

Three Realms 151

Chapter 151: Lu Wuji has Caused Great Trouble

There was a general director in charge of the Dragonteeth Guard who held command of the Dragonteeth Guard, and was in charge of all of the Guards.

The Dragonteeth Guard was divided into ten troops, with a general and vice general assigned to each troop.

There were ten squadrons underneath each troop, with each squadron numbering ten thousand. There was one commander and two vice commanders for each squadrons.

There were lieutenants and captains beneath each commander, and each level was strictly partitioned.

In other words, the general director was naturally at the highest level.

There were three vice directors beneath the general director, followed by ten generals, and then by the ten vice generals.

This General Lu was actually just a vice general.

In terms of title and level, he was indeed a level higher than a commander like Tian Shao.

However, the troop that Tian Shao belonged to wasn't part of Vice General Lu's jurisdiction. Tian Shao had a direct supervisor above him, and a general and vice general that he reported to.

Therefore, strictly speaking, Vice General Lu couldn't issue commands to him, Tian Shao.

However, everyone knew that this Vice General Lu was renowned for having connections. His backer was a vice director of the Dragonteeth Guard.

This vice director was first prince Ye Dai's good friend.

In this way, Vice General Lu's connections reached all the way to the first prince.

With these levels of backers, it allowed Vice General Lu to be extremely domineering and tyrannical within the Dragonteeth Guard. He often committed acts such as overstepping his jurisdiction and handling cases outside of his control.

Except, he hadn't thought that at this moment, Tian Shao, a mere commander, would dare to publicly retort against him.

"Tian Shao!" General Lu stared coldly at Tian Shao. "I've heard of your name and know that you're a famous thorn in the side of the Dragonteeth Guard. You're right, I'm not your direct supervisor, but it only takes a word from me to have your General Qiu make an appearance. If you get out of the way now, I can let bygones be bygones."

"My apologies, however, I don't give way in my territory!" Tian Shao rejected him with these words.

"Good... Good... Good!" General Lu voiced 'good' three times in a row with an incomparably sinister tone. "Tian Shao, I don't know what so-called principles you're sticking to, or what kind of unpresentable relations you have with this kid, but I'm going to tell you right now, you show no respect for your

superiors and offend those higher than you. You have deeply offended me. I can tell you clearly, your life as a commander will reach its end soon!”

Tian Shao’s temper was also quite ornery. “As long as I’m still a commander, don’t you even think of getting past me.”

One could tell that Tian Shao had been deeply angered. This man with a strong sense of principles and justice had been truly enraged by General Lu.

“Tian Shao, don’t stubbornly stick to your foolish ways without seeing the light! General Lu has a background that has direct access to the highest authorities. Going against him is like a praying mantis trying to stop a chariot. Overconfidence will destroy you! It would only take a word from the general if he wished to destroy you. If you step aside now, we can still plead for leniency on your behalf. “

“Fawning upon the rich and powerful, swarming around like flies for food! To think that comrades of I, Tian Shao, are such shameless scum like all of you. I’m ashamed to be in the same company as you. Get the hell away from me, get as far away as possible. Don’t make a clamor in my territory.”

“Conceited arrogance!”

“Ignorant buffoon!”

“Tian Shao, you’re dead meat. No one in the Skylareel Kingdom will be able to save you now.”

General Lu was also thoroughly enraged. His face was dark as he said, “Jian number seven, go report to Vice Director Yang the matters that have occurred here. Ask him to write a report of censure to withdraw the title of commander from Tian Shao.”

“Understood!”

Tian Shao’s face was ghastly pale. He knew that Vice Director Yang Zhao was General Lu’s uncle. He was the third greatest character within the Dragonteeth Guard. His position was high and his power was great. He was no trivial character.

It would only take one word from him if he wanted to impeach a commander.

However, now that matters had proceeded to this point, Tian Shao knew that he had no choice, and had made up his mind decisively.

He also knew that if he wanted to make a stand against these people with his power alone, it would akin to a praying mantis trying to stop a chariot.

But, he had his own principles. Even if it was akin to a mantis trying to halt a chariot, he’d still use all the strength in his body if he felt it was the right thing to do. He only strove to have a clear conscience.

At this moment, someone hurried in from the outside and handed a note over to General Lu.

General Lu was in the midst of being thoroughly ticked off by Tian Shao and took the note with extremely ill temper. He looked at it for a while, his face darkening, and then ripped the note up into little shreds. “What right does an elder of the Southern Palace have to question how the Dragonteeth

Guard handles our cases? Go tell the person who's come that Jiang Chen is a serious criminal of the Dragonteeth Guard, and that it doesn't matter who comes to plead on his behalf."

General Lu's eyebrow arched as he flicked a glance full of some sarcasm at Jiang Chen sitting in his cell. "Kid, you were so cocky because you have some connections to a female elder of the Southern Palace? No wonder you were so arrogant! However, I can tell you clearly that even if Elder Ning herself came to ask for you, she wouldn't be able to save you. You kid, put this hope to rest!"

His words had just sounded when another subordinate hurriedly walked in. He'd brought someone with him — Feng Yan.

"And who are you?" General Lu's brow furrowed as he looked at Feng Yan.

"I'm a disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace, and am here on Vice Head Shi's orders, here to ask for this person on his behalf." Feng Yan was absolutely willing to humble himself and adopt a low posture in front of Shi Xiaoyao, but this vice general of the Dragonteeth Guard had no right to put on airs in front of him, Feng Yan.

After all, with the identity of a disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace, he didn't belong to the jurisdiction of any government agency, and was answerable only to the Myriad Treasures Palace. To speak even more broadly, he was responsible only to the Precious Tree Sect.

"Ask for this person?" Vice General Lu laughed coldly. "Is it child's play when the Dragonteeth Guard handles a case? You get the person when you ask for them?"

Feng Yan was infuriated by these words and asked faintly in response, "Do you mean that the words of our vice head are of no use?"

"Don't you try to alienate one person from another. Go back and tell your vice head that this Jiang Chen is a serious criminal and is implicated in matters involving national security. I hope that he'll understand."

Vice General Lu didn't dare speak too harshly to Shi Xiaoyao. This was an old monster that was several times scarier than Elder Ning.

"Vice General Lu, speak not of alarmist talk like that. I watched with my own eyes the process of Jiang Chen beating a disciple of the Northern Palace to death. That Northern Palace disciple committed a robbery first and Jiang Chen acted after. He was acting in justified self-defense, and isn't guilty at all. Hurry and release this person, or our Myriad Treasures Palace will see out the end of this lawsuit with you."

Feng Yan hadn't been a witness for Jiang Chen on the streets because he hadn't been confident then.

But it was different now, as he felt quite reassured with Shi Xiaoyao's orders.

"What the freaking hell. Come!" Vice General Lu waved his hand. "This is heavily fortified Dragonteeth Guard territory, haul out the random trespasser."

"Understood!"

A group of Dragonteeth Guard immediately surged forward like a pack of wolves and tigers, lifting up Feng Yan, and carrying him out directly.

Feng Yan cursed loudly, “Damn you with the Lu surname, do you think you, a mere vice general, can blot out the sky in the Skylaurel Kingdom?”

His mouth was stoppered as soon as he’d finished cursing.

Seeing that Feng Yan was being hauled out by his men, Vice General Lu smiled coldly at Jiang Chen. “It seems that I’ve rather underestimated you. To think that you’ve even a path to the Myriad Treasures Palace. However, this should be the end of your road. I’ll say this again, there’s no one in heaven or on earth who can save you.”

Jiang Chen turned a deaf ear to this, and had absolutely no reaction to Vice General Lu’s words.

“Keep pretending kid. It’ll be your execution day when this case is sent upwards, judged, and stamped with the Dragontooth seal. I’ll see how you pretend then.”

“And you, Tian Shao, you’re in the same boat as this murderer. You have an additional crime of harboring a criminal. We’ll take a tally of all these crimes together when the time comes!”

Tian Shao snorted coldly and also sighed sadly for Jiang Chen in his heart. The elder of the Southern Palace and the Vice Head of the Myriad Treasures Palace had come to plead on his behalf, but still hadn’t managed to bring him out of this place.

It looked like the first prince had hardened his heart this time and wanted to make Jiang Chen’s case an airtight one. He’d fully decided to kill Jiang Chen and use that to suppress fourth prince Ye Rong.

“Forget it, forget it. A gentleman is ready to die for his bosom friends. I, Tian Shao, have received great favor from the fourth prince. Jiang Chen is also a good man, and to be able to weather hardships and die with him means that I’ll have company on the way to the underworld.”

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“What did you say?” Elder Ning’s willow brows arched. “That Lu surname acted that wildly? He dared to rip to pieces a note written by my own hand and speak so insolently?”

“Yes, he said that as an elder of the Southern Palace, you have no right to question how the Dragonteeth Guard handles their cases. He also said that when he was in charge of a case, it didn’t matter who pled for leniency.”

Elder Ning’s full bosom heaved as rage appeared on her delicate features. Her jade palm slammed down fiercely on her chair. “This dumb animal’s madness knows no bounds, based purely on his uncle. I paid heed to common courtesies in writing him a note — I was honoring him! Since he doesn’t know how to appreciate favors and refuses a polite toast, then I’ll wait for him to come beg me.”

When she finished, Elder Ning raised her voice. “Chun Lan, pass down my orders and tell those below that the set of equipment for the Dragonteeth Guard can be held temporarily. In addition, the sums that they haven’t paid in full the last couple of times must be taken care of before noon tomorrow.”

Elder Ning had been obviously enraged. “How dare that Lu surnamed animal look contemptuously upon me! He is indeed wicked. I’d like to see if they can really blot out the sky with one hand in the capital?”

Qiao Baishi hastened to speak a few conciliatory words, “Please calm your anger, calm your anger. Elder, your being is priceless. Don’t tax yourself by clashing with that ignorant brute.”

“You’re right. I wrote a note to them and tried fair means before resorting to force. I gave this stupid animal face, but he didn’t take it. Alright, I’ll sit here and wait for them to come begging!”

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Myriad Treasures Palace, Shi Xiaoyao’s yard.

“What?” Shi Xiaoyao thought he’d misheard. “Say that again!”

Feng Yan had a downcast face. “Noble head, that General Lu had such an imposing air. Not only did he not give you face, but he also said, ‘How could you get what you want, when the Dragonteeth Guard are handling the case?’ Not just anyone can interfere when he handles a case. Your disciple was angered and argued on basis of reason with him for a few words, before he had someone throw your disciple out. He was indeed rude and didn’t give precedence to you at all.”

“Asshole. Animal!” Shi Xiaoyao’s fist crashed down and a stone jar was immediately pulverized into dust. “Is this Lu surnamed dumb animal that old man Yang’s nephew? Very good, very good. Even old man Yang doesn’t dare talk to me with that kind of tone. Has this animal gained courage from eating the heart of a bear?”

Feng Yan spoke, a bit depressed, “He has deep relations with the Northern Palace, and is venting a breath of ill will through this. He’s making use of public power to avenge personal interests.”

Shi Xiaoyao grit his teeth, “I don’t give a damn if he’s abusing public power, or judging this case impartially. I’ll make life difficult for whomever doesn’t give me face.”

Shi Xiaoyao’s personality was eccentric and proud. Once irritated, his temper wasn’t something that an ordinary person could withstand!

Chapter 152: The Dragonteeth Guard Trembles!

“Feng Yan, take my card and visit the second highest personage of the Dragonteeth Guard, Vice Director Zhou. Tell him that all business between my Myriad Treasures Palace and the Dragonteeth Guard will be halted for three years. Any business that they have entrusted to us is to be returned to them in full.”

The Dragonteeth Guard had extremely high expenses from feeding a million strong army. The stipend from the kingdom was enough to enable them to become strong and mighty, but it was very difficult to help each member of the Guard actually earn money.

Therefore, the Dragonteeth Guard had their own ways of making money. All of the Guard’s gains from cases didn’t have to be handed to the royal treasury. They were instead handed over to the Myriad Treasures Palace to be sold or auctioned off.

The income from this was much more rewarding than the funds that they’d receive from the kingdom, and was the true source of wealth for the Dragonteeth Guard. It was a small gold mine for them.

If this bit of business was stopped, the entirety of the Dragonteeth Guard would only be able to subsist on the stipend from the kingdom, and wouldn't ever enjoy the benefits of this gold mine anymore.

The benefits of this gold mine were practically a hidden rule for the Dragonteeth Guard. If the benefits of this gold mine were to disappear, the entire system that the Dragonteeth Guard had created would definitely fall into an uproar.

One had to say, Shi Xiaoyao's actions were more ruthless and brutal than Elder Ning's.

If one were to say that Elder Ning had left a trace of a way to salvage the situation, then Shi Xiaoyao was an absolute demon when his ire was aroused. He would dare do the most outrageous things.

Not to mention, he had the authority and the rights to. Even the head of the Myriad Treasures Palace, Zhuge Yan, wouldn't say much about this decision.

After all, the vice head's face had to do with the reputation of the Myriad Treasures Palace. Anyone who slapped the vice head's face had committed the same action as trashing the Myriad Treasures Palace's banner. If they didn't strike back, it would be the same thing as them destroying their own banner.

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The Dragonteeth Guard was both the most influential and the strongest army within the capital.

They had a decent amount of authority and all sorts of roles; such as protecting the royal family, guarding the capital, and defending the royal authority. They were also in charge of inspections, customs, and general security — amongst other things.

It could be said that, if it was something to do with matters of force within the Skylareel Kingdom, no one would be able to make a move without the Dragonteeth Guard's permission.

In addition, the Dragonteeth Guard didn't fall under any jurisdiction. They were answerable only to the king himself. The king alone had the authority to command the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard.

Anyone else, even the king's own sons, wouldn't do.

It could be seen from this how much authority the Dragonteeth Guard had.

Of course, despite them having this much power, it was only applicable to the various aspects of the kingdom. Having great power didn't mean that they could blot out the sky with one hand. It also didn't mean that they wouldn't have any favors to ask of others.

Take the four great sites for instance — even the Dragonteeth Guard didn't dare to easily offend them.

The four great sites were part of the Precious Tree Sect's authority, and answered directly to the Precious Tree Sect. Even the king himself gave quite a lot of face to them in private, not to mention the Dragonteeth Guard.

Offending the four great sites would mean that even the foundations of the kingdom would possibly shake.

The Dragonteeth Guard had a general director who was a trusted confidant of the king, whose name was Shangguan Yi.

Shangguan Yi didn't venture out often. Although his authority reached the heavens, he almost never showed his face. He left most things for the three vice directors beneath him to handle.

At this moment, three out of the four total generals and vice directors had assembled.

Shangguan Yi had an urbane manner about him. He looked roughly forty years old, and had a sprinkling of white hairs in his sideburns that further offset his steadiness and maturity.

A pair of eyes akin to those of tigers and dragons were suffused with an uncommon light, giving others the feeling of being filled with vitality.

He leaned slightly forward, patiently listening to the complaints of the other two vice directors.

"General director, it isn't that I didn't try, it's just that I don't know what madness has gotten into the Southern Palace. The equipment we ordered was to be delivered half a month ago, but they've suddenly said that they don't have time to deliver the shipment. They also want us to pay in full what we owe them before noon tomorrow."

The person complaining about this matter was a stout, short, middle-aged man. He was one of the four directors of the Dragonteeth Guard, ranked number three amongst the vice directors, named Qi Tiannan. He was without a doubt the fourth greatest personage in the Dragonteeth Guard.

General director Shangguan Yi smiled faintly, and set down the teacup in his hand. "Old Qi, has something gone wrong with our communications with the Southern Palace? Didn't we say that we'd make up for the outstanding balance when our items were sold at the Myriad Treasures Palace, and after we'd received the funds?"

The Dragonteeth Guard didn't have any industry themselves, and weren't allowed to participate in business. Therefore, their source of income, to a great extent, depended on their business with the Myriad Treasures Palace.

All sorts of spoils and stolen goods that they'd received would be given to the Myriad Treasures Palace for them to sell.

This was the Dragonteeth Guard's greatest source of revenue.

Qi Tiannan smiled ruefully, "General director, you too know that the Southern Palace has always been nice and polite when conducting business. I've gone over this a hundred times, and don't understand why all of this has suddenly changed either. I suspect that possibly, we've offended them somehow?"

"Mm, according to my understanding, the Southern Palace wouldn't just have a fall out like this. Old Qi, you must find Elder Ning and have a thorough discussion about this. If we've really offended them, we should offer gifts and apologize. We can't have a dispute due to personal feelings."

"Understood. I, Old Qi, know what to do once given the general director's orders."

Shangguan Yi smiled faintly, and turned his gaze to another balding elder. "Director Zhou, you don't look too pleased. Has something happened on your side as well?"

The balding elder was in an even higher position than Qi Tiannan. He was the second highest personage within the Dragonteeth Guard, Zhou Kai. His power was second to only the general director Shangguan Yi.

One could tell that Zhou Kai was from the old guard in the Dragonteeth Guard, by Shangguan Yi's use of his title. Even Shangguan Yi treated him with some respect.

"Ai, general director. To be honest, I, Old Zhou, shouldn't come pour my grievances into your ear. However, this matter was truly too unexpected and too serious. I had to come find you and discuss a response." Zhou Kai also started pouring out his complaints when he opened his mouth.

"Oh? What matter could this be?" Shangguan Yi was a bit surprised.

"I've just received a calling card from the Myriad Treasures Palace. A disciple said that he was here on Vice Head Shi's behalf to notify me that the Myriad Treasures Palace is halting all business with us for three years. All business that we've entrusted to them has been returned to us. It's really quite bizarre. This is indeed, really quite bizarre. The Myriad Treasures Palace has always been tempted by money. We do so much business with them, and they take a ten percent commission. Do they think that that's too little?"

"It's not a matter of money." As the general director, Shangguan Yi possessed an exceptionally keen state of mind. His brow furrowed, "Something is very wrong here. The Southern Palace and the Myriad Treasures Palace have always had an amicable partnership with us. Why did these two great powers change so drastically within the span of a single day? Old Zhou, did that disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace say anything else?"

"Nothing else, just that our partnership was temporarily halted, and that our business had been returned to us. I wanted to ask further, but he paid me no heed and left."

The three directors all had grave expressions on their faces. They'd realized that this likely wasn't an accident. Something must have gone wrong in the Dragonteeth Guard for them to offend these two great powers.

"Old Zhou, the person who has tied the bell is required to untie it. Shi Xiaoyao possesses an eccentric personality, and requires his fur to be brushed in the proper direction. The more you get in his face, the more stubborn he becomes. Go, butter him up and find out where our Dragonteeth Guard have offended him, and given him reason to be so angry."

If it were any other powers, the Dragonteeth Guard would have no need to look to anyone else.

But, whether it was the Southern Palace, or the Myriad Treasures Palace, they were all part of the Precious Tree Sect. The Dragonteeth Guard wanted to act tough to them? They didn't have the right to.

At most, they were on the same footing, and didn't have to give each other face.

However, the others could ignore the Dragonteeth Guard, but the Dragonteeth Guard couldn't afford to ignore them. To a great extent, the Dragonteeth Guard's operations couldn't wean themselves off of the support of the four great sites.

Therefore, even if they had to humble themselves, they would still have to settle this matter.

One had to say that, if their partnership with the Myriad Treasures Palace was stopped, none of the others would be able to digest the items that they had.

Without the Myriad Treasures Palace, they wouldn't be able to sell their items for a good three to five years.

However, how many years could the Dragonteeth Guard afford to wait? The Southern Palace was already knocking at their door to collect on their debts, to say nothing of anything else.

It was akin to a leaky roof running into successive nights of rain.

"General director, things are truly bad. Elder Fei of the Qingyang Valley just came to us in a huff. Your subordinate stopped him, saying that the director was in a meeting, and attempted to ask him to wait a moment. Who knew that Elder Fei would show me a cold expression without another word, saying to look elsewhere for the Full Moon Pill that the general director had asked him to refine. In addition, all pill partnerships that we have with the Qingyang Valley have all been cancelled. In the future, when our Dragonteeth Guard handles cases, we must skirt past their territory. Otherwise, every person they catch will spend a lifetime in servitude!"

"What did you say?" At this moment, even the tremendously calm Shangguan Yi was unable to retain his composure.

"Elder Fei was here? Where is he now?"

"He... he left." The subordinate stammered.

"Useless thing, don't you know to directly come in and make a report?" Shangguan Yi rarely lost his temper to hector his subordinates, but this time, he made an exception.

"I... your subordinate also said I would make a report, but he didn't give me a chance to. He yelled out quite a few insults, saying that our Dragonteeth Guard were white-eyed wolves, devoid of gratitude, and even greater..."

"Stop." Shangguan Yi glared at him. "Dismissed."

The subordinate saw that the atmosphere was quite off, and didn't dare to linger. He hastily walked out.

All of these matters had happened one after another, crashing down onto the Dragonteeth Guard like one blow after another.

Shangguan Yi's astute eyes were filled with confusion at the moment. "Both of you, do you see what's happening? The coming events have cast their shadow in front of them."

Out of the four great sites, three of them had blown up at them in a short period of time. What did this mean? This meant that the Dragonteeth Guard had done something gravely wrong, and had really put their foot in it.

The other two vice directors also had looks of awkwardness on their face, their expressions filled with astonishment that they couldn't voice. They were all shrewd people; how could they not see that something was greatly amiss here.

If only one of the sites had blown up at them, then it could be called an accident. But three had completely turned hostile at almost the same time. There was great meaning in this.

Even if it was the Dragonteeth Guard, simultaneously offending three out of the four great sites at the same time, wasn't something that they could hold up against. They could run into overwhelming disaster with the slightest misstep.

If the three sites combined their strength to go against the Dragonteeth Guard, even they would have heads rolling on the floor, and even their foundations upended!

Chapter 153: All of this has to do with Jiang Chen?

A sense of danger they had never experienced before was now resting on the Dragonteeth Guard's heads.

Upon seeing Vice Director Zhou and Vice Director Qi begin to speak but then hesitate, Shangguan Yi waved his hands. "Forget it, don't say anything for now. Since this matter has already happened, there must be a reason for it. The only thing we can do is to prescribe the right remedy for the illness and sacrifice our face to inquire what the situation is."

"Indeed, even if we die, we must at least go down knowing why."

"This is the only way to proceed."

Shangguan Yi nodded. "I have some relations with Elder Fei, I will go pay him a personal visit. Old Qi, you go visit Elder Ning. Remember, do not intentionally bow and scrape, but don't put on any airs as well. We must at least understand the reason behind all this. If it's our fault, then we will bear responsibility. If it's not our fault, then we don't need to compromise out of consideration for general interest. Understood?"

Having said his piece, Shangguan Yi's gaze once again turned to Vice Director Zhou, "Elder Zhou, Shi Xiaoyao's temper is eccentric, you need to take more on your shoulders."

Zhou Kai nodded, "I'm already old and won't bother with arguments. If it is indeed the fault of our Dragonteeth Guard, we'll shoulder the brunt of the responsibility. If they wish to suppress us, our Dragonteeth Guard isn't an easy target for them either."

"Alright, this matter should not be delayed so let's split up and set out." Shangguan gave an order.

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Qi Tiannan had already stood at the doors to Elder Ning's yard for almost half an hour before footsteps sounded from within. "Vice Director Qi, apologies for keeping you waiting. The elder of my house was having her beauty sleep just now and no one dared disturb her. She's awake now and feels quite apologetic that Vice Director Qi has been waiting outside for half an hour. She has already thoroughly lectured us subordinates. Please come in, come in."

Although Qiao Baishi had yet to bring about Elder Ning's wish, Elder Ning was already treating him as her most competent assistant now.

Qi Tiannan flicked a glance at Qiao Baishi and thought that although this person looked unfamiliar, and he had never seen him before, he had no time to think too much about it.

"Director Qi, my underlings didn't know any better and kept you waiting." Elder was rather polite and friendly, her voice a bit lazy from having just woken up.

"Oh, none of that. I, Old Qi, didn't have the heart to disturb Elder Ning's beauty sleep. It is a grave encroachment to disturb one's sweet dreams."

"Hehe, Director Qi is still so considerate." Elder Ning said with a smile as her slender hands played with the velvet fan she was holding.

"Elder Ning, old Qi I wouldn't have come if I didn't have something to ask of you. I dare ask one question, have I, old Qi, somehow offended the Southern Palace in some regard?"

"Given offense? What are you talking about?" Elder Ning's charming eyes widened with innocence.

"Director Qi and I have had a relationship spanning back many years, and the way you comport yourself and handle matters has always been my role model."

"Then." Qi Tiannan was a bit depressed. "But we truly do need that shipment. And to return the funds we owe you tomorrow, that really is..."

Elder Ning shook her head. "I am willing to help but unable to do so in this matter."

Seeing that Elder Ning had's expression had suddenly turned hostile, Qi Tiannan understood that he must have offended this madam somehow.

"Elder Ning, you know the character of I, old Qi. Please speak candidly. Have I offended you somehow? If so, I, old Qi, am willing to apologize for my wrongdoing. Even if we can't conduct business, kindheartedness and justice still exists. I, old Qi, have always greatly admired Elder Ning."

"Do you really want me to speak candidly?" Elder Ning asked indifferently.

"Please, I await a frank word."

"Director Qi, you were right just now, even if we can't do business, our relationship still exists. However, I've discovered that you Dragonteeth Guards do not speak of kindheartedness or justice at all. I have a friend who was robbed on the streets and accidentally killed the robber in self defense. He was thrown into the Black Dungeons without any forethought by the Dragonteeth Guard. I wrote a note on my friend's behalf, but the note was ripped up and I was greatly humiliated. Something about how I, a mere elder of the Southern Palace, had no right to inquire after a case that the Dragonteeth Guard was handling."

Elder Ning became more and more angered the more she spoke. "I'd like to ask, is this how you Dragonteeth Guard handles cases? Justified self defense was turned into a murder and resulted in confinement in the Black Dungeons. Alright, since I cannot reason with you with logic and my pleas are useless, then this is easy. I'm paying no heed to this matter. You Dragonteeth Guard don't come begging to me either. If it comes down to it, we'll take our own paths in the future!"

"What?" Qi Tiannan was no longer coolly composed. He widened his eyes, "Something like this happened?"

Qiao Baishi added fuel to the flame on the side, “Would the elder of my house accuse you for no reason at all? That Lu surnamed fellow not only tore up my elder’s note, but he also humiliated my elder. Director Qi, if it was a disciple of my Southern Palace who lacked intelligence instead, would you feel at ease?”

“Lu surnamed fellow? Lu Wuji?” Qi Tiannan suddenly thought of someone and seemed to understand something in that moment. When it came to this Lu Wuji, he was someone who cared little for laws and rules. If this happened to anyone else, Qi Tiannan might have been a bit skeptical. But since this had happened to Lu Wuji, he was instantly seventy to eighty percent convinced.

Lu Wuji was renowned for being domineering within the Dragonteeth Guard due to his uncle being one of the vice directors of the Dragonteeth Guard.

“I don’t know what’s his name, just that the Dragonteeth Guard calls him General Lu. Is he called Lu Wuji? He’s just as his name says, running wild and amuck.” Qiao Baishi jeered mercilessly.

Qi Tiannan found it difficult to sit still. If this matter was as depicted, then the Dragonteeth Guard had truly been too impolite.

According to law, there was no need to bear any punishment for killing someone in justified self defense.

When justified self defense was treated as a murder case and the defender was thrown into the Black Dungeons, this was a gross mistake in itself.

Elder Ning had sent over a note and not only had Lu Wuji ripped it to shreds, but he’d also made impertinent remarks that Elder Ning was a woman and thus was innately selfishly oversensitive! If it had been him, Qi Tiannan, in her shoes, he likely wouldn’t have been able to accept this either.

A dignified elder had been humiliated like this, no wonder she had been so enraged.

“Elder Ning, I will immediately go back and investigate this matter. If that Lu Wuji was really such a bastard, then my general director will for surely have an explanation for this. Will you give me half a day’s time?”

Elder Ning’s jade hand lighted patted her mouth. “I’ve slept for a while, but why do I still feel so tired?”

Qi Tiannan hurriedly stood up, “Old Qi will be taking my leave now. We will be sure to give Elder Ning a satisfactory response for this matter within a day’s time.”

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The Myriad Treasures Palace, Shi Xiaoyao’s yard.

“Old Zhou, if it wasn’t for your elderly age, I wouldn’t even let you drink the wine you’re drinking today.” Shi Xiaoyao had a belly full of anger and spoke through gritted teeth.

Zhou Kai could only smile obsequiously. “Old brother Shi, just what has caused you so much anger? Our two houses have always enjoyed an amicable partnership. Why...”

“Why?” Shi Xiaoyao laughed coldly. “Old Zhou, you’ve also lived a great number of years. If one of the disciples of my Palace suddenly slapped you in the face, what would you think?”

“Slapped my face?” Zhou Kai was bewildered.

“Don’t play dumb with me. Your Dragonteeth Guard has quite some abilities huh? Grasping military power in your hands, running around wildly with abandon, respecting not even the king. You arrest who you want and kill who you want. You decide cases however you want to. You’re certainly the strongest power in the kingdom alright.”

Zhao Kai broke out in a cold sweat the more he listened. Shi Xiaoyao’s words were actually all laced with freezing irony and burning satire. What did this mean? This meant that there were raging fires of anger within his belly.

“Old brother Shi, don’t beat around the bush. Killing someone is par for the course. See, old brother, I come with much sincerity this time to understand the situation. Is it that one of my men was immature and offended you? Just tell me and I’ll administer beatings and punishments appropriately when I go back.”

“Beatings? Punishments? How would I dare? How would I dare inquire about the matters of your Dragonteeth Guard? How would I dare interfere? I may very well be thrown into the Black Dungeons instead.” Shi Xiaoyao said exaggeratedly.

Zhou Kai had finally gleaned a bit of meaning from all this. It looked like one of the Dragonteeth Guard underlings had committed a thoughtless act and utterly infuriated Shi Xiaoyao.

“Old brother Shi, please speak candidly. Which idiot offended you? I’ll haul him in front of you and if it’s his fault, it’s your call if you wish to beat or kill him.”

“Beat or kill him? Old Zhou, do you think I’m one of your Dragonteeth Guards? I don’t have your power and prestige. The representative I sent was almost beaten to death by your Dragonteeth Guard.”

Despite how it seemed that Shi Xiaoyao hit and cursed at his underlings on a whim, he was actually extremely prejudiced in their favor. Feng Yan was someone he’d sent and thus represented Shi Xiaoyao’s face.

Feng Yan had almost been beaten by Lu Wuji — this was undoubtedly a slap to his, Shi Xiaoyao’s, face.

“Director Zhou, as a junior, I originally have no right to speak. However, that Lu Wuji of your Dragonteeth Guard is truly too outrageous. He doesn’t look at the evidence when he handles cases and twisted justified self defense into a murder case. As an eyewitness, I also count as a witness. But when I went to talk to him on my head’s orders, I was almost beaten up by him.”

Feng Yan felt resentful and continued, “If you want to beat me, then fine, I’m just a puny disciple. But he dared speak impertinently and say that no one could interfere when the Dragonteeth Guard was handling cases just because they wanted to. Does this mean that the head of my house couldn’t even go discuss this with him? He was mishandling a case that involved a friend of the head of my house and we couldn’t even ask after it?”

Zhou Kai finally understood where the crux of the problem. Lu Wuji!

Zhou Kai was a believer when he heard these two words. He raised the cup in front of him, “Old brother Shi, I punish myself with this cup of wine and apologise in advance to you. I will immediately go back and investigate this matter. If matters are as how this little brother has said, I will not sit idly by. My Dragonteeth Guard will also give you a satisfactory explanation.”

At the heart of this matter, Shi Xiaoyao was still making a point about face. Zhou Kai didn’t dare to linger. He knew that Lu Wuji was a lawless fellow. If he sealed that mishandled case in stone and caused the death of the person in the Black Dungeons, then this matter would completely blow up in their faces. It’d be impossible to reconcile with the Myriad Treasures Palace then even if they wanted to.

...

Qi Tiannan and Zhou Kai were relatively fortunate. Shangguan Yi ran into much worse treatment compared to them. The eccentric old man Elder Fei had an even more fiery temper than Shi Xiaoyao. Shangguan Yi didn’t even make it through the door of his room. Elder Fei only had his underlings leave one sentence behind, “If even a hair is missing on Jiang Chen’s head, then he would make ten thousand heads roll from the Dragonteeth Guard!”

“Jiang Chen?” Shangguan Yi only ever inquired after big matters and was actually less familiar with this name compared to his men.

After all, the current level Jiang Chen was at was a bit too low for him. He’d yet to reach the level in which Shangguan Yi would concern himself with.

“Jiang Chen? This name seems a bit familiar. Is he Elder Fei’s relative or something? Oh dear, can it be that my Guard has arrested this Jiang Chen and...”

Shangguan Yi became a bit anxious when his thoughts travelled here.

Chapter 154: The General Director’s Choice

The three directors had once again convened in the Dragonteeth Guard headquarters.

Shangguan Yi didn’t say anything, but Zhou Kai and Qi Tiannan’s words were almost entirely of the same line, the same version under different circumstances.

And the crux of the conflicted all pointed to one person in the Dragonteeth Guard — Lu Wuji.

“General Director, Lu Wuji is the nephew of Vice Director Yang. His reputation has never been the greatest. Elder Ning and Vice Head Shi are all enraged because of the same person. They say that he distorted the truth and twisted justified self defense into a crime. Not only that, he tore Elder Ning’s note up and almost beat the person Vice Head Shi had sent. Wouldn’t you say that this Lu Wuji has utter contempt of all laws and regulation?”

At this moment, Shangguan Yi finally understood why Elder Fei was so angry. If it had been him, Shangguan Yi, who had been bafflingly arrested and clapped into the Black Dungeons, he would also be quite angry and likely even worse off than them.

“Do you know who Lu Wuji has arrested?” Shangguan Yi probed.

“I’m not sure, Elder Ning says he’s her friend.”

“Shi Xiaoyao also said he’s his friend, but he didn’t say his name.”

Shangguan Yi sighed, “His name is Jiang Chen.”

“Jiang Chen?” The two vice directors looked at each other, at a loss of what to do. Their status was high and they rarely asked about common matters. They had never paid attention to Jiang Chen’s name either.

“Who’s this Jiang Chen? Why is it that three out of the four great sites are protecting him?” Qi Tiannan’s facial expression suddenly changed. “Can he be a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect?”

When Shangguan Yi heard the three words of “Precious Tree Sect”, his face abruptly drained of color. “If this is the case, then Lu Wuji has truly caused an overwhelming disaster!”

At this moment, one of his subordinates came to report, “Directors, the Dragonteeth Guard members who were first on the scene have arrived.”

“Send them in.” Shangguan Yi said hastily.

Tian Shao’s men, the ones who had been the first on the scene to handle Jiang Chen’s case, quaked in their shoes as they walked in. Facing three directors at the same time was something they had never experienced before. They almost couldn’t stand straight.

“You there, don’t worry. I have a few questions to ask you. I don’t care what pressure or threats you have faced before, none of that is relevant. I will be the judge for you. What you need to do is to completely recount this matter. Don’t color it with the slightest bit of your personal feelings, I want the truth!”

Shangguan Yi spoke with a few traces of pacification.

“Do you hear that? The general director wants the truth.”

The teeth of the Dragonteeth Guard clattered as they calmed themselves with effort. The captain finally opened his mouth. “The matter occurred on the streets where the Southern Palace was holding their grand exhibition. At that moment...”

The captain restored the events that had happened. However, they hadn’t seen the events that had happened before they arrived at the scene.

They could only retell what had happened after they’d arrived, including Lu Wuji’s flagrant interference, forceful cutting in, Commander Tianshao’s strong argument on just grounds, etc. All of this was poured out like beans spilling out of a bamboo container.

When they heard that Jiang Chen had beaten a disciple of the Northern Palace up, the three directors looked at each other and they were all absorbed in their thoughts.

Now that the situation had developed to this point, semblance of some ideas had vaguely surfaced. A disciple of the Northern Palace, Lu Wuji, as well as Vice Director Yang behind Lu Wuji were all people on the same front line, and all people of the first prince.

In this way, a case that looked simple was something that actually had implications that led to the first prince?

“General director, this case seems to be too difficult to handle.” Qi Tiannan was a bit depressed.

“I don’t think there’s anything difficult about this, just handle it impartially.” Zhou Kai’s tone was firm.

They had all heard of the reputation of the Northern Palace. Killing, raiding and committing robbery on the road, these were all matters that the Northern Palace liked to do.

“Then, where are the witness and evidence now?” Shangguan Yi asked.

“The witness has been detained, while General Lu has taken all the evidence.”

Shangguan Yi’s face darkened and then asked the Dragonteeth Guards, “How is Jiang Chen now?”

“Commander Tian Shao arranged for him to be put into the single holding cell, but we’re afraid that General Lu has already received the order to remove Commander Tian Shao’s title by now. We’re not too certain what the exact situation is.”

Of the three vice directors of the Dragonteeth Guard, Zhou Kai was in charge of financial affairs, Lu Wuji’s uncle, Yang Zhao, was in charge of human resources, and Qi Tiannan was in charge of all sorts of administrative affairs.

When it came to Yang Zhao, he grasped the power of appointment and removal for the level of commander and below, and he had a lot of power as well.

Apart from generals having to be personally appointed and removed by the general director Shangguan Yi, Yang Zhao did indeed have the power to remove a commander.

When Shangguan Yi’s thoughts arrived at this point, he hastily said, “Old Zhou, I need you to make a trip immediately to the Black Dungeons and take my Dragonteeth Guard emblem. Stop Lu Wuji and protect Jiang Chen at all costs. If Lu Wuji dares act out of line, arrest him forcefully. Ignore all who plead on his behalf!”

“Understood!” Zhou Kai accepted his orders.

“Old Qi, take people with you and bring the important witness. If anyone blocks you, suppress them. Don’t let anything happen to the witness.”

To think that a simple matter would have anything to do with the four great sites and drag all of them in to the extent that it even involved the open rivalry and veiled strife between the princes. Shangguan Yi didn’t dare lower his guard.

No matter which way he leaned, he was sure to offend one side. The only thing they could do now was to handle the matter impartially and return the original, naked truth.

This was the only way in which they would be on the side of reason and not be condemned by the public.

However, from the reactions on all sides, Shangguan Yi had also guessed that it was likely eighty percent true that the disciple of the Northern Palace had attempted robbery.

...

In the Black Dungeons.

Lu Wuju was sitting cross-legged with an extremely at ease expression, as if he was a hunter toying with his prey and enjoying the psychological thrill of this perverted mindset.

As for Tian Shao, he sat cross legged on the other side of the Black Dungeons.

As domineering as Lu Wuju was, he still knew that he could not use brute force before he received the removal order. If he used brute force to take Tian Shao down, then he really would be crossing the line.

Even if he had his uncle to wipe his butt after him, this would be a tricky matter to address if it was reported upwards. After all, intervening in this case was a step out of bounds in itself.

He wasn't in a rush at this moment either. On the contrary, he rather enjoyed this feeling. He was like someone who'd received a treasured sword and Tian Shao and Jiang Chen were yearlings waiting for the slaughter.

It was a pity that the two stubborn yearlings still refused to cry out in agony even at this moment. This made his spirits feel slightly dampened.

Therefore, he continuously used words to provoke Jiang Chen.

"Jiang Chen, I've heard you have a few beauties amongst your subordinates. I'll take care of them for you after you die. It's said that you also have a few men as well. Heh heh, our Skylarell Kingdom also has slave markets. It will be like recycling trash when I sell them later."

"And you, Tian Shao, I hear that you have an eight year old daughter? And a very beautiful wife? Is that so?"

Tian Shao's tiger eyes glared as he snorted, "Shameless petty villain! The heavens watch over men's actions. Lu Wuju, you take advantage of your power to bully others. You have absolutely no respect for the law, the heavens will take care of you sooner or later!"

"The heavens? Haha, I'm the heavens here, what do they matter? The heavens are number two and the earth is number three. I, Lu Wuju, am the boss!"

Jiang Chen had been sitting cross legged and saying not a word. When he heard these words, his eyes suddenly glared and shot out a frightening beam of cold light. "Lu Wuju, heaven's vengeance is slow but sure. You defy heaven and have contempt for the law, the heavens will exact justice on you."

As the son of the Celestial Emperor in his past life, the words that Jiang Chen could least bear to hear were stupid words blaspheming the heavens and earth.

"The heavens will exact justice on me?" Lu Wuju laughed heartily. "Even if there is such a day, I'm afraid that you won't be able to see it. Let me tell you what the heavens are. Being alive is the heavens. Being dead is being a ghost. Jiang Chen, you'll be a ghost very soon. The angels of death are coming for you soon."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "The angels of death? Well said, when you are greeted by them one day, make sure to greet them for me."

Killing intent exploded on Lu Wuji's face. "Kid, you're facing your death and are still being stubborn."

Footsteps could be heard from outside at this moment. It was the person that Lu Wuji had sent to apply for the removal order earlier. He came in with hurried footsteps, and a removal order in his hand.

Lu Wuji was overjoyed and held it up in his hand. "Tian Shan, open your dog eyes and take a good look. The removal order is here. From now on, you are no longer a commander in the Dragonteeth Guard. Put your commander shoulder patch down, remove your Dragonteeth Guard uniform, and do not resist arrest!"

Tian Shan threw his head back and cried out, "Heavens, why are you so unjust to let such petty villains hold sway? I, Tian Shao, with a firm and unyielding character, am to be insulted by such a petty villain on this day!"

Jiang Chen on the other hand, spoke faintly, "Commander Tian, the natural laws are manifest and victory or loss isn't decided at this moment. Come here and we'll advance or retreat together."

Actually, these Black Dungeons couldn't trap Jiang Chen at all.

With Jiang Chen's current level of training, he'd be able to fend for himself even if he met Liu Can of the first level of the spirit realm.

Although these Dragonteeth Guards were an army of wolves and tigers, they were only of the true qi realm in the end.

If he really wanted to turn hostile, he had an eighty percent chance of breaking free.

Lu Wuji coldly laughed continuously, "A caged animal making its death struggles? Jiang Chen, do you know what I enjoy the most is admiring the view of prey in its death struggles?"

Jiang Chen laughed heartily, "Lu Wuji, I don't know if I'm making my death struggles. One thing I'm certain of is that I, Jiang Chen, will certainly not die before you."

"Daydreams of an idiot." Lu Wuji grimaced in laughter and abruptly yelled out, "Kill, with lawful authority, the repeat offender Jiang Chen in his attempted jailbreak!"

Lu Wuji was a ruthless person. He wanted Jiang Chen dead and he didn't even wish to wait until the final judgment of the case. He wanted Jiang Chen dead now.

Therefore, a jailbreak was naturally the best excuse.

Striking a jailbreaker down was perfectly logical and reasonable, it could be done flawlessly. Lu Wuji was well versed in this matter and he didn't have any psychological stress about it at all.

"Kill!"

The Dragonteeth Guard that Lu Wuji had brought charged in like wolves and tigers.

"Halt!"

An enraged and shocked roar sounded from the outskirts of the Black Dungeons in this critical moment. "Halt, all of you! You worthless trash, do you want to die!?"

This voice was like a thunderclap out of a blue sky as it echoed throughout the entire Black Dungeons, vibrating so that the eardrums of the Dragonteeth Guard buzzed. The heavens and earth trembled and they almost couldn't keep their footing. They swayed and trembled, unable to hold the weapons in their hands firmly.

In the next moment, the number two personage of the Dragonteeth Guard, Vice General Zhou Kai, came rushing in with great presence along with a pack of elites.

The heart that had leapt into Zhou Kai's throat went back to his chest the instant he saw that there wasn't a scene of flesh and blood flying everywhere.

Thankfully, disaster had been averted. There was still time to salvage everything!

Chapter 155: Lu Wuji is On His Knees

Lu Wuji was a bit surprised to see Zhou Kai appear with a prevailing thirst for blood. "Vice Director Zhou, what brings you here?"

Zhou Kai itched to slap Lu Wuji to death right now. He didn't even look at him as he roared, "All of you, drop your weapons and kneel. Otherwise, you'll be treated as traitors of the Dragonteeth Guard!"

As one of the four directors of the Dragonteeth Guard, Zhou Kai was the first vice director, but he usually only handled financial matters and rarely inquired after affairs of the Dragonteeth Guard. As a result, he did not have too much influence within the Dragonteeth Guard.

Therefore, when this command was given, the team on Lu Wuji's side all looked at each other with some embarrassment before they all looked unanimously at Lu Wuji.

Who knew that this gesture would thoroughly pierce Zhou Kai's self esteem as an elder of the Dragonteeth Guard. He was number two of the Guard, but no one moved to execute an order he'd given.

It looked like the tiger had been asleep for so long that not even this group of Dragonteeth Guard paid him proper respect, and instead treated him as a paper tiger!

Lu Wuji had a face full of shock as the vice director drew near, "Vice Director Zhou, just what has happened for you to be so up in arms?"

Lu Wuji had been here all along toying with Jiang Chen and the others, and hadn't left the Black Dungeons for a good half day. How would he know what had transpired in the outside world?

Besides, although the Southern Palace, Myriad Treasures Palace, and Qingyang Valley were enraged, they only used their connections in private and didn't widely publicize their actions. Therefore, Lu Wuji hadn't received any word of this at all.

Lu Wuji would have been better off not asking. His actions became the greatest offense in Zhou Kai's eyes.

“The Dragontooth emblem is here. Those who don’t kneel will be executed with no exception!”

Zhou Kai had brought the Dragonteeth Guard’s true elites this time, and they were much stronger and more important than Lu Wuji’s men.

Everyone was dumbfounded when they saw the Dragontooth emblem, and Lu Wuji was instantly petrified. Clattering sounds rang out from the back as Lu Wuji’s team all threw down their armor and weapons and crouched on the ground.

Seeing the Dragontooth emblem was like seeing the general director himself arrive.

Within the Dragonteeth Guard, the general director was the supreme one! The general director held the lives of everyone in the Guard in his hands.

The Dragontooth emblem was the totem of the Dragonteeth Guard. It was as if a common mortal had seen a deity or Buddha. Their first thought was to submit, and their second thought was to submit!

“Lu Wuji, how dare you refuse to kneel upon seeing the Dragontooth emblem? Do you really wish to mutiny?”

Zhou Kai turned around and gave a harsh yell. The sound of a sword being unsheathed rang out afterwards.

Lu Wuji was completely dumbfounded, but that remaining bit of reason and logic caused him to involuntarily bend both legs and kneel.

Submitting to the Dragontooth emblem was the first rule that almost every Dragonteeth Guard had to learn before entering the Guard.

“Who is Tian Shao?” Zhou Kai asked.

Tian Shao stood up from the back. “Your subordinate Tian Shao greets Vice Director Zhou.”

Zhou Kai was quite gratified and nodded his approval. “Tian Shao, the general director already knows of matters here. It is quite good, quite good that you can stay true to yourself and not bow in defeat to evil winds and noxious influences.”

Tian Shao had been completely bewildered in the beginning and hadn’t comprehended just what was going on. He finally understood when he heard Zhou Kai’s words and perceived that this matter had already disturbed the general director.

Vice Director Zhou had come ready to kill because he wanted to bring order out of chaos! He was here to provide backup for Jiang Chen and prevent Lu Wuji from pushing a perverse policy!

Tian Shao’s heart felt bittersweet when he heard Zhou Kai’s compliments. He felt that the humiliation he’d suffered through just now had been worth it.

“Vice Director Zhou, your subordinate was incompetent. I could only complete the matters within my duties. If it wasn’t for your timely arrival, the consequences would’ve been dire without thinking!”

Zhou Kai nodded, “Go, open the door. I want to personally apologize to little brother Jiang Chen.”

Lu Wuji and his accomplices' hearts all chilled when they heard these words. Zhou Kai was calling Jiang Chen his little brother. What did this mean?

This meant that the winds had changed and that the general director wanted to personally protect Jiang Chen!

As great as Lu Wuji's power was and as strong as his backer was, could they be more powerful than the general director?

"Jiang Chen, we have caused you suffering. Any sort of apology would be empty talk. I only have one promise — that our Dragonteeth Guard will give you a satisfactory explanation."

Jiang Chen actually hadn't suffered at all, to be honest.

"Vice Director Zhou, all sorts of birds can be found when the woods cover a vast expanse. The Dragonteeth Guard control an army a million strong so it's inevitable that a few bad apples will appear. Since Commander Tian Shao tried his best to mediate, I didn't actually suffer that much in this matter."

Zhou Kai was startled. He'd thought that the young man would be unreasonable and make a scene after enduring such suffering. Who would've thought Jiang Chen would easily gloss over this with a smile?

Zhou Kai's impression of Jiang Chen immediately increased to a very high level in the span of a moment.

"You're right, Tian Shao didn't throw away the moral integrity of a serviceman. I quite admire him. Little brother Jiang, if you don't mind, may we have a few words?"

Jiang Chen waved his hands slightly, "Elder Zhou, I'd like ask General Lu a few questions first."

Zhou Kai nodded. His relationship with Lu Wuji's backer, Vice Director Yang, had been mediocre to begin with. He naturally wouldn't object if Jiang Chen wanted to do so.

If they could make use of this opportunity to make this matter a bigger issue and suppress Vice Director Yang's arrogance, Zhou Kai would be happy about this outcome as well.

"General Lu, I'm unsure how great your position is and how frightening your power is, I only ask you one question. What grudge do you have with me that you treat my justified self defense as a murder case?"

Lu Wuji was woodenly silent. History is written by victors. He was now kneeling on the floor, and a thousand, even ten thousand words would all be empty unconfident fluff.

Gritting his teeth with hatred from the bottom of his heart, his mind was also a chaotic mess. He too, didn't understand what was going on. Wasn't Jiang Chen a foreigner? He had some fame in the Eastern Kingdom, but what did that little bit of fame mean in the Skylareland Kingdom?

Why would such a small matter disturb the general director?

Jiang Chen was just an ant from the Eastern Kingdom. Apart from the king, who else would merit personal inquiry from the general director's priceless self?

"The fourth prince?" This notion flashed through Lu Wuji's mind, but he immediately denied it. "The fourth prince is second or third rate amongst all princes. He's not even fit to carry the first prince's

shoes. He should be in a rush to kiss up to the general director, how could he possibly affect the general director's decisions?"

Lu Wuji went over this hundreds of times but still couldn't come to an answer.

"You want to kill me. I can understand that you've taken benefits from the Northern Palace or received their threats. But, what mistake did my subordinates commit? You said that you'd sell them to the slave markets after killing me? Are you a Dragonteeth Guard or a robber?"

"Tian Shao, he's your colleague, but you keep thinking about his wife and daughter. I'd like to ask, are you human or a beast in human skin?"

Tian Shao also clenched his hands into fists when he heard these words as boundless hatred shot out from his tiger eyes.

"You said that nothing in the heavens or earth could save me, and said that there was no way I could make it out alive now that I've entered the Black Dungeons. I can leave immediately now, but you must continue to kneel here like a dog. You said heaven was number two, earth number three, and you were the boss here. Then I'd like to ask you, what's your rank now?"

Lu Wuji had been cast into hell from heaven all of a sudden, and then been continuously scoffed at by Jiang Chen. The humiliation within his heart exploded all of a sudden.

"Jiang Chen you village buffoon, you animal! What are you so proud of? This matter isn't over!"

Zhou Kai hectored, "Lu Wuji, you have no respect for the law and abused your power. No one will save you this time, even if you have the greatest backer."

Lu Wuji started laughing loudly. "Vice Director Zhou, don't frighten me. There are still two possibilities to how this case will be decided."

"Two possibilities? You're too naive! The witness for this case is being protected by the general director's men. Add to that the eyewitness from the scene, and the outcome of this case is a quite clear."

"So what? At worst, this counts as mishandling a case. What can you do to me? Mishandling a case is at most, considered as a dereliction of duty. This kind of crime can be severe or light. A light punishment would be to demote me, a severe punishment would be to fire me."

Zhou Kai was at a loss for words. If it was any other general who had done these things and committed this overwhelming disaster, they would possibly even lose their life.

However, Lu Wuji had absolute contempt for the law and consequences because he had a backer.

With the mighty being of Vice Director Yang there, it was very possible that he would only be charged with a dereliction of duty crime in the end and get off lightly.

This kid would surely make it back to the position of vice general after a short while.

After all, Vice Director Yang held certain powers of appointment and removal. This power was something that even the first directory, Zhou Kai, didn't possess.

Jiang Chen was rather supremely uninterested in how the Dragonteeth Guard would handle Lu Wuji.

Rather, he was more interested in how much he could gain from this matter.

To put it candidly, Lu Wuji was a pawn. There would be another to replace him if this sort of minor character died. Their numbers wouldn't decrease by one if one was killed, and wouldn't increase if he remained.

Jiang Chen had hundreds of ways to kill minor characters like these.

Upon seeing Zhou Kai remain silent, Jiang Chen was a smart man and knew that although Zhou Kai's position was high, he likely couldn't make the decision either.

He spread out his hands, "Elder Zhou, I don't want to inquire into the personal affairs of your Dragonteeth Guard. However, I won't pretend that nothing has happened after this matter."

Zhou Kai smiled ruefully. This young man didn't flaunt his light, but that didn't mean he didn't have any. He hadn't given him, Zhou Kai, a hard time because he had good breeding and self restraint.

However, this matter didn't mean it would be resolved just like this.

"Tian Shao, the safety of little brother Jiang Chen in the capital will be temporarily handled by you. Remember, our Dragonteeth Guard was at fault first in this matter. You must serve little brother Jiang Chen well."

"Your subordinate understands." Tian Shao accepted his orders.

Zhou Kai had no other choice. He couldn't promise Jiang Chen anything. After all, it was up to the general director how this matter was handled.

What he could do was to humble himself as much as possible and give Jiang Chen a better impression.

Lu Wuji was dumbfounded to see Jiang Chen leave like this. He hadn't left behind a single harsh word nor lodged a fierce protest to angrily demand that he, Lu Wuji, be punished.

He almost didn't believe his eyes. Jiang Chen was leaving like this?

So it turns out that this kid is just a weakling who talks a big talk? He knows that he can't afford to enrage me, Lu Wuji, and doesn't even have the courage to pursue things further? Haha! A village buffoon who's never seen the world is just a buffoon who won't amount to much after all!

Although Lu Wuji was kneeling on the ground, there was no longer any pressure in his heart. Since Jiang Chen wasn't pursuing this matter, this meant that the Dragonteeth Guard had even less of a reason to pursue it!

Chapter 156: Vice Director Yang Wanted to Cry but Had No Tears Left

Although Jiang Chen said that he wouldn't inquire after the internal matters of the Dragonteeth Guard when he left and that this matter wasn't over, all of this sounded like weak, superficial words to Lu Wuji's ears.

If Jiang Chen really did have guts, he would have seized the best timing to lose his temper and make a scene immediately. When this timing was over and the matter had passed, who would pay attention to him, a foreign village buffoon even if he wanted to pursue it?

“He’s definitely a village buffoon from a small place. He has no guts at all. He scared me for no reason. Ah forget it, forget it. Although old man Zhou doesn’t like me, he has nothing on me with uncle there holding down the fort!”

Lu Wuji felt even more reassured when his thoughts traveled down this point. If it hadn’t been Zhou Kai holding the Dragontooth emblem in his hand, he likely would’ve immediately gotten up and swaggered out of the place.

Jiang Chen had somewhat surprised Lu Wuji in his lack of pursuing the matter immediately.

What was even more surprising was that even Zhou Kai didn’t seem to have the intention of pursuing this any further. He simply waved his hands, “Pray that this matter will be resolved easily in your favor!”

With that, Zhou Kai had actually left together with his team of wolves and tigers.

When Zhou Kai left with the Dragontooth emblem, Lu Wuji immediately revived with full blood and stood up dashing, brushing the dust off his knees. “What bad luck to disturb the general director for such a minor, miniscule matter. It gave old man Zhou a chance to swagger around in borrowed influence and humiliate me. What bad luck!”

“General Lu.” His men, jittering with fear, drew near him.

“Look at all of you with your heads down. Did your mother or old man die or something? The matter’s already over, what are you doing with faces full of ugly expressions?” Lu Wuji cursed.

“General Lu, something’s not quite right here.”

“What’s not quite right? Old man Zhou must have been up to no good within this. What are you afraid of? With my uncle there, old man Zhou won’t be able to do much!” Lu Wuji didn’t care at all.

He immediately spoke through gritted teeth afterwards, “As for Jiang Chen, that dumb animal, how dare a village buffoon humiliate me? As long as you remain within the Skylareland Kingdom, I will make sure you die a ghastly death!”

Although Lu Wuji had suffered no harm, he had originally held victory within his hands and had uttered all sorts of wild words. When it came to the final step, the situation had suddenly changed drastically and he’d fallen straight from heaven.

Jiang Chen, who’d been slated for death according to his words, had swaggered past him out of the place.

His heroic and proud words had turned into outrageous jokes.

Accustomed to acting however he wanted within the capital and commanding the wind and rain, exercising control over other people’s life and death, Lu Wuji deeply felt that this was shameful and a greatest affront to him.

“Ai, after going to all this trouble, that kid Jiang Chen still walked out of here alive. I still have to give the Northern Palace an explanation.”

Lu Wuji walked home with this irritated feeling.

When he was almost home, he suddenly felt that this matter should be explained to his uncle and immediately set off for the manor of Vice General Yang Zhao.

“What? Lu Wuji seeks an audience?” By this time, Yang Zhao had already received pressure from many sides and was being scorched by the flames. When he heard that Lu Wuji was asking to be received, he viciously threw the teacup in his hand onto the ground and broke out in large curses. “Does that idiot have the brains of a pig? How dare he come see me at this time?”

Although he was cursing madly, Lu Wuji was still his own nephew, and Yang Zhao had been taken care of by his sister since he was small. Since Lu Wuji was his sister’s only son, he basically treated Lu Wuji like his own son.

“Sir uncle, you must take action on your nephew’s behalf on account of my dearly departed mother!” Lu Wuji had long since gained a thorough understanding of his uncle Yang Zhao, and knew that if he cried, no matter how hard a heart that his uncle had, it would soften for sure.

He had used this move several times over the years at critical moments and it had always proven useful.

Indeed, Yang Zhao had been filled with the fires of anger, but they all dissipated quickly when he saw Lu Wuji this way.

His nephew’s features still bore traces of his sister’s looks.

“Ai, Wuji, you really shouldn’t have come back this time.”

“Why?” Lu Wuji was startled. He hadn’t thought that his usually domineering uncle would voice such depressed words today.

“You mishandled a case. Even if they only charge you with dereliction of duty, you should’ve remained at the Dragonteeth Guard headquarters and awaited the investigation from above. But you swaggered back here. Tell me, how do you think the outside world will view this? You’re my nephew, but can you be pardoned just like this when you commit something wrong?”

Lu Wuji wasn’t a fool. He immediately understood the salient points that Yang Zhao pointed out.

Even if there wasn’t much problem with dereliction of duty, he still had to go through the protocol. Swaggering home like this would undoubtedly give a signal to the outside world — that even if he committed a mistake, he wouldn’t be punished for it because he was Yang Zhao’s nephew.

This kind of signal was without a doubt, very disadvantageous to him.

“Zhou Kai that bastard. I was wondering why he was suddenly so easy going to let us go? He was digging a hole for me!”

Lu Wuji still had some brains after all and he came to terms with this rude awakening.

Yang Zhao was both sorry and infuriated when he saw Lu Wuji's appearance. "So you're not a complete idiot after all."

"Then what now?" Lu Wuji felt extremely put out now that he discovered he had been set up by Zhou Kai.

"It's difficult to say. Us uncle and nephew have to put on a show, one of grievous sadness." Yang Zhou threw out a rope and two branches of thorns. "Take off your clothes and tie yourself up. I'll personally take you to the general director. The general director is a nostalgic person. I hope I can quell his anger by doing this."

Bearing the rod and willingly taking punishment was an old trick, but the most useful method to salvage the situation now.

"Uncle, just what is that Jiang Chen's background? Do you have any news from your end? Why is the general director personally acting on behalf of a minor character?" Lu Wuji was still a bit unreconciled about this development. He felt that he'd been played in a most bewildering manner this time.

"I haven't received intelligence of the particulars of the situation either. I've only learned from various secret channels that not only is the general director quite enraged this time, but that old Zhou and old Qi are also involved."

"Can it be that they're acting in tandem against you?" Lu Wuji thought of a conspiracy theory first.

"Impossible." Yang Zhao shook his head decisively. "Old Zhou has unfriendly relations with me, but I understand old Qi. He won't intentionally target anyone. Don't ask so much now, this matter shouldn't be delayed. I'll haul you in front of the general director right now."

Yang Zhao was naturally an ambitious person who excelled in psychological games given that he'd made it to the second general director, the third personage of the Dragonteeth Guard and held the power of appointment and removal.

Of course, when Yang Zhao appeared at the doors of the Dragonteeth Guard with a trussed up Lu Wuji, cursing madly as he hauled the latter along, it naturally drew looks from many.

"That's Vice General Yang alright. He doesn't tolerate it even when General Lu makes a mistake and has personally brought him here all tied up. It's admirable that he punishes his own relations in the name of justice!"

"When a prince commits a crime, his punishment is the same as a commoner. Lu Wuji seems to have committed a huge disaster this time. Vice Director Yang will surely not protect him."

"Yes indeed. Vice General Yang is objective and impartial, how could he possibly show favoritism?"

These comments made Yang Zhao gloat inwardly, further confirming that he'd chosen the correct move.

"General director, Yang Zhao is fearful and have personally tied up this animal to bring to you to await your judgment!"

When he saw the general director Shangguan Yi, Yang Zhao stomped down on Lu Wuji's butt and roared out, "Dumb animal, why aren't you kneeling and begging the general director for his forgiveness yet?"

As foolish as Lu Wuji was, he didn't dare get up to any antics in front of the general director's power. He spoke respectfully and fearfully, "General director, I was young and ignorant, inexperienced in the ways of handling cases. This caused me to commit the error of biased judgment in this case. I am willing to accept the general director's punishment."

These words were quite cunning. He first removed the actions of him framing Jiang Chen and used nonsense such as, "young and ignorant, inexperienced in the ways of handling cases" to gloss over the matter.

He then said something about willing to accept the general director's punishment — that was even more slippery. He was initially supposed to undergo investigation from the Dragonteeth Guard's disciplinary department and accept the judgement of the military.

If the general director punished him, that meant he wouldn't have to undergo punishment from the military.

Yang Zhao also spoke with deep distress, "General director, it's because that I've been too busy normally that I've neglected my education of this kid. He's committed such a dire mistake this time that if you wish to remove him from his position or punish him, I, Yang Zhao, won't say a word on his behalf."

If it was any other time, Shangguan Yi would have waved it off with a smile.

However, Yang Zhao discovered that things were a bit different this time. Shangguan Yi was expressionless. He made no comment, and didn't propose any punishment. He didn't even look at Lu Wuji.

This bizarre situation suddenly sent Yang Zhao's heart pounding. A foreboding feeling of unease started to spread out within his heart.

At this moment, two more people walked in through the doors. They were Zhou Kai and Qi Tiannan.

Zhou Kai had a livid expression on his face as he looked at Yang Zhou and the trussed up Lu Wuji before walking past them with a shadow of a smile.

As for Qi Tiannan, he shook his head ruefully and didn't dare exchange looks with Yang Zhao. It was obvious that he didn't want to have too much contact with Yang Zhao.

This kind of situation made Yang Zhao feel more and more uneasy.

Zhou Kai's reaction had been within expectations because they were old rivals but there was much more meaning to Qi Tiannan's purposeful evasion of his gaze.

Could it be that there was more to this matter?

Shangguan Yi sighed lightly, "Vice Director Yang, the most critical problem now isn't how to handle your nephew, but how to placate the anger from all sides."

"What do you mean?" Yang Zhao blanked for a moment. Even if the Dragonteeth Guard mishandled a case, that was an internal matter. What anger from all sides?

"It looks like your nephew hasn't told you everything?" Zhou Kai smiled coldly.

“Dirty swine, what else did you conceal?” Yang Zhao was losing face and thus kicked viciously at Lu Wuji. He was truly enraged this time and hadn’t faked that kick. Lu Wuji rolled on the ground in pain.

Shangguan Yi frowned. “Since you don’t know, Vice Director Qi, go over the situation with Vice Director Yang. The person who fastened the bell is needed to undo it, and it falls to the two of you to resolve it.”

Qi Tiannan nodded, “This is how the situation stands...”

Qi Tiannan went over the particulars of this matter again, especially going over in detail the parts having to do with Elder Ning and Shi Xiaoyao.

When he got to the part of Elder Fei from the Qingyang Valley, he quickly glossed over it due to considerations of face for general director Shangguan Yi.

Yang Zhao’s face changed drastically throughout these words and he wanted to cry, but had no tears. He knew that his nephew could cause a world of trouble, but this time’s mess was simply too great.

This was practically an overwhelming disaster that was raking the entire Dragonteeth Guard over hot coals!

Chapter 157: Blackmailing Vice Director Yang

“Vice Director Yang, the flames of anger from the Southern Palace, Myriad Treasures Palace, and Qingyang Palace are all awaiting to be extinguished by us. I only have one word. If you can put out the flames of their fury, then I will not pursue Lu Wuji’s matter.”

Shangguan Yi set forth his bottom line.

There was a rueful look on Yang Zhao’s face. Extinguish the flames of anger from these three places? He knew that he didn’t have the ability to do so. He had always been close to the Northern Palace.

He had no business dealings with the other three and thus only had a middling relationship with them.

If even the face of the general director wasn’t useful, then where did he rank on the totem pole? He would only be inviting humiliation.

His mouth displaying an exceedingly stiff smile full of bitterness, Yang Zhao couldn’t help but ask, “General director, the fault definitely lies completely on Lu Wuji this time. However, I’d still like to ask, just who is this Jiang Chen? Does he command so much face that three out of the four great sites would act collectively for him?”

“You’re asking me, but who should I ask?” Shangguan Yi asked expressionlessly in return.

“This matter cannot be delayed. General director, if the patience of these three sites are exhausted, then I’m afraid it will become more and more difficult to talk to them later on.” Zhou Kai further fanned the flames.

Shangguan Yi’s gaze was full of meaning as he looked at Yang Zhao.

Yang Zhao’s eyes wanted to evade his gaze, but there was nowhere for him to hide. He could only smile ruefully, “General director, you also know that my power is limited. My face isn’t big enough to appease

these three great powers. It's not that I don't want to, I really don't know where to begin. Can you give me a hint? Offer gifts and apologies? I can make Lu Wuji do this."

"Offer gifts and apologies?" Zhou Kai smiled diffidently. "Vice Director Yang, do you think that Shi Xiaoyao and Elder Ning made raised such a big fuss just for a word of apology?"

Yang Zhao had no retort available even though he'd put in a bind by Zhou Kai. He was in a low position now and could only allow Zhou Kai to jeer however he wanted.

"Old Qi, do you have any suggestions? You can't kick me while I'm down now, you have to give me a hand." Zhou Kai opted for a coaxing tone as he asked Qi Tiannan for ideas.

Qi Tiannan mused for a bit and said, "I think the crux of this matter is still on Jiang Chen. The anger from the three sites could be a great matter or it could be a small matter. Although Lu Wuji has offended them, but the youngster was immature and gave offense with his words. At the end of the day, the matter is over when their anger dies. They continue to hold on surely because Jiang Chen isn't willing to let go."

Shangguan Yi nodded slightly. After so much had been said, Qi Tiannan's words had finally hit the spot.

"Old Qi's words are correct. Jiang Chen had also said previously that however our Dragonteeth Guard would like to handle this, it is our internal affair and he wasn't at liberty to inquire. However, he wouldn't treat this matter as if nothing had happened." Zhou Kai also spoke up. "Lu Wuji threw Jiang Chen into the Black Dungeons and subjected him to a round of threats. The spirits of a young man are proud and he certainly won't be willing to let this matter go so easily."

"Old Zhou and Old Qi's words make a great deal of sense. Vice Director Yang, resolving this matter lies in Jiang Chen's hands. Only when Jiang Chen's anger is assuaged and he approves, will the three sites let go as well."

Shangguan Yi was also resigned. Having three of the four great sites announce their intentions to halt cooperation with the Dragonteeth Guard was undoubtedly a lethal blow.

For every day that this situation persists, then it would be a day later that the Dragonteeth Guard could resume normalcy.

...

The person in question, Jiang Chen, was busying himself and quite at peace.

He had already gotten in touch with a dilapidated brewery and was making preparations to distill the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. Now that all the materials were all at hand, everything was in readiness.

Simultaneously, he began preparing the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill. Compared to the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine, the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill was much easier to refine.

This was a pill for retaining youthful looks, and was actually much easier to refine than the Vast Ocean Pill or the Heavenly Karma Pill.

"Baishi, you've done well. I can tell that Elder Ning values you highly. This is a chance for you. You're my disciple, but I hope you can also find opportunities to make strides in your own career."

Qi Baishi was quite grateful. "Honored master, your disciple would still like to stay by your side and work for you."

"I need you to make it into the Southern Palace. This will also aid your future development."

Jiang Chen's first goal was martial dao.

The dao of pills was just supplementary to him pursuing martial dao. Since he'd accepted Qiao Baishi as his disciple, he naturally needed to have a few considerations for his future career.

Logically speaking, if Qiao Baishi could make it into the Precious Tree Sect through the Southern Palace, it would be quite a good choice for him.

Qiao Baishi was also quite sensible as he knew that this was his honored master making preparations for him. He nodded. "Honored master, you will always be my priority no matter where your disciple goes. If you tell me to go to the Southern Palace, then your disciple will surely work with all my heart."

"Baishi, you've never let me down." Jiang Chen nodded. "This Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill will be the way in which you ascend. I will pass this onto you now."

Qiao Baishi was touched and felt quite proud. He knew that his honored master completely trusted him and that he was placing a lot of importance on him.

Jiang Chen passed down the pill recipe to Qiao Baishi and gave him a few pointers on the knacks of refining. In actuality, Jiang Chen hadn't refined this pill much in his previous life.

But in the memories of his past life, the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill had astonishing results with regards to retaining youthful looks.

If he used even slightly better ingredients and refined a supreme rank Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill, it would even produce instantaneous effects.

After giving the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill to Qiao Baishi, Jiang Chen focused on brewing the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine.

In the next three days, he completely immersed himself in creating the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. No matter who came to visit from the outside world, they were all held at bay by Gouyu and his eight personal guards.

Feng Yan, the disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace, had a spring in his step lately. Because of this time's issue, he had been specifically singled out by Shi Xiaoyao and now occupied the position of administrator.

Although he was a vice administrator, the speed of his ascension was an absolute three levels in a row compared to that of an ordinary disciple.

This made the other disciples who had been toiling away with him in the bottom ranks for many years all envious beyond belief.

Feng Yan was quite delighted, but didn't forget who he owed all this to. He knew that it was all because of Jiang Chen that he could occupy this position. Whether or not he could continue to sit in this seat in

the future, or even have the opportunity to take a further step forward would depend entirely on Jiang Chen!

Therefore, when he was kept outside the door by Jiang Chen's personal guards, not only did Feng Yan not lose his temper, but he was actually quite patient. He came once every morning and once every night. Not even thunder and lightning could deter him.

Those from the Dragonteeth Guard were also blocked outside the door.

Vice Director Yang Zhou had initially maintained an air of superiority. He'd sent one of his men to come start a discussion with Jiang Chen and see if they could handle this privately.

It was without a doubt that this man hadn't even set foot inside the door before he'd been hauled off by the personal guards.

Yang Zhao then sent someone with higher authority bearing a lot of gifts as well, fully giving the impression of wishing to offer gifts in apology. They were all brusquely turned down by the personal guards.

The flames of anger burned within Yang Zhao's heart. Despite his power and status as the third personage of the Dragonteeth Guard, he'd actually been rejected twice by a foreigner village buffoon!

If this was before, Yang Zhao would've surely flown into a rage.

However, this time, he was at his wits end. He suppressed his rage and personally made a visit, deciding to have a conversation with Jiang Chen with his status as a Vice Director of the Dragonteeth Guard.

What he hadn't counted on however, was that he continued to receive the cold shoulder.

"My house's young master is in closed door cultivation. All matters must wait until he emerges."

Yang Zhao calmed the fires of anger within his heart with great effort, and asked when Jiang Chen would emerge. The answer he received was, "We're not sure."

Yang Zhao, a person with such a deep degree of shrewdness, almost couldn't hold it in and wanted to roll up his sleeves and come out swinging. But reason told him that once he started throwing punches, he would start a death feud and relations with the three great sites would be utterly destroyed.

As much power as Yang Zhao had and as much capability he had, he had absolutely no courage in this area. He also had no ability to bear the consequences of this disastrous outcome.

Forcefully swallowing this humiliation, Yang Zhao prepared to return in a few days.

A man suddenly walked out when he was about to leave. "Hold, you're Vice Director Yang, right?"

Yang Zhao had been met with a door shutting in his face. When he heard these words, it was as if a drowning man had latched onto a log as his eyebrows arched with happiness eyebrows. "Yes, that's me."

He didn't dare put on any airs at this moment or throw his weight around as the third personage of the Dragonteeth Guard.

Although the other side was a blank sheet of paper in the Skylareland Kingdom and even though the other side had no power or influence at all, he, Yang Zhao, could definitely not put on any airs during this moment.

“Why hasn’t Lu Wuji come?”

As Yang Zhao had made it to the position of third personage within the Dragonteeth Guard, not even the general director had talked to him with such an interrogative tone in recent years.

But now, the circumstances bore greater importance than the person. Even though he’d been slapped on the left cheek, he still had to offer his right cheek and smile, “Lu Wuji has neglected his duties in the course of handling a case and has been grounded.”

“What a nice dereliction of duty, you’ve done away with all responsibility quite nicely!” The person walking out from within was Jiang Chen’s younger cousin Xue Tong, the captain of his eight personal guards.

“I have a list here. Take a look.” Xue Tong radiated out a surge of true qi and sent the list floating in front of Yang Zhao.

Xue Tong’s moves were a bit rude and made Yang Zhao feel a bit irritated, but he still reached out a hand and snatched the sheet.

Xue Tong said blandly, “This is my young master’s bottom line. The day you collect all these items and deliver them to us is the day that anger of my house’s young master will be placated.”

Yang Zhao flicked a careless glance and his brow immediately furrowed. “First rank CloudfLOWER Grass? King of Mauve Jade Ginseng? These... these are all spirit rank ingredients. This... this is highway robbery!”

In his haste, Yang Zhao had forgotten the filter on his mouth.

Xue Tong smiled slightly. “Don’t be mad Vice Director Yang. If you think this is extortion, then treat it as a joke and rip it up after you’ve read it.”

Rip it up? If anger could burn this list up, it would’ve long since turned to ashes. However, how could Yang Zhao possibly rip it up?

What did ripping it up represent? It meant that they were completely and openly hostile and had completely declared war on the three great sites.

“Alright, alright, alright. I concede my defeat this time. If these items are collected, can Jiang Chen represent the position of the three great sites?”

Xue Tong spread out his hands, seemingly not wanting to say much more. “Let’s talk after you’ve collected all of them.”

With that, he flicked a careless glance at Vice Director Yang and turned to walk inside, leaving Yang Zhao standing outside awkwardly with a face full of bitterness.

“Keep it in, keep it in, can’t lose my temper. Jiang Chen this dumb animal, how dare a foreigner threaten me?! See how I’ll get you after all this is over. Who would’ve thought that I, Yang Zhao, who could act however I wished for half my life, would be humiliated by these guard dogs today! Jiang Chen, Jiang Chen!!” Raging killing intent surged within Yang Zhao’s heart.

Chapter 158: The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine that One Goes Crazy For

One had to say, Jiang Chen’s list was an absolute tall order, and a very tall one at that.

It would be a pity if he gave up this chance to swindle through targeting weaknesses.

It wasn’t that Jiang Chen was greedy, but that he didn’t know when the next opportunity would come around if he missed this one. He’d finally borrowed the might of the three sites. If he didn’t leverage this advantage to its fullest potential, then all this scheming would have been wasted.

As for that minor character Lu Wuji, he could vent some of his anger if he killed Lu Wuji, but from Jiang Chen’s height, killing Lu Wuji was just like stepping on an ant.

At the heart of it, it was much more worth it to savagely rip Yang Zhao off.

When Yang Zhao returned home, his heart spasmed each time he looked at the list. All of the items on the list were rare and precious spirit ingredients.

It would be difficult for him to avoid ponying up vast sums if he wanted to collect them all. He made a brief calculation. If he wanted to gather all of them, it’d take at least one third of his earthly possessions.

One third of the wealth that he had accumulated from all those years of scraping off the fat of people, hoarding stolen goods, and milking other parties dry would besucked out in one go. Yang Zhao’s heart ached with pain whenever he thought of this.

“How about having the Dragonteeth Guard pay part of it? This matter involves the overall profits of the Dragonteeth Guard anyways.” Yang Zhao had thought of this as well.

But when he recalled the general director’s solemn expression, he let go of this notion. If he dared to make such an outrageous request, then it was likely that the general director would remove him from his station afterwards.

What was he without the title of vice director? Not even a pile of shit.

People would at least not be willing to step on a pile of shit on the streets. However, if he didn’t have the halo of being a vice director of the Dragonteeth Guard, he would be stomped to death when his enemies came knocking on his door.

“Lu Wuji this useless trash!” Yang Zhao was depressed. This was no longer a simple matter of saving his nephew, but something that had to do with the partnership between the Dragonteeth Guard and the three main sites.

If he, Yang Zhao, extracted himself from the situation and gave no thought to it, Lu Wuji would be dead without a doubt. When the partnership with the three great sites was halted, the final responsibility would still be up to him, Yang Zhao, to bear.

He would still be sitting uneasily in his position of vice director.

“Forget it, forget it.” Yang Zhao made a painful decision. “In the end, I have to pay this money. I’ll let that kid Jiang Chen strut around for a bit. When all of this blows over, I’m going to make him spit it back out along with his flesh and bones!”

Ultimately, he was a decisive and ambitious person. He immediately used all of his connections to start collecting the items on the list.

Skylaurel Kingdom was rich in resources, and Jiang Chen’s list had been based off of the Skylaurel Kingdom’s situation. Therefore, the items he’d listed were all ones that could be found within the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Time passed as five days went by in the blink of an eye.

Jiang Chen watched the steam curl up into the air with a fixed gaze.

At this moment, his God’s Eye and Ear of the Zephyr was deployed to their maximum capabilities and were capturing all the fine details.

This was the final step in the process of distillation. When the flames had risen to the appropriate heat, they would automatically filter out the liquid and the finished Nine Magnificence Dew Wine would slowly flow out.

“Mm, the scents of the nine different flowers can be discerned from this fragrance if it is finely analyzed, but they also seem to have become as one. This duration and degree of heating is about right.”

“Extinguish the flames.”

The flames had reached the appropriate heat and the tap was opened. A liquid like nectar slowly flowed out with a memorable fragrance.

A spirit level Nine Magnificence Dew Wine had been successfully created!

Just after Jiang Chen had successfully created the spirit level Nine Magnificence Dew Wine, Qiao Baishi also successfully refined a batch of acceptable Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill after many failures.

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was decanted into the already prepared wooden container. This wine was quite particular about its container. If the wrong sort of container was chosen, it would have a certain degree of effect on the quality of the wine.

Jiang Chen naturally wouldn’t commit this sort of mistake.

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was produced in exceedingly small quantities, and the amount that would become alcohol in the end was all the cream of the crop of the essence. Therefore, Jiang Chen had prepared so many materials but only had enough to fill nine flagons.

But of course, this amount was already quite astonishing.

At this moment, Qiao Baishi’s forehead was also beaded with sweat. He was used to refining other pills but this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill was so out of the ordinary that it had expended much of his energy.

“Honored master, your disciple has succeeded in carrying out his assignment.”

Out of the Four Season Eternal Spring Pills that Qiao Baishi had refined, four supreme rank pills had actually appeared. Most of them were upper rank, with less than ten percent middle rank.

There wasn't a single inferior rank pill.

“Baishi, your dao of pills and artistry has risen greatly.”

Qiao Baishi hastened to say, “This is all because of honored master's guidance.”

This wasn't Qiao Baishi being humble, Jiang Chen had actually given him many pointers in the area of refining pills. He'd even overturned his previous techniques in refining pills and helped him embark on new paths of thought, helping him understand how superficial and laughable the concepts that he'd grasped before were.

Whenever he caught glimpse of a shortcut, Qiao Baishi's techniques naturally increased greatly. He was a person capable of learning after all.

“Baishi, I'll split these pills with you. Since you're going to the Southern Palace, why not make Elder Ning be happier and gift her a supreme rank Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill?”

“Honored master, just what effect does this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill have?” Although Qiao Baishi felt that this pill was uncommon, he had no idea of what its actual results would be.

“Baishi, you've seen the materials as well. I'll only tell you that the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill is at the peak of perfection at the supreme rank. It's absolutely incredible. It could take effect immediately, or at the very least within six to ten hours. Do you understand it when I put it this way?”

“It's that amazing?” Qiao Baishi didn't know much about the art of retaining youthful looks.

Jiang Chen continued to tease him mercilessly, “Just you wait until Elder Ning promises herself to you.”

In actuality, Jiang Chen hadn't nearly exaggerated enough. This supreme rank Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill was not simply just capable of removing spots and wrinkles.

This pill could change the bodily functions of a woman from their foundation and reshape her body functions, revitalizing her blood and qi, imbuing her meridians with new life, and thus bringing about the heaven defying effect of regaining youth.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that even an old woman with a face full of wrinkles could regain the appearance of herself at thirty or forty years old if she took this pill.

If it was a woman with decent foundations, then upon taking the pill, she would be able to deploy its maximum effectiveness, and its results would be even more incredible.

Seeing Qiao Baishi flush red, Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily, “Baishi, you're well over thirty, what are you blushing for?”

Qiao Baishi had been groomed as Song Tianxing's successor since he was young within the Hall of Healing, and his days had passed quite simply, filled with just business and spirit medicine.

He had experienced the matters of men and women, but had gone through almost no particularly special experiences.

"Alright, so many days have passed already, I'm sure they're anxious with worry. If we don't give the other parties a taste of sweetness, they'll think that we are frauds."

Although Feng Yan's mood had been light for the past couple of days, he was still more or less worried. He now knew why Vice Head Shi placed such importance on Jiang Chen.

However, could Jiang Chen help Vice Head Shi materialize his wish? Feng Yan was still a bit uncertain within his heart. If Jiang Chen did anything out of the ordinary, then he, Feng Yan, would pay the price for it as well.

After all, he was the go-between.

Therefore, he came every morning and night. It was also a materialization of his anxious emotions.

"Heh heh, Brother Feng, sorry to keep you waiting."

"Ah? Younger brother Jiang, you've finally emerged from closed door cultivation. Our house's vice head has spoken of you everyday. This has truly made me anxious."

Jiang Chen looked at Feng Yan and smiled, "It looks like brother Feng has risen quite quickly this time."

"When it comes to this matter, it's all thanks to you, younger brother Jiang. Today, I have accomplished much and I owe all of that to you." Feng Yan spoke rather sincerely this time.

"Alright, I expect that you've had a few difficult days. The vice head of your house has also gone to great effort this time regarding the business of the Dragonteeth Guard, I should pay him a visit and express some of my sentiments."

"Ah?" Feng Yan started and was immediately overjoyed, "Younger brother Jiang, you..."

"Let's go!" Jiang Chen patted Feng Yan's shoulder.

Feng Yan was delighted beyond measure and his heart was quite agitated. He wanted to say something, but was immediately shamefaced when he saw that Jiang Chen's expression was calm.

"Right, younger brother Jiang is indeed someone who does great deeds and is neither proud nor fidgety. It's nothing exciting if even the sky caves in. In comparison, I can hardly retain my composure." Feng Yan couldn't help but reflect when he saw Jiang Chen's cool and composed behaviour.

"This is my chance. Younger brother Jiang isn't just a character who will be confined to one place. If I can hold onto the line of younger brother Jiang, perhaps there will be more chances in the future. It looks like I must spur myself onto greater efforts so that I won't appear to be too far behind. Otherwise the distance between younger brother Jiang and I will only increase in the days to come. I won't have the right to play up to such a big character like him in the future."

Although Feng Yan was of humble origins, he was an extremely nimble person. He knew that he could progress from a humble disciple to a senior middle management position of an administrator and the person who would change his fortunes was undoubtedly Jiang Chen.

If one didn't properly curry favor when he met someone like this, then he was a fool.

"In the future, no matter what, I, Feng Yan, must resolutely stand on the side of younger brother Jiang and be his bosom friend, even his follower or his subordinate. Even if I'm a dog and must listen to his commands, I will try my hardest to become someone that younger brother Jiang trusts!"

Feng Yan thought furiously as he walked.

...

Shi Xiaoyao had narrowed his eyes as a pair of eccentric eyeballs sized up Jiang Chen, sized up this young man who'd caused him nights of restless sleep before he had even met him.

"Jiang Chen, Eastern Kingdom..." Shi Xiaoyao's eyes suddenly widened as he sat up. "Alright, I will pay no heed to all this trivial, minor matters. I care only about one thing. Where's the wine?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and flicked a glance at the wine cups in front of Shi Xiaoyao. "It is said that good wine should be paired with luminous wine glasses. Good wine should have good containers. Can this trash be taken away first? They're an affront to the eyes. Do you have cups of old vine? If not, how about cups of young vine?"

Jiang Chen was fine if he remained quiet and didn't open his mouth, but when he did, he almost frightened Feng Yan into peeing himself. This Jiang Chen was simply too bold. This was the vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace!

Shi Xiaoyao started, and then broke out in a large grin. He spread his hands out, "Feng Yan, get the hell out first. Such good wine would be wasted on you."

Feng Yan felt that it was rather sweet to be cursed at by Shi Xiaoyao, and he chuckled as he retreated from the room.

Chapter 159: Some Houses Rejoice, Some Houses are Sorrowful

What Jiang Chen hadn't anticipated, was that Shi Xiaoyao's next move would actually be to sweep all of the wine cups on the table to the side.

He reached into his shirt and actually took out a cup made of old vines.

At this moment, a man as crude as Shi Xiaoyao was actually handling this cup made of old vines with a look of tenderness on his face — as if he was caressing his own newborn daughter. He was careful, soft, and his face was filled with a gentle look.

In this instant, Jiang Chen saw the shadow of an alcoholic in Shi Xiaoyao.

"Jiang Chen, the last time that I tasted the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was with this same cup made of old vines. I had but a bit of fortune and destiny, and didn't have the chance to taste it again. However, I possessed thick skin, and although I couldn't taste the wine again, I happened to bring the cup home with me. Heh heh..."

Shi Xiaoyao leered just a bit, as if appropriating such a thing wasn't a shameful thing, but rather something to be proud of.

"I'd been suspicious for just a second whether you were able to really bring the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. Now, I believe you much more because you know about a cup made of old vines!"

The cup made of old vines is the best vessel to drink the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine with. Shi Xiaoyao had originally heard this from someone else as well.

Therefore, Shi Xiaoyao hadn't been angered by Jiang Chen's words just now, but rather had become overjoyed.

Putting the cup made of old vines carefully onto the table, Shi Xiaoyao actually closed his eyes. "Jiang Chen, if you're lying to me, then get the hell out now. Since you've mentioned the cup made of old vines, I can let you go this one time. If you're here in earnest, pour the wine!"

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine proceeded to land in the cup made of old vines like ancient nectar. The sound that it gave rise to was as if a babbling mountain spring that had its own mesmerizing rhythm.

In the span of a moment, all artistic conceptions seemed to meld into this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. It was as if the surroundings on all sides had turned into a deep mountain valley that was filled with all sorts of exotic flowers and grass. A clear mountain spring flowed slowly through it, making one free of mind, and happy of heart.

Shi Xiaoyao's entire body spasmed, as his tightly shut eyes suddenly opened.

The next moment, this vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace, one of the few characters who held significant power within the Skylaurel Kingdom, actually began to bawl like a child!

Tears covered his face!

His lips trembled. "Who would've thought that after so many years, I, Shi Xiaoyao, would actually have the good fortune to once again meet the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine!"

He raised the cup made of old vines and placed it next to his lips, seemingly wanting to mobilize his six senses and all the strength in his entire body in order to drink the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine.

When the wine entered his mouth, it was as if Shi Xiaoyao was an old monk who'd entered a trance — he was petrified.

This feeling was just too wondrous and too unforgettable.

This was the taste that had always been in his dreams, the taste that he'd always been preoccupied with.

"Heh heh, Vice Head Shi, cry if you'd like. I know that you told Feng Yan to get out because you were afraid of your subordinate seeing you lose your composure. How embarrassing would that have been!"

Shi Xiaoyao chuckled and scratched his head. "Jiang Chen you brat, you saw through even this. It looks like I've truly underestimated you."

"How's the wine?"

Shi Xiaoyao sighed. "I only have three words, 'death without regret'."

'Death without regret' meant that after tasting this wine, even if he, Shi Xiaoyao, immediately died, he'd have no regrets whatsoever.

What compliment could be higher than this?

Jiang Chen chuckled and pushed the jug of wine forward. "Vice Head Shi, a hero knows another. If it wasn't for you going to this trouble on my behalf for the Dragonteeth Guard matter, then you likely wouldn't have even been able to taste this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine this quickly. This jug of wine is all yours."

"What?" Shi Xiaoyao jumped up and held onto the jug with a death grip from both hands, as his eyes blinked shiftily. "Jiang Chen, don't regret this now."

"A treasured sword is given to a martyr, and rouge given to a beautiful lady. Isn't it a much better thing if the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine is gifted to someone who understands wine like Vice Head Shi, rather than having those ignorant buffoons drink it?"

Shi Xiaoyao chuckled. "I like hearing talk such as this."

"Mm. Then I won't disturb Vice Head Shi from tasting beautiful wine." Jiang Chen rose and prepared to leave.

Shi Xiaoyao started. He'd thought that Jiang Chen would make some sort of request. He'd already mentally prepared himself so that, no matter what Jiang Chen asked for, he'd strive to fulfill it to the best of his abilities.

Who would've thought that Jiang Chen would leave without mentioning any requests at all.

"Wait a moment!" It was Shi Xiaoyao who found it a bit difficult to hold onto his face now. He had thick skin, but it wasn't thick enough to the point of drinking someone else's wine, and not indicating anything in return.

"Jiang Chen, you materialized my wish for me. According to the promise that I left in the Wishing Tower, I must help you obtain a position of at least a fifth rank noble. However, with your abilities, being a fifth rank noble is beneath you. How about this: I'll strive my hardest and promise that I'll get you at least a position of fourth rank, and will try quite hard for third rank. How about that?"

"Vice Head Shi is a man of his word alright."

"Haha, I won't keep you today. I'm going to embrace this jug of Nine Magnificence Dew Wine in my sleep tonight. No one can stop me." Shi Xiaoyao cackled heartily, in an exceedingly great mood.

...

On the Southern Palace side, Qiao Baishi rubbed his cheek, his face bright red, and a complex mix of emotions within his heart. He stood there, a bit at a loss on what to do.

This was because, just moments before, the dignified and graceful Elder Ning had completely disregarded the etiquette of a noblewoman, and had fiercely kissed him whilst hugging him.

“Baishi, I’ve discovered that I may truly love you to death.” Elder Ning chuckled as she carefully checked her face, neck, and even the back of her ears in a bronze mirror.

“This is too amazing! Baishi, do you believe if you sold this pill, that at least ninety percent of the women beneath the heavens will want to sleep with you?”

Qiao Baishi was speechless. What could he say to that?

Elder Ning’s exaggerated performance had already fully portrayed the effects of the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill.

A powerful and influential elder who had lost her composure so utterly in such a short amount of time; it was patently obvious how crazy this pill was.

“Baishi, look at me here. I had some eye bags before, but now, they’re all gone. And here, I had a small freckle here before, and I was fretting endlessly over it! Hehe, it’s gone now as well. And, I felt that my skin was a bit dry before and was lacking in elasticity, but now... don’t you see? Isn’t it so delicate and tender? Heh heh, Baishi, why aren’t you saying anything? Hurry and come over and take a look for me.”

This was a woman. No matter how high her position, or how much power she held, she was still a woman.

The nature of a woman had been utterly revealed, without a doubt, in this moment.

Qiao Baishi had also finally witnessed just how crazy women could get when they pursued beauty.

Elder Ning touched her face on the left and right, appearing a bit worried about the personal gains and losses. “Baishi, do you think that others will still recognize me if I walk out like this? If they don’t recognize me, it’d also be a bit inconvenient.”

Qiao Baishi laughed ruefully, “Elder, you were born a heavenly beauty — this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill is only adding brilliance to your already present splendor. Your original foundation is there, and your uncommon presence is there as well. Unless they’re blind, whoever can’t recognize you has something wrong with their brain.”

With this bit of fawning flattery, Elder Ning began glowing even brighter with health. She was like a blossoming flower — uncontrollable in her magnificence.

“Baishi, look at you. You’ve such a sweet mouth and are so competent. And this pill recipe... I truly am a bit afraid.” Elder Ning suddenly became a bit depressed.

“Afraid?” Qiao Baishi started.

“Sigh. Yes.” Elder Ning walked over and sat down next to Qiao Baishi. “You’re so talented that one day, you’re destined to shine brilliantly with your radiance. I’m afraid that I won’t be able to part from you, and also afraid that someone will steal you away from me.”

Qiao Baishi had thought that she was joking at first, but extremely complicated emotions were in Elder Ning’s eyes. It seemed that she truly was genuinely worried.

"I owe a debt of being understood and well treated by Elder Ning. It is my honor to be of assistance to Elder Ning."

"Baishi, do you truly think this way?" Elder Ning's eyes held a gaze of abundant joy.

"Absolutely, without a doubt." Qiao Baishi said.

"No, no." Elder Ning shook her head again. "I can't be this selfish. I wouldn't be able to bear it if you were my subordinate. Baishi, with your talents, you should at least be an elder."

Qiao Baishi laughed, "I'm a foreigner who's only just arrived in the Skylareland Kingdom. I'll feel quite reassured if I can solidly remain at Elder Ning's side and assist you. It's impractical to have too many thoughts."

Elder Ning didn't speak, only got up lightly and walked in front of the mirror, as she looked at herself in the mirror's reflection and sank into deep contemplation.

One had to say that, although Shi Xiaoyao appeared crude, he was actually quite a particular person. He was quite efficient. as he obtained a fourth ranked noble's position for Jiang Chen the next day, and also gifted him a large manor within the nobles' section.

This was an unexpected joy.

Jiang Chen hadn't thought that a jug of Nine Magnificence Dew Wine would be worth so much. Shi Xiaoyao had resolved his issue of a noble's identity as well as a residency.

This efficiency was seriously high.

Vice Director Yang Zhao was another person who was highly efficient. He'd utilized almost all channels in the past two days, and had finally gathered all of the items on the list within the two days.

"Uncle, you want me to bring these items to Jiang Chen? To offer gifts and apologize?" Lu Wuji's face was resolute as he cried out, "I'm not going!"

"You're not going? If not you, then who?" Yang Zhao said angrily.

"Didn't you already go once uncle? It's always awkward at first, but it gets easier afterwards. You should go again this time." It would feel worse to Lu Wuji for him to go meet Jiang Chen now, than it would be to kill him.

"Lu Wuji, are your brains filled with water? I go? What if Jiang Chen doesn't buy it if I go? Fine, you don't have to go. But if the matter of the three great sites isn't resolved, you'll bear the brunt of the general director's fury. I've always treated you as my own son. You're a fine one alright, disappointing me time after time!"

Lu Wuji was unafraid of anything beneath the heavens or earth because of this uncle. Now that he saw that Yang Zhao was truly angry, he softened at once.

"Uncle, don't be like this. On behalf of my deceased mother..."

"Stop mentioning your mother, I'll throw you out immediately if you keep talking about her! I'll ask you again, are you going or not?"

Lu Wuji realized that his trump card was ineffective, and grit his teeth as he said with a bitter expression, "I'll go. I'll go then!"

Lu Wuji knew that if he didn't go this time, he'd likely lose his uncle's affections forever.

Chapter 160: You're Right, I am Indeed Quite Proud

The capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom, in front of Jiang Chen's new manor.

"What? Who did you say you were?" Qiao Shan put one hand up to his ear with the composure of someone who had not heard properly. "I say, did you not eat your breakfast or something? Can't you speak louder?"

Lu Wuji's face was livid. Such humiliation!

How could he not realize that Jiang Chen's personal guard was purposefully shaming him and riling him up?

But, given the circumstances, as awesome as he, Lu Wuji was, he didn't dare to raise a fuss. He firmly repressed the anger within his heart and raised his voice, "I am Lu Wuji and I am here to offer my apologies to Jiang Chen."

"Lu Wuji?" Qiao Shan started and turned back to the companions by his side. "Who's Lu Wuji? Have you guys heard of him?"

The others all chuckled and shook their heads.

How could Lu Wuji not know that these personal guards were purposefully making fun of him? With his usual lofty and arrogant demeanor, Lu Wuji almost wanted to pull his sword out on these fellows who were insulting him.

However, his remaining bit of reason had yet to be swept away by hatred. He gathered up his courage and said loudly, "Brothers, I've already brought the items that the master of your house wanted. It was my fault previously for not seeing Mt. Tai. I'm here to apologize to your young master."

At this time, a round of hearty laughter rang out from the yard as Jiang Chen and Tian Shao walked out side by side.

"Commander Tian, you've gone to great trouble over the past couple of days. I have already settled in here so you can return to the Dragonteeth Guard to report in. Please give my greetings to the directors."

Tian Shao cupped his hands, "Not at all, not at all. Younger brother Jiang, I will see myself out."

The two chatted and laughed as they arrived at the door, completely disregarding Lu Wuji on the side, as if he was nothing but a cloud of air standing there.

Particularly Tian Shao, his eyes only swept past Lu Wuji's face once when he exited through the door. He didn't even look at Lu Wuji when he left.

Lu Wuji was incredibly incensed. He had always been high above others with his eyes on the top of his head. Within the Dragonteeth Guard, even Tian Shao's supervisor was quite friendly when he saw Lu Wuji, greeting him as General Lu.

This Tian Shao dared to ignore him, Lu Wuji! He'd dared to ignore a vice general who was higher ranked than his own rank of a commander!

"Tian Shao, when the matters of today pass, I will teach you how heavy the price of offending me, Lu Wuji, is!"

Lu Wuji glared viciously at Tian Shao's departing back as he grit his teeth internally.

"Stop looking at him. Before you want to exact your revenge, you should first consider whether or not you can make it through this current trial." Jiang Chen thoroughly understood the human heart. Due to his training of Boulder's Heart and God's Eye, he was quite accurate with regards to his statements.

"Jiang Chen, you're quite proud right now, aren't you?" Lu Wuji couldn't help but ask.

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely. "Yes, you're not a complete fool! You're able to tell even when I'm proud of something. You're right, I'm quite proud. Why shouldn't I be? Someone who wanted to step on me is now begging me to accept his offerings and pleading for my forgiveness. You tell me, wouldn't you be proud if this happened to you?"

If this matter had happened to Lu Wuji instead, he would surely be even more proud and unbridled.

Even Lu Wuji himself couldn't deny this point.

"Jiang Chen, the items are all here. Please look over them." Lu Wuji wasn't an utter fool in the end. He knew that verbally sparring with Jiang Chen now would only be bringing trouble onto himself.

"Put them down. I think you don't have the guts to skim on any of them." Jiang Chen laughed faintly.

"What about the matter of the three great sites?" Lu Wuji was most concerned about this. If the three great sites didn't ease up, he'd be skinned and stripped of his tendons when he went back.

"What do the three great sites have to do with me?" Jiang Chen smiled.

Lu Wuji's face turned ashen, "Jiang Chen, what do you mean by this? You've already accepted the items. Do you want to go back on your word?"

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely and said nothing before speaking to Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan, "Bring the items inside."

Jiang Chen walked into the yard with an even pace after giving his orders, leaving Lu Wuji outside. Lu Wuji wasn't sure if he was to go or to stay.

"Jiang Chen, don't go too far in taking advantage of others!" Lu Wuji grew a bit anxious.

"Going too far in taking advantage of others?" Jiang Chen's coolly composed voice traveled out from within. "Lu Wuji, you think too much. In my eyes, you're not even a human being. What right do you have for me to bully you? Get out of here, don't make a fool of yourself in front of my front door. I'll feel embarrassed even if you won't."

Lu Wuji rather wanted to erupt in a rage, but he also knew that if he lost his temper now, it would give Jiang Chen an excuse to take his revenge. This was Jiang Chen's territory and a good man didn't fight when the odds were against him.

“Jiang Chen, just you wait. You accepted the items but didn’t uphold your part of the agreement. I can’t do anything to you right now, but the same doesn’t hold true for my uncle!” Lu Wuji thought and immediately had an idea. “Right, I’m going to go back right now and tell my uncle all this. I’ll greatly embellish it and enrage uncle so that he’ll make a move to suppress this Jiang Chen.”

Lu Wuji went back to Yang Zhao’s manor in high spirits and great enthusiasm, greatly exaggerating the events of the day and enlarging Jiang Chen’s domineering arrogance by more than ten times.

After he’d blathered away a huge chunk of words, Yang Zhao raised one foot and stomped down on his butt. “Idiot! You’re a boor compared to Jiang Chen!”

“What... what did I do now?” Lu Wuji was unreconciled and had a face full of innocence.

“What? Do you really think that Jiang Chen is as stupid as you to accept the items and not do anything? We’ve just received word from all sides that all cooperation is back on.”

“Ah?” Lu Wuji was stunned. His efforts in wagging his tongue had been a complete waste.

Raising his neck, Lu Wuji had another idea. “Uncle, now that the partnerships are back on, this means that the three great sites are no longer up in arms. Then, are you just accepting the fact that Jiang Chen swindled us out of so much? This isn’t your style.”

“Accepting this?” Yang Zhao laughed coldly in succession. “That Jiang Chen must have the appetite to swallow all my items for me to accept this!”

Lu Wuji was immediately invigorated when he heard this. “Uncle, what brilliant scheme do you have in mind?”

“Wuji, do you know where you went wrong this time? You were wrong in that you charged too far out. Of course, I neglected my supervisory duties in this matter as well. For now on, don’t rush too far out in front. Jiang Chen’s offended the Northern Palace, why should we charge the enemy lines on the Northern Palace’s behalf? Remember, don’t act as weapons for others in the future. Instead, be the one to compel those of the Northern Palace to stick their necks out.”

Lu Wuji slapped his thigh. “That’s right! I truly did miscalculate this time. It was a Northern Palace affair to begin with. I was only a bit more proactive because I wanted to put on a strong performance in front of the first prince.”

“Be smarter in the future!” Yang Zhao analyzed. “The first prince will certainly keep how much you’ve sacrificed this time in mind. You can make use of this opportunity to engender more goodwill from the first prince. Remember, you’re in control of whether you’re a dragon or a snake. When he ascends to the throne in the future and becomes king, it’s up to you if you continue to be cowardly and timid, or rise to the position of general director. I can support you from behind, but am also limited in what I can do.”

Lu Wuji was deep in thought.

...

Within the manor of the fourth prince Ye Rong.

Ye Rong laughed heartily. "Younger brother, I have to say that I've once again underestimated your ability. Come, I salute you with this cup of wine."

"I also salute younger brother Jiang Chen." Tian Shao also raised his cup. He was very grateful to Jiang Chen. That kind of gratitude was very similar to Feng Yan's gratitude to Jiang Chen.

"I'm ashamed. I hope I didn't involve the fourth prince this time." Jiang Chen raised his glass and made an indication, saying to Tian Shao again, "Brother Tian, congratulations on being promoted to vice general."

"Involve me?" Ye Rong smiled. "This is precisely the kind of situation I wanted to see when I invited you to the capital. The more trouble you can stir up, the prouder I feel. This proves that my assessment was quite accurate and true."

Tian Shao also smiled. "Younger brother Jiang Chen, this time's matter isn't necessarily a bad thing for the fourth prince. At least, there has never been anyone who emerged from an exchange with the first prince bearing the upper hand. Although the first prince hadn't made an overt appearance in this matter, but privately, every prince knows full well that the first prince wanted to use this matter as an excuse to oppress the fourth prince. However, he's miscalculated this time."

Tian Shao was a military man. Whether he was a commander or a vice general of today, his words were always straightforward and candid. He wouldn't beat around the bush.

This was also what Ye Rong admired about Tian Shao.

"Come, let's drink." Jiang Chen hadn't thought that this matter would actually be embroiled in the covert struggles and open competition between the princes. He wouldn't set himself on a pedestal when he heard them talk thus.

After the wine had filled their stomachs, Ye Rong said again, "Younger brother, although I don't know why the three great sites would go to this much effort at the same time, but I must remind you of one point. Your position and your status have now changed. The number of people keeping an eye on you will have increased as well. Be careful of what you do. Neither Vice Director Yang of the Dragonteeth Guard nor those of the Northern Palace are kind folk."

"Right, you must be on your guard against a counterattack from them."

Jiang Chen nodded. "Thank you for your reminder. I understand."

Ye Rong laughed frankly and suddenly thought of something. "Right, younger brother, I've come to find you this time to tell you something."

"What is it?"

"The matter is as follows. My teacher, Tutor Ye, Ye Chonglou, will be holding a birthday banquet in half a month. All of us princes will be going to offer our birthday tidings. I only have three spots on my side so I can bring three people with me. I wonder if you, younger brother, have any interest?"

Offer birthday tidings to someone? Jiang Chen honestly didn't have much interest in that. But since Ye Rong had put it this way, he wasn't actually asking for Jiang Chen's opinion, but rather, inviting him to participate. He obviously couldn't turn it down.

Jiang Chen smiled and nodded, "The teacher of the prince must be an elder who is of noble character and high prestige. It must be very exciting then. If I can attend and broaden my knowledge, that'd be a good thing as well."

"Indeed, indeed. You can also increase your network and raise your level of recognition. You've just arrived in the Skylaurel Kingdom and likely don't have a direct impression of Tutor Ye."

When Tian Shao heard Tutor Ye's name, he had a face full of respect and worship as his entire body straightened.

"Younger brother Jiang Chen, Tutor Ye is the spirit king protector of the kingdom for the current dynasty. His level of training is mysterious and unfathomable. It's said that even the elders of the Precious Tree Sect quite admire Tutor Ye's level of martial dao training."

"Spirit king protector?" Jiang Chen started. He knew that only a practitioner at the peak of the spirit realm had the right to be called a spirit king. Those who were labelled spirit king would be those who were placed above the peak of the spirit realm.

"Yes." Tian Shao's tone was very reverent. "Younger brother Jiang Chen, do the four great sites have great power? Yes, but even the heads of the four great sites must call themselves juniors in front of Tutor Ye. How strong would you say that Tutor Ye is?"

Even Jiang Chen felt surprised now. The Skylaurel Kingdom had such a strong kingdom protector? In contrast, that so-called elder grandfather of the Eastern Kingdom who'd never shown his face was basically a joke.

"Tutor Ye is also an elder grandfather of the royal family?" Jiang Chen was quite curious.

Ye Rong sighed, "Royal father has never mentioned his status to us. We only know that his surname is Ye, but we don't know if he's an elder grandfather of the royal family. We also only know that he's celebrating his birthday, but don't know how old he is."

Such a mysterious old man rather gave rise to a trace of yearning in Jiang Chen's heart.

Spirit king protector of the kingdom. Just based on these words, Jiang Chen decided that he would go meet him no matter what. He also wanted to see just what the practitioners at the peak of the spirit realm within this world were like.

Perhaps, he would be able to obtain a trace of inspiration regarding the spirit realm from him?