

IRON DYNASTY

Chapter 1: Your Highness, Your Highness

It felt like he had slept for a century. Groggy and disoriented, Xiao Ming woke up with a splitting headache. The first thing he saw was a white gauze canopy and a room carved from red lacquered wood.

“I’m... not dead?” Xiao Ming murmured. The image of the laboratory explosion was still frozen in his mind.

Sitting up, the embroidered purple silk quilt slid off him. He was wearing a white inner robe and cloth pants, similar to those seen in historical dramas.

Strange. What is this?

He pushed himself up, trying to get out of bed, but when he caught sight of a fair, slender hand, his heart skipped a beat. That was not his hand.

Panic surged through him as he raised his hands to touch his own face. A chilling realization struck him—he was no longer himself.

“Your Highness, why are you getting up?”

A soft, gentle voice called out. A young girl in a green long dress entered from outside, her expression respectful and deferential.

“Lu Luo?” The name slipped naturally from his lips. In an instant, memories flooded his mind like a volcanic eruption.

He now understood his current identity.

His name was still Xiao Ming, but in this world, he was the Seventh Prince of the Da Yu Empire.

This world's history was similar to his own up until the Three Kingdoms period. After that, everything became a tangled mess, and he had no idea which dynasty Da Yu was equivalent to.

If he had to compare, it resembled the 17th century Ming Dynasty, with the technology and lifestyle of the Tang and Song dynasties.

As for the rest of the world? He had no clue. This was a land of information isolation.

He had transmigrated.

Xiao Ming had no choice but to accept this fact.

The good news? He was a prince and even had his own fiefdom.

The bad news? His fief was the poorest, most remote territory, ridiculously far from the capital city of Chang'an.

The worst news? His land bordered the vast northern grasslands, home to barbarian tribes that could invade at any moment.

And that wasn't all. The current Emperor, Xiao Wenxuan, was aging, and the Crown Prince was weak and fragile, constantly at risk of being deposed. The throne was essentially up for grabs.

Because of this, the princes were engaged in both overt and covert power struggles, scheming against each other with the intent to eliminate their rivals.

Even though Xiao Ming was exiled to a distant fief, he was still a prince—he couldn't escape this brutal fate.

He had been sent to this desolate land because the Emperor didn't favor him.

At the same age, he had been banished at thirteen, and in the five years since, the Emperor had never once summoned him back.

Meanwhile, the Sixth Prince, who was just one month older than him, still resided in Chang'an. Ministers had repeatedly urged the Emperor to assign the Sixth Prince a fief, but the Emperor refused.

Not just the Sixth Prince—the Crown Prince, the Second, Third, and Fourth Princes all remained in the capital. Only the Fifth Prince had a fief like Xiao Ming, but his land in Shu was far wealthier than this desolate wasteland.

After thinking it through, Xiao Ming realized the reason for his miserable treatment—his mother had no noble background.

All the other princes and princesses had some blood ties to the Five Great Clans and Seven Aristocratic Families that dominated Da Yu.

“Not favored? So what? At least I don’t have to deal with pretending to be close to the Emperor. In my own fief, I can be as carefree as I want.”

That’s what he told himself, but life in his fief was far from easy.

Not only was the land poor and desolate, but all resources were controlled by the local aristocratic families.

These powerful clans ruled like warlords, to the point where the common people only recognized the noble families, not their prince.

The original Xiao Ming was ignorant and weak, unaware of how dangerous this was. But the new Xiao Ming understood completely—these noble families were like obedient dogs when interests aligned, but ruthless tigers when they didn't.

After grasping his current situation, Xiao Ming sighed. He was living in hell.

But then, he remembered the cause of his transmigration—and hope ignited within him.

The moment the laboratory exploded, the experimental Science Crystal had directly hit him.

While unconscious, he had felt the crystal's presence in his consciousness.

This Science Crystal was an energy core, supposedly originating from a prehistoric civilization.

During the experiment, not only had researchers discovered advanced black technology, but they had also uploaded all human knowledge throughout history into the crystal.

The purpose of the experiment was to perfectly fuse a human's consciousness with the Science Crystal, creating a "Civilization Creator."

According to classified information, once fully integrated, he would have complete access to the crystal's technological database.

Even more incredible—those who merged with the Science Crystal could transfer knowledge to others, a memory-based teaching system that could rapidly advance a civilization.

Excitement surged through Xiao Ming as he felt the Science Crystal within his mind.

An overwhelming flood of knowledge crashed down like a towering mountain.

From ancient to modern technology, an encyclopedic collection of literature, blueprints for every industrial product, formulas for material production—even cutting-edge black technology.

“Civilization Creator? Jackpot!”

Just moments ago, he had been lamenting his wretched fief.

Now, he was thrilled.

A Civilization Creator was someone who could build a civilization from scratch.

This ability was perfect for his current situation.

His land was impoverished, but with the Science Crystal, he could develop technology to boost productivity.

With these tools, he could control resources and wrest power from the noble families.

Otherwise, these aristocrats would remain a looming threat.

With a clear goal in mind, Xiao Ming grinned like an idiot.

“Your Highness? Your Highness?”

His silly smile terrified Lu Luo.

In the past two days, the Prince had been critically ill—if he suddenly went mad or worse, died, every servant in the estate would be executed.

Even though the Qi Prince was not favored, he was still royalty.

Tears welled up in Lu Luo's eyes as panic and sorrow overtook her.

"Father... Mother... I'm sorry... I won't be able to fulfill my filial duties..." she choked, her voice trembling.

Her crying snapped Xiao Ming out of his thoughts.

He looked at his personal maidservant—eighteen years old, with delicate and refined features.

In his memories, Lu Luo and Ziyuan had been given to him by his mother, Consort Zhen, just ten days ago.

The original Xiao Ming had obviously begged for them for certain reasons.

However, before he could do anything, he had died.

“Why are you crying? I’m not dead.”

Xiao Ming understood Lu Luo’s fear.

Even though she had only been in the estate for ten days, her timid nature was already obvious.

Lu Luo immediately stifled her sobs, whispering, “Your Highness... I thought... you had gone mad...”

In Da Yu, “madness” was often considered possession by spirits.

Xiao Ming rolled his eyes. “Nonsense. Instead of worrying, why don’t you let me check your body?”

“Check... my body?” Lu Luo blinked, utterly confused. “What does that mean?”

The previous Prince Qi, Xiao Ming, was cowardly, weak, and ill-tempered—one of the reasons the Emperor disliked him.

However, the new Xiao Ming had no intention of imitating his predecessor’s personality. There was no need—after all, in his own fief, he was the absolute ruler.

Besides, Xiao Ming had always been a carefree, bold, and shameless person. The idea of pretending to be meek and irritable was unbearable.

Now that he understood his relationship with Lu Luo, akin to Jia Baoyu and Xiren, he couldn’t help but secretly rejoice.

After more than twenty years as a nerdy engineering monk, his ascetic life had finally come to an end in this world.

Xiao Ming smirked mischievously. “Checking the body means examining through sight, smell, questioning, and touch—and, of course, observing physiological structures.”

Lu Luo’s tears turned into laughter. “When did Your Highness learn to diagnose illnesses? I know what sight, smell, questioning, and touch are, but... what is a physiological structure?”