

E Monarch 286

Chapter 286: Elder Brother Will Remain at the Top... Even if the Sky Falls Down!

Hundreds of tables were placed in a circle. A small space had been left vacant in the middle. [Would there be a performance at this feast? Will the senior men sing and dance? A normal man may not do it; perhaps those sour and gifted scholars will...]

“The Golden Scholarly Feast has now commenced; everyone is requested to take their seats.”

Jun Mo Xie took his seat. He looked up, and saw someone opposite him. It was none other than the Young Master of the Li Family, Li You Ran. The Young Master Li looked around. He saw the Young Master Jun acting like his debauchee self, and smiled faintly. He then lifted his wine cup to relay his best wishes. Jun Mo Xie sneered and took that opportunity to cross his legs by putting one over the other. This was his signature debauchee-move.

Then, a fragrant smell hit Jun Mo Xie’s nose. It came from behind. He didn’t need to look behind to know that this clean and fresh fragrance was coming from Dugu Xiao Yi. It wasn’t very common, but he was familiar with it. He had been around her several times. So he realized that the Dugu Family would be seated behind him. The Young Master Jun hadn’t turned around to look, but the ‘lady-killer’ Jun could distinctly feel a pair of eyes foolishly staring at his back.

There was another pair of beautiful eyes which were gazing at him from a seat above. Jun Mo Xie raised his eyes to look. Unexpectedly, he came to realize that those eyes belonged to Princess Ling Meng. Her cheeks turned bright red as she turned her head away upon meeting his gaze.

[What’s the matter with that woman? Why was she looking at me like that... she has taken that bullsh*t blood oath... Even if she takes it seriously — I don’t!]

[Wouldn’t the thought of that give me a back-ache?] The Hitman had deliberately concealed his murderous aura since this wasn’t the place to exhibit it. Therefore, he didn’t notice when someone appeared beside him. He turned his head and saw that it was Dugu Xiao Yi. She had come to converse with him. However, she had just seen him exchange ‘flirtatious’ glances with Princess Ling Meng. Therefore, she pinched him hard instead of giving him a tongue-lashing...

Jun Mo Xie bared his teeth. [How can I be bullied by that woman in such a way?] Jun Mo Xie's was unable to turn his head properly. So, he couldn't see what he had touched in his attempt to pinch her back in retaliation. However, that part of her body was extremely smooth and supple; he felt as if he had pinched a sponge. It was very full and elastic; it felt very good.

"Ah!" Dugu Xiao Yi screamed in agony while Jun Mo Xie exclaimed in admiration. He was as thick-skinned as the city walls, but his face had unexpectedly turned red. He withdrew his hand very quickly. However, everyone had looked at them in unison and had witnessed the entire scene.

The entire hall watched as the little girl's face turn red. She straightened-up into a very awkward posture. Her small hands were subconsciously massaging the area where she had been pinched. She was visibly embarrassed and distressed. Her eyes had started to well-up.

Jun Mo Xie had accidentally pinched her fragrant posterior; everyone figured that the little girl would knife-out the life of him.

The sounds of scoffs and discussions started to well-up shortly after everyone witnessed this scene. The youngsters in the main hall had started to give Jun Mo Xie hate-full looks.

[He takes liberties with a woman in such a serious situation...! That brat is the city's biggest pest! Not only did he harass the Dugu Family's little gem... he did it out of lust...]

Dugu Xiao Yi had come up to Jun Mo Xie in high spirits. But she then saw Jun Mo Xie and Princess Ling Meng exchange amorous gazes. This annoyed her greatly. Therefore, she pinched him hard, and then turned around to leave. She had hoped that Jun Mo Xie would follow-after her to coax. Who would've thought that Jun Mo Xie would silently and quickly pinch her 'there' the moment she'd turn? However, he had done it at the first opportunity. He straight-away grabbed her butt and pinched; it seemed as if he had rehearsed the whole thing.

Everyone watched as the little girl's neck turned red with embarrassment. She flew to her seat and buried her head into her stomach. Then, she tried to cover her face with her little hands. She was conscious that she had been touched at that spot in front of several people. [That little rascal pinched me 'there' even though I haven't told him about my feelings yet... so how could he do that?]

The little girl's posture appeared somewhat strange... the place where she was pinched hurt. She couldn't walk fast. In fact, the pain remained even after she had taken her seat. So, she had no option but to re-adjust her posture a couple of times. And, the resultant posture appeared a bit strange...

Young Master Jun was perspiring all-over. He hadn't expected this to happen; ...that he would grab that part... He then became aware of that feeling... that a green apple had ripened into a sweet peach... and he had taken a nibble...

He couldn't help but think what would've happened if she hadn't turned... [Where would I have grasped if she hadn't turned?] He smiled mischievously and twirled his fingers. It seemed as if he could still feel the satin-like sensation on his fingers. He couldn't help but bring them to his nose and smell the fragrance ...as his face became vulgar.

"Shameless! He's such a degenerate!" Everyone-present on the scene was red with anger. They turned their goat-like beards up; [that Third Young Master Jun is very shameless! He's a very vulgar man! I'd like to chop this little scum's hand off!

The young men looked at Jun Mo Xie with extreme disdain and cursed him. They cursed him inwardly in rage, but subconsciously rubbed their own two fingers together. They were then lost in the infinite reverie... thinking... how nice it would be if they could feel such a sensation. [One of Tian Xiang City's two beauties' fragrant butt!]

Soon they were overcome with pleasure. They moved their own fingers to their noses to take a sniff... [ah, such a wonderful and fragrant smell...]

Princess Ling Meng was seated many tables away; she didn't know what to think. Her pretty face turned red as she felt a strange itch on her own butt. She snorted since felt a vague envy in her heart.

Suddenly, everyone started to hear heavy footsteps coming from outside. It was clear that an important personality was approaching the Hall. The teachers of the Institute, and the patriarchs of the different families, entered... with sage-like but fast, old yet vigorous, earnest yet grave footsteps.

The main hall fell silent.

One couldn't trifle with such people.

Then... came the three princes... beaming with happiness.

The Golden Scholarly Talent Feast had officially commenced.

Various sorts of delicious foods were brought to the hall by an unceasing line of servants. The fabulous smell assailed every nostril. However, even a bold debauchee like Jun Mo Xie knew not to make a move.

It was because... the Emperor hadn't arrived yet.

The most important individual is always the last to make an appearance.

Admittedly, Jun Mo Xie didn't care much for the Emperor. However, he didn't desire to stir unnecessary trouble in such eventful times.

Then, everyone quickly sat-up straight since they suddenly heard heavy footsteps coming from outside.

Everyone looked solemn yet respectful as they stretched their necks to see who it was...

What they saw was merely... a large fat person being escorted by a court eunuch.

They recognized the man once he had walked all the way over; it was Tang Yuan!

Everyone was shocked at first. And then they burst into laughter. Tang Wan Li stood up; his face belied his rage, "You little devil! What insanity are you displaying?"

Tang Yuan's face was awash with debilitating fear! He walked as slowly as a zombie — taking his time with each stupefied step he took. His waist was bent-low for the most outrageous reason. A chair was stuck to the backside of his body. He was carrying a round chair on his butts. It seemed as if the chair was growing-out of his butt...

The Emperor's questions to Fatty weren't aimed Jun Mo Xie. His highness had thought-himself-clever and focused on Jun Wu Yi alone. But wasn't that the same thing in Fatty Tang's eyes?

[This matter is fuc*ed!] This was the only thing which was going-through Tang Yuan's mind during his audience with the Emperor.

He had obeyed the Emperor's order to leave, and had gotten up. But he had forgotten to give his salutation since he was beside-himself. He started to wobble at once. But his butt was too big... and the chair was too small for him. So, as he stood up... the chair was raised. It had got stuck to his backside. And it remained glued there the entire walk to this hall. But Tang Yuan was so overcome with anxiety that he hadn't noticed the chair... or its weight. In fact, he hadn't become aware of it until that very moment...

He came back to himself after he heard everyone's laughter and his grandfather's rebuke. He opened his eyes wider, and realized that he had reached the main hall. He suddenly became teary... like a small child who had been wronged.

"Ha ha! Young Master Tang is very talented! His behavior genuinely stands-out from the masses! He's such a great guy! He must've feared that he may not find a suitable seat at the Palace... so he has brought his own seat! He's outstanding!" Meng Hai Zhou wasn't going to let this opportunity slip. He took the lead and made that comment. His words added oil to everyone's laughter.

Tang Wan Li's face swelled purple. He soared-up and struck that round chair hard. It shattered it into many pieces. His beard fluttered as he then looked around and gazed at everyone. However, he lowered his head once he realized that he couldn't stop the laughter.

He sighed when he saw his grandson in such a state. The old man's heart ached with sorrow. [I've known his Majesty for many years... has he forgotten the years of our friendship... why didn't he stop this mishap? However, this isn't the time to pose such questions; it's better to let this matter go.]

However, he then felt a person come-over and stand beside them. If he was not mistaken... then it was the Young Master Jun.

“Buck up, Fatty!” Jun Mo Xie’s voice was somewhat coquettish. He swayed as he spoke. However, Tang Yuan realized what was happening in reality. Jun Mo Xie’s expression was full of warmth. He had decided to deal with this situation.

“Elder Brother will remain at the top... even if the sky falls down! Come, have a drink with me!”

Then, Jun Mo Xie laughed heartily. He had initiated the Art of Unlocking Heaven’s Fortune as he had spoken his words, and had sneaked the real meaning into Tang Yuan’s ears. Everyone else had only heard the last few words since he had spoken them in his normal mode.

“Elder Brother will remain at the top... even if the sky falls down!” These words brimmed with domineering fearlessness. It came like a burst of reassurance and put Fatty’s mind at ease. Tang Yuan’s heart shook. It seemed like he was lost before... but had suddenly seen the light. He looked up; Jun Mo Xie’s expression didn’t matter. He then suddenly laughed mischievously and said, “It appears that the wine they’re serving the guests in this feast is from our Aristocratic Hall! It won’t do if the wine at such a big party isn’t genuinely good! It seems that the Three Princes haven’t appropriated all of it. That’s good; isn’t it?!”

The two men laughed mischievously as they walked away together.

Tang Wan Li gaped in astonishment. His grandson had appeared very disheartened a moment ago. [It seemed as if he can’t feel any love towards morality since his birth...! That little devil Jun Mo Xie started to talk about drinking... and he suddenly reverts to his old self...!]

[What’s this about?]

Chapter 287: A Very Generous and Easy Target!

Most people of the older generation had been seated with the youngsters of their families. However, they didn’t wish to share a drink with their children or grandchildren. So, the elders started to walk over to each other’s tables in order to form groups. They then deviated from the original seating arrangement and sat with people of their own generation.

Therefore, it was only logical that Jun Mo Xie, Tang Yuan, Dugu Xiao Yi and her brothers — ‘heroes and legends bravely rushing forward’ — would be seated together on two tables in close proximity.

It wasn’t the first time they had done this. The young man who sat on the table opposite was Li You Ran; he was facing Jun Mo Xie... same as before.

This was another coincidence...

Tang Yuan had wanted to say something, but Jun Mo Xie used his stealth voice to restrain him. He secretly told the Fatty that this wasn’t the time to talk. Even if it was an important matter... it was better to put-off the discussion for later.

Jun Mo Xie had realized that they were being watched by four distinct pairs of eyes ever since Fatty Tang had arrived in the hall. He believed that the four individuals would come to know of any movement that Fatty Tang might make. However, they couldn’t detect the Young Master Jun’s Art of Unlocking the Heaven’s Fortune. His sound was concealed from the other people, and they wouldn’t be able to hear his words.

[We can’t take any special actions at present. Fatty and I can’t discuss anything even after this feast ends... not before we reach home!]

Jun Mo Xie cracked several jokes. Tang Yuan’s brows were raised as he laughed loudly. He was slowly reverting to his original-self. He wasn’t fully reinstated, but his mood had been lightened; more or less. Dugu Xiao Yi had been on the verge of breaking into tears, but she had started to chuckle as well. She looked at Jun Mo Xie ferociously and angrily said, “Ignore this lecherous beast!” However, it was obvious that she wasn’t as angry anymore.

This girl’s behavior was adorable. Her temperament was somewhat irascible, but it kept fluctuating regularly. There was nothing complex about it. Jun Mo Xie’s mood lightened in that girl’s company and he started to feel relaxed. He started to smile since he felt very comfortable around her.

“I request the honored guests from the Silver Blizzard City to kindly enter!” Everyone’s eyes turned to the doorway as the court eunuch who was acting as the master of ceremonies made this announcement. The Young Master Jun sensed his grandfather’s facial muscles contract for a moment

before they returned to normal. His heart surged with anger at the sight of the Silver Blizzard City's people.

The Silver Blizzard City's people were unexpectedly the honored guests of the Tian Xiang City. Jun Mo Xie sneered as he narrowed and raised his eyes. [Just look at the damage you've done to our Jun Family; I won't forgive you that easily!]

Xiao Han and Mu Xue Tong entered under everyone's gazes. They were followed by Han Yan Meng and Xiao Feng Wu. They honored guests were clad in white clothes. They seemed like flowers that had bloomed beyond the reach of the mortal world.

Everyone felt refreshed and cool as the four individuals entered the hall.

Jun Mo Xie watched as those four individuals sat at that 'separated' table. He sneered inwardly. He didn't have any interest in them at that point. [But how did that Xiao Feng Wu recuperate so much in such a short time?] He could distinctly recall the strength he had used the last time he met the youngster. Xiao Feng Wu looked a bit unhealthy and pale, but he could walk properly. This was totally baffling.

[The recovery shouldn't have been this quick! Shouldn't it have taken several days?]

Suddenly, he became conscious that the Hong Jun Pagoda had started to rotate again. This made Jun Mo Xie very happy. This feeling was somewhat similar to the time when he had fought and grabbed the strange jade pendant from the Sixth Elder. However, that feeling was much stronger now...

Jun Mo Xie's mind started to race; [is it possible? ...the last time I fought and retrieved that treasure... has another one appeared?] Jun Mo Xie pondered. He couldn't help but feel that he had come upon a treasure — a treasure that was ripe for looting. He couldn't help as his spirits rose. [The moment we're out of the door... this elder brother will play a robber. It's a pity that such a mysterious thing is getting wasted on that brat!]

[Indeed, these people have been generous targets! They've delivered me such treasures... not once, but twice!]

He lifted his gaze and saw Han Yan Meng pull a face at him.

Jun Mo Xie observed the movement of her lips, and quickly understood the meaning behind her actions. He skills had made it easy for him to understand the movement of her lips; “Obedient nephew, your aunt is here.”

[This girl lacks class; but I’ll teach you! This girl dares to pretend to be from an older generation!]

The Young Master Jun lazily turned his head away.

“His Majesty, the Emperor has arrived!”

The court eunuch’s sound resounded loudly. The Emperor had finally showed-up. Jun Mo Xie cursed from the pit of his stomach; [bullsh*t! The food is getting cold...]

Several clichéd formalities followed, and the Golden Scholarly Talent Feast commenced at last. Jun Mo Xie interpreted things in his own way, and naturally... started to eat. However, those hard working and capable Gifted Scholars behaved rather properly, and hadn’t yet made a move.

His Majesty eventually declared, “The high-ranking individuals may continue as they wish!” Jun Mo Xie started to gorge himself with great speed after he heard this line. Most people waited on the sidelines and hesitated... but he had devoured half a bear into his belly.

“Can’t you be a bit civilized? You’re eating like a maniac while the others haven’t even started!” Dugu Ying smiled as he looked at Jun Mo Xie with disdain and positioned his hand midair.

He was a son of the Dugu Household. His skin wasn’t thin. However, the Young Master Jun’s skin was thicker than a corner of the city-walls. A few people had decided to look for the yellow and greasy sweet smelling bear-paw... only to find that it was resting inside Jun Mo Xie’s mouth by the time they stretched their hands to retrieve it. In fact, more than half of the dish had landed in his belly by then. His speed was incredible.

This action as well as the speed at which he devoured the food was near-impossible for the youngsters from the various families to imagine. [You may hail from the military families of Jun or Dugu, but this is the Golden Scholarly Talent Feast! It is a known fact that you don't care for appearances, but you should try to behave a bit reserved in such a situation! Doesn't each family in this hall have enough to eat and drink?] However, this caused the Dugu brothers to start albeit in Jun Mo Xie's steps.

However, the unwritten rules of civility were destined to be doomed when it came to the Young Master Jun. He could go three full days without any food or water in his previous life... and still have enough stamina and focus to complete his mission. Conversely, he could eat three days' worth of food in one sitting.

Moreover, he was on a mission to showcase his to showcase debauchee-self. And, it was only-logical to expect such a behavior from a debauchee. Therefore, he continued to chew spiritedly.

"Civilized? How much is that worth in silvers?" Jun Mo Xie snorted and smiled. He reached-out with his hand towards the center of the table. The large bowl was greasy and somewhat transparent. He frowned as he tasted the soup, "This isn't cooked properly... didn't they taste this?"

Jun Mo Xie could obviously judge the soup's taste. This was a tiger pen's soup, but it needed some more work.

Tang Yuan lifted his bowl to his mouth as well. The seven 'heroes and legends bravely rushing forwards' were shocked at the sight, and their eyes turned round. Their eyes bulged so much that it seemed as if they'd burst. Fatty hadn't even used a chopstick. The adjoining seats hadn't even picked their chopsticks. But the best thing on their table was gone. Unexpectedly, that cheap and fat youngster was ranting nonsense as he ate. [We're from the military... so how can you eat that fast?] "Is your throat a well or what? Damn! Such Speed! How on earth aren't you choking on it?" the seven brothers cursed in unison.

"What soup is this? Why did you snatch all of it?" Dugu Xiao Yi's big eyes turned into crescent moons with happiness. [Brother Mo Xie has only left one bowl on a table of ten people. What does it mean? What does it represent?] The little girl felt quite satisfied as she brought the bowl to her mouth and softly sipped a mouthful of the soup. The smell was somewhat fishy. Then, a radish shaped lump entered her mouth. She chewed on it and realized that the more she chewed... the more fragrant it became.

“It’s the Forehead...” Jun Mo Xie was startled. He then stretched his hand, grabbed a crab dish, and placed it in front of Dugu Xiao Yi, “Try this too.”

The seven brothers were quite shocked at manner in which this scene had unfolded. However, they wanted to eat fast and deftly compete with Fatty Tang. Jun Mo Xie craned his neck and saw Fatty. No sort of civility could prevent Fatty Tang from ignoring such delicacies. He was a great connoisseur of food. The seven Dugu brothers were military brats, but watching him eat with such a speed made them slap their heads. Momentarily, an entirely different scene was created on their table. And then it turned into a bit of a riot.

The center of the table had been full of dishes a moment ago. However, it was suddenly empty. Everyone had used their hands to prop-up the table, and had embraced as many dishes as they could. Each one of them looked alert and ready to gobble-up the food. Then, they suddenly realized that they couldn’t hear a single sound around them. This confused them, and they raised their heads to look. Everyone else was watching their table in silence. Everyone was startled, and their eyes were wide open; their faces were full of astonishment.

The people on the other tables hadn’t even started yet... but this table had been emptied...

Dugu Zong Heng, Jun Zhan Tian and Tang Wan Li were extremely shocked. They had thick skins... but they had turned red. The three old men exchanged meaningful looks in embarrassment.

“Elder Jun, I’m convinced that the Third Young Master is from your lineage. It’s like a tradition... he may not have ascended to the battlefield yet, but I can see that he has a small trait of your family...” Murong Family’s Patriarch, Murong Feng Yun spoke as he shook his head. His expression was somewhat serious. His words seem to be of praise and derision; they were thought-provoking.

“You know it well...” Grandpa Jun gave him a quick and harsh glance. The few old men beside them were unwilling to intervene. “How can you be sure, brother Murong?”

“Take a look yourself...” Murong Feng Yun pointed towards Jun Mo Xie. His hands and the mouth were busy. “This brat’s shameless appearance is very similar to yours... in the old days. This old man would be blind if he didn’t see it...”

The entire room burst-out with laughter.

The corners of the Emperor's mouth drew upwards as he coughed in order to retrain himself. Nevertheless, the fact was that a few youngsters had acted on-their-own and had disrupted the feast. He picked-up the wine without any prior indication, and raised a toast to everyone. The entire hall then stood-up and conveyed their thanks.

The Tian Xiang Empire's premier man had led the way and drunk his wine; the feast had begun. Every gifted scholar on the scene was in a competition with their counterparts. The civil and military officers were the judge of this contest.

The wonderful event had begun!

Chapter 288: You're Very Lucky!

The sounds of two coughs were heard. Then, the old and decrepit teacher of the Wenxing Heavenly literature Institute —Mei Gao Jie— stood up. His body seemed to be trembling under the effect of those coughs. He faced the Emperor, and cupped his hands in salute. Then, he turned around and greeted the rest of the crowd in the same manner, "Your Majesty; respected seniors... this Golden Scholarly Talent Feast is the finest arrangement this humble man had ever seen. This old man sincerely wishes His Majesty and his lineage the best of fortunes on behalf of the Wenxing Heavenly Literature Institute. May the heavens watch over His Majesty and my Tian Xiang. May the people of the nation always prosper! May the military sweep over the entire continent and unify the land under Tian Xiang's banners. May the entire land prosper under His Majesty's grace! We thank His Majesty's vast and unbounded benevolence to rise above the norms of Imperial Examination and allow scholars like myself to prosper..."

He had drawn a long breath to speak this entire passage in one shot. However, it sounded like it was only the beginning of his speech. He was about to get to the main topic of his speech... when a grumbling voice was heard, "How can you eat so much at such a majestic Imperial Feast... Fatty! I understand that you have a big belly. But you have to realize that there are more people around. You've finished an entire table worth of food on your own in such a short period of time..."

The sound of this voice was very low. In fact, it had seemed as if the speaker had deliberately lowered his volume. However, the entire hall had solemnly silenced to listen to Mei Gao Jie's speech; there was pin-drop silence in the hall. Therefore, everyone heard these remarks rather clearly, and their faces started to reveal a queer complexion...

The speaker was none other than Jun Mo Xie. The Young Master Jun had his heart set on disrupting matters. He obviously wouldn't have allowed this opportunity to pass-by. As far as the accused was concerned — Tang Yuan merely gazed back at him with a stupefied yet innocent expression on his face. He held half-a-crab in his hand. [Who eats more amongst the two of us Elder Brother? That's obviously me. I do eat a lot, but did I touch your half of the dish? So... why would you accuse me?]

Mei Gao Jie was in the middle of delivering a very moving speech. However, he was suddenly interrupted. He obviously couldn't help but become angry. Moreover, the disturbance had been caused by an utterly shameless person, and for an utterly shameless reason. His lips started to tremble in anger as he turned. However, another gong-like voice sounded; it had a disdainful tone to it, "I've seen shameless people, but I've never seen someone this shameless. The person who tries to devour the best dishes by himself has the nerve to falsely accuse the others... what's happened to people..."

This voice belonged to Dugu Ying. Dugu Ying had been fighting over the bear paw from the beginning. Hence, he was obviously very angry. Therefore, he deliberately raised his voice to express his dissatisfaction. However, he was far more robust than the Young Master Jun. This was merely his normal speech-volume, but it was akin to an average person's shouting-volume-level. The Young Master Jun had successfully managed to cause more mischief since everyone in the crowd had heard this ruckus. The event's proceedings were getting disrupted, but Jun Mo Xie's plan was only finding more success.

Jun Mo Xie's spirits were lifted to see that someone had unknowingly lent him a hand. He twitched his mouth, "And now I can't eat fast, huh? Nonsense! Your family has brought more people than any other family. Your family must suffer to feed those hungry mouths of yours. They must've gone bankrupt. And now you sit your plump butts on this table. I reckon I wouldn't even be able to taste the soup if I didn't eat quickly enough..."

Tang Yuan stood-up to resolve the dispute, "Third Young Master... his reaction is understandable. You see... he knows he doesn't have to pay for this food."

Even the Emperor was unable to restrain his laughter as he heard these words. He issued a strange "Pfff" sound as he muffled the sound of his laughter. The faces of the other old men in the hall revealed strange smiling expressions as they attempted to restrain their laughter. However, Dugu Ying stared at the Fatty; it seemed as if he'd eat Tang Yuan whole.

The solemnly silence hall was suddenly overcome with 'pfff' sounds as everyone clutched their mouths to muffle their laughter.

Old Man Mei Gao Jie had started to tremble with anger. He was about to speak-up when a peculiar voice mocked, "The Jun Family is genuinely very arrogant, ah. Its reputation is fully justified!" Everyone turned their gazes to follow the source of the sound. The speaker was a white clothed youngster seated around the table that was reserved for the feast's guests of honor — the Silver Blizzard City's Xiao Feng Wu.

Xiao Feng Wu was aware of the matter between his Uncle Xiao Han and Jun Family's Jun Wu Yi. Moreover, the Little Princess Han Yan Meng hadn't stopped gloating about having a nephew ever since she had returned from the Jun Family's residence. This had obviously made Young Master Xiao very uncomfortable. Therefore, he had taken the initiative and spoken such ironic words.

"And who are you?" Jun Mo Xie pretended as if he didn't recognize the man he had beaten-up.

"I'm surnamed Xiao; I'm Xiao Feng Wu from the Xiao Family of Silver Blizzard City!" Xiao Feng Wu eyebrows shot-up. He pulled out a folding fan from his bosom, and started to sway it in a confident and easy manner.

"That's a good name!" Li You Ran was quick to speak-up, "Elder Brother Xiao has a very refined name! It feels like a breath of fresh air!" The enemy's enemy is a friend. The Jun and the Xiao Family hated each other. How on earth could Li You Ran not exploit this?

"He he... now that you've mentioned it... there's a short story behind the origin of my name." Xiao Feng Wu was feeling awfully pleased with himself. Li You Ran had scratched his itch. Therefore, he started to explain, "My mother had a dream one evening before I was to be born... in the dream she saw a beautiful phoenix in the sky. The phoenix landed on a Parasol tree. Therefore, she named me Feng Wu."^[1]

"Your name is indeed bestowed by the heavens," Li You Ran applauded. There was a look of admiration on his face.

"Ha ha..." Jun Mo Xie burst into laughter.

"Why are you laughing?" Xiao Feng Wu seemed angry. He was enjoying a moment of pride. How could he allow interruptions?

“Nothing. I was just wondering... you mother must be very talented. She dreamt of a phoenix land on a parasol tree, and then named you so beautifully... Feng Wu...”

It seemed as if the Young Master Jun couldn't restrain his laughter. He swayed back and forth for a moment, and then continued, “Your mother dreamt of a phoenix land on a Parasol tree... but what would you've been named if she had instead dreamt of a chicken land on a Banana tree? Imagine that! She dreamt a good dream at the appropriate time. You're very lucky!”

His Majesty chocked on his wine. His face turned red as he coughed for a while; he was literally between laughter and tears.

[A dream of a chicken landing on a Banana Tree...?] Then, everyone attached these words to Xiao Feng Wu's surname. Suddenly, everyone came to see the truth... [2]

Everyone wanted to burst into laughter. However, they were terrified of the Silver Blizzard City's might. Therefore, everyone restrained their laughter. Some people almost choked in the process.

“What are you trying to say?” Xiao Feng Wu didn't get it at first. He then subconsciously pondered over that line for a moment. Suddenly, his face froze, “Jun Mo Xie! How dare you abuse me?”

“Abuse you? When did I abuse you?” Jun Mo Xie exposed an innocent face, “You think you can say whatever you want because you're from the Silver Blizzard City? You need to catch a couple in the act if you wish to accuse them of adultery. You must find the stolen items before you accuse a thief. It's necessary to have evidence!”

“You abused my name!” Xiao Feng Wu couldn't control his anger. He bellowed out of humiliation, “Jun Mo Xie, I will kill you!”

“The Silver Blizzard City is very powerful. It is worthy of being called the most powerful force in the world.” Jun Mo Xie shook his head in admiration, “But you are in our country at the moment... as the Emperor's guests. You were invited to this feast in the Imperial Palace as the guest of honor. However, you threaten to murder the only heir of a powerful family... and that too in front of every official of the Empire... and the Emperor as well? I must admire your courage, ah!”

The faces of the ministers and the officials suddenly became unsightly.

[Ah! He threatened to kill the Jun Family's sole heir in front of the Emperor! Just how arrogant would he become if he were allowed to leave this Imperial Palace?]

Xiao Han quickly stood up, and forced his nephew to sit down. He then cupped his hands and apologized, "Young Feng Wu doesn't know much about life. He merely acted on impulse. Please forgive him." Xiao Han didn't care much for the royalty. However, he didn't wish to incite trouble against the Royal Family of an entire nation for no reason. After all, they had an ancient treaty of alliance. Moreover, the Emperor had called them in good faith. Therefore, even the Silver Blizzard City's Lord wouldn't appreciate it if they were to incite trouble in Tian Xiang under such circumstances.

The Emperor smiled magnanimously to indicate that no harm was done.

Jun Mo Xie was forced to sit down. However, Dugu Xiao Yi had taken the opportunity to gather a lot of food dishes. She opened her black and white eyes wide as she curiously asked, "Chicken landing on the Banana tree... and the name stands for?"

Jun Mo Xie nearly tumbled into the table when he heard her question. He picked his face up after some time, and wiped his nose, "Ask your brothers okay? They know it. I've just spoken so many words... I need to save my saliva."

Dugu Xiao Yi grunted and turned towards Dugu Ying. Dugu Ying's face flushed with embarrassment in a split second. How could an elder brother explain this matter to his younger sister? He fiercely looked at Jun Mo Xie as he refused to answer her question. Dugu Xiao Yi wasn't satisfied. So, she pouted her mouth and started to throw tantrums. The seven Dugu Brothers were left perplexed at the awkwardness of the situation.

The atmosphere in the Imperial Hall had become somewhat awkward. Therefore, the other teacher of the Institute — Kong Ling Yang — stood and spoke, "The young masters of the major families battled it out with the disciples of our Wenxing Heavenly literature Institute the last year. Our Wenxing Heavenly literature Institute won... but only by fluke. But Grand Preceptor Li's grandson, the Young Master Li, remained unbeaten and excessively impressive. There are many disciples today who wish to consult with Young Master Li... would he be interested?"

Everyone's spirits started to rise. This was the highlight of the event.

The Wenxing Heavenly literature Institute's disciples had carried a strange gleam in their eyes since the moment they had entered the hall. They didn't care for the delicious food or the exquisite wine. They had merely been waiting for this moment. If they could somehow prove themselves better than Tian Xiang City's number-one scholar Li You Ran... their future would have boundless prospects.

Li You Ran smiled elegantly. He gently rose to his feet, looked around and said, "This humble You Ran isn't worthy of raising difficult questions for such talented scholars. However, there is one man who has won You Ran's admiration. Therefore, I would like to challenge that man..."

"Who is that talented young man, Young Master Li?" everyone asked in unison. [Is there someone in the Tian Xiang City who is capable of competing against Li You Ran? Someone even Li You Ran admires? But why haven't I heard about this man before?] The eyes of everyman present expressed the confusion of their minds.

"The Young Master of the Jun Family — Jun Mo Xie!" Li You Ran solemnly stated and pointed towards Jun Mo Xie in order to point-out his target clearly. Jun Mo Xie couldn't help but stare at Li You Ran as he continued to nibble on a mouthful of the greasy chicken-leg he held in his hand.

[Sh*t! You publicly trapped me?!]

[This could cause a wild uproar!]

Chapter 289: I Only Feel Like Stepping on the Wenxing Heavenly Literature Institute

Meng Hai Zhou and the others took the opportunity that followed Li You Ran's challenge, and started to jeer at Jun Mo Xie. They never realized that Li You Ran had put forth his challenge with the utmost sincerity.

"Young Master You Ran is indeed very funny," Kong Ling Yang didn't seem very pleased. "Perhaps the Young Master Jun... is an expert in some other aspects of life... However, his knowledge on literature isn't very eminently known..."

Some people couldn't help but laugh up their sleeves. Master Kong's tone had been very obscure. However, everyone had reached the conclusion that the Young Master Jun's areas of "expertise" were brothels, dog and cock fighting, and other contemptible activities. What would this youngster know about the more important aspects of life? Everyone had started to think very high of the old Masters of the Institute; [These old Masters are amazing. They can manage to insult people in such a refined manner!]

"Master Kong shouldn't have anything to worry about. He he... why don't we have one of your disciples contest against Jun Mo Xie. Then, we'll know if he's any match for Young Master Li... he he..." Meng Hai Zhou smiled and replied. His remark was aimed to incite Master Kong for a war.

Kong Ling Yang was annoyed at this. He thought, [I've nurtured these disciples with such meticulous care. I might as well tie a rope to the ceiling and commit suicide if my disciples are unable to beat this debauchee.] He didn't say anything in response. He merely waved his hand and appointed one of his disciples to take-up the challenge.

"Disciple Han Zhi Dong requests Young Master Jun for some advice," A young man stood up with a smile. He then cupped his hands in greeting and looked up. A trace of disdain flashed in his eyes; seemingly for his opponent.

"En... I don't give advice but I do have the time to teach you a trick or two. You'll be able to move about the Spirit Fog Lake unbridled after I'm done with you. What could be better than a demonstration of the profound mysteries of that universe? I'll take the lead if you don't mind."

Jun Mo Xie had seen the expression in that youngster's eyes. So, he was aware of the contempt that youngster held for Jun Mo Xie. Therefore, the Young Master Jun had winked as he stood-up, and laughed along with the crowd as he voluntarily put on his 'hat of shame'.

"This young disciple had shunned evil influences in his life. This young disciple shall never go near the Spirit Fog Lake's territory." Han Zhi Dong's voice was somewhat cold. He disdainfully thought, [he's the biggest degenerate. I've asked him for scholarly advice, and he starts by mentioning a brothel! Are you aware that this is public event? This is very humiliating!]

"You've never been to the Spirit Fog Lake? Then where do you go?" Jun Mo Xie's heart was brimming with disdain; [I'm not done with you yet.] He then crossed his legs, and continued in a leisurely tone, "Ah, that's right. This Young Master had neglected that Scholar Han isn't very wealthy and may not have been able to afford the prices of the services rendered in that area. It seems that he holds his pike in his

own hands inside his tent as he imagines the battle formations. He must require to struggle up and down the battlefield. He must manage to relinquish millions of soldiers until he's too exhausted to continue..."

[What the hell is this!] Han Zhi Dong's fair facial color turned as red as a dead chicken's blood. In fact, his neck turned red as well.

Jun Mo Xie's choice of words had been very elegant, yet very energetic. Suddenly, everyone present in the hall seemed to be a bit distracted. They carefully pondered on his words in the hope to interpret their true meaning. However, most people spat-out the food they were chewing and burst into laughter once they understood the meaning of his words... [This kid... is too much!]

Every man present in the main hall had understood Jun Mo Xie's remark in a matter of a few moments. However, the indecency of their laughter couldn't be conveyed in words...

Princess Ling Meng, Dugu Xiao Yi, Han Yan Meng and the other ladies of note looked-on with an amazed expression in their eyes. They couldn't understand the crowd's reaction. They could distinctly sense that this matter wasn't good. However, they couldn't figure what was wrong with it. [Jun Mo Xie's words seemed to have described a majestic general... but why does it feel weird?]

Several old men were making gestures at each other with their eyes. However, there were only a few men who were able to laugh-out unrestrained without bothering about the consequences. Some even patted their hand on the table, while some others patted their thighs in applause as their eyes closed-shut from the intensity of their laughter. Dugu Zong Heng's body trembled with laughter as he slapped Tang Wan Li on his shoulders. He then whispered, "Old Tang, I just remembered the time when the two of us had just joined the army. We were sent-off to the battle at the Heavenly Wolf Mountains... Old Jun was a young captain back then... We had caught sight of you when you had left the camp to fight your glorious battles at dawn..."

Tang Wan Li suddenly turned red with rage. He forgot about Dugu Zong Heng's fearsome reputation as he extended and grabbed his sturdy neck. He then roared in a whisper, "You old bastard! Go on, I dare you to say another word..."

Dugu Zong Heng started to cough. He seemed to be laughing as he begged for forgiveness. A few other Family-heads raised their thumbs in quick succession as they gestured to Tang Wan Li. It seemed as if many people had heard that remark...

Old Man Tang's face flushed red with rage. He stood-up panting and tried to exit the hall. However, several other old men got up from their seats in unison, and persuaded him to calm down.

Dugu Xiao Yi saw that her seven brothers were laughing with their lips sealed. Their overjoyed faces revealed the merry of their hearts as their shoulders trembled with laughter. She figured that it must've been something awfully funny. So, she couldn't help but ask, "What did that mean? Is it that funny?"

[Uh...] The seven brothers looked at each other in dismay. They realized the awkwardness of the situation and quickly readjusted themselves. They shook their heads in unison as they replied, "It's not funny; how's it funny? It's not funny!"

Dugu Xiao Yi groaned. She turned her head away in anger. She suddenly felt annoyed at the sight of her brothers and Jun Mo Xie since they hadn't answered any of her questions today.

She secretly recalled Jun Mo Xie's words, and repeated them again to memorize them by heart. [You think I won't find out if you don't tell me...? I'll ask mother once I get home... I don't think she'll deny me...]

Han Zhi Dong took a deep breath. He was aware that this debauchee had gained the upper-hand as he said, "This Golden Scholarly Talent Feast is being conducted by His Majesty's grace. However, this young disciple is ashamed to be in company of his opponent. To pair this young disciple with Young Master Jun for a scholarly advice is the same as the accidental pair of Golden chrysanthemums and orange osmanthus!"

He didn't wait for Jun Mo Xie's reaction, and continued, "Chrysanthemums' fragrance, Orchid's fragrance, osmanthus' fragrance from the Imperial gardens... the fragrance of these fragrant flowers float in the Tian Xiang... Their heavenly fragrance floats for a thousand miles... and a thousand miles their heavenly fragrance floats..."[1]

This poetic verse caught everyone's attention.

This poetry had sounded simple, but it wasn't. Especially that last part. He had repeatedly used the words "Heavenly Fragrance" as a metaphor to bless "Tian Xiang". Everyone started to rack their brains in search of a comeback in order to display their talent in front of His Majesty.

Everyone had nearly forgotten of Jun Mo Xie's involvement. [How could he possibly make a joke out of such a poetic verse? He wouldn't be able to conjure a come-back even if he was given two lives to try...]

"Young Master Jun, this young disciple's talent is humble, and knowledge is shallow. This young disciple can only come up with such shallow words. This shouldn't be much of a problem in your eyes?" Han Zhi Dong chuckled. He then humbly looked at Jun Mo Xie with a sincere expression on his face, "I hope that Young Master Jun will still teach me a thing or two!"

Everyone would have waited for Jun Mo Xie to come-up with an answer in case this last sentence hadn't been spoken. They would've looked down on him but wouldn't have blamed him for falling short since this poetry was indeed excellent and difficult to counter. After all, no one had considered him to be any match to this young scholar. Moreover, the young scholar would've left a special effect in the hearts of everyone present since his talent was original as well as amazing. However, this last sentence had left everyone sighing.

His unreasonable last line had exposed the savagery of his nature, and had lowered his prestige. [You've been studying at the Wenxing Heavenly Literature Institute for many years. So what's there to be so proud of about being able to speak a few lines of poetry?]

[This so-called young scholar's future achievements are bound to fall short.]

The big shots may allow scholars to climb-up the ranks of their families. However, they would never promote such a person to the top. [What's the guarantee that he won't get rid of us once he gains enough power in the family?] Han Zhi Dong was unaware that he had declared the doom of his future political-career with that last line he had spoken. Therefore, he stood there with a sense of complacency in his heart.

Jun Mo Xie puckered his brows. Any verses he'd come up with in reply would merely be plagiarized. However, even plagiarizing poetry of such level was beyond his ability. [Ah... should I come up with nonsense poetry from my previous life? No... that won't do! This motherfuc*er!]

Master Kong Ling Yang narrowed his eyes. He seemed pleased with himself, "It is okay if Young Master Jun can't come up with a poetic verse to match this... the Young Master Jun wouldn't lose face because of this matter..."

Everyone chuckled. [This old man doesn't forgive easily. He's just using his usual method... he abuses a person without using abusive words...]

A burst of vigor rushed inside Jun Mo Xie's heart. He shouted in a harsh and loud voice, "What's so difficult about this? Wasn't that a shi*ty poem? I will better him and walk all-over this Wenxing Heavenly Literature Institute's chump!"

Several people issued sounds of displeasure. [This kid dares too much when he speaks. He's challenged to come up with a rival verse... he's lost his mind. He should think before he talks. Looks like he's going to get a tough lesson from that young disciple...]

However, Li You Ran and Jun Zhan Tian's expressions were very different from the rest of the crowd. Li You Ran was convinced he had the talent to come-up with a worthy reply. However, he himself had tried, but hadn't been able to so far. However, Jun Mo Xie had declared that he would reply with a fitting verse... [Is he better than me?]

Grandpa Jun was somewhat anxious. [Didn't we agree that he wouldn't make a complete fool of himself? How's he going to beat that?]

Kong Ling Yang sneered and he spoke, "Young Master Jun seems very confident of himself. I propose an arrangement. The institute shall concede defeat if the Young Master Jun is able to come-up with a reply before the incense stick burns out. However, if he shall lose... Young Master Tang will have to act in order to mediate his losses. Thereafter, he would willingly return my poor disciple back...?"

He was obviously referring to the disciple Tang Yuan would bully into cleaning women's underwear — Scholar Zhao Cheng Song. However, Fatty Tang was worried about leaving such a presence un-monitored in his house. Therefore, Tang Yuan had bludgeoned him to death after he was expelled from his household. So where would he return that scholar from? His stinking bones probably wouldn't accept his soul even if it was somehow recovered from the depths of hell.

"That's done!" Jun Mo Xie stretched his neck. [I don't have any problems in agreeing to that. We'll return his skeleton if I lose. You never said whether you want him back dead or alive...? So why should I even bother...]

“However, you will submit to my superiority if I win. Your Institute will never mention the words ‘poetry’ is front of me after that. Agreed?” Jun Mo Xie smiled.

Notes:

Native word play. Tian means heavenly. Xiang means fragrance. Tian Xiang means heavenly fragrance. He repeatedly uses the word ‘Xiang’ in the poetic passage.

Chapter 290: This is the Next One

“It’s a deal!” Kong Ling Yang didn’t think very highly of Jun Mo Xie. [He doesn’t have the skill to come up with a counter-verse for Han Zhi Dong’s verse. And even if he managed to come-up with something... how could this debauchee’s shallow verse match up to the WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute’s standard? This is a joke!][1]

Jun Mo Xie patted his thigh, and crisp ‘pop’ sound echoed. He then raised a bottle of wine off the table, and put one of his feet on the chair. He raised his head upwards, drank a mouthful of wine and thought for a while. Then, he looked upwards once more, drank a mouthful of wine, and continued to ponder.

Everyone’s gaze was fixed on Jun Mo Xie. Even the Emperor was no exception. There was look of interest and a faint trace of coldness in the Emperor’s eyes. He would have to re-assess the Jun Family if Jun Mo Xie was able to come up with an appropriate counter-verse...

Dugu Xiao Yi and Princess Ling Meng gazed at him anxiously. [How’s he going to win? He will have to face a lot of embarrassment if his verse isn’t up to the mark...] However, they didn’t speak up since they didn’t wish to disturb his thoughts.

However, Dugu Ying became anxious as he saw Jun Mo Xie devour over half of the wine bottle, “Hey...! You aren’t using this opportunity to drink extra wine, right?”

Dugu Xiao Yi ferociously shot a glance towards her elder brother, “No one else seems worried about that; so why are you?” Dugu Ying scratched his head in confusion. He remained seated as his helpless eyes remained affixed to the wine-bottle in Jun Mo Xie’s hand...

Suddenly!

Jun Mo Xie raised his right hand and snapped his fingers. 'Click!' A clear and crisp sound echoed as he said, "I've got it!"

Everyone anxiously listened as Jun Mo Xie complacently recited his counter-verse, "The streets smell sh*t. A man's sh*t stinks. A dog's sh*t stinks. A pig's sh*t stinks. Sh*t stinks sh*it stinks, and shit*y sh*t stinks. To have one's name go down in history — a scholar must sh*t the most stinky sh*t!"

It seemed as if everyone had been thunderstruck!

"That's amazing! Really Amazing! To use 'stink' to counter 'fragrance', and 'sh*t' to counter 'flowers'... Gluah, gluah..." Tang Yuan hurriedly spoke up in praise. However, he hadn't even finished his sentence when his mouth started to nauseate with a 'gluah' sound. He then became speechless as his belly expressed a strong desire to vomit...

Such a pair of counter-verses... was too nauseating. This couplet could make anyone nauseate. Therefore, it wouldn't be strange if people were to vomit... especially after eating a heavy meal...

Everyone had a weird look on their faces. They looked at Jun Mo Xie with grief and indignation. Suddenly, a 'gluah' sound was heard. Silver Blizzard City's Little Princess Han Yan Meng clutched her mouth and ran out. Several young maidens followed after her with their mouths clutched...

Finally Dugu Xiao Yi followed after them with her mouth clutched. She shot Jun Mo Xie a quick hateful glance before she ran-off...

"Who can dare to say that I'm wrong? I've balanced the unbalanced!" Jun Mo Xie made a rousing call. He then grabbed a crab, efficiently fished out the meat, put it in his mouth, and started to chew.

Everyone watched as he started to chew that yellow-colored crab meat. Suddenly, everyone's complexion turned pale as they recalled the counter-verse he had just spoken...

Everyone was left dumbfounded. This antithetical couplet was indeed a fitting match. Moreover, the counter-verse had come as a ruthless abuse that had been aimed at these talented scholars. The phrase “A scholar must sh*t the most stinky sh*t” had left the two Old Masters trembling in anger. Kong Ling Yang and Mei Gao Jie made no comments as far as the metrical aspects of the counter-verse was concerned... however...

[You came-up with this counter-verse while everyone was eating their meal. Aren’t you deliberately trying to make us look bad? Your verse may have been up to the mark, but you’ve surely killed everyone’s appetite...]

“Time to reverse the wheel; now it’s my turn to ask the question!” Jun Mo Xie complacently waved the half-the-crab that remained in his hand, “I recall that I was at my home about a fortnight ago... I was reading poetry... when suddenly... an old friend of my grandfather’s showed up. He left a deep impression on me because of his strange name and surname; his Surname was ‘He’... and name was ‘Shang’... He gifted my grandfather a picture he had painted with his own hands. It was a Lotus’s painting. He consulted my grandfather with a poetic verse before he left. My Grandfather has asked several people, but no one has been able to answer it...”

Dugu Xiao Yi and the other women returned to the hall. Their pale faces and hateful eyes were bitterly glaring at Jun Mo Xie. In fact, it seemed as if they were itching to bite him.

Someone asked out of curiosity before Jun Mo Xie got a chance to continue, “What was the specific verse Third Young Master Jun?”

“That verse was very simple. It only had 7 words in it — Picture a lotus above a monk’s Picture.” Jun Mo Xie groaned twice as he tossed this phrase out. He had used his grandfather as a tool to conjure this shady trickery. He was aware that his grandfather wouldn’t betray him. There were too many people whom he’d never trust. However, his grandfather was amongst the people he considered the most worthy of his trust.[2]

Grandpa Jun would never wipe his buttocks with his own grandson’s face. Therefore, Jun Mo Xie could tell such lies with a straight face in public view.

“Picture a lotus above a monk’s Picture... Picture a lotus above a monk’s Picture...” Everyone frowned as they repeated this verse. This verse seemed very simple, but it was quite complicated; it left everyone’s pumping cold air...

It didn't matter which side one looked at the poetic verse from... one would only see the man's name and gift embedded into the poetry. Moreover, the end and the beginning of the verse were exactly the same. However, they were inverted with respect to each other.

Every expert poet in the room frowned. They had never imagined that this incompetent debauchee would be able to come up with such a difficult puzzle.

Every scholar from the WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute found themselves looped in a puzzle of unprecedented difficulty. They puckered their brows as they racked their brains to find a solution.

Jun Mo Xie had put-up this verse even though he didn't know the counter. The fact that he had put-up this puzzle could not be reversed. He would find himself in trouble if the opposition was unable to come-up with a fitting reply. This was because he would have to answer the riddle if they weren't able to. And every person from the institute was likely to gang-up on him if he wasn't able to answer his own riddle...

The solution to this puzzle would come like a miracle to them; and they needed this miracle to happen!

Wouldn't it be a matter of shame if the entire brain-power of the Institute was unable to solve an incompetent debauchee's puzzle...? Therefore, everyone racked their brains, and came up with multiple solutions after applying various kinds of creative concepts. However, none of the counter-verses seemed to be of sufficient quality.

These gifted scholars were required to come-up with a reply before an incense stick burns out. This made them worry more and more as time elapsed.

The two masters of the Institute were struggling as well!

Mei Gao Jie's eyebrows were puckered as he paced back and forth. He'd shake his head from time to time and then mutter, "No. That won't do." Then, he'd attempt to try a different angle.

Old Master Kong Ling Yang was motionless. His eyes were shut. His face was angled towards the heavens. He was immersed in a deep thought. However, if one looked from a distance... they'd see the

dark of his gloomy facial wrinkles... his silver-grey and snow-like hair falling over his face. One couldn't help but feel a strange sadness as they'd look at his face.

This verse was meant as a puzzle for the disciples of the Institute. Therefore, the participation of the two old masters of the Institute would be considered illegal. However, this matter related to the reputation of this ancient Institute. Hence, the two old masters couldn't help themselves...

Jun Mo Xie didn't care much about it. He wouldn't have bothered if ten-twenty masters of the institute were to participate... let alone these two...

Time passed very gradually. The smoke from the incense stick continued to rise in spirals until its entire body turned to ashes.

Their miracle didn't happen!

"I have nothing! I concede my defeat!" Han Zhi Dong's head was hung low in disappointment. He couldn't help but feel frustrated within his heart. How could a top-scholar from the WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute lose to this brat...?!

He wished he were dead...

"No! You lost, but you're not to be blamed for it. Well, the blame isn't limited to you!" Jun Mo Xie half-leaned into his chair as he extended his finger and gently rowed it. "You're not to blame for this bet against me! You can at-best be considered a chess piece in this game; and a very ordinary one at that. You're not qualified to make a bet with me! No matter which way you see it... you're not even qualified to make a bet against me! You're too beneath my own self for that."

Then, Jun Mo Xie tilted his head and smiled as he looked at the Kong Ling Yang and Mei Gao Jie, "Masters? What do you have to say?"

"We've lost." The faces of the two old men looked dazed. They had arrived here in high spirits as the two lead-representatives of the WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute — an institution that was publicly accepted to be the biggest and wisest talent hub of the Empire. However, they had unexpectedly

suffered a crushing defeat at Jun Mo Xie's hands. The two old masters felt as their lives had been turned into a living-death.

Kong Ling Yang's lips trembled as he spoke in a soft voice, "This Old Man shall keep his promise. The WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute will never speak of poetry in front of Jun Mo Xie."

There was absolute silence in the hall for a while.

Jun Mo Xie sighed. The characters of these two men had earned them a lot of respect in his heart. He hadn't wished for them to be subjected to such a plight. These two men had set-up the WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute on their own merit. They would hand-pick their disciples personally, and would nurture the Empire's talent pool with their inexhaustible efforts. They had never disregarded the poor and lowly. Their only selection-criteria had been the disciple's intellect and learning ability. They had solemnly ignored the riches of life, and had stayed away from the political influence of Imperial Ministers. They were genuinely worthy of the Hitman's admiration in this regard.

These two men were certainly admirable. However, they had some short-comings. Their knowledge and teachings were surely worthy of respect, but their ideology and methods were mistaken. They would pay note to a disciple's intellect and learning ability, but they'd neglect his other character-traits.

A teacher mustn't limit to imparting knowledge alone.

Jun Mo Xie had always believed that — Teachers are the engineers of the human soul.

These masters were certainly the greatest of their generation. They had imparted a vast base of knowledge to their disciples. Their disciples were well-versed with poetry. They were well-versed with strategic ploys. They were well-trained to handle important political positions. They were certain to find success in their careers if they were able to put this training to use; and quickly at that. However, the two masters had neglected that their disciples would act selfishly if they weren't good men at heart. Their actions would only revolve around their person glory, wealth, and profits... as such, they'd make terrible servants to the people of the Empire.

It was needless to say that these two masters had nurtured thousands of the disciples under theirs' and the WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute's name.

Such individuals would be bound to act for their own selfish interests once they were to leave the Institute and embark on their bureaucratic journey... regardless of their inherent social wealth or status. Moreover, these disciples were educated at the WenXing Heavenly Literature Institute, and were likely to acquire top positions in the powerful factions and families. In fact, even the worst of them were bound to make low level officials... such as clerks or book-keepers...

How much harm could they cause to the society if their characters weren't shaped with appropriate moral education? The damage they could cause was unimaginable.

This was the reason why Jun Mo Xie disapproved of them. In fact, he didn't merely disapprove of them... he despised them.

The two old masters were extremely enraged. However, Jun Mo Xie didn't believe that they had been wronged. Rather, he believed that they had been served well.

[I'm not a good person. Nor do I care about the sufferings of the people on this land. However, if you bully me like that — I shall not be reluctant to stand-in for the heaven's punishment!]

[These worldly matters, ah!] Jun Mo Xie sighed. Then, the Hitman Jun suddenly turned into a champion for a cause. He had started to think very nobly of himself — [I shall relieve people of their pains and sufferings no matter which world I live in. I shall emerge when people are in dire need...] Well, that situation hadn't arisen yet...