou Shu said.

Although Zhang Yibei and the rest didn't say anything, their expressions already made it clear what they were thinking.

Zhou Shu shook his head. "No. The development plans of the 0th Workshop are closely related to each and every one of you.

"Let me put it this way. The development of the 0th Workshop is the foundation of your future. If you don't even know the development of the workshop, how can you take control of your own life?"

Take control of our own life? Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the rest were confused. How does this phrase have anything to do with us?

All they needed to know was what to do.

Zhou Shu felt a little helpless. Indeed, talking to the assembly line workers about the factory's development plans was a bit of nonsense.

"Alright, you don't have to care so much for the time being," Zhou Shu said. "This matter has something to do with you. The work you have to do in the future is going to change.

"Actually, it's not quite right to say it's going to change. Let me put it this way. The work that you have to do in the future is somewhat similar to what you've been doing for the past month."

"Superintendent, do you mean that we have to go to other workshops to command their Forging Apprentices?"

"'Command' is not appropriate. Change the word. Guide," Zhou Shu said. "Yes, guide.

"According to the agreement between the grand minister and I, the 0th Workshop will no longer take on any specific forging tasks. Our main task from now on is to develop and improve standard weapons!"

"Huh?"

When it came to general forging knowledge, Zhang Yibei and the others understood. It was precisely because they understood that they were shocked.

"Superintendent, are you going to drive us back to our original workshop?" Zhang Yibei, Sixth Brother Wu, and the rest said uneasily.

After their time at the 0th Workshop, it was really hard for them to accept that they would have to return to their original workshop.

Other things aside, many of them had already brought their families into the 0th Workshop's accommodations. If they were sent back to their original work shed, how would their family live?

"Of course not." Zhou Shu shook his head.

"But we only know how to forge. We don't have the ability to develop and improve standard weapons," Zhang Yibei said.

They now all had a clear understanding of themselves. They were good at forging standard weapons, but developing new weapons, or even simply modifying the original standard weapons, was simply beyond their ability.

“You can learn slowly if you don’t know,” Zhou Shu said, “Besides, even if you don’t know how, I do.

“For now, your task is very simple. After I develop a new standard weapon, I will teach you the forging method. Then you will go to other workshops and guide the other Forging Apprentices.”

This method was the result of Zhou Shu’s careful consideration.

When a weapon was developed, it had to be mass produced. But it was obvious that the 0th Workshop didn’t have the manpower.

This way, he would have to find a factory.

Of course, this was an internal matter of the Forging Division. To Zhou Shu, it was equivalent to giving a portion of his accomplishments to his sister workshops.

He had discussed this with Yin Wuyou, and she didn’t have any objections.

To the higher-ups, what they did wasn’t important. What was important was the result.

Zhang Yibei and the others finally understood Zhou Shu’s explanation.

It was just like what they had been doing. Weren’t the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers and the Horse Slaying Sabers forged in this way?

“In that case, we should be able to take on the responsibility,” Zhang Yibei and the others said. “No, we will definitely complete the task entrusted to us by you, Superintendent!”

“It’s not that exaggerated.” Zhou Shu shook his head. “It’s just work.

“In order for everyone to work more effectively in the future, I’ve asked someone to find some martial arts techniques. Although we’re only forgers and don’t need to fight with others, I don’t think I need to say much about the importance of the Martial Dao to forging.

“I don’t expect everyone to be ranked martial artists, but practicing the martial arts and strengthening our bodies will also be beneficial to our forging.

“Zhang Yibei, you’re responsible for passing these martial arts manuals to everyone. Everyone will choose one to cultivate.”

“This matter is very important. It directly concerns your future salary. You must pay attention to it, understand?”

Zhang Yibei carefully took a few books from Zhou Shu and said solemnly, “Understood!”

His hands were trembling slightly.

Martial arts in Great Xia were flourishing. On the surface, everyone had the opportunity to cultivate the Martial Dao. But in fact, the opportunities people received were very different.

Just like Zhang Yibei and the others, they had all cultivated some elementary cultivation techniques before. But these cultivation techniques were the most crude and common ones. They were just barely able to strengthen their bodies. It would be difficult for them to achieve anything with them.

Now that Zhou Shu had even prepared cultivation techniques for them, how could Zhang Yibei not be moved?

He didn't even need to look through them to confirm that the cultivation techniques Zhou Shu had taken out were definitely better than the ones they had previously cultivated.

"Thank you, Superintendent, for your nurturing!" Zhang Yibei fell to his knees and kowtowed.

"Thank you, Superintendent, for your nurturing!" Sixth Brother Wu and the others followed suit.

Some people even had tears brimming in their eyes. Perhaps even if they had a cultivation technique, they wouldn't have much of a future in the Martial Dao.

But from this, they could see how much Zhou Shu valued them. They could also see the hope of life. At this moment, they felt that they could die for Zhou Shu without any hesitation!

"Woah, why are all of you kneeling?" Such a solemn scene was suddenly destroyed by a voice.

"Everyone, withdraw. You can pick a cultivation technique that suits you. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me." Zhou Shu waved his hand, gesturing for Zhang Yibei and the others to leave.

Then his gaze fell to the door. "Why are you here?"

Chapter 62: Go to Hell

"Old Zhou, I'm here to bid you farewell." Sun Gongping stood at the entrance of the 0th Workshop and leaned against the door with a smile.

...

Zhou Shu didn't know if it was an illusion or not, but he felt that Sun Gongping's tone was much closer than before.

Although he had called him this name before, at the time, it was only because of his personality. Now, how should he put it? Zhou Shu felt that he had been acknowledged?

Damn it. Do I need his acknowledgment?

I'm his uncle!

While cursing inwardly, Zhou Shu looked at Sun Gongping. "Farewell?"

"Yeah." Sun Gongping nodded. "You're not an outsider, so there's no harm in telling you.

"Great General Meng wants to lead the army to the borders, and I will set out with the army."

"You're going to war?" Zhou Shu was a little surprised. "Aren't you a divine constable of the Divine Constable Bureau? Do divine constables also need to go to the front line to fight?"

Zhou Shu naturally knew that Meng Bai wanted to lead an army into battle. He was even in charge of forging the batch of Huben Sabers, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers, and Horse Slaying Sabers.

Moreover, Mi Ziwen had previously invited him to go along with him to the battlefield to earn military merits, but he had declined.

Zhou Shu didn't expect Sun Gongping to go.

Logically speaking, the Divine Constable Bureau and Great Xia's three armies were two different systems. Has the situation in Great Xia reached such a critical state?

Even the police have to go to the battlefield?

"Divine constables obviously don't need to go to the front line." Sun Gongping shook his head. "But I have a reason to go. I can't go into the details.

"Just take it that I'm being temporarily transferred to the military."

"But aren't the soldiers of the Country Protector Army all ordinary people? You're a ranked martial artist," Zhou Shu asked curiously.

In a rare occurrence, Sun Gongping patiently explained, "The Country Protector Army is made up of ordinary people, but this doesn't mean there are no ranked martial artists. Cheng Wanli of the Huben Troops is also a ranked martial artist. Isn't he still the commander of the Huben Troops?

"It's true that the soldiers of the Country Protector Army are ordinary people. But there are also many people who have advanced in the Country Protector Army and broke through to become ranked martial artists, and they still haven't left. They usually become the generals of the Country Protector Army.

"Besides, other than the Country Protector Army, the Demon Executing Army will be deployed as well to prevent the enemy from sending a large number of ranked martial artists into battle.

"I will mainly follow the Demon Executing Army."

"I see." Zhou Shu nodded. "Then, what should I say? Have a safe trip?"

He now knew Sun Gongping's identity. As a noble young marquis, he was definitely not going to the front lines to get killed, so he wasn't worried about Sun Gongping's safety.

"Of course." Sun Gongping said. "With me, Sun Gongping, on the battlefield, no matter what kind of people they are, all of them will have to get lost!"

"Hehe." He chuckled and returned to his usual self. "Old Zhou, I came to find you for another matter.

"I already know about the Spring Embroidered Saber. Old Zhou, you're really good!"

Sun Gongping gave a thumbs up and said proudly, "Standing tall in embroidered robes in springtime, returning home proudly in colorful official clothes. What a fitting description!

"I know that the Spring Embroidery Saber has just been developed, and it's not realistic to mass produce it. Her Highness is holding onto the saber, and she won't let go of it. I can only come to you."

Sun Gongping's eyes lit up as he stared at Zhou Shu. "Old Zhou, help me forge another Spring Embroidered Saber. This time, I want to be equipped with a Spring Embroidered Saber when I go!"

"You want a Spring Embroidered Saber?" Zhou Shu frowned. "Although the Spring Embroidered Saber was custom-made for the Divine Constable Bureau, it isn't for divine constables. It's only a standard weapon."

The Divine Constable Bureau's divine constables were all ranked martial artists, and their weapons should be ranked ones.

The Spring Embroidered Saber was only meant for the constables who had yet to become divine constables.

"What does it matter?" Sun Gongping said. "Old Zhou, you're not a ranked martial artist, so you don't know. Let me tell you. Even if I was only holding a tree branch now, I would still be able to completely suppress an unranked martial artist. Even if it's a standard weapon, I will still be able to kill with it."

Zhou Shu believed him.

A ranked weapon could increase the combat power of a ranked martial artist. Even if it didn't, it wouldn't affect their strength.

"If you want one, there's no problem," Zhou Shu said. "However, you have to pay."

The forging materials of the Forging Division belonged to the Imperial Court. Although it wouldn't be too much of a problem for him to use them secretly to forge a saber, Sun Gongping was a young marquis.

A standard weapon cost nothing to him.

"Old Zhou, you're being so calculative with me! I've treated you as a brother in vain!" Sun Gongping scolded.

"Accounts should be clear even between blood brothers!" Zhou Shu pursed his lips. "If it was anyone else, even if they paid, I wouldn't forge for them!"

The workshops of the Forging Division were not private workshops. They didn't sell weapons.

If others wanted a weapon, they would have to wait for it to be distributed.

"Fine, you have a point," Sun Gongping said. "I'll pay!"

"Old Zhou, did you really hear that poem from that restaurant's storyteller?" Sun Gongping changed the topic. "I've been to that restaurant a few times. The storyteller's standard is just average. I didn't expect him to be such a literary talent."

Yin Wuyou didn't know what kind of place the restaurant was, but Sun Gongping knew. Back then, it was Sun Gongping who had told Zhou Shu about it.

"He probably heard it from somewhere else. He's a storyteller, after all. Nobody says he can't talk about things he hears from elsewhere," Zhou Shu said perfunctorily.

"That's true." Sun Gongping stroked his chin. "I'll have to find him later to have a chat. I have to get him to complete the poem for me."

"I hope he remembers everything." Zhou Shu lowered his eyes.

"You're going out to battle tomorrow, so I'm sure you have a lot of things to do. Go do what you need to do. I'll deliver the Spring Embroidered Saber to you before tomorrow." Zhou Shu didn't want to continue this topic, so he stood up to send the guest off.

Sun Gongping indeed had a lot of work to do. Before he left, he turned around and said to Zhou Shu, "Old Zhou, I'll get you some forging materials unique to the barbarians. When the time comes, you'll definitely become a Forging Master."

With that, Sun Gongping rode off.

...

In an ordinary alley in the capital, Yin Wuyou and Haitang were dressed as men and walking on a limestone road.

"Your Highness, I've asked around. The restaurant that Superintendent Zhou mentioned is right in front."

Haitang whispered, "But—"

"But?" Yin Wuyou asked.

"But that place doesn't seem to be—" Haitang hesitated.

"Are you trying to say that Zhou Shu lied to me? He didn't hear those poems in the restaurant?" Yin Wuyou understood.

"Yes!" Haitang hesitated for a moment, then nodded vigorously. "Superintendent Zhou is sometimes a strange person. I think he was the one who wrote those two poems. He's just spouting nonsense about some storyteller."

"That's true. That fellow doesn't look like an honest person." Yin Wuyou nodded in agreement. "But since we're here, let's take a look first."

A moment later, Yin Wuyou stormed out of the restaurant. Damn Zhou Shu, how dare he lie to me! This storyteller doesn't even know how to recite a single poem!

After walking a distance away, Yin Wuyou seemed to think of something and burst out laughing. The anger on her face instantly vanished.

Haitang was confused. "Your Highness, what's wrong?"

She didn't find anything funny.

"Forget it. I'll remember this!" Yin Wuyou shook her head. "That fellow is a forger, yet he can compose poems. Don't you think it's very interesting?"

Haitang's eyes were full of confusion.



...

Achoo—Zhou Shu had just picked up his hammer when he sneezed.

With his current body, it was impossible for him to catch a cold.

Who is scolding me? Zhou Shu rubbed his nose in thought and then began to forge the Spring Embroidered Saber.

Zhou Shu had yet to teach Zhang Yibei and the others the Spring Embroidered Saber's forging process.

He wasn't in a hurry to mass produce the Spring Embroidered Saber yet.

But since Sun Gongping wanted one, Zhou Shu wouldn't refuse.

If Sun Gongping went into battle with his saber, he would probably have many chances to kill enemies. When the time came, he would naturally receive the benefits of the Spring Embroidered Saber successfully completing kills.

Most importantly, Sun Gongping was a member of the Divine Constable Bureau. Giving him a Spring Embroidered Saber wouldn't violate his agreement with Ma Fengzhang.

The backyard of the 0th Workshop was Zhou Shu's personal space. Without anyone present, Zhou Shu unleashed his full power.

His movements left behind afterimages. It was as if several Zhou Shus were forging at the same time.

Amid the clanking sounds, a Spring Embroidered Saber quickly took shape.

After carefully wiping the blade clean and looking at the sky, Zhou Shu returned to his room to take a bath and change his clothes. Only then did he pick up the Spring Embroidered Saber and head into the city.

Sun Gongping was going to set off tomorrow, but Zhou Shu didn't know where and when he would set off, so he had to give him the saber today.

After leaving the Forging Division's workshop, Zhou Shu walked far away. When he saw that no one was around, he began to exert his strength.

He didn't know any lightness techniques, but his Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique was at the eighth level, and the Golden Bell Shield Technique had broken through to the sixth level. His strength was universally shocking.

As he ran with all his might, every step he took was over ten feet. His speed was comparable to a galloping horse.

It's said that high-ranked martial artists have the ability to fly. I wonder what it feels like to fly in the sky.

This was the first time Zhou Shu was running at full speed. As he felt the strong winds blowing against him, he felt as though he was flying through the wind.

"Hmph!"

Just as Zhou Shu was happily running, a cold snort suddenly rang out in his ears.

Zhou Shu's heart skipped a beat, and he suddenly stopped moving. His feet dug a deep ditch into the ground.

He suddenly looked around. "Who is it?!"

His right hand subconsciously grabbed onto the handle of the Spring Embroidered Blade, and the violent energy in his body was ready to be unleashed.

"I originally thought that you were the easiest to kill, but I didn't expect you to have hidden yourself so deeply." A cold voice rang out. Then ripples appeared in the space in front of Zhou Shu. The light seemed to distort, and a person in a black robe suddenly appeared.

He only revealed a pair of cold eyes as he said coldly, "A talented forger who has such high cultivation at such a young age. Those spies actually placed you last. They must be blind!

"But fortunately, I've noticed it. It's your honor to die at my hands.. Go to hell."

Chapter 63: It Seems Like I'm Stronger Than You

Zhou Shu stared fixedly at the man in the black robe as his back turned cold.

...

The way this black-robed man appeared exceeded Zhou Shu's understanding. Almost immediately, he thought of the person who got away at the execution ground!

Zhou Shu was almost certain that this black-robed man was the man who got away!

According to Mi Ziwen, the cultivation of this man should be around the fourth rank!

Zhou Shu wasn't sure what rank he himself was at, but it definitely wasn't the fourth rank.

A person at the fourth rank was about to become a high-ranked martial artist. They had all sorts of unfathomable mystical abilities, and their strength was immeasurable.

"Who are you? Are you from Great Wei?" Zhou Shu pulled out the Spring Embroidered Saber and held it in his hand. The other party had already seen his cultivation, so there was no need for him to hide it anymore.

Even though he could feel the pressure emanating from his opponent, he didn't panic too much.

So what if he's at the fourth rank?

I, Zhou Shu, am not an easy target to be trampled upon!

If they really fought, it would be hard to tell who would die and who would live!

"Haha, if you want to know who I am, go ask the King of Hell when you're there!" The black-robed man laughed coldly.

His body swayed, and a cold light shot out from beneath his black robe, stabbing toward Zhou Shu's heart.

Zhou Shu's pupils constricted slightly. He snorted coldly, took a step forward, and raised the Spring Embroidered Saber diagonally.

Facing the attack, he didn't dodge but took the initiative to face it.

The black-robed man snorted coldly. He's overestimating his abilities. How dare he go head-on against me!

Just as their weapons were about to collide, Zhou Shu suddenly shook his wrist.

The Spring Embroidered Saber transformed into a profound ray of light, bypassed the opponent's weapon, and directly slashed at the opponent's chest.

If the black-robed man continued to attack Zhou Shu, he might be able to kill him, but he wouldn't be able to avoid Zhou Shu's attack.

Dying together was not the black-robed man's goal.

He didn't want to suffer even a little injury to kill a measly workshop superintendent!

The black-robed man took a step forward, and his body flew high into the air. The seemingly extraordinary longsword in his hand descended from above, coming toward Zhou Shu's head.

Zhou Shu exerted strength under his feet. The immense force brought by the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique's eighth level reached the ground and caused spiderweb-like cracks to appear on the hard ground.

As for Zhou Shu, he had already soared into the sky. The Spring Embroidered Saber in his hand transformed into a sky full of saber shadows. The saber shadows were like dragons flying through the skies, creating countless images.

A hint of surprise flashed in the black-robed man's eyes. Seeing Zhou Shu's talent, he became even more determined to kill him!

Bang Bang Bang!

A few muffled sounds resounded. In the blink of an eye, the two of them exchanged countless moves. The sounds of their qi energy colliding boomed continuously. The ground was already a mess.

The black-robed man had chosen the time and location of his attack very carefully. This place was far from the Forging Division's workshops, and it was quite some way from the capital. Not many people would pass by normally.

Now that it was getting late, there was no one on the road.

No matter how big the commotion was, it wouldn't attract anyone's attention.

Zhou Shu focused and pushed the thought of escaping out of his mind.

He was still a distance away from the capital, and he definitely couldn't outrun the other party. If he ran away rashly, he would only expose his back to the enemy. At that time, he would die even faster.

It was better to take a risk!

Zhou Shu didn't expect that the other party would come to assassinate him at this time.

Meng Bai and Mi Ziwen's army had not set off yet!

Mi Ziwen had previously warned Zhou Shu. But at the time, Zhou Shu felt that with so many people on the assassination list, the other party might not target him. Even if he did target him, he wouldn't leave the Forging Division's workshops. Unless the other party was courting death, he would definitely not go to the Forging Division's workshops to assassinate someone.

One had to know that the Forging Division's workshops were weapon factories, and defenses around the workshops were extraordinary.

Who would have thought that the assassin would actually target him and launch an assassination so quickly!

I can only blame myself for being unlucky and not checking the almanac before going out, Zhou Shu thought.

He didn't relax his grip in the slightest as he executed the Heavenly Saber Art to the fullest.

Even though his opponent's cultivation was high, the Heavenly Saber Art was a saber technique that had been honed from countless combat experiences. Its might was extraordinary.

In addition to Zhou Shu's divine strength, the black-robed man was unable to gain the upper hand for a while.

The black-robed man's eyes flickered with a cold light. He was getting impatient.

Although very few people passed by here, it was not too far from the capital after all. If he alarmed the experts in the capital, it would be troublesome if he wanted to escape.

"Brat, to be able to last so long under my hands, you are indeed impressive," the black-robed man said coldly. "But now, you can die!"

The black-robed man gave a low shout. His body suddenly lit up, and the long sword in his hand suddenly sped up.

Before Zhou Shu could react, the sword had already stabbed into his body.

Ding!

With the sound of metal colliding, the tip of the sword penetrated an inch into his flesh. But it was as though it had hit an iron plate and was unable to penetrate farther into his body.

The black-robed man's expression changed slightly as dazzling white light filled his eyes.

His feet suddenly stomped on the ground, and his figure retreated explosively.

He only stopped after retreating several meters away. He stared at Zhou Shu in disbelief.

Cough cough—Zhou Shu coughed up a mouthful of blood and slowly straightened his body from his chopping stance.

“You’re strong. You’re the strongest opponent I’ve ever met in my life,” Zhou Shu said. “But it seems like I’m stronger than you.”

“You...” Anger flashed in the black-robed man’s eyes. The next moment, he spat out a mouthful of blood and collapsed to the ground.

At this moment, a thin red line appeared between his eyebrows all the way to his lower abdomen.

The black-robed man’s eyes were wide open, and his aura gradually disappeared. Even in death, he couldn’t understand how he lost.

Puu—Seeing the black-robed man die, Zhou Shu spat out another mouthful of blood.

Although the sword had only penetrated an inch into his flesh, the sharp sword qi had already penetrated his body, destroying his internal organs.

If not for the fact that his Golden Bell Shield technique had already broken through to the sixth level, just the sword qi would be enough to send him on his way.

The black-robed man had lost because he hadn’t expected Zhou Shu to have cultivated the Golden Bell Shield Techniques, making his defense abnormal.

Otherwise, he would have strengthened his attack some more. If this had happened, Zhou Shu’s Golden Bell Shield Technique might not have been able to withstand it.

The cultivation of this escapee is below the fourth rank. I feel that he’s inferior to Big Brother Mi.

Looking at the black-robed man’s corpse, Zhou Shu felt lucky. If the black-robed man’s cultivation had been a bit higher, he feared that he would have died here.

This world was too scary. He was already cautious enough, but he had almost failed. He had to keep a low profile in the future.

His cultivation should only be at the fifth or sixth rank. Big Brother Mi hasn’t truly fought with him, so he made a mistake in his judgment. If he was really at the fourth rank, there would be no way I could have resisted his attacks.

From the looks of it, it will be difficult for me to deal with even a fifth or sixth rank martial artist.

The person Zhou Shu had interacted with the most before was the ninth-rank Sun Gongping.

Yin Wuyou and Haitang might be slightly stronger than Sun Gongping, but Haitang was at about the seventh or eighth rank. He hadn’t seen Yin Wuyou fight before, so it was hard to judge.

In comparison, Zhou Shu felt that his overall strength should be around the sixth rank.

If he encountered a sixth-rank expert, he should be able to win. Even against a fifth-rank expert, he might still be able to put up a fight.

Zhou Shu's cultivation was not on the same path as the martial artists of this world, so it was not easy to judge his cultivation level.

Currently, my strength should be equivalent to the sixth rank.

This cultivation level is still a bit too low. I wonder if this expedition will allow me to break through to the thirteenth level of the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and the twelfth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique.

The thirteenth level of the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and the twelfth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique were the highest levels of the two techniques.

Zhou Shu reckoned that in this case, even if he couldn't advance to the first rank, he should be able to advance to third-rank Grandmaster.

There was also the Heavenly Saber Art. The Heavenly Saber Art had no upper limit, and his saber intent could continue to improve. If the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber killed enough enemies, Zhou Shu felt that he could become the number one saber wielder in the world in the future.

While he was thinking, a message flashed in front of his eyes.

[The Spring Embroidered Saber you forged effectively completed a kill. You are rewarded with the cultivation technique: Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form!]

[Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form. Visualizing the true form of the Five Mountains will strengthen one's spirit. One will be unaffected even when mountains collapse in front of them. After a long time, the spirit will toughen, making it difficult for anything to harm it. It will also allow one to hide one's aura and be as immovable as a mountain.]

Countless pieces of information flashed through Zhou Shu's mind. Five towering mountains appeared in his consciousness before crashing down.

In an instant, he felt as if the sky and earth had been turned upside down, and his spirit was shaken endlessly. After a moment, a refreshing feeling spread throughout his entire body.

His mind was clear. It was as if the entire world had become clearer. Zhou Shu even had the illusion that his spirit had become corporeal.

With a thought, Zhou Shu completely restrained his aura. It was as if he had turned into a boulder, not revealing any martial artist's aura.

This Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form was a type of mysterious refinement technique. Not only could it strengthen one's spirit, allowing a martial artist to derive divine sense, but it could also restrain one's aura and allow one to be as immovable as a mountain. It had endless uses!

Zhou Shu's eyes lit up. This Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form is very powerful!

It's even stronger than the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique combined!

If he could master the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form, as long as he looked at an enemy, he would be able to make them feel as though mountains were crushing them, killing them with a single glance.

Furthermore, the function of restraining his aura was also very important to him. Although there weren't many people who could see through his cultivation before, this would be even safer, right? Who knew if the Legendary Armament Canon would reward him with other cultivation techniques that could easily leak his aura?

Is it because the person I killed this time is stronger, so the cultivation technique rewarded by the Legendary Armament Canon is also very strong? Zhou Shu wondered.

The Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique were considered martial arts. As for the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form, it involved immortal cultivation and was on a completely different level.

Although his Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form had just reached basic mastery and was not that powerful, its upper limit was much higher than the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique.

Zhou Shu looked at the black-robed man's corpse on the ground and praised him for being a good person for giving him benefits.

On the execution ground that day... Zhou Shu suddenly thought of something he had almost forgotten.

Chapter 64: Don't Be Unappreciative

That day, Mi Ziwen had been in charge of supervising the execution of the spies from Great Wei. Great Wei had sent people to raid the execution ground and fell into Mi Ziwen's ambush.

...

In the battle, many of the weapons used by Mi Ziwen's soldiers were personally forged by Zhou Shu.

It was also then that Zhou Shu's Golden Bell Shield Technique directly broke through from the first level to the sixth level.

The reason for this effect was not because his weapons had completed enough kills but because the situation was different from usual.

Under normal circumstances, the Horse Slaying Saber would give Zhou Shu two years of cultivation.

But at the time, there had been a succession of 20% increases, mixed with the benefit of his cultivation of the technique being doubled. Back then, Zhou Shu had felt that it was somewhat strange.

The series of events that followed almost made him forget about it.

If not for this black-robed assassin, he probably wouldn't be able to recall this incident.

This black-robed assassin is a ranked martial artist. When the Spring Embroidered Saber killed him, the benefit I received was better than before. Back then, when the Golden Bell Shield Technique doubled, was it because someone used a Horse Slaying Saber to kill a ranked martial artist?

After deducing for a while, he was almost certain that this was what had happened.

It seems that the benefits given by the Legendary Armament Canon are different for killing ordinary people and for killing ranked martial artists. Is it that the higher someone's cultivation is, the better the benefits the Legendary Armament Canon gives? Zhou Shu guessed. He felt that this was the truth, but there was no way to verify it now.

Who cares? No matter how much benefits I get, I don't mind.

Zhou Shu decided not to worry about this problem.

In any case, he had already handed over the weapons he forged to Mi Ziwen and the army.

Zhou Shu could no longer control how many kills they would complete.

"Why do you have to take things so hard? That's why I said that it's very dangerous outside. Don't run around randomly."

Zhou Shu looked at the black-robed assassin's corpse on the ground and thought for a moment. He raised the Spring Embroidered Saber and sabotaged the black-robed assassin's wounds.

Then he ignored the corpse and continued heading toward the capital.

Getting rid of traces wasn't something he was good at. Now, this place wasn't suitable for him to get rid of the traces. No one had seen him kill him, so what if the corpse was left here? If it got discovered, someone would deal with it.

Not long after Zhou Shu left, a cold wind blew past the place where he and the black-robed assassin had just fought. A black-robed figure dressed similar to the black-robed assassin appeared.

When the new black-robed man saw the corpse on the ground, his pupils constricted, and he snorted coldly.

As expected, they still haven't let down their guard, the black-robed man thought. A small workshop superintendent has an expert protecting him. As for the others... it looks like they'll need to remain silent for some time.

The black-robed man flicked his sleeves, and a stream of black gas landed on the corpse on the ground. With a hissing sound, the corpse seemed to be corroded by poison and disappeared at a visible speed.

It was not until the corpse had completely disappeared did the black-robed man lightly stomp his feet and then suddenly vanish as if he had never appeared.

If Zhou Shu could see this scene, he would have realized that it wasn't that Mi Ziwen had misjudged the cultivation of the escapee but that the assassin he had encountered was not the man who got away!

Fortunately, he didn't witness that scene. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been a match for the man who had gotten away.



Now that the man suspected Zhou Shu had an expert protecting him, he wouldn't attack Zhou Shu again for the time being.

...

Zhou Shu rushed to the capital and handed the Spring Embroidered Saber to Sun Gongping.

Sun Gongping was busy with the expedition, so he didn't have time to spend with Zhou Shu. Zhou Shu didn't mind. He put down the Spring Embroidered Saber and left.

It was already late. Although the gates of the capital city weren't closed, when he thought of the assassin who had come for him, Zhou Shu still felt a little uneasy for some reason, even though he had killed the assassin.

To be on the safe side, he didn't return to the Forging Division's workshops. It was safer to return after daybreak.

Zhou Shu didn't know many people in the capital. There was only a handful of them—Sun Gongping, Yin Wuyou, Ma Fengzhang, and perhaps Cheng Wanli.

Among them, perhaps only Sun Gongping was considered a friend.

Sun Gongping was busy right now, so he naturally couldn't disturb him. If he wanted to stay overnight, maybe he should look for Yin Wuyou?

Wasn't that nonsense? Regardless of whether it was the imperial palace or the princess's residence, they weren't places he could casually stay overnight.

Ma Fengzhang and Cheng Wanli?

Zhou Shu wasn't that close to them yet.

Do I have to stay at an inn?

Zhou Shu stood on the streets. The imperial capital lived up to its name. It was already night, but the streets were still bustling with activity. There was no sign of curfew at all.

Other than an inn, there seems to be another choice...

Zhou Shu felt his heart pounding. Thinking about it, he was really a little excited.

The next moment, he touched his pocket and immediately felt discouraged.

All of his assets had been used to build the 0th Workshop. Even the meeting gift Mi Ziwen had given him was used to repay his debt.

Right now, his pockets were even cleaner than his face. He couldn't even afford to stay in an inn, let alone visit a brothel.

When he left for the capital, he hadn't expected to have to stay overnight here. He didn't even bring a single copper coin with him.

How could he have expected to meet an assassin on the way?

Although I don't know where the sense of danger comes from, returning to the workshop overnight is clearly not a good choice.

After obtaining the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form, Zhou Shu felt that his spirit was always in an extremely lively state.

This ominous feeling might not be for no reason.

He had already been injured during the fight with the black-robed assassin. If he encountered another assassin, it would be extremely dangerous.

Thus, he would rather sleep on the streets than take that risk. His life was the most important.

No matter what, I am someone of status. If I go to an inn and put it on a tab, this should be doable, right? Zhou Shu thought.

Why was he still stuck in the mindset of his previous life? Why couldn't he stay at an inn without money?

This was not Earth; this was Great Xia!

No matter what, he was still an official. A lowly official was still an official.

Surely I can stay one night at an inn on credit?

After thinking this through, Zhou Shu immediately stopped panicking. His mindset changed, and he became excited.

After coming to this world for so long, he had never seen Great Xia's night view.

On the brightly lit street, Zhou Shu strolled leisurely.

The night market in Great Xia was naturally incomparable to the night markets on Earth. However, it had a different style. Although it wasn't as fancy, Zhou Shu was still very excited as he strolled around.

Zhou Shu was standing in front of a noodle stall, thinking highly of it, when a voice suddenly rang in his ears. "Superintendent Zhou, my master invites you."

He turned around and saw a middle-aged man in a brocade robe looking at him.

When the middle-aged man saw Zhou Shu turn around, he extended his hand and gestured for him to leave.

The middle-aged man's face was full of arrogance.

"Who is your master?" Zhou Shu frowned. In this bustling city, the other party shouldn't be an assassin. If the assassin dared to attack here, Zhou Shu only needed to hold on for a moment, and Great Xia's experts would rush over.

To Zhou Shu, unless a third-rank Grandmaster made a move, he would be able to hold on for a while no matter what. Thus, he wasn't afraid of anyone attacking him.

It was not so easy for a third-rank Grandmaster to infiltrate the capital. Did they really think that the Great Xia's Demon Executing and Fiend Eradication armies and Divine Constable Bureau were useless?

"You'll know when you get there," the middle-aged man said, his gesture of invitation remaining unchanged.

"What are you up to? I won't go!" Zhou Shu said straightforwardly. Then he continued walking forward.

The middle-aged man's expression changed, and he said coldly, "Superintendent Zhou, do you know whose invitation you've rejected?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," Zhou Shu said without turning around. "I have no interest in people who hide themselves."

The middle-aged man took two steps forward and said coldly in a low voice, "Do you know that if you offend my master, you will never have a place in the Forging Division?"

"My master wants to see you because he has a great opportunity for you. Don't be ungrateful!" The middle-aged man sounded threatening.

Zhou Shu was so angry that he laughed. After being in Great Xia for so long, even when he was still just a Forging Apprentice, he had never met such an arrogant person.

Threatening me?

Do you think that I, Zhou Shu, will fear you?

"That's a pity," Zhou Shu said. "I am ungrateful, so what? I will never have a place in the Forging Division? That's good. I really want to see how you're going to make me lose my place."

With Zhou Shu's talent in forging, as long as Yin Wuyou wasn't an idiot, he wouldn't be kicked out of the Forging Division.

Other than the grand minister of the Forging Division, who could make him lose his place in the Forging Division?

"You..." The middle-aged man's face flushed red, and the finger he was pointing at Zhou Shu was trembling with anger.

"Superintendent Zhou, do you really want to offend my master?" the middle-aged man said coldly.

"Stop, or don't blame me for using some methods!"

A fierce aura surged from the middle-aged man's body as he locked onto Zhou Shu.

This arrogant and rude fellow is actually an expert?

A dignified ranked expert actually became someone's servant?

Zhou Shu stopped, turned around, looked at the middle-aged man, and said coldly, "I am a government official appointed by Great Xia. I don't care who you are. If you attack a government official on the streets, even if you are a ranked martial artist, you won't be able to escape death. I wonder if the master behind you can protect you?"

The middle-aged man looked into Zhou Shu's eyes. In this instant, he seemed to see a mountain peak reaching into the clouds. This mountain peak was oppressing him. The immense pressure made him involuntarily take two steps back. His entire body was drenched in sweat, and his body went limp, almost falling to the ground.

The middle-aged man raised his head. When he looked at Zhou Shu again, he didn't find anything strange. Was that just an illusion?

The middle-aged man was puzzled. He took a deep breath and calmed himself down. He frowned and said, "Superintendent Zhou, you can't scare me. I just want to invite you to meet my master. I won't hurt you. What kind of attack was that? I'm not afraid no matter how far it goes!

"Are you coming with me or not!" the middle-aged man said in a stern voice.. His fingers were curled into claws, ready to strike.

#### Chapter 65: If You Say That, Then I'll Understand

"You should be glad that this is the imperial capital of Great Xia." Zhou Shu looked at the middle-aged man indifferently.

...

The middle-aged man frowned, not understanding what Zhou Shu meant.

He didn't know that if they weren't in the busy streets in the capital, Zhou Shu would have sent him flying with a slap.

How dare a mere ninth-rank martial artist be so arrogant in front of me?

I've even killed a fifth or sixth-rank martial artist before, okay?

"Superintendent Zhou, you're a smart person. We can do it the easy way or the hard way. It's your choice!" The middle-aged man didn't understand what Zhou Shu meant, nor did he want to understand what Zhou Shu meant.

As he spoke, his fingers crackled, indicating their threat.

Zhou Shu's lips curled up slightly as he sneered in his heart. "Is that so? I want to see who's so arrogant."

Although Zhou Shu wasn't afraid of this middle-aged man, he didn't want to make a move in public. If he did, he could easily kill this middle-aged man, but he would expose his cultivation.

Zhou Shu placed his hands behind his back and said coldly, "Lead the way!"

"Hmph, at least you know your place!" The middle-aged man snorted and turned to leave.

He didn't take Zhou Shu too far away. In a luxurious restaurant on the same street, the middle-aged man led Zhou Shu to a private room on the top floor.

"Master, he's here," the middle-aged man said respectfully.

“Come in.” A voice came from the private room.

Zhou Shu vaguely felt that the voice was somewhat familiar, but he couldn’t recall who it was.

As he pondered, the middle-aged man opened the door to the private room and gestured for Zhou Shu to enter.

Since he was already here, he might as well take things as they came. He didn’t believe that anyone in Great Xia’s capital could directly attack him.

Zhou Shu patted his clothes and walked into the private room.

“It’s you?” The moment he entered, he saw a familiar face.

“Superintendent Zhou, long time no see,” Xiao Zongshui said with a spurious smile.

Long time no see, my ass. We just met two days ago.

Since when did Xiao Zongshui have a ninth-rank martial artist as his follower?

Zhou Shu’s gaze shifted, landing on the figure beside Xiao Zongshui. The doubt in his heart was instantly resolved.

It wasn’t that Xiao Zongshui had a ninth-rank martial artist as a follower but that he wasn’t the master at all.

The master was the person beside him—Grand Craftsman Zhu Chuanfeng!

Upon seeing Zhu Chuanfeng, Zhou Shu immediately understood why his voice sounded familiar.

He had met Zhu Chuanfeng once before. Previously, when the 0th Workshop was just built, Zhou Shu had wanted to use Zhang Yibei and the others. But Xiao Zongshui, Li Hongyuan, and the other superintendents had worked together to obstruct him.

Back then, Zhou Shu had been forced to compete with their Forging Apprentices, and the judge Xiao Zongshui and the others had invited was Zhu Chuanfeng.

Zhou Shu vaguely remembered that Zhu Chuanfeng seemed to hold some enmity toward him at the time. But because Meng Bai was present, he didn’t do anything to target Zhou Shu.

Later, Zhou Shu simply forgot about this person.

So what if he was a Grand Craftsman?

There was no need for Zhou Shu to fawn over him.

“I was wondering who was so ostentatious. So it’s Grand Craftsman Zhu.” Zhou Shu greeted him indifferently.

Zhu Chuanfeng frowned slightly. This kid is too rude.

“Impudent! How dare you speak to Master like that?” the middle-aged man who had led Zhou Shu here shouted angrily.

Zhu Chuanfeng waved his hand, indicating that the person didn't need to be bothered. He sized up Zhou Shu and said, "It's normal for someone with skill to have a bit of a temper."

"When I was young, my temper was even worse than yours."

Zhou Shu was somewhat puzzled. What does Zhu Chuanfeng mean?

I remember him picking on me last time. Why is he so nice this time?

He even praised me?

There must be something wrong!

Zhou Shu raised his guard. He cupped his hands in front of his chest and said, "Grand Craftsman Zhu, may I ask why you have invited me here?"

"Sit down and talk. The food here is not bad. Try it." Zhu Chuanfeng didn't answer but pointed at the table.

Zhou Shu's eyebrows twitched. This Zhu Chuanfeng isn't easy to deal with. He's so domineering that even the pace of our conversation has to follow his lead. From the looks of it, he has ill intentions!

Zhou Shu sat down across from Zhu Chuanfeng, but he didn't move his chopsticks. Instead, he continued, "Grand Craftsman Zhu, if you have something to say, just say it. I don't have time to beat around the bush."

The corners of Zhu Chuanfeng's mouth raised as he laughed, "A straightforward person speaks his mind. Your temper is exactly the same as mine when I was young."

Zhou Shu was speechless. Is this old fellow trying to take advantage of me? But I don't have proof.

He wasn't sure what Zhu Chuanfeng was up to. If Zhu Chuanfeng wanted to cause trouble, then even if he was a Grand Craftsman, Zhou Shu wouldn't be afraid.

So what if he's a Grand Craftsman?

Although I'm not a Grand Craftsman, I have a big brother!

His big brother was the successor of Great General Meng and the heir of the Mi family. A Grand Craftsman paled in comparison!

"Zhou Shu, right? In just a few short months, you've developed four new standard weapons. You're not bad." Zhu Chuanfeng acted as an elder as he nodded slightly, seemingly satisfied. "I think you're capable of greater things. It's a waste that you are only the superintendent of a small workshop."

"Zhou Shu, are you willing to learn the art of forging from me?" Zhu Chuanfeng stroked his beard.

Zhou Shu was a little stunned. What does this mean?

He didn't call me here to cause trouble but to accept me as his disciple?

“Congratulations, Superintendent Zhou.” Xiao Zongshui chuckled. “Now that you’ve become Grand Craftsman Zhu’s personal disciple, becoming a Forging Master is only a matter of time. Your future is limitless.”

Zhu Chuanfeng smiled reservedly, seeming to agree with Xiao Zongshui’s words.

He was a Grand Craftsman. Taking a Forging Apprentice as his disciple was definitely a great gift to them.

Zhou Shu looked at Zhu Chuanfeng and then at Xiao Zongshui. The two of them were singing the same tune, and their coordination was quite good.

“Superintendent Zhou, there was a small misunderstanding between us in the past. Since you’re already Grand Craftsman Zhu’s disciple, we’re on the same side.” Xiao Zongshui chuckled as he raised his glass. “Let me toast you first. I apologize for what happened in the past.”

Xiao Zongshui raised his glass and drank the wine in one gulp.

“Wait.

“I don’t think I’ve agreed yet,” Zhou Shu said.

Zhu Chuanfeng frowned, displeasure flashing across his face.

Xiao Zongshui was slightly stunned. “Superintendent Zhou, you’re a Forging Apprentice. Don’t tell me you don’t know what Grand Craftsman means? Grand Craftsman Zhu is one of the top craftsmen in Great Xia. Those who want him to accept them as his disciples can line up from here to the border!”

“The grandmaster saw that you have some talent and didn’t want your talent to go undiscovered, so he was willing to take you in as his disciple. Don’t misunderstand!” Xiao Zongshui’s expression turned cold as he stared at Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu was somewhat speechless. He finally knew where the middle-aged man had learned his rudeness and arrogance.

So if Grand Craftsman Zhu wants to take me as his disciple, I have to kneel down in gratitude and worship him?

Shouldn’t this be a two-sided affair?

No matter how great a craftsman you are, no matter how brilliant your forging skills are, it doesn’t mean that I have to cry and call you my master.

Zhou Shu ignored Xiao Zongshui. Instead, he cupped his hands toward Zhu Chuanfeng and said politely, “Grand Craftsman Zhu, thank you for your kindness. However, I’m sorry, but I don’t have any intentions of becoming your disciple.”

He would definitely not acknowledge anyone as his teacher. But since the other party wanted to accept him as a disciple, it couldn’t be considered malicious intent. Even if his attitude was a little arrogant, there was no need to fall out with him directly.

“You rejected me?” Zhu Chuanfeng frowned.

“Do you know what it means to you to acknowledge me as your master?”

“Do you think that by becoming a workshop superintendent from a Forging Apprentice, you will rise to the top?”

Zhu Chuanfeng’s tone was not particularly harsh, but it was full of an imposing aura.

Without waiting for Zhou Shu to reply, Xiao Zongshui continued, “A workshop superintendent is just a lowly official. Compared to the disciple of a Grand Craftsman, the difference is like heaven and earth!”

“Zhou Shu, don’t be fooled by your talent. Whether or not you can become a Forging Master is another story. If you become Grandmaster Zhu’s disciple, under his guidance, it will be as easy as flipping your hand for you to become a Forging Master! How can the future of a small workshop superintendent compare to that?”

Xiao Zongshui no longer addressed him as Superintendent Zhou and directly called Zhou Shu by his name.

“You should be thankful that Grandmaster Zhu is willing to take you in as his disciple! If I were you, I would definitely give up everything I have to repay Grandmaster Zhu’s kindness!” Xiao Zongshui practically pointed at Zhou Shu’s nose as he spoke.

Zhou Shu rubbed his nose and said to Xiao Zongshui, “That’s good. Superintendent Xiao, why don’t you take Grand Craftsman Zhu as your master?”

“You...” Xiao Zong was exasperated.

“Grand Craftsman Zhu, I appreciate your kindness,” Zhou Shu said as he looked at Zhu Chuanfeng. He stood up and cupped his hands. “However, I do not have any intentions of becoming your disciple. Farewell!”

“Wait!” Zhu Chuanfeng said in a low voice, “Taking someone as your master is not child’s play. Perhaps you haven’t thought it through yet. Since you’re a promising talent, I can give you another chance.

“Go back and think about it for a night. Give me an answer tomorrow morning.”

“Zongshui, Zhen Cai, send Superintendent Zhou back.”

Zhu Chuanfeng waved his hand. “You must ensure that Superintendent Zhou carefully considers the pros and cons of this matter and not let any external factors affect his thoughts. Understood?”

Xiao Zongshui and the middle-aged man bowed at the same time. “Yes, we will definitely let Superintendent Zhou think it through.”

Zhou Shu: “...”

What is the meaning of this? A blatant threat? Sending two people to help me think through the pros and cons?

Do you think I don’t understand what you mean?



Zhou Shu, who had just gotten up, turned around and sat back down.. He stared at Zhu Chuanfeng and said, "Grand Craftsman Zhu, I understand now that you've said that."

## Chapter 66: I Am Magnanimous

"Have you thought it through?" Zhu Chuanfeng looked as if victory was within his grasp, and he nodded slightly. "You will understand. It will be very beneficial for you to acknowledge me as your master."

...

"Don't be fooled by your talent. You won't become a Forging Master no matter how talented you are. Without a guide, you might have to waste decades as a Forging Apprentice."

"Grand Craftsman Zhu, what you say does make sense." Zhou Shu nodded in agreement.

Under normal circumstances, without someone passing on an inheritance, it was indeed impossible for Forging Apprentices to advance to Forging Master.

There were definitely cases of self-taught geniuses, but they were extremely rare. This was the same in any world.

In his previous life, during the information explosion era on Earth, there was no one who became a scientist without going to university.

But Zhou Shu wasn't an ordinary person. He did not need to be self-taught. He did not need to learn!

As long as there was something in the Legendary Armament Canon, he would naturally be able to grasp it.

When ranked weapons appeared in the Legendary Armament Canon, he would naturally become a Forging Master.

Under these circumstances, why would Zhou Shu find himself a master?

Not to mention, Zhu Chuanfeng didn't look as though he was accepting a disciple from the perspective of cherishing a talent.

If it was really just taking in a disciple, shouldn't it be a two-sided affair?

He actually sent two people to help Zhou Shu think it through after he was unwilling to acknowledge him as his master.

"However, I've always been a person with no ambitions. Whether I can become a Forging Master is up to fate." Zhou Shu shrugged.

"I think it's quite good to be a workshop superintendent. Superintendent Xiao is already so old, but isn't he still a workshop superintendent? I think he's living quite freely." Zhou Shu glanced at Xiao Zongshui, his eyes flashing with coldness.

He had yet to settle the score with Xiao Zongshui. Now, he actually dared to jump out and fan the flames.

Just because a tiger doesn't show its might, do you think it's a sick cat?

Initially, he wanted to be a magnanimous person and not bicker with him about what had happened before. However, he was courting death!

Xiao Zongshui was originally Zhou Shu's superior and had squeezed him dry before. Even when the Huben Saber first appeared, Xiao Zongshui had claimed credit for it.

Zhou Shu had already disliked him to begin with. But when they were working to complete Great General Meng's mission, Xiao Zongshui had been quite cooperative, so Zhou Shu couldn't be bothered to find trouble with him.

Who would have thought that Xiao Zongshui would dare to find trouble with him instead?

If he didn't take action, he would be bullied in the future!

Xiao Zongshui couldn't help shivering when Zhou Shu looked at him. He subconsciously shrank his neck, but then he thought about it.

We are both superintendents. You have Her Highness behind you, and I have Grand Craftsman Zhu behind me. Why should I be afraid of you?

Her Highness won't always pay attention to a small workshop superintendent like you!

Zhu Chuanfeng originally thought that Zhou Shu had already figured it out. But when he heard Zhou Shu's words, he realized that this brat was playing him!

Zhu Chuanfeng's expression darkened. In the ten years that he had been a Grand Craftsman, no one had dared to toy with him like this.

"Zhou Shu, don't try my patience," Zhu Chuanfeng said coldly. "Zhen Cai, take him to the room next door and let him think about it calmly!"

"Yes, Master!" The middle-aged man with the ninth-rank cultivation took a step forward to grab Zhou Shu's shoulder with his claw-like hand.

Zhou Shu twisted his body and dodged Zhen Cai.

"Zhen Cai? Your name really suits you." Zhou Shu sneered. "If you dare to reach out to me again, I will break your arm!"

"How dare you!" Zhen Cai was furious. Although he was Zhu Chuanfeng's servant, Zhou Shu was too disrespectful.

How dare a mere workshop superintendent insult me?

Does he really think that he can trample on me just because Master wants to take him in as his disciple?

Putting aside the fact that he has yet to acknowledge Master as his teacher, even if he has, he would only be a pawn of Master!

In his rage, Zhen Cai reached out with both hands once more. His fingers bent, and his nails glowed with a cold light. Like a hawk pouncing on its prey, he grabbed at Zhou Shu's shoulder.

Zhen Cai's strength was all in his fingers. His fingers could even pierce through leather armor. How could Zhou Shu, a Forging Apprentice barely proficient in the Martial Dao, withstand them?

Zhen Cai had a sinister smile. He could already see ten bloody holes appear on Zhou Shu's shoulder, and then he would cry and beg his master to accept him!

Crack! Wood chips flew everywhere.

Zhou Shu had appeared behind Xiao Zongshui at some point. Zhen Cai's sure-kill attack had forcefully grabbed the stool Zhou Shu had just sat on.

The hard wooden stool broke into pieces.

"Stop!"

Zhen Cai was enraged and just about to continue attacking when Zhou Shu loudly yelled while standing beside Xiao Zongshui.

"If you dare to take action again, I'll call the Divine Constable Bureau and the Country Protector Army over to judge!"

Zhou Shu was standing next to Xiao Zongshui, next to the window.

This was the capital of Great Xia. He only needed to open the window and shout, and very soon, people from the Country Protector Army and Divine Constable Bureau would rush over.

Although Zhu Chuanfeng wasn't afraid, he didn't want to cause more trouble.

He waved his hand, signaling Zhen Cai to step back.

"Zhou Shu, do you really want to take things so far?" Zhu Chuanfeng said coldly.

"Grand Craftsman Zhu, what do you mean?" Zhou Shu blinked his eyes innocently. "I am extremely flattered by your desire to cherish talent. It's just that I know that I am shallow and not worthy of your teachings, so I don't want to become your disciple."

"Is there a problem with this?"

"I've never heard of anyone forcibly accepting another as their disciple."

Zhu Chuanfeng's expression darkened. There really was no reason to force him to become his disciple.

But Zhu Chuanfeng had never been rejected since he became a Grand Craftsman, much less by a mere Forging Apprentice!

Besides, there was a reason why he had to take Zhou Shu as his disciple!

"Very good." Zhu Chuanfeng coldly said. "Zhou Shu, you are a talent, so I will be more lenient with you. My stance remains, and I won't change my mind for now."

"After tomorrow, I can't guarantee what will happen. You're on your own."

Zhu Chuanfeng waved his hand. "Send the guest out!"

Zhen Cai's expression was cold as he glared at Zhou Shu and gestured him out. "Please!"

With a smile on his face, Zhou Shu cupped his hands toward Zhu Chuanfeng and Xiao Zongshui.  
"Goodbye."

Zhen Cai walked Zhou Shu all the way to the door. Before he returned, he whispered darkly into Zhou Shu's ear, "Superintendent Zhou, the road is slippery at night. You have to be careful!"

"Thanks for your concern," Zhou Shu said with a smile.

He could tell that Zhen Cai was threatening him, but he didn't care.

Zhen Cai was just a rookie.

Although he was injured, if he really made a move, he could beat Zhen Cai to the ground with one hand.

Upstairs, Xiao Zongshui bent down and moved closer to Zhu Chuanfeng.

"Grandmaster Zhu, you're letting him go just like that?" Xiao Zongshui said unwillingly.

"What else can we do? If we start a ruckus here, the Divine Constable Bureau will come. Would it be you who steps in or me?" Zhu Chuanfeng coldly snorted.

"I didn't expect Zhou Shu to be so stubborn!" Xiao Zongshui said embarrassedly. "But he doesn't understand your strength, Grandmaster Zhu. If he knows your true strength, then he won't wait until tomorrow. Tonight, he'll crawl back here!"

"Cut the crap!" Zhu Chuanfeng said coldly. "If he hadn't already shown his face in front of Her Highness, things wouldn't have been so troublesome.

"Hmph, why didn't you say earlier that you had such a person under you?"

"Grandmaster Zhu, I didn't know Zhou Shu was so capable," Xiao Zongshui quickly protested. "If I had known, how could I have let him show his face in front of Her Highness?"

If he had known that Zhou Shu had such abilities, he would have locked him up to develop new weapons specially for the 97th Workshop!

"It's not too late now." Zhu Chuanfeng grunted coldly. "Listen carefully. His Majesty has already seen Zhou Shu's name. There is no need for any other methods. He must acknowledge me as his master. There can't be any mistakes in this matter, understand?"

"Understood!" Xiao Zongshui hurriedly said. "Grandmaster, what should we do now?"

"Do you need me to teach you how to do it?" Zhu Chuanfeng said unhappily. "Weren't you full of ideas in the past? I don't care what you do. I only want results!"

A cold light flickered in Zhu Chuanfeng's eyes, and Xiao Zongshui felt a chill run down his spine.

"I know what to do. Don't worry, Grandmaster. I'll definitely settle the matter." Xiao Zongshui gritted his teeth.

“Let Zhen Cai follow you. I don’t want any accidents to happen!” Zhu Chuanfeng’s eyes flickered with a cold light.

...

Zhou Shu walked along the streets for a long time. He could still feel someone staring at him from behind.

He didn’t mind. Although Zhu Chuanfeng was a Grand Craftsman, his Martial Dao cultivation wasn’t high. Even if he personally took action, Zhou Shu wouldn’t fear him.

Unless he shamelessly invited experts, but this was impossible.

After all, on the surface, he wanted to take him in as his disciple. Although he didn’t understand why he wanted to do so, he was certain that he didn’t want to make things too ugly.

So what if he was following him?

He could slap a ninth-rank martial artist to death.

Zhou Shu felt a bit regretful. He should have eaten at Zhu Chuanfeng’s place before turning hostile. What a waste.

I’m hungry. Where can I find something to eat? Zhou Shu rubbed his stomach. Am I really going to put the bill on my tab?

He, Superintendent Zhou, couldn’t afford to do something so embarrassing. He was a superintendent and a famous person on the assassination list. How did he end up having to put a bill on his tab?

Even though he was just a superintendent, he didn’t want to embarrass himself like that.

Zhou Shu was thinking about where he could get a meal when he suddenly heard a voice.

“Superintendent Zhou? Why are you here?”

Zhou Shu was slightly stunned. Am I already so famous? I can be easily recognized on the streets?

Chapter 67: Am I That Famous?

Zhou Shu was a little puzzled. He rarely came to the capital, and there weren’t many people he knew here.

...

What’s going on today? I haven’t even finished strolling around the night market before two people who know me called out to me.

Am I already so famous?

I’ve become famous, but I’m the last to know?

Zhou Shu turned his head around and saw a fully armed figure standing not far away, looking at him with surprise.

“Lieutenant Cheng?” Zhou Shu was a little disappointed. He thought he had a passerby fan, but it turned out to be someone he knew.

“Lieutenant Cheng, what are you doing?” Zhou Shu asked curiously.

Cheng Yong was in full armor with a Huben Saber hanging from his waist. He looked out of place on the lively night streets.

And behind him were a few soldiers dressed exactly like him.

Zhou Shu thought about his identity. Could there be trouble in the capital again?

Cheng Yong looked at his outfit and smiled. “Oh, we’re off duty and haven’t had time to change.”

“Why are you still here at this hour, Superintendent Zhou?” Cheng Yong asked curiously.

The Forging Division’s workshops were outside the city. At this time, the city gates were almost closed, but Zhou Shu was still leisurely strolling around.

He had never heard that Zhou Shu had a house in the capital.

Cheng Yong had known Zhou Shu for a long time. When Xiao Zongshui went to the Huben Troops camp to sell the Huben Sabers, Cheng Yong had already met Zhou Shu.

Later on, Cheng Yong was ordered to investigate traitors and even had a misunderstanding with Zhou Shu.

Afterward, Cheng Yong specially offered a humble apology and became friends with Zhou Shu.

According to his understanding, Zhou Shu was originally only a Forging Apprentice. Now, he had only been a workshop superintendent for a short period of time. In theory, he shouldn’t have the ability to do business in the capital yet.

But it wasn’t polite to ask Zhou Shu directly.

“It’s getting late. I don’t think it’s safe to travel at night, so I plan to return to the workshop tomorrow morning,” Zhou Shu explained with a smile. There was nothing that he couldn’t say. Even if he didn’t meet the assassin, it was normal to say that the night road wasn’t safe.

“You don’t have it easy.” Cheng Yong laughed. “We are off duty. Superintendent Zhou, if you’re worried, we can escort you back.”

In terms of official rank, Cheng Yong was actually a higher ranking officer than a workshop superintendent. But a workshop superintendent was in charge of forging weapons. Sometimes, Cheng Yong had to ask the workshops for help.

Furthermore, with Zhou Shu’s current performance, it was very likely that he would become a Forging Master in the future. His status would be far above that of a lieutenant.

Thus, his attitude toward Zhou Shu was extremely polite.

“Will you escort me back?” Zhou Shu glanced at Cheng Yong and the others.

The few of them were all young and strong men. They were wearing golden armor and had Huben Sabers hanging from their waists, looking exceptionally powerful.

But in Zhou Shu’s eyes, they only looked good.

The Huben Troops sounded very domineering, but they were only a part of the Country Protector Army. Even among the Country Protector Army, they were not the best elites.

Their daily duty was to patrol around the palace.

If a powerful assassin really attacked while they were escorting him back, they probably wouldn’t even be able to stall for time.

At that time, it was not certain who would protect who.

Some things couldn’t be said directly, or it would be too hurtful.

“It’s okay. I’m not in a hurry to get back to the workshop.” Zhou Shu shook his head.

“It’s rare for me to come to the capital. I still want to stroll around the night market. Besides, you’ve all had a tiring day. It’s better to go back and rest early.”

“I see.” Cheng Yong pondered for a moment.

“Superintendent Zhou, we’re about to have some wine. If you don’t mind, how about we treat you to some wine?” Cheng Yong said expectantly.

Although Zhou Shu’s status as a forging genius had yet to spread, it was no secret to some people.

Cheng Yong happened to be someone who knew about this.

The importance of weapons to martial artists was self-evident. Although Cheng Yong had yet to become a ranked martial artist, he was someone unwilling to be ordinary. He also hoped that he could become a ranked martial artist one day.

When he became a ranked martial artist, he would need a ranked weapon.

If he wanted a ranked weapon, he would have to ask a Forging Master.

Forging Masters were all high and mighty figures, and Cheng Yong didn’t have the qualifications to get to know them yet. In front of him was someone who might become a Forging Master in the future. If Cheng Yong didn’t befriend him, he would be a fool.

If he didn’t become friends with Zhou Shu now, when he really became a Forging Master, he wouldn’t even have the chance to.

“Of course. I don’t mind!” Zhou Shu laughed. He was starving. How could he miss this opportunity?

“Making an appointment is not as good as meeting by chance. I will be thick-skinned and bother you all.”

"Superintendent Zhou, what are you saying? You are a rare and esteemed guest." Cheng Yong was overjoyed and gave a signal to a soldier behind him. The soldier understood and quickly left.

"This brother..." Zhou Shu said strangely.

"It's fine. He has some matters to attend to at home. He'll be back soon."

Of course, he wouldn't tell Zhou Shu that the person had gone back to get the money.

Since he wanted to treat Zhou Shu to wine, he definitely couldn't go to a place that was too lousy.

They had just gotten off duty and didn't bring much money with them. Of course, they had to send someone back to get money.

"Superintendent Zhou, you might not be familiar with the capital. Come, let me introduce you." Cheng Yong warmly invited Zhou Shu.

In the distance, Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai had gloomy expressions.

Zhen Cai suppressed his anger and whispered, "Superintendent Xiao, what do we do now?"

"No rush," Xiao Zongshui said coldly. "He has the Huben Troops with him now, so it's not convenient for us to make a move. If the Huben Troops get alerted, it will be troublesome.

"The Huben Troops can't follow him forever. We'll follow them first, and when the Huben Troops leave, we'll take action. When the time comes, we'll capture him and take revenge. It's fine as long as we don't kill him."

Zhen Cai showed a cruel smile and laughed coldly.

...

"Lieutenant Cheng, do you usually come here to drink after work?" Zhou Shu was somewhat dumbfounded at the scene in front of him.

Although the Huben Troops were imperial guards, they were only the outermost patrols. Were they so well paid?

"How can that be?" Cheng Yong chuckled. "To be honest with you, Superintendent Zhou, although our salary isn't low, we can only come to such places two or three times a year.

"However, we're all very happy to meet you today. Let's have a good time together. Superintendent Zhou, you don't have to worry about money. I still have some savings."

The other Huben soldiers agreed. "Yes, Superintendent Zhou, you just have to enjoy yourself. We have money."

Zhou Shu was somewhat speechless. I just have to enjoy myself?

Are you all serious?

He didn't expect that he was still thinking about whether he should come here to take a look now long. In the end, he was brought here, and he didn't even need to spend his own money.



“Well...” Zhou Shu laughed dryly. “Why don’t we go somewhere else? If we’re just drinking, there’s no need to come here.”

He felt a little guilty about visiting a brothel.

He was a good young man in my previous life...

“It’s the same drinking here.” Cheng Yong didn’t give Zhou Shu a chance to refuse. The few of them put their hands around Zhou Shu’s shoulders and entered the brothel.

Although Cheng Yong and the others were wearing armor, no one stopped them. The brothel didn’t care what the customers wore. After entering, they would take off all their clothes eventually anyway...

Outside, Zhen Cai asked Xiao Zongshui, “Superintendent Xiao, should we go in?”

Although his cultivation was higher than Xiao Zongshui’s, his master had said that he had to follow Xiao Zongshui’s orders.

Xiao Zongshui’s face darkened as he cursed under his breath. If they went in, wouldn’t they meet Zhou Shu?

“No, wait here!” Xiao Zongshui said coldly.

In the bleak evening breeze, the two men hid in the shadows at the foot of a wall. From time to time, they would look at the entrance of the brothel. No matter how one looked at it, it seemed obscene...

Compared to Xiao Zongshui and Su Chen, Zhou Shu could feel the lively atmosphere as soon as he entered the brightly lit building.

In the middle of a spacious hall was a circular platform. On the platform, a woman was dancing.

The woman had an alluring figure and a gorgeous face. As she moved, her private parts were faintly discernible.

Zhou Shu felt his face heat up. He subconsciously rubbed his nose. If he had a nosebleed, it would be too embarrassing.

Although he had seen countless films in his previous life, this was the first time he had seen such a scene in real life.

This scene was much more exciting than watching movies.

Zhou Shu subconsciously took a few more glances.

The woman on stage was not extremely beautiful. At least, she was far inferior to Yin Wuyou...

Wait, why did I think of comparing her to Yin Wuyou?

If Yin Wuyou knew I compared her with a brothel girl, would she chop me using her saber?

At the thought of this, Zhou Shu unconsciously shook his head.

Cheng Yong noticed Zhou Shu's actions and thought that Zhou Shu didn't think much of the woman on the stage. He smiled and said, "This woman is only average here. There are a lot of beautiful women here. I guarantee you won't be disappointed."

What else could Zhou Shu say?

Show me.

Zhou Shu was a virgin, but Cheng Yong and the others were all wily old foxes.

But their statuses weren't high, so they didn't have a private room. They found a table around the high platform, sat down, and ordered some dishes and wine.

Eating and drinking were secondary here.

"Superintendent Zhou, if you like the woman on stage, you can just raise your card and bring her back to the room..." Cheng Yong explained softly.

"I'll just take a look first," Zhou Shu said. He only had the intention to do so but not the courage to do so. Moreover, he felt that it would be a waste to have this first time here...

"Understood!"

Cheng Yong and the rest of the Huben Troops let out meaningful laughter. None of these women had caught Superintendent Zhou's eyes yet, but it didn't matter.. There were still quite a few beautiful women here, but they might cost a bit more.

Chapter 68: Zhen Cai? Rookie!

Cheng Yong and the others wanted to befriend Zhou Shu, so they didn't care how much money they would spend.

...

Even if Zhou Shu played freely, how much could he alone spend?

Now, they had the chance to invite Zhou Shu. When he truly became a Forging Master, even if they wanted to invite him, they wouldn't be able to do so.

On the stage, the performance continued.

Zhou Shu had an eye-opener today.

One after another, beautiful women went on stage to perform their talents such as dancing, singing, playing the zither, lute...

There were even women performing splits.

The only thing these women had in common was their beauty!

If they weren't beautiful, there wouldn't be much room for survival in such a place.

How corrupt, Zhou Shu thought.

These women, who were not inferior to ordinary celebrities even in his previous life, were performing practically naked in front of him. Any man would be full of vanity.

There were a few times he almost raised his card out of impulse.

Fortunately, his rationality won in the end.

Zhou Shu silently thought of the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form. He was calm and composed as he ate food and drank wine. Cheng Yong and the others were impressed.

If not for the sake of accompanying Zhou Shu, they would have long rushed into a room impatiently. Even now, a few young men full of vigor were already flushed red.

Look at Superintendent Zhou. He was clearly younger than them. Shouldn't he be more anxious?

A genius was a genius indeed. To be able to remain so calm in front of so many beautiful women, this was the difference.

Cheng Yong and the others were full of admiration.

"Lieutenant Cheng, you don't have to bother about me. If anyone catches your eye, do as you please," Zhou Shu said calmly and put a mouthful of food in his mouth.

"It's fine, it's fine," Cheng Yong quickly said. "We come here often. It's more important to drink with you."

Zhou Shu didn't believe a single word they said. These guys look like they want to rip off the clothes of the woman on stage. If they were regular customers, they wouldn't have such a look on their faces.

"Lieutenant Cheng, are the Huben Troops usually busy?" Zhou Shu naturally wouldn't expose Cheng Yong and the others, so he tried to find a topic to talk about.

On the stage, another woman began to perform a sword dance. This woman was dressed more normally. Although the sword dance was very exciting, the cheers were much less than before.

Cheng Yong and the others' spirits were also greatly dampened. They practiced swordplay all day, so they didn't care about this sword dance.

"It's alright," Cheng Yong said. Compared to the border army, the Huben Troops' training wasn't that tough.

"If we didn't have to prepare for next year's military parade, our Huben Troops would have it much easier."

"Military parade?" Zhou Shu's interest was piqued.

"Yes, our Great Xia's military parade once every five years is a grand occasion," Cheng Yong said with pride on his face. "Not all troops can participate in the military parade. Our Huben Troops is considered one of the top few in the Country Protector Army, so we are qualified to participate..."

Cheng Yong became excited when he talked about his job.

Actually, Zhou Shu had heard of the military parade before. There were two types of military parades. The first type was the military parade that all the countries on the land participated in.

The other type was the national military parade.

The military parade that all the countries participated in was held once every ten years, but each country's own was different.

In Great Xia, the latter happened once every five years.

The military parade was actually the Great Xia emperor inspecting Great Xia's military strength. In essence, it was similar to the military parades in Zhou Shu's previous life.

"Speaking of which, Superintendent Zhou, this military parade has a lot to do with your Forging Division," Cheng Yong said.

"The Forging Division will choose Forging Masters to forge in front of His Majesty. In other words, it will be an inspection. If you can gain His Majesty's favor, you will be able to achieve meteoric success."

Cheng Yong licked his lips in envy.

Compared to soldiers like them, the chances of Forging Masters being noticed were much higher.

"This has nothing to do with me." Zhou Shu shrugged. "Only Forging Masters have the chance to participate. I'm just a Forging Apprentice."

Even if this wasn't the case, he wasn't interested in participating in the military parade.

He relied on his own ability and hard work to make a living. He didn't need anyone's favor.

"What a pity. But Superintendent Zhou, you will definitely participate in the next military parade," Cheng Yong said.

Next? Five years later?

Then, I might not be qualified to participate.

Only Forging Masters could participate in the military parade. Even Grand Craftsmen were not qualified to participate.

1

With the Legendary Armament Canon, if Zhou Shu couldn't become a Grand Craftsman in five years, he would kill himself with a piece of tofu.

"Help yourselves. I'll go to the latrine." Zhou Shu stood up.

Following the maid's directions, Zhou Shu found the latrine in the backyard. After happily taking care of his business, he was just about to return to the front hall when his ears suddenly twitched. He heard a faint voice.

After cultivating the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique to the eighth level, Zhou Shu's physique had undergone a tremendous change. Not only was his divine strength astonishing, but his five senses were also extremely sharp.

Not long ago, he had obtained the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form. After cultivating it, it strengthened his spirit and allowed him to derive divine sense.

Although Zhou Shu had yet to have any divine sense, his spiritual strength had already surpassed that of martial artists of the same level. The external improvements were his five senses, which had once again been greatly enhanced. He could see farther and hear farther.

The voice was extremely soft. If not for Zhou Shu's exceptional hearing, he definitely wouldn't have heard it.

Even so, he noticed this voice because it was somewhat familiar!

Otherwise, Zhou Shu wouldn't have paid too much attention to such a faint sound mixed with the noise of the bamboo rustling nearby.

"Superintendent Xiao, that Zhou boy won't stay the night, right? If that's the case, are we going to wait here all night?"

Zhou Shu stopped and listened carefully. The somewhat familiar voice seemed to filter through layer after layer and once again entered his ears.

Zhen Cai? Zhou Shu's eyes narrowed.

This voice belonged to Zhen Cai, Zhu Chuanfeng's subordinate.

Needless to say, the Zhou boy he mentioned was definitely referring to him!

He's really persistent! Zhou Shu looked in the direction of the voice.

This direction is a high wall. Zhen Cai is waiting for me outside the high wall?

The person he's talking to is Xiao Zongshui?

Zhou Shu slowed down and took a few steps toward the high wall.

Zhen Cai's voice became clearer.

"In my opinion, we should just go in and kidnap him. There's no need for such trouble!" Zhen Cai grumbled softly.

"Go in? Do you know which girl's room he's sleeping in?" Xiao Zongshui snorted. "Or do you plan on kidnapping him in public? Do you really think you can do whatever you want in the capital with Grandmaster Zhu's protection?"

"If things get out of hand, are you going to bear the consequences, or should I?" Xiao Zongshui sounded impatient.

After being in the cold wind for half the night, the two of them were not in a good mood. They were thinking that once they caught Zhou Shu, they would definitely vent their anger on him!

Anyway, Grandmaster Zhu only needed them to keep him alive!

What they didn't know was that the person they wanted to capture was standing right beside them and listening to their conversation.

Listening to Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai's conversation, Zhou Shu was extremely confused. What exactly does Zhu Chuanfeng want?

Is there a need for him to do this to take in a disciple?

If he really took a fancy to my talent, it wouldn't be appropriate to use such methods.

But if that isn't the case, why would he resort to such means to take me as his disciple?

There's definitely something I don't know.

Zhou Shu had never heard of such a thing. Who would accept a disciple in such a manner? Wasn't he afraid that his disciple would hate him?

Who cares what he thinks? If he wants to be my master, he's not good enough.

Zhou Shu snorted coldly in his heart.

And Xiao Zongshui, you had a chance to go to heaven, but you chose to barge into hell instead.

Zhou Shu looked around. This was the backyard of the brothel, and not far away was the latrine. There was no one in the latrine, and no one was walking around nearby.

He took off his outer garment, turned it inside out, and put it back on. Then he suddenly exerted strength in his legs and jumped up into the air. He jumped up more than ten feet, reached out his hand on the wall, and directly flipped over.

Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai were hiding in a dark alley not far from the brothel's entrance. From time to time, they would peek their heads out to take a look at the brothel's entrance.

Suddenly, they heard the sound of rushing wind above their heads. Almost at the same time, they thought that something was amiss.

As a ninth-rank martial artist, Zhen Cai had a faster reaction than Xiao Zongshui. He didn't even raise his head as he grabbed upward without any hesitation. His five fingers formed the shape of an eagle's claw, and his sharp claws shone faintly in the darkness.

He believed that even martial artists of the same rank wouldn't dare to take this grab head-on!

Zhen Cai's arm was halfway out when it suddenly stopped in the air.

His pupils dilated, and his face was full of fear.

In his consciousness, a towering mountain descended from the sky and directly pressed down on his head.

Zhen Cai's breathing almost stopped due to the oppressive aura. He only lasted for two breaths before his eyes rolled back and he fell to the ground.

On the other side, Xiao Zongshui lay on the ground with his eyes rolled back.

Zhen Cai couldn't withstand it. Xiao Zongshui, who was not even a ranked martial artist, naturally couldn't withstand it either.

At this moment, Zhou Shu's feet had just touched the ground.

Zhen Cai? Rookie! Zhou Shu looked at the unconscious Zhen Cai with some disdain. He was also somewhat surprised by the power of the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form.

His Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form had only just entered basic mastery, and the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form had only just formed an outline.

He had only attempted to use the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form to intimidate Zhen Cai and Xiao Zongshui so as to avoid making too much noise when he made a move.

Unexpectedly, the two of them were so weak that he didn't even need to do anything. They were actually knocked unconscious by the Five Mountains' True Form.

Zhou Shu even suspected that Zhen Cai, this ninth-rank martial artist, was a fake.

You two think you can kidnap me?

Zhou had wasted his efforts in disguising himself, afraid that they would recognize him.. If he knew this would happen, he wouldn't have wasted so much effort.

Chapter 69: You Have to Understand the Situation

This was the first time Zhou Shu had used the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form against enemies, and the result was astonishingly good.

...

One was a ninth-rank martial artist, and the other was a martial artist with cultivation close to the ninth rank. The two of them combined didn't even have the strength to resist before they fainted.

If it was before Zhou Shu obtained the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form, even though it wouldn't take much effort to defeat the two of them, he would still need to make a move, right?

How could it be as easy as it was now?

"Superintendent Zhou, are you done?"

While Zhou Shu was thinking, he suddenly heard Cheng Yong's shout from the other side of the wall.

Cheng Yong saw that Zhou Shu hadn't returned for a long time and was worried, so he came out to look for him.

Zhou Shu glanced at the unconscious Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai, then at the alley.

This was a small alley behind the brothel. It was pitch black and didn't look like a place where people often passed by.

Without thinking too much about it, Zhou Shu picked up the two of them and threw them into the corner of the wall. Then he went back over the wall.

Cheng Yong was calling out to the latrine when he saw Zhou Shu walk out from a nearby bush holding his pants.

“Superintendent Zhou, you—” Cheng Yong was stunned.

“I can’t hold my liquor. I’m getting a little dizzy.” Zhou Shu laughed. “Let’s go. Let’s continue.”

Back at the front hall, the performances on the stage were still ongoing. Zhou Shu was thinking about Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai, wondering when they would wake up.

Since he had already made his move, he didn’t plan on letting the two of them off. He had to think of a way...

He looked around, and his gaze landed on the stage.

Lieutenant Cheng, I will have to trouble you this time! Zhou Shu thought.

Whoosh! Zhou Shu raised the sign beside him.

This sign had been given to them when they entered. If they liked the woman on the platform, they could raise the sign.

If only one person raised the sign, the woman on the platform would belong to the person raising the card tonight.

If many people raised their signs, they would have to bid.

Seeing Zhou Shu raise the sign, Cheng Yong and the others didn’t know how they felt. Were they happy, or were their hearts aching?

They were the ones treating tonight. Since Superintendent Zhou had chosen a lady, it meant that he owed them a favor.

But the girls here weren’t cheap. One night would probably cost them a month’s salary...

It’s worth it to spend this bit of money to befriend a future Forging Master, Cheng Yong comforted himself.

Seeing that no one else was bidding, the red-clothed woman who had been playing the zither and singing slowly walked up to Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu grabbed the woman in red’s shoulder and said to Cheng Yong and the others, “Lieutenant Cheng, please excuse me.”

The red-clothed woman blushed, but she didn’t stop Zhou Shu. “Young Master, please follow me.”

“Superintendent Zhou, do as you please. You must enjoy to your heart’s content,” Cheng Yong and the others said from behind Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu rolled his eyes in his head.



As he followed the woman in red through several corridors, the sound of the stringed instruments in the front hall gradually became barely noticeable.

The woman in red opened a door and invited Zhou Shu in.

As he stepped through the door, a fragrance wafted over. This room belonged to the lady in red.

The room was elegantly decorated. If one didn't know, they would think that this was the boudoir of the young lady of a wealthy family.

But in a certain sense, these brothel girls, be it their talents or looks, were not much inferior to those rich ladies.

For the woman in red in front of Zhou Shu, if she was on Earth, she would definitely be a celebrity.

"Let me serve you, Young Master," The woman in red whispered as she walked to Zhou Shu's side, her beautiful face red. This young master is really handsome!

"Excuse me," Zhou Shu whispered.

The woman in red was stunned, not understanding what Zhou Shu meant. Could it be that this young master has other hobbies?

Being in a brothel, she had seen all kinds of situations.

Just as she thought this, she suddenly felt her mind shake, and then she fell unconscious.

Zhou Shu took a step forward and supported her.

Her skin was smooth and soft to the touch, and there was a sweet fragrance to it. Zhou Shu couldn't help pinching her slightly. Very elastic...

He slapped himself in his head and carried the lady to the bed. After thinking for a while, he took off her clothes.

With great willpower, he pulled the blanket over her fair body. If he took another look, he was afraid that he wouldn't be able to control himself and do something...

He went to the window and listened for a while. After making sure that there was no one outside, he opened the window, climbed out, and closed the window from the outside.

The Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form not only strengthened his spirit, but it was also an offensive technique.

Previously, when Zhou Shu had used the Five Mountains' True Form to attack Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai, the two of them had been unable to withstand it, let alone an ordinary brothel girl.

Even though Zhou Shu had already restrained most of his power, this impact was enough to make the brothel girl faint for an entire night.

He could use this time to do something.

In the darkness, a figure leaped over the high wall of the brothel's backyard like a ghost.

Although Zhou Shu didn't know any lightness techniques, his Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique were not weak. His physical body was strong, and his true qi was vigorous. With his full strength, his speed was so fast that even sixth or seventh-rank martial artists couldn't compare to him.

Back in the small alley, Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai were still lying in the corner. It seemed that no one had passed by during this period of time.

A cold light flashed in Zhou Shu's eyes. Since these two wanted to plot against me, then they can't blame me for returning the favor!

He held the two of them in his hands as if he was carrying two sacks. He jumped and directly entered the backyard of the brothel.

His figure flickered. A moment later, Zhou Shu brought Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai to the firewood shed.

This was the spot that Zhou Shu had found earlier. This woodshed was located in a remote area, very far from the front hall of the brothel, and no one lived nearby.

It was late at night. As long as they didn't make too much noise, no one would come here!

After throwing the two of them to the ground, Zhou Shu closed the door of the woodshed.

Looking at Xiao Zongshui, Zhou Shu visualized the Five Mountains' True Form in his consciousness and slammed it toward him.

Xiao Zongshui's body trembled, and his expression became incomparably terrified. The next moment, he suddenly opened his eyes and gasped for breath. His clothes were instantly drenched in cold sweat, as if he had just crawled out of water.

"You..."

When Xiao Zongshui saw Zhou Shu, he was just about to say something when a hand suddenly grabbed his neck, and he swallowed back the words he was about to say.

"Superintendent Xiao, long time no see." Zhou Shu grinned.

Xiao Zongshui cursed inwardly. Damn it, didn't we just meet two hours ago!

He was extremely terrified. What just happened?

Why am I here?

Also, what's going on with Zhou Shu?

Why does he have such power?

Xiao Zongshui wasn't a fool. On the contrary, he was a very smart person. Being a workshop superintendent wasn't a simple job. Those who did well as a superintendent were all quick-witted.

Although he didn't understand what had happened, it didn't stop him from immediately understanding his situation.

He patted Zhou Shu's arm with all his might, indicating that he wouldn't yell and telling Zhou Shu to let go.

Zhou Shu looked into his eyes and slowly relaxed his grip.

Xiao Zongshui didn't shout, as he promised. He took a few deep breaths before saying, "Superintendent Zhou, is there a misunderstanding between us? What do you mean by this?"

"Xiao Zongshui, you're a smart person. There's no need for us to beat around the bush." Zhou Shu looked at Xiao Zongshui and smiled coldly. "I'm very curious now. Why does Grand Craftsman Zhu insist on taking me as his disciple?"

"Grandmaster Zhu just took a fancy to your talent and didn't want you to be buried..." Xiao Zongshui said.

"Superintendent Xiao, that's not interesting at all," Zhou Shu coldly interrupted him. "Do you think I'm an idiot? If you don't even believe it yourself, then don't say it out loud and embarrass yourself."

"Superintendent Zhou, I'm telling the truth," Xiao Zongshui said bitterly. "How could I possibly know what Grandmaster Zhu is thinking?"

"This really has nothing to do with me—"

"Is that so? Didn't you come here on Grand Craftsman Zhu's orders to convince me? Didn't you plan to kidnap me and then talk some sense into me?" Zhou Shu sneered. "Superintendent Xiao, do you want to hear me reason with you?"

A light flashed in Zhou Shu's eyes. Xiao Zongshui immediately felt a wave of pressure wash over him. He was greatly shocked. Is Zhou Shu a martial arts expert?

Thinking of this, Xiao Zongshui had a bad feeling.

Before he could think further, a sharp pain shot through his shoulder.

It was Zhou Shu's palm that had landed on his shoulder. The powerful force made him feel as if his shoulder was about to be crushed.

"Superintendent Xiao, I don't have much patience, nor do I know any interrogation techniques," Zhou Shu said coldly. "If you don't want to suffer more, then you'd better speak the truth!"

"I'm telling the truth," Xiao Zongshui said painfully through clenched teeth.

"That's all I know! Superintendent Zhou, becoming Grandmaster Zhu's disciple is absolutely beneficial to you without any harm! If you become the disciple of a Grand Craftsman, even nobles will treat you as an honored guest. You will have a much higher status than just being a workshop superintendent!"

"On the contrary, if you offend a Grand Craftsman, it will be difficult for you to make any progress in the future even if the grand minister is on your side!"

"You're already in this state, yet you still want to help Grand Craftsman Zhu persuade me?" Zhou Shu said. "I really do admire you. In order to curry favor with him, you really don't even care about your own life?"

“Superintendent Zhou, this matter is really a misunderstanding,” Xiao Zongshui hurriedly said. “We really don’t have any ill intention toward you. Go out and ask around. How many Forging Masters want to become Grandmaster Zhu’s disciple but can’t? You should be thankful that Grandmaster Zhu took a liking to you!”

“You don’t seem to understand the situation.” Zhou Shu shook his head. “I have to do whatever the Grand Craftsman wants me to do? I’ll ask you one last time. Why is Zhu Chuanfeng willing to do so much to take me as his disciple?!”

“I’ve already said what I needed to say. Superintendent Zhou, this is your chance!” Xiao Zongshui shouted.

Zhou Shu sneered as five towering mountain peaks appeared in his eyes.. Xiao Zongshui’s expression froze as his pupils suddenly dilated.

Chapter 70: Off to Battle, Send Off

As Zhou Shu watched Xiao Zongshui’s corpse fall to the ground, his heart didn’t waver much.

...

Xiao Zongshui was not the first person he killed, nor would he be the last.

Actually, killing Xiao Zongshui now was not a good choice.

But Zhou Shu hadn’t hesitated at all.

His principles never changed. If someone wanted to harm him, he would strike first and gain the upper hand without any hesitation or mercy!

From the moment Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai decided to kidnap him, their fates were already decided.

Moreover, after Xiao Zongshui saw his strength, it was naturally even more impossible for him to survive.

Although Zhou Shu didn’t manage to obtain the information he wanted from him, this was not the main point.

From the beginning, Zhou Shu didn’t really care about Zhu Chuanfeng’s goal.

He just needed to know that Zhu Chuanfeng was up to no good!

Furthermore, even though Xiao Zongshui had died, there was still Zhen Cai.

Compared to a wily old fox like Xiao Zongshui, although Zhen Cai’s cultivation was higher, he was not as shrewd.

Zhou Shu clearly remembered that he had been able to anger Zhen Cai with just a few words. If it was Xiao Zongshui, how could this be possible?

Xiao Zongshui was the kind of person who would only stab you in the back if you scolded him face to face.

After throwing Xiao Zongshui's corpse to the side, Zhou Shu used the same trick again, using the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form to awaken Zhen Cai.

"You ambushed me?!" Zhen Cai shouted as soon as he opened his eyes.

He didn't even see who the person in front of him was before he jumped up and grabbed forward with his hands at lightning speed.

The reaction of a ninth-rank martial artist was indeed faster than that of an unranked martial artist. This grab was as fast as lightning. Even a martial artist of the same level could only temporarily avoid this move.

But Zhou Shu was not a ninth-rank martial artist. Zhen Cai was fast, but Zhou Shu was even faster.

Slap!

While Zhen Cai was extending his arms forward, a huge force twisted his head to the side, and his entire body fell heavily to the ground.

Five clear finger marks appeared on Zhen Cai's right face.

He was stunned.

Ever since he became a ranked martial artist, although he had been defeated in battle before, they were still glorious defeats. When had he ever been slapped?

A man could be killed but not humiliated!

Zhen Cai was furious.

Bang!

Just as he was about to leap up, a foot descended from above and stomped on his chest.

Zhen Cai felt as though a mountain was pressing down on his body, and the strength from his body was forcefully dispersed. He struggled with all his might, but the foot didn't move at all.

"Zhen Cai, I have a question. Why is Zhu Chuanfeng going to this extent to make me his disciple?" Zhou Shu asked coldly.

"It's you?!" At this moment, Zhen Cai saw that the person stepping on his chest was actually Zhou Shu!

"You're a ranked martial artist?" Zhen Cai's eyes were wide open in an expression of disbelief.

"I'm asking you. It's not your turn to ask questions!" Zhou Shu said coldly.

"What's so strange about it? Master wants the reward from the military parade, and taking you in as his disciple is the easiest way," Zhen Cai said without any hesitation. "Why are you a ranked martial artist? Master didn't say anything!"

To Zhen Cai, the first sentence was not a secret at all. On the contrary, the second sentence was more important to him.

He wants the reward from the military parade? Taking me in as his disciple is the easiest way? Zhou Shu frowned. What does this mean?

Zhen Cai was really not that smart.

“Tell me what the reward for the military parade means first. Then I’ll tell you why I’m a ranked martial artist,” Zhou Shu said.

“What do you mean?” Zhen Cai said. “His Majesty allowed you to participate in the military parade. Master said that you might receive a reward. The reward is useful to him. If you become his disciple, you will have to give that reward to him.”

Zhen Cai spoke for a while, and Zhou Shu asked a few more questions. But Zhen Cai didn’t care much about this matter, so he wasn’t clear about the details.

In the end, Zhen Cai became impatient.

“Are you done yet?! If my master wants to take you in as a disciple, you should thank your ancestors for your good fortune! Don’t be ungrateful!

“Also, aren’t you a Forging Apprentice? Why did you suddenly become a ranked martial artist?”

Zhen Cai was persistent. He really cared more about this.

“Do you know why?” Zhou Shu said. “Because I’m a genius!”

Zhou Shu didn’t waste any more words. He used the Visualization of the Five Mountains’ True Form technique again, and an enormous amount of spiritual power suddenly surged into Zhen Cai’s sea of consciousness.

Zhen Cai’s eyes suddenly widened and then started to lose focus.

Zhou Shu frowned deeply. The only useful information he had obtained from these two was that Zhu Chuanfeng wanted to make him his disciple because of the military parade.

The emperor allowed me to participate in the military parade? Zhou Shu was somewhat puzzled. Is this for real?

He had never heard of a Forging Apprentice participating in the military parade.

1

But Zhen Cai didn’t look like someone who would lie.

Even if the emperor allowed him to participate in the military parade, what was the reward?

There was too little information, and Zhou Shu could not analyze anything.

In the end, he decided not to think too much about it. He picked up Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai's corpses and left the woodshed. He quickly disappeared into the night while avoiding the gazes of the people in the brothel.

...

When the first ray of sunlight rose, a maid was walking along the corridor with a basin of water. Suddenly, a door creaked open in front of her, and a man carefully walked out.

The maid blushed when she saw the man's face.

In this brothel, although she saw many men every day, there were not many who were so handsome.

The handsome man put his index finger to his lips and shushed her.

Before the maid could react, the handsome man had already walked out.

The servant girl looked at the room where the handsome man walked out. There was no movement in the room. Miss Hongxiu must have been so happy last night...

Zhou Shu walked out of the brothel. Cheng Yong and the others were nowhere to be seen. He didn't know if they had stayed here last night or if they had gone home.

After dumping the corpses last night, Zhou Shu had returned to the brothel to avoid suspicion. The main reason was that if he didn't come here, he wouldn't have anywhere else to go.

But after returning to the brothel, he naturally engaged in another battle.

Not every man could remain calm.

Moreover, last night was no longer a matter of being calm and composed. Who could resist the temptation of a peerless beauty lying there?

In any case, Zhou Shu almost couldn't take it anymore. He had spent the entire night practicing the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form. Otherwise, he would really transform into a wolf—

Although it didn't matter what he did since this place was...

Facing the unconscious woman, he really couldn't bear to do it.

After leaving the brothel, Zhou Shu walked out of the city gates. Just as he was about to return to the 0th Workshop, he suddenly thought of something. After pondering for a moment, he changed directions and strode in a certain direction.

...

"Everyone, listen up! We are going to set off!" Meng Bai rode on his horse, and his expression was calm as he shouted in a voice that wasn't that loud and clear.

"Understood!" A sound resembling a thunderclap resounded as all the generals urged their horses back to their respective camps. The great army was about to set out!

The endless army of soldiers slowly moved forward. Sun Gongping blended in with the group. He had the Spring Embroidered Saber on his waist and wore golden armor, looking very eye-catching in the group.

Not far away, Emperor Yuan Feng and his court ministers were standing side by side. They were here to send off the army.

Clang!

Suddenly, the sound of a zither rang out on a hill beside the path.

Swish!

Almost as soon as the zither sounded, within the great army, countless longbows were drawn at the same time and aimed at the hill.

Several figures flew into the sky and charged toward the hill.

“Stop!” Mi Ziwen’s voice rang out in time to stop everyone.

On the hill, Zhou Shu was already drenched in cold sweat.

How careless!

If I was killed as an assassin, it would be an unjust death!

He visualized the Five Mountains’ True Form and tried his best to calm himself down. He placed his hands on the zither and played.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

In his previous life, Zhou Shu had only learned how to play the zither in a university club. He was just a dabbler.

But in this current situation, there was an endless army slowly advancing at the foot of the hill. In the distance, the emperor and important ministers were even looking over.

Zhou Shu sat at the top of the hill, his clothes fluttering in the wind. He played the zither with both hands. To put it in simpler terms, he was extremely dashing!

Mi Ziwen smiled and stole a glance at his teacher.

Meng Bai sat on his horse, slightly surprised. But Mi Ziwen still noticed a flash of special charm in his eyes.

If Mi Ziwen had to interpret it, it would be, “This child is very thoughtful.”

Mi Ziwen nodded slightly and mumbled, “Thank you, Second Brother!”

He held his head high and puffed out his chest. A heroic spirit rose in his chest. Second Brother, don’t worry. We will definitely return triumphantly!

In the distance, when Emperor Yuan Feng heard the sound of the zither, he was also a bit surprised. “Did you arrange this?”



The court ministers shook their heads, denying that they had arranged it.

“So, is this a spontaneous action of the civilians?” Emperor Yuan Feng nodded. “The military and civilian relationship of Great Xia is still very harmonious.”

“Father, I seem to know that person. He’s not a civilian but an official of the Imperial Court of Great Xia...” Yin Wuyou whispered in Emperor Yuan Feng’s ear.

Emperor Yuan Feng was startled. “An official? How come I’ve never seen him before?”

“His official position is too low, so he doesn’t have the qualifications to meet you, Father,” Yin Wuyou said. A workshop superintendent is a ninth-rank official, so he can also be considered an official. Urm, an official the size of a sesame seed is also an official. That’s right!

“He is the superintendent of a workshop in my Forging Division. His name is Zhou Shu.”

“Zhou Shu? That Zhou Shu?” Emperor Yuan Feng was a little surprised, but then he nodded. “He’s quite considerate. Great General Meng spared no effort in recommending him, and he specially came to send the army out to battle. He seems to be someone who knows how to repay kindness...”

Before Emperor Yuan Feng could finish his sentence, a song suddenly rang out from the hill in the distance. The song was a bit strange, but when combined with the impassioned zither music, it unexpectedly made people’s blood boil.

“Vigorous when facing the beatings of ten thousand heavy waves,

“Ardent just like the rays of the red sun.

“Having courage like forge iron and bones as hard as refined steel,

“Having lofty aspirations and excellent foresight.”

For a moment, even Emperor Yuan Feng forgot to continue speaking.. He listened to the song seriously and clenched his fists.