

Keyboard Immortal

Chapter 6: The Wager

Translator: Pika

Zu An stared at her tiny, pale little fist. Yet again, he found himself questioning reality.

“Honestly, someone as weak as you is not worth my effort.” Chu Huanzhao let out a piercing whistle. “C’mere, Bootlicker!”

Zu An was puzzled. Huh? How could such a young girl have bootlickers following her around? Are the men of this world really such pansies?

"Woof!"

Ferocious barking came from a distance away, and Zu An realized his error. So her ‘bootlicker’ was actually a dog! But honestly, what type of name is that? Heh, heh, heh. Seems like weird names are a forté of this family. [1]

His smirk slid off his face as a creature the size of a panther bounded inside, staring down at him with oily green eyes. Okay, technically this thing is shaped like a dog, but... this is way too freakin’ huge!

“Who’s a good boy, Bootlicker!” Chu Huanzhao squatted down to rub the monster’s head, and the beast wagged its tail joyfully.

Zu An gulped, eyes transfixed by the massive beast in front of him. “You call this thing a dog?!” Blood leaked from the corner of the creature’s mouth. Belatedly, he realized where the chewing sounds he’d heard earlier had come from..

“Scared now?” Chu Huanzhao laughed diabolically, then pointed straight at him. “Bootlicker, bite him! Bite him hard!”

In one smooth motion, the huge dog leapt towards Zu An without a moment’s hesitation. Clearly, this wasn’t its first rodeo.

Blood drained from Zu An’s face as he saw that giant, bloody maw flying towards him. That huge thing will take off my entire arm in one bite! Even more concerning, he knew just how deadly rabies could be. Who knew what sort of deadly viruses the dog’s drool contained? This world didn’t have rabies shots. If he was infected, he’d be doomed.

On top of all that, the beast had just eaten a few rats alive. Maybe it was now carrying some rat plagues!

Zu An reacted without thought, leaping frantically to the side. The dog landed on a chair next to the bed, shattering it to pieces.

Oh my sweet Lord Almighty... Zu An was pretty sure that his body wasn't as tough as that chair. He fled. His first thought was to use Chu Huanzhao as a shield since she had promised not to beat him up personally... but the little girl had already run outside. She was watching his ordeal from a nearby window, delight plastered all over her face. She had even shut the door behind her!

In his mind, Zu An cursed her entire clan a thousand times over as he ran in circles around the table in the center of the room. There was no way he could outrun that huge dog, so all he could do was dodge around what little furniture there was to keep away from it.

The dog was simply too damned big, so big it couldn't slip under the table to get to him. This was the only thing keeping Zu An alive.

Alas, his body was weak to begin with, and he'd been struck by lightning earlier in the day, not to mention the punch he'd just suffered from Chu Huanzhao.. After just a few minutes, Zu An felt as though his lungs were about to explode. He was sure that he'd felt the warm, foul-smelling breath of the monstrous canine brush the back of his neck several times. It took all his will just to keep his legs moving, keeping him ahead of that salivating maw.

A part of him was surprised that he had lasted this long. He credited this to him training in the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, which had increased his physical strength slightly. However, his limited training was no use in overcoming this huge, ferocious beast.

"You dumb mutt! Why do you have to chase him around the table? Just leap over the damn thing!" The young lady spectating from outside stamped her feet in displeasure. Her voice, normally crisp and pleasant, was now a demonic howl.

The huge dog seemed to understand its master's words. It let out a loud howl, then leapt onto the table and clambered across towards Zu An.

Zu An tipped the table over, putting the tabletop between him and the creature. Holding onto the table legs, he tried to push it away with the table. The dog used its head to smash a hole through the tabletop, its jaws inches from Zu An's face. The weight of it bore him down to the ground, as he kicked feebly at the monster's belly. It strained to squeeze more of its bulk through the hole in the table, and Zu An felt his arms giving way. The difference in strength was too great. The dog's jaws inched closer to him.

Zu An could smell the dog's foul breath as it splattered gobs of saliva all over his face. It clawed furiously at the tabletop with its front paws, gouging huge holes in it, as though it were made of wet paper.

Zu An's heart froze as the dog's teeth and claws filled his vision, their points sharp as daggers. I'm gonna get killed by a dog. Damn, I'm a disgrace to all transmigrators.

Wait a second. Dagger? Zu An was struck by a flash of inspiration. He summoned his Keyboard and hammered the 'B' key, summoning his Poisonous Prick from the item bar. Just as it appeared in his hand, the table shattered. The dog's massive mouth flew towards him... and its teeth chomped down on the dagger.

The dog had been aptly named as Bootlicker, for it loved to lick random objects. It reflexively brushed its tongue against the dagger, opening a tiny gash across the tip of its tongue. A series of strange, black runes appeared across its entire body, as if drawn in ash. The dog trembled once before falling down to the ground, all traces of life snuffed out.

"It actually died?" Zu An sighed in relief. He was completely spent. He lay motionless on the ground, unable to move so much as a finger.

"Bootlicker! What's wrong?!" Chu Huanzhao, watching from outside, was certain that her beloved dog was about to win, but it had all gone wrong in an instant. Bewildered, she ran in to assess the situation. Alas, no matter what she did or said, the dog failed to respond.

"How dare you kill my Bootlicker?!" Chu Huanzhao exploded in fury as the reality of Bootlicker's death sank in.

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 233 Rage points!

Zu An lacked the energy to respond, but he subconsciously transferred the Poisonous Prick back into his item bar. It was better to be safe than sorry, after all. Best keep it hidden unless absolutely necessary. The huge dog and the table had blocked the girl's line of sight. She probably didn't see exactly what happened.

"You'll pay for Bootlicker's death!" Chu Huanzhao was close to tears. Her parents were always busy with clan affairs, and her sister was always away. She had few playmates in the estate; in a way, Bootlicker had been her only friend.

As he lay unmoving, Zu An saw a small foot flash furiously towards him.

...10 Rage points! ...10 Rage points! ...10 Rage points!

Zu An let out a muffled groan. He was simply too exhausted to dodge her kick. Thankfully, it connected with his buttocks. The fleshy lumps just barely managed to cushion the blow.

The sight of him just lying there further fueled Chu Huanzhao's anger. She drew the whip from her waist and, with a flick of her wrist, lashed him with it.

“Aah!” Zu An reflexively bolted upright, spine unnaturally straight, the pain from her strike triggering muscles he thought were too tired to move.

Chu Huanzhao gave a satisfied nod at his ridiculous reaction. “Scared now? My sister was worried about others bullying me, so she found this weapon just for me. It’s called ‘Wailing Whip’! It’ll amplify any pain my enemies feel tenfold! No one can withstand such pain.”

“Wailing Whip?” Zu An swallowed, hard. That name alone was proof that this was a nasty piece of work. Amplify pain tenfold? No wonder that hurt so much!

What really surprised him was that that single strike had substantially increased the golden matter in his first formation. The increase was far greater than what he had gained from punching the stone wall. In fact, the first formation was almost full, most likely due to the combined damage her punch, kick and whip strike had inflicted.

This really is a bullshit technique! Zu An mentally cursed the technique’s creator a thousand times over. That guy had to be a masochist of the highest order!

Despite it all, he wanted to know what would happen once the formation was completely full. Judging from the amount he’d just gained, a few more hits from the whip would probably do the trick.

He shuddered as he recalled the soul-incinerating pain he had just suffered. A few more hits? He couldn’t even take one more!

It wasn’t just about enduring the pain. The lightning strike, getting punched and kicked, and fending off a giant man-eating dog had all taken a huge toll on his constitution. He was barely clinging onto life. He sensed that the next whip strike would end him for good.

Chu Huanzhao interpreted his silence as true fear, and stayed her whip. Instead, she gloated, “Hmph! Scared now, huh? If you kneel down, kowtow and apologize, then lick my shoes clean, maybe I’ll be in a good mood and spare your life.”

She sat down on a chair, crossed her legs arrogantly, and wiggled her feet at him. Zu An took in her long and slender legs. If a picture of her in this pose was posted online back in his own world, it would undoubtedly garner many comments of marvel.

“Tsk!” Zu An was enraged by her suggestion. There might be some perverts who would actually look forward to that, but not him!

Chu Huanzhao smirked. “It seems you have some spirit in you. How about this? Let’s make a wager.”

"What kind of wager?" replied Zu An nervously. This little sister-in-law of his was clearly a massive sadist. He had to be careful.

Chu Huanzhao gestured with her whip. "If you can take three hits of my whip without screaming in agony, I'll no longer blame you for killing my Bootlicker. What do you say?"

Her eyes glinted in anticipation. No ordinary person could withstand the pain inflicted by a whip that amplified agony tenfold. She had offered this wager to hand him a glimmer of hope, then watch as it quickly turned to despair. She desired to see his futile struggle to control his pain, and the inevitable, pitiful howls that would follow. Only with this much could the hatred in her heart be soothed.

She really is a pervert! Just as Zu An was about to refuse, he remembered the Ball of Delights he had won earlier. It had seemed a laughably useless reward back then, but it was perfect for the situation at hand.

"Fine! I accept your wager!" Zu An prayed fervently that the description of the item's effects was accurate. If not, he was a goner.

"Wait a second! What if you lose?" Chu Huanzhao asked.

"What do you propose?" Zu An could sense two little horns emerging from the top of her head. This little beauty sure has a little demon hidden inside her.

Her eyes flashed eagerly. "If you lose, I'll grant you the right to kneel down and lick my shoes."

Zu An was dumbstruck. Again with the licking? How did the Chu clan produce a pervert like you?! "That's not fair, unless you also agree to lick my shoes if I win."

Chu Huanzhao sniggered. "You are in no position to bargain. First, you have to make amends for killing my dog. Win this bet first if you want to make another about licking your shoes." She was certain he stood no chance.

"Fine!" Zu An felt his blood begin to boil. This little girl was simply too much of a freak. It was time he taught her the real meaning of the word freaky.

Chu Huanzhao drew back her whip, but Zu An interrupted her hastily. "Wait a sec!"

Chu Huanzhao frowned. "Are you backing out?"

"Lemme grab some water first." Zu An needed an opportunity to activate the Ball of Delights. Chu Huanzhao snorted but didn't stop him. She was in no hurry.

Zu An secretly called forth the Ball of Delights as he drank some water. He stared at the sparkling steel wool pad and gulped. So how am I supposed to use this thing? I don't actually have to scrub myself... there, do I?

This item can be activated by scrubbing it against any part of your skin. The holographic screen appeared, displaying these words. It seemed someone - or something - had read his mind.

Zu An had no time for idle thoughts. Turning his back to Chu Huanzhao, he discreetly scrubbed the steel wool on his hand. The item description appeared on the screen, together with an extra line of text.

Activation successful. For the next hour, any pain inflicted on you by a wealthier woman will be transformed into euphoria. Warning – this artifact does not lower the actual amount of damage you take. If a rich woman inflicts lethal damage to you, you will not die, but be left with your last sliver of health.

Uses remaining: 2/3

Zu An didn't even have the strength to bother cursing at the Keyboard anymore. This piece of garbage... not only is it almost useless, but its usage is limited too? It looks like I can only use it two more times. This keyboard was clearly devised by the most unscrupulous of fiends!

"Are you ready yet? Stop dawdling over there." Chu Huanzhao sounded dissatisfied. Clearly, she was growing impatient.

1. The Chinese term for 'bootlicker' is literally 'licking dog'.