

E Monarch 246

Chapter 246: 'Great Auctioneer' Tang Yuan's Interpretation of Aristocracy

A faint music floated from upstairs, and echoed down in the hall. The musical composition wasn't a rare masterpiece, but no one could see the people who were playing it. Somehow, this added a touch of elegance to this mediocre musical composition.

On the floor was a unique green-blue carpet; it was abnormally thick. The people walking on it felt a sense of warmth and luxury even though its color wasn't glamorous in particular!

Every table had a postcard with a name on it. The first row was naturally reserved for the Royal Family; they were the cranes in this flock of chicken. Four of the tables were designated for their seating.

Everyone thought, [this Aristocratic Hall is truly great; even the Royal Family hasn't been given a private area...]

Moreover, people inside this hall felt that they themselves had truly risen in the society. They started to believe that they were in the ranks of genuine nobles since they weren't too far removed from the Imperial Family. [Isn't this what aristocracy means?]

Everyone except for the members of the royal family felt very cheerful because of this.

The second row was for the major families. There was no division in accordance with their ranks. The third row was for the descendants of officials, as well as rich noblemen. And the fourth was reserved for the other rich and powerful of the Tian Xiang City.

Separating each row was a curtain of pearls hanging from above. This screen hazily covered a part of a person's head sitting ahead, which made it difficult for people to see the person sitting in the row in front of theirs...

Every nook and corner stationed a 'red-crowned crane incense burner'. It seemed like these cranes were blowing blue smoke. The smoke was rising spirally in the air, and this wafting smoke made the atmosphere seem more peaceful.

Some people had arrived early, and had been waiting for half-a-day. However, they didn't seem one bit impatient; in fact, they seemed to be brimming with vigor and excitement.

Dozens of young women wearing light-yellow clothes were serving tea in small cups. Their clothes and graceful disposition made them look like butterflies. They looked quite pretty as they moved around easy-mannered, yet with a sense of propriety.

There was a milky-white tapestry in front of the first row which looked like it had dropped from the sky. The tapestry completely covered what was behind it; it looked like an unusually thick wall.

The sound of music stopped.

Everyone's spirit rose, [finally the opening gong of this show has been rung.]

The tapestry in front of the first row was raised noiselessly, exposing the snow white platform. Then there was a sudden inflow of bright glittering lights. These lights were refracting from gems mounted in the different positions covering a small perimeter of the platform.

There was desk stationed in the middle.

On top of the desk, was a hammer; the hammer which would mark the final decision.

This arrangement was simply fantastic. In fact, it was such a stark contrast to the Magnificent Jewel Hall's set-up — which was wide known as the best auction house in the entire City — that it seemed as if a pheasant had run into a golden phoenix... or a beggar into a prince...

Suddenly, an echo of footsteps drew everyone's attention. The sound of these footsteps made everyone curious, [what kind of colossal person could be behind such footsteps?]

The lights turned off.

A mountainous fat pile of meat walked in, looking around proudly; every step he took looked dignified. The fair skin under his black gown made him appear similar to boiled pork in-between sprouted bread. This entity bounced-about in a lively and a rhythmic manner, taking one step at a time.

“Since everyone here has received the invitation from our hall, all of you are the real aristocrats of the Tian Xiang City. And thus, our honored guests! I, Tang Yuan, am the chief auctioneer of the Aristocratic Hall. On behalf of this hall, I shall represent the three families comprised of the Prince Equivalent, the Jun Family and the Tang Family. I am here to greet the aristocrats on behalf of these families, and extend a very warm welcome to all!” Tang Yuan loudly orated what he had memorized by heart. Then, surprisingly, he bowed after he finished speaking.

Fatty Tang was in-fact still repeating what he had been taught earlier. He was speaking off the speech written on a piece of paper by the Young Master Jun. This voluminous write-up was scripted to create a civilized yet materialistic environment.

There was a warm and enthusiastic round of applause from the audience — not for anything else, but just the line “Tian Xiang City’s Aristocrats”. It did not matter if this praise was genuine or not, because from now on these families could use this title against the people they previously weren’t able to stand up to.

“The Aristocratic Hall, as the name applies, is the hall where only genuine aristocrats can come. Though, what is an aristocrat?” Fatty made great efforts to clasp his hands behind his back. It was a very strenuous task which he had undertaken to put on a formal appearance. As for Fatty getting rid of his weight, one could not say much. He wasn’t exactly short in stature, and his limbs were in proportion to his height. Although he wasn’t exactly tall and powerful, but his physical build was still a bit too much. However, he could not get rid of that fat right away. And try as he might, he was unable to wrap his arms and clasp them behind his back. Nevertheless, Fatty did his utmost to do it in accordance with Jun Mo Xie’s instructions so as to seem graceful, calm, and ‘hiding a few tricks up his sleeves’.

Tang Yuan’s ego was given a boost since he was aware that this was his moment in the limelight. Though, to everyone else, he looked like a black bear which tried to clasp its hands behind its back in an attempt to walk gracefully. In fact, every step he took looked clumsy to them. However, every individual witnessing this scene was doing their utmost to stifle their laughter.

Fatty Tang sweepingly glanced at all sides with dignity, "The so-called aristocrat, is a man on top who has the best of qualities! For example, this — " Tang Yuan turned his hand; in the hollow of his palm was a round object, "I believe everyone here has tasted this crop and knows it as a potato. Everyone knows that this half-a-kg crop can be bought at the local market for three coins. Hence, this can be considered an ordinary vegetable. However! ..."

Tang Yuan stopped at once, and gave a pause since the potato appealed to his appetite.

Everyone was confused because this man was talking about nobility... so why had he just pulled out a potato? This thing had never been served as food to the rich and powerful!

"This half-a-kg 'thing' which is worth three coins is not only cheap, but it also makes convenient meals. All you need to do after getting back home is boil it in water. And then you can eat it. Or perhaps you can cut it into thin slices. In fact, you can continue slicing it as much as you like."

Tang Yuan felt as cultured as a great scholar as he uttered these words. He couldn't help but feel proud of himself. And hence, he smiled in cultured manner. However, in the eyes of the 'noblemen' sitting in the audience, it seemed as if the half-a-kg weighing potato had somehow been pulled out by an elderly female pig. They were left twitching, for it was an unbearable sight!

"However, in a small tavern, it doesn't matter how a vegetable is cut as long as one can finish making a dish out of it. Then, even a cheap potato can be used to earn hundred times the profit!" Tang Yuan spoke in an incessant torrent. "A man eating this 'half a silver coins worth' potato dish at a small tavern is obviously an aristocrat when compared to one consuming the same at home. What aristocrats consume is price! However, even that is of a low level.

"If a restaurant of a higher class serves the same kind of preparation, but at the cost of two to three silver coins, then that would naturally be considered of a higher quality. And again, one will still find it justified if one embraces an escort in a brothel at the Spirit Fog Lake who is skilled in her art, even when she draws out a sliced potato and asks for twenty silver coins. In fact, one cannot stop the price from rising if many individuals decide not to sell their bodies afterwards, and only offer the similarly prepared potato. Even fifty silver coins won't be too much. In any case, the aristocrats visiting the Spirit Fog Lake will not worry about a few silver coins... "

Tang Yuan spoke excitedly since this felt similar to being in a brothel and lecturing a group of its patrons. He continuously winked and smiled in a manner like a man who could understand these things very tacitly.

The hall burst laughing with tacit understanding. As was expected, this made several ladies inside the hall frown. But none more than the one who had accompanied the Second Prince inside the Hall... her beautiful face turned green out of anger...

Princess Ling Meng suddenly heard a burst of laughter from her side; on turning her head, she saw her father, The Emperor, narrowing his eyes while stroking his beard. His eyes flashed with brilliance as if he had just met an old and intimate friend. It seemed as if he was feeling the same immeasurable cheerfulness inside. He couldn't help but cough; and then did it again more vigorously. He spoke in a low and angry voice, "Ahem! Men are not good creatures!"

His Majesty the Emperor coughed embarrassingly at first. He then lowered his head, and held it with both hands, before raising it again after recalling some old memories. He then sat up straight on his seat; almost like a deadpan. He then thought, [Damn! This fatty almost swayed me! However, such a thing happened to me long back...]

"...Naturally if you go to Tian Xiang City's most luxurious restaurant for sliced potato... you will even be in favor of paying a hundred silver coins; even if their potatoes aren't that special!" Tang Yuan extended his finger, and lightly moved it to-and-fro like a pendulum.

This movement was also in imitation of Jun Mo Xie. The Young Master Jun was tall, and his fingers were slender. Therefore, he looked graceful when he made such a gesture himself. Moreover, one could also sense an air of arrogance in addition to grace when Jun Mo Xie made such movements. Tang Yuan had admired this in secret for a long time. His face lit-up after having pulled it off so coquettishly in front of so many people.

It should be mentioned that Fatty's expression greatly divulged from the reality...

Since looking at him from the audience's point of view... Tang Yuan looked like a motionless fat pig with a carrot jutting-out from its hoof, which he was swinging enthusiastically like a pendulum. Many of the audience became stiff, and then shuddered because of this sight. In addition, that unwarranted expression of pride on his face made the hair of every "aristocrat" stand up with disgust. Even those who possessed extraordinary strength were no exception to this. [This fellow is extremely disgusting!]

“A hundred silver coins would be enough to buy potatoes to feed a family of four for five years! However, a person can eat only one sliced potato in a high level restaurant for that price. Moreover, this staple meal will be the cheapest dish no matter where you eat it!”

Tang Yuan’s arms vibrated as he laughed loudly, and said, “Could it be that such noble people just eat a potato? No! What you eat... is elegance; it is grace! What you eat, is status! What you eat, is your taste! What you eat, is also the price! What you eat, is the loneliness of sitting at the top! And only true aristocrats can enjoy this feeling!

“And at this point we can say, ladies and gentlemen, that sitting here in our Aristocratic Hall is the same as sitting at the best restaurant in Tian Xiang City!”

Tang Yuan shouted himself hoarse. Each-and-every muscle in his body shivered as he jumped about emotionally with a fierce look on his face, “This is the genuine aristocratic paradise! Even the water you drink here will be considered a genuine aristocratic commodity! As mentioned before, what we drink is not just water, but the loneliness of being at the top! To be alone — as to experience solitude — is the true mark of a genuine aristocrat!”

A thunderous applause erupted since fatty’s words were well-received by the audience. In fact, the applause continued to resonate for a while.

In another room upstairs, Jun Mo Xie laughed, “Fatty just said that genuine aristocrats consume sliced potatoes and plain water in solitude!”

Chapter 247: Jun Mo Xie’s First Abduction

Jun Wu Yi’s head shook as he broke into laughter. Beside him, even Little Yang Mo was laughing. Though he didn’t understand the true meaning behind those words, the little rascal was aware that the combination of sliced potato and warm water wasn’t delicious.

Tang Yuan wasn’t just extremely fat; his memory wasn’t that good either. He had forgotten the instructions long back. As a result, he wasn’t left with much to go on. This section of the speech was a pure improvisation based on whatever little he could remember. Surprisingly, he had still managed a presentable performance. He was surely a very talented individual.

Fatty Tang was still speaking in an endless torrent. The Young Master Jun was in no mood to listen to the speech again. He turned and smilingly looked at Yang Mo, "How's your mood, Little Miss Yang?"

Yang Mo's pretty little face drooped instantaneously. Usually, he would refrain from retaliating when Jun Mo Xie called him 'Little Miss Yang'. This time however, he snorted and turned his head to leave. The Prince equivalent's son was a clever and mischievous little devil for his age. However, he was just a ten year old boy. He had already been embarrassed in the incident which had previously taken place. Therefore, it was only natural that he would find it hard to remain calm. Moreover, no one had consoled him after that. In fact, even an adult wouldn't have reacted calmly, and would've found it difficult to endure.

"It's no use getting angry," Hit-man Jun snorted as he made no effort to coax the boy. Instead, he crossed his legs, "You know that all you can do is get angry when you meet a bully, and nothing else. You might as well refrain from losing your temper since there is no gain in it."

"What's the use of controlling my anger if there's no gain in it?" Yang Mo had been enduring that pain for a while, and the tears had finally started to fall.

"Calling you a 'little girl' wasn't wrong since you're crying over such a small matter. What are you crying for? If a 'real man' is frequently reduced to tears, he loses respect. Such a man will obviously get bullied," Jun Mo Xie spoke in disdain as he picked up a big apple from a table. He cut out a piece and took a bite of it, "Is crying useful? Will crying solve the problem? You will leave my sight right away if you cry again. Get lost and weep somewhere else! I will not follow to console you. Moreover, I won't try to help you vent your anger."

"I won't cry," Yang Mo quickly wiped his tear, but continued to sob for a little while. He was very attached to the Jun Family's Young Master. "Dad tells me that elder brother Jun is very clever. Can you please tell me what I should do? Those three have been bullying me since childhood. I... I get so scared that I can't even think of anything. And I just want to run away... Elder Brother, can you please tell me... How can I make them stop? Or how I can get revenge, and vent my anger?!"

"Taking revenge to vent your anger? That's not a good way." Jun Mo Xie's eyelid remained motionless as he calmly said, "They are the Emperor's sons. Who is the biggest in this world? The Emperor is! If the Emperor's son wants to bully you, is there anything you can do? All you can do is endure since your family isn't as powerful as theirs."

"I do not want bear it anymore! Elder brother Mo Xie, dad said that you are the smartest, and that no matter can baffle you..." Yang Mo caught Jun Mo Xie's right arm and started shaking it, "I request you elder brother Mo Xie... please give me an idea..."

"Stop it. Stop it. Stop it right now!" Jun Mo Xie hastily pushed his hand away. He then continued impatiently, "Their father is the Emperor, while your father is not. This matter cannot be solved with intelligence. You want me to help you? There is no chance. We don't have the means."

Yang Mo stared blankly for a moment. Then his eyes started getting watery again, and soon the tears gushed out. His tiny mouth had just let out a few sobs when, suddenly, there was a resonant flash in his eyes. His temperament immediately reverted back to the way it was before he had started crying. He became quite, while his eyes opened as round as the full moon, "Elder brother Mo Xie, you just said that their father is the Emperor, while mine is not..."

"Why isn't my dad the Emperor? They are both the sons of my grandfather, the previous Emperor... why is my father merely a Prince, while his elder brother is the Emperor? I am also the blood of the old Emperor. So why is it that they can bully me, and I cannot rebel?" Yang Mo opened his big round eyes as he looked at Jun Mo Xie inquiringly.

"You just said that you also have the blood of the previous Emperor, so this entire matter is clearly your family's internal issue. How would I know 'why'?" Jun Mo Xie appeared somewhat impatient as he spoke, "Your father didn't have future prospects, just like you. He was also bullied since childhood. He didn't dare to rebel or call-on the nonsense that was perpetrated. Therefore, his habit became his nature. In fact, he may be willing to bear the bullying even now when he's a grown up. It's obvious that he didn't become the Emperor. And now, even his son has to deal with bullying."

"I mustn't be bullied again!" Yang Mo suddenly clenched his tiny fists, "I won't be bullied after I grow up! And neither will my descendants!"

"This is no good... the problem is difficult to solve," Jun Mo Xie sighed in a false show of affection.

"Is the Emperor the only person who doesn't have to stand bullying? Will my descendants also be spared if I don't face it?" little Yang Mo asked.

Jun Mo Xie sighed, "I don't know; I really don't know."

"I'm going to become the Emperor just like you told me, ok?" Yang Mo opened his eyes wide. There was a sincere look in them.

"You? You are the previous Emperor's grandson. So, you are naturally entitled." Jun Mo Xie tilted his head as he focused his eyes on the boy, "Yes, you have the basic qualifications, but you fall too short of the other required traits. Hence, you are not qualified enough."

"Then please tell me elder brother Mo Xie, how do I change that? I must not be bullied again!" Yang Mo asked.

Jun Mo Xie was just about to reply when Jun Wu Yi, who was sitting behind him, coughed loudly; his thundering cough had sounded very similar to that of someone suffering from tuberculosis. It was evident that Jun Wu Yi was worried that other people might overhear that conversation. Hence, he tried to muffle this conversation. This deafening cough was indeed worthy of a Sky Xuan expert's name even though it had been limited to just this room.

Jun Wu Yi had been listening to this conversation, and felt that it had started to sound a bit wrong. Though the conversation had started out as an effort to console the child, it had soon taken a completely different direction. Moreover, it had started to tread on a forbidden road, and could possibly bear a very poisonous fruit. It was possible that the method Jun Mo Xie had adopted to coax this boy might end up being etched in his young mind. Hence, the Young Master Jun's advisor tried to indicate that they only needed to keep up with this act until they gathered the financial resources they needed. This process would only take a month or two. However, in case they ended up instigating the Equal Prince's son against the throne, then they might end up regretting it later...

[What is this kid thinking?]

"I am unable to answer this question of yours. Ask your dad when you go back home. I'm sure of what he's going to say: Good that they bully! Good that someone else is also taking up my role. What about it huh? People bully the true and honest," Jun Mo Xie imitated the Prince Equivalent.

"How do you know that? My father speaks exactly like that every time I get bullied. He tells me that I should be bullied, and he even says that I should be bullied more severely," Yang Mo blinked as he looked at Jun Mo Xie with an expression of reverence. [This older brother really is very smart!]

[In fact, even my grandfather used to talk like this...]

Jun Mo Xie snorted and spoke the words of his heart, “I obviously know. I am also aware that you are a little traitor. You will go back and inform your dad about whatever people will tell you. Isn’t it so?”

“I will not betray my friend! My dad told me that people who betray their friends are bad. But I am a good person; I won’t betray my friend!” Yang Mo’s tender face became very red.

“Why are you worried?” Jun Mo Xie glanced at him plainly as he said, “You shouldn’t be. How about I tell you a story first?”

Yang Mo hung his head and dejectedly agreed, “Fine.”

Jun Wu Yi had practically been sitting on the edge of his seat. He finally loosened up and secretly wiped away his cold sweat. [These lunatics have finally stopped their discussion on that sensitive topic. Good thing that they’ve started with a story... I was really worried about the result of that...]

“This story is called the ‘Xuan Wu Gate Coup,” Jun Mo Xie was all smiles. “Li Shi Min was the son of a Prince of the Tang Empire. He had two elder cousins — Li Jian Cheng, the heir-apparent, and Li Yuan Ji. They used to bully their younger cousin a lot. At first, Li Shi Min endured their bullying. However, when it became too much, he murdered them at the Xuan Wu gate. Then, he sat on the throne and became the Emperor. He never got bullied by anyone ever again... ”

Jun Wu Yi also listened to Jun Mo Xie’s story. Not only did he regularly listen to Jun Mo Xie’s short stories, he was also very fond of them. Especially the story called ‘Romance of the Three Kingdoms’, whose contents had left Jun Wu Yi stupefied. Since Jun Mo Xie was telling a story he hadn’t heard before, he naturally listened with rapt attention.

However, as Jun Mo Xie calmly continued telling his story, Jun Wu Yi, whose nerves had just started to relax, suddenly became very taut again. In fact, cold sweat had drenched his clothes down to his undergarments.

The fact that a mere story by the Jun Family's Young Master would actually scare a Sky Xuan expert to such a degree was definitely an unprecedented feat — if not an accomplishment.

[My god... I am an experienced general.] Jun Wu Yi was extremely infuriated by the Jun Mo Xie's actions, [Are you trying to scare me to death? What utter nonsense are you narrating, kid?!]

[Heavens me! You have just incited a revolt. Yang Mo will listen and remember your words. Even if he is a child, he may still hold a grudge... hasn't your story just poured a barrel of oil over the fire?!]

"Good, kill them! Kill them at once! Show them no mercy!" Little Yang Mo waived his arms as he exclaimed in excitement. There was a strange flash in his eyes. Perhaps a desire... maybe it was a thirst... or some other fanatical idea...

Jun Mo Xie's eyes were almost the same. [I've said too much again. How many words can a small child remember? This is a seed, and must be irrigated with a little water to make it a tree. However, it will drown if I throw it directly into the ocean.]

A sudden burst of an exotic smell flowed out from below. In fact, the scent was so powerful that everyone exclaimed in wonder; even the people who had been repressing their emotions. Even the people seated upstairs focused their attention on it.

After much promotion, the auction of the 'Heavenly Wine' had finally begun. On the stage, was an old man of fifty. His posture was upright, and he was dressed entirely in black. He seemed full of excitement and energy, while his concentrated eyebrows were arched like two cold swords.

Even Jun Mo Xie was surprised at seeing this person. [Isn't this the sloppy and negligent Old Song?] He had adorned his fresh attire in the same manner as a soldier would. He wasn't slouching anymore, and was standing straight from his waist up. All in all, he looked like a Military General right now.

"Send a glass of wine before the kill; Song Shang?(2)" Some people in the audience immediately recognized Old Song the moment he appeared on the stage. [There are rumors that Song Shang is a Sky Xuan expert. And now he is an auctioneer for the Aristocratic Hall.]

[Indeed... this is very aristocratic!]

The strong smell of the wine was floating in the air, and everyone was ferociously inhaling that scent. [This wine is worthy of the title of 'Heavenly Grade Wine', just on the basis of its wonderful smell alone.] Suddenly, everyone became somewhat impatient.

The eyes of that black clothed man sitting behind Princess Ling Meng flashed a bizarre light after he breathed in that fragrance. He was the Emperor of a country. Yet he had never come across such a high quality wine. This was an obvious indication of the rarity of this wine's quality.

Notes:

A story from Chinese History.

This used to be Song Shang's tagline. It was mentioned during the wine contest sequence.

Chapter 248: The Gong to Start the Show!

It was no wonder that the Aristocratic Hall was selling such a high quality product. After all, this generation's 'Wine God' Song Shang had carefully fermented this 'Heavenly Wine'!

Even though Song Shang himself hadn't said anything, or admitted to fermenting the wine himself, everyone present couldn't help but think that he had. Song Shang was considered a formidable Sky Xuan hit-man, and was famous for his prowess as a warrior. However, Song Shang's identity as the 'Wine God' was how people had truly etched his character in their hearts.

Several maids started to move about. Each of them was pushing a huge trolley. And each of these trollies each had twelve small... wine glass.

These wine glasses... were nearly one of the smallest wine glasses available. However, it was still extremely exquisite since it was made of silver. Moreover, they looked extremely delicate — like a cicada's wings since its whole body seemed to sparkle.

Besides looking pleasant, these cups made of pure silver also assured people that the wine wouldn't be poisonous since poison would change color on coming in contact with silver. People could drink good wine without a worry on their minds since it would be completely safe.

Three wine glasses were placed on each table. Then, several maids arrived with wine bottles, and started pouring some wine very carefully so as to not spill even half a drop. The cold and extraordinary wine gurgled like a river as it was poured out of the bottles' snout and filled the wine glasses. The hall was covered with an even stronger fragrance as the wine flowed into the glasses. Everyone looked at the glasses in front of them. Many of them, regardless of their status or wealth, could not stop their mouth from watering.

"The main item for this auction is a wine which has never been seen in the mainland — the Heavenly Class Wine! We request everyone to first try the wine. That way, you will all be aware of what is at stake during the bidding," Song Shang's raised voice shook the audience in the hall. Naturally, he was very different from Tang Yuan. It seemed as if a deep and still-lake was standing on the stage as the prominence of a Sky Xuan's demeanor exuded from his body language.

"After trying this wine, I am convinced that everyone will realize that it is a spiritual commodity, and a priceless treasure; no expenses incurred and no price paid will be too much for this wine. It will all be worth it as long as one gets possession of this marvel," Song Shang waved his hand.

"Please."

Everyone had already started coveting this 'never before seen' glorious wine. They impatiently lifted their wine glass as they inwardly cursed the stingy Aristocratic Hall for the small finger-sized cups provided for tasting.

"Everyone must be thinking that these glasses are too small; that they are not big enough to drink properly," Song Shang spoke in an unhurried manner. "I would like to solemnly admit that in this regard... this Hall is guilty. However, I beseech everyone to think — if everyone drank this wine as much as they could, would they be able to truly cherish this 'Heavenly Wine'? Moreover, would you all pay a high price for such wine then? This selfishness is necessary to curtail the greed which would violate this spiritual commodity!"

The guests were all fairly experienced in the ways of life. However, they didn't understand the importance of that line, and therefore, dismissed it with a laugh.

All of them toasted, and then drained their glasses as they laughed. Princess Ling Meng didn't drink her cup; she didn't like drinking in general. Anyway, she wouldn't dare to drink without getting prior permission. The two black clothed men sitting behind her were quite intimidating. So much so, that mere thought of overstepping her boundaries in front of them was enough to terrify her. If it weren't for their orders, she would've already left. Therefore, she had no choice but to pass the wine glass behind to the two men while giving them a disdainful look. Now these two men had three glasses in between themselves.

The two black clothed men behind her were getting somewhat impatient; so much so that they practically on the verge of snatching the glasses. They drained their glasses in one gulp as soon as they received it. The wine left these two men somewhat emotional after entering their bellies. These men had drunk wine from all over the land, but they never had the good fortune to appraise such a high quality commodity. The desire to continue drinking was strong in both of them. They both looked at the remaining glass simultaneously, and then looked at each other; neither was willing to yield.

Young Master Jun figured that the two men in black clothes who had accompanied Princess Ling Meng weren't ordinary. One of those two people was 'that man.' However, if that were true, who in all of Tian Xiang could be considered his equal? Who wouldn't yield in front of him? Who was that other man?!

"..." Unexpectedly, the crowd fell silent after taking the first gulp.

Then there was a sudden sound a while later. In the midst of this silence, a robust barreled-shaped man shouted as he stood up. His voice was full of emotion as he groaned joyously. There was a hint of a queer smell about him.

Everyone turned to the source of the sound, and noticed a man of barely forty years with a bewitched color spread across his face. He had put his hand on his cup, and had suddenly jumped to stand up. There was a foolish gaze on his face as he raised his head and said, "You truly deserve to be called the 'Wine God' after fermenting this mysterious wine. Many of us have toppled after having just one cup. Tell me, when will the auction begin? What is the base price? It does not matter how much money is required, for this head of the family will take back at least ten jars of this wine!"

The big man who had just stood up was actually Tian Xiang City's foremost salt merchant. He was also the head of Tian Xiang City's Chamber of Commerce; Zhao Meng Long.

Though this man's words seemed very vulgar, but everyone refused to reprimand him since they felt like doing the same. Hence, they all nodded in agreement. If it weren't for them being dukes, chancellors and members of great families, none of them would have constrained themselves from saying what they really wanted to.

Only Dugu Wudi, who was sitting on the second row, shouted with a string of dark expression across his face, "Sit down! Speak in accordance to your surroundings! Making a big fuss like that, what's next?! Don't you see the people around you?! Do you think this is an aristocrat mannerism?" Dugu Wudi was very anxious and depressed.

The great general Dugu had come here for several reasons. One of his intentions was to show his support to Jun Wu Yi. However, his real intention had been to witness Jun Mo Xie getting humiliated. He wanted to beat him, and settle the bet that very same day. [One bottle for over ten thousand taels? What a joke! He really is very crafty if he can sell it at such a price. I will win this bet anyhow; that's for sure.]

Who knew that at this point ten thousand silver taels for a bottle of wine wasn't going to be considered expensive. Not only would the wine be sold for that much, but the price will far exceed the original amount. Also, because of the successful sale, he would end up with a debt of twenty five million silver taels. Life was indeed very unpredictable!

How could General Dugu not be depressed? Even if he decided to erase his conscience for this once, it still wouldn't get him out of his problem. Moreover, he had disturbed the meeting of so many people at present. He inclined his head and narrowed his eyes as he angrily looked towards the room where the uncle-nephew duo of Jun Mo Xie and Jun Wu Yi were sitting. [Wouldn't those two be laughing uncontrollably at me right now?]

Zhao Meng Long hiccupped as he sat down cutting a sorry figure. Although he was very powerful merchant in Tian Xiang City, he wouldn't dare to argue with the head of the well-known 'rude and unreasonable' family. He kept the already empty cup down as he sat. Then, he drained the other two cups on his table and gave a profound and satisfied sigh.

His face was full of happiness.

Dugu Wudi turned his head and saw his treasured daughter smiling. Her face was adorned in a happy and satisfied expression as she looked at her own father's expression; it was almost as if she was taking

delight in his misfortune. He couldn't help but snort and threaten, "If you smile like that again, I will start arranging marriage interviews for you from tomorrow!"

Dugu Xiao Yi's laughter suddenly ceased. Her big shining eyes filled with anger, and her pretty face became dark. She turned her head as she panted in rage. She then looked-back at him as she spoke with an angry frown on her face, "Humph! Look at yourself. Are you scared that you are going to lose? Humph! Such a huge debt... I would like to see how you pay it back. You won't be able to pay back twenty five million silver taels even if you sell everything we have. "

Dugu Wudi was extremely infuriated by this, and rambled, "What pay back? Your father has plenty of means! You say that even if your father sells everything, he won't be able to pay the debt off? Is it really that huge a sum? If I truly don't have the money, then I will use my daughter to make that boy my son-in-law. That ought to make up for the debt, and make you happy, right? Humph!"

Dugu Xiao Yi's pretty face became red as she got up to leave in defiance. With a look of utmost disdain, she shouted, "I do not want that! Who would cherish that?!"

She was both angry and anxious. Although she liked Jun Mo Xie, she didn't want to be given to him as a stake in a bet. In that sort of condition... how would her beloved give her any respect?

She suddenly started tearing up. Her eyes started glistening with tears as she stamped her foot. She then turned her tiny waist away without paying attention to her father, and tears continued to fall.

Dugu Wudi was at a loss because he had forgotten to mind himself, and had disrupted things. He hurried to console her. All of the seven 'Heroes and Legends Bravely Rushing Forward' could not attend due to the limited seating. Therefore, only Dugu Ying Yi had been brought along. He was initially laughing at the joke, but was soon found himself kicked on his buttocks.

"Won't you go down?" Jun Wu Yi asked his nephew.

"I feel that something isn't right," Jun Mo Xie frowned and pointed his finger, " 'That man' has arrived. Moreover, he has also brought someone along with him. It's better if I don't invite unnecessary trouble. Therefore, I plan to act cautiously."

“Oh?” Jun Wu Yi’s body shook.

“I think everything will be alright,” Jun Mo Xie laughed mischievously. “I am convinced that Tang Yuan and Yang Mo can handle this matter. I will only make an appearance at a critical point.”

Jun Wu Yi smiled knowingly, but puckered his brows, “I fear that the knowledge of your strength will spread sooner or later. They will all... eventually come to know of it.”

Jun Mo Xie agreed and shook his head, “Therefore, we should rush to develop our Family’s strength in such a way that no would dare provoke us. This way, no one will be able to do anything even when they find out. After all, only the strength which does not diminish is the most powerful of all — money.”

Meanwhile, Song Shang had praised the many interesting qualities of this wine, and had now withdrawn to the side. Song Shang, the ‘Wine God’, had spoken well since he clearly understood the flavor of the wine. And though his explanation fell short of Jun Mo Xie’s, everyone who heard it was now reluctant to leave. In fact, they all wanted to dabble with that good wine. Their hearts had started beating much faster, while the atmosphere had reached a new height of excitement.

Now, as his role as the auctioneer, it was Tang Yuan’s time to take to the stage.

“The auction of the ‘Heavenly Wine’ formally begins! The base price of each bottle is ten thousand silver taels. The price can increase consistently since there will be no upper limit. And because of the limited quantity of this excellent wine, each table can take back fifty bottles at most. Yet, there may be many who won’t get this wine,” Tang Yuan energetically made the announcement.

“May I venture to ask what this auctioneer Tang... meant when he said that many will not receive this wine?” Many people asked impatiently as Tang Yuan’s voice faded.

“It has no special meaning. Only that, Mr. Song has spent his entire lifetime travelling all over the mainland to collect the best quality materials. He has used all of it to brew this wine; nothing more. There isn’t any more of this high quality wine left. Therefore, this is the first and the last auction of this ‘Heavenly wine’!” Tang Yuan sighed.

“Only this one time...!” everyone cried in alarm. They all looked at each other in dismay; [this excellent wine will go permanently out of stock today?]

Chapter 249: Who is worse than whom?

Everyone thought that this was reasonable. [It must’ve been difficult to find the raw materials to ferment such a high quality wine, right?]

[Yes. It’s fair that there’s only this one batch.]

“Since it will only be this one batch... how many bottles are there in total?” this question was asked by a person who wasn’t necessarily an authority on wines. In fact, she hadn’t even tasted the wine — for it was Princess Ling Meng.

Fatty Tang answered her question despite being astonished by it, “The total number of wine bottles on auction is: three thousand. And no matter the price — wine such as this ‘Heavenly Wine’ appears only briefly. Therefore, just drink it! Even if it means that this wine will get finished!”

“Three thousand bottles...!” People who were very fond of the wine exclaimed. Three thousand bottles was a lot; it would be considered a massive number. However, one had to remember that many people were invited for the auction, and at least a hundred people were participating in it. Therefore, each would be able to obtain only thirty bottles on an average.

However, the upper limit of purchase for each person was fifty bottles. Moreover, in the first row was the royal family, and behind them were all the great houses of the Kingdom. These people would certainly take initiative and spend money so as to not return empty handed. It was likely that they would take turns in procuring for their needs. On top of that, representatives from over a dozen such great families were present here. Their consumption would reach around eight hundred bottles of wine; at the very least.

Hence, the remaining eighty or so families would have to compete for twenty two hundred bottles. This made it clear that there would be many who wouldn’t be getting any of this ‘Heavenly Wine’.

If one was unable to bid successfully, it was possible that they would forever lose the opportunity to taste wine of such an extraordinary quality.

The competition between the merchants would invariably be unprecedented and bitter.

Many people secretly clenched their fists. They were ready to shout out the price once when the time came.

“Now we formally begin the auction. The first batch consists of fifty bottles! Only one person can win all of this,” Tang Yuan’s fat stomach shook as he smugly announced. He felt that the most important moment of his entire life was upon — holding the hammer, and making the final decision.

“I bid one million taels for these fifty bottles!” A man shouted. Surprisingly, the first person to bid... had actually doubled the price. Some people inwardly cursed the man after hearing this; [arrogant. Sir, this is just the first bid... don’t treat it so much like game. Won’t the prices become sky high when our turn comes because you shouted out like this?]

The person who had just called-out slowly stood up from his seat in the third row. He was wearing a blue gown. It looked as if the ocean was rippling undulated inside its in endless folds. In fact, it seemed to everyone that a thin layer of ‘Blue Ocean’ had suddenly appeared in front of them.

The man leisurely smiled and said, “I am Hai Chen Feng, the leader of Tian Xiang City’s Jin Yang Gang. I have always loved wine. Therefore, I wish to covet the ‘Heavenly Wine’. In fact, I don’t think that one million silver taels is too large an amount for this wine. I ask anyone who I might have offended to forgive me.”

Hai Chen Feng had naturally been brought in by Jun Mo Xie as a precaution against many eventualities. He needed someone he could “trust”. True to the task, Hai Chen Feng had stood up to receive the first shelling of criticisms.

Naturally, there was another reason behind this action of Hai Chen Feng’s. He had done this to announce that Tian Xiang City’s number one underworld faction, the Jin Yang Gang, had undergone a change of leadership. Moreover, he had also demonstrated that ‘Gang Leader Hai’ was taking the Jin Yang gang to the upper echelons of the Tian Xiang City.

Hai Chen Feng's sudden appearance caused everyone's gaze to be immediately drawn to him; like pieces of metal being attracted to a magnet. Hai Chen Feng stood there motionless, but he looked a bit 'under the weather', for his complexion had turned somewhat pale. In fact, Jun Mo Xie, who was watching all this from upstairs, was left puzzled. [Don't tell me that he has sustained serious injuries in these two days? This is becoming too frequent, right? It seems that I will have to train him, and increase his strength at least once or twice. Otherwise things might get risky.]

Only the Young Master Jun could dare to think this this. ...increasing a Sky Xuan expert's strength by two levels on a whim... who would believe that?!

The three princes and the members of all the great families paid very careful attention to him. They all knew that Jin Yang Gang had undergone a change of leadership. However, they hadn't expected that the mysterious new leader would turn out to be a Sky Xuan expert.

It was important to know that Spirit Xuan experts considered themselves above everyone else and rarely interfered in worldly quarrels. Just below the Spirit Xuan experts, were the Sky Xuan experts; they formed the backbone of the world's power houses. Taking the Tang Family as an example; it was one of the most powerful families in Tian Xiang City. However, even its most powerful member was a mere Earth Xuan expert. And now, there was a strong Sky Xuan expert who had unexpectedly become the head of a gang. Even if the Jin Yang Gang was supposedly the city's number-one gang, it still wasn't powerful enough to compete with the latter. Hence, everyone found this to be a bit too outrageous.

However, bearing this Sky Xuan expert to obtain these fifty bottles of extraordinary wine was acceptable. Hence, no one else participated in this bid; for a while.

As the dust settled, everyone saw a black clothed youngster leisurely standing up in the second row. Although his face was covered with a veil, his bearing was extremely graceful. Each and every movement of his' seemed to be comfortably executed. So much so, that it seemed as if he was a reservoir of all the elegance under the sun. Moreover, his conduct was a textbook example of paragon.

This black clothed youngster was the Li Family's Li You Ran.

Li You Ran was attending a public event after many years.

"I bid one million and five hundred thousand silver taels," it seemed from Li You Ran's voice that he was smiling. His voice sounded like a cool breeze passing through a forest on an autumn day; it was clear, and there was no hint of anger in it. "This is the first round of auction for this Heavenly Wine. This is of great importance. This Young Master is also fascinated with this wine. Therefore, I must ask Gang Leader Hai to forgive me."

Li You Ran smiled as he looked at Hai Chen Feng; it seemed that his look was one of admiration.

However, he did not reveal his truest and innermost feelings.

It was just the evening of the day before yesterday when two of his seniors had been dispatched. But, they were forced to return after sustaining serious injuries. And their culprit was the man in front of his eyes; the new leader of the Jin Yang Gang. Although he had come to know that both sides had suffered injuries, how could he allow this auction to go as per Hai Chen Feng's wishes? Especially when his eldest brother-apprentice was sitting right behind him...

Li You Ran's main aim was simply to disrupt Hai Chen Feng's impetus, and test the financial capabilities of the Jin Yang Gang. After all, the commodity on sale would cost millions of silver taels. Hai Chen Feng would be a very brave man if he were to blindly increase the price. In that case, Li You Ran would back down at an opportune moment, and Hai Chen Feng and the Jin Yang Gang would suffer a crippling financial blow. This would also serve as revenge for his two injured senior brother disciples.

"So the Li Family's Young Master is also very fond of wines, huh?" Hai Chen Feng chuckled gently, "This, however, is not a problem. It is only natural that the price will go high. And since that is the case, I bid three million silver taels!"

Hai Chen Feng had never cared for money. Especially now when the Jin Yang Gang's purpose was to help Jun Mo Xie earn profit. Therefore, no matter what price Li You Ran would bid, Hai Chen Feng could surmount it.

However, this price wasn't enough for Li You Ran to consider withdrawing. Moreover, he was also worried that no one else would now dare to compete against Hai Chen Feng. Anyhow, such an opportunity didn't come to him very often. Therefore, he naturally wanted to add a little bit more; what he would add, would keep the price almost the same.

[Three million!]

Everyone present on the scene was a powerful personality in their own merit. And although three million was not a small amount, it wasn't very high either. However, spending so much to buy fifty bottles of wine... sixty thousand per bottle was still quite extravagant. [These gangs will never change... money is dirt to them.]

"Gang leader Hai is very rich; as expected!" Li You Ran laughed calmly as his glance turned as intoxicating as a joyful river. "This Young Master bids three million silver taels... and one copper."

Three million silver taels... and one copper?!

Such a bid was clearly meant as a blatant insult.

Hai Chen Feng was infuriated, and a wave of outrage rose within him. He started breathing violently as he looked at Li You Ran in a cold manner. He said, "Young Master Li's family is truly great... adding just one copper to the three million. He he... However, my heart is untroubled in this regard, and I will not hesitate to spend ten thousand gold taels. Therefore, I bid five million!"

Hai Chen Feng was really mad at Li You Ran. [This boy is extremely annoying! You increase the price, but add only a single copper! This is too strange! Dammit!] He decided to end it with Li You Ran at that moment.

This matter had just become a question of dignity.

"Gang leader Hai, didn't you yourself say that 'it is only natural that the price will go high'? Then why are you getting so mad about this? Such behavior isn't good. He he," Li You Ran said lightly. "Every family here is a noble, and everyone's demeanor is in accordance to that status. This Young Master has merely added to the price without violating any rules. There aren't any stipulations regarding how much we can add. Also, my Li Family is a very small family. Therefore, we cannot afford to add a lot of money; kindly forgive me. However, since Gang Leader Hai feels this way... I will admit that I have sinned since I wish to avoid annoying him!"

Hai Chen Feng's face was pale but he was happy inside. [You try to add more to the price, and I will immediately stop. I will make you bear the burden of this black pot with your own pocket!]

Li You Ran paused for a moment, and then finally said with elegance, "I will bid five million silver taels... and two coppers!"

Hai Chen Feng flew into a rage! He jumped on top of his table, and let out a huge roar, "You, boy, you've gone too far... you..." Just then, he heard Young Master Jun's faint voice... right in his ear. It was similar to that of a housefly, "Let him have it."

Hai Chen Feng was stumped. He started looking around. In the Xuan Xuan Continent, there was no technique-known to send one's voice to others in such a manner. Hai Chen Feng had no idea how that voice entered his ear... [Why does it seem that no else heard that? This is too weird, right?]

"I am telling you to let him have it. Do not bid again; that's an order!" Jun Mo Xie's voice sounded inside Hai Chen Feng's ear once again.

The voice was very strict and commanding; even if it was faint. Hence, he could not disobey that command.

[Yes. I will obey your orders.]

Jun Mo Xie had taken note of Li You Ran the moment he had arrived. He had then searched through the previous Jun Mo Xie's memories, and had come to realize that this was the first time that he was seeing Li You Ran in person.

Jun Mo Xie had a sense of uneasiness the first time he laid eyes on this man. Li You Ran's bearing... whatever he said... or the movements he made — were too perfect!

He was just perfect... regardless of what was at hand.

However, [does such a perfect personality truly exist in this world?] Jun Mo Xie would never be convinced of that.

[The Heaven and the Earth aren't perfect; nothing is perfect in this entire world.]

[Such a perfect person does not exist anywhere in the world!]

Even if Li You Ran demonstrated a “perfect” behavior, Jun Mo Xie knew at a glance that he was actually a fake.

Fake to the core!

Chapter 250: Locked Onto Their Respective Targets

Li You Ran was entrenching his position step by step whenever he spoke, and was drawing Hai Chen Feng into an ambush. Hai Chen Feng was a seasoned Sky Xuan expert and was usually calm. However, he had suddenly gotten angry, and had started behaving violently because of a few spoken words.

This scheme of Li You Ran was as profound as the ocean. He was indeed a formidable enemy.

Jun Mo Xie was certain that Li You Ran would eventually stop bidding if Hai Chen Feng would continue to blindly increase the price. He felt so because if it were him, he would've compelled the price to rise high, and then retreat at the opportune moment.

[Your plan was really good Li You Ran. It's a pity that you met Hai Chen Feng... and behind him — me. And you were doomed in that. This plan would've swindled any other person to fail!]

[You are indeed worthy of applause.]

Therefore, Jun Mo Xie had decided to act decisively, and put a stop to Hai Chen Feng's impulsive actions.

“Ha Ha Ha...” Hai Chen Feng was very experienced in worldly matters. And although Li You Ran had riled him up for a while, he had instantly gotten back his bearings with just a small warning from Young Master Jun.

It was extremely embarrassing for Hai Chen Feng to imagine himself standing atop the table. This was a disgrace to his identity as a Sky Xuan expert. Nevertheless, the lofty and towering Hai Chen Feng suddenly burst into laughter, "The Li Family is worthy of being called 'one of the greatest families of Tian Xiang City'! It is indeed incomparably rich! He He He, I am a mere gang leader. Who am I to provoke the Imperial Preceptor's family? He he. These fifty bottles aren't the only ones with this wine. Keeping in mind Young Master Li's reputation, I will withdraw from this bid since he is so determined to get this batch."

He calmly stepped down after saying this. Then, in the middle of this gathering, he cupped his palm towards Li You Ran as the corners of his mouth rose in a faint smile. "Young Master Li is really fond of this wine. Therefore, I congratulate you for your successful bid in the first round of this auction."

A few words had completely turned an awkward situation around. And those words were truly incisive.

Li You Ran was astonished for a moment. Though no one could make that out since his expression was hidden by the veil he was wearing; not a single ripple of the storm broke past the veil.

Li You Ran was completely puzzled. Hai Chen Feng was falling into his trap. In fact, it had seemed that he preparing to shout ten million judging by the degree of his emotional upheaval. However, Li You Ran had never expected that the leader of Jin Yang Gang would stand down and beat the drums of retreat at such a crucial time. [How is this possible?]

[Do I want the wine? This is a joke! Of course the wine is important to me, but I know that the first two rows are bound to get their fill. In fact, they won't even have to spend a very high price. They may even get it at the base price. How many bottles have I obtained after spending these precious five million silver taels?]

Li You Ran felt that a matter had not gone according to his calculations for the first time in his life. [But Hai Chen Feng's anger didn't seem false. So what's going on? Could one really control themselves in the nick of time? Not only did he withdraw from this meaningless struggle, but he also prevented hurting himself from hurting his reputation. He was almost about to prove that he uses force to bully people...]

[Hai Cheng Feng surely doesn't have such insight, right?]

[Is there a skillful person behind him who might be providing instructions? If there is someone who stopped him when they saw the matter getting out of hand... what method were they using to transmit their instructions?] He was completely puzzled.

This troublesome train of thoughts ran in his mind for a period of time. Li You Ran was staring blankly at first, but he was then obliged to smile and act cordially the next moment. He got up and cupped his hands calmly. He then said, "I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to Gang Leader Hai for allowing me to win this bid."

He laughed gently in self-ridicule before continuing, "I figure that this young master has fallen into his own trap. Gang leader Hai understood the dirty game I was playing. I admire gang leader Hai's wisdom. I hope to seek the brilliant Gang Leader Hai's wisdom whenever I get the opportunity."

Upstairs, Jun Mo Xie could not help but sigh, [Li You Ran handles matters in a watertight manner. He is extraordinary!]

A person discerning this matter would see that Li You Ran had deliberately tried to disrupt the bidding. Moreover, it was clearly visible that he had raised the price in a way which would certainly embarrass Hai Chen Feng. Everyone jeered at him when his plan unexpectedly failed, and he had to spend a monumental five million silver taels to obtain those fifty bottles.

However, Li You Ran's manner of speech suddenly became very frank. He had then taken responsibility for his actions, and admitted defeat with a smile. This act demanded a lot of courage and strength of character.

The two black clothed men behind Princess Ling Meng looked at each other. Their eyes were full of admiration, "He adapted to the situations as they arose. This Li You Ran is some guy! He is a rare individual in this generation," Mr Wen smiled as he said this in a low voice. "Could it be that you don't think him to be clever?"

The other black robed man was the current Emperor of the Tian Xiang Empire. His vision was sharp and profound. He answered in an equally low voice, "Indeed, I think he is quite worthy. However, the man behind Hai Chen Feng is even more commendable. He gave his instructions without leaving a trace; no trace will be found even if you look for it. Moreover, I believe that person's wisdom is in no way inferior to Li You Ran's. In fact, it's possible that this man may even be better than Li You Ran!"

“Another man behind Hai Chen Feng?” Mr. Wen did not understand.

“Mr. Wen, think. Li You Ran’s words had pushed Hai Chen Feng into a very perilous trap. He knew that Hai Chen Feng would compete when he raised the price by five hundred thousand. However, he had left Hai Chen Feng with no choice but to get angry when he added just a single copper. Moreover, Hai Chen Feng was in a completely confused state of mind. And then Li You Ran added only two coppers in his third bid. Hai Chen Feng was already unable to restrain his anger by then. It was improbable that he would think clearly from there-on. He was likely to become a ‘mad bull blinded by anger’ and would’ve resolutely charge forward. In fact, he would charge stubbornly even if he up against a thick wall which was had to break through.”

Mr. Wen closed his eyes and looked back at everything that had happened. He realized that it was true. Hai Chen Feng had forgotten the manners of a Sky Xuan expert, and had gone into a fit of rage. Shockingly, he had jumped on top of his table in extreme anger; completely disregarding his image. It had seemed as if he was about to explode.

“He then jumped on to the table, and said this, ‘You, boy, you go too far! I...’ After that, he suddenly stopped. This is the point when one usually doesn’t stop. It was as if a massive river had been suddenly halted in the middle... by something. Then he calmly stepped down from the table, and cupped his hands to admit defeat. This was an exceptional counterattack. In fact, it can even be said that this was a very dangerous counter attack.

“Just figure this; Li You Ran isn’t looking around the hall. I reckon that he and I have the same suspicion. Therefore, nobody can understand what sort of an enlightened person that man is. Or what kind of method he is using to instruct Hai Chen Feng. This is why I said that the man behind Hai Chen Feng is truly difficult to deal with. Whether it is his wisdom... or his extraordinary methods,” His Majesty the Emperor smiled.

Mr. Wen evaluated at the situation accordingly. Li You Ran was deliberately not looking all over the place. However, he was still spying around secretly. He naturally couldn’t keep this hidden from Mr. Wen’s eyes.

His Majesty’s eyes were sparkling with the splendor of his wisdom and foresight, “Wen, if you or I were in Hai Chen Feng’s place, and were receiving such insults — we also would not have been able to control ourselves. Wouldn’t you agree? That is why I believe that Hai Chen Feng was stopped by someone else. And that person chose a very suitable moment to act. He caused that Li You Ran to suffer by making him incur a huge loss. This person may be the main reason behind Hai Chen Feng suddenly taking control of the Jin Yang Gang. He He, the original leader of this gang was called Jin Feng Lie, right?”

Paying attention to a great many events, the country's Emperor had surprisingly remembered the name of the head of an underworld faction — one could say that the Emperor was truly prodigious!

"I also suspect that this person may be the true organizer of this auction," The Emperor's expression was a bit cold. "We might be able to glean some information about this person if we observe Hai Chen Feng."

Mr Wen looked at Hai Chen Feng. His eyes were shining as he said, "If that doesn't work, this old man will seize Hai Chen Feng and interrogate him slowly. This old man can extract information from him even if he is strong and hard-headed."

Mr. Wen's tone was simply too much. Hai Chen Feng was a Sky Xuan expert. Only a few people were stronger than him. And now this person was talking about capturing and interrogating him.

"Hai Chen Feng is the Blue Master's apprentice." His Majesty smiled, "We cannot provoke the Blue Master. In fact, we must not provoke him. The gains we will achieve will not make up for our losses." Then he leisurely looked at Tang Yuan, "There are many methods which can be used to gather information."

Li You Ran indifferently deposited the money he was required to pay. And he did it under the public eye. A man from the Aristocratic Hall followed him, and made preparations for handing over the wine. Li You Ran, however, took a seat and rested in peace.

"This Li You Ran is a formidable character," Young Master Jun concentrated as he looked at the man downstairs. To him, that man was a definition of a threat. And according to his accurate intuition, the threat from Li You Ran was actually quite huge.

Jun Mo Xie couldn't allow any threat to exist owing to his instinct as the number-one assassin in his previous life. Especially something that could threaten his life. Usually, his first thought in such situations was to destroy the threat.

Jun Wu Yi smiled as he intentionally-or-otherwise looked in the same direction, "Li You Ran is the eldest grandson of the Imperial Grand Preceptor. He is also the leading figure amongst the Li Family, the Meng

Family and many other smaller families' younger generation. He has never attended this kind of an event before, Mo Xie. He is here in person to show face in Grand Preceptor Li's stead."

"I do not care about their face. Their face can be as big as an ass. It has no meaning as far as I am concerned," Jun Mo Xie smiled. "What I genuinely care about is... him spending that much money," A ray of light flashed in his eyes as he said this.

[I must keep Li You Ran in my line of sight!]

Hit-man Jun had secretly decided.

The first batch of the fifty bottles had been sold for an unexpectedly high price of five million silver taels... and two coppers. Tang Yuan was very excited as he brought out the second batch of fifty.

"This person bids one million silver taels for those fifty bottles. I don't know who else will increase the price?" Hai Chen Feng stood up once again. He was more than qualified to make this bid.

It was only natural that he would make this bid. Moreover, it would be considered very strange if he didn't make any more bids.

"I bid one million five hundred thousand," A sharp and sweet sound resounded; it did not sound too urgent... nor did it sound too slow.

Everyone turned to the source of the sound and were surprised to see that it was Princess Ling Meng. She had unexpectedly bid such a high price!