

## Canon 121

### Chapter 121: Suffer in Silence

Zhou Shu was not such a mean person. But this time, he was deliberately provoking Shen Yue.

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Since he saw Shen Yue at the Forging Division's workshops the last time, Zhou Shu had always felt that Shen Yue was extremely hostile toward him.

This hostility didn't seem to be just because they were in different camps.

Even if they were born in opposing countries, one shouldn't be hostile toward every single person from the enemy country, right?

To say Shen Yue was such a patriotic youth, he didn't seem to have the same hostility toward others.

He could have been hostile toward him because he had lost to him in the competition. But Shen Yue was already hostile before they had even started competing.

Zhou Shu believed that he couldn't be wrong. He could feel Shen Yue's desire to get rid of him.

He didn't know where his hostility came from, but he wouldn't leave a hostile person alone.

Zhou Shu had a principle—strike first to gain the upper hand. If he attacked later, he would suffer!

The other party already had killing intent toward him. There was no reason for him to treat him nicely.

He wasn't that kind-hearted.

Shen Yue's face alternated between green and purple. His anger almost destroyed his rationality. But a moment later, he took a deep breath and calmed down.

"Like I said, I will not go back on my words for a mere ten thousand taels of gold," Shen Yue said calmly.

"It's because I didn't bring much money with me when I came to Great Xia, so I need some time to gather it.

"It won't be more than two days at the latest before I get someone to send the money to you. You don't have to judge others by your petty standards."

Zhou Shu's eyes narrowed warily.

He wouldn't be so wary if Shen Yue had exploded and attacked him.

But he had spoken so ruthlessly, yet he was able to calm down so quickly. Such shrewdness was a little scary.

"How can I trust you?" Zhou Shu said. "Either give me the money now or write me an IOU now! I don't trust you!"

Shen Yue's chest heaved violently. After a few seconds, he said coldly, "Alright, I'll write you an IOU!"

“Wait!” A voice suddenly came from the post house.

Zhou Shu’s pupils shrank slightly. He could tell that this voice belonged to Xiao Shunzhi, Great Wei’s imperial preceptor!

*Does this old fellow want to make a move?*

*If he wants to attack, Yin Wuyou probably won’t be able to handle it. Should I step up?*

Just as Zhou Shu was hesitating, a beam of light shot out from the post house.

He subconsciously wanted to make a move. But before he could do anything, Yin Wuyou blocked in front of him in a flash.

Yin Wuyou’s aura suddenly erupted, and her clothes fluttered in the wind. Her entire body lit up with a faint white light, as if a fairy had descended to the mortal realm. A three-foot-long sword had appeared in her hand at some point, and she was holding it horizontally in front of her as sword qi soared into the sky.

Zhou Shu’s heart stirred slightly. Yin Wuyou’s actions made him feel warm inside.

He had fought Great Wei’s Imperial Preceptor Xiao Shunzhi and Yin Wuyou before. He knew very well that Yin Wuyou’s cultivation was worlds apart from Xiao Shunzhi’s.

If Xiao Shunzhi wanted to kill Yin Wuyou, he wouldn’t need to make more than ten moves!

Yin Wuyou should also know this herself, but she still stood in front of him without hesitation.

Zhou Shu was somewhat moved.

Just as he was contemplating whether he should recklessly attack, Xiao Shunzhi’s voice suddenly sounded again. “Your Highness, there’s no need to be nervous. I have no ill intentions.”

With a crisp sound, the beam of light that shot out from the post house didn’t attack Yin Wuyou and Zhou Shu. Instead, it suddenly arched three meters away and nailed itself to the ground.

The light disappeared to reveal a long saber. The blade was three inches into the ground, and it was still vibrating slightly.

“Since my student lost, I’ll pay for him.”

Xiao Shunzhi didn’t appear in person, but his voice seemed to ring in everyone’s ears.

“Your Highness, look at this saber. Is it worth ten thousand taels of gold?”

Yin Wuyou didn’t completely restrain her aura. She looked at the saber with a grave expression.

The blade trembled slightly, and light flowed on the blade as if it had intelligence.

“Heaven-grade?” Yin Wuyou exclaimed.

Zhou Shu looked over Yin Wuyou’s shoulder, and his expression darkened when he saw the saber.

*Damn it. Isn’t this one of the three sabers I left behind that day?*

*This f\*cking Xiao Shunzhi actually used something he stole from me to pay for the bet Shen Yue lost to me?*

He was about to explode!

Shen Yue's face darkened. Although he didn't know why his teacher did this, now was definitely not the time to ask.

"A heaven-grade saber's market price will definitely be higher than ten thousand taels of gold," Shen Yue said coldly. "It's more than enough to pay for our bet!"

Zhou Shu looked at Yin Wuyou. He didn't know much about heaven-grade weapons.

Yin Wuyou nodded and said solemnly, "A heaven-grade weapon can indeed be sold for ten thousand taels of gold on the market."

Yin Wuyou didn't expect Great Wei's diplomatic mission to be so generous!

A heaven-grade weapon could be sold for 10,000 taels of gold, but that didn't mean that people could buy a heaven-grade weapon with 10,000 taels of gold!

Heaven-grade weapons were existences that couldn't be bought with money.

Zhou Shu cursed in his heart. He couldn't say that the saber was his to begin with.

He was clearly here to collect debt, yet he had to suffer in silence!

This made Zhou Shu feel extremely aggrieved. He had never suffered such a huge loss since his debut!

Even when he had left three heaven-grade sabers to stop Xiao Shunzhi from going after him, he wasn't so angry.

After all, it was a fight back then. There was nothing to say about losing to someone else.

But this time, he was clearly the victor. Why did he have to suffer in silence?

"Accept it!" Yin Wuyou whispered. "The value of a heaven-grade weapon is above ten thousand taels of gold. If you want money, you can sell it to me!"

Zhou Shu's face darkened. Yin Wuyou had just risked her life to protect him, so he had to give her face.

Besides, it seemed like he couldn't refuse.

The other party had used a heaven-grade weapon to pay off the debt. In the eyes of outsiders, Zhou Shu had gained an enormous advantage.

It would be abnormal if he refused.

*Very good. Surnamed Xiao, I'll remember you. Just you wait!* Zhou Shu glared in the direction of the post house. *This matter isn't over!*

"I want this saber. The debt is written off!" Zhou Shu said coldly.

He took a few steps forward, pulled out the heaven-grade saber from the ground, and casually slung it over his shoulder.

“Grand Minister, let’s go. This place is foul because of some people. It’s unpleasant to stay here for a minute longer.”

With that, Zhou Shu and Yin Wuyou walked toward the capital.

As Shen Yue watched their backs, his face turned incomparably gloomy. *Hmph, Zhou Shu, I’ll let you be complacent for a few more days!*

Shen Yue and Yin Wuyou didn’t notice that a bolt of lightning suddenly disappeared in the sky.

Zhou Shu raised his head to take a look, then withdrew his gaze.

A moment later, after Zhou Shu and Yin Wuyou had disappeared, a figure suddenly appeared in midair.

It was a handsome middle-aged man. He rubbed his chin. *Why do I feel like that kid just saw me? I must have seen it wrongly. How can someone who hasn’t even entered the ranks see me? Even my eldest niece didn’t notice me!*

*That old geezer Xiao is really cunning. He knew that I wouldn’t let him take the heaven-grade saber away from Great Xia, so he actually chose to throw it out at this time! He didn’t suffer any losses at all!*

After thinking for a while, he turned into a bolt of lightning and disappeared.

When Zhou Shu and Yin Wuyou returned to the capital, Zhou Shu threw the heaven-grade long saber to Yin Wuyou.

“Grand Minister, I’m selling this to you,” Zhou Shu said casually.

It was useless for him to keep this heaven-grade saber, so he might as well sell it to Yin Wuyou. This was legal income.

“Really?” Yin Wuyou was surprised. Heaven-grade weapons were priceless, and even the imperial family didn’t have many.

As a princess and a Martial Dao genius, she was a third-rank Grandmaster at a young age. But she had yet to own a heaven-grade weapon and was still using an earth-grade weapon.

Zhou Shu had won this heaven-grade saber with his own abilities. It would be natural if he wanted to keep it for himself.

Yin Wuyou had never thought of forcing him to sell it to her. It didn’t matter if a heaven-grade saber had an extraordinary meaning to Great Xia.

“Of course,” Zhou Shu said. “What would I want it for? Your Highness, do you think I can use a heaven-grade weapon?”

On the surface, he was just a Forging Apprentice who had just come into contact with the Martial Dao. How could he have the ability to wield a heaven-grade weapon?

“Who knows how long it will take before I can use a heaven-grade weapon. At that time, I might even be able to forge a heaven-grade weapon myself,” Zhou Shu continued.

Yin Wuyou nodded. She had full confidence in Zhou Shu. He would definitely become a Grand Craftsman in the future!

“Alright, I’ll take this saber. Don’t worry. I won’t let you suffer,” Yin Wuyou said.

She wasn’t buying this heaven-grade saber herself. Instead, she would give it to her father.

She had already thought about how to make an offer to her father!

*Just don’t take it away without paying for it,* Zhou Shu complained in his heart.

But after thinking about it, he realized that he couldn’t blame her for what had happened before. She was the grand minister of the Forging Division. What was wrong with her taking away one or two standard weapons?

*I forgive you for having protected me despite the situation, although I didn’t need your protection.* Zhou Shu put on an act in his heart. He had never really taken it seriously.

Yin Wuyou was swift and decisive. Without another word, she took the saber and entered the palace again.

When Emperor Yuan Feng saw Yin Wuyou walk into the imperial study with a saber in her hand, his heart skipped a beat. *No way, right?*

Before he could say anything, Yin Wuyou shouted in a coquettish tone, “Father~”

“Stop!” Emperor Yuan Feng rubbed his glabella. *Where has my considerate and sensible daughter gone?*

“Speak. Has Zhou Shu developed some new weapon?”

He felt that his heart was in pain. This kid would develop a new weapon every few days. Although it was a good thing, he didn’t know how to reward him anymore.

This was just for standard weapons. If he did this after becoming a Forging Master, wouldn’t he be rewarded beyond recognition?

“It’s not that. It’s not that easy to develop a weapon. A wise sage said that it requires 99% hard work and 1% inspiration. Without inspiration, it’s impossible to develop a weapon,” Yin Wuyou said.

“99% hard work and 1% inspiration? Which sage said that?” Emperor Yuan asked.

“No, Father, did you hear me?” How would Yin Wuyou know which sage it was?

“You haven’t told me. How am I supposed to listen?” Emperor Yuan Feng said unhappily.

This daughter of his had always been calm and collected in the past. Recently, she seemed to have become fond of acting cute. But this feeling wasn’t bad. At the very least, it made him feel more important to his daughter.

A little girl should act coquettishly to her father.

"Father, look at this." Yin Wuyou also reacted and hurriedly handed over the heaven-grade saber in her hand.

"This is?" Emperor Yuan took it, and his expression immediately changed. "Heaven-grade! Where did you get it from? Could it be that someone from the Forging Division has advanced to Grand Craftsman?"

Emperor Yuan Feng was ecstatic.

With Zhu Chuanfeng's death, Grand Xia had lost one Grand Craftsman. Furthermore, he also knew that because of Zhu Chuanfeng, Grand Xia had lost countless Grand Craftsmen.

If a new Grand Craftsman appeared in Great Xia at this time, his heartache would be greatly relieved.

"No!" Yin Wuyou shook her head. "Zhou Shu won this saber!"

"Zhou Shu?" Emperor Yuan Feng felt a headache.

*It's really related to him?*

*Can't this kid stop for one second?*

*I just made him a baron. Am I to promote him every few days?*

"Didn't Shen Yue go to the Forging Division's workshops to compete with him? At the time, they made a bet with ten thousand taels of gold as the wager," Yin Wuyou explained.

"In the end, Zhou Shu forged the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber and completely defeated Shen Yue.

"Today, we went to ask Shen Yue for money. Shen Yue didn't bring so much money, so Xiao Shunzhi used this heaven-grade saber to pay off the debt.

"Then Zhou Shu sold this saber to me!"

Yin Wuyou looked at Emperor Yuan Feng with a proud expression. Written all over her face were the words: Praise me quickly.

Emperor Yuan Feng heaved a sigh of relief. *So he sold it to her. Fortunately.*

*Had he offered it to the Imperial court, I really wouldn't know how to reward him.*

*Since Zhou Shu sold it, I just have to pay.*

*Issues solvable with money are not issues.*

Emperor Yuan Feng waved his hand. "Well done! I'll pay for this!"

"Who said that this saber is only worth ten thousand taels of gold?" Yin Wuyou asked in astonishment.

"Didn't Shen Yue use this saber to pay off the debt of ten thousand taels of gold?" Emperor Yuan Feng said.

"That's debt repayment. How can it be the same? It's a heaven-grade saber! It's impossible to buy one without fifteen thousand taels of gold!" Yin Wuyou said righteously.

"If it's auctioned, the price might double!

“Father, Zhou Shu sold this saber to us for my sake. We can’t be so petty,” Yin Wuyou advised.

“If he doesn’t want to sell it, we can’t rob him, right? He won it back with his own abilities. It’s his private property.

“I think we can’t let him suffer a loss and be disappointed...”

## **Chapter 122: Martial Dao Genius**

Emperor Yuan Feng clutched his chest as his vision darkened.

...

His heart ached. He felt terrible.

*What is this called?*

*Don’t you feel sorry for your father?*

*Even the imperial family can’t withstand such torment.*

He felt dizzy when he thought of what Yin Wuyou had taken away.

*Forget it. I am the emperor. How can I be petty?*

Emperor Yuan Feng comforted himself. He rubbed his chest and let out a long sigh.

In contrast, Yin Wuyou left the imperial palace in high spirits.

She was smiling, and her eyes showed contentment. Her high-spirited appearance made the entire sky brighten up.

*Hmph, Zhou Shu, quickly thank me!*

...

Zhou Shu didn’t expect Yin Wuyou to arrive so quickly. As expected of the princess, she was rich.

She gathered ten thousand taels of gold so quickly!

“Grand Minister, cash or banknotes?” Zhou Shu said with anticipation.

Ten thousand taels of gold, how much was this?

No matter how much, he had never touched so much money in his two lifetimes!

*Should I change them all to gold bars and fill my bed?* Zhou Shu thought.

“Neither,” Yin Wuyou proudly said. “This is for you!”

She carefully and solemnly took out a jade pendant from her bosom.

“What is this?” Zhou Shu was puzzled. *I just want money. Why do you want to exchange this with me?*

*I don't need the jade pendant. If I take it, I'll have to sell it. It'll be a hassle.*

*Couldn't you just give me money?*

Yin Wuyou looked around and whispered cautiously, "Emperor Xuan Jade Book!"

"Emperor Xuan Jade Book? What is it?" Zhou Shu was puzzled.

"Something good!" Yin Wuyou said as she presented it to him.

"You know about Emperor Xuan, right?"

"I don't know." Zhou Shu shook his head.

He really didn't know and didn't pay attention to it at all.

"Emperor Xuan was the founder of our Great Xia. His real name is Yin Daoxuan, and he was also our Great Xia's first forger.

"Not only was Emperor Xuan a forger, but he was also a powerful martial artist. Back then, he dominated the world and was invincible in the world.

"This Emperor Xuan Jade Book was left behind by Emperor Xuan."

Zhou Shu looked at the small jade pendant in Yin Wuyou's hand in shock. Although he didn't know who exactly Emperor Xuan was, he could tell that he was an extremely impressive person.

How could someone who was said to be invincible in the world be a simple character?

Not to mention, he was the founding emperor of Great Xia.

"The Emperor Xuan Jade Book is a cultivation technique that my ancestor Emperor Xuan cultivated back then. But ever since the ancestor disappeared, no one has been able to cultivate this Emperor Xuan Jade Book anymore."

"In that case, why did you bring it here?" Zhou Shu asked.

"For you."

"For me?"

"That's right." Yin Wuyou nodded. "In any case, no one in the imperial family can cultivate it now, so it's just collecting dust there. Moreover, I feel that Emperor Xuan was a genius in martial arts and forging. You're very similar to him, so you might be able to cultivate this Emperor Xuan Jade Book!"

Zhou Shu was somewhat stunned.

He didn't know if he could cultivate the Emperor Xuan Jade Book. Even if he could, he didn't have any expectations for his own aptitude.

Besides, he didn't lack cultivation techniques. Why would he need the Emperor Xuan Jade Book?

"Isn't this too precious?" Zhou Shu said.



“There’s nothing wrong with you receiving it. You exchanged it with a heaven-grade weapon. You don’t have to stand on ceremony.” Yin Wuyou waved her hand.

Zhou Shu was speechless. *Me? Stand on ceremony?*

*I’m not standing on ceremony. I don’t want this thing. I want money!*

*I want money. Do you understand?*

He felt like he had jumped from one pit to another.

That fellow Shen Yue had used a heaven-grade weapon to pay off his betting debt, and it was the heaven-grade weapon he had lost!

Forget about that. Zhou Shu wanted to sell the heaven-grade weapon to Yin Wuyou for money.

In the end, Yin Wuyou didn’t even give money and directly gave him some useless Emperor Xuan Jade Book!

Zhou Shu looked at Yin Wuyou’s magnanimous appearance and couldn’t express the bitterness in his heart.

From Yin Wuyou’s attitude, she had good intentions.

She even gave him the cultivation technique of Great Xia’s founding emperor. Even if Zhou Shu didn’t understand it, he could imagine the value of this cultivation technique.

It was probably not something that a mere heaven-grade weapon could compare to.

There was a high chance the cultivation technique was Great Xia’s investment in him.

The problem was, he didn’t want this. He wanted money...

“This Emperor Xuan Jade Book is quite magical. When you want to read it, you just have to infuse spiritual essence into it, and words will appear,” Yin Wuyou said. “Oh, I forgot. You haven’t cultivated spiritual essence yet. It’s alright. I’ll help you!

“Let’s go!” Yin Wuyou pulled Zhou Shu away without any explanation.

Zhou Shu didn’t see that Yin Wuyou, who was walking in front, was blushing like an apple, beautiful and alluring.

Zhou Shu’s baron’s residence was next door to the princess’s residence. Yin Wuyou and Zhou Shu entered the baron’s residence and found a random room before closing the door and windows.

A man and a woman alone had closed the door and windows tightly. There was ambiguity in the air.

But Yin Wuyou didn’t seem to notice anything unusual. She held the Emperor Xuan Jade Book and infused spiritual essence into it.

*Buzz—*

With a soft buzz, the jade pendant suddenly emitted a bright yellow light.

The light was like a projection projecting into the air. Then three-dimensional words appeared.

*3D projection?* Zhou Shu thought.

“Look!” Yin Wuyou said anxiously.

From the moment Yin Wuyou returned with the Emperor Xuan Jade Book to the moment she directly activated it, Zhou Shu didn’t find a chance to refuse her.

How could he reject her now?

In any case, he couldn’t get the heaven-grade saber back, and there was no hope for him to get money. He couldn’t possibly spend all that effort for nothing.

It would be a waste not to learn the Emperor Xuan Jade Book!

Zhou Shu cursed as his gaze landed on the golden words in the air.

The Emperor Xuan Jade Book didn’t have many words, only about three thousand.

Zhou Shu had cultivated the Visualization of the Five Mountains’ True Form, so his spirit was very strong. Although he didn’t have a photographic memory, he wasn’t too far off.

He quickly browsed through it a few times and memorized the words.

The Emperor Xuan Jade Book, or rather, the cultivation path of this world, was different from the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique that Zhou Shu was currently cultivating.

The Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique cultivated the body, while the Golden Bell Shield Technique cultivated true qi on the foundation of cultivating the body.

There was no such thing as true qi or internal strength in this world. People absorbed the spiritual qi of heaven and earth into their bodies and converted it into spiritual essence. Then they would break through and improve.

Although the methods were different, the principles were similar.

Zhou Shu pondered over the contents of the Emperor Xuan Jade Book and then attempted to absorb the spiritual qi of heaven and earth into his body.

The first step of cultivation was to calm one’s mind and focus while sensing the existence of heaven and earth’s spiritual qi.

Zhou Shu’s mind stirred slightly. He began to visualize the Five Mountains’ True Form in his mind. His mind immediately calmed down, and all of his distracting thoughts disappeared.

Suddenly, the scene in front of him changed.

There seemed to be particles emitting light in the air. Some were golden, some were purple, and some were blue. They were colorful and looked like stars filling the sky. It was very beautiful.

Zhou Shu used his consciousness to form a small hand and attempted to grab the particles into his body.

Multicolored particles touched the hand formed by his consciousness. Most of them were like fish escaping the net, spreading in all directions.

Only some golden and red particles entered his body through his consciousness.

As these particles entered his body, Zhou Shu felt as if his entire body was soaking in a hot spring. A warm feeling filled his whole body. The feeling made him so comfortable that he wanted to moan.

Before he could moan, lines of messages suddenly floated across the starry sky.

[The Horse Slaying Saber you forged effectively completed a kill. The Golden Bell Shield Technique has improved by 30%!]

[The Horse Slaying Saber you forged effectively completed a kill. The Golden Bell Shield Technique has improved by 12%!]

...

[The Spring Embroidered Saber you forged effectively completed a kill. The Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form has improved by 5%!]

...

There was only one Spring Embroidered Saber on the southern borders battlefield, and it was in Sun Gongping's hands.

*What the hell is a 5% improvement for the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form?*

*Is Sun Gongping only targeting small fries?*

He had forgotten that the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form was on a higher level than the Golden Bell Shield Technique and Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique. It was naturally more difficult to level up.

Before he could think any further, Zhou Shu was suddenly rendered speechless.

*This is bad!*

*Boom!*

A fierce aura suddenly erupted from his body, and a faint golden light radiated from his body. In an instant, he seemed to have turned into a golden man.

Golden Bell Shield Technique, tenth level!

The sudden feedback caused his Golden Bell Shield Technique to break through to the tenth level!

The commotion caused by his breakthrough dumbfounded Yin Wuyou.

In her eyes, Zhou Shu had only finished reading the Emperor Xuan Jade Book, then closed his eyes and cultivated for a while. Then... then...

*He entered the ranks?*

*Why is his aura after entering the ranks so terrifying?*

*It's even stronger than when I broke through to the third rank!*

*But the spiritual qi he absorbed was so little.*

*Could this be the profoundness of the Emperor Xuan Jade Book?*

*It's indeed the ancestor's technique!*

*But it seems like Zhou Shu was a bit more powerful. He's only seen the Emperor Xuan Jade Book for less than fifteen minutes, and he's already entered the ranks?*

*What kind of aptitude is this!*

Everyone said that she was a Martial Dao genius, but she had cultivated for a full month before breaking through to the ninth rank.

Just as Yin Wuyou was sighing with emotion, she suddenly saw a vortex visible to the naked eye above Zhou Shu's head. A large amount of spiritual qi of heaven and earth surged into his body.

Her eyes widened, and her mouth opened so wide that a duck egg could fit inside.

*It's not over yet?* Zhou Shu was also somewhat dumbfounded.

He didn't understand what was happening.

After his Golden Bell Shield Technique broke through to the tenth level, he originally planned to open his eyes and come up with a reason to explain it to Yin Wuyou.

But he felt that the Emperor Xuan Jade Book that he had just learned began to automatically circulate and absorb the spiritual qi of heaven and earth!

Then he felt the amount of spiritual essence in his body increasing. The entire process seemed to happen naturally, and he didn't need to waste any energy.

It felt like...

His body was an empty bucket, and the spiritual qi of heaven and earth seemed to be pouring into it.

Zhou Shu didn't know what was happening, but he knew that he couldn't allow the spiritual qi of heaven and earth to continue pouring in. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to explain the situation.

Even though he was a genius, it had to make sense!

He visualized the Five Mountains' True Form, and his spirit jolted as he forcefully cut off the circulation of the Emperor Xuan Jade Book.

At this moment, he suddenly realized that he seemed to be a genuine ninth-rank martial artist.

That's right. From the depth of the spiritual essence in his body, he had already entered the ranks and became a glorious ninth-rank martial artist...

Zhou Shu was somewhat speechless. He was still not a Forging Master, yet he became a ninth-rank martial artist first?

How was he going to explain this?

“Grand Minister...” Zhou Shu looked at Yin Wuyou and tried to think of a reason to brush her off.

“Ah!” Yin Wuyou suddenly shut her mouth and almost bit her tongue. “Zhou Shu, I was right about you. You can really cultivate the Emperor Xuan Jade Book!

“Back then, my ancestor obtained the Emperor Xuan Jade Book and entered the ranks in one day as well. You’re even more powerful than my ancestor!”

Zhou Shu was speechless. *Your Highness, are you trying to kill me with your words?*

*I am more powerful than the founding emperor of Great Xia?*

*What would your father think of me?*

“That’s great! I want to tell this good news to Father!” Yin Wuyou excitedly rushed outside.

“Don’t—” Zhou Shu couldn’t stop her in time, so he could only watch as Yin Wuyou ran like a little bird toward the imperial palace.

*She doesn’t seem to have discovered my true strength. She just thinks that I’ve cultivated the Emperor Xuan Jade Book and broken through to the ninth rank?*

Zhou Shu recalled Yin Wuyou’s words and came to a realization.

*If that’s the case, it’s actually a good thing.*

In any case, the origin of the Emperor Xuan Jade Book was open and aboveboard. As for breaking through to the ninth rank, it was a little fast, but there was nothing suspicious about it.

He was only worried that his true strength would be discovered by others. If a Forging Apprentice suddenly became a peerless expert, everyone would know that he was hiding something. Then, it would be hard to guarantee that there wouldn’t be experts who had their eyes on him.

As for being treated as a genius, Zhou Shu wasn’t that worried.

There were many geniuses in the world. At most, they would occasionally be assassinated. But not many powerful experts would be sent for the assassinations. Would Zhou Shu be afraid?

In any case, he was already being treated as a forging genius. It was no big deal to be treated as a Martial Dao genius.

In the eyes of Emperor Yuan Feng and the others, he should have been a Martial Dao genius long ago. When he had gone to the Saber Cave to comprehend the saber intent, he had immediately comprehended it.

Zhou Shu thought about it carefully and felt that it wasn’t all bad that Yin Wuyou had witnessed his breakthrough.

At least in the future, when he occasionally made a move in front of others, it wouldn't arouse suspicion.

Using this portion of his cultivation to display in front of others to conceal his true strength might be even more effective.

*Ranked martial artists seem to be qualified to become officials. But I'm already a baron now. This qualification is useless to me. What a waste.*

...

Yin Wuyou excitedly rushed to the imperial palace but was stopped by Eunuch Zhao at the entrance of the imperial study.

"Your Highness, His Majesty is discussing important matters with the court ministers. No one is to disturb him."

"Even me?"

"His Majesty's instructions are for everyone," Eunuch Zhao said profoundly.

Yin Wuyou frowned. "Alright, when Father is free, get someone to inform me. I have something to report!"

With that, she left unhappily.

Eunuch Zhao only returned to the imperial study after Yin Wuyou left.

There were no ministers in the imperial study. Emperor Yuan Feng looked up from his memorial. "Gone?"

"Yes, she's gone," Eunuch Zhao said.

"This girl has been so startling recently that even I'm afraid of her." Emperor Yuan Feng shook his head with a wry smile. "Eunuch Zhao, keep an eye on her. Before the Standard Armament Manual is released, if Wuyou comes looking for me again, stop her!"

### **Chapter 123: Revenge Waits For No One**

It was late at night. The main streets of Chang'an were still brightly lit.

...

But outside the main streets, the city was already in darkness.

In the darkness of the night, a faintly discernible figure leaped up and down the roofs of houses, heading toward the city wall.

A moment later, the figure had already aimed at the gap in the patrol of the guards on the city wall. With a leap, he directly landed outside the city wall.

This figure was none other than Zhou Shu!

During the day, Zhou Shu had broken through in front of Yin Wuyou, and then Yin Wuyou had excitedly rushed into the palace.

Not long after, she returned dejectedly. She told Zhou Shu not to be anxious and then left.

Zhou Shu wondered why she told him not to be anxious.

Did she know that he was anxious?

Zhou Shu thought for a moment and decided to pretend he didn't hear anything. He was just anxious and didn't want to wait any longer!

The Golden Bell Shield Technique had broken through to the tenth level. Although the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique hadn't broken through to the eleventh level, it had also improved greatly. Even the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form had also improved.

Zhou Shu felt that his cultivation level had improved once again.

Now, if he encountered Xiao Shunzhi again, even if he didn't leave heaven-grade sabers behind, he was confident that he could retreat unscathed!

In that case, he had to seek revenge!

That brat Shen Yue had lost 10,000 gold taels to him and wanted to use a heaven-grade weapon to repay his debt?

It wasn't that he couldn't use a heaven-grade weapon to repay the debt. The problem was that this heaven-grade weapon was originally his!

Ever since Zhou Shu debuted, he had never suffered such a huge loss!

If he couldn't vent his anger, even the title of nobility wouldn't make him happy!

Zhou Shu moved like lightning, quickly passing through the outskirts of the capital.

After he reached the tenth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique, his internal strength had already returned to its origin. His true qi was extremely vigorous, and he could injure anyone with it. Furthermore, his only weakness was one inch from his vital point. Unless someone pierced him within this one inch, any ordinary attack would not be able to hurt him.

At this moment, although Zhou Shu had yet to learn any lightness technique, with the support of his powerful true qi, his running speed was no less than that of a fast horse.

Zhou Shu only took a few moments to arrive at the post house from the capital.

He could faintly feel that there seemed to be a blazing sun in the post house even when he was still a distance away.

This should be Great Wei's Imperial Preceptor Xiao Shunzhi!

After his Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form improved, he could already faintly sense Xiao Shunzhi's strength.

Previously, he couldn't even sense Xiao Shunzhi's existence.

*The Great Wei imperial preceptor is indeed very strong!*

In the past, there had been no comparison. Now that Zhou Shu had cultivated the Emperor Xuan Jade Book, his body also had spiritual essence equivalent to a ninth-rank martial artist.

Compared to Xiao Shunzhi, the little bit of spiritual essence in his body was almost nothing.

This wasn't just the difference between heaven and earth. This was the difference between the ninth heaven and eighteenth level of hell.

A first-rank martial artist and a ninth-rank martial artist were indeed two different existences!

The ninth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique couldn't block Xiao Shunzhi's attack, and he didn't know if the tenth level would be able to block it!

He reckoned that it would be difficult as well. If he wanted to completely block Xiao Shunzhi's attack, he would have to wait until the twelfth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique, when he reached perfection in it.

But it wouldn't be easy for Xiao Shunzhi to completely break the defense of the tenth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique.

Let's put it this way. He would be able to take on Xiao Shunzhi's attack with the tenth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique. He might get injured, but it wouldn't kill him.

The attack of a first-rank martial artist was very powerful. It was already very impressive that he wouldn't die from it.

Even so, Zhou Shu didn't want to fight Xiao Shunzhi head-on.

He wasn't here to fight. Even if he wanted to fight, he had to take revenge first, right?

Zhou Shu slowly circulated the true qi in his body, hiding the aura of his spiritual essence.

At the same time, he visualized the Five Mountains' True Form in his consciousness. Even his spiritual fluctuations were completely restrained, as if he had become a rock.

Then he quietly approached the post house.

Zhou Shu knew that Great Wei's diplomatic mission had set up sentries around the post house.

When he and Yin Wuyou came over in the day, those scouts had informed the people in the post house beforehand.

At the time, Zhou Shu had already used his divine sense to locate the sentries.

The divine sense was the result of Zhou Shu cultivating the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form. It was a power that was of a higher level than true qi or spiritual essence.

Zhou Shu didn't know if a first-rank martial artist had similar abilities, but it was obvious that Xiao Shunzhi couldn't detect his divine sense.



Since he knew what he was doing, Zhou Shu was naturally able to move with ease.

Without alerting any scouts, he had already entered the post house.

The post house was now used to receive Great Wei's diplomatic mission. Other than a few postmasters, the rest of the people in the post house were from the Great Wei diplomatic mission.

Zhou Shu released his divine sense, enveloping a ten-foot radius around him. Within this ten-foot radius, no matter what happened, nothing could escape his divine sense.

Of course, it wasn't that he couldn't sense anything from ten feet away. It was just more effective within ten feet.

Zhou Shu had only walked a few steps into the post house when he discovered several third or fourth-rank experts.

Fortunately, none of them had discovered his divine sense.

Upon discovering this fact, Zhou Shu became even more cautious.

Great Wei's diplomatic mission was stronger than he had imagined.

If he was discovered, there would be a fierce battle.

Zhou Shu wasn't afraid of being beaten to death. After all, he had the Golden Bell Shield Technique protecting him. Even if he couldn't win, he could still escape.

However, being ganged up on was definitely not a good experience.

Zhou Shu definitely didn't want to try.

*One diplomatic mission has so many experts. I've already killed one third-rank martial artist, but there are still three more! Are there so many experts in Great Wei?*

He had a feeling that there was something wrong with Great Wei's diplomatic mission.

Did a normal diplomatic mission need to send so many experts?

Even if both countries were at war, envoys shouldn't be touched. Great Xia still had this bit of grace.

Furthermore, if Great Xia really wanted to kill them, even if more third-rank martial artists came along, it would be useless.

As for the safety of the diplomatic mission, the imperial preceptor was a first-rank martial artist. Would bandits be tired of living and rob them?

But if he could think of all these things, the Imperial Court would definitely be able to think of it as well.

Zhou Shu didn't believe that the Great Xia Imperial Court wouldn't know about the arrival of so many experts from Great Wei!

Last time, he saw a man who was not the slightest bit weaker than Xiao Shunzhi come to this post house. This person was probably an expert of Great Xia.

Zhou Shu did his best to avoid the area where Xiao Shunzhi was. Although he was very confident in his saber art, first-rank martial artists were already another realm. Who knew what abilities they had?

With the help of his divine sense, Zhou Shu quickly found Shen Yue's room.

In the middle of the night, Shen Yue was still awake and cultivating.

Indeed, no one could succeed easily, except...

Shen Yue was already a fourth-rank martial artist at such a young age. Although it had to do with talent, it also couldn't do without his hard work.

What one was most afraid of was talented people who were hardworking. Ordinary people were completely no match for them at all.

Zhou Shu cursed in his heart.

With Shen Yue's age, being able to have a fourth-rank Martial Dao cultivation was definitely amazing.

Although Yin Wuyou was younger than him and had a higher cultivation level than him, Zhou Shu estimated that there must be some reasons behind Yin Wuyou's current cultivation level.

Perhaps she was a monster like Lu Wenshuang from Qingzhou.

Other than those few monsters, people like Shen Yue were already extremely rare.

Mi Ziwen was very powerful, wasn't he? He was the eldest son of the richest family in Great Xia, the only successor of Great Xia's God of War. He was a few years older than Shen Yue, but he was only a fourth-rank martial artist.

A third-rank martial artist was also known as a Grandmaster. The threshold between a fourth-rank martial artist to a third-rank martial artist was a bottleneck that countless martial arts elites encountered.

Zhou Shu silently stood outside Shen Yue's window. As his thoughts ran wild, he seriously considered robbing him...

If he could rob Shen Yue without alerting Xiao Shunzhi, that would naturally be the best.

Zhou Shu glanced in the direction where Xiao Shunzhi was. Shen Yue's room was only several meters away from Xiao Shunzhi's room.

After all, this post house was not very big.

To an expert like Xiao Shunzhi, such a close distance was practically nonexistent.

As long as there was a slight movement, he would be able to detect it immediately.

Once he sensed it, Zhou Shu would have no time to rob him.

Although Shen Yue's fourth-rank cultivation wasn't low, Zhou Shu estimated that with his cultivation, if he attacked with his full strength, he would be able to defeat Shen Yue in three moves.

The problem was that he had the confidence to put Shen Yue down, but he didn't have the confidence to do so without alerting Xiao Shunzhi.

*If only there was some incense or something like this, I could just blow on it and make Shen Yue fall asleep.*

Zhou Shu was not completely out of ideas.

The Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form!

This mystic technique for cultivating one's spirit was also an offensive technique. It could unleash spiritual attacks.

When Zhou Shu had first obtained the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form, he had used it to kill Xiao Zongshui and Zhen Cai. He had also used it to stun Hongxiu from Lichun Courtyard.

However, Shen Yue was different from the three of them. Shen Yue was a fourth-rank martial artist. Even though Zhou Shu's Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form was much stronger than before, he wasn't sure he would be able to knock Shen Yue out with one strike.

If he didn't completely lose consciousness, then Xiao Shunzhi would definitely be alerted.

Just as Zhou Shu was deep in thought, an explosion suddenly sounded in midair.

A voice sounded. "Xiao Shunzhi, I'm here again. Let's fight another three hundred rounds!"

Accompanying this voice, streaks of lightning appeared in the sky. A handsome middle-aged man stepped on the thunderclouds like a god of lightning.

"Yin Changhao! Do you think I'm afraid of you?" Xiao Shunzhi's voice filled with anger rang out, and then a golden light shot into the sky from the post house. "You come to harass me every few days. Is this the attitude your Great Xia has toward the diplomatic mission from another country?"

"Xiao Shunzhi, don't get the diplomatic mission involved. This is our personal grudge!"

The middle-aged man said disdainfully, "I'm just here to spar with you. If you don't dare, just say it. I won't force you."

Xiao Shunzhi's expression was gloomy. "You asked for it. Don't blame me for being impolite!"

A huge golden palm slapped toward the man.

Yin Changhao laughed and raised his hand. A bolt of lightning struck the palm.

With a loud boom, the two of them began fighting.

*Good opportunity!* Zhou Shu's eyes lit up. In his divine sense, Shen Yue was already awakened by this commotion. He opened his eyes and prepared to come out to check.

Without any hesitation, Zhou Shu activated the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form and pressed toward Shen Yue.

*Boom!*

The moment Shen Yue got off the bed, he suddenly felt as if five towering mountains had appeared in front of him and pressed down on him.

The mountains were so tall that they brought with them an endless sense of oppression. Just one look at them made his limbs turn cold, and his breathing became somewhat irregular.

However, he was indeed impressive. In the blink of an eye, he had already bit the tip of his tongue and endured the intense pain in his head to regain consciousness.

But when experts exchanged blows, one second was enough to change the outcome.

Just as he regained consciousness, a fist the size of a clay pot filled his vision.

*Bang!*

Shen Yue blacked out and fainted.

Even when he fainted, he didn't see who had ambushed him!

*Bang!*

Zhou Shu punched the unconscious Shen Yue again before nodding in satisfaction. *Symmetry is perfect.*

He no longer paid attention to Shen Yue, who had fainted on the floor. Right now, two experts were fighting outside, and the commotion had completely covered up the noise here.

Zhou Shu quickly searched the room.

A moment later, he put a stack of banknotes into his pocket in disappointment.

*You boasted so much, yet you're just a poor man! No wonder you didn't pay your betting debt. So you can't afford it!* Zhou Shu looked at Shen Yue with disdain.

*Shen Yue is just a deputy envoy. Will the main envoy be richer?*

Zhou Shu looked toward Xiao Shunzhi's room, and his heart began to itch uncontrollably!

Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't have this thought. After all, Xiao Shunzhi wasn't someone to be trifled with.

But now that Xiao Shunzhi was being entangled by the expert outside, there shouldn't be anyone in his room, right?

*There's no time to lose. There won't be another chance like this. I'll go take a look!* Zhou Shu made a straightforward decision.

Covered by the sound of the chaos outside, his figure moved like lightning, avoiding the other experts of Great Wei's diplomatic mission, who had already rushed into the courtyard to watch the show. Then like a wisp of smoke, he entered Xiao Shunzhi's room.

A moment later, a sneaky figure came out of Xiao Shunzhi's room, quickly climbed over the wall of the post house, and disappeared into the night.

At this moment, lightning suddenly flashed in the sky, and Yin Changhao retreated dozens of feet.

He stood in the air and waved at Xiao Shunzhi. "That's all for today. As expected of my opponent, Old Xiao, you're really strong. It's hard to determine the outcome today. Wait for me to go back and practice my ultimate move. We'll fight another day!"

Yin Changhao turned into a bolt of lightning and disappeared.

Xiao Shunzhi looked in the direction Yin Changhao disappeared with a gloomy expression.

It was only because this was Great Xia that he restrained himself. Otherwise, he would definitely teach Yin Changhao a lesson!

He snorted and landed on the ground.

"Go back to sleep! What's there to see!" Xiao Shunzhi berated. With a flick of his sleeve, he turned around and returned to his room.

A moment later, an angry roar came from Xiao Shunzhi's room. "Yin Changhao!"

## **Chapter 124: Heaven Refining Stone**

Zhou Shu quickly ran and disappeared like a wisp of black smoke in the darkness.

...

Suddenly, a bolt of lightning shot toward him.

Zhou Shu frowned slightly. He disappeared behind a tree in a flash and instantly retracted his aura.

Just as he completed these actions, a figure descended from the sky.

It was the man named Yin Changhao who had fought with Xiao Shunzhi earlier.

Yin Changhao looked around in confusion. The person he was looking for had actually disappeared. No wonder he dared to infiltrate Great Wei's diplomatic mission.

He smiled and muttered in a low voice, "Brother, I know you haven't gone far. Please come out and meet me.

"Just now, if I didn't fight Xiao Shunzhi, you probably wouldn't have succeeded so easily, right? This could be considered a collaboration. Brother, you're not planning on taking all the benefits for yourself, right?

"You're not being considerate."

Zhou Shu frowned slightly. *Yin Changhao already spotted me at the post house?*

*He challenged Xiao Shunzhi for the sake of protecting me?*

*When did he follow me? Did he discover my true identity?*

A few doubts flashed across Zhou Shu's mind.

He was stunned. If Yin Changhao had found him outside the post house, he probably wouldn't know his identity.

But if he had followed him from the baron's mansion...

Zhou Shu's gaze turned cold.

But this was unlikely. If he knew his true identity, he would have called out his name.

Even so, Zhou Shu's heart still felt a little cold. He had already taken extra care against these first-rank martial artists, but he didn't expect that he had still underestimated them.

Yin Changhao had discovered him, but he hadn't detected Yin Changhao!

Fortunately, Yin Changhao didn't seem to have any ill intentions. Otherwise, if he had launched a sneak attack, he might have been injured.

In the future, he would have to be more careful when facing these first-rank martial artists.

If it wasn't for Yin Changhao today, he might have suffered under Xiao Shunzhi's hands again!

He now thought that he might have underestimated earlier.

If Yin Changhao had spotted him, perhaps Xiao Shunzhi would have some special method to make him suffer?

"Are you planning to keep everything for yourself?" Yin Changhao continued loudly. "If so, don't blame me for being unreasonable.

"Do you believe that if I shout now, tens of experts will surround this area?"

Zhou Shu's expression darkened. He believed it!

From his name, Yin Changhao was definitely a member of the imperial family!

He was a first-rank martial arts expert of the Great Xia imperial family near Chang'an. Let alone tens of experts, if he wanted to, he could even mobilize the entire Demon Executing Army and Fiend Eradication Army!

Zhou Shu had no choice but to speak up.

If Yin Changhao really called people over, his safety aside, his identity would definitely be exposed.

"How can you be sure that I took something from the Great Wei diplomatic mission?" Zhou Shu sighed and walked out from behind the tree.

"Eh? You're actually here?" A bewildered expression appeared on Yin Changhao's face. When he was staring at Xiao Shunzhi outside the post house, he had accidentally discovered a figure. At the time, he hadn't paid much attention to it and had only played along and helped Zhou Shu.

Only now did he realize that Zhou Shu had completely restrained his aura. Even though he was standing in front of him, he couldn't sense Zhou Shu's spiritual essence at all.

No wonder he could hide in the capital without being discovered.

Yin Changhao had already guessed Zhou Shu's identity. This man in black, who only revealed his eyes, was most likely the mysterious expert who had left behind the saber intent in the Saber Cave, sent Great Wei's assassination list over, and killed Zhu Chuanfeng.

"You have such an amazing qi restraining technique!" Yin Changhao praised.

"You flatter me. You haven't answered my question." Zhou Shu used his true qi to change his vocal cords, speaking in an old and hoarse voice.

"You didn't kill anyone when you went to Great Wei's diplomatic mission. You couldn't have just gone there for a walk, right?" Yin Changhao smiled. "It's the middle of the night. Who would come out and wander around without any benefits?"

"Aren't you outside too?" Zhou Shu said calmly.

"I'm being treated like a laborer!" Yin Changhao said angrily. "Let's not talk about this. What did you take from Old Xiao? Take it out and let me see!"

Yin Changhao smiled excitedly like a fish.

Xiao Shunzhi was the official envoy of the Great Wei diplomatic mission. Due to his status, he could occasionally find trouble with Xiao Shunzhi. But he wouldn't be able to truly attack Xiao Shunzhi.

However, it wasn't a problem for this mysterious expert to make a move against Xiao Shunzhi. He wasn't a member of the Great Xia Imperial Court. He might not even be a member of Great Xia.

"You stole something from Xiao Shunzhi. That can only mean that you don't have a good character. At most, my Great Xia will help him investigate. As for whether or not he's able to recover the stolen item, there's no guarantee."

"There's nothing." Zhou Shu spread out his hands. He felt that an expert like Yin Changhao shouldn't be interested in gold and silver, so he didn't say anything.

Yin Changhao had asked him what he stole from Xiao Shunzhi.

There was indeed nothing valuable in Xiao Shunzhi's room.

Yin Changhao frowned. "Really?"

"Of course it's true. Think about it. Would Xiao Shunzhi carry valuable items with him in an enemy country?"

"That's true." Yin Changhao rubbed his chin.

"No, you already knew about this. Why did you still go to the Great Wei diplomatic mission? You must have discovered some secret, right?" Yin Changhao suddenly said.

He recalled how this mysterious expert had helped Great Xia greatly a few times in the past.

He now suspected that this mysterious expert had discovered another secret!

"Tell me. I'll help you!" Yin Changhao said excitedly.

Zhou Shu was speechless. *Yin Changhao's cultivation base is quite high, but why does it feel like he's a bit unreliable?*

"There are no secrets! Nothing!" Zhou Shu shook his head. "If you insist on saying that there is, then Xiao Shunzhi's room has a map of the You and Bing prefectures. Does this count?"

"A map of the You and Bing prefectures? What kind of secret is this?" Yin Changhao blurted out. He suddenly thought of something and frowned.

Although he was a little spontaneous, he wasn't a fool.

Zhou Shu's words reminded him of the bet between Great Xia and Great Wei.

"There's something wrong with the You and Bing prefectures!" Yin Changhao exclaimed.

"Are you asking me? How would I know?" Zhou Shu shook his head.

"Alright, I've said what I needed to say. I'm leaving now." Zhou Shu turned around and walked away.

"Stop following me. Otherwise, I'll treat you as an enemy."

Yin Changhao was still pondering when Zhou Shu had already walked several feet away.

Suddenly, Yin Changhao said loudly, "No, you're hiding something from me! When I left, Xiao Shunzhi shouted. It seems he lost something!"

Zhou Shu stopped in his tracks. *This guy is quite smart!*

"Alright, I took something from Xiao Shunzhi's room. It's just some lousy stone," Zhou Shu said casually. He even took Xiao Shunzhi's money bag. But how could he tell Yin Changhao about this?

"Lousy stone?" Yin Changhao said in disbelief, "Brother, the rules of the martial arts world are that we should split the good stuff equally. Don't hide it!"

"Fine, we'll split half!" Zhou Shu said unhappily. "This is the stupid stone. If you want it, I'll give you half."

Zhou Shu flipped his wrist and retrieved a silver-white stone.

The stone was about the size of an adult's fist. It was silvery-white and seemed to be made of silver, but it gave off a crystal clear feeling.

Upon closer inspection, one could even sense that the stone contained a starry sky.

It felt really strange. So although Zhou Shu didn't know what this stone was, he still took it away.

Putting everything else aside, the stone was pretty, and he felt it would be nice to use as a paperweight in his study.

"Heaven Refining Stone?" Yin Changhao's eyes suddenly widened. "You actually took Xiao Shunzhi's Heaven Refining Stone!"

"This stone is called a Heaven Refining Stone?" Zhou Shu said. He really didn't know.



However, it seemed like Heaven Refining Stones were very precious.

“You don’t know?”

“I don’t know. I think it looks pretty, so I’m going to take it home and use it as a paperweight,” Zhou Shu said casually.

Yin Changhao was shocked. In the end, he gave him a thumbs up. “Using a Heaven Refining Stone as a paperweight, how bold!”

“Is this thing very valuable?” Zhou Shu asked casually.

He really didn’t know what this Heaven Refining Stone was. Since there was someone who knew about it in front of him, he naturally had to take the opportunity to ask.

Yin Changhao didn’t mind. Although he was a little curious about the other party’s cultivation level and why he didn’t know about the Heaven Refining Stone, it wasn’t something he couldn’t accept.

After all, it was possible that some people were obsessed with the Martial Dao and didn’t pay attention to other things.

“It’s more than precious! Heaven Refining Stones are an indispensable material for forging ranked weapons. There are a lot of them in this world. Let me tell you. For such a large Heaven Refining Stone, if you don’t have a hundred thousand taels of gold, then don’t even think about it!”

“A hundred thousand taels of gold?” Zhou Shu’s jaw dropped.

Did this mean he had made a killing?

He originally only wanted to collect some interest for the 10,000 of gold he lost. But in the end, he accidentally took 100,000 taels of gold from Xiao Shunzhi?

“This is going to be a big deal.” Yin Changhao laughed out loud. “Such a huge Heaven Refining Stone is more than enough to forge a heaven-grade weapon!”

Even with his status, such a large Heaven Refining Stone was extremely precious.

After all, gold was easy to find, but Heaven Refining Stones were hard to find.

The mineral reserves of Heaven Refining Stones were scarce to begin with. Coupled with the many years of wear and tear, the production of Heaven Refining Stones was decreasing day by day.

Even with Yin Changhao’s status, obtaining Heaven Refining Stones was not an easy task.

“You said that Heaven Refining Stones are an essential material for forging ranked weapons?” Zhou Shu asked.

Only now did he realize his lack of knowledge.

Although he was a Forging Apprentice, his forging techniques all came from the Legendary Armament Canon. To be honest, his knowledge of forging was almost nonexistent.

He lacked common sense when it came to ranked weapons.

It was mainly because Zhou Shu felt that he would become a Forging Master through the Legendary Armament Canon sooner or later, so he didn't consciously try to understand it.

As a result, as a genius Forging Apprentice, he didn't even recognize a Heaven Refining Stone. If others found out, he would be a laughing stock!

"Yes." Yin Changhao didn't provide Zhou Shu with any further general knowledge about forging. In his opinion, it had nothing to do with what had happened today.

"Brother, we stole the Heaven Refining Stone together. According to the rules, half of it should be mine, right?" Yin Changhao stared at the Heaven Refining Stone in Zhou Shu's hand earnestly.

"I'll give you half." Zhou Shu didn't dawdle and spoke decisively. After all, his harvest tonight wasn't just this Heaven Refining Stone.

Then again, without Yin Changhao, he might not have succeeded.

"Heaven Refining Stones can only be split by Forging Masters, but neither of us are Forging Masters. How about this? Brother, how about you sell me your half of the Heaven Refining Stone?" Yin Changhao said.

Zhou Shu raised his eyebrows slightly. *Only Forging Masters can divide them?*

He exerted some force on the Heaven Refining Stone, but it didn't budge.

His current strength was more than 500 kilograms. He could easily leave a fingerprint on a piece of metal. But the Heaven Refining Stone didn't change at all. It was indeed abnormally sturdy.

"What price do you plan to pay?" Zhou Shu asked.

"Like I said, the market price for such a large piece of Heaven Refining Stone is a hundred thousand taels of gold," Yin Changhao said. "I'll give you fifty thousand, and this Heaven Refining Stone will be mine. How about it?"

Zhou Shu was somewhat surprised. He had previously obtained a heaven-grade weapon from Xiao Shunzhi and Shen Yue, which was only worth 10,000 taels of gold.

Such a Heaven Refining Stone was equivalent to ten heaven-grade weapons?

It was a bit funny. Zhou Shu was clearly an expert in forging, but he really didn't understand the actual situation.

There were also differences between heaven-grade weapons.

Ordinary heaven-grade weapons were only worth ten thousand taels of gold. But top heaven-grade weapons were worth several hundred thousand taels of gold.

The difference was even greater than that between heaven-grade weapons and yellow-grade weapons.

Such a big piece of Heaven Refining Stone was enough to create a top heaven-grade weapon. It was worth 100,000 taels of gold, so it wasn't too much.

Of course, even with such a large piece of Heaven Refining Stone, whether or not it could create a top heaven-grade weapon depended on the forger's skills.

But no matter what, spending 100,000 taels of gold to buy such a large piece of Heaven Refining Stone, although it couldn't be said to be a profit, definitely wasn't a loss.

Zhou Shu was hesitant. Fifty thousand taels of gold had already exceeded his expectations, but this Heaven Refining Stone was a necessary material for forging ranked weapons. If he sold it to Yin Changhao, he might not have the chance to obtain Heaven Refining Stones in the future.

But keeping it didn't seem to be of much use now.

He didn't know when he would advance to Forging Master.

As for gold, he really needed it now. The baron's mansion hadn't even been renovated yet.

After hesitating for a moment, Zhou Shu made his decision. "If you can give me fifty thousand taels of gold now, then we'll do as you say. If you can't, then forget it."

Zhou Shu wouldn't go with Yin Changhao to get the money. One couldn't judge a book by its cover. Who knew if Yin Changhao would backstab him?

"Really, what a coincidence! I really have banknotes worth fifty thousand taels of gold with me!" Yin Changhao was delighted.. As he spoke, he took out a stack of banknotes. "The Heaven Refining Stone is mine!"

## **Chapter 125: The Secret of Ranked Weapons**

Zhou Shu looked at the stack of banknotes in his hand. He didn't even need to count them to be sure that Yin Changhao wasn't lying to him. This was definitely worth 50,000 taels of gold!

...

He wanted to curse in his heart.

*Who exactly is Yin Changhao?*

*Who would run around with banknotes worth fifty thousand taels of gold for no reason?*

*Does he have to be so rich?!*

He had just said that casually. He had thought that Yin Changhao wouldn't be able to take out 50,000 taels of gold immediately, so he would just give him a few hundred taels of gold and then run away with the Heaven Refining Stone.

Who knew that Yin Changhao would throw out a stack of banknotes without hesitation!

For the first time in his two lifetimes, Zhou Shu felt as though he had been knocked unconscious by money!

Fifty thousand taels of gold!

With Shen Yue's status, it was very difficult to gather 10,000 taels of gold. 50,000 gold taels was definitely a huge sum to anyone.

He felt as if he had been hit by a hundred lottery tickets, the kind that emptied the prize pool.

*I am rich!*

*Wait, why do I feel like I've suffered a loss?*

*Should I have really given the Heaven Refining Stone to him?*

All Zhou Shu knew about the Heaven Refining Stone was what Yin Changhao had just told him.

Zhou Shu had no idea how valuable this thing was.

But recalling Yin Changhao's expression, Zhou Shu felt that he might have suffered from false information!

"Brother, call me along the next time you do something like this. Let's go together!" Yin Changhao laughed.

Zhou Shu was speechless. *Do you think that I made a living by robbing others?*

"Goodbye, I won't see you off." Zhou Shu threw the Heaven Refining Stone to Yin Changhao and turned to leave.

"Don't follow me anymore, or I won't be polite," Zhou Shu said fiercely.

Yin Changhao chuckled. He had no intention of investigating Zhou Shu's identity.

Experts all had their own secrets. The other party had no ill intentions toward Great Xia, so there was no need to anger him to fulfill his curiosity.

Yin Changhao tossed the Heaven Refining Stone up and down with a brilliant smile.

He lifted his feet lightly and transformed into a bolt of lightning, disappearing in the direction of Chang'an.

Zhou Shu circled around Chang'an a few times and used all sorts of counter-surveillance means that he had learned from TV dramas in his previous life to confirm that Yin Changhao was not following him.

He then changed his attire and returned to the baron's mansion quietly.

He had given the Heaven Refining Stone to Yin Changhao. Although he wasn't sure whether he had made a profit or a loss, he didn't regret it.

Even if he sold it cheaply, it was nothing. Anyway, he got it for free.

Obtaining 50,000 taels of gold out of nowhere had far exceeded his expectations. What was there to be unsatisfied about?

...

After returning to the baron's mansion, Zhou Shu slept until the sun rose.

After getting out of bed, he called over a few of the servants the Mi family had assigned to him and arranged for them to purchase some things that the baron's residence needed.

Now that he had money, he naturally had to take care of the baron's residence.

After making these arrangements, Zhou Shu went to the Forging Division's government office.

The Forging Division was an enormous organization. The workshops outside the city were only a part of it.

In the capital, there was also its headquarters, the office of the Forging Division.

Other than that, the first 36 workshops of the Forging Division were distributed throughout the various prefectures of Great Xia. There were also some departments that were responsible for purchasing and collecting forging materials.

The headquarters of the Forging Division was also where Grand Minister Yin Wuyou and the four ministers were usually.

Zhou Shu did not come to find them.

He came to the Forging Division's library to look up information.

Yesterday's experience had taught him that relying solely on the Legendary Armament Canon was not enough for a Forging Master. The Legendary Armament Canon could only let him know how weapons were forged, but it wouldn't let him know the principles behind it.

In other words, Zhou Shu knew how to forge weapons, but he didn't know why.

Therefore, he decided to supplement his forging knowledge in order to avoid the embarrassment of not knowing about materials.

Zhou Shu searched through the library for a long time, but he didn't find anything related to weapons. In the end, he could only go to the bookkeeper in charge of the library. "Excuse me, Sir. Why isn't there any information on ranked weapons?"

"The information on ranked weapons is on the second floor. Only Forging Masters have access." The bookkeeper glanced at Zhou Shu. Although Zhou Shu could be considered a famous person within the Forging Division, there were no pictures in this world. The bookkeeper only knew his name and not how he looked, so he didn't know Zhou Shu.

"Only Forging Masters have access?" Zhou Shu frowned. "I can't access it even though I'm a workshop superintendent?"

"No," the bookkeeper said firmly. "Unless the grand minister permits it."

"I need permission from the grand minister?"

"Of course!"

Zhou Shu had no choice but to leave the library to find Yin Wuyou.

Yin Wuyou wasn't as idle as Zhou Shu. She had already arrived at the Forging Division Headquarters early to work.

Zhou Shu soon saw Yin Wuyou, who was engrossed in her work.

Yin Wuyou had a strand of long hair hanging down from his forehead. She was deeply engrossed in her work, and her perfect side profile emitted a charming glow.

*Some people are really favored by God. It's as if all good things belong to them,* Zhou Shu thought.

Yin Wuyou looked up at Zhou Shu. "Is there something you need me for? I have business to attend to today, so I can't accompany you for a field survey."

The veins on Zhou Shu's forehead twitched. *Did you really take the field survey seriously?*

"No. Grand Minister, I want to ask you for approval." Zhou Shu changed the topic. "I want to go to the library to look up some information regarding ranked weapons. The bookkeeper said that only Forging Masters have access to them. Otherwise, I require the approval of the grand minister."

"You want to check the information on ranked weapons?" Yin Wuyou put down the document in her hand and looked at Zhou Shu in surprise. "Are you going to advance to Forging Master?"

"No..." Zhou Shu said. "It's not that easy to become a Forging Master. I just want to learn more about forging and accumulate experience for becoming a Forging Master in the future."

"I see," Yin Wuyou said. "There's nothing good in the Forging Division's library. The real good stuff is in the small library of the first thirty-six workshops."

The institutional setup of Great Xia's Forging Division was in the first 36 workshops. They were almost independent existences under the Forging Division.

If one had to describe it, the Forging Division was equivalent to an alliance, and the first 36 workshops were the various large sects.

The first 36 workshops not only took on forging tasks, but they were also the cultivation system for Great Xia's forgers. Each workshop had its own forging inheritance.

Most of Great Xia's Forging Masters were trained there. The workshops after the first 36 were just simple factories.

Of course, it was much more complicated in reality.

"If you want to know more about ranked weapons, let me think of a way," Yin Wuyou said. "After I finish with these things, I'll go get some information for you. Go back and wait for me!"

Yin Wuyou decided everything and then kicked Zhou Shu out of the Forging Division. This made Zhou Shu feel like he was a freeloader...

Yin Wuyou was very efficient. In the afternoon, she had Haitang deliver a pile of books to Zhou Shu.

"Sir, Her Highness borrowed these from the imperial library. You must not damage them. Otherwise, Her Highness will get into trouble too," Haitang instructed worriedly.

“Got it. Say, Haitang, why are you naggier than Her Highness?” Zhou Shu waved his hand. “Don’t worry. I won’t spoil them. I’m just reading them, not eating them!”

After sending Haitang away, Zhou Shu impatiently plunged into the sea of books.

It was indeed easy to depend on others.

Ordinary people wouldn’t be able to see the treasures in the imperial library!

Zhou Shu continued to read until the sky gradually darkened. He lit a lamp and continued to flip through the pages, even skipping meals.

It was not until midnight that he lifted his head from the pile of books and let out a long breath.

*So, these are ranked weapons.* Zhou Shu sighed. *I really don’t know who invented ranked weapons. They’re amazing!*

Zhou Shu sighed from the bottom of his heart.

Only now did he know what ranked weapons were.

Previously, he had always thought that the weapons in this world were not too different from those on Earth. At most, one would use better materials to make the weapons sharper and sturdier.

Only now did he realize that he was wrong, ridiculously wrong!

Whether a weapon was ranked or not was related to the forging materials, but this was not the most fundamental.

Ranked weapons were considered ranked weapons because they had meridians!

That’s right, meridians!

There were also meridians in this world. The human body had 12 principal meridians and 8 extraordinary vessels. It was similar to the Traditional Chinese Medicine Theory that Zhou Shu had come into contact with in his previous life.

According to this theory, the human body had 720 acupuncture points.

It was unknown which mighty figure had used the human body as a reference to create ranked weapons.

The so-called ranked weapons were existences with veins, which were similar to the human body’s meridians, in the inner part of the weapon. In the terminology of forgers, it was star paths!

Forging star paths for weapons was called fixing stars!

In layman’s terms, fixing stars was to establish acupuncture points within the weapon. The more acupuncture points one built, the more powerful the weapon would be!

This was the foundation of ranked weapons!

On the other hand, the forging material needed for fixing stars was Heaven Refining Stones!

Without Heaven Refining Stones, one wouldn't be able to fix stars on a weapon. Thus, one would naturally not be able to create a ranked weapon.

The more star positions there were, the more Heaven Refining Stones needed.

This was also the reason why Heaven Refining Stones were so precious.

*Depending on the number of star positions and star paths, the grade of the weapon will be differentiated, Zhou Shu thought.*

*Weapons have star paths. Once spiritual essence enters them, it will circulate within the weapons as if it was in the human body, allowing people to unleash the power of multiple divine abilities. What a genius idea!*

Regardless of whether it was true qi or spiritual essence, when going through different meridians in the body, it would have different effects on the body. This was the principle behind Martial Dao techniques.

The star paths in weapons were similar to the meridians of the human body. When spiritual essence traveled on the star paths, it could stimulate the power of the weapons. The more star paths, the more power the weapons could unleash.

Theoretically, once a weapon had a complete set of 12 principal meridians and 8 extraordinary vessels, its power would reach an unimaginable level.

However, no one seemed to be able to create such a weapon right now.

Even for heaven-grade weapons, the highest record was only 600 stars.

*When I fought with Xiao Shunzhi last time, if I could unleash the full power of a heaven-grade weapon, I might not have necessarily lost to him.*

Although Zhou Shu had heaven-grade weapons, he didn't know how to use them.

It was only now that he realized that he had used a rifle as a stick!

But then again, Xiao Shunzhi was the Great Wei imperial preceptor, so he might have a heaven-grade weapon in his hands.

Even if Zhou Shu knew how to use a heaven-grade weapon, he might not be able to gain any advantage.

*No wonder it's said that ordinary Forging Apprentices will never be able to advance to Forging Master unless they receive a legacy. This isn't just a matter of skill.*

*Without a legacy, who can comprehend this?*

*Even if I know that ranked weapons require fixing stars, I don't know how to do it.*

The information Yin Wuyou had Haitang send over was already very detailed, and it even included some of the experiences of Grand Craftsmen in forging weapons.

However, Zhou Shu still had no idea how to fix stars in a weapon.



Every lineage had its own secret techniques for fixing stars into ranked weapons. These were all secret techniques unrecorded or passed to outsiders. They were impossible to guess.

Only if he had enough Heaven Refining Stones would he maybe be able to find a way to stabilize the stars.

But Heaven Refining Stones were incomparably precious. Even the Forging Division couldn't be so generous.

*According to the description in these materials, Heaven Refining Stones should be a non-renewable resource. Now that they're being mined less and less, they might disappear at any time.*

*The reason Big Brother Mi's family is so rich is that they have a Heaven Refining Stone mineral mine!*

*The Mi family's ancestors made an agreement with Great Xia's founding emperor, Emperor Xuan. They gave up on the honor of contributing to the founding of Great Xia and chose to possess a Heaven Refining Stone mine. This choice is truly amazing.*

*A Heaven Refining Stone the size of an adult's fist can be sold for a hundred thousand taels of gold. Big Brother Mi's family has a mine. How much money is that?*

Before, Zhou Shu couldn't imagine why Mi Ziwen was so generous. He had given Zhou Shu thousands of taels of silver as soon as they met, and he had even given him a mansion in the capital.

This was what it meant to have a mine at home, and a diamond mine at that!

Heaven Refining Stones were much more expensive than diamonds!

*In the future, when I forge ranked weapons, will I be able to enjoy the benefits of being in a favorable position?*

Zhou Shu thought that having a wealthy sworn brother would bring about many benefits.

*According to the information, there are divine weapons above heaven-grade weapons. I wonder what kind of existence they are. But it seems that divine weapons are just a theory. They are just like the Divine Craftsmen who can forge divine weapons. The names are recorded, but they have never appeared before.*

*Forget about divine weapons. Even perfect heaven-grade weapons haven't been forged before.*

*What's the point of thinking so much? I'm still a Forging Apprentice now. Wait until I can forge a yellow-grade weapon first,* Zhou Shu thought in a self-deprecating manner.

*Yellow-grade weapons contain one to five star paths and at most a hundred and eighty stars. The difficulty of forging this grade of weapon is already quite high. It's no wonder that the status of a Forging Master is so high.. Forging ranked weapons is really a skill.*

## **Chapter 126: Requesting for a Saber**

For the next few days, Zhou Shu stayed in the baron's mansion to study the materials that Yin Wuyou had borrowed for him. He didn't even go to the 0th Workshop.

...

With the excuse of field surveying, Yin Wuyou didn't care about him at all.

In any case, the 0th Workshop had already developed quite a few standard weapons. People couldn't say that the 0th Workshop had no results.

With the helpers sent over from Mi Ziwen's residence, Zhou Shu didn't have to worry about anything else. He focused on absorbing the knowledge regarding ranked weapons.

Yin Wuyou had put in a lot of effort. There was also a complete book on forging materials that recorded the characteristics of hundreds of different materials.

If this book was placed outside, it would probably be snatched by countless forgers.

The imperial family was the imperial family after all. Even though they hadn't produced a capable forger for many generations, in terms of their book collection, there were probably not many people in the world who had a comparable one.

The more Zhou Shu read, the more engrossed he became. Only now did he truly feel the charm of forging. Previously, when he forged, it was either because he was forced to or because of the Legendary Armament Canon.

Now, he wanted to study forging.

If someone hadn't come to interrupt his research, Zhou Shu would have continued to immerse himself in the sea of books.

*I owe Yin Wuyou a big favor this time.*

Zhou Shu listened to the steward's report and looked up from his book.

When he interacted with Yin Wuyou before, although she was his boss, he had never felt like he owed her anything.

Although Yin Wuyou had indeed helped him a lot, he had also brought a lot of results to Yin Wuyou.

It was a fair exchange.

Zhou Shu had overlooked the fact that his contributions couldn't be exchanged for so many rewards. Especially the Emperor Xuan Jade Book, it was practically a priceless treasure.

Zhou Shu didn't know about these things, but he did feel as though he owed Yin Wuyou a big favor for all the information on ranked weapons.

In any world, knowledge was precious wealth.

Ordinary forgers might not be able to come into contact with such information in their lifetime.

Just because of a single sentence from him, Yin Wuyou showed him the imperial library's collection. This favor was truly immense.

*I still have to think about how to return her favor,* Zhou Shu thought. He was not used to owing people, especially women.

*Commander Cheng Wanli of the Huben Troops, why is he looking for me?*

Zhou Shu temporarily put his relationship with Yin Wuyou aside. He wasn't in a hurry to return the favor.

There were people waiting for him.

When he came to the front hall, Zhou Shu immediately saw Cheng Wanli, the Huben Troops' general, and Cheng Yong, the Huben Troops' lieutenant, whom he was more familiar with, sitting there drinking tea.

Upon seeing Zhou Shu enter, Cheng Wanli and Cheng Yong both stood up and cupped their hands.

"Lord, sorry to disturb you."

Zhou Shu had seen Cheng Wanli before. Back when he was a mere apprentice at the 97th Workshop, he had followed Xiao Zongshui to the Huben Troops' camp.

At the time, he had just forged the Huben Saber.

At the time, Cheng Wanli had been very arrogant and had barely looked him in the eye. He wasn't as polite as he was now.

But he couldn't blame Cheng Wanli.

Although Cheng Wanli was not a ranked martial artist back then, he was a general of the Country Protector Army and in charge of the Huben Troops. His official rank was as high as the fourth rank!

Even though Zhou Shu was already a baron, he was still one rank lower than Cheng Wanli.

At the time, there was nothing strange about him looking down on a Forging Apprentice.

"General Cheng, you are too polite."

Zhou Shu sized up Cheng Wanli. Cheng Wanli had already entered the ranks, and his cultivation level was the same as Zhou Shu's on the surface. They were both ninth-grade martial artists.

This was a world where martial artists and ordinary people lived together. It didn't mean that one would be promoted to a higher position just because they had higher cultivation. It also didn't mean that one couldn't become a high official just because they were unranked.

Zhou Shu and Cheng Wanli were two living examples.

Their spiritual essence cultivation was nothing in the martial arts world, but their official positions were not low.

"General Cheng, may I know why you are here?" Zhou Shu asked.

"I wouldn't dare." Cheng Wanli was very polite. Although his official position was one rank higher than Zhou Shu's, the two of them were not ranked in the same system, so there was no hierarchy between them.

Moreover, he was already over forty years old, and he could already see the end of his road of promotion. Zhou Shu wasn't even twenty years old yet, so his position in the future would definitely be above his.

"I have a request." Cheng Wanli cupped his fists.

Cheng Yong cupped his hands as well.

He had had two drinks with Zhou Shu, so they were quite familiar with each other. This time, Cheng Wanli specially called him over to make friends with Zhou Shu.

"General Cheng, I'm just the superintendent of a workshop in the Forging Division. How can I help you?" Zhou Shu said noncommittally.

Although he didn't hate Cheng Wanli for what had happened before, he didn't have much of a relationship with Cheng Wanli, so he naturally wouldn't agree right away.

"Actually, it's not a big deal." Cheng Wanli smiled. "Superintendent Zhou, I came here to ask you for a saber."

"You want a saber?" Zhou Shu said. "General Cheng, if you want to purchase Huben Sabers, you can go directly to the 97th Workshop. The Huben Sabers are produced there."

The standard equipment of the Huben Troops was the Huben Saber. Although the ownership of the Huben Saber had been returned to Zhou Shu, the 97th Workshop was in charge of forging them.

After all, the 0th Workshop's current responsibility was to develop standard weapons, not mass produce them.

"Lord, you have misunderstood." Cheng Wanli shook his head. "I'm not here for the Huben Saber.

"I would like to ask you for a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!" Cheng Wanli said solemnly.

Zhou Shu was slightly stunned. "Great Xia Dragon Sparrow?"

He looked at Cheng Wanli in surprise. Cheng Wanli was already a ninth-rank martial artist. Shouldn't he get himself a ranked weapon?

By now, Zhou Shu already knew that the difference between ranked weapons and standard weapons was like the difference between heaven and earth.

In some cases, a ranked martial artist's strength could double when equipped with a ranked weapon!

With Cheng Wanli's status, it wasn't easy to get a good ranked weapon, but it shouldn't be a problem to get an ordinary one.

"General Cheng, you want a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow. Are you planning to use it yourself, or are you planning to give it to the Huben Troops?" Zhou Shu asked.

Not many people knew about the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber. Cheng Wanli actually knew about the existence of the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, which made Zhou Shu think highly of him.

Although Cheng Wanli's position was not high, as the commander of the Imperial Guards, he was considered the emperor's trusted aide.

"I'm going to use it myself," Cheng Wanli said. "To tell you the truth, Lord Zhou, I have already entered the ranks. Originally, I wanted to change to a ranked weapon, but I have yet to find a suitable one.

"Now that I am about to leave the Huben Troops, it is no longer appropriate to use the Huben Saber.

"That's why I specially came to ask you for a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!"

Since there were no suitable weapons for now, he would use the strongest standard weapon. The name Great Xia Dragon Sparrow was even more domineering than the Huben Saber!

"General Cheng, you're leaving the Huben Troops?" Zhou Shu said in surprise.

He remembered that the first time he went to the Huben Troops' camp, Xiao Zongshui had introduced him to Cheng Wanli. At the time, Cheng Wanli had just taken over the Huben Troops. How long had it been?

But after he thought about it, Cheng Wanli had already entered the ranks. And judging from his appearance, he should have been promoted.

"It's confidential information. Please forgive me for not being able to say more," Cheng Wanli said.

"Lord, I will provide all the materials needed to forge a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber. Please name your price." Cheng Wanli cupped his fists.

"General Cheng, you seem to be mistaken." Zhou Shu shook his head. "This isn't a store. If you want a Grand Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, you can go to the Forging Division to register and purchase it."

"I've been to the Forging Division. There's no Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber in the Forging Division's standard weapon register!" Cheng Wanli said.

That's right. The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber had just been developed and had not reached the stage of mass forging. Naturally, it wouldn't be given to the three armies of Great Xia.

Let alone the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, even the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber had not been publicly listed.

"Lord, I am here to ask you for the saber in my personal capacity," Cheng Wanli said in a deep voice.

"Lord, you are the creator of the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, and the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber has yet to be recorded in the Forging Division's standard weapon register. In other words, the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is still your personal item.

"It is not against the rules of the Forging Division for you to sell your personal items."

In the words of Zhou Shu's previous life, the workshop superintendents of the Forging Division, as well as the Forging Apprentices, were all people working for the country. Naturally, there would be some restrictions.

They had used the resources of the Forging Division to create the standard weapons, so the ownership of the weapons belonged to the Forging Division. The developers only had attribution rights.

This was the same in Zhou Shu's previous life. When a person published their achievements while employed, the unit would take some of the benefits.

Otherwise, why would the Forging Division provide support for the Forging Apprentices?

Since the patent rights belonged to the Forging Division, theoretically speaking, even Zhou Shu, the inventor, couldn't casually forge Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers for others.

However, this patent hadn't been registered yet, so using it once wasn't illegal.

Cheng Wanli wanted Zhou Shu to take advantage of this loophole.

Zhou Shu looked at Cheng Wanli. *This guy looks so righteous with his thick eyebrows and big eyes, but he's full of tricks.*

Back then, he and Xiao Zongshui had deliberately raised the price of the Huben Sabers and obtained many benefits.

Now, he actually wanted him to use this loophole to help him forge a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber?

"Sorry."

Would Zhou Shu listen to him? What nonsense.

Although Zhou Shu didn't care about the rules, and the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was developed by him, he wouldn't do such a thing for an irrelevant person.

What good would that do him?

"Lord, listen to me first." Cheng Wanli's expression remained unchanged as he spoke in a deep voice. "Other than the materials needed to forge the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, I am willing to pay another thousand taels of silver!"

Zhou Shu had recently come into contact with more than 10,000 taels of gold. When he suddenly heard that Cheng Wanli was willing to pay 1,000 taels of silver, he nearly blurted out, "Is that considered money?"

But on second thought, 1,000 taels of silver was really not a small amount. An ordinary standard weapon was worth a few taels of silver to a dozen taels of silver. Expensive ones were only a few dozen taels of silver.

This was the standard pricing.

For a standard weapon, 1,000 taels of silver was definitely a high price.

Cheng Wanli was quite rich.

However, Zhou Shu still chose to refuse. "I'm sorry, General Cheng. I can't help you with this."

He wanted the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow. Although he had enough money, they were not close enough.

Zhou Shu stayed in the Forging Division because he hoped to distribute the weapons he forged through the channels of the Forging Division to the Grand Xia's three armies. He didn't want to ruin his foundation in the Forging Division just to help Cheng Wanli.

When it came to loopholes, with the first time, there would be a second time. Sooner or later, something would happen.

"Lord—" Cheng Wanli was about to say something when a voice came from outside.

"Give it to him!" The voice was as clear as a silver bell. Following this, a beautiful woman in a gauze dress walked in.

Yin Wuyou's long hair was loose, and she had tied it up simply with a headband behind her head, seemingly like she was dressed at home.

Cheng Wanli and Cheng Yong only took a glance before they hurriedly lowered their heads and bowed. "Greetings, Your Highness!"

"I'm not the princess now. I'm the grand minister of the Forging Division," Yin Wuyou said.

"General Cheng, you want a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber?"

"Your Highness—" Cheng Wanli wanted to explain.

However, Yin Wuyou didn't give him a chance to explain. "Superintendent Zhou, why don't you want to earn money? Help General Cheng forge one!"

"Grand Minister, this—" Zhou Shu wanted to say that this was against the rules.

Yin Wuyou shook her head. "I'm the grand minister of the Forging Division. I'm saying it's okay!"

Zhou Shu rolled his eyes in his head. *Since you said it, I'm not responsible for it. In the future, don't take this as an excuse to kick me out of the Forging Division!*

"Alright." Zhou Shu nodded.

"General Cheng, that will be one thousand taels of silver." Zhou Shu extended his hand in front of Cheng Wanli.

Cheng Wanli looked up at Yin Wuyou. Seeing that Yin Wuyou didn't seem to lose her temper, he hesitated for a moment before taking out a large banknote and handing it to Zhou Shu.

At the same time, he was wondering why the princess was here. *Could it be...*

Cheng Wanli quickly cut off his thoughts. As the former commander of the Imperial Guards, he knew exactly what he should know and what he should pretend not to see!

"Your Highness, I'm requesting the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber because I want to live up to His Majesty's expectations." Cheng Wanli cupped his hands. "I will definitely use the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber to raise the prestige of Great Xia!"

His expression was solemn, and his eyes were full of sincerity. At this moment, he didn't seem like a pretentious general but like an indomitable warrior.

"You don't have to tell me that. Just tell yourself." Yin Wuyou shook her head. "I only hope that you don't disgrace the name of the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow!"

Zhou Shu watched as they spoke, but he was still in a daze and couldn't be bothered to continue listening.

"General Cheng, I happen to have a forged Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber here. I'll give it to you." Zhou Shu said. "As for the materials needed to forge the saber, I'll convert them into money. It's probably—"

Before Zhou Shu could finish speaking, Yin Wuyou interrupted, "Three hundred taels!"

Zhou Shu's expression didn't change, but he was shocked in his heart. *Three hundred taels?*

If he didn't remember wrongly, the iron used in the Forging Division wasn't that expensive, right? It seemed like five kilograms of iron was only worth one tael...

One Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber consumed 150 kilograms of iron. This was worth at most 30 taels. She increased the price by 10 times?

Cheng Wanli didn't hesitate. He immediately took out three banknotes worth 100 taels and stuffed them into Zhou Shu's hands.

Zhou Shu was a little confused. One was asking for a sky-high price, and the other was actually willing to pay!

Had he encountered another blind spot in his knowledge?

## **Chapter 127: Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber's Opportunity to Kill**

Yin Wuyou's actions made Zhou Shu overlook why she appeared in his home.

...

Only when Cheng Wanli happily left with a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber did Zhou Shu come to his senses.

"Grand Minister, why are you here?" Zhou Shu looked at Yin Wuyou.

Even though he had seen Yin Wuyou countless times, he still felt a little stunned every time he saw her. She was wearing a simple and elegant dress, and under the contrast of her curvaceous figure, she gave off a different kind of warm feeling.

"I can't come?" Yin Wuyou delicately rolled her eyes.

"No, I'm just curious," Zhou Shu said.

"Of course I'm here for something. Your steward said that you were in the middle of meeting someone, so I didn't ask him to inform you and came in directly."



*Yin Wuyou doesn't treat herself as an outsider. It's fine that she lives next door, but now she doesn't even announce her arrival?*

*Is this the baron's residence or the princess's residence?*

Zhou Shu cursed in his heart.

"What is it? Why did you ask me to sell the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber to General Cheng? Isn't this somewhat against the rules? He should go to the Forging Division to purchase it."

"It's fine. Why not earn some money?" Yin Wuyou replied. "Cheng Wanli doesn't lack money anyway."

Yin Wuyou spoke as if it was a matter of course and didn't take it seriously at all.

"Alright." Zhou Shu actually didn't care why. In any case, he had made a small profit and didn't need to take responsibility. This was a good thing.

"Grand Minister, you haven't told me why you're here," Zhou Shu continued asking.

Yin Wuyou replied, "Just like Cheng Wanli."

"You're here for a saber too?" Zhou Shu said. As soon as he said this, he knew something was wrong. Yin Wuyou was the grand minister of the Forging Division, and she was free to take standard weapons whenever she wanted.

"The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, are you here for the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber?" Zhou Shu corrected himself.

"Yes." Yin Wuyou nodded. "Zhou Shu, let me ask you, if I allow you to freely mobilize the resources of the Forging Division workshops, how fast can you forge?"

"The craftsmanship of the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is extremely complicated. With the workshop's current conditions, only I can forge it," Zhou Shu said in a low voice.

The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber was different from other standard weapons. Even if the forging process was broken down, ordinary apprentices wouldn't be able to do it.

"Unless Forging Masters take action, the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber can't be mass produced. With my speed, I can forge one every two days."

Zhou Shu gave a conservative number. In truth, if he went all-out, it wouldn't be difficult for him to forge a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber every day. However, he had other things to do, and he couldn't spend the entire day forging.

"One every two days?" Yin Wuyou frowned. "We won't make it in time like this."

"In time for what?" Zhou Shu asked curiously.

"Do you know why Cheng Wanli suddenly came to you for a saber?" Yin Wuyou answered with a question.

Zhou Shu shook his head. *How would I know? I'm not familiar with Cheng Wanli. I didn't even get to speak to Cheng Yong just now.*

“The Imperial Court is currently establishing a new Country Protector Army, responsible for taking over the You and Bing prefectures. Cheng Wanli will be in charge of this new Country Protector Army,” Yin Wuyou said.

Although this was a military secret, Yin Wuyou didn’t hide it from Zhou Shu.

“Take over You and Bing prefectures?” Zhou Shu thought of the bet between Great Xia and Great Wei and asked curiously, “Is Great Xia so sure of winning?”

The bet between Great Xia and Great Wei was based on who ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual. The wager was two prefectures.

If the weapon ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual came from Great Xia, then Great Wei would return the two prefectures to Great Xia. Otherwise, Great Xia would give two prefectures to Great Wei.

The Standard Armament Manual rankings hadn’t been announced yet, so it was still uncertain who would win.

But Great Xia had already started to prepare the army to take over the You and Bing prefectures?

Weren’t they counting their chickens too soon?

“If we lose, we will send troops to take back the You and Bing prefectures!” Yin Wuyou had a murderous look on her face.

“You’re not kidding, right? If we attack rashly, will the other countries just sit back and watch?” Zhou Shu was speechless.

The ten countries of the land stood side by side. In the beginning, in order to reduce conflict, the ten countries had an agreement to settle disputes through the Ten Nations Martial Arts Tournament.

Although the Ten Nations Martial Arts Tournament was only in name now, if the two countries really fought, the other countries would definitely take advantage of the situation.

At that time, it might become a world war.

“I don’t know if it’s a joke or not, but the establishment of the You Prefecture Army and the Bing Prefecture Army are already set in stone,” Yin Wuyou replied. “This has nothing to do with you. The responsibility of the Forging Division is merely to supply weapons.

“I was planning to equip them with the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, but it seems like I won’t be able to now.” Yin Wuyou frowned.

Yin Wuyou was the grand minister of the Forging Division. She had the right to make a lot of suggestions as to what weapons an army should be equipped with.

Originally, she had wanted to make use of the recovering of the two prefectures to make the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber known to the world. It would be a good thing for Zhou Shu and the Forging Division.

However, the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber couldn’t be mass produced now.

“Grand Minister, we can’t mass produce the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber, but we can mass produce the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber.” Zhou Shu’s eyes lit up.

War meant an opportunity to kill enemies.

Zhou Shu didn’t like war, but an opportunity to kill enemies meant a massive increase in his cultivation.

Of course, he couldn’t let go of such an opportunity.

“Grand Minister, to the Country Protector Army, the power of the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber is enough. The Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber can be given to the generals of the army,” Zhou Shu said.

Of the six sabers he had developed, or rather, of the six sabers in the Legendary Armament Canon, the Huben Saber, the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, and the Horse Slaying Saber were all showing their prowess on the battlefield in the southern borders. From time to time, they would give him a wave of benefits.

The Spring Embroidered Saber had already been supplied to the Divine Constable Bureau. In the future, there would be no lack of chances for it to complete kills.

Only the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber and the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber were not equipped to anyone.

Zhou Shu had originally wanted to sell them to the Country Protector Army.

Now that such a great opportunity was presented to him, how could he miss it?

If Great Xia lost the bet, they would send the army to recover the two prefectures.

The You Prefecture Army and the Bing Prefecture Army definitely existed for the sake of battle.

Just think about it. Even if Great Wei returned the two prefectures to Great Xia, they had occupied the two prefectures for over a hundred years. Would they be able to wipe them out in an instant?

Impossible!

At that time, the You Prefecture Army and the Bing Prefecture Army would definitely have plenty of opportunities to fight!

“Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber?” Yin Wuyou nodded. “The Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber is indeed enough.

“Can the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber be mass produced?”

There would be a lot of people in the You Prefecture Army and the Bing Prefecture Army. The number of weapons needed would also be vast.

If the production of the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber couldn’t keep up, it would be impossible to use it.

“Yes!” Zhou Shu said in a low voice. “My subordinates have been practicing the forging process of the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber day and night. They can start working at the various workshops at any time.”

It would be much more efficient to break down the forging process than having the Forging Apprentices forge the weapons individually.

Furthermore, it would be very difficult for Forging Apprentices to master the forging method of the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber alone.

“Grand Minister, if you can give me the workers from five workshops, I can supply five thousand Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers within a month!”

In order to obtain an opportunity, Zhou Shu had to give it his all.

“Five thousand a month is too slow.” Yin Wuyou shook her head. “I’ll allow you to use all the resources in ten workshops. I want to see five thousand Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers within ten days!”

*Ten days?* Zhou Shu frowned. *Your Highness, you really can order people around.*

“It’s not that I’m anxious, but the Standard Armament Manual’s ranking will be announced in ten days at most. The You Prefecture Army and the Bing Prefecture Army must be formed before then!” Yin Wuyou noticed Zhou Shu’s expression and explained. “If there are too few Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers, we won’t even be able to equip a brigade. Five thousand is sufficient to equip a brigade.”

To Zhou Shu, all he needed to do was send the hundred sabers he had personally forged into the army. However, he definitely couldn’t just send a hundred sabers.

“Alright, I’ll accept it!” Zhou Shu thought for a moment. Five thousand in ten days meant five hundred in a day. After dividing the work, it meant fifty a day for each workshop.

The Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber was much harder to forge than ordinary standard sabers. But for a workshop, it wasn’t too difficult to forge fifty sabers a day.

“There are still ten days to go. How many Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers can you give me?” Yin Wuyou continued to ask.

The Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers would be given to ordinary soldiers, and the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers would be given to generals. Yin Wuyou was determined to use this opportunity to make a name for the Forging Division’s 0th Workshop.

Zhou Shu would naturally not let go of such a good opportunity.

“A hundred!” Zhou Shu gritted his teeth.

He already had more than ten Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers. With his current cultivation base, if he had enough materials, he would only need four hours to forge one.

Without sleep or rest, he could forge five or six weapons a day.

It was difficult to forge a hundred Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers in ten days, but it was not impossible!

With his current cultivation, he wouldn’t die if he didn’t sleep for ten days and ten nights!

Men should be tough to themselves!

"A hundred?" Yin Wuyou was astonished.

She was very clear that only Zhou Shu was capable of forging the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber. He could forge ten Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers in a day?

How was this possible?

Even if it was just forging standard sabers, it was already the limit for an experienced Forging Apprentice to be able to forge three sabers a day.

In Yin Wuyou's opinion, it was normal for a standard saber like the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber to be forged in a few days.

She had seen it with her own eyes when Zhou Shu forged it previously. It had taken quite some time.

It was impossible to guarantee a 100% success rate when forging.

Yin Wuyou originally thought it would be considered very fast if he could successfully forge one a day.

"Zhou Shu, this isn't child's play. I will take your word for it!" Yin Wuyou said seriously.

"I'm not joking. A hundred sabers in ten days, I mean what I say!

"If I can't produce a hundred Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers by then, you can do whatever you want with me!" Zhou Shu said seriously.

This was the perfect opportunity to max out the number of Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers and distribute them.

Then he would just wait for the rewards...

Ten days of hard work would be worth it!

Zhou Shu was determined. He looked as though he was willing to go through fire and water for Great Xia!

Yin Wuyou was moved. *He's willing to go all out for me?*

Yin Wuyou's eyes flickered as she tenderly glanced at Zhou Shu. "Alright, I believe you can do it."

With that, Yin Wuyou lifted the corner of her skirt and quickly left.

Zhou Shu was baffled by what Yin Wuyou said. *Women are strange.*

*Isn't that obvious whether I can do it or not?*

Zhou Shu didn't think about Yin Wuyou anymore. He left some simple instructions and headed straight for the 0th Workshop.

Putting aside the Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber, forging a hundred Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers in ten days was definitely a challenge for him.

Before, Zhou Shu himself didn't have the confidence to complete this.

But recently, he had been studying all kinds of forging materials. Now, his understanding of forging had reached a whole new level. Thinking about it now, forging standard weapons should be even easier.

Furthermore, his own cultivation had also increased. This would be very helpful for forging.

With greater strength, it was naturally more efficient.

To be able to forge a hundred Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers in ten days was also a challenge that Zhou Shu gave himself!

...

At the 0th Workshop, Zhou Shu acted like a heartless boss, directly waking Zhang Yibei and the others from their sleep.

Without another word, he placed the 1,300 taels of silver that he had just earned from Cheng Wanli in front of everyone.

"There are one thousand and three hundred taels here. Each person gets around thirty," Zhou Shu said directly.

Zhang Yibei and the others looked at each other in dismay. Then they felt a little uneasy.

"Superintendent, are you trying to chase us away?"

Giving out money out of nowhere, wasn't this the prelude to disbanding?

Thirty taels of silver was equivalent to two to three years of their salary.

*Whoosh—*

The group of Forging Apprentices knelt on the ground and shouted,

"Superintendent, don't chase us away! If we did anything wrong, you can punish us however you want, but don't chase us away!"

Zhou Shu's expression darkened. "All of you get up! Who said I was going to chase you away?"

"Then, why did you suddenly give us money?" Zhang Yibei said nervously.

"This is your salary," Zhou Shu said. "From now on, I want you to go to the other workshops and lead the other Forging Apprentices to forge Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers! Forge as many as you can within ten days. The money is your overtime pay!"

"Overtime pay?" Zhang Yibei and the others were confused.

"All you need to know is that once you take the money, you have to work! As long as you don't die, you have to work as much as you can! For the next ten days, you don't have to treat yourselves as humans. Just work!"

When Zhang Yibei and the others heard this, they heaved a sigh of relief. They had been scared to death. They thought something had happened. Was it just work?

Were they like humans in the past?

Only after coming to the 0th Workshop did they live like human beings. Who didn't go all out in the past?

No one had given them so much money back then.

Not to mention that each person could get 30 taels, even if they didn't, they would still do their best.

Besides, they got 30 taels of silver each.. There was no need to live like human beings. They would just work!

## **Chapter 128: Great Xia's First Weapon Forging Apprentice**

According to Zhou Shu's understanding of purchasing power, thirty taels of silver was equivalent to tens of thousands of yuan in his previous life. This immediately made Zhang Yibei and the other apprentices excited.

...

They could earn tens of thousands of yuan just by working hard for ten days. Where else could they find such a good deal?

The lowest level of working people like them were least afraid of selling their lives!

Zhang Yibei took the lead and shouted, "Don't worry, Superintendent. We will do our best!"

"This time, you will need to work together with ten workshops. Zhang Yibei, you will be in charge of allocating everyone. You must arrange everything properly. I don't care about anything else. Within ten days, I want to see no less than five thousand Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers!

"You have trained for so long. Let me see the effect of your training!"

"If the mission is completed well, I will reward you handsomely when it's over!" Zhou Shu said.

There were more rewards? Zhang Yibei and the rest were even more excited.

They eagerly went to work. Zhou Shu didn't waste any time. He went to the back courtyard of the 0th Workshop and began to forge Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers!

The Forging Apprentices could make use of the manpower in ten workshops. Although they had to forge 5,000 Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers in ten days, it was not impossible to complete this mission.

After all, if hundreds or even thousands of people worked on it, it should be no problem for them to forge 5,000 Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers in ten days.

On the other hand, it was very difficult for Zhou Shu to forge a hundred Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers in ten days!

He was alone, and no one could help him. Even if he already had more than ten Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers, whether he could complete this mission or not was still up to him.

*Had I known earlier, I wouldn't have wasted my time. If I had continued forging, I could have saved up quite a number of Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers.*

Zhou Shu shook his head. *Forget it. No matter what, work first!*

He took off his shirt, revealing his muscular upper body. He picked up his hammer and began to forge.

Zhou Shu's Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique had already reached the eleventh level. He wasn't far from the twelfth level.

His strength had reached a monstrous level.

The huge hammer was like an embroidery needle in his hand, and all the forging movements were precise and light.

Forging Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers was already a piece of cake for him in terms of technique. The problem now was how to minimize the forging time.

*Ding ding ding—*

With Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique's divine strength and the enhancement of the tenth level of the Golden Bell Shield Technique, every time Zhou Shu struck the iron, dazzling sparks shot out from the point of contact between the hammer and the iron as the iron rapidly shrank.

Under the tremendous force, the impurities in the iron were quickly removed. In a few breaths of time, an ingot of iron was completely purified.

Without anyone around, Zhou Shu went all out.

Not only had he activated the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique to their limits, but he had also used the Visualization of the Five Mountains' True Form and the Heavenly Saber Art.

His divine sense covered the iron, and his saber techniques allowed him to swing the hammer more efficiently and precisely.

With every strike, his divine sense could even observe the changes in the impurities within the iron.

As such, Zhou Shu only needed an hour to complete the refinement of the 150 kilograms of iron.

He didn't hold anything back in the forging process.

Every move was extremely precise and concise.

Even so, it took him half an hour to forge a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!

Originally, the forging method he had obtained from the Legendary Armament Canon was already the most perfect, and there was almost no possibility of improvement. A Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber took an hour and a half to forge. This was already Zhou Shu's best performance.

If not for his current cultivation, it would have taken him at least an hour to forge a Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!



In that case, without eating, drinking, sleeping, or resting for a day, he could forge—16 sabers!

Indeed, there were benefits to having a higher cultivation level.

After calculating this result, Zhou Shu became even more confident.

What people feared the most was not seeing hope. Once they saw hope, they would be able to erupt with limitless potential!

For the rest of the day, the clanking sound in the backyard of the 0th Workshop never stopped.

After nightfall, Zhang Yibei and the others didn't return to the 0th Workshop to rest. In these ten days, they would also work tirelessly. It would be a joke to come back and sleep. They could just find any haystack in the workshop and rest for a while. Coming back and forth would be a waste of time.

Meanwhile, the family members of the Forging Apprentices who stayed in the 0th Workshop to do odd jobs were puzzled when they heard the clanking sounds in the backyard.

Was there someone else working in the backyard besides the superintendent?

Why was this clanking sound coming non-stop day and night?

It wasn't that they found the sound of metal striking annoying. They lived in a forging workshop, so how could they not be used to the sound of metal striking?

Out of curiosity, they only discussed it in private. They didn't dare to approach the backyard, nor did they have the right to.

Several days passed in the blink of an eye.

The hammering continued in the 0th Workshop.

If someone entered the back courtyard of the 0th Workshop at this time, they would see a young man with a scraggly beard. His upper body was bare, and his eyes were focused on forging weapons.

After several days without sleep or rest, Zhou Shu didn't seem to have changed much. Other than his beard growing a bit longer, he didn't appear any more tired than a few days ago.

Unknowingly, Zhou Shu's current physique had already far surpassed that of ordinary people.

The Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique allowed him to possess an abnormal amount of divine strength, while the Golden Bell Shield Technique had completely transformed his body.

According to the Legendary Armament Canon's description, once one mastered the Golden Bell Shield Technique, one could attain an invincible body.

Bodhidharma, who had created this technique, was invincible against punches and kicks of various experts, swords, fire, and water. He could survive without eating or sleeping for five hundred days. He was even able to remain unscathed after consuming poison.

In comparison, Zhou Shu had only stayed awake for a few days. It was like child's play.

Of course, he had only cultivated the Golden Bell Shield Technique to the tenth level. He was still very far from mastering the twelfth level.

However, this was enough for him to accomplish his goal.

On the seventh day, Zhou Shu had eighty-three Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers.

Although theoretically, he could forge sixteen Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers a day, humans were not machines after all. He had worked too quickly, and the effect was that the supply of iron couldn't keep up...

Therefore, on average, he could only forge ten or so Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Swords a day.

This speed was twice as fast as the forging speed he displayed in front of others. But it didn't matter. No one knew how he forged them anyway.

When the goods were delivered, he would only need to tell Yin Wuyou that he had already forged a batch of Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers in advance. After all, no one could prove that these Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers were forged within ten days.

There were still three days left, and Zhou Shu only had seventeen more Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers to forge. Time was no longer as tight as before.

Zhou Shu took a few sips of water.

Just as he was about to continue forging, he suddenly saw a barrage of messages.

[You receive a reward of five years of cultivation because the Huben Saber you forged effectively completed a kill!]

[You receive a reward of seven years of cultivation because the Huben Saber you forged effectively completed a kill!]

...

[The Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber you forged effectively completed a kill. The Heavenly Saber Art has improved by 3%!]

...

[The Horse Slaying Saber you forged effectively completed a kill. The Golden Bell Shield Technique has improved by 1%!]

...

The barrage of messages flashed past in front of Zhou Shu's eyes, and waves of energy surged into his body.

This had happened several times in the past few days.

But his Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and Golden Bell Shield Technique had yet to break through to the next level.

Zhou Shu was already close to mastering the Dragon Elephant Prajna Technique and the Golden Bell Shield Technique. At this time, it was extremely hard to level them up.

*It's getting harder and harder to improve my cultivation level. I wonder if I can master these two techniques before the war on the southern border ends.*

Zhou Shu pondered.

Once the war on the southern border ended, the Horse Slaying Sabers and the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Sabers would have fewer opportunities to kill enemies.

However, this was not something he could control.

The only thing he could control was forging more weapons. If the weapons were damaged, he would replenish them in time.

After thinking for a while, Zhou Shu continued to forge Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers.

Three days passed in a flash. On the third day at noon, Zhou Shu finally finished forging the last Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber.

With a thought, the Legendary Armament Canon appeared in front of him, and he flipped to the page of the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber.

The number after the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber had increased to 100.

He had filled up the slots of the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber!

Zhou Shu was overjoyed. Suddenly, the pages in the Legendary Armament Canon flipped. With a rustling sound, the Legendary Armament Canon flipped to a blank page.

It was like an invisible brush was rapidly moving across the page. Zhou Shu's eyes grew brighter and brighter. It was like a weapon was dancing in his pupils.

...

"Zhou Shu, why did you call me here?" Yin Wuyou asked Zhou Shu while standing in the open area of the 0th Workshop.

"Grand Minister, have you forgotten our agreement?" Zhou Shu laughed. "Tomorrow is the tenth day. I invited you here today to inspect the goods."

"Fortunately, the mission of forging the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers and Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers has been completed!"

Zhou Shu pointed at the pile of boxes in the open area.

"Grand Minister, once you've inspected them, I will get people to transport them away!"

"Did you really do it?" Yin Wuyou was surprised. "How did you do it?"

"Is it difficult?" Zhou Shu said lightly. "Our 0th Workshop originally had some reserves, and we've been working tirelessly for the past ten days. It would be strange if we couldn't complete it."

"There are a total of one hundred Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers and six thousand Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers here."

Zhang Yibei and the other Forging Apprentices had exceeded their quota. Within ten days, they had forged close to six thousand Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber.

Zhou Shu had mixed the hundred Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers he had forged into the pile. There were actually more than six thousand of them, but Zhou Shu didn't care if there were a few more.

Yin Wuyou's mouth opened slightly, and she gave Zhou Shu a thumbs up. "You've worked hard!"

"To serve the people," Zhou Shu said casually.

Yin Wuyou was puzzled.

Zhou Shu laughed. "Grand Minister, how is the formation of the You Prefecture Army and the Bing Prefecture Army? When are these weapons going to be given to them?"

"It's almost time," Yin Wuyou replied. "If nothing unexpected happens, the Standard Armament Manual will be released tomorrow. Once the news is out, His Majesty will personally hold an oath ceremony. At that time, the Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers and the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers will be bestowed to the You Prefecture Army and the Bing Prefecture Army.

"You don't have to worry about these things. There's something you should be more concerned about." Yin Wuyou raised her head slightly, appearing pleased.

"What is it?"

"You're already a county baron. There are some people you should get to know," Yin Wuyou said. "Coincidentally, your baron's mansion has also been renovated. I've prepared a banquet for you when you officially move into the mansion.

"I've already prepared the invitation list for you. Just send the invitations out when the time comes."

Yin Wuyou tried her best to appear expressionless as she continued, "I'll get Haitang and the steward of my residence to handle the rest of the matters for you. What you need to do is to properly tidy yourself up..."

Zhou Shu was confused.

*A banquet?*

*Don't you think it's a bit out of place to talk about this in this workshop?*

*Come to think of it. You are the princess and the grand minister of the Forging Division. Are you very free?*

*Do you even do such things?*

Zhou Shu thought about it and understood what Yin Wuyou meant.

He was no longer the superintendent of a small workshop. Strictly speaking, he was considered quite a figure in the capital.

A county baron, a ninth-rank martial artist, and a genius Forging Apprentice, if this was made known to others, it would scare some people.

However, he had been promoted too quickly, and he basically had no dealings with the high officials and experts of the capital.

Yin Wuyou wanted to help him expand his connections.

Zhou Shu didn't reject her. These were all his future potential customers.

When he became a Forging Master, he would have to rely on these people to buy his weapons.

Since there was such an opportunity, he should broaden their horizons.

Zhou Shu rubbed his chin in thought.

*Since I already have the title of a genius Forging Apprentice, then in terms of forging, aren't I too low profile?*

*Yes, just like that, keep a low-profile life and work in a high-profile manner!*

Zhou Shu would never admit that it felt good to be in the limelight...

"Grand Minister, I'm not familiar with these people. If I invite them, will they come?" Zhou Shu asked.

"They will." Yin Wuyou glanced at him. *Doesn't he know that he's already a popular person in the capital? Many people want to befriend him, but they can't find the opportunity.*

Being a county baron was not a big deal. A ninth-rank martial artist at his age could only be said to be not bad. However, Great Xia's number one Forging Apprentice was not just for show. The Huben Saber, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber, and Horse Slaying Saber were all famous on the southern border. Although the Spring Embroidered Saber, Autumn Anatidae Plume Saber, and Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber were not famous, they were not weak either.

Yin Wuyou just didn't know the word 'potential stock'. Otherwise, she would definitely label Zhou Shu as one. Zhou Shu was a potential stock right now.. If others didn't take this opportunity to make friends with him now, it would be too late when he became a Forging Master.

## **Chapter 129: Sun Gongping's Gift**

Zhou Shu handed the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Sabers and Autumn Anatidae Plume Sabers to Yin Wuyou. He didn't need to worry about the rest.

...

Then he returned to the baron's mansion and slept soundly.

Anyway, he didn't have to worry about the banquet Yin Wuyou had mentioned.

The steward of the princess's residence and the steward arranged by the Mi family had already handled all the chores properly.

Zhou Shu slept until late in the morning. If not for Yin Wuyou and Haitang dragging him out of bed, he would have continued sleeping.

"You're really not worried at all." Yin Wuyou watched Haitang comb Zhou Shu's hair. "The Standard Armament Manual is going to be announced today. Aren't you worried about the ranking at all?"

"What is there to worry about?" Zhou Shu asked indifferently. There was no need to see the Standard Armament Manual.

In the past, no one bothered to look at it.

It was only because of the bet between Great Xia and Great Wei that more people paid attention to it.

But what did this have to do with him?

He had never taken it upon himself.

He didn't care what weapon was ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual.

It would be best if the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber ranked first. If it couldn't, he would still be the superintendent of his workshop. No one could cause trouble for him because of this.

"I really don't know what to say about you!

"Do you know what it means to you if your weapon ranks first in the Standard Armament Manual?"

"What does it mean? A promotion? Or a wife?" Zhou Shu said indifferently.

*What's the point of ranking first in the Standard Armament Manual?*

*It only matters if my weapon ranks first in the Ranked Armament Manual!*

*Women are too short-sighted!*

Yin Wuyou's pretty face instantly turned incomparably red. *What does he mean? Is he hinting at me? But I'm not ready yet...*

Yin Wuyou's heart was in a mess when she heard Zhou Shu change the subject. "Haitang, that's enough. Stop combing."

If not for the fact that he was afraid it would be too shocking, he would have cut his hair short.

"Grand Minister, that Heavenly Rock is thousands of miles away from Great Xia. Even if the Standard Armament Manual is announced, it will still take some time to transmit the results, right?" Zhou Shu asked casually.

He had previously learned a little about the Standard Armament Manual from Yang Hong.

This Standard Armament Manual was arranged by the mysterious Heavenly Mountain Villa, and the manual would appear directly on a giant rock called the Heavenly Rock.

This might involve the mysterious power of this world. Zhou Shu temporarily didn't understand the principles behind it.

"You don't know?" Yin Wuyou said. "It's normal that you don't know."

"The Heavenly Rock is not the only thing that shows the results."

"The Heavenly Rock you mentioned on the shores of the Endless Sea is the largest Heavenly Rock in the world. In fact, in the capital cities of the various countries, each of them has a small Heavenly Rock."

"The Standard Armament Manual will also be released on these small Heavenly Rocks at the same time. Therefore, as long as the Standard Armament Manual is released, we will know immediately."

Zhou Shu was suddenly enlightened. *That fellow Yang Hong isn't reliable. He said that it's because someone copied the information on the Heavenly Rock. But it turns out that people in the imperial palace can directly check the internet!*

But then again, Yang Hong wasn't even a divine constable at the time. He was just a lowly constable and didn't understand the truth of the matter. He couldn't be blamed.

"Let's not talk about this for now. Although the Standard Armament Manual will be released today, we don't know when exactly it will be released. The guests are almost here. You should go out and welcome them." Yin Wuyou directly pushed Zhou Shu out the door.

*Who is the owner of the baron's mansion?* Zhou Shu grumbled in his heart, but he still went to the door.

Just as he reached the door, he saw a familiar figure.

"Sun Gongping? When did you come back?"

*Didn't Sun Gongping follow the army to the southern border?*

*When did he come back?*

*The army was victorious?*

*That shouldn't be the case.*

Two days ago, he had received benefits from the Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber and the Horse Slaying Saber.

"Old Zhou, not bad. It's only been a while since we last met, but you have already become a baron." Sun Gongping smiled.

He was thinner and darker than before, and his aura had also changed a little. How should Zhou Shu put it? Right now, he looked like he had gone through hardships and exuded an unwavering determination.

If not for the fact that his smile was still a bit unruly, Zhou Shu almost wouldn't have recognized him.

"Watch my move!" Sun Gongping suddenly let out a loud roar, raised his head, and punched Zhou Shu in the chest.

Zhou Shu was stunned. He hurriedly controlled the true qi in his body. Even so, Sun Gongping still staggered back a few steps, a look of surprise on his face.

"You've really entered the ranks!" Sun Gongping said. "I almost thought that I had left for a long time. You suddenly became a baron and a ninth-rank martial artist. I feel like I've missed a lot of things."

"Don't sneak up on me next time. There will be injuries." Zhou Shu said angrily. If he hadn't retracted his true qi in time, the Golden Bell Shield Technique would have severely injured Sun Gongping!

Sun Gongping thought that Zhou Shu was talking about him getting injured. He smiled and said, "Don't worry. I didn't use my full strength. Old Zhou, you've improved a lot. I've improved a lot too. I'm already a seventh-rank martial artist. Are you surprised?"

Zhou Shu rolled his eyes at him. *So what if you're a seventh-rank martial artist? I can still kill him with a single slap.*

But then again, Sun Gongping's growth was indeed impressive.

It had only been less than a month since he had left with the army, yet he had already broken through two ranks. This was his own effort.

The description of him in the genius assassination list of Great Wei was indeed correct.

From the looks of it, he had followed the army to battle, presumably to use the battles to stimulate his own potential.

"You're back. Where are Great General Meng and the rest?" Zhou Shu asked with concern. His sworn brother, Mi Ziwen, was also in the army. Although the possibility of an accident was not high, who could say for sure what would happen on the battlefield?

"They're still at the southern border," Sun Gongping said. "But the southern barbarians have basically been dealt with. There aren't many tough battles left, so I came back first."

He was not a soldier to begin with. This time, he had followed the army out to train himself. Naturally, he came back as he wished.

"Old Zhou, you're already a ninth-rank martial artist. Why haven't you made any progress in forging?"

Although they hadn't seen each other for a while, Sun Gongping didn't feel unfamiliar with Zhou Shu. He took a step forward and wrapped his arm around Zhou Shu's shoulders.

"If you become a Forging Master, I won't have to worry about my weapon. I'll get you to forge it for me."

After Sun Gongping entered the ranks, he had never had a ranked weapon. It wasn't that his family couldn't afford one. Rather, it was because he had built a stable foundation to allow his cultivation to increase rapidly. At this stage, he wouldn't be able to control weapons that were too good for him, and those that weren't good enough wouldn't be able to keep up with his cultivation.

Therefore, it was better to wait for his cultivation to stabilize before getting a ranked weapon.

Without the support of his family, Sun Gongping wouldn't be able to survive today. It would be strange if he could save up money to buy a weapon.



Hearing his words, Zhou Shu smiled slightly. "Why do you mean I haven't made any progress? I am now the Great Xia's number one Forging Apprentice."

"That's still just a Forging Apprentice," Sun Gongping said disdainfully. "Look at those forging geniuses. Who cares to fight with you for this title? If you can't become a Forging Master, you're just a blacksmith. You're worthless, understand?"

"Not necessarily," Zhou Shu said. "Shen Yue seems to care a lot about this title. Isn't he also a Forging Apprentice? He even specially came to compete with me."

*However, this fellow is really a Forging Apprentice. He's definitely been able to forge ranked weapons long ago. It's just that he hasn't truly forged them.*

*He's definitely at the Forging Master level.*

*Then again, it's the same for me.*

"What do you mean not necessarily? Old Zhou, when do you think you can become a Forging Master? I have to consider whether to wait for you or not."

Sun Gongping continued, "Let me tell you. I've made quite a lot of contributions this time. When I receive the rewards, I'll be rich. When the time comes, I'll go and buy a ranked weapon."

"Advance to Forging Master?" Zhou Shu smiled. "Anytime."

Sun Gongping laughed out loud. "Old Zhou, I've known you for so long, I didn't realize that you're so funny. Do you think that Great Xia's number one Forging Apprentice can easily advance to Forging Master?"

"I almost forgot that you haven't received a Forging Master legacy. Don't worry. I'll introduce you to two Forging Masters later. With your aptitude, they will definitely fight to take you in as a disciple."

Sun Gongping nagged non-stop.

Zhou Shu felt both warm and annoyed.

It felt good to have a friend go afar and return safely.

"Heh, Old Zhou, you've been conferred the title of county baron and advanced to a ninth-rank martial artist. I've just returned and haven't prepared any congratulatory gifts for you..." Sun Gongping continued.

"No need. I'm already very happy that you're here." Zhou Shu said. He didn't have many friends, and Sun Gongping could barely be considered one.

"That won't do," Sun Gongping said. "Am I, Sun Gongping, such an uncouth person?"

"Coincidentally, I have something good. I originally wanted to give it to you as a congratulatory gift for when you advance Forging Master. I didn't expect that you would become a ninth-rank martial artist before becoming a Forging Master. Let's use it for this occasion."

Sun Gongping mysteriously took out a palm-sized box and handed it to Zhou Shu.

Zhou Shu declined it, but Sun Gongping firmly stuffed the box into Zhou Shu's hands.

"Aren't you going to open it?" Sun Gongping said when he saw Zhou Shu put the box away.

Seeing Sun Gongping's expectant expression, Zhou Shu seemed to understand something.

He smiled. "Then, let me see what the Great Divine Constable Sun gave me."

Zhou Shu opened the box and saw a bean-sized silver-white object lying inside. The object gave off a crystalline feeling, as if there was a galaxy swirling within it.

"Heaven Refining Stone?" Zhou Shu said in surprise.

"How is it? Aren't I a good brother?" Sun Gongping said proudly. "This Heaven Refining Stone is something I obtained after much difficulty. I was originally planning to use it to forge a ranked weapon for myself, but now I'm giving it to you. You can use it to practice and become a Forging Master as soon as possible."

Zhou Shu: "..."

He was very confused now. *Are you serious about this tiny piece of Heaven Refining Stone?*

He recalled the Heaven Refining Stone that he had taken from the imperial preceptor of Great Wei, Xiao Shunzhi. It was the size of an adult's fist and at least 100 times bigger than this tiny bean.

"A Heaven Refining Stone of this size is more than enough to forge a yellow-grade weapon," Sun Gongping continued.

Zhou Shu suddenly said, "Forging a yellow-grade weapon needs this much Heaven Refining Stone? How much Heaven Refining Stone does a heaven-grade weapon need?"

Zhou Shu had a bad feeling.

Back then, Yin Changhao had said that a fist-sized Heaven Refining Stone was only enough to forge a heaven-grade.

"That's hard to say. There are different grades of heaven-grade weapons. I estimate that it will need at most one or one-point-five kilograms of Heaven Refining Stone."

Sun Gongping was not a forger, but his words were most likely the truth.

*Damn it. Yin Changhao had said it so seriously!*

The weight of the Heaven Refining Stone was what mattered. The fist-sized Heaven Refining Stone probably weighed more than five kilograms!

According to Sun Gongping, he would be able to forge at least three or four heaven-grade weapons with that amount!

Why didn't he think twice about it back then? If such a huge piece of Heaven Refining Stone could only be used to forge a heaven-grade weapon, why would Yin Changhao be willing to spend so much money to buy it?

Selling the Heaven Refining Stone for fifty thousand taels of gold made Zhou Shu feel like he had suffered a great loss.

Although Shen Yue and Xiao Shun used a heaven-grade weapon to cover the debt of ten thousand taels of gold, it didn't mean that a heaven-grade weapon was only worth ten thousand taels of gold.

Even the worst heaven-grade weapon was worth at least 10,000 taels of gold. Put up for auction, a heaven-grade weapon could even be sold for around 30,000 to 50,000 taels of gold.

A Heaven Refining Stone that weighed more than five kilograms was definitely worth more than 100,000 taels of gold. It wasn't a huge loss to sell half of it for 50,000 taels of gold, but it was still a loss.

"Great Divine Constable Sun, thank you!"

Zhou Shu closed the box. After seeing the fist-sized Heaven Refining Stone and then looking at the bean-sized one, he really couldn't get excited.

But since it was Sun Gongping's kind intentions, he couldn't show too much disdain.

He was considering if there was any way to get the piece back from Yin Changhao. He could even return the money to him.

It didn't seem that easy. Yin Changhao was a first-rank martial artist after all. It didn't matter if he could defeat him or not. It wouldn't be easy to find him.

"You're welcome. There's no need to stand on ceremony." Sun Gongping waved his hand.

*I almost forgot that you're my nephew,* Zhou Shu thought.

Zhou Shu temporarily stopped thinking about the Heaven Refining Stone and instead looked at Sun Gongping and asked, "Great Divine Constable Sun, you always carry the Spring Embroidered Saber around. I haven't asked you this before. Do you specialize in using the saber?"

"I'm not bragging, but I'm good at everything," Sun Gongping said proudly. "I'm not best at using sabers. I'm best at using swords. Do you know what my nickname is? Master of Saber and Sword! Unfortunately, you're only good at forging sabers..."

Zhou Shu's lips curved up slightly. "That might not be true. Great Divine Constable Sun, I'll give you a surprise later."

"What?"

Sun Gongping wanted to ask more, but Zhou Shu had already stepped forward because the invited guests had already arrived.

### **Chapter 130: Heavenly Mirror, The Announcement of the Standard Armament Manual**

"Thank you, everyone, for coming to attend my banquet. I hope you can forgive me for my lack of hospitality." Zhou Shu raised his wine cup politely.

...

This was the first time he was attending a banquet in this world. But regardless of which world it was, such events were similar.

In his previous life, Zhou Shu had also been a slave to society for a few years. For the sake of living, he had attended many drinking parties.

Right now, it was just that the officials here were a little more prestigious and had a little more money. That was all.

“Lord Zhou, you are too polite. Congratulations on your promotion.”

The people were all making small talk.

Actually, how could a county baron be worthy of their congratulations?

They only came because of the princess.

They were also very curious. The invitation to the banquet was sent by the princess, and the one making arrangements was also the steward from the princess’s residence. What was the relationship between the princess and this new baron?

Even though they were doubtful, no one would be foolish enough to ask directly.

“Lord Zhou, you are young and promising. It is a great fortune for our Division to have such talent.” The person who spoke was a middle-aged man who looked to be in his forties. He was the deputy minister of the Ministry of Works, Yuan Shouzhong.

The Forging Division was nominally affiliated to the Ministry of Works. However, the Forging Division was relatively independent, so they rarely contacted the Ministry of Works.

Strictly speaking, Yuan Shouzhong was Zhou Shu’s superior, so it wasn’t a problem for him to say that.

“Minister Yuan, you are too polite,” Zhou Shu said.

After Yuan Shouzhong spoke, the rest of the people also began to speak. They were all making insincere small talk.

Most of the people Yin Wuyou had invited were deputy ministers of various departments, such as the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Official Personnel, and the Ministry of War.

It was not that she couldn’t invite the ministers but that they were all waiting in the palace for the announcement of the Standard Armament Manual.

Of course, it would be too much for a baron to invite the ministers to celebrate his promotion.

“Superintendent Zhou, I heard that you claimed that the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber you forged is the strongest standard weapon in the world. I wonder if the first place in the Standard Armament Manual already belongs to you?” An extremely discordant voice suddenly sounded amid the harmony.

Everyone’s gaze naturally turned toward the voice.

Zhou Shu also looked over and happened to see a provocative gaze.

*Xiao Bufan?* Upon seeing this person's face, a name appeared in Zhou Shu's mind.

He didn't notice when Xiao Bufan came. The steward hadn't announced his arrival either.

If Zhou Shu hadn't seen him again, he would have almost forgotten this name.

After Xiao Zongshui, the superintendent of the 97th Workshop, died, Xiao Bufan, a Forging Master, had taken over the 97th Workshop.

At the time, he had even joined forces with Minister Meng Jinguang and the others with the intention of taking him down a notch. In the end, they naturally failed.

Later on, Zhou Shu no longer had any dealings with him, and he didn't try to find fault with him again. Zhou Shu had thought that he would be implicated in Zhu Chuanfeng's matter, but he hadn't expected him to still be alive.

"Superintendent Zhou, you haven't answered me yet." Xiao Bufan looked straight at Zhou Shu and spoke without fear.

The way he spoke was extremely unpleasant. The guests addressed him as Lord Zhou, but he was the only one who called him superintendent. He was obviously trying to stir up trouble.

Zhou Shu looked at Xiao Bufan, and the corner of his mouth raised slightly. *He didn't come with good intentions.*

"Superintendent Xiao, you must be joking. I'm not the one who ranks the weapons in the Standard Armament Manual. How would I know what ranks first?" Zhou Shu said. "Superintendent Xiao, you are a dignified Forging Master. Why are you concerned about such a small matter?"

"You claimed that the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber is the strongest standard weapon in the world. If it doesn't rank first, how can it be called the strongest? If Great Xia loses to Great Wei, can you bear the responsibility?" Xiao Bufan stared at Zhou Shu.

Some people frowned slightly, but most of them looked as though they were watching a show.

*Is this idiot Xiao here to cause trouble?* Yin Wuyou's brows furrowed slightly. She was already displeased.

She held this banquet to introduce Zhou Shu to these people, not to let people question him.

"Why should I bear this responsibility?" Zhou Shu shook his head.

"Aren't you Great Xia's number one Forging Apprentice? If you don't take responsibility for the standard weapons, who will?" Xiao Bufan said.

"Are you stupid? Were you the one who named me Great Xia's number one Forging Apprentice?" Zhou Shu sneered. "Superintendent Xiao, if you're here as a guest, I welcome you. If you're here to cause trouble, then I'm sorry, but the door is right there. You can get lost!"

"Zhou Shu! Why don't you dare to answer me directly? Is it because you don't have any confidence in the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber? Or is it because you're a thief who only knows how to deceive the world!" Xiao Bufan became enraged!

"Bufan!" A shout rang out just as Zhou Shu was about to say something. A handsome and elegant figure appeared in front of Xiao Bufan.

Xiao Bufan lowered his head and greeted, "Senior Brother."

Xiao Bufan's senior brother apologized to Zhou Shu with an apologetic expression. "Lord Zhou, I'm sorry. My junior brother is young and frivolous. I apologize for him."

This person looked to be in his twenties. He was handsome and had an elegant aura. Every move he made had the air of a gentleman.

"Shi Songtao, he's insensible, but are you also insensible?" Yin Wuyou said coldly. "I don't object to you bringing someone here, but there are some people you shouldn't bring. I hope this doesn't happen again!"

Shi Songtao gave a bitter smile and cupped his hands. "Your Highness is too kind!"

A sentence flashed across Zhou Shu's mind. *Shi Songtao, 28 years old, a talented Forging Master. At 25 years old, he forged the ranked weapon, the Songtao Sword. He became famous with one weapon...*

Shi Songtao was on the genius assassination list of Great Wei.

Zhou Shu didn't expect to meet him under such circumstances. Furthermore, Xiao Bufan was his junior brother?

"Bufan, apologize to Lord Zhou," Shi Songtao said seriously.

There was a complex expression on Xiao Bufan's face. He gritted his teeth and said, "Why should I apologize to him?! I'm not lying! What nonsense about the number one Forging Apprentice of Great Xia? He's just a Forging Apprentice? What right does he have to be a baron?"

"If you keep talking nonsense, then get the hell out of here!" Shi Songtao was also a little angry.

Xiao Bufan seemed to respect his senior brother very much. He lowered his head and didn't say anything, but he didn't apologize to Zhou Shu either.

Shi Songtao sighed and said to Zhou Shu, "Lord Zhou, I apologize on behalf of my junior brother. At the same time, I am well aware that the strength of a standard weapon is not fixed. Even the strength of a ranked weapon may not be obvious at a glance.

"Who can predict the Standard Armament Manual rankings in advance?"

Shi Songtao's tone was extremely gentle, and it sounded as if he was apologizing to Zhou Shu. But it also felt like his words were hinting at something, making one feel a bit uncomfortable.

"My junior brother has disturbed the fun for everyone. In order to express our apology, I will give this Heavenly Mirror to Lord Zhou. I hope you will not decline," Shi Songtao said as he took out a palm-sized bronze mirror.

The bronze mirror was about the size of an adult's palm, and there were exquisite carvings on its back. The front seemed to be shrouded in mist, making it appear blurry.

“Heavenly Mirror?” Some people cried out in surprise, while others revealed looks of confusion.

Evidently, not everyone present knew what the Heavenly Mirror was.

“Take it!” Yin Wuyou whispered to Zhou Shu, her tone carrying a rare hint of urgency.

Zhou Shu looked at Yin Wuyou in surprise. *The princess isn’t an inexperienced person. Even she’s reacting this way to the mirror?*

Zhou Shu didn’t hesitate. “Since you’re so sincere, Brother Shi, then I won’t decline.”

He walked forward and took the bronze mirror from Shi Songtao’s hands.

The bronze mirror felt extremely heavy in his hand.

“Lord Zhou, you might not know about the Heavenly Mirror. Allow me to tell you about it,” Shi Songtao said with a smile.

“This Heavenly Mirror is an item of the Heavenly Mountain Villa. It is connected to the Heavenly Rock. With the Heavenly Mirror, we can see the information on the Heavenly Rock at any time.

“For example, if the Standard Armament Manual is announced on the Heavenly Rock, we can see it immediately through the Heavenly Mirror.”

Zhou Shu suddenly understood. This was the same as Great Xia’s imperial palace’s Heavenly Rock. It could be considered a client.

*Why didn’t Yin Wuyou mention such a good thing before?*

Shi Songtao’s next words enlightened Zhou Shu.

“The Heavenly Mirror is extremely rare. I only obtained one by chance. Lord Zhou, you only need to inject spiritual essence to check out the Armament Manuals’ rankings.

“According to my understanding, the Armament Manuals of the Heavenly Mountain Villa might change in the future. It will no longer be ranked once a year. Instead, it will become a real-time ranking. With the Heavenly Mirror, you will be able to know the rankings of all weapons in the world at any time.”

Shi Songtao was talking about the secrets of the Forging Master’s Association. Ordinary people might not know about them.

Zhou Shu was curious. With a thought, a stream of spiritual essence entered the bronze mirror.

*Buzz—*

The bronze mirror trembled slightly. The mirror that seemed to be shrouded in mist suddenly emitted a weak golden light.

In an instant, Zhou Shu felt as though he was looking at a huge rock standing by the sea. The rock’s surface was smooth and entered his vision, and pages of text kept flashing across it.

Then he saw thin lines extending from the giant rock. Some of the lines connected to the rocks in the capital cities of the various countries, while others connected to bronze mirrors. These bronze mirrors were identical to the one in Zhou Shu's hands.

There was an extremely thick beam of light on the boulder that connected to an unknown location. Zhou Shu was just about to examine it carefully when he felt his body rejuvenate. The scene in front of him had already returned to reality.

The bronze mirror in his hand reflected a golden light screen.

On the screen, words suddenly began to flow.

"The Standard Armament Manual is about to be announced!" someone exclaimed.

Zhou Shu looked at Shi Songtao in surprise. *What a coincidence! Did he plan this?*

*Xiao Bufan intentionally looked for trouble, and then Shi Songtao stood out to apologize and even compensated me with a Heavenly Mirror. I have just obtained the Heavenly Mirror, and the Standard Armament Manual is going to be announced?*

*How can there be such a coincidence in this world?*

*Is Shi Songtao doing this on purpose?*

*He wants everyone present to see the Standard Armament Manual immediately?*

*What is he plotting?*

Zhou Shu was a bit puzzled, but this was the first time he had seen Shi Songtao today. He didn't understand Shi Songtao's character, so he naturally couldn't guess what his goal was.

Before he could think further, words began to appear on the screen projected by the Heavenly Mirror.

"Standard Armament Manual"

A few words appeared.

In Zhou Shu's opinion, the Heavenly Mirror was like a projector. Everyone was watching a movie. The content of the movie was the Standard Armament Manual's rankings.

He had a strong sense of being solitary.

Everyone's breathing quickened as they stared at the screen.

Zhou Shu didn't feel much.

Xiao Bufan wanted to make fun of him just now, but little did he know that Zhou Shu didn't care about his weapon being first on the Standard Armament Manual at all.

So what if he was first?

The Legendary Armament Canon wouldn't give him benefits for it.

He might as well use the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Saber to kill a few more people.



After the words 'Standard Armament Manual' appeared, words began to emerge below.

"3,971st, Bone Severing Saber."

...

"3,964th, Standard Crescent Path."

...

"1,156th, Standard Unilateral Spear."

...

"712th, Swallowtail Strongbow."

...

"305th, Three-foot Copper Whip."

...

The golden words flashed past quickly, and the weapons before 100th place were almost gone in a flash.

These standard weapons only showed their names and didn't show which country they belonged to.

However, the insiders knew which weapon belonged to which country, so there was no confusion.

Soon, it reached 100th place, and the speed at which the words flew slowed down.

However, no one cared much about this.

Right now, they only cared about which weapon ranked first in the Standard Armament Manual.

The same scene happened in the imperial palace of Great Xia.

Emperor Yuan Feng, the core court officials of Great Xia, as well as the Great Wei's envoy, Shen Yue, and the others were all paying attention to a three-meter-tall boulder in the palace.

This was a Heavenly Rock. The imperial families of each country had one.

"It's almost the tenth place!"

Whether it was within the imperial palace of Great Xia or within Zhou Shu's baron's mansion, everyone who could see the announcement of the Standard Armament Manual felt their breathing quicken.

"10th, Cloudhead Saber."

The words projected by the Heavenly Rock and the Heavenly Mirror were cold and emotionless, but they affected the hearts of countless people.

"The Cloudhead Saber is a standard weapon of Great Liang. The handle of the saber is small, and the blade is curved forward to the top before continuing to bend toward the back of the saber. The head of the saber is round and shaped like the head of the cloud, hence its name," Shi Songtao said, displaying his rich knowledge of weapons.

There were indeed many people who didn't know much about this. They nodded as they listened to him.

*Zhou Shu curled his lips. This fellow really likes to show off.*

"9th, Thick Grade Sword."

Another name appeared on the Standard Armament Manual.

"The total length is three feet four inches, and the sword handle is six inches and two..." Shi Songtao continued explaining gracefully with his hands clasped behind his back.

At this moment, he and the words on the screen became the center of attention.

Even though Zhou Shu was somewhat unhappy, he had to admit that he didn't know as much as the other party.

The speed at which the words flew was extremely slow. The names of every weapon would stop for a moment before disappearing.

Finally, Zhou Shu saw a very familiar name appear on the light screen!

"7th, Hundred Refinements Ring Pommel Saber."