

Teacher 501

Chapter 501: Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting

When Sun Mo arrived at the cabin, he had heard the entire story. He also met the maid after that.

“Greetings to Teacher Sun!”

The little maid greeted. Her eyes were red and swollen from crying and resembled large walnuts.

“Teacher, the painting is here!”

Lu Zhiruo pulled Sun Mo before the table.

Actually, Sun Mo really wanted to say that if the target was an ordinary painting, he could still do something about it. But famous paintings weren't things that could be drawn just because one felt like drawing them. However, when he saw the papaya girl's gaze that was filled with worship toward him. Sun Mo truly couldn't bring himself to say the word 'impossible'.

“This is a landscape painting, Wu Yezi is the name of the artist!”

Li Ziqi introduced. “Wu Yezi is someone from Linchuan. He has been learning how to paint ever since he was young. It's said that when he was 19, he didn't rest or sleep and spent a total of seven days under the snow to draw the Jiangdong Snow, becoming famous after a single painting!”

“He's even a famous person?”

Sun Mo frowned. This wasn't easy to solve, as there would be many people who knew about the paintings of such famous people. If he tried to copy it, any tiny mistakes would easily be spotted.

“Wu Yezi's famous paintings are very expensive. Hence, I estimated that this painting must be something he drew recently and the number of people who knew about it would surely be very little. This is why the owner, the Jinling Governor, wanted to display and show it off in the Deer Tail Banquet.”

Li Ziqi guessed.

“Are there no other solutions that can save her?”

Sun Mo admired the painting.

This was a Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting and belonged to the category of a landscape painting.

Mountains could be seen in the distance, and thousand-foot waterfalls were cascading down, flowing through a field. In this tranquil utopia, a simple hut could also be seen.

It was covered in green moss, exuding an idyllic aura!

There were no humans in the painting, but one could see a pair of footwear placed before the doors.

“Not bad, there are a few parts that are quite impressive!”

Sun Mo's lips twitched. Right now, he was also an artist after all. Hence, after taking a few glances, he understood the meaning of the painting.

This was the painting of a high official in retirement, living in a tranquil paradise separated from the world. He lived in a grass hut and lived a bucolic lifestyle.

Why did he say it was a high official?

Because the style of the footwear could only be afforded by wealthy people.

Using the words of the modern era, it would mean that the person in the painting was either a rich and powerful person with the net worth of over one billion dollars or some other major characters. That person then retired and ran to Mt. Zhongnan to build a grass hut there, living alone to pursue a free disposition of mind.

“What a troublesome painting!”

Sun Mo’s lips twitched.

“Teacher, can you replicate it?”

The papaya girl asked.

The little maid was sobbing as she looked at Sun Mo with a hint of final hope in her eyes.

“I can copy it, but I can’t replicate its effect.”

Sun Mo knew his own standard very well. Currently, he possessed the knowledge on two branches of Traditional Painting. The first branch was Character Painting; he had grandmaster-level expertise in it. The second one was Landscape Painting; his expertise was merely at the elementary level.

Naturally, Sun Mo still had time emblems and could use them to level up his proficiency, but he didn’t harbor any hope regarding this.

“Teacher, don’t be too humble. Her life is in your hands now!”

Lu Zhiruo waved her little fist. She was even more confident than Sun Mo.

“Teacher, I’ve already prepared the brush, paper, and ink!”

Li Ziqi didn’t feel that Sun Mo would succeed, but as for the preparations that must be made, she had already completed them.

“System, use three time emblems to improve my expertise in the landscape painting technique!”

Sun Mo instructed. Honestly speaking, he felt a little heartache. But after seeing the incomparably miserable and helpless look on the little maid’s face, he decided to go all out even if he had to use ten time emblems.

Ding!

“Congratulations, the proficiency level of your Traditional Painting, the landscape painting branch, is improved to the grandmaster-level!”

The system congratulated Sun Mo.

Sun Mo took up the brush and paused a little to settle his emotions. After that, he began to draw. The grandmaster-grade painting technique allowed Sun Mo's drawing to be imbued with divine aid. He was able to casually draw out what he envisioned in his mind onto the paper.

"Teacher is so awesome!"

Lu Zhiruo was agitated, the Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting was about to be completed.

Even the little maid was so nervous that she had no way to breathe. She was focused on that piece of paper.

"Teacher's drawing techniques are truly very impressive!"

Seeing Sun Mo's copying skills being so flawless, Li Ziqi also felt anticipation. However, after the drawing was completed half-way, her heart sank gradually.

As expected, when two-thirds of the painting was completed, Sun Mo tossed his writing brush aside in vexation and crushed the paper.

"Ah?"

Lu Zhiruo didn't understand. "Why are you crushing the paper? I think the painting was pretty good!"

"The level of that drawing hasn't reached the Wondrous Blossom Realm."

Li Ziqi explained.

If the painter didn't achieve that mental state, even if the copy was exactly the same, it was useless. In this era, the only color available was black. If one wanted the painting to be vibrantly colored, they could only do so if they managed to get into the 'Wondrous Blossom' Realm.

Next, Sun Mo drew two more paintings but gave up halfway for both of them.

Li Ziqi glanced at the sky and her expression became heavy. Although her teacher's drawing was very quick, it was getting late and the banquet was about to start. The amount of time he had left was not much.

"Teacher, why are you unsatisfied with these paintings?"

The papaya girl asked.

"They are drawn quite well and the concept within is still okay. But it's still a few shades off being perfect."

It wasn't that Sun Mo was looking down on Wu Yezi's painting, but rather, he could feel that their way of thinking didn't really match.

"In that case, just draw it according to the sense of perfection in Teacher's heart!"

Lu Zhiruo spoke in a manner of 'as it should be by right'.

"What are you blindly talking about?"

Ying Baiwu was speechless. “Teacher is trying to copy this painting, how can he draw according to his own ideas?”

The iron-headed girl actually resented the papaya girl a little bit. Why was she finding trouble for their teacher? This was especially so given the fact that it was almost impossible to copy the painting exactly.

“Why not?”

The papaya girl blinked her eyes.

Ying Baiwu turned her head away. She was so angry that she didn’t wish to speak to a fool like Lu Zhiruo. Even if she didn’t understand painting, she also knew that trying to ‘copy’ a famous painting naturally meant following the concept of the original painter. If not, it wouldn’t be called ‘copy’.

“Zhiruo, copy means...”

Just when Li Ziqi wanted to speak to Lu Zhiruo about some common sense, Sun Mo’s eyes suddenly brightened because of Lu Zhiruo’s words.

(That’s right, why do I have to rigidly adhere to Wu Yezi’s concept?)

(Isn’t this painting simply representing a major character leading an idyllic lifestyle in retirement?)

After thinking of this, Sun Mo started to dip the writing brush in ink again.

Discarding Wu Yezi’s concept while drawing according to his own idea, yet not changing the entire scene—this also meant that Sun Mo was drawing the same thing, but the core that he wanted to present had now changed to his.

‘Any mountain can be famous with the presence of an immortal!’

Back then, Sun Mo had had to entertain some people after work. He hadn’t wanted to go, but he had no choice. He couldn’t live a lifestyle of his choice back then.

‘Any river can be holy with the presence of a dragon!’

Actually, what Sun Mo was pursuing was very simple. He wanted to do something he liked. It was enough as long as he could earn enough to sustain him and his family.

Why did he have to force himself to drift with the waves and go with the flow? To live a dog-like life?

Bzz!

Sun Mo’s writing brush shone with a layer of light. Every time it brushed past the paper, the ink started to glow as well.

Motes of light drifted over and gathered on the paper, allowing this ‘Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting’ to be instantly filled with color.

The little maid, who was originally in despair, directly bit her right hand when she saw this. It was very painful, but she bit her hand even harder.

Because she felt that this was a dream. If she hadn't awoken, it meant that she was not biting hard enough.

"It succeeded! It succeeded!"

Lu Zhiruo grabbed Li Ziqi's arm and shook it fiercely. She was so agitated that perspiration could be seen on her face. "I've always known that Teacher is omnipotent!"

Dong!

Favorable impression points from Lu Zhiruo +500. Reverence (24,150/100,000).

"Is this something achievable by humans?"

Li Ziqi was in a daze.

Compared to the naive papaya girl, Li Ziqi knew how difficult it was for Sun Mo to do this.

The little sunny egg believed that her teacher could do it if it was just drawing a famous painting alone. But this was trying to copy another one!

"..."

Ying Baiwu didn't know what expression she should make.

Sun Mo held the writing brush with his right hand, while his left hand held up his sleeve to prevent it from brushing against the paper.

Although his house back home was simple, it was heart-warming!

Every time after he had done overtime, Sun Mo just wanted to quietly stay in his cozy nest, drink some iced cola, and play some games. He didn't want any nagging from his parents or requests from a girlfriend.

Eh!

(What am I thinking about?)

(Quickly wake up, I'm just a single-dog, how would I have a girlfriend?)

Sun Mo entered a state of self-forgottence, venting all the emotions in his heart out.

(Why do we have to adhere to the customary convention?)

(Why can't we live freely with no restraints?)

(I really want a cozy space. It can be small, but when I'm in it, I'm the heavens and the earth and I'm in control of my own destiny!)

Swish~

The last stroke of the brush drew the tufts of young and tender grass that swayed with the wind. He stopped and took a few steps back, silently admiring the painting.

The coloring of the painting continued. Because this famous painting was created by Sun Mo's Wondrous Blossom, some parts were different from the original.

"Wow, it's completed!"

Lu Zhiruo happily leaped onto Sun Mo's back. "Teacher is so awesome!"

"People would be able to tell the difference!"

Sun Mo shook his head.

"Teacher, you are worrying too much. The Jinling Governor would surely not think that someone would be able to copy a famous painting. As for the difference in details, he would assume that he must have remembered it wrongly."

Li Ziqi had a self-mocking smile. If it was her, if she didn't personally see it, she would also not have believed that this feat was possible. "Oh right, the name on the painting is Wu Yezi!"

Sun Mo filled the inscription portion up with Wu Yezi's name.

"It's done? It is really completed?"

"Yeah, it has succeeded. You don't have to die anymore!"

Lu Zhiruo consoled.

Li Ziqi started to destroy the original painting and placed the new one into the box. Although there was a possibility they might be seen through, they had to try their best.

"I've done all I can!"

Sun Mo smiled and glanced at the maid. He consoled, "Although it might not be as precious as the drawing from Grandmaster Wu Yezi, it can be considered a famous painting too. There's definitely no way to purchase it from the market."

"Teacher, I feel that your painting is better than the one earlier!"

Lu Zhiruo wasn't fawning. This was what she really felt.

"Yeah, in terms of concept, this painting by Teacher can form a resonance with me!"

Li Ziqi evaluated.

"Right, right, I feel it too!"

The little maid nodded hurriedly. Wu Yezi's famous painting wouldn't evoke any emotions if the viewer wasn't a major character in court or a wealthy merchant. But Sun Mo's painting was different. After all, he returned completely to his roots, drawing it from the perspective of an ordinary man.

Chapter 502: Great Teacher Feat, Immense Reward

The little maid looked at the brand new [Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting] and heaved a long sigh of relief, feeling a sense of joy after surviving a calamity.

Earlier, she was truly in despair. How could the life of a slave be comparable to the price of a famous painting? Hence, she wanted to commit suicide to end everything.

However, she didn't expect that there was actually a path of survival!

"The painting technique of this teacher is really impressive!"

The little maid blinked her large swollen eyes and looked at Sun Mo with worship. He had managed to copy a famous painting and after he was done, the painting looked even better than before.

"I...Isn't this too incredible?"

Ding!

Favorable impression from the little maid +1,000. Respect (1,000/10,000).

"You have to be more careful in the future!"

Sun Mo reminded her.

"I understand!"

The little maid felt a lingering fear.

On the Linjiang Square, when the nobles and rich people went to play, the servants and maids weren't allowed to wander randomly. They all had to rest here. Someone earlier had been curious about what the little maid had been holding and she had answered casually. In the end, everyone had wanted to take a look at the painting due to curiosity.

"Let's leave!"

Sun Mo called out and left the cabin.

Lu Zhiruo grinned happily as she hugged Sun Mo's arm. In the past, she felt that her father was the greatest great teacher under the heavens. But now, her teacher was catching up to the status of the father in her heart.

"Father, I believed that there will come a day when my teacher surpasses you!"

The papaya girl mumbled. Whenever she thought of her father, her emotions would be complex and she would feel a little dispirited. If her father was on the scene, he would also be able to replicate this famous painting.

With regard to this point, her teacher was, at most, equally-matched with her father.

"Teacher, you have to work harder!"

Lu Zhiruo suddenly exerted more force and hugged Sun Mo's arm tighter.

After walking a few steps, Ying Baiwu suddenly spoke, "Teacher!"

"What's the matter?"

Sun Mo turned his head and looked at the iron-headed girl who seemed like she wanted to say something but was hesitating. "Just say what you want to, there's no need to have misgivings!"

"That famous painting should be worth a lot of money, right?"

Ying Baiwu gulped down a mouthful of saliva. When she was young, she was extremely poor and she was used to the feeling of hunger. Now, she actually saw her teacher gifting a famous painting away so casually.

Honestly speaking, she felt a little heartache when she saw that.

"You have to check with Ziqi about this!"

Sun Mo wasn't familiar with the world of paintings.

"Famous paintings are considered art pieces, and their prices depend on their creators. If the famous artist has been famous for a long time, and it was very rare for him to paint, his work would basically all be priced at a heavenly price. If the famous artist isn't that popular yet, the price wouldn't be that high. However, a famous painting is a famous painting after all. Hence, at the very least, the price would be 1 million taels of silver!"

Li Ziqi explained.

"1 million taels?"

Ying Baiwu was stunned. So much money? How long would she have to work to earn that?

"1 million taels?"

Sun Mo was also a little shocked. In the past, for the sake of living expenses, he had braced himself and written the first half of [Journey to the West], merely earning a few thousand taels of silver. Yet now, a casual painting could actually earn one million?

In any country of the Nine Provinces, this could be considered a huge sum enough to purchase a house with two courtyards.

One must know that the definition of famous paintings in the Nine Provinces was different from the modern era.

Many of the famous paintings in the modern era were priced highly due to hype or due to money laundering. Ordinary people wouldn't know how to appreciate them. However, the famous paintings in the Nine Provinces are different.

Because only when one reached the Wondrous Blossom Realm would they be able to draw a painting that displayed a concept that could influence the admirers, allowing them to become someone inside the painting and experience everything there.

In the Nine Provinces, there were a few paintings that were passed down through the ages. Ordinary people were forbidden to look at them because the moment they did, they would have no way to shift their eyes away. It was as though their souls were being drawn in by the paintings. Their entire being would then fall into a daze and only the thought of protecting this painting would exist in their minds.

Hence, some famous paintings were dangerous. But there were also others who provided an enlightening effect.

“I feel that this painting of our teacher is worth 10 million at the very least!”

Lu Zhiruo spoke confidently, “Because this is Teacher’s earliest famous painting and would surely have its collection value. When Teacher became famous, all the famous paintings he drew in his early days as a painter would in fact be even more valuable!”

“You really have high expectations of me!”

Sun Mo chortled.

Li Ziqi involuntarily glanced at the papaya girl, feeling curiosity over her background. (What clan are you from? You can actually speak of 10 million so casually?)

If it was an ordinary person who saw Sun Mo gifting the painting away, they would surely feel intense heartache and even regret. Ying Baiwu was already considered not bad seeing how she could endure this given her personality as a miser.

Li Ziqi didn’t care about 1 million taels, but this was a famous painting drawn personally by Sun Mo. Hence, she felt some reluctance. She was already prepared to wait for a while before seeking help from Grandpa Zheng to get this painting back.

However, Lu Zhiruo was different.

In her heart, no matter how good the painting was and even if it was really worth 10 million taels of silver, she wouldn’t hesitate to give it to save the little maid’s life.

The papaya girl was extremely kind-hearted.

Li Ziqi believed that if Lu Zhiruo had owned such a valuable painting, she wouldn’t have hesitated to give it unconditionally to the little maid to help her.

The four of them laughed and chatted. Before they could walk too far, the little maid hugged the wooden box and chased after them. She charged toward Sun Mo and stopped before him. After that, she knelt and kowtowed forcefully.

“Might I inquire about my benefactor’s name?”

The little maid sobbed. “This slave will never dare to forget sir’s kindness and graciousness. If there’s a next life, I’m willing to be an ox or horse for you to repay this great debt of kindness!”

The little maid was too nervous earlier, hence, she had neglected the price of the famous painting. Now when she realized it, she immediately rushed out.

“It’s just a painting, there’s no need to mention it!”

Sun Mo smiled and waved his hands, indicating that the little maid didn’t need to be bothered.

“Boohoo!”

The little maid sobbed, not knowing what to say. A famous painting like this would cost 1 million at the very least, something she couldn't even pay back in ten lifetimes. However, this great teacher actually gifted the famous painting to her.

"No matter what difficulties you may face, I hope you won't give up easily. Committing suicide is a sign of uselessness. Little sister, do your best and continue living on. I feel that the sunlight would shine on you sooner or later."

Sun Mo earnestly persuaded her. He was the most afraid of children attempting suicide.

Because he had spoken these words from the bottom of his heart, Priceless Advice was activated. A golden light illuminated the surroundings.

As she bathed in the glow of the great teacher halo, the little maid was startled. She looked at Sun Mo's face. His smile was so warm and gentle.

It was like the winter sun. He also referred to her as 'little sister'.

Boohoo!

The little maid started sobbing again. Ever since she had been sold to the government manor when she was very young, she had never heard these two words again. She would either be scolded by others as 'cheap slave's or 'damn brat'. Even if they called her name, they would refer to the new name her owner gave her.

"I've remembered your teaching!"

The little maid kowtowed again. After that, she gazed at Sun Mo with a face filled with hope. "This lowly slave has one more request, I hope that I'll be able to address you as, 'Teacher'!"

"As one who teaches, transmits the dao, and solves the queries of others, I've straightened your thoughts earlier and can already be considered your teacher. So, don't feel self-inferior. You have the qualifications to be my student!"

Sun Mo laughed.

"Teacher!"

The little maid kowtowed. This was the first time she had 'tasted' respect and learned what concern was.

Seeing Sun Mo's group of four leaving and how Lu Zhiruo hugged his arm, the little maid's eyes were filled with envy.

Ding!

Favorable impression points from Yi Cui'e +10,000. Reverence (11,000/100,000).

...

Just when the little maid was kneeling and thanking Sun Mo. A middle-aged man on the upper level of the Linjiang Square coincidentally saw this scene.

“Brother Qj, what are you looking at?”

A good friend asked.

“Nothing much!”

The middle-aged man smiled, yet his gaze remained on Sun Mo. He didn’t expect he would witness such a huge drama the first time he saw Sun Mo

“Black Doggy Sun? If he isn’t someone extremely scheming, he must be a great teacher that’s truly worthy of respect!”

The middle-aged man mumbled.

...

Sun Mo didn’t return to the resting cabin. He had been badly frightened by the amount of contribution points the little maid contributed.

“System, why is it so much?”

“Because you saved her life, gave her respect, and showed concern for her. At this moment, she worships you from the bottom of her heart!” The system laughed. “You should feel happy. That is a little girl who is pure and knows gratitude. If not, you would have drawn that famous painting for nothing.”

“Don’t always assume the worst about people, alright?”

Sun Mo rolled his eyes.

Ding!

“Congratulations on obtaining Yi Cui`e’s worship. Because you have received 10,000 favorable impression points in a single shot, you are hereby awarded 1 gold treasure chest.”

“Congratulations on achieving a great teacher feat. You are awarded 1 great teacher emblem!”

The system complimented, causing Sun Mo to be shocked again.

“What? Doing this is considered achieving a great teacher feat?”

Sun Mo was joyful. The great teacher emblem was worth more than a famous painting.

“Educating others, pointing out the way when they are lost, while also saving the life of a student. Your behavior earlier is considered a great teacher feat!”

The system explained.

“Understood, you can go and rest!”

Sun Mo patted the papaya girl’s head in passing. After that, he opened a starmoon fruit from the treasure chest.

...

Sun Mo returned to the cabin. Before he could rest for long, a servant came to inform him that the banquet was about to start. He was to go to the Linjiang Hall.

The so-called Linjiang Hall was the top level of this boat. Because it was modified, the area was exceedingly vast. One could lean against the railings and stared into the distance, enjoying the night breeze as they admired the beautiful scenery of Jinling.

When Sun Mo arrived, there were already quite a lot of people here. They were in groups of twos and threes as they chatted.

“Teacher, that middle-aged man in green robes is named No Jingting. He is Li Zixing’s private tutor!”

Li Ziqi introduced.

Sun Mo looked over. Ni Jingting had a medium build and ordinary features. However, he had a hawk nose. This caused his aura to be very sharp.

Although his gaze was amiable and approachable, the arrogance in his bones still leaked out slightly.

Upon noticing Sun Mo’s gaze, Ni Jingting turned over. He nodded and displayed a very friendly attitude.

“Where is Li Zixing? Is he not here?”

Sun Mo knew the reason why Zhang Hanfu was so bold as to covet the position of headmaster of the Central Province Academy was because his backer was Li Zixing.

“He isn’t here yet!”

Li Ziqi’s lips twitched.

Logically, the two of them were relatives, but Li Ziqi didn’t feel any good will toward Li Zixing. Besides, according to the rules of society, a junior shouldn’t have a character in their name that was the same character as their senior. Hence, Li Ziqi’s name shouldn’t have the character ‘Zi’ or people might mistake that the two of them were from the same generation.

Naturally, the matters of the royal clan weren’t something ordinary people could surmise. Hence, Sun Mo didn’t ask as well, not wanting Li Ziqi to feel awkward.

“Teacher Sun, it has been many days since we last met. Are you still doing well?”

Yue Rongbo immediately came over upon seeing Sun Mo. When he got closer, he reminded in a low voice, “Be careful, Li Zixing is going to find trouble for you today. If you have no alternatives, why don’t you fake sickness and leave first?”

“Brother Yue, do you think I’m a fugitive? Why should I flee?”

Sun Mo counter-asked.

Yue Rongbo started. After that, he had an ashamed look on his face as he laughed. He clasped his fist. “I was being too talkative. Noble brother, I will treat you to some wine another day as an apology!”

Chapter 503: Start of A Good Show

On the Linjiang Square, the number of people gradually increased. This was especially so when the banquet time was getting nearer. Those major characters also started to appear.

When Zheng Qingfang arrived, everyone on the ship hurried over to greet him no matter what they were doing.

This was the deference given to a doyen-level character that had served three generations of the Great Tang Empire.

Although Zheng Qingfang had retired, no one dared to look down on him.

One must know that Zheng Qingfang didn't retire because he was dismissed. Rather, it was because his body couldn't endure it. If not, he would still be the prime minister and would continue serving all the way until he died.

And if one was to name a person the current majesty trusted the most, the person would undoubtedly be Zheng Qingfang.

"Let's chat again another day!"

Zheng Qingfang encouraged a few of his juniors. After exchanging greetings with a few old friends, he walked toward Sun Mo. "Why are you hiding in a place like this?"

Sun Mo shrugged.

"Sun Mo, listen to uncle. If you purely want to be a great teacher, there's no need for you to care about these social interactions. But if you wish to expand your influence and achieve something in the great teacher world, social interactions are necessary. Whether a person is successful or not, that would depend on his ability to manage his social network."

Zheng Qingfang earnestly advised Sun Mo.

"Many thanks for Uncle Zheng's guidance.

Sun Mo knew that Old Zheng truly wanted to guide him.

"Let's go, I will introduce a few people to you!"

Zheng Qingfang pulled Sun Mo's hand along.

Upon seeing Zheng Qingfang regarding this young man so highly, many of the guests were extremely curious as all of them sought to find out Sun Mo's name.

"He is that One-Vote Sun?"

"Oh, so he is An Xinhui's fiance?"

"Wow, he's quite handsome-looking!"

This was the Deer Tail Banquet. It was organized to congratulate newly ascended 1-star great teachers. Moreover, there was someone who had achieved a grand slam and broken the record this year. All the guests were naturally incomparably curious.

Everyone had long since heard of Sun Mo. After all, the title of An Xinhui's fiance was sufficient to attract attention.

Sun Mo was very calm. He followed Zheng Qingfang around to greet a few major characters.

If this was the previous year, those 1-star great teachers would surely feel jealous. After all, it was too rare to get an opportunity to get acquainted with these major characters of Jinling. But for this year, no one was bothered.

People like Gu Xiuxun, Fang Wuji, and Liu Mubai basically wouldn't care.

This was the confidence brought about by talent.

"This is prince consort Qi Mu`en, the husband of his majesty's paternal aunt!"

Zheng Qingfang introduced.

Sun Mo, who was originally indifferent, immediately corrected his attitude. After all, this was a family elder of one of his personal students. He had to treat the meeting seriously.

"Teacher Sun, it's an honor to meet you at last!"

Qi Mu`en smiled harmoniously.

"Lord Qi!"

Sun Mo clasped his fists.

Li Ziqi's aunt was the eldest princess of the Great Tang Empire. She was heavily trusted by his majesty.

Usually speaking, the emperor would avoid these relatives and basically wouldn't give them any authority. He would give them enough money to do whatever they wanted to, but as for authority, they didn't even need to think about it.

However, the eldest princess was an exception. It was said that she controlled the secret spy network of the Great Tang Empire. Simply speaking, she was an information broker.

Sun Mo didn't know how outstanding Qi Mu`en was, but since he could make such an impressive woman fall in love with him, he must definitely be very talented.

Based on looks, he who was in his 40s was still suave and handsome. Every casual action of his exuded an aura of nobility, causing people to feel good will toward him.

For such a wealthy uncle-looking guy, if it was in the modern era, he would surely be the king of sugardaddies.

"This elder's EQ is extremely high!"

Sun Mo analyzed. He had seen people like him before. Those people with high EQ were all highly educated and had interacted with many different types of people, as well as experiencing many events in their lives. All these factors combined and nurtured them to have a very high EQ.

“Teacher Sun, I actually wanted to look for trouble with you, but I can’t bear it if our Ziqi cries. Hence, I shall temporarily spare you.”

Qi Mu`en, who was originally smiling, suddenly changed his tone.

“Little Qi!”

Zheng Qingfang called out.

“Uncle Zheng, this is my family matter!”

Qi Mu`en rebutted.

“This is also my family matter!”

Zheng Qingfang chortled.

“Mn?”

Qi Mu`en started. After that, he looked at Sun Mo. “Uncle Zheng’s horizons are very broad. Since you can obtain his admiration, you must have your outstanding aspects. However, it is still not enough!”

Qi Mu`en didn’t expect Zheng Qingfang would appreciate Sun Mo so much and treated him like a junior of his own clan. “Just a title of the top-ranker of the 1-star great teacher examination...let alone my wife, even I’m not satisfied with it.”

Sun Mo explained. “I’ve never been complacent before!”

At this moment, Sun Mo recalled those parents who purposely made things difficult for him. Honestly speaking, it wasn’t easy for a student to meet a responsible teacher and also have understanding parents.

“The amount of time you have remaining is not a lot. In the 2-star great teacher examination two months plus later, I hope to see you prove yourself there.”

Qi Mu`en requested.

“Little Qi, are you not being too overbearing?” Zheng Qingfang frowned. “Have you seen someone who could rise 2 stars in a single year?”

“Only geniuses can accomplish things normal people cannot. Uncle Zheng, Ziqi’s personal teacher has to be a genius no matter what, right?”

Qi Mu`en counter-asked.

Zheng Qingfang didn’t know what to say. Honestly speaking, given Li Ziqi’s identity as a princess of the Great Tang Empire, even if her teacher wasn’t a secondary saint, it wouldn’t be a problem for her to take a 7-star or 8-star great teacher as her personal teacher.

Back when he heard that Li Ziqi had taken Sun Mo as her master, he was badly frightened. He even wanted to step out to stop her. In fact, even now, he still felt that Sun Mo wasn’t too suitable.

There was no doubt that Sun Mo was outstanding, but could he be more outstanding than a 7-star great teacher? Even if he could, how long must they wait for him to ascend to that rank? Moreover, in the process of him becoming a 7-star great teacher, her highness's education would surely be delayed!

After all, the optimal learning age for everyone was that short few tens of years.

"Also, I heard that Liu Mubai is planning to achieve the feat of obtaining 3 stars in a single year. I believe my request for Teacher Sun to get 2 stars in one year isn't too overbearing, right?"

Qi Mu'en asked.

"Not at all!"

Sun Mo smiled. "If I can't even achieve 3 stars in a year, I will persuade Ziqi to leave me!"

"Sun Mo!"

Zheng Qingfang was badly frightened.

"Obtaining three stars in a year? Are you sure you didn't say it wrongly?"

Qi Mu'en's eyes widened as he started to survey Sun Mo seriously.

"I'm certain!"

Sun Mo looked at Qi Mu'en with a solemn expression. "This time around, I'm not fighting for myself. I'm also fighting to prove that Ziqi's judgment isn't mistaken!"

Upon hearing this, Zheng Qingfang involuntarily stroked his beard as he laughed uproariously. As expected, this was the Sun Mo he was acquainted with. He was tyrannical enough.

Ding!

Favorable impression points from Zheng Qingfang +100. Respect (2,440/10,000).

"Alright, if you managed to achieve it, I would pour tea for you myself and apologize for my words!"

Qi Mu'en raised his right hand. He wanted to strike palms with Sun Mo to seal the deal.

Sun Mo wasn't afraid at all.

Pak! Pak! Pak!

The crisp sounds of their palms meeting echoed through half of the Linjiang Square.

The surrounding guests couldn't help but whisper to each other, very curious about their conversation.

"Teacher's expression is so heavy. Something couldn't have happened, right?"

Lu Zhiruo was worried.

Li Ziqi's heart was filled with concern. The scene she was most afraid of finally came. She didn't care anymore, if her aunt and uncle bullied her teacher, she would use her own life to threaten them!

In any case, with such a good teacher by her side, she would never give up on Sun Mo her entire life.

Ding!

“Mission issued: Please pass the 2-star great teacher examination two months later and prove your excellence to Qi Mu`en. Special reward: 1x silver treasure chest!”

“Mission issued: Please do your best to accomplish the feat of obtaining 3 stars in one year, shocking Qi Mu`en badly. At that time, there will be a mysterious reward given out.”

The system’s voice rang out in his ears.

“What are you guys chatting about? Can I join in?”

A 50-year-old man walked over with vigorous strides. He was very tall and had broad shoulders. When he spoke, it was as though an iron wall was rushing over, bringing with it immense pressure.

“This is Prince Li!”

Zheng Qingfang introduced.

“Prince Li!”

Sun Mo greeted but he didn’t bow.

Upon seeing this scene, Li Zixing’s gaze froze slightly. After that, he started laughing. He stretched out his hand and patted Sun Mo’s shoulder heavily.

“The juniors are fearsome. The Central Province Academy exceeded all expectations this year because of you. This is glory for our Jinling!”

Li Zixing praised.

Sun Mo didn’t speak and merely smiled. However, he had an evaluation of Li Zixing in his heart. “Smiling tiger!”

At this moment, An Xinhui also came over.

“Premier Zheng, Prince Li, Prince consort Qi!”

An Xinhui greeted all of them. She was worried that Sun Mo might suffer a disadvantage.

“Premier Zheng, recently because Teacher Miao has read [Journey to the West], he felt inspired and created a painting of Reverend Sanzang.”

Li Zixing bragged. “I’ve already bought it for 1 million taels of silver!”

Li Zixing’s voice was very loud. As his status was very high as well, this would naturally attract the attention of others. Hence, once he spoke, many people exclaimed in surprise.

Teacher Miao’s name was Miao Mu. He was a 1-star great teacher, but his drawing technique was extremely good, ranked number one in Jinling. He was even very famous in the entire Jiangnan.

His paintings were often out of stock.

“Teacher Miao, you are in the wrong then. I’ve said that if you created any famous paintings, you should show them to me first!”

Premier Zheng was depressed.

“Premier Zheng. To tell you the truth, when I was drawing this in my humble abode, Prince Li coincidentally paid me a visit. When he saw it, he told me he wanted to purchase it immediately. There was really nothing I could do!”

A skinny middle-aged man exuding a hint of scholarly aura spread his hands wide.

“Since I saw such a painting, I naturally mustn’t miss out on it, or I would regret it all my life!”

Li Zixing laughed complacently.

“How about taking the Sanzang Painting out and showing it to everyone?”

Qi Mu`en was also a lover of paintings.

“Maids, come and open up the painting scroll!”

Li Zixing commanded.

That Teacher Miao was drinking tea in a very composed manner.

Very soon, two maids brought the painting scroll over and opened it.

This was a long-axis painting. It was about 3 meters long and was about Reverend Sanzang traveling to the west. Some parts of the painting, about $\frac{3}{5}$ of it, were colored.

“It’s considered half a famous painting. What a pity!”

Several guests sighed. If it was a famous painting, it would be much more valuable.

Naturally, even the standard of the current painting was already extremely high.

“If it wasn’t for me being too excited back then and called out in agitation, disturbing Teacher Miao’s focus, this would be a famous painting.”

Li Zixing sighed ruefully.

“Prince, what are you saying. It’s clear that I wasn’t skilled enough!”

Miao Mu hurriedly spoke up humbly.

Everyone started to evaluate this painting. Naturally, the mood had already been set, and everyone was complimenting it. After all, this came from the number one artist in Jinling and was purchased by Prince Li. Who would dare to say anything bad?

Zheng Qingfang turned his head and looked at Sun Mo before winking mischievously. Given his long years of experience, he could tell that Li Zixing was about to make things difficult for Sun Mo.

Sun Mo helplessly shook his head.

“Eh? What does Teacher Sun mean by shaking your head? Could it be there’s something lacking about this famous painting?”

Qi Mu`en asked.

It wasn’t that he wanted to make things difficult for Sun Mo. He only asked because he was curious.

(Well done!)

Li Zixing silently mused joyfully. He had already arranged for people to find a chance and make things difficult for Sun Mo, but he didn’t expect Qi Mu`en to speak. This saved him some effort. Next, it would depend on how Sun Mo answered this.

(If his answer isn’t good, don’t blame me for flying into a rage!)

Chapter 504: Sorry, the Grandmaster-Level Sun Mo Is Simply a Daddy!

Sun Mo shook his head. It was to express his helplessness in the current situation.

However, Sun Mo could understand Li Zixing’s thought process.

It was difficult for a mountain to contain two tigers. Both the Central Province Academy and Myriad Daos Academy were located in Jinling, and the Central Province Academy was even upgraded to the ‘C’ grade. It directly brought immense pressure to the Myriad Daos Academy.

As a supporter of the Myriad Daos Academy, it would be strange if Li Zixing didn’t hate Sun Mo.

One must know that the reason why the Central Province Academy was able to avoid being delisted and overturn its situation was because of Sun Mo’s excellence. In fact, he had even suppressed one of the twin jade annulus of Jinling, Liu Mubai, and became the trump card of the Central Province Academy.

If one asked what Li Zixing wanted to say the most about Sun Mo, it would absolutely be ‘Sun Mo? I want nothing more than for him to die!’

(A man can only be considered a real man after withstanding tribulations from the heavens. If one’s talent doesn’t involve jealousy in the heart of others, that person is mediocre for sure!)

Sun Mo murmured in his heart, consoling himself. After that, his expression turned cold. He didn’t want trouble, but trouble came knocking on his door. Since that was the case, he had nothing to fear as well!

(Since you guys want to find trouble with me, this daddy is going to screw all of you!)

Sun Mo stared at Qi Mu`en. “Prince Consort Qi, what a strange question. Isn’t it obvious? If this painting wasn’t lacking, it wouldn’t be merely half a famous painting!”

“Eh?!”

Everyone on the scene fell silent. The guests in the surroundings subconsciously glanced at Li Zixing before turning to glance at Miao Mu. After that, they shifted their gazes back into Sun Mo.

(You are really audacious!)

This was the thought of all the guests. (What is your EQ? Are you an adult yet?)

Just like the saying, 'no one would go against the words of high officials', among the guests today, the ones with the greatest power were undoubtedly Zheng Qingfang and Li Zixing.

Speaking of the person with the highest status, it was naturally Li Zixing.

Earlier, Li Zixing had said that he had spent 1 million to purchase this painting and was continuously praising it.

In such a situation, even those with half a brain would say that this painting was excellent!

"Teacher is so iron-headed!"

Li Ziqi was secretly joyful, feeling even more admiration in her heart. As expected, her teacher wouldn't act submissively in order to ingratiate himself.

An Xinhui's countenance didn't change, but there was worry in her heart. Sun Mo's words were true. If there were no flaws with this painting, it would be a famous painting then. However, the consequences of these words might lead to a painting challenge. What should they do then?

"If I knew this would happen, I would have continued training my drawing techniques!"

An Xinhui sighed. When she was young, she was proficient in the way of zither, chess, calligraphy, and drawing. But as the number of things she had to learn gradually increased, she began to lack time. Hence, she decided to give up subjects like calligraphy and drawing.

Naturally, although she had given them up, An Xinhui's calligraphy and art pieces were still better than the majority of people. But when compared to famous calligraphers and artists, her skill was insufficient.

"Why? Was there a mistake in my words?"

Sun Mo looked at Qi Mu`en as he counter-asked.

(Why was I so talkative?)

Qi Mu`en was depressed. It was hard to dismount a tiger. Given his identity, he was naturally not afraid of offending Miao Mu and Li Ziqing. However, he had always been benevolent and knew how to give people face.

Bluntly speaking, he had never been those types of people who would say malicious words about people behind their backs.

"Sun Mo's words are right!"

Qi Mu`en first confirmed Sun Mo's words. After that, he changed the topic. "However, Grandmaster Miao's painting does have a resemblance to the image of Reverend Sanzang in the novel."

"Teacher Sun, I've already said earlier. If it wasn't for me disturbing Grandmaster Miao, this would surely be a famous painting!"

Li Zixing explained.

"No matter the reason, since it didn't become a famous painting. This indicates that Grandmaster Miao's drawing technique is not consummate enough!"

Sun Mo shrugged.

(Aiya, you are still talking?)

(The guests are already convinced, can't you just let things go?)

However, everyone here was a veteran in society, and they could easily see the hostility between both parties very quickly.

"Oh, let me ask Teacher Sun then. What is lacking in the painting? I wish to touch up on it!"

Miao Mu suppressed his anger and consulted Sun Mo for guidance. However, the smart ones could tell that Miao Mu was preparing his retaliation.

(You are an ordinary person, how can you evaluate a famous artist? If you can't give a convincing reason, you will definitely be cursed at by everyone!)

Puchi~

Before Sun Mo spoke, Zheng Qingfang burst out into laughter. His sudden actions instantly drew the attention of everyone over.

"Cough, cough. Sorry, sorry, I have a stomachache!"

Premier Zheng randomly found an excuse, but no one dared to call him out on it.

"For this painting, regardless of its scenery setting or painting skill, both are excellent. However, its concept is slightly lacking. Reverend Sanzang is fully focused on retrieving the true scriptures from the West, but he is doing this not to grind his will. Most importantly, he is doing this because he wanted to save everyone from calamities, rescuing the world!"

Sun Mo spoke.

Miao Mu, who was originally filled with disdain toward Sun Mo, suddenly frowned upon hearing this. He then glanced at this Sanzang Painting again.

Li Zixing stared at Miao Mu. (What are you doing?)

(Retaliate!)

(Curse him!)

Miao Mu was still contemplating Sun Mo's words, but after he saw Li Zixing's gaze, he could only stop pondering and spoke out.

"Teacher Sun, if you don't understand painting, could you kindly shut up? Either that or you should sincerely consult others for guidance. You are simply nitpicking, and doing something like this doesn't benefit our statuses as great teachers."

Miao Mu reproached, reprimanding Sun Mo in the name of a famous artist.

"I feel Teacher Sun's words are correct!"

“What do you mean by correct? For something like a ‘concept’, this is the most unreliable thing. Other than the author of the [Journey to the West], who could fully understand the meaning that the story wanted to present?”

“Isn’t this simply both sides claiming they’re right?”

The guests discussed. Although they wanted to praise Sun Mo’s intellect, honestly speaking, his provocation now seemed a little shameless.

It was like there might be 1,000 readers reading Hamlet, but other than Shakespeare himself, who dared to say that they understood Hamlet fully?

Sun Mo shrugged. He hadn’t been casually speaking. If it was a painting of flowers, birds, fishes, and bugs, he would truly not know how to evaluate. But now that the thing he was evaluating was a Sanzang painting...sorry, the grandmaster-level Sun Mo was a daddy!

“Teacher Sun, I dare to say that with regard to research in [Journey to the West], I’m absolutely one of the top few in Jinling. Ever since this book was published, I’ve reread it many times. Right now, I already know the content by heart. If I don’t have true appreciation for it, I wouldn’t be able to produce a half famous painting either!”

Miao Mu explained.

“That’s right. Teacher Miao’s love for [Journey to the West] surpassed everyone else’s.”

Li Zixing added in support. “Hence, his understanding of Reverend Sanzang is also the deepest. What about you, Teacher Sun? In this past year, you should have been busy preparing for the 1-star great teacher examination, right?”

The guests started to discuss among themselves again.

Indeed, even if Sun Mo said he was someone who read the [Journey to the West] every day, no one would believe him. After all, if one wanted to break the record and obtained the first place, they had to put in more effort compared to other teachers. How would Sun Mo have the time to read novels idly?

In the eyes of everyone, Sun Mo was reluctant to admit his mistake. He was the type of person that refused to shed tears before he saw a coffin in front of his eyes.

Pu!

Zheng Qingfang couldn’t help but laugh.

“Premier Zheng, what do you mean?”

Qi Mu`en didn’t understand.

“I have a bad stomach ache!”

Zheng Qingfang not only wanted to laugh, but he even wanted to toss a [Journey to the West] book to Miao Mu. (Did you say you understand the [Journey to the West] more than Sun Mo?)

(Do you know that he is none other than the author?)

“This book [Journey to the West] might use simple wordings and is somewhat crude, but the writing style is extremely interesting and the author’s imagination is vivid. The concepts are profound and far-reaching, causing people to feel that other authors are far inferior. This book has opened up a brand new genre!”

Miao Mu praised the book highly.

Many guests respectively nodded after they heard this.

In this recent year, [Journey to the West] was wildly popular. This was especially so in the circles of nobility. It spread like wildfire.

One must know that nobles weren’t like ordinary folks who had to work to support their family. Other than eating and playing, nobles had all the time in the world. They could read as many novels as they wanted to.

This was the first time many among them got their hands on common literature, and they loved it so much they couldn’t bear to part with it.

The Great Sage Equal to Heavens had fiery golden eyes and wreaked havoc through the Lingxiao Treasure Hall, screwing the heavens, the earth, and the air. His attitude was grand and tyrannical, causing many men to idolize him.

One could say that all the men on the scene right now wanted an iron cudgel that could penetrate the sky, not allowing it to hinder their vision!

“I only hate the fact that this is just the first half of the book!”

Miao Mu sighed.

“Yeah, I wonder what that Gandalf is doing. Why is he not continuing to write?”

“It’s Grandmaster Gandalf. Could you show some respect when speaking about him?”

“I almost die from the lack of continuation!”

Speaking of [Journey to the West], everyone felt some anger. Why was there only the first-half? They could only hope that the writer wouldn’t ‘castrate’ it half-way and stop writing!

Upon hearing the discussion in the surroundings, Sun Mo felt very awkward. (I should feel proud if so many people praise me!)

Actually, Sun Mo was giving Miao Mu face by intentionally ‘nitpicking’.

“Hehe!”

Lu Zhiruo’s grin almost reached her ears. Her teacher was the book’s author. Although he didn’t write the second-half, she had heard the plot from him already.

It was super fascinating!

“What’s the matter?”

Ying Baiwu didn't understand.

"Because..."

Just when the papaya girl wanted to speak, she was interrupted by Li Ziqi.

"Cough cough!"

The little sunny egg was speechless. There were many people with sharp senses here. If the papaya girl revealed this fact and it got heard by others, it might bring trouble to their teacher.

As Miao Mu started to brag about his knowledge of [Journey to the West] and express his understanding of Reverend Sanzang through his speech, he wanted to show that Sun Mo didn't know anything.

His words earlier were just a cover-up for his superficial-ness.

An instant later, Miao Mu turned the topic of conversation to Sun Mo again as he looked at him.

"So, Teacher Sun. You really know nothing about painting, right? In that case, please stop talking when it comes to evaluating paintings."

Miao Mu flicked his sleeves, acting as though he wouldn't hold it against Sun Mo.

(Haha, competing with me? You are still far from capable enough!)

Li Zixing was extremely happy. It could be considered that he had obtained a small victory in this first round of the Deer Tail Banquet.

What he wanted to do was to give Sun Mo a 'social death'. What was a great teacher most afraid of? Naturally, it was their reputation being destroyed. At that time, no one would take them on as a teacher.

Yue Rongbo sighed. Li Zixing had truly been prepared before he came this time around. It was clear that he wanted to destroy Sun Mo. Also, this was merely an appetizer. If Sun Mo was smart, he should have left Linjiang Square as soon as possible.

An Xinhui felt anxious when she saw that Sun Mo had no plans of rebutting. It seemed like she was the only one who could say something. "Teacher Miao, your words are incorrect!"

However, before An Xinhui could finish speaking, Zheng Qingfang interrupted her.

"What a coincidence. I've obtained three famous paintings recently and might as well take this chance to let everyone evaluate them!"

As Zheng Qingfang spoke, he winked mischievously at Sun Mo, indicating for him to watch a good show.

"Three?"

Everyone was badly shocked. One must know that only paintings at the 'Wondrous Blossom' realm would be able to become famous paintings. This was why famous paintings were so rare. Yet, Zheng Qingfang actually said that he had managed to obtain three?

(Did you dig the tomb of some nobles from the royal clan and stole the paintings that were used as funerary objects?)

Li Zixing immediately grew jealous.

“Where are the paintings? Quick, quick, bring them out!”

Qi Mu`en excitedly urged.

Chapter 505: The Significance of This Famous Painting

In the Nine Provinces, famous paintings were still very scarce. After all, things were different from the modern era where paintings could be faked easily. Even rubbish could look like a rare treasure after an elaborate scheme.

In the Nine Provinces, if the artist wasn't in the Wondrous Blossom realm, their paintings wouldn't be qualified to be called a famous painting. Hence, famous paintings had always been rare commodities.

Usually speaking, it would be considered very fast if a famous painting could be produced once every three to four months.

(Hence, Zheng Qingfang, what are you saying? Obtaining three famous paintings in one go?)

If it wasn't for the fact that they knew Zheng Qingfang's personality, the guests would feel that this old fellow had obtained them through force or trickery.

“What are you still waiting for? Quickly!”

Li Zixing urged.

Gu Xiuxun stood outside the perimeter, observing everything. Even if she wanted to help Sun Mo, she couldn't do anything. After all, both parties in this scenario were peak-tier bigwigs of Jinling.

Very soon, three muscular guys walked in. Each of them had a square-shaped wooden box.

“What are you doing?”

The Jinling Governor started. After that, he came to his senses. Was Zheng Qingfang not afraid of besmirching the status of these famous paintings? He was immediately unhappy. “Premier Zheng, how can you take the risk of letting these lowly people taint the famous paintings?”

After hearing this, Sun Mo frowned. His impression toward the Jinling Governor dwindled greatly.

The Jinling Governor had status and power. He wasn't simply a literary official. He had troops under his authority too, but he looked down on soldiers.

However, this was the common attitude in the Tang Empire. Literary officials would always look down on military officials.

Zheng Qingfang knew Fang Lun's temper, so he naturally wouldn't argue with Fang Lun over such a small matter. However, someone not far away started speaking.

“The famous paintings are not choosing people, but the admirers of the paintings are doing so instead. Hehe, how comical!”

Fang Lun’s expression changed. He turned his head swiftly. “Who’s the one being noisy?”

The guests all had faces filled with panic as they dodged away when they saw Fang Lun staring at them. They were deeply afraid of being implicated. After that, Fang Wuji who was drinking in the corner was revealed.

“Wuji, what nonsense are you talking about?”

Cao Xian started and quickly berated, “Quickly apologize to the governor!”

“The one who should apologize is him!”

Fang Wuji had drunk so much that he was completely intoxicated. Because he was rejected by Zhang Li when he had proposed in public, after he returned, he became dispirited and started to feel self inferior.

In the past, given Fang Wuji’s EQ, he would have not said something like this. But now, he didn’t care at all. In any case, he had no more interest in this life. He didn’t mind even if everything was destroyed.

“Governor, he is drunk!”

Cao Xian sighed silently. He knew he wasn’t able to persuade Fang Wuji and could only apologize for him.

“Old Cao, admire the painting. Admire the painting! Don’t let such a person spoil the mood!”

Li Zixing persuaded.

He was the backer of the Myriad Daos Academy and had heavily regarded Fang Wuji. However, it was time to knock some sense into this brat.

“He’s ‘disabled’ now!”

An Xinhui sighed.

“A formidable opponent of our rival academy is ‘disabled’. You should be happy instead, right?”

Sun Mo counter-asked.

“Even if I want to win, I want to do so with an upright method.”

An Xinhui explained, “Fang Wuji is a good teacher. What a pity!”

Honestly speaking, the three muscular guys didn’t feel that they were insulted. After all, there were no such things as human rights in the eyes of some officials in the empire.

“Alright, let’s admire the painting!”

Zheng Qingfang pulled Fang Lun gently. He was also fond of talents and didn’t want Fang Wuji to be punished. “The first painting, [A Walk in Early Spring].”

When the painting scroll was opened, one could see the beautiful scenery of spring rain that had just stopped. The aura of spring instantly gushed forth, causing everyone in the Linjiang Hall to immediately fall silent.

This was the charm of a famous painting. One just needed to glance at it once and they would have no way to shift their eyes away.

No one discussed, no one evaluated. Everyone was immersed in that atmosphere that exuded qualities that delighted children.

A large pavilion, the swallows were flying west in the rain!

The brook rippled as the fish swam. The willow trees swayed gently on both banks from the wind. Tender soft shoots were seen around them.

Not far away, a young girl holding a kite was standing on a tip-toe, staring at the pavement.

Following the girl's vision, one could see the end of the path. There was a rich young master with a fan in his left hand and the reins of a horse on his right.

"Wonderful, extremely wonderful!"

Li Zixing slapped his thigh before applauding loudly.

This painting instantly made him recall memories of his youth, back when he had been enjoying a spring outing with his friends.

"When I was young, I used to fly kites as well!"

"Young child playing out in spring, what a joyful atmosphere!"

Bzz~

The guests started to discuss among themselves, feeling a myriad of emotions. A few emotional upper-class women even started to cry silently as they recalled fondly about scenes in their youth.

Zheng Qingfang coldly smiled when he looked at these people. He then spoke, "Everyone, look carefully. This painting isn't a simple Spring Painting!"

Zheng Qingfang was a major character. People would naturally not dare to defy his suggestion. Hence, they looked at the painting carefully again. After that, they soon discovered the other details within.

At the grassy area far away, over ten children were pulling kites, running to and fro. Their shirts were already drenched by their sweats, and their faces were filled with fatigue. However, not a single one of them dared to stop because there was a young girl clad in gorgeous clothes berating them.

At the right side of the painting, there was a pavilion with a sumptuous feast prepared within. A few well-dressed scions of wealthy clans could be seen sitting there, drinking tea while chatting as they looked at the kites in the sky.

Outside the pavilion, on the road, there was a young girl who made a living by singing. Her grass shoe was stained with dew and mud.

She wanted to go near to earn a few copper coins but was worried she might disrupt the mood of the rich scions and be beaten up as a result.

The guests no longer spoke. All of them were secretly monitoring Zheng Qingfang's expression.

As expected, although this premier had retired, he still had the welfare of the common people in his heart.

"The concept of this painting is really fascinating. At first glance, it seemed to be scions from wealthy clans enjoying the spring, exuding a childlike delight and joy. But if one looked carefully at the four corners, the main concept of the painting completely changed. It became a type of denunciation instead!"

Qi Mu`en spoke, appreciating this famous painting.

"Not bad!"

An Xinhui nodded. "The waters of early spring were still cold, but these children still frolicked in the waters. From this, one could see the difference in statuses between them and those wealthy scions."

Zheng Qingfeng swept his glance around. No one else spoke. It wasn't that their standard in art was too low. Rather, they didn't dare to speak.

This painting clearly spoke of the differences between the two worlds.

"Teacher Miao, what do you think?"

Zheng Qingfang glanced at Miao Mu.

Miao Mu fell silent. The main concept this painting was presenting might still be 'enjoying the spring', but happiness only belonged to upper-class people. He could see this, but how would he dare to say it out?

Those who could come to Linjiang Square were all upper-class people. If he said such a thing, wouldn't he offend everyone?

"Ha!"

When he saw Miao Mu acting like this, Zheng Qingfang sneered in his heart.

"Under the vast heavens, there are indeed many more people who are suffering. I'm lucky enough to enjoy his majesty's favor. I will definitely work hard and make sure there's no starving people dying on the streets. I will do my best to make every family have a storeroom full of grains!"

Qi Mu`en spoke again. "I represent the Eldest Princess to donate 1 million taels of silver for the repair of orphanages and schools."

Upon hearing this, the countenances of the guests all turned grey. (Zheng Qingfang, you dying fool! So it turns out you are here to swindle all our money.)

Even Qi Mu`en had spoken.

(If I don't donate, wouldn't I be implicated?)

“Prince Consort is really thinking for the commoners. 1 million taels can indeed do many things. I’ll definitely urge my subordinates to oversee this matter and make sure all the money is spent properly!”

After Li Zixing finished speaking, he turned to Zheng Qingfang again. “Premier Zheng, the first painting is already so fascinating. I’m sure the second painting will be even more awesome. Quickly show it to us!”

“Yeah, Premier Zheng, take it out quickly!”

“We would surely be able to feast our eyes on a masterpiece this time around!”

“I wonder who the artist is?”

The guests started to discuss and the volume of their voices was very loud. Clearly, all of them had chosen to forget the matter about the donation.

Zheng Qingfang was almost angered to death. He didn’t expect Li Zixing to be so shameless, not even willing to spend a single cent. As long as he donated a little money, everyone here would surely take him as an example and give generously.

“This man is so shameless!”

The papaya girl looked at Li Zixing in astonishment. (Are you sure you are a noble from the royal clan? Aren’t the commoners of Jinling your people?)

Upon thinking of this, the papaya girl stood up and said, “Grandpa Zheng, I will donate 176 taels of silver plus eight copper coins!”

Swish~

Everyone instantly turned their gazes over with unkind looks on their faces. (Who the hell is this? The topic earlier was clearly shifted away, why did you bring it up again?)

“Hey, little doll, why is the amount of money you are donating such a strange figure?”

Zheng Qingfang asked.

“Because that’s all the money I have!”

Lu Zhiruo spoke in a manner like as it should be by rights. After that, when she noticed the gazes others shot her, she couldn’t help but shrink her body back and hide behind Ying Baiwu.

The iron-headed girl didn’t show fear at all. She subconsciously moved her right hand, wanting to place it on the hilt of her weapon, but there was nothing there. She then recalled that before they boarded the boat, they had been searched and all weapons had been taken away.

Honestly speaking, if it wasn’t for the different standpoints, everyone would be touched by the papaya girl’s action. What a good kind-hearted girl she was.

“Since even my student has donated money, as a teacher, I naturally cannot fall behind. I will represent the Central Province Academy to donate 1 million taels of silver to help the children in the villages around Jinling City.”

After Sun Mo spoke, he turned and looked at Cao Xian.

“As expected of the Central Province Academy, its foundations are deep indeed. Although my Myriad Daos Academy isn’t comparable, we will do our part too and also donate 1 million taels!”

At this moment, Cao Xian didn’t feel heartache for donating so much money. After all, he still possessed the sense of glory of a great teacher and a headmaster. After seeing the painting, it was like his mood was affected. He wanted to do something to help those kids in poverty.

“Damn!”

Li Zixing immediately glared at Cao Xian. (You are donating? Isn’t that still my money?)

Since both the Central Province Academy and Myriad Daos Academy had spoken, Governor Fang couldn’t avoid this either, he was someone who wanted face. He could only laugh loudly and donate as well.

“I’m a poor man, but I’m willing to sacrifice everything I have. I will donate 500,000 taels!”

Fang Lun sighed, putting an expression of he wanted to help but was helpless to do more.

His acting skill was undoubtedly top-tier.

“It’s already good that you have the intention!”

Zheng Qingfang consoled while coldly laughing in his heart. (Every year, the coffee money you receive from those merchants that deal in iron salt tea is at least a few million taels!)

“I will donate 1 million taels too!”

Li Zixing was helpless. The major characters here had already donated. If he insisted on not donating, he would not be giving them face. After he spoke, all the guests also weren’t able to hide anymore and could only donate some money as well.

Zheng Qingfang smiled. This banquet allowed him to get roughly 10 million taels in donations. It was enough to do many things.

“Alright, the money has been donated. Quickly take out the second painting for us to admire.”

Qi Mu`en urged. However, the guests no longer wanted to see it. What if Zheng Qingfang used that as another pretext to get them to donate again? Who could bear it?

Chapter 506: Excellent in Writing and Painting

The river breeze gusted by, bringing a sensation of coolness.

In the Linjiang Hall, the atmosphere was a little subtle.

Based on normal circumstances, this [A Walk in Early Spring] was very well drawn. Besides, the implication of the theme was also very excellent. For scholars who were inspiring to benefit and help the commoners, this painting contained a warning and a spurring significance.

But who were the people on the scene?

Everyone was either a noble or an extremely wealthy person. They were those who could just lie on the bed and wait for loads of money to enter their pockets. They might feel some pity for these commoners, but they usually wouldn't take out their money for them.

Zheng Qingfang didn't think of changing them for the better. He was already very happy that he had been able to squeeze some money out of their pockets to help with irrigation works, pavement repair, and supporting the commoners.

The second painting was opened; the character in the painting was a young girl!

In early spring, the sky was drizzling.

Outside the southern outskirts of the city, in verdant and lush surroundings, a young girl who was clad in goose-yellow robes held a large banana leaf in her hands, using it to block the falling rain. She was squatting beside the nearby creek and positioned the banana leaf to block the rain for those ants who were moving house!

However...

Gua~

A little frog leaped high in the air, jumping onto the banana leaf. The young girl's eyes followed its trajectory and she stretched out one of her hands to catch it.

Because of this action, the entire painting seemed extremely life-like!

"Haha!"

The instant surrounding people saw this painting, they involuntarily smiled. Their nervous feelings also relaxed immediately. It was as though they had melded into this painting and was standing in the spring rain.

The adorableness of the endearingly silly young girl and the pure innocence in her eyes... With just a glance, everyone felt an indescribable comfort in their hearts when they looked at the painting.

"I've seen this painting before!"

An old man stroked his beard and spoke.

"That's right, I've also seen it before last year. Premier Zheng brought it over to my residence. At that time, I really felt like keeping it behind!"

"I heard that the girl in the painting was missing. Premier Zheng only had this painting because he was trying to find her!"

"Eh? Why do I feel that the girl in the painting looks somewhat familiar?"

The guests discussed.

Gu Xiuxun stared at Sun Mo in shock. She had seen the [A Walk in Early Spring] before and at that time, she had thought that Sun Mo had only managed to draw that due to a coincidence. She didn't expect that his skill in drawing was truly unparalleled.

She knew of the incident when Lu Zhiruo had gone missing. Hence, with all the information above, Sun Mo was the only one who could have drawn such a vivid and lifelike papaya girl.

An Xinhui subconsciously glanced at Lu Zhiruo and compared her with the girl in the painting. Although they weren't exactly the same, their charm and demeanor made it clear that they were the same person.

After that, An Xinhui had a look of shock on her face as she looked at Sun Mo.

"Aiya, is the girl in the painting this little doll from the Central Province Academy?"

Qi Mu`en exclaimed in shock and realization.

Lu Zhiruo had spoken out earlier, saying that she wanted to donate over a hundred tales. This was why everyone had taken a few glances at her. Qi Mu`en had done so as well, but only now did he realize this.

Everyone turned and compared Lu Zhiruo with the girl in the painting. In the end, they discovered that the resemblance was truly remarkable.

"Premier Zheng, it should be a painting of this girl, right?"

Qi Mu`en asked.

"Ah?"

Lu Zhiruo was stunned, she stared at the painting dumbfoundedly. "I was thinking why does this look so familiar. So, the girl in the painting was myself?"

"Haha!"

Seeing the endearingly silly look on the papaya girl's face, several people couldn't help but smile.

"Teacher Miao, out of everyone present, your drawing techniques should be the best. Could you please evaluate this?"

Zheng Qingfang asked.

Qi Mu`en didn't know whether it was a misperception or not, but he seemed to hear a tone of ridicule in Zheng Qingfang's voice when he spoke to Miao Mu.

Yet, Miao Mu inclined his chin slightly and had an arrogant look on his face. He then swept his gaze toward Sun Mo. (Do you see it? Even Premier Zheng thinks so highly of me!)

(Hmph, you want to talk about painting with me? Are you even worthy?)

(You are just a little bro!)

When Miao Mu's gaze turned toward the painting again, he revealed a serious look filled with appreciation. He was going to take out his true capabilities.

"This painting should have been completed within 15 minutes or even less!"

Miao Mu spoke.

“Ah? It can’t be, right? Producing a famous painting within 15 minutes?”

Fang Lun was badly shocked. “Isn’t a famous painting something that requires time and effort to produce?”

“For a mysterious state like Wondrous Blossom, it depends on the artist’s feeling at that moment. Naturally, the longer they take, the easier it is for the feeling to come. It’s just like archery. After you fire a few arrows, the feeling would appear. That’s just how archery is!”

Miao Mu found an easy-to-understand comparison.

“Grandmaster Miao is indeed awesome. This painting was indeed completed within 15 minutes!”

After Zheng Qingfang said this, several people exclaimed in admiration.

“Being able to complete a famous painting within 15 minutes, that grandmaster’s skill is definitely extraordinary!”

Qi Mu`en was shocked. He then looked at the corners of the painting, wanting to find a name inscription, but he couldn’t see any.

“The composition of this painting is very simple, there’s no profound concept as well. It must have been purely produced because the grandmaster was in the mood. However, don’t think of this painting as something simple. It clearly displays the grandmaster’s concern, doting, and even love toward this girl perfectly.”

Miao Mu sighed. “This [Young Lady Spring Rain Portrait] gives off a feeling of pureness, not containing even a tiny bit of impurities.”

“Eh? So Teacher likes me so much?”

Lu Zhiruo was astonished as she gazed at Sun Mo. She suddenly felt that she was too stupid. Her aptitude was bad and compared to Li Ziqi and Ying Baiwu, her teacher would surely like them a little more. But from the looks of things now, she seemed to have misunderstood her teacher.

Sun Mo laughed softly and patted the papaya girl’s head.

“Hehe!”

Lu Zhiruo grinned. She instantly cast aside those distracting thoughts. (I don’t have to care about anything else. In any case, in my heart, I’m the student our teacher loves the most!)

Li Ziqi’s lips twitched. Intense envy suddenly rose in her heart. (I also want to ask Teacher to draw a painting about me! There’s no need for it to be a famous painting. It’s fine as long as Teacher is the one drawing it personally.)

Sun Mo was in deep thought. No wonder Miao Mu was so arrogant. He did have the capabilities to support his arrogance.

“There’s no need to think too much about this famous painting. There’s also no way for you to overthink things. It’s enough just to appreciate that pure sense of beauty.”

Miao Mu concluded and showed a thumbs up. "This grandmaster is truly very impressive!"

Everyone looked at the painting again.

The tender grass shoots had sparkling dew trickling down. Black ants crawled on the ground, and there were also wisps of smoke rising from the wet soil. Just by looking at it, the presence of the world in the painting seemed to gush forth, causing those who looked at it to be able to clearly feel this.

Indeed, upon looking at this painting, the chaotic emotions of the guests soon calmed down. The effect was even quicker compared to those famed incense or high-grade teas.

"Prince Li, what do you think?"

Zheng Qingfang asked.

Li Zixing's expression had turned unsightly. This painting was no doubt a good one, but because of it, he recalled the son of his that had died a miserable death.

Although his son was useless trash, no, even if it was just a dog from his clan, it wasn't up to others to deal with him.

"Haha, good painting!"

Li Zixing praised, but he had decided that if there was a chance to do so, he definitely had to kidnap that girl from the Central Province Academy and sell her away to countries extremely far away, making it so that no one could ever find her.

"Premier Zheng, I wonder who was the grandmaster that drew this painting?"

Miao Mu was curious because he discovered that the famous painting didn't have a name inscribed on it. Hence, he could only ask.

"Gandalf!"

Zheng Qingfang answered simply.

"Who? Is it that Gandalf who authored [Journey to the West]?"

"I didn't expect that he would be a famous artist as well!"

"Eh? Top-level skill in both writing and painting? He's actually an expert in two fields?"

The guests were shocked.

When Qi Mu'en heard this name, he was stunned as well. After that, he subconsciously glanced at Lu Zhiruo and followed her gaze to Sun Mo.

"This girl really worships Sun Mo a lot!"

Qi Mu'en mumbled. He kept feeling that this painting had some relationship to Sun Mo.

"Aiya, why are you guys so shocked? Could it be that you guys have never seen a painting by him before? The first painting, [A Walk in Early Spring], was also drawn by Grandmaster Gandalf!"

“...”

The guests were speechless. Earlier, who could have been idle enough to check for the name inscription? Everyone had been thinking about how to evade the matter of donation. After all, compared to giving out their own money, the identity of the painter wasn't as important.

“Premier Zheng, I wonder if you are willing to part with this painting?”

Qi Mu`en was conflicted, but he still decided to ask. After all, he was also a lover of paintings. Since he had seen this, he didn't want to miss out on it.

“Prince Consort Qi, you are asking for my life!”

Zheng Qingfang rejected.

“In that case, Uncle Zheng, since you were able to get two paintings from Grandmaster Gandalf, you must be very familiar with him, right? Are you willing to introduce me to him?”

Prince Consort Qi took a step back and settled for the next best thing.

Given his identity, there was no way for him to develop more in his career. Hence, he started to dabble in the arts.

“How about I give you a reply after I check with Grandmaster Gandalf?”

Zheng Qingfang didn't reply recklessly.

“I'll have to trouble you then!”

Qi Mu`en clasped his hands and bowed. After that, he grew agitated again. “Isn't there one more famous painting? Quickly take it out!”

“The third painting should be the best, right?”

Fang Lun guessed.

“Earlier, everyone admired Grandmaster Miao's Reverend Sanzang Painting and had high evaluations of it. Now, I also have a Sanzang Painting. Everyone, please feel free to evaluate it.”

After Zheng Qingfang spoke, the last muscular guy unscrolled the painting as a [Sanzang's Journey to the West] appeared before the eyes of everyone. In an instant, everyone in the Linjiang Hall fell silent.

When they looked at this painting, they didn't know what to say. Their focus was completely absorbed by the look of resolve shown on the face of Reverend Sanzang.

Was Miao Mu's Sanzang Painting not good?

It was very good and could be considered a rare work. If there were no comparisons, it would be fine. But upon comparing the two, Miao Mu's work was clearly two levels inferior!

Strictly speaking, Zheng Qingfang merely took out a simple portrait painting. However, the simpler it was, the easier it was for people to resonate with it.

Those on the scene, especially those older people, involuntarily sighed. Time was ruthless; their youth had already faded. Who among them didn't wish to live for a few more years?

Honestly speaking, when the majority of people reached this age, they would be satisfied to just muddle through life without high ambitions. But after seeing this painting, their spirits suddenly stirred.

"Haha. Marvelous! Marvelous!"

An old man laughed loudly, stroking his beard. He stared at this Sanzang Painting. "This old man has long since wanted to travel to the west years ago to witness the magnificent view of the desert. However, I was worried I might die on the way there, hence, I've never done so before!"

"Laughable, how sad, how lamentable!"

After the old man spoke, he suddenly clasped his hands toward Zheng Qingfang. "Brother Zheng, please take care of this little brother's clan for me!"

After the old man spoke, he laughed loudly and strode away vigorously. His lofty aspirations were ignited by this painting. He wanted to accomplish his ambition from back when he was younger!

"Eh? Father, father! You can't go!"

A middle-aged man was anxious and wanted to chase after his father. His clan was able to have their current status due to his father's influence and social network. If his father died outside, the influence his clan held would be greatly diminished.

"Little Zhang, don't chase after him. Just let him go!"

Zheng Qingfang persuaded the middle-aged man. He had been acquainted with the old man for a very long time, but ever since he became an official in court, Old Zhang had never referred to him as 'Brother Zheng' ever again. Now that he had started to use back this term of address, it meant that his heart had really returned to those days long ago when they were young.

"Calm down! Calm down!"

Governor Fang kept warning himself that he mustn't do any stupid things. Right now, he felt an impulse to quit being an official and pursue his ambitions when he was young of conquering famous mountains and great rivers.

"This is the power of famous paintings!"

Qi Mu`en sighed ruefully.

At this moment, everyone was immersed in a strange atmosphere.

In the past year, [Journey to the West] was wildly popular and sold greatly. Even the illiterate commoners had heard the story from storytellers.

When the frenzy was at its highest, let alone the inns of Jinling, there were even storytellers at the roadside tea stalls in the outskirts, singing the story out loud.

It was precisely because everyone had experienced [Journey to the West] before. Hence, after they looked at this Sanzang Painting, their feelings were exceptionally intense.

The Reverend Sanzang in the painting no longer wore a magnificent kasaya and looked like an eminent monk with fair and clear skin. He was now covered in dust, and even his white steed was covered in mud. He held the Nine-Ringed Staff and continued forward despite miasma and monstrous beasts blocking his way.

The colors of this painting weren't gorgeous because of the greyish tone used. At first glance, one would feel a stifling and even depressing feeling. They would struggle in their hearts and feel uncomfortable.

However, this sense of discomfort would vanish like snow under the sunlight upon seeing Reverend Sanzang.

Sanzang's gaze was resolute and showed an unwillingness to bow. It could peer through all fog and gaze at the western paradise!

Sanzang's steps were heavy but holy. It was as though he could walk through a thousand difficult calamities and trample all dangers underneath.

Sanzang's expression was filled with persistence and a lack of regret at leaving everything behind to head to the west for the sake of acquiring the holy scriptures. Regardless of how difficult the path before him was, no matter how far it was, he would never cower back.

Such will gushed forth from the painting, into the faces of everyone looking.

In life, there were troubles upon troubles!

Who wouldn't feel weary in their life?

Sometimes, they truly felt weary and could only continue decadently. But after looking at the painting, an intense battle will ignited in their hearts!

"I feel that I'm 30 years younger!"

Li Zixing laughed uproariously.

(I actually started to feel anxious and even a little nervous due to the rise of the Central Province Academy? There's no need to be afraid. I will definitely make the school belong to me before I die!)

Also, for the position of the throne....

Li Zixing's eyes shone. He bit his lips. (Who says that I will never be able to sit on the throne in this life of mine?)

An Xinhui was someone intelligent. After her frame of mind exited from the painting's concept, she glanced at the name inscription and was startled.

"Gandalf?"

Why was it that fellow again? But upon thinking of it, the [Journey to the West] was also authored by Gandalf. It was only normal that he drew a painting for the main character in his novel.

It was unknown why, but An Xinhui directly looked at Sun Mo before winking.

Sun Mo helplessly shrugged. After that, he heard the system notification.

Ding!

Favorable impression points from An Xinhui +1,000. Reverence (11,000/100,000).

Chapter 507: Painting Battle

“Grandmaster Miao, what do you think?”

Zheng Qingfang asked.

Miao Mu didn't speak, and he seemed to be in deep thoughts. Actually, he was very unhappy. (Old Zheng, are you trying to be disgusting?)

The first two famous paintings could be casually evaluated by him. But now, the third painting was also a Sanzang Painting, and it could clearly be seen which one of them was superior.

Miao Mu knew that he was inferior to Gandalf. But if he had to personally say it, it would be a little face-smacking.

“Could it be that Grandmaster Miao has some unique opinion?”

Zheng Qingfang continued to ask.

“Good painting!”

Miao Mu spoke the two words dryly. After that, he quick-wittedly directed the point of attention to Sun Mo. “Didn't Teacher Sun use the judgment of an artist to evaluate my Sanzang Painting earlier? How about this painting? What do you think?”

What could Sun Mo say?

He couldn't possibly praise it, right?

What if the fact that he was Gandalf was exposed in the future? He would then have the title of a braggart. Hence, it was still better for him to be more humble.

“There's a huge flaw in this painting. Gandalf's mood was overly casual when he drew this!”

Sun Mo recalled the situation when he was drawing this painting and found a flaw.

“Teacher Sun, can you please respect Grandmaster Gandalf? How can you directly call his name?”

Li Zixing berated.

“Yeah, you are too disrespectful!”

Miao Mu sighed. “Although it's said that scholars tend to disparage each other, there's no need for you to display such behavior so obviously, right?”

Li Zixing wanted to laugh when he looked at Sun Mo. (Who told you to be so careless when you speak! I'll let you wear a hat of contempt and arrogance toward a grandmaster first.)

Pu!

Zheng Qingfang couldn't hold it in anymore and laughed out loud.

"Uncle Zheng, you...?"

Qi Mu`en was very surprised. He kept feeling that Zheng Qingfang was pulling a prank somehow.

"Stomachache!"

Zheng Qingfang explained.

"Teacher Sun, from the brush strokes, it does appear that Grandmaster Gandalf drew this painting quickly. However, this wasn't because he was casual, rather, it's a type of poetic intent. Only those who could reach such a carefree state could be referred to as grandmasters!"

Miao Mu guided.

Ding!

Favorable impression points from Miao Mu +50. Neutral (50/100).

"..."

Sun Mo was speechless. This could work as well?

"Teacher Sun, are there still any flaws within this painting?"

Zheng Qingfang asked teasingly.

"Hmm, maybe the concept? It lacks a little meaning!"

Sun Mo felt very unbearable, not daring to praise it. (Speaking of which, old man Zheng, what are you trying to do?)

"Teacher Sun, your words are incorrect. When I first looked at Grandmaster Miao's painting, I kept feeling that something was lacking, but I didn't know what it was. But after seeing this, I finally understood. Grandmaster Gandalf is the author of [Journey to the West], hence, the Reverend Sanzang he drew brings out the divine charm of the character even more perfectly!"

Qi Mu`en rebutted. It wasn't that Miao Mu couldn't make it. But rather, he had only read the first half of [Journey to the West]. His understanding of Reverend Sanzang wasn't deep enough yet.

"Teacher Sun, you are not a professional. In the future, please do not casually evaluate the artworks of others, or you would only make a fool out of yourself!"

Miao Mu admonished.

The guests in the surrounding started to discuss, and negative feelings toward Sun Mo were generated in their hearts. They felt that all three paintings were very excellent and had no flaws to pick on.

Yet, Sun Mo kept acting fastidious, trying to nitpick.

Upon hearing the whispers, Lu Zhiruo grew unhappy.

“You are the one who is unworthy to discuss painting with my teacher!”

Lu Zhiruo was like a little puppy, protecting Sun Mo.

“I’m not worthy? In that case, does he dare to compete?”

Miao Mu mocked and immediately made a challenge.

(Prince Li said before that I should find a chance to diminish your sharpness. However, I didn’t expect that you would actually send yourself to my door. Since that’s the case, don’t blame me for being impolite.)

Naturally, Miao Mu also wanted to use this chance to display his drawing skills so as to expand his fame.

Even without waiting for Sun Mo to speak, Zheng Qingfang spoke first.

“Sure. Teacher Sun, your personal students are on the scene. There are so many great teachers here; you must not have stage fright, okay?”

Zheng Qingfang spoke seriously.

“Uncle Zheng, you...”

Sun Mo bitterly smiled. He understood. Zheng Qingfang wanted the painting he drew later.

“Haha, a painting battle? I love programs like this that add to the fun!”

Li Zixing laughed uproariously. “However, let’s make things clear first. Grandmaster Miao’s painting will belong to me!”

“Prince, you can’t say this!”

“Let us bid for it, the one who bids the highest shall win the painting!”

“Would another famous painting be born?”

The guests discussed with each other. They didn’t really mind a painting battle. In any case, Sun Mo would lose for sure. They wanted to see if Miao Mu could really produce a famous painting.

“Go, prepare some brushes, ink, and papers!”

After Zheng Qingfang finished instructing the servants, he made another announcement. “Later on, Teacher Sun’s painting will belong to me, Zheng Qingfang. No one is to snatch it from me!”

When Zheng Qingfang’s voice faded, the entire scene fell silent. All the guests stared at him in puzzlement. (Did you say the wrong name?)

Sun Mo’s painting?

Who would want it?

If they used it to wipe their asses, they might even find the paper being too hard.

Very soon, four large round tables were shifted over and placed two-by-two. After that, the paper, ink and brush were placed on them.

“There’s no topic. The two of you can freely express yourselves!”

Li Zixing took the initiative to speak.

Usually, for painting battles, a topic would be set at the start. However, to painters, there would surely be things they were proficient in, and things they weren’t very proficient in. If they encountered a topic they weren’t proficient in, they would be finished.

“Prince, why don’t you give a topic?”

Zheng Qingfang counter-asked.

Given Li Zixing’s ego, he wouldn’t be able to bear the embarrassment. Everyone here knew he had a good relationship with Miao Mu and he clearly knew his proficiencies well.

“Only through expressing themselves freely would a famous painting possibly be created!”

Li Zixing casually found an excuse. In any case, no matter what they drew, it was impossible for Sun Mo to win.

Qi Mu`en glanced at the sky. “How about we set an hour as the time limit?”

After all, this was the Deer Tail Banquet. They couldn’t allow the two of them to continue drawing without caring about the time, overwhelming the host as guests.

“Alright!”

Miao Mu flicked his sleeves, adopting the demeanor of a grandmaster as he walked toward the table. (What should I draw to display my drawing skills perfectly?)

As for his opponent Sun Mo?

(Please, in what aspect can he win against me?)

Miao Mu stood before the table and took up a brush, but he didn’t dip it in ink yet.

“Sun Mo, move quicker!”

Zheng Qingfang stood beside Sun Mo and reminded him in a low voice. “Artists like them would have a few categories they are the most proficient in so as to deal with situations like this.”

One could say that Miao Mu’s current look of contemplation was actually an act.

“Uncle Zheng!”

Sun Mo bitterly smiled.

Upon staring at Sun Mo’s expression, Zheng Qingfang felt some self-reproach. He explained in a low voice, “Sun Mo, you would most probably become a 3-star great teacher a year later. At that time, how would I have the guts to ask you for a famous painting. Hence, I can only use this chance and earn one more painting for you!”

Zheng Qingfang loved painting, and he also loved to read. But up until now, he didn't urge Sun Mo to finish writing the second-half of the [Journey to the West] because he understood this was just a minor thing.

As a great teacher, Sun Mo had more important things to do.

Today, this opportunity just happened to coincide with the occasion. In any case, since Li Zixing wanted to use a famous artist to crush Sun Mo, Zheng Qingfang would beat him at his own game and give Sun Mo a chance to perform while also acquiring a famous painting in the passing.

"How can you be so sure that I will definitely be able to produce a famous painting?"

Sun Mo self-mockingly smiled.

"Don't undervalue yourself. Miao Mu is 29 this year and he merely managed to produce one famous painting before. What about you? 20 years old and you've produced three famous paintings!"

Zheng Qingfang stretched out three fingers. From his point of view, Miao Mu was simply overestimating himself.

In order to prevent Sun Mo and Miao Mu from being disturbed, the spectators all stood over ten meters away and watched from afar.

Naturally, major characters like Zheng Qingfang and Li Zixing were exceptions.

"Let's start. Prove to these people that you are not only the number one great teacher in Jinling, but you are the number one famous artist in Jinling as well!"

Zheng Qingfang passed the brush to Sun Mo.

Sun Mo took it. Honestly speaking, he wasn't in the right state of mind to draw something. But when he turned his head and saw Li Ziqi and the other two looking at him with anticipation in their eyes, he suddenly felt that he mustn't lose face for his students.

In their hearts, they believed that he was the most impressive teacher. In that case, he had to meet their expectations at all moments.

"Teacher, I'm cheering for you!"

The papaya girl waved her little fist.

"Haha!"

Sun Mo laughed. He lifted his hand and cast Encyclopedic Knowledge on himself. This was for him to discard aside all distracting thoughts.

"What should I draw?"

Sun Mo muttered irresolutely to himself. After that, he glanced at the surroundings, trying to find some inspiration.

These guests were clad in gorgeous clothes made from expensive materials. Any single piece of clothing they wore was comparable to the annual living expenses for a family of three.

On the table, sumptuous and luxurious foods were placed. Servants and maids were everywhere...

Sun Mo noticed the students that the great teachers brought along with them, in addition to some young people. All of them had envious looks on their faces.

That was true. The grade of this banquet was so high, who wouldn't want to keep attending something like this?

Sun Mo dipped his brush in ink and began to paint.

"So fast?"

An Xinhui frowned. She was worried Sun Mo might be too hurried and hadn't thought of the concept well enough.

"Eh, these few strokes seem impressive!"

Qi Mu'en and Li Zixing knew painting well, and when they saw Sun Mo's strokes, they knew that this fellow wasn't simple.

Gradually, a galloping horse appeared on the paper.

Young people all hungered for a better life, envying their peers who were descendants of wealthy clans. There was no mistake in this. If such envy could be changed into motivation, it would be even better.

Knowing what they wanted and fighting to achieve it.

Without a good family background, they couldn't brag about their fathers. Being not handsome enough made them unable to attract fair, rich, and beautiful ladies. Even their luck seemed worse in comparison.

...

It was fine. As long as they still possessed their two hands, it was enough for them!

Gallop!

Gallop!

Galloping relentlessly!

Every time they worked hard, they would be a little nearer to their goals!

Sun Mo's emotion was stirred completely. He not only wanted to encourage these youngsters, but he also thought about himself. In this life, he would strive unremittingly, pushing forward relentlessly!

Bzz~

Sun Mo's brush glowed with light, starting to attract the spirit qi in the surroundings over.

"The movement of spirit qi in the area, is this the Wondrous Blossom State?"

Governor Fang exclaimed in shock and subconsciously glanced at Miao Mu.

The other spectators also looked over but soon discovered nothing seemed to be happening in Miao Mu's surroundings. After that, they subconsciously turned their heads and saw Sun Mo's painting glowing with light.

"What the hell?"

"Did I see things wrongly?"

"Why did Wondrous Blossom appear and it's so fast?"

The guests were completely stunned. How long had it only been since the start of the painting battle? Sun Mo had already entered that state?

(Could it be that you are not a great teacher but a famous artist in recluse?)

"This..."

Li Zixing was dumbfounded.

"So this is the case!"

Qi Mu'en finally understood why Zheng Qingfang was laughing so mischievously. So, Grandmaster Gandalf was none other than Sun Mo!

At this moment, the Prince Consort Qi surveyed Sun Mo as he felt a myriad of emotions in his heart.

Excellent in both writing and painting. How impressive!

Ding!

Favorable impression points from Qi Mu'en +500. Friendly (500/1,000).

Zheng Qingfang heard the noise in the surroundings. He directly lifted his head, and his sharp and imposing gaze swept through the crowd. (All of you are to shut up for me. Whoever disturbs Sun Mo when he's producing this famous painting, I will kill him!)

When his vision turned to Sun Mo again, Zheng Qingfang felt extremely comforted. His judgment wasn't wrong!

Geniuses were simply so outstanding. They were people whom you couldn't measure with logic!

"You...you...how are you so proficient?"

An Xinhui was shocked. When did her childhood sweetheart become a famous artist? Moreover, it seemed that he was already used to experiencing the Wondrous Blossom state.

Chapter 508: Skill Shocking Everyone

"It's here, it's here. I have a premonition I will be able to create a famous painting today!"

Miao Mu swiped the brush across the paper. His expression mirrored that of the concept in the painting; there was occasionally a look of excitement and occasionally a look of malevolence. As for the discussion of the surrounding crowd, he had long since tuned all of them out because he had entered the state of forgetting everything.

After that, some motes of light flashed.

“Haha, Wondrous Blossom!”

Miao Mu was extremely joyful. Just when he was about to continue, he was stunned when his gaze turned back to his painting. Why were there no colors?

Wait a minute, where had the motes of light gone to?

Subconsciously, Miao Mu’s gaze shifted toward the trajectory of the motes. After that, he soon discovered that they landed on Sun Mo’s paper.

The brush in this braggart’s hand was currently glowing brightly with resplendent radiance.

“What?”

Miao Mu was dumbstruck. His hand uncontrollably drew a line on his painting that shouldn’t have appeared by rights.

To artists, this was a major mistake. Basically, it was no longer possible for him to enter the Wondrous Blossom state. However, with Miao Mu’s drawing skills, there was still a possibility for him to salvage it. At the very least, he could transform it into a piece of art that was not too bad.

However, everything seemed to lose its meaning now.

“W...wondrous blossom realm?”

Miao Mu’s face was filled with shock. It was like seeing an empire-toppling beauty being married to a beggar full of sores. Moreover, the beggar was an old man with half a foot in his coffin.

(How is this possible?)

This was a state that was impossible for famous artists to enter at will. It couldn’t be purchased by money, all depending on talent.

But this Sun Mo...

How old was he? Only 20?

When Miao Mu thought of this, he immediately grew very angry and jealous. He felt that he had wasted the past 30 years of his life.

“Miao Mu, calm down. Maybe you’ve seen it wrongly!”

Miao Mu rubbed his eyes forcefully, but he felt despair after that. There was no mistake. The traces of light from spirit qi could be seen, Sun Mo’s painting was now filled with colors. This was undoubtedly the effect of the Wondrous Blossom Realm.

“Failure!”

“Failure!”

“Failure!”

Completely out of instinct, Miao Mu started to curse Sun Mo in his heart, hoping for his failure. As for his own painting, because his heart was now in chaos, it was no longer possible for him to continue.

Half an hour later, Sun Mo retracted his brush. His painting was completed.

The painting of a speeding horse appeared before the eyes of everyone.

The entire Linjiang Hall fell silent. Everyone involuntarily took a few steps forward and even tip-toed and stretched their necks for a look.

“Grandmaster Miao, are you still going to continue drawing?”

Qi Mu`en asked.

According to the rules, in a painting battle, the two paintings could only be compared when both sides finished the painting or the agreed time limit was reached. But in this situation now, it was clear that Miao Mu had collapsed mentally.

“Y...yes...”

Miao Mu returned to his senses and wanted to continue drawing. However, his mind was now in chaos. All the emotions he was brewing earlier had faded away.

(How did this happen?)

(This is clearly a banquet for me to expand my fame, why did all the attention get seized away by a layman?)

“Teacher Miao, if you are unable to finish your painting, don’t force yourself!”

Zheng Qingfang persuaded.

“Grandmaster Miao, why don’t you go down and take a break first?”

Qi Mu`en gave Miao Mu a path of retreat.

(You are very famous and are known as the number one artist in Jinling. But in the painting battle, Sun Mo produced a famous painting. What can you use to win him?)

Only a famous painting can win against a famous painting.

If he was tactful, he should go down quickly and stop delaying everyone from admiring the painting.

“I...I...”

Sweat dotted Miao Mu’s forehead. Ever since he had produced a famous painting three years ago, no matter where he went to, he was treated like a grandmaster by everyone. He had never been in a predicament since then.

Miao Mu really wanted to leave, but with the pride of a famous artist, he decided to stay. He mustn’t flee without a fight.

“I’m still fine. Let’s admire the painting!”

Miao Mu drew in a deep breath and forced himself to calm down. Although he suffered a setback, it could be considered a type of tempering exercise.

“Maids, come and display the painting!”

Zheng Qingfang waved his hand grandly. There were immediately two serving maids with tall figures walking out, one on the left and one on the right. Their fair hands held the paper and displayed the painting for the guests to see.

Hua~

Everyone exclaimed in admiration.

On the paper, tufts of green grass, swirls of wind extending into the horizon, and clouds dotting the azure sky could be seen.

There were a bunch of horses resting idly beside the lake.

However, there was another bunch of seven colts (young horses) who were running as fast as lightning, galloping with all their might, chasing after the flowing clouds in the sky.

Their hooves kicked up the mud; they trampled on the green grass. Their manes and tails swished with the wind, like a magnificent banner fluttering!

The content of this famous painting wasn't complicated. It was an overall simple concept, yet it was grand and impressive. It caused people to imagine themselves on the boundless grassy plains, being one with the heavens and earth. After that, it was the galloping horses. Their rippling muscles simply caused people to be intoxicated. One could sense the beauty of strength from the horses just with a single glance.

After the exclamations of surprise, the guests fell silent and attentively admired this painting of galloping horses.

This was the power of famous paintings. Even if one didn't understand drawing, they could still feel the charm within.

“A masterpiece, truly a masterpiece! With just a single glance, I feel my heart is full of strength and vigor. I wish to gallop like those colts!”

Governor Fang sighed in admiration.

“Sun Mo is actually a famous artist as well?”

Cao Xian was shocked as he glanced at Yue Rongbo at his side.

“I just knew about it too!”

Yue Rongbo curiously surveyed Sun Mo. (Young man, you really concealed yourself very deeply! Also, is your talent like the surging tides of great rivers that are inexhaustible?)

Ding!

Favorable impression points from Yue Rongbo +100. Friendly (836/1,000).

“I’ve said it a long time ago. Teacher is the best!”

Lu Zhiruo had a calm look on his face. “Alright, alright, there’s no need for you all to be shocked. This is just standard operating procedures, just applauding will do!”

Ying Baiwu had never doubted this point.

Gurgle~

Li Ziqi gulped down a mouthful of saliva when she looked at this painting. Compared to the papaya girl who worshipped Sun Mo blindly and the iron-headed girl who didn’t understand drawing, the little sunny egg knew how difficult it was to achieve the Wondrous Blossom Realm.

As for her teacher, he could enter it any time he wanted to!

(My heavens, teacher, are you the most favored child of heavens?)

...

Gu Xiuxun looked at the painting. She then suddenly turned and glanced at An Xinhui. She had always worshiped An Xinhui, but now, she felt a little loathing and even a little jealousy toward her.

(Why are you able to get such an outstanding fiancée?)

“I suddenly feel that I might not be worthy of him!”

An Xinhui applauded and heaved a sigh.

Gu Xiuxun jumped in fright. She hurriedly lowered her head. “N...No it won’t be. Sister Xinhui is also very outstanding!”

...

“Prince Li, how is it?”

Zheng Qingfang stroked his beard, smiling as he turned his head.

Li Zixing had a gloomy look on his face, feeling so depressed that he felt like coughing up blood. What else could he say? He could only praise it!

“Good, very good!”

This was a famous painting. Even though Li Zixing was a part of the royal clan, he was in no position to evaluate it.

“Haha, good? In what aspects is it good?”

Zheng Qingfang continued to ask.

(Why don’t you go to hell?)

Li Zixing glanced at Zheng Qingfang while silently cursing in his heart. His tone grew tougher. “Sorry, my learning in this is too shallow, I can’t tell!”

No matter what, Li Zixing was someone who had received royal education. He naturally could see the strong points of this painting. However, wanting him to praise the murderer who had killed his son? This was something even more difficult to bear compared to killing him.

“Grandmaster Miao, since Prince Li doesn’t understand. You, as a famous artist, should be able to tell what’s so good about this painting, right?”

Zhang Qingfang shifted his target.

“This painting displayed the hot-bloodedness and sharpness of young people!”

Miao Mu spoke, feeling embarrassed. He casually skimmed on the details.

“Everyone, Teacher Sun, oh it should be Grandmaster Sun... After all, he produced a famous painting and is worthy of the title ‘Grandmaster’.” Zheng Qingfang smiled and looked at the guests here. “Earlier, was he qualified to evaluate the works of others?”

“Naturally yes!”

Governor Fang nodded.

The guests, who had felt that Sun Mo had been talking nonsense and nitpicking earlier, now felt somewhat embarrassed. If a famous artist was evaluating the artwork of someone else, even if the painter of the artwork was present, he wouldn’t be able to say that the famous artist wasn’t qualified to evaluate his work.

After that, they turned and looked at Miao Mu, recalling that he said Sun Mo was just a dabbler and didn’t understand painting. In the end, Miao Mu was crushed...

T...this was truly a humiliation great enough to make people feel like dying!

But then again, wasn’t this Sun Mo a little too impressive? He could break the record and be the number one ranker, and he could also produce a famous painting?

(What can’t he do?)

“Grandmaster Sun, how long have you practiced drawing for?”

Qi Mu`en was curious.

“I didn’t really practice it seriously before. I would only casually draw stuff when I have some idle time!”

Sun Mo braced himself and explained. He was too busy recently and had planned to draw some AV actresses for his own entertainment, but he didn’t even have the time to do so.

Wow!

The guests exclaimed. This was what a so-called genius was, right?

Fang Wuji was drinking, ignoring the happenings here, but Liu Mubai saw everything. Honestly speaking, he felt somewhat jealous.

After all, no one would feel bad that they had too many skills.

“Calm down, calm down. Drawing is just a minor dao!”

Liu Mubai consoled himself.

“Teacher, the path of a famous artist is destined to be one with no future!”

Han Zisheng consoled in a low voice. “Your goal is to become a saint, to educate everyone in the world!”

“Bootlicker!”

Although Liu Mubai verbally scolded his disciple, he felt even more fond of him in his heart. (Sun Mo, you have Xuanyuan Po and Ying Baiwu, but I’m not bad as well. Han Zisheng alone can rival all six of your personal students.)

“Grandmaster Sun, I wonder if you are willing to sell this painting?”

Governor Fang rubbed his hands, feeling a little anticipation.

“Fang Lun, you are incorrect in this. I’ve said earlier that I’ve pre-booked Teacher Sun’s painting in advance.”

Zhen Qingfang hurriedly spoke.

If Sun Mo rejected Fang Lun, he might offend him. So, it was better for Zheng Qingfang to speak out. In any case, he must not miss out on this painting.

“Damn, Old Man Zheng, you are actually playing schemes? You are really getting more and more shameless the older you are!”

Governor Fang scolded. Naturally, this was the teasing between friends.

Li Zixing had wanted to suppress Sun Mo, but after the painting battle ended, Sun Mo’s fame actually erupted. How could this be possible? He cast a glance at Miao Mu. This fellow was crushed, and it was helpless to depend on him anymore. Hence, Li Zixing turned his gaze toward Ni Jingting.

(During such a crucial moment, I still have to depend on you!)

“Cough! Cough!”

Ni Jingting coughed twice loudly.

The sounds of discussion in the surroundings instantly faded. The guests turned over. Ni Jingting was a 3-star great teacher. This was the respect accorded to him.

“Teacher Sun, drawing is a minor dao. We, as great teachers, should still focus on educating others!”

Ni Jingting lectured.

“Haha!”

Li Zixing was silently joyful. (So, are you angry or not?)

(Since you are a low-star great teacher, you should just be obedient and accept the admonishment. Do you dare to rebut? Fine, I will let you wear the hat of someone disrespectful to their seniors. When this matter circulates out, all the seniors in the great teacher world would surely be unhappy with you.)

Chapter 509: I'm Deeply Afraid That I've Underestimated Sun Mo!

Ni Jingting's lecture did have some logic to it.

Things like famous paintings weren't a necessity to the world. It was like in the modern era, most people had probably only heard the names Van Gogh and Da Vinci in passing. However, there were definitely more people who knew about Einstein, Edison, and Newton.

Speaking of their contributions to the world, Einstein's contributions would definitely be greater than Van Gogh's.

"A good show is about to start!"

Gu Xiuxun was silently joyful. (Do you think the name Black Doggy Sun is fake? Later on, he will definitely bark at you so loudly that you start to doubt life.)

"Your talent isn't bad, don't waste it on painting."

Ni Jingting appeared to be showing guidance to Sun Mo but was intentionally trying to disgust him and make him dig a hole for himself. (If you say thanks for the guidance, you will surely feel so sullen like you just ate shit. If you want to argue, the hat of 'not respecting seniors' will be even more secured on your head.)

"Teacher Ni, your words are incorrect!"

An Xinhui and Yue Rongbo felt that Ni Jingting was extremely sinister. Just when they wanted to help Sun Mo get out of the predicament, the spirit qi in the surrounding suddenly gathered and surged toward a youth.

Swish~

The guests in the surroundings hurriedly stepped aside. They turned their heads in the passing and then glanced at the youth clad in a school uniform. That youth was completely focused on Sun Mo's painting, staring at it unblinkingly.

"He is going to break through!"

Cao Xian excitedly let out a low roar. "Everyone, keep silent!"

This was a good seedling from his school, his breakthrough must not be disturbed.

"Wuji, stop drinking!"

Yue Rongbo berated. Duan Qiao was Fang Wuji's personal student. At such a time, Fang Wuji naturally had to stay by his side to protect him.

"Mn, Little Qiao is going to break through?"

Fang Wuji stood up with a look of joy on his face. After Duan Qiao had opened up 12 acupoints in the spirit-refinement realm, he entered a bottleneck phase. However, no one expected that he would actually breakthrough now.

Fang Wuji hurried over and saw Duan Qiao currently staring at a painting. He also glanced over and his mental state was instantly stirred.

RUMBLE~

Duan Qiao's robes fluttered without wind, swelling up. His body was like a vortex, frenziedly devouring the spirit qi in the surrounding.

Three minutes later, the breakthrough ended!

Hu~

Duan Qiao exhaled a long breath.

Spirit-refinement realm, 15 acupoints opened. Success!

"Headmaster Cao, congratulations. Another genius is born in your esteemed school!"

Although this Duan Qiao had an 80 to 90% chance of becoming a formidable opponent for the students of Sun Mo and Liu Mubai, An Xinhui still congratulated Cao Xian.

An Xinhui was undoubtedly magnanimous and open-minded.

"Spirit-refinement realm? Impressive!"

Liu Mubai praised.

"Haha, his name is Duan Qiao, a personal student of Wuji. In the future, if there are no accidents, he would be the top student of our Myriad Daos Academy!"

Cao Xian introduced, helping Duan Qiao boost his fame.

Back then Fang Yan, the top student of the Battle Hall, got famous because An Xinhui had brought him to the Deer Tail Banquet.

Everyone naturally wouldn't be stingy with their praises. The surrounding guests immediately congratulated Cao Xian, causing him to smile so widely that one could see his teeth and not his eyes.

"Teacher, I've finally broken through my bottleneck and reached the next level!"

Duan Qiao rushed to Fang Wuji's side and reported happily.

"Mn, I saw it!"

As Fang Wuji surveyed Duan Qiao, he stretched out his hand to inspect his body. "Go and thank Teacher Sun. Without the stimulation of his famous painting, it's unknown how long it would take you to break through the bottleneck!"

When everyone heard this, they were stunned. (What do you mean by this? Are you guys not opponents?)

Duan Qiao was stunned. After that, he nodded and walked toward Sun Mo. He then bowed. "Teacher Sun, thank you for your famous painting. It helped me to break through successfully!"

"Your words are too serious. It's all because your comprehension ability is very high!"

Sun Mo was humble and didn't dare to accept the bow.

"Teacher Sun, you should stop being humble. This Galloping Horses painting does have the effect of edifying the hearts and souls of students. If it wasn't pre-booked by Premier Zheng, I really wished to bring this back to school to display it, allowing all the students to view it!"

Yue Rongbo laughed.

Si~

After hearing this, all the guests took a gasp of cold air. They only felt that there was a charm exuding from this painting, but they didn't expect such an effect. After that, they all subconsciously glanced at Ni Jingting.

One must know that this 3-star great teacher had just criticized Sun Mo earlier, saying that drawing was just a minor dao. In the end, Sun Mo's painting actually helped a student to break through his bottleneck successfully!

Wasn't this too face-smacking?

As expected, Ni Jingting's expression was filled with embarrassment now!

He wanted to rebut, but Yue Rongbo was a 4-star great teacher. If he argued now, wouldn't that mean he felt that 4-star great teachers were inferior to him?

Li Zixing's lips twitched. He glared at Cao Xian. (How do you teach your subordinates?)

Cao Xian bitterly smiled. Yue Rongbo had always admired Sun Mo very much, saying that he was someone with an upright character. Most people would say this as well.

Who asked Sun Mo's painting to have such an effect?

If one wanted to complain, one could only blame Ni Jingting for being too unlucky.

"Teacher Ni, I feel that Grandmaster Miao had said something good earlier. A dabbler shouldn't criticize others!"

Sun Mo laughed and looked at Ni Jingting. He coldly mocked, "In the aspect of painting, you have no qualifications to guide me!"

The entire Linjiang Hall felt completely silent. No one would have expected Sun Mo to so openly rebut Ni Jingting, not giving him the slightest bit of face at all.

"Haha, Black Doggy Sun is going to bite people."

Gu Xiuxun was extremely joyful.

“Teacher Ni, if you wish to understand more about famous paintings, you can look for me for advice. But there’s no need to take me on as your teacher!”

Sun Mo acted generously, yet his words caused Ni Jingting to be angered half to death.

Pu!

An Xinhui couldn’t help but smile. Her childhood sweetheart really showed mercy at all!

“Aren’t Sun Mo’s actions a little too arrogant?”

Cao Xian muttered.

“Headmaster Cao, maybe by the end of the year, Teacher Sun would have 3 stars pinned on the pocket of his chest. Ni Jingting truly has no qualifications to be arrogant before him.”

Yue Rongbo explained.

“You are saying that Sun Mo can achieve the feat of rising 3 stars in a year? Are you not overestimating him?”

Cao Xian was astonished. At the same time, he felt a little worried. This was because he knew Yue Rongbo’s judgment was very accurate. If Sun Mo could accomplish that, he would become the Myriad Daos Academy’s strongest opponent.

“I’m deeply afraid that I might still have underestimated him!”

Yue Rongbo sighed ruefully.

“Teacher Sun, many thanks!”

Fang Wuji clasped his hands and bowed.

Two months plus later, Fang Wuji would also participate in the 2-star great teacher examination. The stronger Duan Qiao was, the better his chance of passing. Hence, he had to thank Sun Mo.

After he spoke, Ni Jingting’s countenance grew even darker.

As the host, Fang Lun naturally didn’t wish to see a conflict. Hence, he shifted the topic. “Enough, this matter shall conclude here. Let us continue to admire famous paintings instead.”

“Do you have some famous paintings?”

Zheng Qingfang was astonished.

“Haha, Old Zheng. This time around, I have bought the most recent famous painting Wu Yezi drawn. It’s absolutely authentic.”

Fang Lun bragged.

Miao Mu’s famous painting naturally wouldn’t be able to be comparable to Wu Yezi’s. Wu Yezi was publicly proclaimed as Jiangnan’s number one artist, while Miao Mu was only the number one in Jinling.

Even if the painting he drew wasn’t a famous painting, it was still extremely hard to obtain it.

“Governor, why don’t you quickly take it out?”

“It’s Grandmaster Wu’s famous painting after all, I’ve never seen one from him before!”

“It should be said that only a few people have ever seen his paintings. Those who could buy his paintings would have very high statuses and would place them in their collections. Ordinary people wouldn’t be able to see any of them!”

The guests discussed, all of them had looks of excitement on their faces.

This was the effect of a famous person. Leonardo Da Vinci’s painting would surely be more attractive compared to the painting drawn by a student from the academy of arts.

“Bring it over!”

Fang Lun shouted.

Li Ziqi and Lu Zhiruo exchanged a mutual glance. What was supposed to come had come in the end.

As expected, that little maid soon entered the area. However, her build was too small. So two other maids went over and helped open up the painting scroll.

“This is the new work of Grandmaster Wu Yezi, the [Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting]. It...eh?”

Fang Lun had wanted to introduce the painting, but the instant he looked at it, he was stunned. For some reason, he felt that something was different.

The colors had changed a bit. Moreover, even the concept exuded by the painting seemed different.

“Old Fang, what’s wrong?”

Qi Mu`en was puzzled.

“Nothing much, I was just sighing in admiration. As expected of the work produced by a grandmaster. Every time I see it, it gives me a different experience.”

Fang Lun laughed uproariously. He was extremely impressed.

He treated the difference between the two paintings as Wu Yezi’s profound drawing skill.

Upon seeing this scene, Lu Zhiruo silently used her elbow to nudge Li Ziqi. “Senior sister, we succeeded!”

“Mn!”

Li Ziqi was also at ease now.

In truth, this couldn’t be blamed on the other party being careless. No matter what, no one would expect that someone could copy Grandmaster Ye Wuzi’s painting like this!

“Good painting!”

“As expected of a grandmaster-level masterpiece!”

“The concept, the composition...they are both absolutely wondrous!”

The guests all praised. This was especially so for those officials. They immediately felt a sense of unsullied loftiness, a feeling that made them stand out from the common crowd!

“Master Wu Yezi’s masterpiece is truly worthy of its reputation!”

Li Zixing applauded as he complimented, “Teacher Sun’s painting earlier wasn’t bad. But when compared to this, the concept and his skill are evidently much inferior!”

Was it?

The guests weren’t able to tell, but nothing could go wrong as long as they agreed with the prince. Because even if they used their buttocks to think, Wu Yezi’s painting would definitely be better than Sun Mo’s.

Pu!

Ying Baiwu, who always had a cold expression, involuntarily burst out laughing at this moment. After that, disdain appeared in her heart. These major characters were truly empty inside. What ignorant fellows.

Zheng Qingfang helplessly shook his head. This was clearly an opportunity to help enhance Sun Mo’s fame. But in the end, Fang Lun had taken out such a high-level painting. Sigh!

“Eh, this painting...”

Miao Mu was stunned. Why did something seem wrong with it? It was just that before he could think things through, he heard someone shouting!

“This painting is a fake!”

Fang Lun was extremely angry.

(Are you doubting my judgment?)

However, when he was about to explode in anger, he turned his head and realized that the person who had just spoken was none other than Li Zixing’s youngest son, Li Feng.

This caused him to have no way to vent his bellyful of anger.

“Don’t talk nonsense!”

Li Zixing berated.

“Father, this painting is fake!”

Li Feng was still young. When he saw that no one believed him, his rebellious nature kicked in and he wanted to prove that he was correct even more.

“Little prince, tell us why do you think it is fake then?”

Fang Lun asked with an unkind tone.

“F...fake...”

Li Feng stuttered. He was worried that after he revealed how the maid damaged the painting, she might expose his role in it.

“This is clearly a famous painting at the Wondrous Blossom Realm. How can it be fake?”

Qu Mu`en shook his head. Li Feng spoke too irresponsibly.

“Yeah, why is it fake?”

After hearing all the comments, Li Feng suddenly started to doubt himself. (Could it be that I’ve seen it wrongly? Hence, he stared at the painting closely, wanting to find traces of it being redrawn.)

“Hu, we passed the calamity!”

Sun Mo heaved a sigh of relief. After that, he glanced toward the little maid and winked at her.

“Hehe!”

The little maid, who was originally extremely worried, finally revealed a smile of joy. But at this moment, a loud and heroic-sounding voice rang out.

“Sorry, sorry. I came late!”

Li Ziqi turned her head. After that, her countenance changed because the person who had just arrived was Wu Yezi.

Chapter 510: Golden Sentences from the Mouth

When the little maid heard this voice, her body involuntarily shivered.

Because she was adorable-looking on top of being intelligent and skilled in the four arts of zither, chess, calligraphy, and books, Governor Fang was very fond of her.

Every time Governor Fang mingled with the cognoscenti, he would bring her along.

Bringing a famed courtesan?

It was too vulgar. Governor Fang precisely wanted the feeling of a budding beauty like her beside him. However, no matter how much he doted on Yi Cui`e, once the famous painting was destroyed, he would definitely beat her to death.

“Calm down, I have to quickly calm down. Great Teacher Sun’s drawing skill is wondrous and amazing. Surely, there wouldn’t be any flaws!”

The little maid consoled herself.

Sun Mo turned his head. The person who had just arrived was tall but exceptionally skinny. He was casually clad in a white robe, and it was unknown how long it had been since he had washed the robes. Not only were there wrinkles, but there were even ink stains on them as well.

His hair was disheveled and was tied together with a flaxen rope behind his head. Truly, this person was slovenly in dress and manner.

“As expected of someone who does art!”

Sun Mo's lisp twitched. He didn't understand why the majority of those who did art would have such a style.

Zheng Qingfang's group came over to welcome him and started to reminisce about old times.

Artists weren't mainstream, but once an artist could become the number one in Jiangnan, things would be different.

Sun Mo used this break to activate Divine Sight as he peered at Wu Yezi.

67 years old, fifth level of the divine force realm!

He has been learning to draw since young, never resting be it in summer or winter.

Outstanding talent. If he spends his energy on cultivation, he would surely have high accomplishments and he could even become a great teacher. However, he loves drawing too much.

For drawing, he once chose to forsake love. Because he felt that the emotion of love would cause one to become a part of the mortal world and become burdened by family and responsibility, as well as life's daily necessities.

“...”

At the start, Sun Mo had admired this painting fanatic a lot, but after seeing his info, he suddenly felt contempt. Sun Mo felt that love and life's daily worries were also a type of experience and even a blessing.

Suddenly, Sun Mo understood why Wu Yezi could draw [Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting], and he also understood the deeper meaning of this painting.

This fellow treated everyone else as vulgar commoners.

Today was the Deer Tail Banquet. Although the invited guests were all extremely wealthy, not all of them were qualified to chat with Wu Yezi.

Only peak major characters like Li Zixing and Zheng Qingfang could stand beside Wu Yezi.

As for the others, they were insignificant.

“Grandmaster Wu, we are currently admiring your [Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting].

Fang Lun then issued an invitation. “Since Grandmaster is coincidentally here, how about explaining the concept in the painting to us?”

“There's no need for that. Famous paintings are to be admired by people themselves. They should sense them with their own insights. If others introduced it to them, it would actually cause an adverse effect.”

Wu Yezi cleanly rejected.

This was his opinion, but the reason for his rejection was mostly because he was lazy and felt disdain. The people here were just a bunch of ordinary people. Were they qualified to listen to his explanation?

Wu Yezi faxed around and saw these people smiling and had amiable attitudes toward him. He was used to be respected like this. However, just when he wanted to find a place and sit down to drink tea, he suddenly saw a young man speaking to a teenage girl beside him. That young man basically treated him like the thin air.

Cough! Cough!

Wu Yezi coughed intentionally.

“Is Grandmaster sick?”

Fang Lun had a look of concern on his face. The others also immediately asked in concern.

“It’s just a common cold, there’s no need for concern!”

Wu Yezi saw that the young man merely lifted his head and took a glance at him before lowering his head. Even when their gazes met, the young man had no other expression.

“Che, this gaze seemed to be looking down on me?”

As an artist, Wu Yezi’s mind was very meticulous.

“Teacher Sun, your [Galloping Horses] isn’t bad but when compared to Grandmaster Wu’s [Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting], it is still inferior. So, don’t feel arrogant. Instead, you should sincerely put your heart into learning. Come, let me introduce you. This is Grandmaster Wu Yezi, the number one artist in Jiangnan!”

Ni Jingting spoke again for the sake of disgusting Sun Mo.

He could tell that a person like Sun Mo was full of pride. Naturally, he was overflowing with talent and had the capacity. If he forced him to admit defeat, there was an 80 to 90% chance he would be against Wu Yezi.

(Miao Mu can’t make it, but Wu Yezi surely can, right?)

(If you can win against Wu Yezi, I, Ni Jingting, will change my surname to ‘Sun’!)

Ni Jingting smiled and looked at Sun Mo. If Sun Mo paid respect and greeted Wu Yezi like a junior, the degree of fame he had garnered earlier would immediately be weakened by a bit.

Just think about it, Sun Mo who was so impressive still had to be respectful to Wu Yezi. Didn’t that mean that Grandmaster Wu was even more impressive?

It was like in a banquet, a third-rate film star appeared and drew the attention of everyone. But in the end, an Oscar Award winner arrived. Who would then care about the third-rate star? After the banquet, everyone would only be discussing the Oscar Award winner.

“This fellow is so disgusting!”

An Xinhui frowned. She wanted to help Sun Mo out of the predicament, but before she could speak, Wu Yezi already exclaimed in shock.

“Whose painting is this?”

Swish~

In the entire Linjiang Hall, no sound could be heard. The guests stared dumbfoundedly at Wu Yezi. This grandmaster was currently staring at the [Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting] and was extremely focused.

In the next instant, their gazes turned to Fang Lun. Their first thought was Fang Lun must have been swindled by a cheater. If this was Wu Yezi's painting, why did he not recognize it?

"Grandmaster Wu, I...I got this painting personally from you?"

Fang Lun frowned.

"My painting?"

Wu Yezi frowned. He took a few steps forward and observed it again. "No, although it is very similar, this isn't something drawn by me!"

After hearing this, Sun Mo sighed. He knew that there was no way he would be able to fool the original painter.

Miao Mu, who was not far away, started. After that, he had a look of shock on his face as he stared at Sun Mo. Indeed, this painting must have been drawn by Sun Mo.

No, more accurately, all those paintings from earlier must have been drawn by him.

Ordinary people might not be able to tell, but Miao Mu, who was a famous artist, could see certain drawing techniques that were present in all five famous paintings. Moreover, the techniques originated from the same person.

(Isn't this a little too incredible? This Sun Mo actually managed to replicate Grandmaster Wu's painting?)

Miao Mu was stunned. Was this something achievable by humans?

However, the truth was before his eyes, and he couldn't not believe it! After that, his heart was filled with envy, and everything transformed into intense disappointment and self-inferiority.

As expected, geniuses could never be measured by logic.

Ding!

Favorable impression points from Miao Mu +1,000. Respect (1,100/10,000).

"Prince, I feel a little unwell. I will take my leave first!"

After Miao Mu spoke, he didn't wait for Li Zixing's reply. He picked up the pace and wanted to quickly leave the boat.

"Grandmaster Miao, there are doctors on the boat!"

Qi Mu'en spoke out, but Miao Mu waved his hands, indicating everyone not to bother with him.

Everyone no longer paid attention to Miao Mu because they were looking at Wu Yezi.

“Grandmaster Wu, is this a fake painting?”

Fang Lun asked. He started to suspect whether someone had swapped the original [Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting] away.

“Fake painting? Where would you find a fake painting at the Wondrous Blossom Realm?”

Wu Yezi smiled.

Everyone started. That’s true.

Zheng Qingfang was as expected of someone with a lot of experience. He directly shot a contemplative look at Li Feng and the little maid. Finally, his gaze landed on Sun Mo.

Wu Yezi looked at the famous painting before his eyes. “Although the layout of this painting is similar to my Riches and Honor, Solitary Life Painting, its concept has far surpassed mine!”

Si~

Upon hearing this, everyone took in a cold gasp of air. This was actually drawn by a famous artist that was more impressive than Grandmaster Wu Yezi?

“Before this, when I gave the painting to you, I actually felt unhappy because it wasn’t perfect enough. However, I wasn’t able to find the reason why. But now, I found it.”

Wu Yezi sighed ruefully.

As a painting lover, he would evaluate every painting purely from the aspect of artistry. There would absolutely not be any personal feelings in it.

“Grandmaster Wu, why do you say this?”

Qi Mu`en was curious.

“For my painting, if an ordinary person sees it, they wouldn’t feel anything because that painting depicts people of overly high statuses. Only people like Governor Fang and Premier Zheng would understand the concept. However, for this painting, even ordinary people would be influenced by the concept it exudes!”

Wu Yezi shook his head and smiled. “After looking at this painting, don’t you guys feel a sense of release? Its concept allows you to find your true self, ignoring the discussions of others.”

The guests whispered to each other. Honestly speaking, they were still in a daze.

“I wonder who the painter of this famous painting is?”

Wu Yezi was curious.

“Lowly slave, why are you not coming over yet? Quickly say the reason!”

Fang Lun glanced at the little maid and bellowed in a loud voice.

Putong!

Yui Cui`e directly knelt on the ground.

“I...I was the one who painted it!”

The little maid didn’t want to implicate Sun Mo, hence, she admitted to this.

“Lowly slave, do you think I’m dumb? If you could paint a famous painting, even beggars could become immortals. Men, come over and pummel her!”

Governor Fang roared in rage.

A muscular guard immediately rushed in, wanting to hit the little maid.

Yi Cui`e decided to bite her tongue off. She was worried that she might not be able to endure such a vicious beating and might expose Sun Mo in the end.

If she bit her tongue off, there was no fear for this to happen then.

It was a pity that the guard of Governor Fang was an elite. He instantly grabbed Yi Cui`e’s chin and forcefully stopped her.

“Sir, she wants to commit suicide by biting her tongue off!”

The guard reported.

“Wishing for death? How can things be so easy? Beat her!”

Governor Fang was badly angered because he had lost face. Just think about it. He had bragged for so long about his famous painting and in the end, the painting wasn’t even drawn by Wu Yezi. How awkward was the situation?

He would definitely not be able to escape the reputation of ‘pretending to know something yet doesn’t know anything’!

“Stop!”

Sun Mo shouted. With a flash, he appeared before the little maid and blocked the guard’s fist.

“Governor, this painting was drawn by me. Because of urgent circumstances, I had no choice. I beg for your forgiveness!”

“Huh?”

All the guests were astounded. What show was this again?

“Teacher Sun, I know you are concerned for this maid, however, you cannot speak recklessly!”

Qi Mu`en persuaded. The matter today could be very significant. If Wu Yezi wanted to pursue things all the way to the end, Sun Mo could be pressed with the crime of ‘counterfeiting a famous painting of others.’

This stain would negatively influence his career in the future greatly.

“Speaking of which, the main culprit is Prince Li’s favored son. He forcefully snatched the famous painting that this little maid was holding and even schemed to destroy it.

“This little maid panicked and could only seek death. Luckily, my student saw it and stopped her. Hence, I decided to act and help them, producing this painting.”

After Sun Mo spoke, he looked at Wu Yezi and bowed to apologize. “I’m sorry, Grandmaster Wu!”

Wu Yezi didn’t speak, instead, he was surveying Sun Mo.

(My heavens, what a good drama!)

The guests were extremely excited. Actually, they believed Sun Mo. Everyone understood Li Feng’s personality.

Now that they thought of it, Li Feng had been the first to step out and shout that the painting was a fake earlier.

“Nonsense, it’s clear that the little maid was careless and damaged the painting herself!”

Li Feng disputed.

Sun Mo smiled.

“Father, my words are true. He’s trying to frame me!”

Li Feng forcefully tugged on Li Zixing’s arm.

“Shut up!”

Li Zixing scolded. (Do you take all of them as fools?)

Even if they didn’t say anything, he had to be impartial in this.

(There’s no problem if you want to do bad things, but if you are seen by others and you allow them to have some information that can be used against you, you are nothing but a fool.)

Naturally, he felt so awkward, but it wasn’t because his son was exposed. He had said that Sun Mo was inferior to Wu Yezi. And yet in the end, the paintings here were drawn by Sun Mo.

“Teacher Ni, your judgment is really so awesome!”

An Xinhui praised.

Ni Jingting’s face instantly turned red. If it wasn’t for the fact he had a mission, he really wanted to leave right now.

The gazes that the guests used to look at Ni Jingting with had changed to ones filled with contempt. They had heard that he was a 3-star great teacher and was even a private great teacher hired by Li Zixing with a high price. To think that he was so trash!

“What is your name?”

Wu Yezi asked.

“Sun Mo!”

Sun Mo introduced.

“Oh, so you are that One-Vote Sun who said the words ‘you are just a dog waiting for others in front of their door’!”

Although Wu Yezi was a painting fanatic, Sun Mo was just too famous. Whenever he attended gatherings, he would hear his friends speaking about Sun Mo’s deeds.

“...”

Sun Mo fell silent.

“I really want to know why are you guys not surprised?”

Wu Yezi curiously looked at Fang Lun.

“Because he has just produced a famous painting!”

Qi Mu`en explained. After that, he added another line in his heart. “In fact, he might be the one who drew the three paintings Premier Zheng showed us!”

“Oh? Is it possible for me to take a look?”

After Wu Yezi asked, he saw the galloping horses painting. He involuntarily complimented, “Beautiful. This painting exudes intense vitality, something that belonged to young people!”

After admiring it, Wu Yezi glanced at Sun Mo. “May I be so bold as to ask why are you using that gaze to look at me?”

“Grandmaster Wu, you are too bigoted. If you can’t love life, how can you love painting? How can you draw a famous painting that can influence the people of the world?”

Sun Mo’s words came from the bottom of his heart.

It wasn’t because he wanted to lecture Wu Yezi. Rather, it was to advise and persuade him. He hoped that Wu Yezi would be able to improve and move up one more level, reaching the step of a Saint Artist.

Bzz~

Priceless Advice was activated.

“...”

In the crowd, Gu Xiuxun was speechless. (Why do golden sentences* come out from your mouth every time? Besides, you are lecturing the number one famous artist of Jiangnan. Are you not a little too ‘lawless’?)

However, his words earlier ‘If you can’t love life, how can you love painting?’ was extremely well said!

Wu Yezi repeated the words and sank into contemplation.

Not only him, but everyone in Linjiang Hall was influenced by this great teacher halo.

Liu Mubai was dumbstruck. (Do you have to show off that much?)

“Haha, I understand now. So, my bottleneck is this. No wonder I haven’t improved for ten years. So... my heart is too lonesome and proud!”

Wu Yezi suddenly laughed uproariously. After muttering a few sentences to himself, he clasped his hands and bowed to Sun Mo. “Great Teacher Sun, many thanks for your guidance!”

Ding!

Favorable impression points from Wu Yezi +500. Friendly (500/1,000).

Hua~

The guests were all completely stunned. They had thought that Wu Yezi would pursue the matter of Sun Mo falsifying his painting. After all, the name inscription had the name ‘Wu Yezi’, so who could have expected that he would actually thank Sun Mo?

Who was Wu Yezi?

He was the number one famous artist in Jiangnan, yet he actually bowed to Sun Mo?

However, the most embarrassed people were undoubtedly Li Zixing and Ni Jingting. The two of them had kept shooting Sun Mo down to elevate Wu Yezi’s status.

“Ha, I’ve long since known that my teacher is the most impressive!”

Lu Zhiruo inclined her head and felt extremely honored.

“Grandmaster Wu, I don’t dare to accept your now!”

Sun Mo stepped aside with a flash.

“Congratulations to Governor Fang on obtaining a famous painting!”

Wu Yezi glanced at Governor Fang. After that, he clasped his hands and made a request. “Could you return my original painting?”