

The Immortal's Wine Store

#Chapter 71 - The Clock Is Ticking - Read The Immortal's Wine Store Chapter 71 - The Clock Is Ticking

Chapter 71 - The Clock Is Ticking

Master Fengzi and the four Alchemy Emperors continued running at their speed. But then, a strong aura suddenly enveloped their surroundings which also prevented them from taking another step forward.

"Step! Step! Step!" A series of light footsteps echoed in the darkness, scaring the five alchemists tremendously.

They stiffly turned their heads in the direction where the footsteps came from and saw a blonde beauty dressed in a knight's armor walking slowly towards them.

Her face could be hardly seen because of the lack of light and only her pretty eyes were slightly visible.

Seeing her, the alchemists suddenly recalled that they still haven't paid for the wine that Jiu Shen ordered.

Master Fengzi who was as strong as an 8th-rank Divine realm cultivator was now shaking in dread. "Yo-Young Mi-Miss Theia, we're not running away from payment... He-Here! Take this. This has two hundred True Crystals inside..." He said in a stuttering voice as he took out a small pouch from his storage ring.

Theia moved closer to Master Fengzi and she took the small pouch from the latter's hands. She then inspected it with her spiritual power and saw that there were indeed two hundred True Crystals inside. After that, Theia grabbed eighty True Crystals from the pouch and handed it back to the shivering Master Fengzi.

"Old man, I don't take bribes..." She whispered to Master Fengzi before her silhouette vanished from the scene.

"Whoosh!"

Master Fengzi held his chest as he panted heavily. "That young lady-That young lady... She is even scarier than the de-demons of the Crimson Fiend Continent... Should I be happy... Should I be happy that a strong expert is living here in the Silver Wing Empire or should I grieve instead?" He muttered while catching his breathing.

"Branch Head Fengzi, I doubt if she would even involve herself in the internal conflict of the empire." Wang Wei said while wiping the sweat from his forehead.

Master Fengzi who was still taking heavy breaths was stunned. He then glanced at Wang Wei and asked him with knitted eyebrows. "What did you just say?"

Wang Wei sighed and replied in a serious tone. "The empire might face a huge conflict in the coming days. The three eldest sons of the emperor are now becoming restless. They will surely make a move any time now."

Master Fengzi frowned when he heard the news. He was too focused in concocting the 8th-grade Invigorating Meridians Pill that he didn't even know what was happening to the Silver Wing Empire. "If any of the three eldest sons of the emperor will come to our Alchemy Hall to seek for political help, refuse them immediately."

Wang Wei and the other three Alchemy Emperors were surprised and the former couldn't help but ask in a perplexed tone. "Branch Head Fengzi, I thought...we are supporting the crown prince this time... Isn't that what you told us before?"

Master Fengzi shook his head and glanced at the direction of Jiu Shen's store with a complicated look. "That was before we met Wine Master Jiu..."

"Branch Head, what do you mean?" Wang Wei stared at Master Fengzi in confusion.

"What do you think will happen if Wine Master Jiu decides to support one of those princes?" Master Fengzi didn't answer Wang Wei and instead threw another question at him.

Wang Wei's eyes widened as a flash of understanding erased all of his doubts. "That prince would surely... But will Wine Master Jiu really involve himself in this event?"

Master Fengzi took a glance at Wang Wei and smiled. "We will know soon..."

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Inside Jiu Shen's room.

"There are still three days left before your next acupuncture. And by then, the four Earth Origin Dragon Tree will also bear their fruits." Jiu Shen said with his back turned against Lu Sulan.

The latter was delighted when she heard that, but then, she suddenly recalled something. "Master, the fruits... The alchemists might remain silent about it, but some of the customers should have been able to recognize such a treasure."

Jiu Shen grabbed a chair for himself and sat lazily on it before he glanced at his disciple who now had a worried expression lingering on her face. "You don't have to be worried. Instead, you might as well place your worry to whoever comes to make trouble inside the store."

Lu Sulan's mouth gaped at his words and she couldn't help but let out a smile.

"Knock! Knock! Knock!"

"Come in. It's open." Jiu Shen said indifferently.

"Click!" The door emitted a clicking sound as it opened, revealing the face of Theia.

Lu Sulan glanced at her warily. Lu Sulan was a bit afraid of this woman even though Theia was serving as her master's store guard.

"Master..." Theia spoke gently as she handed a small pouch to Jiu Shen. The former's eyes contained deep affection and respect as she glanced at Jiu Shen. It was hard to believe that the tyrant of the Immortal's Wine would behave so meek and gentle.

Jiu Shen took the pouch but before he could even glance at its contents, it magically vanished from his hands.

Of course, it was the system who had taken it...

Jiu Shen then glanced at Theia's eyes with an emotionless look. "Is there anything else, Theia?"

"Ah- Nothing else, master." Theia was flustered when she met Jiu Shen's gaze. She also felt a slight pang in her heart after seeing his cold look.

With a slightly heavy heart, Theia hastily left the room.

Lu Sulan glanced at Theia's desolate figure with pity before she turned to look at her master with a wry smile on her face. 'Only master could evoke Lady Theia's womanly emotions, but he's too cold-hearted to accept her feelings...'

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Xue Family Estate.

"Elder Ming, the final transaction with the Fang Imperial Family of the Blue Fang Empire was successfully accomplished. There are no casualties and the slaves are now ready to be trained by our people." Sword Three bowed at the man in front of him with reverence.

Elder Ming smiled and nodded his head. "Good job, Sword Three. You may leave now to take a rest. Tomorrow, make sure that those new batch of slaves will be properly trained."

Sword Three nodded his head and replied in a confident tone. "I will get it done, Elder Ming."

After Sword Three left, a burst of eerie laughter echoed inside the room.

"Elyk, the clock is ticking. Your reign won't last for long...*Hahaha!*"

Chapter 72 - Not Bad

The next day.

Inside a lavish big manor situated at the center part of Beltran City, a group of men wearing thick battle armors was kneeling respectfully in front of a man in his late twenties.

The man was wearing a luxurious-looking embroidered robes. He had a kind smile on his face as he glanced at the soldiers in front of him.

"Are you sure that what you saw was the Earth Origin Dragon Tree?" The man asked gently.

"Your highness, I can never be wrong about it. It's definitely the Earth Origin Dragon Tree and there are four such spiritual plants inside the wine store." A soldier answered while facing the ground, not daring to face the man.

"Oh? What an interesting store." The man let out a brilliant smile which highlighted his gentle countenance.

"But ah- there is something weird about that store, your highness." The soldier added.

The man glanced at the soldier with the same mellow expression on his face and asked with a curious voice. "Eh? What is it? Tell me."

"A woman is protecting that store and she doesn't seem to be weak. Not just her, even the owner himself is also believed to be a strong expert. We also heard of the news that this owner is actually an Alchemy Saint..." The soldier replied.

The man's mild and warm eyes suddenly flickered because of the soldier's words but it swiftly reverted back to normal.

"An Alchemy Saint opening an inconspicuous store in Beltran City... Prepare my carriage. I want to see this man for myself." He said with an unchanging smile.

"Yes, your highness!"

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"The Frozen Origin should be prepared by now." Jiu Shen muttered to himself as he opened his eyes after his daily meditation.

He then stood up and directly went inside the Time and Space Chamber.

Yesterday, he brewed the Frozen Origin and aged it inside a huge wooden cask. And with the accelerated time inside the chamber, the wine's aging process should be done by now.

Jiu Shen had high expectations for this new wine. Not with its taste, but its profitability.

Although the system is taking all the revenue, Jiu Shen felt that if the store earned a specific amount, he might get an unexpected surprise.

Considering the system's profligate nature, Jiu Shen was sure that whatever it gives him would never be ordinary.

With the addition of the Frozen Origin, his store would surely earn more than usual since it's way cheaper and affordable compared to the Deep Sea Spring Dew.

Jiu Shen slowly opened the wooden cask while taking out the spatial bottle from his storage earring.

After opening the cask, Jiu Shen saw an ocean blue wine liquid that had a faint golden hue.

Before the aging process of the mixture, the wine liquid was still golden in color. But after the aging of the liquid is done, the Frozen Cloud Glacier's natural color will become the dominant one.

Jiu Shen transferred the wine inside his spatial bottle. The amount of wine liquid inside the wooden cask should be enough to fill hundreds of wine bottles but everything was perfectly stored inside the spatial bottle with no hints of it being fully filled.

After that, Jiu Shen stepped out of the Time and Space Chamber. He still had to transfer the wine liquid inside the display bottles so that he can already sell it.

The store was still closed, so it was fairly quiet and tranquil.

Jiu Shen then saw the three ladies whispering to each other at one corner of the store.

"Where's master? I knocked on his door, but no one answered me." Lu Sulan asked the two ladies in front of her.

"Don't worry about him. Master should be preparing the new wine inside the Time and Space Chamber." Hestia smiled as she looked at Lu Sulan.

Theia remained silent, but she eagerly listened to their conversation.

"Time and Space Chamber? What's that?" Lu Sulan knitted her eyebrows as she took a glance at Hestia with a curious look on her face.

Hestia giggled and said. "It is the place where master brews his wines. As for what kind of place it is... That's a secret. *H*

ehe."

"Ehem!" Jiu Shen cleared his throat to gather the attention of the three. When he saw them glance at him, Jiu Shen gestured for the three ladies to come near him.

"Prepare your cups. You guys will be the first ones to taste the Frozen Origin." Jiu Shen said calmly.

Lu Sulan and the other two were exhilarated at Jiu Shen's words. They had already tasted all the wines sold by the store and not even one failed to impress them, so they were expectant about this new wine.

Their master even had to gather for its ingredients, so it shouldn't be ordinary right?

"Hehe. Master, I have already prepared the cups for all of us." Hestia chuckled as she took out four silver cups. She then placed it on a table near them while winking at Jiu Shen playfully.

Jiu Shen's lips curved upwards for an instant at the sight of it. He then shook his head before heading straight to the table.

The three ladies quickly found themselves a seat while looking at Jiu Shen with shining eyes.

Jiu Shen ignored their gazes and poured the four cups with an ocean blue wine liquid from his spatial bottle.

A burst of cold air struck their faces but every one of them took it with a pleased look.

The feeling they got was similar to someone eating an ice cream in hot sunny weather.

"How cold!" Lu Sulan glanced at her silver cup filled with blue liquid. She took the cup in her hands and took a sniff of the wine's aroma.

Jiu Shen and the others did the same. The former was more reserved since he had already smelled the wine inside the Time and Space Chamber.

The Frozen Origin had the distinct smell of grapes but it was accentuated by the cold and glacial aroma of the Frozen Cloud Glacier.

He then placed the cup in his mouth and drank its content with his eyes closed.

A cold sensation wrapped around his tongue and throat as he swallowed the wine. It was then followed by a mild grape-flavored aftertaste that burst forth in his taste buds.

"Not bad." Jiu Shen muttered to himself.

Chapter 73 - The Second Prince

Lu Sulan and the other two ladies released satisfied sounds as they gulped the wine from their silver cups.

"Ah~ this wine... This will be good during the summer." Lu Sulan said while looking at the empty silver cup in her hands.

Hestia and Theia nodded their heads in agreement. They then took a glance at Jiu Shen with heated looks.

At that moment, another line of words appeared on the small blackboard.

Frozen Origin - 55 True Crystals

Jiu Shen ignored the three ladies' gazes and slowly walked towards the entrance of the store. He then opened the door and was met with the sun's brilliant illumination.

It was still the middle of spring, but the light from the sun was beginning to turn warmer.

After that, Jiu Shen glanced at Lu Sulan and the other two with a calm look and said. "Business will begin soon, so make sure that all of you are prepared. Also, the new wine is ready to be served."

Jiu Shen went to the wine storage after he said those words. He still had to transfer the Frozen Origin in the display bottles...

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A fancy-looking carriage was being pulled by two 5th-rank Spirit realm Fire Leopards. The two savage beasts had red armor-like scales that covered their humongous bodies. Transparent crimson flames were also emitted by them as they pulled the carriage forward.

Circling the luxurious carriage was a team of soldiers dressed in gold and silver armors with the insignia of the Silveria Imperial Family engraved on their capes. All the soldiers were riding a 3rd-rank Crusader realm spirit beast, the Brute War Horse.

"That... The person inside should be one of the three eldest princes, right?" The crowd whispered when they saw the majestic line up of soldiers protecting the carriage.

The people were very familiar with the insignia of the Silveria Imperial Family, but they also knew that only the three eldest sons of the emperor had the authority and power to have such a strong team of soldiers escorting them.

A soldier leading the team frowned when he saw the people standing foolishly even in their presence. He glared at the people and shouted in a ferocious voice. "Insolence! How dare you lowly commoners not kneel in the presence of His Highness the Second Prince! Kneel down!"

The citizens immediately prostrated on the ground after hearing the angry soldier's command. They did not even dare lift their heads in fear of being punished.

Cold sweat trickled down their backs as they shivered in dread as they quietly listened to the footsteps of the savage beasts as they continued to walk forward.

"Stop." A gentle voice echoed from inside the carriage surprising everyone in the scene.

The leading soldier heard the command and instantly gestured his men to stop their mounts.

He then went to open the carriage, revealing the handsome and gentle face of the second prince.

The latter stepped out of the carriage with a warm and kind smile on his face. The second prince then stared at the commanding officer leading his escort and patted his back forcefully, making the officer's heart skip a beat.

Then, the second prince turned his gaze to the shivering people who were still prostrating on the ground in fear. And with a voice that was as heartwarming as the morning air, he said. "Everyone, don't be scared. I will apologize on behalf of my men's stubborn attitude."

The people heard the second prince's comforting voice were confused. Why would someone from the imperial family apologize to the commoners?

Nonetheless, all of them remained silent and stayed prostrating on the ground.

"Everyone, please stand up. I just came here to visit a store to satiate my cravings." The second prince smiled at the people before he went back inside his carriage.

The commanding officer heaved a sigh of relief and glared at the prostrating people for one last time before he gestured for his men to proceed moving forward.

After the second prince and his men left the scene, the citizens slowly stood up from the ground.

"The rumors are indeed true! The second prince is truly a kind person. He even apologized to us on behalf of his men."

"Yeah, but among His Majesty's three eldest sons, he has the weakest military strength. What a pity! If only he had more authority, our Silver Wing Empire might be able to prosper for the next centuries to come."

"I agree with you. But the ones with the highest chances of succeeding the throne is the crown prince and the third prince. Their military strength and connections are way ahead compared to the second prince's. *Sigh.*"

* * *

In front of Jiu Shen's store stood the majestic team of soldiers escorting the second prince.

With his head slightly sticking out of his carriage's window, the second prince glanced at the unassuming store in front of them.

"The Immortal's Wine... What a bold and imposing name! The owner must be confident with his wines to name his store like this. *Haha!*" The second prince chuckled to himself as he stepped out of his carriage.

When he came near the store, he stopped for a brief moment with his eyes flickering with surprise.

'Interesting...' He thought to himself as he resumed walking inside the store...

The moment the second prince stepped on the store's entrance, he felt the space vibrating for an instant, making him smile.

He glanced curiously at the store's interior while searching for the reason of his visit, the Earth Origin Dragon Tree...

And as expected, he saw four identical spiritual plants lying undistinguished in different corners of the store.

"It's true..." He muttered with a bit of surprise.

"Please don't block the store's entrance if you don't want me to kick you out." A melodic but cold voice echoed beside the second prince's ears stupefying him greatly.

Slowly, he took a glance at his side and saw a peerlessly beautiful young lady with golden hair. She was wearing a knight's light armor and had a short sword strapped behind her back. Her snow-white arms and legs were exposed making her look both seductive and valiant.

But the second prince's attention was not on her assets but on the overwhelmingly strong aura he was feeling from her.

He then clutched the pendant on his chest while looking at Theia with widening eyes.

The second prince's breathing became erratic, but he swiftly took a deep breath to calm his shaking nerves. While putting up a gentle smile he said. "I apologize, young lady. We were just stunned by the store's stellar capabilities. We'll find ourselves a table, please excuse us."

After that, the second prince smiled at Theia and led his men to a vacant table.

Theia furrowed her eyebrows as she looked at the figure of the second prince. "That jade pendant... Why does he have that?"

Chapter 74 - Liu Mengdi Meets The Second Prince

"Welcome to The Immortal's Wine, dear guests. What would you like to order?" Hestia smiled radiantly as she glanced at the second prince's group.

She then glanced at the jade pendant that he was wearing for a brief moment before she retracted her sight from it.

The second prince felt his gaze which made him feel a bit nervous. "Ah- where's the menu, young lady?"

Hestia giggled and pointed in a certain direction as she said. "You can see the prices of our wines in that small blackboard."

The second prince followed the direction she was pointing at and was surprised, but he did not show it outwardly.

"Can you give me an order of Deep Sea Spring Dew and fifteen Frozen Origin for my men?" The second prince said with a smile.

Hestia nodded her head and replied. "Not a problem, dear guest. And, is there anything else you would like to add?"

The second prince shook his head and said. "No, but ah- can I ask you a question, young lady?"

Hestia raised her eyebrows in surprise, but she still replied. "Sure. What is it?"

"Would I have the honor to speak with the owner of this store?" The second prince asked gently.

Hestia had an apologetic look as she replied. "I don't know about that, dear guest. Our master is usually busy and rarely finds time to talk with someone, but I can notify him about this."

The second prince sighed regretfully while shaking his head. "*Sigh*. In that case, we will just enjoy the wines here."

The leading soldier escorting the second prince frowned. He was about to stand when he felt the second prince's stare lingering on him. He sighed inwardly and remained seated on his chair while sullenly looking at Hestia.

Hestia smiled at the glaring officer before she went to the wine storage to get their orders.

While walking to get their wines, Hestia thought to herself. 'I should notify master about the jade pendant.'

Inside the wine storage, Jiu Shen was still busy distributing the Frozen Origin wine liquid inside the display bottles when he saw Hestia going inside.

"Greetings, master." Hestia greeted Jiu Shen while bowing respectfully.

Jiu Shen glanced took a quick glance at her and waved his right hand as he said. "Don't mind me and just do your work."

"Master, there is someone with that jade pendant. He should be a..."

"I know. I already felt his presence the moment he stepped inside the store. Don't worry about his identity and just get them their orders. Anyone who steps inside the store is our customers no matter what their identities are. Now go and get their wines." Jiu Shen cut her off from her speech.

"Yes, master." Hestia acknowledged Jiu Shen's words while giving him a reverential bow.

After pouring out all of the Frozen Origin wine liquid in the display bottles, Jiu Shen stepped out of the wine storage and went to check the dining hall of the store and took a seat in a random corner while listening to everyone's conversations with his spiritual power.

This was what he does when he is bored.

"Here are your orders. Fifteen Frozen Origin and one Deep Sea Spring Dew. Enjoy." Hestia slowly placed their orders on the table as she spoke.

"Thank you, young lady." The second prince said while giving Hestia a kind smile.

Hestia smiled sweetly at their group and left.

"Isn't that person the second prince? Why is he here?" Liu Mengdi who was enjoying his wine at a different table was surprised when he saw the second prince's group.

"Let's go and pay our respects to him. Although his military strength is weak, he is still an imperial prince and has the blood of the Silveria Imperial Family flowing in his veins. Furthermore, there is something about this man that I could not understand. His group is the weakest among the three eldest sons of the emperor, but my instincts are telling me that this man is dangerous." Liu Mengdi added with a serious look as he stood up from his seat. He was only here with all his trusted subordinates, so he didn't mind speaking what was on his mind.

The men from the Liu Family were surprised at the high evaluation that their young master gave to the second prince. Their young master might be capricious but he was someone gifted with great intelligence and high talent for cultivation. They treated his words seriously no matter how unbelievable it may be...

Liu Mengdi stopped in front of the second prince's table and bowed respectfully. "Liu Mengdi from the Liu Family greets His Highness the Second Prince."

Liu Mengdi's men followed his actions as they spoke in unison. "We greet His Highness the Second Prince."

The second prince had a look of surprise as he glanced at Liu Mengdi and co. They haven't interacted that much before and only saw each other during special occasions, so the second prince was a bit stunned to see him here.

"Oh, I didn't think that I would meet the young patriarch of the Liu Family here. Don't mind me and just continue to enjoy your wines." The second prince spoke cordially.

"Since the second prince has spoken, I will go back to our table. If his highness wishes to speak with me, then just call my name." Liu Mengdi said and was about to go back on their spot when...

"Young Master Liu, wait!"

"What is it, your highness?" Liu Mengdi asked curiously.

"Do you know anything about the Earth Origin Dragon Tree?" The second prince inched closer to Liu Mengdi and asked in a whispering voice.

The latter's eyes widened at the question. He then glanced to his left and right to see if anyone else heard their discussion. Liu Mengdi then turned to look at Theia who was now eyeing them with a profound look.

"Your highness, if you're planning to take away the Earth Origin Dragon Tree- you must abandon that plan right away. This store isn't as simple as seems to be... Troublemakers didn't have a good ending..." Liu Mengdi whispered hastily. He was already feeling the warm perspiration on his back, but he still warned the second prince with good intentions.

Liu Mengdi had already known the presence of the Earth Origin Dragon Tree inside the store, but he did not dare think of foolishly stealing it. He believed that he would no longer see tomorrow's sunshine if he really dared to do so.

The second prince saw the fear in Liu Mengdi's eyes which made him laugh in his heart in contempt, but he still put on a warm smile as he said. "Thank you for your warning, Young Master Liu Mengdi."

Chapter 75 - Ice Begging For Milk

"If there's nothing else, then we'll go back to our spot. Please excuse us, Your Highness." Liu Mengdi bowed at the second prince.

The latter nodded his head and waved his hands with a smile on his face.

'The rumors about this store should be true considering how Liu Mengdi acted. If that's the case, I won't be able to get the Earth Origin Dragon Tree no matter how I try to. But it doesn't matter, I shall not let this disappointment ruin my plans...' The second prince thought to himself while glancing at an Earth Origin Dragon Tree in one corner of the store.

He also saw a tiny fruit hanging on the small tree, but he did not dare look at it for long. 'That fruit should be enough for me to enhance my strength even further, but I won't gamble my life for it.'

Jiu Shen gazed at the second prince with a calm look. Although he was slightly surprised at what he saw, it didn't last for long.

"Something interesting is bound to happen to the Silver Wing Empire with this guy's presence. I should find some time to check it out when that happens." Jiu Shen muttered to himself.

"Meow."

Jiu Shen glanced down below and saw a chubby white cat with fat cheeks looking at him with a pleading look. "Human, I want milk. *Meow.*"

Jiu Shen ignored the telepathic message sent by Ice and closed his eyes.

"Meow, I know you can hear me! Give me milk or I'll scratch the tables and chairs later!" Ice glared at Jiu Shen who now had his eyes shut tightly.

Jiu Shen smirked in his heart when he heard the childish voice of Ice ringing in his head. Ice actually sounded like a little girl at the age of six!

"You finally decided to talk now huh, little tiger." Jiu Shen sent back a message to Ice with his eyes still closed.

"How did you know?! Ah- I mean... What little tiger!? I'm a cat! A cute and adorable cat!" Ice's cute loli voice echoed loudly in Jiu Shen's head.

Jiu Shen remained silent, making the already angry Ice even more incensed. She then hopped onto Jiu Shen's lap, but in the end, she did not dare scratch him.

"Foolish human! Stupid human! Stinky human! *Meow.*" Ice's childish voice reverberated loudly inside Jiu Shen's head.

"I'll give you two bowls of milk if you can shut up." Ice expression softened after hearing Jiu Shen's indifferent voice.

Her big blue eyes widened and a line of saliva can also be seen streaming out of her tiny mouth. "Two bowls of delicious and yummy milk?! *Hurhur. Meow.*"

Jiu Shen opened his eyes briefly and shook his head at the scene. "It's hard to believe that you're a 10th-rank God realm Glacial Sovereign Tiger..."

Ice glittering blue eyes widened in shock when she heard what Jiu Shen said. No one else knew her identity in the whole of the Profound Dragon Continent. She hasn't even told anyone yet, so how did Jiu Shen know who she was?

"You... You... How did you know?" With a dumbfounded expression that shouldn't be present on cats, Ice raised one of her dainty paws and pointed it at Jiu Shen while standing on her hind legs.

Jiu Shen glanced at Ice and smiled while patting Ice's little cat head. "You better behave or else I might throw you back to the Divine Beast Continent."

Ice was still enjoying Jiu Shen's touch when her expression turned into extreme horror. "That... That... You also know that I came there?! Stinky human! I hate you! *Meow.*"

Jiu Shen smiled and chuckled silently while looking playfully at the chubby white cat who was now lying pitifully in his arms.

Lu Sulan, Hestia, and Theia were now glancing at their master with stunned faces. They actually saw Jiu Shen laugh for the very first time! The time might be short, but they will never forget that dashing smile lingering on his face as he rubbed the tiny head of Ice.

"That fat cat..." Lu Sulan and Hestia heard Theia's icy muttering voice ringing beside their ears. They both covered their mouths in hopes of preventing themselves from laughing.

"What are the two of you laughing about? Go back to your spots and attend to our customers!" Theia almost snapped after hearing the two ladies giggling at the sidelines.

Hestia stuck her tongue out and ran away while Lu Sulan slowly walked away without turning her head around.

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"Your Majesty, our men sent us a report that Second Prince Arslan is now inside the wine store." An imperial guard said while kneeling on the ground in one knee.

Emperor Elyk frowned when he heard the report. He then glanced at the imperial guard and said. "Just let him be. It matters not as long as he doesn't provoke the people from that store."

"But, Your Majesty... The fourth prince and the fifth princess are also headed there. If their group meets inside the store, they might cause trouble. It will be fine if it's just the fourth prince but the fifth princess is together with him." The imperial guard said with a contorted look.

Emperor Elyk's eyes widened and he couldn't help but slam the armrest of his throne. "What?! How come no one stopped that little demoness from going out of the imperial palace?!"

"Your Majesty, our men did, but her highness threatened us that if we don't let her go out, she will force us to run around naked in Beltran City. We didn't dare hold her for long or she might have really thrown down a tantrum. The last time it happened... *Sigh*." The imperial guard had a look of distress as he spoke.

Emperor Elyk let out a heavy sigh and rubbed his temples. "Is Defender Duanmu with them?" The emperor asked with a worried tone.

"Yes, Your Majesty. Defender Duanmu is following behind them secretly." The imperial guard replied.

Emperor Elyk sighed in relief and said. "Then let's just hope that the old man can handle them."

Chapter 76 - Princess Sylvia Scamming The Second Prince

"Fourth Brother, it's been a while since I last visited Wine Master Jiu's store. I'd like to order the Deep-fried Shrimp Tempura and boast about its taste to our imperial father." The fifth princess smugly said.

The fourth prince's lips twitched at her words and was a bit jealous.

His little sister was able to talk casually with their imperial father. If it was him, the emperor would surely cane him a hundred times.

"I'll just order five Ables Blanc for now and also a serving of Deep-fried Shrimp Tempura." The fourth prince licked his lips as he spoke.

"Eh? Isn't that our second brother's carriage? Is he here as well?" The fifth princess was surprised to see the carriage of the second prince outside Jiu Shen's store.

The fourth prince knitted his eyebrows and said. "That seems to be the case..."

"Hmph! Let's go. The second brother still owes me a thousand True Crystals." Princess Sylvia said with glittering eyes.

Prince Dante was surprised at her words and he could not help but ask. "Huh? How did second brother owe you that much True Crystals?"

Princess Sylvia glared at her fourth brother and said with an evil grin. "Because I'm the fifth princess and imperial father dotes on me. *Hehe.*"

Prince Dante paused from his steps and was stunned at his fifth sister's words. 'This girl is becoming smarter and smarter. My early condolences to you, second brother...'

Princess Sylvia pulled her brother after seeing him standing foolishly.

"Hey, don't pull me! Fifth sister!"

After the two left the scene, an old man dressed like a commoner stood in where they previously were. The old man glanced at the luxurious carriage of the second prince then onto the receding figures of the two youngsters he was secretly protecting. "Oh crap! I hope nothing bad happens..." He muttered as he swiftly followed behind the two youngsters without making them notice him.

Princess Sylvia's smile widened after she saw the second prince sitting with his men. She then slowly walked towards them while ignoring her fourth brother's warnings.

"Sister, don't cause trouble here. If you create a huge commotion, Young Miss Theia might throw us out of the store." Prince Dante whispered to her ears while pulling her half-heartedly.

He had been conned many times by his fifth sister and he wanted to see someone else succumb as much as he did before. Furthermore, Prince Dante didn't like his second brother that much even though the latter was putting up a gentle and kind facade since they were young.

Prince Dante had a feeling that their second brother was merely faking it, but he wasn't so sure either.

"Oh, what are my cute little sister and my talented young brother doing here? Are you guys also here to enjoy wine? If that's the case, everything's on me." Prince Arslan said with an affectionate smile.

Princess Sylvia's smiled turned even more vibrant when she heard those words. "Second Brother, don't forget that you still owe me a thousand True Crystals." The fifth princess intentionally increased the volume of her voice so that everyone inside the store will be able to hear her clearly.

Prince Arslan almost choked on his wine when he heard the playful voice of the fifth princess. He then saw the little demoness winking at him skittishly which made his lips twitch in annoyance.

"Ah- Of course! How could I forget that? Don't worry, little sister. Your second brother will give it back to you, but for now, let's enjoy the wines in this store." The second prince forced out a smile as he said that.

Princess Sylvia frowned and said loudly. "I want it now! I want it now!"

Prince Dante found himself a seat and looked at the scene with great interest.

Prince Arslan's pupils widened at the sudden outburst of the fifth princess. He didn't expect that she would make things difficult for him in front of many people.

If he did not agree to her demands, he was sure that the little girl in front of him would surely throw a tantrum.

He knew how hard it was to pacify the fifth princess, so he yielded and said with a slightly shaking voice. "Sure. Here's your one thousand True Crystals my dear fifth sister." Prince Arslan took out a small pouch from his robes and handed it to Princess Sylvia with shivering arms.

It was unknown if he was shaking due to anger or embarrassment. Nonetheless, the fifth princess accepted the pouch with a wide smile on her face. "I know that second brother is the best! *Hehe*." She said frivolously.

"Everyone, you heard what my second brother said, right? He said that everything's on him, so let's all enjoy our wine since he will be paying for our orders! *Hehe*." Princess Sylvia grinned after saying those words.

The people inside the store cheered when they heard her words.

"Long live the second prince!"

"Thank you, your highness!"

As for the second prince, his gentle face almost distorted and he could hardly control his raging emotions, but he still put on a kind-hearted smile as if he really meant it.

Princess Sylvia felt a chill behind her back when her eyes met with Prince Arslan's warm gaze. It felt as if she was looking at a viper who was silently waiting for its prey in the shadows.

The second prince stood up and let out a smile that was as gentle as the morning air and said in an amiable voice. "Drink up, everyone! Everything's on me this time. *Haha*."

"*Haha! Cheers!* We offer our respects to you, Your Highness!"

"All hail the second prince!"

When everyone else was cheering for the second prince, Jiu Shen was still lazily sitting on his chair while rubbing Ice's fur. He was the only one who looked calm inside the store when everyone else was shouting praises.

The fat cat who still had an indignant look before was now closing its eyes in delight while enjoying the gentle touch of Jiu Shen. "More... More... *Meow*."

The man and the cat duo seemed oblivious to what was happening inside the store as their eyes remained closed.

In fact, they both knew what was happening, but they were just too lazy to bother...

Chapter 77 - Princess Sylvia's Feelings

The second prince sat down with a calm look, but he was inwardly cursing the fifth princess. He was also looking at her with a gentle gaze but hidden behind that facade was thick killing intent!

Oblivious to her second brother's towering rage, Princess Sylvia sat beside Prince Dante and showed off the small pouch that contained the one thousand True Crystals that Prince Arslan gave her.

"Look, the second brother gave me a thousand True Crystals. *Hehe*." Princess Sylvia said to the fourth prince with a smug look on her face.

Prince Dante smiled and patted her head gently. "Good job, fifth sister!" He said while giving her a thumbs up.

Prince Arslan who was still looking at the fifth princess became more incensed at what he saw. 'Once everything is settled, I'll make sure that both of you will die by my hands! Did you guys really think that I fear that old bastard's rage?! Laughable!' Prince Arslan thought maliciously.

Lu Sulan walked towards the fourth prince' and fifth princess' table and smiled at them. "Hello, dear guests. Do you like to order something?" Lu Sulan asked while looking at the two in amusement.

Princess Sylvia's eyes widened in surprise as she looked at Lu Sulan. And with a perplexed tone, she asked the latter. "Young Miss, are you a new waitress here?"

'Young Miss?' Lu Sulan muttered in her heart with delight and her impression of Princess Sylvia improved significantly.

"That's right, your highness. I'm indeed a new waitress here." Lu Sulan said softly.

Princess Sylvia's expression turned into excitement when she heard that. "Oh, really? Young Miss, how did you become a waitress in Wine Master Jiu's store? Could you please tell me how you did it?" The little princess said while looking at Lu Sulan with shining eyes.

Lu Sulan's lips twitched at the fifth princess' words. 'To think that my master's charm could even sway a young girl's heart...'

When Lu Sulan saw the eager look in Princess Sylvia's eyes, she could not help but sigh. Lu Sulan then inched closer to the little princess and whispered to her ears. "Your Highness, to be honest with you, I'm Wine Master Jiu Shen's disciple."

The fifth princess' eyes bulged at Lu Sulan's words. "Disciple? He's taking in disciples?" The former muttered to herself while looking at Lu Sulan with a flabbergasted look.

"Yes, I don't know what master saw in me. But I know that my fate has changed the moment I accepted him as my master." Lu Sulan smiled while looking at Jiu Shen who was sitting lazily on his chair.

Princess Sylvia followed her gaze and saw the man that was always present in her dreams.

Her eyes turned vibrant and everything else blurred except for that very man she was looking at. And as if Jiu Shen felt her gaze, he opened his eyes and turned to look at Princess Sylvia.

When their gazes met, Princess Sylvia felt her heart fluttering in glee and happiness. At that moment, she finally realized that she had fallen for this mysterious man.

"Is this what they call love?" She muttered in the most gentle voice she had ever spoken in all her life.

The fourth prince who was listening at the sidelines almost fell on his chair when he heard her soft voice. 'Oh no! She has completely succumbed to Wine Master Jiu's charms!' Prince Dante thought to himself while feeling a bit conflicted.

He was happy for his sister but also worried at the same time.

He was glad that her sister found the man she likes, but he was worried that his sister's feelings might not be reciprocated.

After visiting Jiu Shen's store for many days, Prince Dante had roughly understood the former's personality.

Jiu Shen was a mysterious man who was even said to be an Alchemy Saint. His unfathomable strength and uncaring attitude were evident to all the patrons of his wine

store. So the possibility of him reciprocating Princess Sylvia's feelings was almost impossible.

Prince Dante sighed regretfully at his own thoughts. He then turned to look at his little sister who still had an infatuated smile on her pretty face. Prince Dante's expression had a tinge of pity when he saw her like that.

Lu Sulan held the same sentiments when she saw the little princess' look. She had interacted with her master for a couple of times already and she even held an inexplicable emotion towards him, but she knew that her master had never thought of entangling himself with any emotional ties at the moment.

Lu Sulan shook her head and turned her gaze to the fourth prince.

The latter understood Lu Sulan's gaze, so he spoke silently. "I apologize for delaying your tasks, young miss. Can we try the new wine?"

Lu Sulan nodded her head with a smile but still gave him a warning. "Yes, you can. But each of you can only drink half of it, okay? So I can only give you guys one bottle of Frozen Origin."

The fourth prince had a regretful look, but he was still curious about the new wine, so he agreed. "No problem, young miss." He said.

Lu Sulan nodded her head at Prince Dante and turned to look at Princess Sylvia before she went to the wine storage.

"Brother, that beautiful lady told me that she's a disciple of Wine Master Jiu." Princess Sylvia said without looking at Prince Dante.

The latter was dumbfounded at his sister's words. He then held Princess Sylvia's shoulders and shook her gently. "Fifth sister, what did you say?"

Princess Sylvia glanced at the fourth prince in annoyance and replied with a vexed tone. "Listen carefully, my idiot brother. I said Wine Master Jiu took her in as his disciple. That means there is a possibility of him taking in more."

Prince Dante released Princess Sylvia's shoulders and sighed. He then looked at Jiu Shen who was rubbing the fur of a fat white cat and muttered to himself. "Is that really the case? I doubt that..."

Chapter 78 - The One-Armed Barbarian

"Sister, we've really offended our second brother right now. With the current state of our Silver Wing Empire, there is a chance that he might get rid of us to prevent future troubles for himself. Although we're not among those selected to fight for the throne, we are still of imperial bloodline after all. And our second brother... He is not as kind as he seemed to be." Prince Dante frowned as he spoke with a serious look.

Princess Sylvia's cheeky expression turned grave when she heard her fourth brother's words. She then glanced at their second brother who was now drinking with his soldiers with a brilliant smile on his handsome face.

She could not pinpoint how her fourth brother came to believe that Prince Arslan is capable of killing them, but some part of her believed Prince Dante's words might be possible.

"I don't think he has the guts to kill us out in the open. And Even if we are in a deserted street, he will still hesitate in taking our lives." Princess Sylvia said while cupping her chin with her palms.

Prince Dante nodded his head in agreement, but he still felt that Prince Arslan would not let them off the hook easily. "With Defender Duanmu protecting us secretly, he shouldn't be that idiotic to kill us for some squabbles, but we still have to be careful about his revenge." Prince Dante said while eyeing their second brother who was laughing joyfully with his men.

Other people might think of the second prince as a kind and caring individual, but Prince Dante thought otherwise. He didn't know why he was so certain about that, but he chose to believe in his instincts.

"Dear guests, here's your Frozen Origin. Please enjoy it." Lu Sulan smiled as she put the bottle of Frozen Origin and two silver cups on the table of the two imperial siblings.

Prince Dante and Princess Sylvia glanced at the bottle of wine that was releasing a dense amount of cold air. They were so surprised that they forgot to thank Lu Sulan.

"Ehem." Lu Sulan let out a cough to gather the attention of the still stunned siblings.

Prince Dante glanced at Lu Sulan apologetically and said with a smile. "I'm sorry about that, Young Miss. We haven't seen wine as fascinating as this yet. I'm now curious about why is it so cold. Do you mind telling us the reason for this?"

Lu Sulan smiled and shook her head. "Unfortunately, the master did not divulge the ingredients and the process of making this wine, so I also don't know anything about this. But if you're that curious, you might want to ask him yourselves. Who knows... Maybe master will tell you guys about it."

Princess Sylvia's eyes twinkled when she heard that, but as she was about to speak, Prince Dante immediately spoke eloquently. "In that case, we'll ask Wine Master Jiu Shen at a later date. Thank you for your suggestion, Young Miss. Also, may I dare ask for your esteemed name?"

Lu Sulan's eyebrows raised in surprise. She didn't think that this naive-looking young prince was actually so quick-witted to speak before his sister did.

"My name is Lu Sulan." She answered while looking at them kindly.

"Lu... Lu Sulan?" Prince Dante's eyes bulged when he learned her identity. He was very familiar with the name 'Lu Sulan' since their father the emperor spoke about her some time ago.

The emperor said that aside from the Alchemy Hall's branch head and himself, there was still someone in the Silver Wing Empire who had the strength of an 8th-rank Divine realm. She was the sect mistress of a hermit sect, the Ice Cloud Sword Sect. Her name... is Lu Sulan!

Lu Sulan ignored Prince Dante's surprise and told them in a serious voice. "Dear guests, please remember that you have to divide the wine evenly in half. Because if you drink more than that amount, your bodies might experience something terrible."

Looking at Lu Sulan's grave expression, Princess Sylvia gulped in dread. "Don't worry, Young Miss Lu Sulan. We won't drink more than the amount you told us." The latter said while forcing out a smile.

"Good." Lu Sulan replied before she left the two of them.

At a random corner in the store, Jiu Shen who was holding Ice in his arms glanced in a certain direction with a curious look on his face. "Oh? Are you also going here for the fruit of the Earth Origin Dragon Tree? Interesting..."

Ice who was lying in Jiu Shen's embrace looked in the same direction and scoffed in disdain. "*Meow*. I can break their bones for you if you give me one more bowl of milk."

Jiu Shen rubbed her head gently and replied in a calm voice. "No need. Theia will be able to handle them herself."

"Stingy! *Meow*." Ice swatted Jiu Shen's hand in annoyance.

Jiu Shen ignored the rebellious fat cat and continued rubbing her fur while Ice rolled and kicked Jiu Shen's hand with her paws.

* * *

At the entrance of Beltran City, a group of people riding on high-level savage beasts came. They were wearing a set of light armors but it could hardly cover their bulging muscles.

Leading them was a one-armed man mounting on a 7th-rank Emperor realm Crimson Lightning Tiger.

The tiger was approximately six meters tall and was more than ten meters in length. It was crimson red in color with black stripes all over its humongous body. Its two sword-like fangs can be seen extending out of its mouth!

The man sitting on its back had a dark skin and a rather buff physique. He had a long wavy red hair and there was also a cape made from savage beasts' fur tied to his armor.

Although he only had his right arm remaining, it did not stop the people who were with him to look at the man in reverence.

The one-armed man looked at the bustling Beltran City with an awed look and said. "The capital city of the Silver Wing Empire is truly prosperous. The main district of our Mythos Wildlands could not even be compared to it."

After he spoke those words, he led his men to go inside Beltran City under the scared gazes of the city guards who did not even dare to stop them from going in.

Who could blame them? Those barbarians emitted a strong and malefic aura that made these inexperienced soldiers shiver in trepidation.

Chapter 79 - Danger

"*Hic*. Dis wine is so gewd~ *Hic*." The fifth princess muttered with a drunk look. Her face was beet-red and she could hardly open her dazed eyes.

Beside her was the fourth prince who had a much better complexion. Although he was in a much better condition compared to his sister, he still had an intoxicated look after drinking the Frozen Origin. "*Hehe*. My head feels heavy. I think I want to sleep here." He said while resting his head on the table.

Prince Arslan's eyes glinted when he saw that the two were slowly losing their consciousness. He then whispered something to one of his soldiers. The soldier's eyes turned grim when he heard the second prince's words and he immediately went out of the store with an invisible dark aura revolving around him.

Prince Arslan smirked for one last time before he resumed talking with the rest of his men with his usual amiable expression.

The customers inside laughed when they saw that the two were already drunk after only drinking a bottle of wine. They didn't know what wine they ordered, but the customers had an idea of which one it was after looking at the state of the fourth prince and the fifth princess.

"With their strength, they can't finish an entire bottle of Deep Sea Spring Dew. In that case, they must have ordered the new wine! It's the second most expensive wine sold at the moment, so it should be strong considering how it knocked down Prince Dante and Princess Sylvia who have considerable levels of cultivation." Liu Xiufeng muttered in amusement as he glanced at the fourth prince and the fifth princess who now had their heads planted on their table.

"Let's try it out ourselves next time."

"Sure!"

The mercenaries talked and laughed as they continued drinking their wines.

Sitting in front of Jiu Shen was an old man wearing a straw hat and thick grey robes. He sighed when he saw Prince Dante and Princess Sylvia who were slowly drifting into their dreamlands.

"You should take them back to the imperial palace before it's too late." Jiu Shen glanced at the man in front of him as he spoke. He knew that the man was Defender Duanmu in disguise.

"Wine Master Jiu's eyes are truly piercing, but...I don't understand what you mean." Defender Duanmu raised his straw hat to take a look at Jiu Shen's expression only to see the latter's usual indifference.

"You'll know soon. Now, take them with you so that their seats will be vacated. There are still more customers waiting outside." Jiu Shen added calmly.

Defender Duanmu smiled and shook his head. The former was already used to Jiu Shen's uncaring nature that he was no longer annoyed with it. He then bowed at Jiu Shen and went straight to the fourth prince and the fifth princess.

Prince Arslan eyed him with a cold look, but he hurriedly retracted his gaze when he felt that Defender Duanmu was about to glance in his direction.

Defender Duanmu looked at the second prince for a brief moment before he ordered his men who were stationed outside the wine store to get the fourth prince and the fifth princess.

Ice glanced at their retreating figure with a disinterested look and wriggled her fat ass to get a much better position as she spoke. "They will surely die if you leave them be. The soldier that went out earlier was an 8th-rank Divine realm demon while the old man is only at the peak of the 7th-rank Emperor realm. *Meow.*"

Jiu Shen ignored Ice, but he was thinking to himself. 'If I leave them alone, I'll lose a few patrons. This isn't good for my business.'

"Hestia, come here." Jiu Shen called out telepathically.

Hestia was surprised at the sudden call of Jiu Shen, but she still walked towards him.

"Master, what can I do to help you?" Hestia bowed her head as she asked in a respectful tone.

Jiu Shen's indifferent eyes hovered on Hestia's face making the latter a bit self-conscious.

"Hestia, follow the old man and protect them from danger. Make sure that they return to the imperial palace safely." Jiu Shen said.

Hestia knitted her eyebrows and was curious about the reason for her master's order. Her cultivation level is already at the mid stage of the 8th-rank Divine realm. Since her master told her to protect someone, then there should be an enemy who's at least on the same level as her.

"I understand, master. Leave this to me. I'll make sure that they'll arrive back to the imperial palace safe and sound." Hestia said confidently.

Jiu Shen nodded his head and warned her. "Be careful. You're not facing a human."

Hestia's expression turned grim as she nodded her head.

"You may go." Jiu Shen closed his eyes as he spoke those words.

Hestia bowed as she swiftly left the store.

"Will she be fine? She's not just facing a normal demon. That guy should be a demon general considering how thick his demonic aura is. *Meow.*" Ice said while looking at Jiu Shen's face with her round eyes.

Jiu Shen's lips curved upwards and said. "Hestia isn't just a normal human either..."

"Stop acting mysterious, you stinky human! *Meow.*" Ice waved her paws but it was easily blocked by Jiu Shen.

* * *

"Sigh! These two kids will surely get another round of scolding from his majesty. But at least nothing much happened inside the store." Defender Duanmu muttered to himself as he urged his horse to walk forward.

Beside him was an imperial carriage where Prince Dante and Princess Sylvia were resting. A group of imperial guards was also protecting the carriage, their expressions rigid and careful.

These soldiers can be considered as elites even among the imperial guards and there were more than ten of them encircling the carriage. Each of them had the strength of a 5th-rank Spirit realm expert!

Jiu Shen's store was located in a remote alley and there were hardly any people walking by. It was only around Jiu Shen's store where there are lots of people loitering.

Defender Duanmu frowned as he looked at the quiet surroundings. He had an ominous feeling when he sensed a cold breeze. "This sensation... An expert? Everyone, prepare for combat! We have company!" Defender Duanmu shouted as he glared in a certain direction.

"Clap! Clap! Clap! Impressive! Your title as one of the Silver Wing Empire's defender is not just for show indeed." A man dressed in long black robes walked forward as he spoke in a condescending tone after clapping his hands sarcastically.

Behind the man was ten other people dressed in similar attire.

Defender Duanmu and the imperial guards hurriedly surrounded the imperial carriage while glaring warily at the newcomers.

"Who are you people? Since you already know our identities, then please take your leave!" Defender Duanmu said as he got off his mount.

Chapter 80 - Defender Duanmu's Resolve

"Leave? Do you think that you have the power to command us, you old thing?!" The man dressed in long black robes laughed in disdain as he glared at Defender Duanmu with his exposed eyes.

Defender Duanmu frowned as he thought to himself. 'Just who are these people? They're not even afraid even after knowing our identities. I can't even tell the strength of that guy leading them, but those people with him are at least at the 5th-rank Spirit realm

with some at the 6th-rank King realm. It will be bad if we have a direct confrontation with them. How troublesome!

Defender Duanmu glanced at the imperial guards behind him and ordered in an irrefutable tone. "Go bring the fifth princess and the fourth prince back to the imperial palace! I'll hold them off here!"

The imperial guards were surprised at the command but after seeing the determined look of Defender Duanmu, they nodded their heads and saluted with grim expressions.

"You can rest assured, Defender Duanmu! Even if we have to sacrifice our lives, we'll do it as long as the fifth princess and the fourth prince can return to the imperial palace unharmed!" The leader of the imperial guards said with a resolute look.

Defender Duanmu nodded his head gravely at his people after hearing those words. He then turned to look at the enemies while releasing the true essence in his body without constraints.

The imperial guards grabbed the fourth prince and the fifth princess from the carriage and left hastily without looking back.

"Ho? Some of you, go after them! Don't let them escape alive!" The man in long black robes commanded his men.

"I won't allow you people to harm them!" Defender Duanmu shouted as he released a violent punch at the opposing group.

He had to buy as much time as possible for the fifth princess and the fourth prince to arrive safely in the imperial palace.

"You don't have the capabilities to stop them, old thing!" The man in black robes said while blocking Defender Duanmu's attack with a sword.

"Booom!"

A violent eruption resounded after Defender Duanmu's punch hit the man's sword. Dust and fierce gales covered the epicenter of the attack.

When the dust particles subsided, the man in black robes can be seen completely unharmed even after taking the full brunt of Defender Duanmu's attack.

"So the defender of the Silver Wing Empire is this weak? How pitiful!" The man said in a mocking voice.

Defender Duanmu was a peak 7th-rank Emperor realm expert, but his attack didn't even leave any visible injuries on his opponent!

The difference in their strengths was clear to see.

"Enough with the nonsense and kill me if you can!" Defender Duanmu gazed at his opponent grimly.

The man in black robes smiled. "If that's the case, then I shall no longer waste my time here. Receive my strike!"

Following those words, the man in black robes brandished his sword, producing fierce gales that threatened to slice anything in its way.

Facing such an attack, Defender Duanmu had a somber look. He then grabbed a spear from his storage pouch and shouted.

"Sky Shattering Spear Strike!"

Defender Duanmu pointed his spear at the opponent's throat and completely ignored the attack aimed his way.

The fierce gales left dozens of cuts on the old man's arms but he gritted his teeth and continued pushing his spear forward with an indomitable will.

"What a crazy old bastard!" The man in black robes cursed as he parried Defender Duanmu's attack with his sword. He then kicked the latter's abdomen, sending the old man flying towards the ground.

"Baangg!" A huge crater was formed following the fall of the old defender.

Defender Duanmu spat a mouthful of blood as he tried to stand up. 'What a strong kick! That person is at least at the 8th-rank Divine realm! How can such a strong expert be here without us knowing? And who can command such an individual?' He thought as he used his spear to hold himself up.

"You're quite a resilient old thing to survive that kick, but for how long can you stand up? *Hahaha!*" The man in black robes laughed.

"Just who are... you? What's... your purpose in coming... to our Silver Wing Empire?" Defender Duanmu asked after wiping the trail of blood coming out of his mouth.

The man in black robes smirked and replied with contempt. "A dead man has no right to know anything! Just stand still and accept your death!"

After that, the man lifted his sword with two hands and slashed towards Defender Duanmu's direction.

The latter immediately rolled sideways to evade the attack.

"Bang!"

Countless rock debris flew in the air after the slash hit the solid ground.

Defender Duamu held his spear tightly and prepared himself for the next attack of his opponent. 'Is this where I die? What will happen to our Silver Wing Empire after my death? No... No!! I don't want to die just yet! I still want to see our empire overcome all these troubles and come out as a much stronger force to be reckoned with!'

Defender Duanmu grabbed a pill from his storage pouch and gulped it without hesitation. 'This is an 8th-rank Berserk Pill from the Alchemy Hall. It is capable of forcefully enhancing my strength to the 8th-rank Divine realm for a short period of time. As for the consequences of taking it... It doesn't matter! My death is worth it as long as the fourth prince and the fifth princess can escape safely!'

"Ahhhh!!" Defender Duanmu roared savagely. His strength reached the next realm after consuming the pill.

"Shit! To think that this old man had such a trump card! Now, this is a bit troublesome!" The man in black robes muttered in anger.

Defender Duanmu's eyes reddened as he clutched his head with one hand. 'This strength is still too much for my body. I should not waste too much time and end this before the effects of the pill subside.'

He then grabbed his spear and glared hatefully at the man in black robes. With his spear pointed at the man, Defender Duanmu said fiercely. "Whoever you are, I won't allow your plans to succeed! Even if it means this old man's death!"