

I Can Meet with Dead Scientists

Chapter 201 148: The Completely Collapsed Style of Li Qingzhao (6K)_2

[813 words]

But if nothing unexpected happens, there's a high probability that it's a kind of Gram-positive bacteria, like this... this and that."

Medical or university students who have studied biology should know.

Bacteria can be classified into Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria through Gram staining.

The former retains the blue-violet color of the initial crystal violet stain.

The latter loses the initial crystal violet color and adopts a complex red or saffron yellow color after staining.

The distinction between the two types of bacteria is also very evident:

Positive bacteria produce exotoxins, while negative bacteria produce endotoxins.

Therefore, Gram-positive bacteria generally cause suppurative lesions.

A typical case was the bacteremia Wang Yue had, as well as the inevitable sepsis in the normal course.

As for Gram-negative bacteria, although they can also cause bacteremia and septicemia, they generally occur in the abdomen, bile ducts, and urinary tract.

Of course.

Dyeing is only necessary to classify bacteria, and observing certain types of bacteria under a high-powered microscope is not difficult.

Afterward, Xu Yun pointed out several bacteria with distinct appearances, like staphylococcus and streptococcus, among others.

The shape is recognizable at a glance.

After all, although Old Su's drawings were done meticulously, hand-drawing inevitably struggles with fidelity.

Especially compared to later imaging techniques, Old Su's transferred images are indeed not very clear, so he could only prioritize introducing bacteria with distinct characteristics.

Speaking of which...

If there's an opportunity, they should develop pencils to advance sketch drawing.

After all, compared to traditional ink paintings, sketch drawing has much higher fidelity.

If the technique is exquisite, the picture quality might even be uncannily accurate.

"Staphylococcus..."

Wang Yue repeated the term, staring at the image on the drawing for a while.

As if trying to etch it into his mind.

Then turned his head.

He exchanged a glance with his brother.

Although they were merely military generals with limited horizons, unlike Old Su who was so understanding,

they couldn't evaluate the value of the microscope from a historical perspective either.

Yet as survivors of bacteremia and frontline leaders, they knew one thing clearly:

Excrement on the battlefield is almost an ultimate weapon that cannot be defended against.

In encounters, excrement was often applied to blades, guns, or arrows, proving more potent than many poisons.

Anyone hit by this would likely perish, and at best, recover only to become a cripple.

In siege defense, defenders would heat urine and feces in pots, combining them with rolling stones.

There are many heat-resistant bacteria in feces that can survive more than 30 seconds even under Baidu, and some would continue to survive as spores.

Thus, those affected would first suffer burns, then develop suppurative infections, with survival being a miracle for even one out of ten.

This fecal weapon also had a loud name:

Golden Juice.

Incidentally.

Golden Juice is also one of the unique weapons in the history of the Huaxia Civilization.

Over in Europe, they mostly used asphalt, aiming to burn the enemy through the conduction of heat via armor, without subsequent biological damage.

Overall.

If the Military Equipment Bureau could further explore the properties of *Escherichia coli* through the microscope, they might be able to produce more superior drugs!

After all, while allicin has an excellent effect, its preservation time is still too short.

It's fine for occasional emergencies but hard to popularize or use widely in emergencies.

If the court could develop more efficient drugs, it might even have significant or decision-making impacts on the western front's situation!

Then Xu Yun played the teacher again, briefly introducing some basic concepts to Old Su and others.

And like when making lenses earlier, he chose to feign ignorance on some concepts again.

Either the manuscript was lost, or even the Wind Spirit Moon Shadow sect didn't study it deeply.

As for deeper cellular internal observation...

He planned to tackle that in a few days.

First, because too much knowledge at once can't be digested, and excessive knowledge infusion might not be effective.

Secondly, internal cellular observation also requires some staining agents, which need time to prepare.

In later eras, acetic orcein or crystal violet was commonly used as staining agents, but actually, hematoxylin is also a good staining agent.

More crucially.

Hematoxylin doesn't require very advanced equipment to prepare; finding materials is enough.

Its precursor, called haematoxylin, is extracted from the trunk of the logwood tree.

Once oxidized, haematoxylin becomes hematoxylin and can be used as a dye.

Regions in cells rich in DNA and RNA can be stained blue with hematoxylin, making observation and interpretation much easier.

On another note.

After dismounting from the microscope,

Xiaoli stealthily pulled Xu Yun to the side, saying mysteriously:

"Wang Lin, may I ask you something?"

Xu Yun blinked:

"What is it?"

Xiaoli glanced around and asked:

"Let me ask you, how much silver did this microscope cost in total?"

"How much silver?"

Upon hearing Xiaoli's words, Xu Yun was taken aback.

Why was Little Doudou asking about silver out of nowhere?

Although puzzled, he rubbed his head and answered truthfully:

"For materials, about a hundred guan might do. If you skip the silver plating, it might be less than a hundred?"

But if you factor in labor costs, it's hard to say; hiring Master Qi probably wasn't cheap."

Actually, from an objective perspective.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 202 148: The Completely Collapsed Style of Li Qingzhao (6K)_3

[647 words]

The most valuable part of the microscope is actually the curvature calculation, which can even be considered a technological barrier.

However, when Xu Yun was estimating, he subconsciously omitted his own contribution.

After all, from the perspective of later generations, he had only done a minor job and it was decent enough not to be replaced by someone more competent.

Xiaoli nodded thoughtfully and said:

"I've heard of Master Qi's craftsmanship. Last year, a business association in Hebei Dao re-forged a waterwheel and hired Master Qi at a high price.

The president of that business association was a schoolmate of my father's. When he visited our house at the beginning of the year, I vaguely heard him say that Master Qi's wages were almost three thousand coins per day, plus miscellaneous items and so on..."

Xiaoli counted on his fingers for a while and finally said:

"So, the cost of a microscope is about one hundred and fifty coins?"

Xu Yun thought for a moment and nodded:

"That's more or less the figure."

Xiaoli stopped speaking upon hearing this.

After a while.

Just as Xu Yun was pondering whether to speak, Xiaoli made up his mind and asked:

"Wang Lin, if I can come up with two hundred coins, could you design another microscope?"

Xu Yun was stunned:

"What?"

Seeing his surprised expression, Xiaoli gently gestured with his chin towards the crowd observing the microscope and explained:

"Wang Lin, the previous microscope was of poor craftsmanship and not worth much, so I boldly asked Uncle Su to bring it back home.

But this microscope is quite costly. If I were to ask for it for free again, it would be rather improper.

Besides, sharing this microscope with others, not to mention the daily complexities, it isn't feasible for it to be available for me alone every day..."

Listening to Xiaoli's reasoning pile up, Xu Yun's expression became ever more nuanced.

Oh my!

The style of this Layman Yi'an is not only getting more wayward, but seems to be uncontrollable, what to do?

If this continues.

The future Layman Yi'an might be renamed as Streptomycin Yi'an...

If those fans of Xiaoli in later generations knew about this, they might hang me up for a beating...

But soon.

The image of Xiaoli tinkering with the microscope surfaced again in Xu Yun's mind.

As a future scientific worker, Xu Yun knew very well:

Scientific talent is actually a mysterious yet indeed existent mystical attribute.

Some people don't understand physics at all, but when doing biological experiments, they're extremely organized, and their efficiency is several times that of others.

Based on Xiaoli's current grasp of biological concepts.

It's not to say she definitely possesses one hundred percent talent in biology, but at least the probability isn't low.

If enough resources were provided, plus Xiaoli's background and the relatively high social tolerance for women in the Northern Song...

This girl might indeed become the Grandma Tu of the Song Dynasty?

Thinking of this.

Xu Yun couldn't help but look at Xiaoli, pondering:

"Miss Li, designing a microscope is not difficult, I can just redesign the curvature radius, but as for the master..."

Xiaoli, understanding his implication, quickly said:

"There's no problem with Uncle Su, I already probed him yesterday. If it weren't so, I couldn't have sought you first."

Xu Yun nodded:

"Then there's no problem, but Miss Li, this isn't a small sum of money, you..."

"You just rest assured."

Before he could finish, Xiaoli, whose eyes gleamed with anticipation for the microscope, waved a small fist at him, and said extremely spiritedly:

"A few days ago, I wrote three poems, originally planning to use them to make a name for myself at the Moonlight Festival on the night of the full moon to surprise my father.

But now I've changed my mind, after all, writing poems at the festival is not nearly as interesting as looking at the microscope?

So I plan to sell them to the city's painting boats, given my current fame, it's not difficult to sell three poems for two hundred coins."

Xu Yun:

"...."

.....

Note:

Last day of the month, let's ask for some Monthly Passes.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 203 149 Early Dungeon Summary

[2,058 words]

"..."

In the courtyard.

Looking at Xiaoli with a face full of 'my poetry sells really well,' Xu Yun felt like there was something stuck in his throat he couldn't spit out.

As a Song Fan.

He certainly knew that in the current era, there were often transactions involving the buying and selling of poetry in certain gray areas.

Just like buying and selling papers in the 21st century, where there's demand, there's a market.

Every festival, pleasure boats would lavishly purchase some beautiful poems, to be sung by the leading figures of various pleasure boats during the holidays.

In some articles from later generations, this kind of activity is also called the competition for the flower queen.

The current period is the flourishing era of pleasure boats in Bianjing. Li Shishi, Xu Poxi, Feng Yinu, Sun Sisi, and others were almost breaking their heads for the fame of the flower queen.

Among them, the most famous singing princess was undoubtedly Li Shishi.

According to the "Records of the Splendor of Tokyo: Capital City Art and Entertainment," Li Shishi was a person of unparalleled elegance, setting the standards of beauty for her time.

Unfortunately, in ancient Huaxia, only four great beauties were recognized, from Xi Shi in the Spring and Autumn to Lady Yang of the Tang Dynasty, the four slots were long filled.

Li Shishi was born too late and missed that wave of titles.

But if there were to be a ranking for the five great beauties instead, Li Shishi would definitely be among them.

However, Li Shishi's most popular period was between 1102-1110, and at this moment, she hadn't shown her overwhelming advantage yet.

Therefore, in such intense competition, the importance of a good poem speaks for itself, being crucial for victory.

Singers from later generations often paid fifty to a hundred thousand for a good song, and it's not uncommon for even better ones to go for two to three hundred thousand.

Some top-notch songs could sell for as much as 600,000 to 800,000.

Thus, with Xiaoli's current reputation, selling three poems for about two hundred guan isn't a big deal—this girl might be a girl, but status-wise, she's definitely a 'poetry maven.'

However, Xu Yun was worried that...

This girl might sell "Zhegu Tian," right?

And if she gets a taste of it, she might end up becoming Li, the 'sell some poetry for funding' Qingzhao?

Don't let it develop to the point where Xiaoli even starts incorporating some scientific terms into her poems?

Like "And more sycamore with fine rain, base ester dehydrogenation, drip by drip." Or something?

Ssss....

Feeling like he's getting further along the path of being pummeled by Xiaoli's fangirls and fanboys...

However, seeing Xiaoli's face full of excitement, Xu Yun could only reluctantly nod:

Well, as long as the girl is happy.

Studying science isn't a dead end, who knows if Xiaoli might become a genius in both arts and sciences in the future?

He then followed Xiaoli to Old Su's side and recounted the whole situation.

Old Su had already learned of Xiaoli's intentions the day before, so he didn't hesitate much and agreed to Xiaoli's request on the spot.

Of course.

Agreement is one thing, but Old Su didn't budge at all on the price.

Not only didn't he offer a discount, but he even increased it by about 20%.

After all, the resources were found through Xiaozhao, so getting approval was already a backdoor move; in formal proceedings, no sensitive traces could be left.

After getting approval.

Xu Yun returned to his room and began to compute the curvature values Xiaoli needed.

Two days later.

In the morning.

"Creak creak....."

After finishing the breakfast brought by the servant, Xu Yun returned to the desk and began writing in a small notebook.

This was his custom-made memo, which recorded some projects or "achievements" he had completed, as well as his thoughts for the future.

It was worth mentioning.

Although Old Su's family was very safe, and theoretically no one would go into his room to steal things...

Considering the error margin, Xu Yun ultimately decided not to use Chinese characters, but instead used...

Morse code and the English alphabet.

The entire memo was divided into two columns, the left column labeled 'ok,' the right column labeled 'nook.'

The left side indicated completed projects, while the right side indicated future plans.

Though grammatically speaking.

The English for completed and unfinished should be finished and unfinished, Xu Yun's arrangement looked rather rustic.

But at this point in time, his English teacher wasn't even born yet, no need to worry too much, as long as he understood it, it was fine.

And below the completed projects were several lines of Morse code.

The top-ranking one was:

—••, •—

•••, ••—, •—, —•

•••, ••— (Don't say I'm rambling, 7 characters equal one word)

Combined, it means "allicin."

Anyone who has been in the espionage community would know.

Writing Morse code isn't difficult.

Writing it fluidly can be even quicker than letters and pinyin.

Plus, its appearance can be disguised using 'mathematics,' so Xu Yun mainly chose Morse code to record text.

Because again, stability is key.

Aside from allicin, the completed projects also included several other terms:

Generator, electrolytic cell, syringe, microscope, chalkboard chalk, curvature formula, math and science introductions, rescuing Wang Yue, killing cockroaches, and a series of terms.

If we consider the situation from the last 1665 'dungeon,' the completed project scores would obviously not be too low.

It seems as long as Old Su's last wishes are completed, Xu Yun could successfully return to reality and receive a score.

But don't forget.

The mission's name is [Making a Fuss], with difficulty ranging between [★☆☆☆☆-★☆☆☆☆].

Xu Yun had a vague feeling:

What he's been doing wasn't particularly difficult, it seemed achievable by anyone, and likely far from meeting the four-star standard.

Not to mention, from a national perspective, Xu Yun also didn't want to see the suddenly abrupt demise of the flourishing Song Dynasty in twenty years.

Therefore, the next direction....

Xu Yun came to the nook section, and next to the goal of "continue killing cockroaches," he wrote down a string of Morse code.

•——, ••, •—

—••, •—

•—••, ••

—••, ••—

Another crucial point is.

The following plan should not be limited to Old Su Mansion but should expand its influence.

If there's an opportunity, it's best to reach out to some big figures in the Imperial Guard.

Although the Song Dynasty was very typical in valuing civil over military affairs.

But if one can achieve a military officer rank of Third Grade or above, they still hold a certain position.

Looking at the memo in front of him, Xu Yun couldn't help but gently bite the end of his brush, which was also an action he really liked:

"The highest military position in the Song Dynasty is Grand Commandant, but Emperor Huizong will soon break up the position of Grand Commandant from the top three, and later there were several Grand Commandants, wasn't there?"

Tong Guan is certainly one, Wang Hou must be one too, and Old Zhong was later Vice Imperial Secretariat, if I remember correctly....

Besides, the Four Generals of Revival can be ruled out, and I don't remember the rest....."

Currently, Emperor Huizong of Song has just ascended the throne, and the Grand Commandant is still one of the top three positions, which will be officially broken apart in a few years.

Therefore, Xu Yun directly abandoned the idea of asking Old Su's list—under normal historical circumstances, when Old Su died, the Grand Commandant was still one of the top three.

According to later developments, in a few years, Emperor Huizong of Song will break up the Grand Commandant into nine positions.

They are respectively the Commander of the Palace Guard, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Chief of the Imperial Guard, Commander of the Imperial Guard Cavalry, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Chief of the Imperial Guard, Commander of the Imperial Guard Infantry, Deputy Commander, Chief of the Imperial Guard.

They are also called the Three Marshals of the Imperial Guard, the Three Marshals of the Cavalry, the Three Marshals of the Infantry, collectively known as the Nine Marshals of the Imperial Court.

In "Water Margin," Gao Qiu's real position was one of the Three Marshals of the Imperial Guard.

That's why he was called Marshal, Grand Commandant.

According to the storyline of "Water Margin."

Song Jiang was later appointed Chuzhou Pacification Envoy, and Wu Yong was appointed Military Victory Commander, both of whom could indeed be called "Grand Commandant Song" and "Grand Commandant Wu."

However, although there were many Grand Commandants later, those who were genuinely capable and currently in relatively high positions during this period were quite limited.

From a broad perspective, the most suitable person to contact in the Imperial Guard is undoubtedly...

Old Zhong.

Old Zhong, also known as Zhong Shidao.

In "Water Margin," Lu Da often mentioned Old General Zhong, who was this person.

He came from a family of generals, with outstanding military achievements, and ultimately became Vice Imperial Secretariat.

It is no exaggeration to say that Old Zhong was the soul of the entire Great Song's Western Army.

Although Old Zhong had both victories and defeats in his career, in terms of military capability alone, he was undoubtedly recognized as the Northern Song's last pillar.

Actually.

During the entire Jingkang Incident, his strategy was correct:

First, he swiftly dispatched elite troops from Tong Pass and then tended to hold back Wanyan Zongwang of the Eastern Route Army.

Once Zongwang's isolated force was deeply entrenched and had no supply linings, he would then bite back. At the very least, he intended to rebuild the Hebei defensive line.

Hedong's Taiyuan Western Route Army commanded by Wanyan Zhonghan could be attacked in collaboration with Wang Bing's forces from Taiyuan, as Taiyuan was a fortified city surrounded by mountainous terrain, making it difficult for Zhonghan to breach.

However, Old Zhong encountered the legendary teammate Emperor Huizong, who delivered one of the most famous operations in Huaxia's history:

First, he made a surprise attack with Yao Pingzhong that became known to everyone in the city, leading Zongwang to happily accept the gift.

Then he forbade the Eastern Route Army from retreating and refused plans to repair the defense line, urging Zhong Shidao's brother Zhong Shizhong from Hedong to go into battle.

Zhong Shizhong first won but later lost, ultimately dying on the battlefield, wrapped in horse hides.

By the eve of the Jingkang Incident, the Jin soldiers besieged Bianjing again.

At this time, Zhong Shidao, who was seriously ill, made a last suggestion to Emperor Huizong's son, Emperor Qinzong:

Your Majesty, you should retreat to Chang'an temporarily, and entrust the Capital City wholly to the generals in charge.

As expected, Emperor Qinzhong, who inherited Emperor Huizong's excellent bloodline, continued to ignore it, accusing Zhong Shidao of being cowardly due to his age, and rejected his advice.

Eventually, the 76-year-old Zhong Shidao passed away in regret and bitterness.

A month later, in November of the First Year of Jingkang, Bianjing fell.

What can you say to that....

In summary.

Old Zhong was undoubtedly the most suitable option, but Xu Yun was not quite sure if the Minister of Strategy was currently in Bianjing.

Under normal circumstances.

Old Zhong should be serving as Prefect in Weizhou, defending the frontier and would not easily return to the Capital City.

However, with the recent strategic gains in Qingtang, it's possible that Old Zhong might also return for a report.

Actually, Xu Yun had also asked Wang Bing about this matter earlier, but alas, Wang Bing returned to the Capital City for medical reasons with Wang Yue first, and he needed to inquire further to determine the full entourage's members.

Therefore, Xu Yun first drew a question mark next to Old Zhong's Morse code to indicate uncertainty.

Then he thought for a moment and wrote down another name:

Wang Hou.

This is also a previously mentioned character, who in a certain sense, was one of the reasons why Tong Guan could rise.

Although Wang Hou might not be as famous as Old Zhong in history, in terms of achievements or abilities, he was only slightly below Old Zhong.

And compared to the uncertainty surrounding Old Zhong, Wang Hou's whereabouts were quite clear—he had already returned to Bianjing with Tong Guan.

More importantly...

Wang Hou and Wang Bing share a kinship relation; they practically had the same great grandfather, though not the same great grandmother.

"Old Zhong, Wang Hou, as long as we can connect with either one, in conjunction with the status and network that Old Su still possesses, and the previously laid 'Black Rye Erguotou'...."

Looking at these two names and the plan written earlier, Xu Yun lightly nodded:

"In this way, the configuration to cause some trouble is nearly complete....."

While Xu Yun was pondering, Yongzhu's voice suddenly came from outside the door:

"Brother Wang, the master is asking you to come over."

Xu Yun hurriedly put away the memo, calmed his breath, and replied:

"Coming immediately, Brother Yongzhu, did the master mention anything?"

"Yes, Prince Jian just arrived at the mansion."

.....

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 204 150: Goodbye Xiaozhao

[1,354 words]

"Prince Jian?"

Upon hearing Yongzhu's words, Xu Yun's expression immediately shifted.

Well, well.

Has Xiaozhao left the palace?

Realizing this, he hurriedly put away his memorandum.

He straightened his attire, left the room, and followed Yongzhu towards the courtyard where the study was located.

After half an hour.

The two reached the outside of the study's courtyard, and Yongzhu stopped consciously:

"Brother Wang, the master and Prince Jian are both inside the courtyard. The master instructed that once you arrive, you can enter directly without announcement."

Xu Yun nodded gratefully and turned to enter the courtyard.

Since the completion of the microscope preparation not long ago, this study had not only contained books but had become an almost private research facility.

Xiaoli and Old Su would often come here to conduct experiments whenever they had free time.

Besides the microscope,

The generator and electrolytic devices that Xu Yun previously made were also moved here, adding a somewhat technological flavor to the place.

As Xu Yun entered the courtyard,

Xiaozhao, who hadn't been seen for a few days, was sitting under the tree chatting with Xiaoli and Old Su.

Seeing this, Xu Yun approached them, bowed to Prince Jian, and smiled:

"A humble citizen, Wang Lin, greets Prince Jian."

Xiaozhao was sitting with his side to the entrance, so he only noticed Xu Yun when he got closer and quickly forced a smile:

"Mr. Wang, it's been a while."

Xu Yun greeted Old Su and Xiaoli, and in the brief moment he looked up and turned his head, he quickly surveyed Xiaozhao.

Not having seen him for two weeks,

This dashing gentleman's mental state was noticeably worse than before, with a hint of worry between his brows.

Clearly,

Some incidents in the palace had brought a significant mental burden to this younger brother of Emperor Zhezong of Song, who was already under pressure.

Prince Jian then bowed to Xu Yun, apologetically saying:

"Mr. Wang, some matters arose in the palace recently, making it inconvenient for me to leave. I've neglected five occasions and more; I ask for your understanding."

Xu Yun, who had been thinking of what to say, quickly returned the gesture and said:

"As the Empress Dowager is not in good health, it is only right for Your Highness, as a descendant, to serve her. Filial piety is a fundamental principle of human relationships; there is no need for apologies."

Old Su and Xiaoli nodded in agreement upon hearing this.

Throughout the five thousand years of Huaxia's history,

Loyalty and filial piety have almost always been core principles repeatedly emphasized in every dynasty.

The Song Dynasty's rule stemmed from Zhao Kuangyin's coup, seizing the throne from the hands of Emperor Gong of Zhou's orphaned family. No matter how later Song Emperors tried to legitimize their rule, there was always some lack of confidence.

So compared to 'loyalty,' the Song Dynasty's court seemed to place more emphasis on filial piety, and the development of filial culture is historically notable.

Thus, in face of Xu Yun's response, even the relatively carefree Xiaoli showed great agreement.

Meanwhile,

Old Su took the opportunity to inquire about the situation in the palace from Xiaozhao, as he hadn't had the chance to learn the details yet:

"Prince Jian, may I ask how the Empress Dowager's health is now?"

Xiaozhao paused for a moment, his face turning faintly sullen:

"Although the Empress Dowager has awakened, her health remains poor. She requires nearly ten hours of rest each day, and the situation... is not very optimistic."

Old Su looked at him thoughtfully and asked:

"What do the Imperial Physicians say?"

Xiaozhao exhaled deeply and shook his head.

Although he didn't speak, the gesture itself was an answer.

Clearly.

As a nephew and someone with vested interests, Xiaozhao couldn't be too candid, but the Imperial Physicians had evidently provided some unfavorable assessments.

This time, although Empress Dowager Xiang was successfully saved, what about the next?

No one could guarantee it.

In fact.

There was something Xiaozhao hadn't voiced:

According to a trusted Imperial Physician, there's a high probability that Empress Dowager Xiang wouldn't survive more than three months.

Once Empress Dowager Xiang passes away, with Zhao Ji unrestrained, Xiaozhao feared he would be in trouble.

Thus, in the past days, Xiaozhao had been even busier than the physicians himself.

Apart from serving Empress Dowager Xiang,

He had been contemplating his choices and was compelled to interact with Zhao Ji daily.

After all the fuss, Xiaozhao's mental state visibly deteriorated.

Currently, the only solace Xiaozhao found was Zhao Ji's naturally gentle (soft) nature, who hadn't resorted to slaughter since ascending the throne.

Moreover, being half-brothers, Zhao Ji treated his mother, from the Zhu Family, decently and frequently paid respects.

Thus, given his apparent concession, Zhao Ji might at most reduce the stipends and spread some underhanded rumors, but was unlikely to act ruthlessly against him...

Right?

Thinking of this,

Xiaozhao couldn't help but sigh slightly, temporarily shelving these thoughts, and asked Xu Yun:

"Mr. Wang, may I inquire about the progress in telescope construction?"

Xu Yun pondered for a moment and replied:

"In reply to Your Highness, the telescope body is one-fifth completed, but the mirrors will take longer, needing roughly over twenty more days."

Earlier it was mentioned,

The telescope Xu Yun designed had a diameter close to one meter and a length of about ten meters.

Coincidentally.

When Xu Yun was writing novels in a previous life, he wrote about telescopes of similar specifications, and a reader once questioned, "Do you know how precise the base has to be?" and such thoughts.

But in reality,

Astronomical telescopes didn't have as high requirements for their bases as imagined.

Even in later generations, a general astronomical telescope base's core was just a Dobsonian base with a central plumb line to track celestial motions.

Many amateur astronomers later built mobile telescopes, compensating for the lack of Dobsonian bases of 0.5v or above by elevating one side of the base to achieve a similar effect.

For instance, in the 18th century,

Herschel's telescope that mapped the Milky Way was mounted on a wooden cart, similar to a large catapult.

The specifications of that telescope were a diameter of 1.22 meters and a length of 12.4 meters, even larger than Xu Yun's design.

With modern productivity levels, requirements are naturally refined.

But the ancient development of academia was limited, and applying modern standards to the past isn't very necessary.

It's like participating in an 800-meter high school run; is it necessary to wear hundred-thousand-dollar sneakers in a fundamentally limited platform?

Based on the scientific understanding during the Song Dynasty or the 11th century global context,

Excessively profound knowledge might have hindered them, reflecting the limitations of their era.

Of course.

Compared to Herschel, who was relatively impoverished, Xu Yun and his team wouldn't resort to using wood for the telescope tube—they used iron.

Also, it answers another reader's query regarding the base issue.

A hollow cylinder with a diameter of one meter, length of ten meters, and thickness of two centimeters has a volume of 0.61544 cubic meters, and one cubic meter of iron weighs 7.8 tons.

Simple multiplication shows that making the telescope consumed around five tons of iron.

The Song Dynasty was when Huaxia cuisine began making its way to the common people, mainly due to its high iron production.

For instance,

In the 3rd year of Xining, Song Dynasty, which is 1069, the court set up 26 coin mints nationwide, minting over 5 million strings of copper coins and over 800,000 strings of iron coins annually.

The iron coins minted in the Song Dynasty weighed 25.5 Song Jin per string, equivalent to 15.3 kilograms per large iron coin, and calculating 850,000 strings amounted to 13,000 tons. (Paper doi: 10.13850/j.cnki.chinum.2005.04.010)

Therefore, gathering over five tons of iron was not much trouble for either Xiaozhao or Old Su.

Returning focus,

Upon learning the progress of the telescope from Xu Yun, a hint of joy and anticipation appeared in Xiaozhao's eyes.

Dissimilar to his deliberately carefree image,

He genuinely enjoyed the scientific concepts discussed by Xu Yun.

Such as experiencing the high-precision microscope with Xiaoli in Xu Yun's absence, observing Brother Lv's tadpoles.

Somewhat similar to Old Su, his interest leaned more towards the observable celestial sphere than microorganisms and cells.

Xiaozhao contemplated for a moment and then asked Xu Yun:

"Mr. Wang, on my way to the courtyard, I happened upon the Captain, and I heard recently...

"You've brewed some excellent wine?"

.....

Note:

...Some readers' thought processes shouldn't be so complex, okay? At times, input methods cause 'him' to be typed as 'her'; consequently, someone speculated I succumbed to the feminist pressure? Black man question mark.....

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Chapter 205 151: A Drunken Night (4.8K)

[2,112 words]

"Wine?"

Hearing the word slip from Xiaozhao's mouth.

Xu Yun was initially taken aback, then gently nodded:

"Indeed, that's true."

Previously, in order to produce allicin to treat Wang Yue's illness, he had spent significant effort concocting high-proof alcohol and distillation equipment.

Thus, naturally, distilled wine emerged alongside it.

After all, this stuff was originally the core objective of early distillation, right?

But due to limited time, Xu Yun couldn't craft many varieties.

He merely distilled a few types of pure white spirits with alcohol content between 45 and 60 degrees.

Yet, such distilled spirits, though ordinary in Xu Yun's eyes, were a so-called bug-level killer in an era where drinks at most were 20 degrees.

Even Wang Bing, who looked like the stoic Zhu Shimao, was immediately captivated by Xu Yun's 'Erguotou' at first encounter, due to its overpowering nature.

According to Wang Bing,

even wine for celebrating major victories couldn't match one-tenth of Xu Yun's spirits!

Not to mention the frontier in the west, where temperatures would plummet to freezing after October.

Although the officials generally wouldn't choose to march and fight after late autumn, the western frontier always needed garrison and patrol, right?

If one could carry such a flask of strong liquor while patrolling,

even if faced with a sharp temporary drop in temperature, it could at least keep one somewhat warm.

Therefore, from both a drinking and military preparedness standpoint, strong liquor was undoubtedly a "soldier's magnet".

Now, after daily training,

Wang Bing would ask Xu Yun for a couple of ounces of white spirits, accompanied by meat as a late-night snack, enjoying himself immensely.

Although Xiaozhao was a prince, he was also a lover of wine, delighting in drinking.

If he weren't truly a wine enthusiast, he wouldn't have chosen a tavern as a 'stage'—wouldn't a pleasure boat or brothel be more appealing?

Thus, upon hearing that Xu Yun had concocted several new types of strong liquor, Xiaoli's craving was immediately piqued:

"Mr. Wang, where are the new wines stored? Could I have a small taste as well?"

Xu Yun lifted his eyes to glance at him, thinking today he'd already gathered most of the information needed, and thus agreed:

"If Your Highness is interested, this humble one must comply, but the liquor is stored in the wine cellar, and the master..."

Old Su, hearing this, immediately understood and waved his hand:

"Xiaowang, today you will attend... ahem, accompany His Highness for a stroll. If anything comes up at the residence, I'll have someone find you, so don't worry."

Xu Yun then nodded, taking leave with Xiaozhao and Xiaoli.

The three then passed through several courtyards, arriving at the entrance to a wine cellar.

This wine cellar was divided into ground level and underground sections, with the underground also serving as an ice cellar, covering a larger area.

Considering transportation and preparation issues, Xu Yun's distillation equipment was not chosen to be placed in the underground cellar but was instead installed in a ground-level side room.

Arriving outside the side room's door.

Click—

Xu Yun pulled out a key to unlock the door, leading Xiaozhao and Xiaoli inside.

This room was a bit over thirty square meters, with a set of distillation equipment in a corner, not in operation at the moment.

On the opposite side of the distillation equipment were several ceramic jars of varying sizes.

Labels on the tops read "75-degree alcohol," "95-degree alcohol," "99.9-degree alcohol," and "white spirits," among others.

As soon as they entered the room, the intense smell of alcohol hit them.

Xiaoli sensibly sniffed the air, murmuring softly:

"Such a nice aroma."

Xu Yun ignored the feminine drinker's exclamation and walked adeptly to a jar with a broken seal labeled 53 degrees.

He opened the lid and scooped a spoonful of wine with a wooden ladle.

Just as he was about to find a wooden or ceramic bowl to pour the wine into, Xiaozhao eagerly cupped his hands:

"Mr. Wang, pour it into my hands."

Xu Yun was astonished at his request.

Goodness gracious.

This Quasi-Prince was really down-to-earth, wasn't he?

If in public, he did this to 'stay alive,' then in private, such behavior was a mark of a genuine character.

On a personal note, Xu Yun rather appreciated this approach.

So, when Xiaozhao made his request, Xu Yun stepped over, gently pouring the wine into Xiaozhao's hands.

Xiaozhao, as if receiving mountain spring water, cupped the wine carefully, bringing it up to sniff gently.

A moment later, an intoxicated gleam spread across his face.

As for Xiaoli nearby:

(̄ ̄)...

Then Xiaozhao slightly inclined his head forward, slurping down the wine in a single gulp.

"Cough, cough, cough..."

As soon as it hit his throat,

a scorching sensation, never felt before, filled his mouth and esophagus, causing the royal family member to cough uncontrollably, resembling a new case in the Northern Song.

Some of the wine not fully consumed spilled over him, making him look a bit untidy.

But Xiaozhao seemed utterly unconcerned by these issues.

With a flushed face, he steadied his breath, not even bothering to straighten his clothes, and immediately gave Xu Yun a thumbs up:

"Excellent wine, potent! Mr. Wang, does this wine have a name?"

Xu Yun nodded and said:

"Ordinary folks would be drunk after a single bowl of this wine, unable to walk further, hence it's named 'One Bowl, No Pass'.

Xiaozhao's eyes lit up:

"One Bowl, No Pass... great name!"

The wine Xu Yun scooped out was possibly just over an ounce, and after accounting for what spilled, Xiaozhao actually consumed very little.

Such a quantity of white spirits wouldn't, of course, get Xiaozhao drunk, but the alcohol's stimulus made the Prince of Zhezong's behavior slightly more boisterous.

He grabbed Xu Yun's wrist, saying:

"Mr. Wang, is there wine and meat available in the house now?"

Xu Yun's wrist was grasped so tightly it hurt a little, but he still said:

"Wine and meat are simple enough, as it's close to noon now, the kitchen has probably started cooking.

Otherwise, have the Old Chief Steward send someone across the street to buy some from the restaurant."

Xiaozhao, hearing this, exchanged a glance with Xiaoli, the two drinkers reached an instant consensus:

"Great, Mr. Wang, please inform the kitchen staff to prepare the wine and meat quickly, today the three of us shall not leave until we're thoroughly inebriated!"

Xu Yun nodded, agreeing:

"No problem, leave it to me."

....

Although it is summer now, a heavy rain just fell in Bianjing last night, so the weather is still quite cool.

Therefore, after consulting with Xiaoli and Xiaozhao, Xu Yun decided to choose the outdoors as the place for drinking and chatting.

Two quarters of an hour later.

In a secluded courtyard of the Su Mansion.

The three of them, Xu Yun, Xiaoli, and Xiaozhao, sat around a stone table under the shade of a tree, and the table was set with some food and drink.

The main dishes were lamb and beef:

Two entire plates of braised meat and a hot pot, the pot was bubbling away.

Steam rose and a fragrant aroma spread all over.

Xu Yun personally doesn't much like mutton, but he's an ardent beef enthusiast, nearly ecstatic without it.

Later generations, influenced by some strange thoughts, seemed to especially favor foreign beef.

Things like insisting steak must be rare, only eating Wagyu for barbecues, and such.

People who like such things, let them like them, and they enjoy praising one while disparaging the other.

With some inexplicable sense of superiority, they belittle domestic beef varieties.

But in Xu Yun's view.

Although domestic beef might indeed have a certain disadvantage in the international market, due to the relatively late start of breeding certain breeds.

There's nothing to deny about this, their breeding industry started two to three decades earlier, so it's also reasonable to have some achievements.

But this disadvantage is not an uncrossable gulf, at least not so exaggerative to the point of abandoning native cattle entirely.

For instance, the braised beef Xu Yun is enjoying now.

It comes from a high-quality yellow cow from the Northwest region, naturally grass-fed, incredibly fresh and tender meat.

The cucumber strip cut can be stir-fried.

The brisket can be stewed with radish.

The shank can make braised beef.

And the beef tendon can.... ahem....

Of course.

Some people might ask:

No, wait a minute.

Wasn't it forbidden to eat beef in the Tang and Song dynasties?

True, but not entirely so.

Although there were laws in the early Northern Song's 'Song Penal Code' such as "Those who deliberately kill government or private cattle, imprisonment for one year and six months", "The owner who kills cattle or horses himself, imprisonment for one year".

But in reality, during the Tang and Song dynasties, beef was actually a fairly common ingredient among the people.

For example, the renowned Du Fu, his cause of death was related to beef.

Yet whether he was overstuffed or the beef had gone bad remains unknown.

Furthermore, not long ago, Wang Hou and others returned victorious from the Western front, bringing back a lot of cattle and sheep.

Some of the beef found its way through various channels into the civilian market, after all, in the Northern Song, everything revolved around profit.

"Delicious!"

Xu Yun picked up a large piece of beef, slowly chewing it in his mouth.

This un-bred beef had more bite than the beef cattle of later years.

Eating it is immensely satisfying, though it does tire the jaw.

Beside him, Xiaoli and Xiaozhao were sipping strong liquor.

Judging by the stance, Xiaoli seemed a bit fiercer than Xiaozhao.

After all, this girl was known to be a notorious drinker.

According to statistics by Xiaoli's fans in later generations, she had gotten drunk three times in her pre-marital poems.

Twice in 'As if in a Dream' and once in 'Washing Stream Sand'.

As for after marriage, it happened even more often.

Sober twice, drunk seven times, and after Zhao Mingcheng's death, drunk six more times.

The thing is, this girl loves drinking but has a low tolerance, feeling tipsy after just three cups.

A cup in the Song dynasty held about 30 milliliters, which equates to roughly six Qian—bear in mind, the liquor at this time just barely reached above ten degrees of alcohol at the max.....

A genuine novice who loves to play.

But to come back to the point, there truly are few literati who can drink much.

Take Du Fu's 'Song of the Eight Immortals of Wine' for instance.

Zhi Zhang got drunk and fell into a well while horseback riding, Li Bai became poetic and ebullient after a mere dou, not to mention Zhang Xu who started sprawling cursive after just three cups.....

Moreover, Xu Yun brought out high-proof liquor this time, so it wasn't long before both Xiaoli and Xiaozhao's cheeks started to blush.

"Mr. Wang, this fish sashimi tastes wonderful, do try some."

Compared to the hard-drinking Xiaoli, Xiaozhao seemed more considerate.

She quite enthusiastically placed a piece of fish on Xu Yun's plate and said:

"This is yellow croaker, a specialty from the Deng Prefecture region. It is incredibly fresh and delicious, truly one of the great delicacies of the world."

Xu Yun courteously thanked Xiaozhao and began to savor the fish.

His expression was genuine, for the yellow croaker of this time was undoubtedly a wild variety, considered priceless in later eras.

For those under seven taels, it wasn't too bad, but the price soared as the weight increased.

Like the nearly three-jin yellow croaker on the table at the moment, selling it for ten thousand yuan at a later era's restaurant wouldn't even raise an eyebrow.

Switch it to a top-tier private kitchen like Mr. Huang's or No. 5 in the western suburbs, and it would likely double in price, exceeding twenty thousand.

Xu Yun once saw a hot topic of a 400,000-yuan-expensive menu in recent years, which apparently can still be found online now.

Other dishes Xu Yun couldn't recall clearly, but he hasn't forgotten a 7.4-jin wild large yellow croaker:

15,800 yuan per jin, over 110,000 yuan for the whole fish.

In this age, the only ones on par with wild yellow croaker might be three-liang class knife fish.

Watching Xu Yun carefully enjoy the fish, Xiaozhao asked:

"Mr. Wang, from your accent, it sounds like you are from the Daming Prefecture area?"

Xu Yun's accent, which came from the system, leaned toward an HB accent, close enough to be from the realm of Daming Prefecture:

"That's correct, I was born in Zu'an Village in Daming Prefecture. Unfortunately, an evil man named Sun Xiaochuan came to the village in my early years, forcing the whole family to flee, and later... sigh."

Hearing this, Xiaozhao was momentarily stunned, then with a slightly guilty expression, she raised her wine glass:

"Mr. Wang, I carelessly misspoke and accidentally touched on your painful memories. I ought to punish myself by downing a cup."

Without waiting for a reaction from Xu Yun, Xiaozhao downed her drink in one go.

As the strong liquor went down.

Xiaozhao's face turned an even deeper shade of red, her eyes becoming somewhat glazed.

.....

Note:

There have been fewer updates recently, but don't forget to cast your monthly votes; 1000 votes will mean four thousand extra words added this month.

The updates have been sparse mainly to adjust my health, but I'll make up for anything missed, starting with normal updates tomorrow, so please send in those monthly passes!!!!

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 206 152: Xiaozhao Furiously Rebukes the Ministers (6K!!!)

[975 words]

After Xiaozhao took another bite of lamb.

With the feedback of a full stomach, a wave of drunkenness surged up.

Clatter—

He tossed a chopstick aside, holding the end of the remaining one, rhythmically tapping it on the ceramic dish.

At the same time, he shook his head and softly chanted:

"Those who abandoned me, yesterday is gone and cannot be held, those who disturb my heart, today is full of worries.

A long wind sends autumn geese over thousands of miles, which can be exuberantly enjoyed from a high tower.

The literary works from Penglai have the bones of Jian'an, and Xiao Xie among them has emerged once more.

All carry lofty thoughts with majestic desiring to reach the sky and grasp the bright moon.

Draw a sword to cut the water, but the water continues to flow; raise a cup to dispel sorrows, but the sorrows increase."

Xu Yun, seeing this, picked up a piece of fish but wisely refrained from praising the 'eloquence'.

If he remembered correctly, this should be Li Bai's "Farewell Banquet at Xie Tiao Tower in Xuanzhou for Uncle Xie," not an original by Xiaozhao.

Even though he majored in science, he still had an impression of such famous pieces.

After all, during his school days, he often mistook the characters '跳楼' in "Farewell Banquet at Xie Tiao Tower in Xuanzhou for Uncle Xie" for 'jumping tower'.....

What?

You ask where Xiaoli is?

See that dish of chicken over there that's already drunk like a puddle?

Looking at the rather carefree Xiaozhao, Xu Yun couldn't help but shake his head and sighed quietly in his heart.

"Farewell Banquet at Xie Tiao Tower in Xuanzhou for Uncle Xie" is a very typical farewell lyric poem that actually expresses emotions.

Although it's not particularly gloomy or melancholy, it reveals considerable anxiety and distress between the lines, with a taste of making merry amid hardship.

At this moment, Xiaozhao had consumed about seven liang of strong alcohol, and he was already a bit dizzy.

The selection of such poetry at this moment can largely reflect his inner emotions.

It makes sense.

After Emperor Zhezong ascended to the throne, whether it was Zhao Ji, Zhao Bi, Zhao Yu, or Xiaozhao, they were all essentially losers in the competition for the imperial throne.

Emperor Zhezong ascended the throne at the age of ten, still a young emperor, so his grandmother Empress Dowager Gao had to rule on his behalf.

In the Eighth Year of Yuan You... which is 1093.

With Gao's passing, Emperor Zhezong officially began his reign.

At that time, Emperor Zhezong had just turned 18, full of vigor and in good health.

From a bystander's perspective, living long aside, there seemed to be no problem with ruling for at least thirty years.

Unless Emperor Zhezong was incapable of producing heirs, there seemed to be no reason for the throne to pass to others.

Therefore, at that time, princes like Zhao Ji, Zhao Bi, and Xiaozhao didn't hope for the throne at all.

Either they enjoyed their blessings peacefully, or they freely indulged in their own pursuits—why else would there be the saying 'Prince Duan was frivolous'?

Without competition among themselves, the relationship between them remained good, with a show of brotherly respect and humility.

Who would have expected.

In just seven short years, Emperor Zhezong suddenly died young, leaving no heirs.

Zhao Ji suddenly transformed and ascended to the throne, instantly altering the former alliances with his brothers.

Additionally, Xiaozhao was Emperor Zhezong's biological brother and the original choice supported by most officials in court.

Therefore, Zhao Ji quickly changed his previously friendly attitude toward Xiaozhao.

Hence the saying, having no heirs is no good...

In any case.

In such a situation, the worries and distress in Xiaozhao's heart indeed weighed heavily on him.

Looking at the already somewhat dazed Xiaozhao, Xu Yun suddenly had a thought and came up with an idea:

Should he probe this Prince Jian a bit?

He covertly poured himself a cup of Qingshui, then filled Xiaozhao's cup with wine, saying:

"To drink at the same table with Your Highness is a blessing from the ancestors for this humble commoner. Come, I toast you again!"

"Oh... okay, another cup!"

Xiaozhao, slightly bewildered, smacked his lips and grabbed the wine cup in front of him, drinking it all down in one go.

"Hic!"

As the strong liquor went down, a burst of alcohol fumes immediately accompanied the hiccup.

Xiaozhao's body swayed slightly, needing to prop himself on the table with his left hand to stay seated, his eyes growing increasingly vacant.

Xu Yun pondered for a moment and refilled his cup with wine:

"Prince Jian, you've missed some sessions these days; shouldn't you also drink a cup as a self-penalty?"

Xiaozhao wobbled and stared blankly for a few seconds, then nodded repeatedly like a great thinker:

"Ah, yes, yes, yes!"

Before Xu Yun could urge him, he proactively picked up the wine cup again, raising his head for a bold sip.

Glug, glug—

In just a few seconds, the strong liquor was completely drunk.

He has a strong sense of self-management.JPG.

With two cups of strong liquor down, Xiaozhao finally fell completely into a drunken state:

This charming fellow was babbling, his eyes barely open, looking rather like Li Ronghao.

Xu Yun tested by waving a hand in front of him, saying:

"Prince Jian? Prince Jian?"

Xiaozhao showed no response:

"Ah ba ah ba...."

Xu Yun glanced at the Xiaoli next to him, yep, already snoring.

Ensuring no one around, he cleared his throat, and in a sharp voice, said:

"Your Highness, Your Highness, something's wrong; there's an edict from the palace, the Empress Dowager has appointed Prince Duan as emperor....."

This technique was one Xu Yun heard from a doctor friend in his past life, mentioning certain people or matters around a drunken person has a greater chance of triggering subconscious memory feedback.

This method is commonly used in modern operating rooms, scientifically named positive suggestive language, with a DOI of 10.15932/j.0253-9713.2017.01.030.

The success rate of such suggestions is generally around 30%, usually requiring milestone-like instances to take effect.

However, compared to modern times, Xiaozhao's current situation would be slightly special—he'd never encountered such strong liquor before.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 207 152: Xiaozhao Furiously Rebukes the Ministers (6K!!!)_2

[920 words]

In the past, Xiaozhao's so-called drunkenness and drunken antics were largely deliberate acts for self-preservation.

The negative emotions buried deep within Xiaozhao were far more than Xu Yun had anticipated.

Such a person, once intoxicated, was more prone to certain responses than the average drunkard.

Thus, with a hint from Xu Yun.

Suddenly, in Xiaozhao's mind, which had lost basic judgment, a scene emerged from the day a little eunuch delivered an imperial decree...

Clatter—

With a sweep of his sleeve, Xiaozhao knocked several plates to the ground.

At the same time, he continued to utter hoarse, incoherent sounds, murmuring like a wounded beast:

"Zhao Ji, Zhao Ji... we are of the same flesh and blood, why have you brought me to this state? When our brother was in power, did he ever treat you cruelly?!!"

As he spoke, Xiaozhao's eyes suddenly welled with tears:

"You ascended to the throne as Emperor, honored by thousands.

I had no intention to compete for the throne with you, yet you wouldn't even allow me to leave the Capital City, always guarded against me.

Today you cut my allowances, tomorrow you plant spies.

Last month, I sensed something amiss and stuffed a strand of hair into the undergarments I changed out of, instructing servants not to enter the room, but when I returned to the mansion after half a day, the strand of hair was already gone!"

As Xiaozhao spoke, he suddenly looked at Xu Yun with a mix of tears and laughter, as if mistaking him for Zhao Ji:

"Even the smallest intimate items, you don't leave untouched, Zhao Ji, what are you truly planning? Do you wish to claim my life before you rest?"

Seeing Xiaozhao in such a discomposed state, Xu Yun suddenly felt a wave of sympathy.

From Xiaozhao's final words and previous poems, it isn't hard to discern.

He didn't truly believe Zhao Ji would harm him, it was more from a place of tormented emotions.

After all, incidents of fratricide in the Northern Song were not many, tales of shadows and hatchets were ultimately rumors, without solid evidence.

Secondly, Zhao Ji's temperament, as mentioned before.

He was foolish, indeed, but could not be deemed violent.

Thus, in Xiaozhao's view.

The worst Zhao Ji might do was confine him within the palace, perhaps release him after several or even a dozen years.

But the problem is...

Historically, Zhao Ji did indeed cause harm to Xiaozhao.

Once was during the Prince Cai's Mansion prison case, where almost all capable aides of Xiaozhao were killed.

Another was Xiaozhao's later sudden death, which even historical records dare only obscurely cover up with the word 'demise'.

Since ancient times, the imperial family has been unfeeling...

Xiaozhao, in the courtyard, laughed and cried, venting his emotions.

Fortunately, the courtyard Xu Yun chose was quite secluded, and he instructed the servants not to approach.

In this era, without listening devices, even if there were spies watching, it simply appeared a little wanton.

After a while.

Xiaozhao was entirely spent, appearing somewhat sober.

Seeing this, Xu Yun quickly poured him another cup of wine.

Then he paused for a moment and posed a long-held curious question:

"Prince Jian, may I ask your thoughts on the current state of the nation?"

After asking this question.

Xu Yun closely observed Xiaozhao, his expression somewhat grave, uncertain if Xiaozhao would follow up.

"The state of the nation?"

Xiaozhao repeated this phrase, struck a funny pose tilting his head, then slowly uttered one word:

"Perilous!"

"Perilous?"

Upon hearing this response, Xu Yun was instantly intrigued, pressing for more:

"Why do you say perilous?"

Gulping down.

Xiaozhao picked up the jug, poured another cup of wine, drank deeply, then wiped the corner of his mouth.

What Xu Yun didn't know was.

The topic he brought up was precisely what Xiaozhao had pondered for a long time.

Thus naturally, Xiaozhao felt compelled to speak:

"In the current court, there are four Ministers, I wish to dismiss three of them, Three Masters and Three Dukes, I wish to dismiss four of them."

"Look at those seven individuals, which of them isn't gray at the temples, which isn't a pillar of the court, which isn't a family relative through marriage to my brother's daughter, they have rotted, and my heart is breaking."

"My brother entrusted the nation to Zhao Ji, yet it turned out like this, how can Zhao Ji face my brother?"

"When my brother first ascended, I was young, thought the greatest enemy of the court was Qiangwu; once Qiangwu was subdued, I thought it was Western Xia; General Wang Hou recovered Qingtang, then the Liao people became Great Song's worry."

As he spoke, Xiaozhao suddenly grew agitated, pointing with his index finger in a certain direction:

"I am increasingly clear now, Great Song's problems lie not outside, but within the court, right there in Chuigong Hall! Within my own flesh-and-blood brothers and Ministers!"

"Once a rot begins in Chuigong Hall, Great Song will rot as a whole!"

"If they all rot...."

Xiaozhao couldn't help but take a deep breath, shaking his head:

"The regions of Great Song will rise in revolt, leaving us with no place to die peacefully!"

Xu Yun, seeing Xiaozhao's reaction, glanced at him and proposed a new question:

"So, Your Highness, if you were in power, where would you start?"

It was evident Xiaozhao had pondered this question more than once, and even in his current muddled state, he resolutely answered:

"Curb factional disputes internally, eliminate false payrolls in Xiping!"

After saying this, he hiccupped before hazily continuing:

"The chaos of factional disputes has persisted... for too long, from Emperor Shen Zong's reign on, the rise of factional struggles over reform has engulfed the court, long... long before it eroded the structure of the court.

Look, apart from Duke Zhao wholeheartedly... wholeheartedly pursuing scholarly ranks, who in recent years can maintain neutrality?..."

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 208 152 Xiaozhao Angrily Rebukes the Courtiers (6K!!!)_3

[653 words]

After saying this, Xiaozhao suddenly yawned and curled up on the chair to sleep.

Sensible.jpg.

Meanwhile, Xu Yun fell into deep thought.

The factional struggles of the Song Dynasty, in fact, were anticipated and alerted by Zhao Kuangyin at the very beginning of the founding of the state.

The third year of Jianlong... which is 962.

Regarding the civil service exam, a crucial source of officials, Zhao Kuangyin issued a strict order:

"Successful advanced scholars shall not address the examiner as gracious master or mentor, nor claim to be his disciple."

A few years passed.

Zhao Kuangyin established the palace examination as a standard, emphasizing that those who passed were personally selected by the Emperor.

This changed from being "disciples of the seated master" to "disciples of the Emperor."

The purpose of this was to attempt to strengthen the presence of imperial power and weaken the influence of the master-student relationship.

Thus breaking the situation of factions formed due to the civil service exams, yet, heaven did not grant this wish.

Due to the unjust acquisition of power in the Song Dynasty, military generals were continuously suppressed, emphasizing the status of literati.

This practice, while achieving numerous scenes of esteemed ministers gathering and heroes assembling,

also led to high officials competing for power, deeply embroiled in factional struggles without concern, even esteemed ministers couldn't avoid it.

After the death of the second generation's "Donkey Cart Emperor," factional struggles gradually spread and intensified, becoming uncontrollable.

For example, during Emperor Zhenzong's reign, the factional struggle was represented by Wang Qinyin and Kou Zhun, with Wang Qinyin excluding Kou Zhun to gain power.

During Emperor Renzong's reign, it was represented by the overt and covert conflict between Lv Yijian and Fan Zhongyan, causing the "Qingli New Policies" to fail halfway.

Then there was...

The reform struggle that Xiaozhao mentioned.

Which involved the Yuanyou Faction issue previously mentioned when introducing Xiaoli's father, Old Li.

Recognizing this, whether or not Xiaozhao has the ability to solve it, at least he's much better than Zhao Ji, the "Flower and Bird Emperor" who neglected his duties:

Zhao Ji ignored the matter entirely, leaving his hands off the keyboard and idled away.

This eventually led to the late Song's "Six Traitors" monopolizing the court's power, farmer uprisings breaking out everywhere, becoming one of the critical reasons for the Northern Song's sudden demise.

However, what truly surprised Xu Yun wasn't the factional issue, but the second matter Xiaozhao referred to:

The ghost payroll in Xiping!

The Northern Song's Imperial Guard adopted a five-grade, twelve-level Xiang Army system. Xu Yun couldn't recall the exact numbers at this time, but around the time of the Jingkang Incident, he remembered the registered number for soldiers and salaries in Northern Song's Ceshan:

One million two hundred thousand!

And how many could realistically be mustered from this number?

Less than four hundred thousand!

A ghost payroll of a whopping eight hundred thousand! How could the Northern Song convert its economic advantage into military strength?

Even during the Jingkang Incident.

Many of the Jin Army's weapons were simply bought from some Western Army generals...

But looking over the entire history, out of nine Northern Song emperors — including the clever Emperor Huizong and Emperor Qinzong, only Emperor Zhezong attempted to address the ghost payroll issue.

Yet his policies hadn't been implemented long before he suddenly died.

Therefore, some people speculate that Emperor Zhezong's sudden death might be related to some interest groups in the Western Army.

After all, being skilled in warfare and embezzling funds aren't mutually exclusive.

For example, the later renowned general against the Jin Army, Li Gang, and Zhang Jun of the "Four Generals of Revival" disgrace, were both people who fell into the pit of money.

In summary.

The fact that Xiaozhao could say these words.

At least from the perspective of insight, he's far superior to that Flower and Bird Emperor and humanoid procreator, Zhao Ji.....

Thinking about this.

Xu Yun couldn't help but take a deep breath, and a certain idea in his heart became increasingly clear....

...

Note:

Today's update resumes. Starting tomorrow, I will increase the updates. Can you give some encouragement with a monthly pass?????

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 209 153 All Is Ready, Except for the East Wind (6.8K)

[887 words]

After receiving a relatively satisfactory reply.

Xu Yun walked out of the courtyard and found Mr. Xie, the Old Chief Steward.

He asked him to bring in some servants and maids to place Xiaozhao and Xiaoli in separate guest rooms.

Early the next morning.

Xiaozhao was the first to wake up from the drunkenness.

"Your Highness, Prince Jian."

After Xiaozhao dressed up and just stepped out the door.

Xu Yun, who had been waiting outside the courtyard, quickly approached him, bowed his hands, and smiled:

"I wonder if Your Highness found the night's sleep agreeable?"

Xiaozhao rubbed his still slightly aching head, grinned, and shook his head:

"The bed was quite comfortable, but the strength of the wine was really something..."

Then, before Xu Yun could say anything, Xiaozhao suddenly thought of something.

His eyes flashed, and he proactively asked him:

"By the way, Mr. Wang, did I talk nonsense while drunk yesterday?"

While asking this, Xiaozhao's tone seemed casual, but his expression was slightly tense.

After all, although he enjoyed drinking, he rarely got truly drunk.

In most cases, he was just pretending.

Yesterday, when he heard from Wang Bing that Xu Yun had good wine, he thought it would be no more than the Transparent Bottle Fragrance of the palace.

About twenty degrees or so, like the later versions.

But what he didn't expect was...

The alcohol content of Xu Yun's strong liquor far exceeded his expectations.

And the wine tasted exceptionally aromatic at first sip, so he drank several more without noticing.

When the alcohol kicked in, he started to feel dizzy, and it was impossible to pull back.

Although Xiaozhao was aware that his drinking conduct was quite decent, everything feared the unexpected.

If he really said something out of line, that would be disastrous.

But soon.

Xu Yun's answer allowed him to breathe a sigh of relief:

"Your Highness, Prince Jian, you're asking the wrong person.

This humble man has a weak tolerance for alcohol, and was the first to pass out after two drinks yesterday.

However, before fainting, I vaguely remember Miss Li saying something like 'Your Highness has missed a class for several days and should penalize himself with a drink' and so on..."

Upon hearing this, Xiaozhao was first stunned, then nodded thoughtfully, visibly relaxing:

"I do recall such words, oh, Miss Li is just like that; once she touches wine, she loves to make a fuss.

The song 'As if in a Dream' was just like that..."

Xu Yun could only respond with an awkward smile.

Then Xiaozhao chatted with him simply for a while, confirming several times that he hadn't said anything out of line before quickly bidding farewell and leaving the Su Mansion.

Although Empress Dowager has now passed the most dangerous phase, Xiaozhao no longer needs to stay in the palace constantly.

But as a junior, he still had to greet Empress Dowager Xiang every day.

Xu Yun then turned to another courtyard, preparing to teach mathematics to Old Jia, Han Gonglian, and others.

A few days ago.

After calculating the inclination factor for lenses, the workload on Old Jia and others was significantly reduced.

However, Xu Yun did not let them leave.

Instead, he persuaded Old Su to grant Liu Yi and others the status of guests and continued imparting advanced mathematical knowledge.

Including, but not limited to, modern mathematical symbols, names, and some binomial equations, which were...

like calculus.

The saying remains the same.

Although Song Dynasty's mathematics was very advanced, it still lacked the complete system foundation to derive calculus.

For instance, before Little Niu derived calculus, Europe's mathematical foundation was already solid—relative to that era,

initially having Barrow's theorem on the product and quotient of two functions, along with infinitesimals and numerous conjectures and deductions from predecessors as a base.

Accumulating all this, Little Niu then derived calculus.

Though a genius, it didn't violate mathematical principles.

Song Dynasty's mathematical community, however, was severely lacking in this accumulation.

Even if Xu Yun actually produced calculus, it would only be considered prematurely forcing progress.

Therefore, what Xu Yun could do was inform Old Jia about the few concepts related to variables in the entire calculus system... essentially Little Niu's Flow Technique.

Striving to plant some seeds in the native mathematical community of this timeline, perhaps increasing the difficulty of exams by twenty or thirty points.

Just like that.

In the alternating sessions of teaching Old Jia, Xiaozhao, Xiaoli, and opening special sessions for Old Su.

Twenty days passed in the blink of an eye.

It was early one morning.

After Xu Yun finished his morning tea as usual and walked out of his little hut yawning, he found a little old man standing outside:

Northern Song's "Level Eight Craftsman"...

Siegfried.

Seeing Siegfried waiting specifically for him, Xu Yun hurriedly stepped forward and offered a junior's politeness:

"Master Qi, why have you come, sir? Could it be that the telescope is almost ready?"

Siegfried smiled and bowed his hands, nodding and answering:

"Mr. Wang, the preparation of the telescope is about eighty percent complete. Today, I came to invite you to the Artifact Bureau to validate it."

Then he paused, seemingly remembering something, and added:

"Oh yes, and Miss Li's microscope has been completed as well; you could go and collect it too."

Xu Yun then understood and nodded.

Previously considering the telescope's substantial size and the need for extensive professional equipment for production, Old Su's Family was evidently unsuitable.

After numerous discussions, the production location was finally arranged at the Artifact Bureau.

Of course.

Besides this apparent reason, there was another underlying reason:

The entire process required the consumption of more than five tons of iron.

Mind you.

Iron in ancient Huaxia was a crucial military resource.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 210 153 All Is Ready, Except for the East Wind (6.8K)_2

[955 words]

If this iron were to fall into private hands, it would be enough to arm a considerable army.

Therefore, for the sake of stability, the entire production process must take place under the watchful eye of Emperor Huizong of Song.

The only part of the process conducted at Old Su's Family was the production of a mercury paraboloid.

This mercury paraboloid was completed by Xu Yun several days ago and is currently stored in a sealed, low-temperature environment, ready for use at any time.

Which means.

Siegfried is primarily responsible for the tube body, spherical lenses, and modifying the Water Transporting Celestial Observation Platform to a Rotating Instrument Clock.

Afterward, Xu Yun tidied up his attire and followed Siegfried in preparation to head to the Artifact Bureau.

Coincidentally.

As the two of them reached the entrance of the Su Mansion, they were met by the approaching Xiaoli.

"Miss Li."

Xu Yun quickly stopped this Little Doudou. It wasn't a school day today, so there was obviously only one reason she'd be here:

"Here to see the microscope again?"

Xiaoli nodded and said:

"I had an appointment with Uncle Su the day before yesterday. Today, I can use the microscope for two hours."

Xu Yun immediately laughed and motioned with his chin towards the outside of the door:

"That's quite a coincidence, Miss Li. Don't go inside. Come along with Master Qi and me."

Xiaoli blinked, her face showing slight reluctance:

"Where are we going? I hardly got this opportunity from Uncle Su..."

"Of course, to get your micro... hey, slow down!"

And so.

Xu Yun and the others followed Siegfried and took a carriage to the Artifact Bureau.

The Artifact Bureau was established 33 years ago, under the jurisdiction of the Military Equipment Supervision, but it did not handle military device preparation.

Its primary production function was to refine non-military ironware.

Common items included iron plows and iron wheel axles used in high-end carriages.

Additionally, items like iron pots or kitchen knives were government-controlled industries at this time, and private production could be equivalent to private coin minting.

Siegfried's department was a bit unique.

Similar to future large-scale research institutions, it generally had no mandatory production tasks but mainly focused on self-development of new types of iron equipment.

Of course.

This kind of research had certain constraints.

For example, there were limits on the annual consumption of iron, and multiple people had to be present during the smelting process. Old ironware needed to pass through several processes for verification before it could be destroyed, and so on.

The Artifact Bureau's location is northeast of Imperial Street, and from a distance, one could see iron-smelting furnaces emitting smoke, exuding a clear atmosphere of primitive industry. (Reference for the architectural layout of Bianjing during Emperor Huizong's period: doi10.16783/j.cnki.nwnus.2009.05.007)

In fact, Xu Yun was always puzzled:

Why was such a department as the Artifact Bureau, which could have large accidents at any time and also pollute the environment, not only established within the city of Bianjing but also only about one and a half li away from the Imperial Palace?

Never mind how much harmful exhaust gas could be produced by the four six-meter-high iron furnaces.

Just the acidic wastewater produced by iron-smelting would flow along the Bian River, severely affecting the daily lives of residents in the northeast area of Bianjing City.

Truly strange indeed.....

Clang, clang, clang——

As Xu Yun and the others entered the Artifact Bureau.

They saw a large number of bare-chested strong men wielding black and hard tools, forcefully striking some round, slightly elastic targets.

Siegfried led Xu Yun and others forward while explaining:

"Mr. Wang, Miss Li, this is the hammering of cauldron bottoms. After the hammering is completed, quenching and reinforcement can begin."

Xu Yun nodded, committing this scene of sparks flying to memory.

This is indeed the pinnacle of ancient Huaxia craftsmanship...

If he remembered correctly.

The quenching technique should have appeared during the Spring and Autumn Period and began to be widely promoted after the Western Han Dynasty, a technology ahead of Europe by over a thousand years.

But in later generations, everything switched positions.

The need to purchase iron ore from other countries could be excused.

After all, this is an inherent resource limitation dating back to the new Archaean age, a situation beyond human alteration.

But some iron-smelting equipment and even methods were outpaced by foreign countries. For example, a technology like FINEX still requires paying patent fees to Prét, which is quite frustrating.

One could only say the pit dug by a certain queue dynasty was too deep, with debts being paid even a hundred years later.

Next, Xu Yun and the others followed Siegfried further, and the surrounding sounds gradually began to quiet down.

A quarter of an hour later.

They passed through a courtyard gate and arrived at a site covering nearly three hundred square meters.

At this very moment.

A large iron tube lay on the ground, about ten meters in length and one meter in diameter.

It was hollow inside, with no other engraving around the surface.

One side of the iron tube was relatively smooth and simple, while the other side was much more complicated, with a great number of intricate mechanisms and push slots.

Obviously.

This was the telescope's tube body.

Siegfried led Xu Yun to the tube body and said:

"Mr. Wang, take a look at whether this tube is up to standard?"

Xu Yun cupped his hands toward him, moved to the edge of the iron tube, and began to inspect the completion state.

To be honest.

The telescope's tube body wasn't particularly complex.

Apart from the main body.

The key structures include the Star-finding Mirror, Guide-star Mirror, and Rotating Instrument Clock, all of which involve issues of precision.

Some could measure with precision to seven or eight decimal places, while others could only reach one or two, leading to a vast difference in prices.

The Rotating Instrument Clock, in particular, was primarily designed to compensate for Earth's rotation, allowing the telescope to consistently be aimed at the same celestial area, thus achieving stable observation.

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Chapter 211 153 All Is Ready, Except for the East Wind (6.8K)_3

[1,085 words]

Now the Rotating Instrument Clock is primarily powered by a motor, with its speed controlled by an astronomical clock or radio oscillator.

However, the early Rotating Instrument Clocks drew their power from chain-driven weights or springs, with their rotational speeds controlled by centrifugal governors.

The Water Transporting Celestial Observation Platform, representing the pinnacle of Old Su's life, utilized this latter principle.

Previously, when designing the layout of the telescope, Xu Yun made some modifications to the Rotating Instrument Clock based on the Water Transporting Celestial Observation Platform.

First, he adjusted the torque and also created a spiral passage inside the cylinder body.

Turning it into an attached device.

Subsequently, Xu Yun bent down and reached into the cylinder with his right hand to begin feeling around.

A few seconds later.

About 30 centimeters along the cylinder wall, he felt three small protruding discs.

Xu Yun gave a slight twist, and an iron disc was removed.

Then he casually picked up a piece of foxtail grass from the ground and inserted it into a gap.

At the same time, he adjusted the torque, precisely enlarging it to twenty times speed based on the scale.

Soon.

Driven by the internal spring, the foxtail grass began to rotate with the platform.

"One... two... three..."

Xu Yun watched seriously for a few minutes, silently keeping count.

A few minutes later.

A slight smile of satisfaction appeared on his face.

The precision of this rotating instrument equipment was very perfect, which was more than sufficient to undertake this observation task.

In this way.....

As long as the donkey at home turns a few more discs, it will be fine.

He then reassembled the iron disc and began to inspect the remaining Star-finding Mirror and guide mirror.

Those familiar with astronomical telescopes should know.

Due to the generally small field of view of the primary mirror of an astronomical telescope, it is often very difficult to directly find the observation target in the primary mirror—because near the target, there are often no other celestial bodies available for reference comparison.

In later times, to solve this problem and quickly locate the celestial body to be observed.

Astronomers attached a small telescope with low magnification and a wide field of view next to the primary mirror.

This is the Star-finding Mirror.

The Star-finding Mirror typically uses a refracting telescope, with its optical axis parallel to the primary mirror's optical axis.

The aperture is generally around 50 to 100mm, the field of view is about 30° to 50° , and the magnification is 7 to 20 times.

A graticule is mounted on its focal plane for calibration, which can be modified with a ruler.

During observation.

One only needs to first find the celestial body to be observed with the Star-finding Mirror and align the body to the center of the Star-finding Mirror's field of view.

Due to the parallel optical axes, the celestial body will also appear synchronously in the primary mirror's field of view.

Additionally.

When the primary mirror is engaged in long-term observation.

To promptly correct tracking errors, observers also set up a telescope for monitoring purposes next to the primary mirror.

This is the guide mirror.

The diameter, focal length, and magnification of the guide mirror must all be greater than those of the Star-finding Mirror, and the field of view smaller.

When the observation target deviates from the primary mirror's center, this situation can be reflected in the guide mirror, allowing it to be promptly adjusted back to the field of view center.

However, there are many unscrupulous merchants in later times. Some popular telescopes have only one of either the Star-finding Mirror or guide mirror, severely impacting novice observation experiences.

The perspective returns to reality.

Only to see Xu Yun come to the head of the Star-finding Mirror and measure the optical axes of the two mirror surfaces using a portable wisdom tooth gauge.

"17.4 centimeters."

Then he reached the tail and continued with the measurements.

"Also 17.4 centimeters."

Then there was the guide mirror.

"Head 12.1 centimeters."

"Tail also 12.1 centimeters."

"Completely consistent, parallel."

After completing the examination.

Xu Yun stood up, dusted off his hands, and gave Siegfried a thumbs-up:

"Master Qi, the cylinder is fine, but how is the mirror surface now?"

Seeing that the cylinder passed Xu Yun's inspection, Siegfried's shoulders slightly relaxed, and he replied:

"The mirror surface is still being polished, after all, unlike the cylinder, the mirror surface is completed by us alone.

So it will be slower. At the present pace, another week will probably be needed....."

Xu Yun remained silent for a moment, then calculated the approximate time and said:

"Master Qi, do not worry, do not overlook quality for the sake of time.

If a week is not enough, then ten days; if ten days are not enough, then two weeks; if two weeks are not enough, then a month.

The master has no strict deadline for the project; everything is based on precision, slow work yields fine craftsmanship."

Then he remembered something and glanced at Xiaoli, who was staring at him, and asked:

"By the way, Master Qi, what about Miss Li's microscope..."

Upon hearing this, Siegfried immediately pointed to a certain room nearby:

"The microscope is finished, it's in that workshop, you can enter by pushing the door."

Xu Yun looked at him again to confirm:

"Master Qi, the microscope was made according to the blueprint I gave you before, right?"

Siegfried nodded emphatically:

"That's right, exactly as instructed by Mr. Wang, with no deviations whatsoever."

Xu Yun nodded, pondered for a moment, and said to Siegfried and Xiaoli:

"Master Qi, Miss Li, I'll go inside for a check."

Xu Yun, being the person most knowledgeable about the microscope, had a perfectly reasonable request.

Even Xiaoli said nothing more and watched as Xu Yun entered the house.

A quarter of an hour passed.

Crunch——

The door of the house was opened again.

Xu Yun emerged, carrying a box.

He raised the box toward Xiaoli and smiled:

"Miss Li, the precision of the microscope is correct, but the box might be a little heavy.

I'll carry it for you, and later hand it over to the coachman. You can check it yourself when you get home, alright?"

A flash of excitement crossed Xiaoli's eyes, and she quickly nodded:

"That's great, thank you very much."

Seeing that, Xu Yun placed the box down and cupped his hands to Siegfried:

"Master Qi, there are still matters at the house; since all is well, I shall take my leave. Please pay more attention to the remaining lenses."

Siegfried hurriedly returned the gesture:

"Mr. Wang, rest assured, this matter is remembered by this old man. There shall be no mistakes."

Afterwards, he accompanied Xu Yun and Xiaoli back along the original route, escorting them to the entrance.

Xu Yun handed the box to Xiaoli's carriage driver and parted ways with Xiaoli on the spot.

Click-click-click——

Watching the carriage gradually fade into the distance, Xu Yun sighed slightly:

"Sorry, Old Li..."

.....

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Chapter 212 154: A Moment Etched in Human History (6K)

[868 words]

Eighteen days later.

A quiet summer night.

No black clouds were visible in the sky. The stars exerted their effort, merging droplets of light together.

Although not as splendid as the Sun, nor as clear as the Moon, they still sprinkled starlight dreamily onto the world.

The twinkling starlight intertwined, turning the earth into a peculiar world, sparking a desire in people to explore.

Compared to the vast starry sky, humans seem pitifully small, like dust.

Under the universe, humans are as insignificant as ants on the ground.

Yet, even ants differ from each other.

For instance, at this moment.

Night has fallen.

In Bianjing City, the 'ants' may have already gone to sleep, or are preparing for tomorrow's expenses, or wandering around the night market in pairs.

Some lie on the lap pillows of singing princesses on pleasure boats, enjoying some special amusement.

And outside Bianjing City.

On a short but very spacious hill, another group of 'ants' is busy.

Dozens of servants, holding torches, surround the edge of an open area, providing light while standing guard.

Inside the open area, twenty to thirty people stand orderly, assembling and testing something, looking lively.

"Careful, careful, three, two, one, lift!"

"Left side, left side, yes, yes, right here, right here....."

"Swoosh, release release release release release release!"

"Where's the axle? Where's the axle?"

"Yongzhu, take the donkey away first. We'll need it to haul cargo on the way down the mountain!"

Amidst the noisy chatter.

Xu Yun stands beside a giant iron cylinder, seriously making the final adjustments.

"Master Chen, align the polar axis to the north celestial pole! Yes, yes, very good!"

"Master Guo, check if the four hairsprings have wedged into the celestial socket."

"Captain Wang, fix the right side a bit tighter..."

About ten days ago.

Siegfried officially completed the grinding of the lens and handed it to Xu Yun.

Xu Yun then spent a day for fine grinding, ultimately processing the lens's NA value between 1.18-1.20 and passing the final verification test.

But although everything was ready, he did not rush to start astronomical observations.

Firstly, astronomical observations have certain environmental requirements—visibility must be high.

After all, with a sky full of clouds, you can't observe, right?

Secondly...

Xu Yun was waiting for a special day.

Thus, he waited for a full ten days.

Of course.

During these ten days, Xu Yun was not idle.

Aside from attending classes as usual, he also took several donkey cart rides to scout for suitable observation points.

After some observation, he finally selected this small hill.

This little hill is only about a hundred meters high, looking somewhat low.

But actually.

The inside of the hill is half empty, with a very spacious large platform at its waist, capable of accommodating hundreds of people.

According to the information Mr. Xie obtained.

This hill was originally a clay kiln, later closed and abandoned due to its former owner being involved in a corruption case, while the transport platform at its waist was preserved.

Now, after several years, it was picked up by Xu Yun.

After about a quarter of an hour.

Siegfried briskly walked to him, respectfully saying:

"Mr. Wang, all parts have been debugged."

Xu Yun cupped his hands to express thanks, handed him the waterskin at his waist:

"Thank you, Master Qi, have a drink."

Then he walked to the right side of the cylinder, put on gut gloves, and placed the Star-finding Mirror's lens into the side wing of the cylinder.

As previously mentioned.

The telescope designed by Xu Yun has a diameter of one meter, length close to ten meters, and weighs up to five tons.

Therefore, in order to maintain the ability to turn and stabilize the cylinder at the same time, it could only be tilted towards the sky and externally equipped with fixed installations.

As for how it was hauled up the mountain...

Simply put, Brother Lv's efforts are indispensable.

Five tons is not heavy, indeed.

Actually.

Such devices appeared in the 19th century, specifically in 1865.

At that time, the John Bull Royal Society invested heavily in creating a large iron telescope weighing 8.9 tons for observation, which is now in the Oxford Museum.

Although the telescope designed by the Royal Society did not have the highest precision at the time, its significance was extraordinary:

This was the first official star observation in human history.

This also represented a certain attitude of the British Royal Family towards science—although the industrial something is filled with blood and tears, at least in the scientific attitude, the British Royal Family was indeed right.

Coincidentally.

At the same time, domestically Emperor Tongzhi was also looking up to the stars.

But he was not observing through a telescope; he was just praying to the gods and spirits—that year, a cholera outbreak occurred domestically; naturally, people were panicked and could only turn to gods and Buddha, hoping to determine national policies by astrology.

It is worth mentioning.

Also in that same year, Nokia was just established...

Returning to reality.

After all the adjustments were completed.

Xu Yun walked to Old Su's side and looked at the surrounding crowd.

Besides Old Su, everyone today included Wang Bing and his brother, Xiaozhao, Old Jia, and six mathematicians, Siegfried, Mr. Xie, and Xiaoli and his daughter—they came as Old Li was quite concerned about a late-night outing.

Additionally.

There were a few special individuals present:

Among them, the leftmost was a seventy-year-old civil servant from the Scripture Compilation Institute, a Junior Eighth Grade 推官.

What is called the Scripture Compilation Institute refers to the book compilation agency belonging to the Song Dynasty History Hall.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 213 154: A Moment Etched in Human History (6K)_2

[1,005 words]

It was in charge of compiling historical records of the nation, including important regulations, realistic records, calendars, and other matters; it wasn't a major authoritative department, but its nature was very special.

Today, what Old Su was conducting was the first telescope observation in the human history of this time and space, requiring the presence of such a recommendation officer.

However, compared to this person's identity, his name might be even more prominent:

His name was Zhang Huaimin.

That's right.

The very Zhang Huaimin.

He was exiled to Huang Prefecture four years later than Su Shi, but he was reinstated earlier, having returned to Bianjing last July.

The position of recommendation officer at the Scripture Compilation Institute was the last known position he held, after which there is no detailed record.

Standing next to Zhang Huaimin were two men dressed in blue clothing.

One of them was about forty years old, with sharp facial features as if carved by a knife, a piercing gaze, and a tall stature, truly a heroic figure.

The other was a sturdy old man with a thick white beard and hair, slightly more restrained in temperament, but with a scar on his left cheek that added a fierce edge to him.

From their posture and expressions, it's likely they both came from the military and held high ranks.

And indeed, that was the case.

The older of the two was Wang Hou, mentioned previously.

A few days ago.

With the efforts of the Wang brothers and the allure of alcohol and distilled spirits, Xu Yun finally connected with this military big shot and, through Old Su's invitation note, got him to the scene.

As for the other middle-aged man...

He was Zhang Shuye.

The very figure from whom Lin Chong in "Water Margin" was inspired, one of the few conscientious officials of the late Northern Song, and historically known for suppressing Song Jiang's rebellion.

Unfortunately.

According to the normal historical trajectory, Zhang Shuye met a similar tragic fate to Wang Bing.

In the year of Jingkang, Zhang Shuye was also the General Director of the Southern Route, with the Jin soldiers approaching Bianjing, the imperial family in crisis.

Upon learning of this, Zhang Shuye, with thirty thousand soldiers, fought loyally to save the king, being the only large-scale establishment to aid Bianjing in the Jingkang Incident.

When the Jin soldiers further besieged the capital city, Zhang Shuye fought them continuously for four days, but ultimately couldn't change the tide.

Later, when Emperor Qinzong drove out of the city, preparing to surrender to the Jin camp, Zhang Shuye knelt before him to advise against it, but was captured by the Jin soldiers and prepared to be taken north to the Jin Kingdom.

The day after crossing the boundary river.

Zhang Shuye looked up to the heavens, weeping sadly, and hanged himself, dying at the age of sixty-three.

Currently, Zhang Shuye was the prefect of Hai Prefecture, having returned to Bianjing to report just a few days ago.

Since his grandfather Zhang Qi and Old Su's father Su Shen were close friends across generations, he made a special visit to the residence, where Xu Yun conveniently brought him up to the mountain.

After arriving beside Old Su, Xu Yun cupped his hands and said:

"Master, the telescope has been calibrated; we can begin observing the starry sky now."

Upon hearing this, Old Su's pupils shrank slightly, and his body began to tremble faintly.

For some reason.

This eighty-year-old who had gazed upon the starry sky countless times felt an unusual trace of trepidation.

It should be noted.

Even when he was waiting for the results beside that old hooligan selling spicy soup, his emotions were never this stirred.

Yet, being someone who had served as Prime Minister, he possessed an ocean of wisdom within.

In less than half a minute.

Old Su took a deep breath and forced himself to regain calmness.

He then politely declined Elder Xie's support, adjusted his sleeves, and walked slowly to the telescope on his own.

First, he looked up at the starry sky, silent for a moment, then pointed at the crescent moon and asked Xu Yun with anticipation:

"Xiaowang, could you let this old man see the moon first?"

Xu Yun nodded solemnly, cupping his hands:

"No problem."

He then walked to the operating table, adjusting the focal axis of the main telescope's star-finding mirror, locking it onto the area where the moon was.

The telescope's base could rotate via a dial, assisted by rollers and tung oil, making it quite easy to maneuver.

The mercury parabolic mirror ensured self-rotation through another system, preventing interference between the two.

Then, Xu Yun rotated three screws on the star-finding mirror, meticulously aligning the image in the center of the main lens with the crosshair of the star-finding mirror.

This process seemed simple, but in reality, it required extreme patience.

The crosshair had to be precisely aligned, and all three screws had to reach the barrel; even the slightest deviation was unacceptable.

A certain anonymous fishing enthusiast once made a mistake over this, nearly getting strung up and beaten....

Once the optical axes of both barrels aligned.

Xu Yun rotated the tripod, reaching the final focusing phase.

Ping—

Clang—

Chime—

With a gentle touch and slow adjustment.

Xu Yun, like an experienced veteran, carefully calibrated the newly manufactured telescope.

A quarter of an hour later.

Xu Yun wiped the sweat from his forehead and stood aside, saying to Old Su:

"Master, I have not failed you."

Old Su nodded at him, moved to the eyepiece, and pressed his eye against it.

In less than a moment.

Old Su raised his head from the eyepiece, his face filled with astonishment, his finger trembling as he pointed at the view:

"Xiaowang, is that... is that the moon???"

Beside him, Xiaoli rushed over eagerly:

"Uncle Su, what did you see?"

Old Su paused for a moment, pointing to the eyepiece:

"See for yourself; Xiaowang has already set the focus, just look directly."

Xiaoli glanced at Old Li who followed by his side, bouncing eagerly to the eyepiece.

And like Old Su, within a few moments of looking, Xiaoli gasped:

"So many craters...."

Then Xiaozhao, Old Li, Old Jia, Wang Hou... even Zhang Huaimin stepped up to take a look.

Although including Wang Hou and Zhang Shuye, everyone present had already looked through another microscope before coming, so they had some understanding of certain phenomena.

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Chapter 214 154: A Moment Etched in Human History (6K)_3

[651 words]

But when they saw that dim, lifeless, cratered moon in the field, they couldn't help but feel a surge of shock.

The reason was simple.

Because it is the moon!

As everyone knows.

In ancient Huaxia.

Due to a lack of rich entertainment options, composing poetry became a mainstream pastime.

And in the various poems and verses.

The moon is undoubtedly a very common 'supporting actor'.

Whether it's 'the sun and the moon march on, as if rising from within; the starry Milky Way, as if emerging from it'.

Or 'lifting my cup to invite the bright moon, with my shadow we become three'.

Or even 'the sea brings forth the bright moon, we share this moment from afar', all are famous and well-loved pieces.

Meanwhile, in myths and legends.

The moon is also the dwelling place of Chang'e, who stole the immortal pill and fled to the moon, raising a bunch of Jade Rabbits, and would occasionally munch on spicy rabbit heads...

Although Old Su did not believe in tales of immortals and gods, he too held a fairly positive expectation of the moon.

But unexpectedly...

Through the telescope, there was neither the celestial Chang'e nor the starlit jade trees.

The only things visible were the grey soil and a mass of pockmarked craters.....

Across from him.

Seeing the look of horror on Old Su's face, Xu Yun, uncharacteristically, chose to remain silent.

For ancient people encountering the surface of celestial bodies for the first time, shock, even panic or fear, were inevitable psychological reactions.

The first person on Earth to observe the lunar seas, Galileo, was no different.

Upon first seeing the lunar seas, he was feverish for two days before he accepted this fact, then continued his observations of the craters.

This is a hurdle that must be crossed independently, with little help from external forces.

Earlier, Xu Yun had already imparted a lot of cosmic knowledge to Old Su. If even with this, Old Su couldn't understand, then there wasn't much else to say.

Just like that.

The scene suddenly fell into an eerie silence, and even the donkey, which had been grazing nearby, quieted down and looked curiously at the two-legged creatures not far away.

A few minutes later.

Old Su took a deep breath, gently closed his eyes.

When he opened them again, his gaze was filled with determination.

"Xiaowang, the moon..... no, or rather the Moon, though far removed from what I imagined, has nonetheless resolved a question of mine and proven the correctness of the 'planet' concept you spoke of....."

Old Su paused for a moment, then turned to Zhang Huaimin, saying:

"Wu Quan, record it as such."

"On the night of August 3rd, in the Third Year of Yuanfu, Crown Prince's Grand Protector Su Song, male... ahem, Guest Wang Lin, Xihai Governor Wang Hou, Assistant Minister Li Gefei, and his daughter Li Qingzhao, as well as... King Jian Zhao Si, Mr. Tongyu Jia Xian, and others, twenty-three in total, gathered outside Bianjing City at Xiaolianzi Mountain, using the 'Celestial Palace' telescope for an initial glimpse of the moon."

"What we saw..."

"Countless depressions, grey-white soil, devoid of water and life, silent as the void, its shape like an egg, standing amidst the ether....."

Zhang Huaimin recorded everything one by one.

After saying these words, a sense of relief washed over Old Su's expression.

Then he suddenly remembered something and said to Xu Yun:

"Xiaowang, over forty years ago, a guest star appeared in the east at dawn, remaining bright even at night.

In the First Year of Zhihe, on the twentieth day of the fifth month, it appeared several inches southeast of the Celestial Gate, lasting over twenty days before it faded away.

At the time, I was serving as an associate at the Imperial College of Rites and witnessed firsthand the guest star crossing the sky, even outshining Taibai.

Do you know... what this star was?"

Xu Yun blinked:

"Over forty years ago?"

It is currently the year 1100, so over forty years ago would be around 1055.

And at that time....

Indeed, an extremely spectacular celestial event occurred.

Which was...

"The supernova explosion that created the Crab Nebula!"

.....

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 215 155 Myth from Beyond the Sky (6.6K)

[886 words]

Astronomy enthusiasts should all know.

The so-called supernova explosion.

Refers to a kind of violent explosion certain stars undergo when they approach the end of their evolution.

Such explosions are extremely bright, and the sudden electromagnetic radiation during the process often illuminates the entire galaxy it resides in.

It can last for weeks to months before gradually fading into invisibility.

During this period.

A supernova radiates an amount of energy comparable to the total energy radiated by the Sun throughout its entire life.

On the other hand.

While supernova explosions in the universe are a dazzling phenomenon, magnificent, and enchanting.

For humanity, it actually poses a certain risk.

During the explosion, a supernova releases a large amount of gamma rays, which radiate at light speed to the Earth's atmosphere.

Gamma rays induce a special chemical reaction when they interact with the atmosphere:

They convert nitrogen molecules into nitrogen oxides.

This consumes the protective shield for life on Earth, which is the ozone layer.

Leading to Earth's life being directly exposed to harmful radiation like solar winds and cosmic rays.

For example, there have been five mass extinction events in Earth's life history, and the second ranked is the Ordovician mass extinction.

The Ordovician mass extinction occurred 440 million years ago, resulting in 85% of Earth's species becoming extinct and later triggering an ice age.

In 2005.

NASA and the University of Kansas jointly released a research report.

The report suggested that this mass extinction event was likely caused by a gamma-ray burst from an extreme supernova.

Based on model reconstructions of the event.

The entire process might have lasted just ten seconds, yet it destroyed half of Earth's ozone layer.

Ultimately causing ultraviolet rays from the Sun to bombard Earth, leading to massive death on the surface and causing biological extinction. (doi.org/10.1099/ijs.0.02503-0)

By the way.

Currently, the most discussed topic in the astronomy community is Betelgeuse; recently, its photometric data has been somewhat abnormal, possibly indicating a supernova explosion.

However, due to its distance, this occurrence wouldn't have much impact on Earth's organisms.

After all, radiation should comply with basic ... basic principles of physics.

Besides Betelgeuse,

another star that might undergo a supernova is WR102 in Sagittarius.

It's a rare oxygen-rich Wolf-Rayet star, and based on existing models, this star has likely already exploded.

Judging by its distance.

If you can live another 1500-2000 years, you should be able to witness this spectacle, not too difficult.....

In summary.

Over the past two thousand years, humans have observed a total of eight supernova explosions.

Among them, many are impressive:

For instance, the earliest recorded supernova was SN185, seen by local astronomers in 185 AD.

Also, the brightest recorded supernova is SN1006.

Supernovae SN1572 and SN1604 were the last two supernovae in the Milky Way observed with the naked eye, which significantly impacted the development of astronomy in Europe.

They were used to refute Aristotle's fixed universe theory beyond the Moon and planets, marking a landmark discovery.

With the advent of the telescope era.

Humans subsequently observed SN1885A, SN1987A, and SN2006gy.

Of course.

Upon reading this far.

Students who didn't fail mathematics might have noticed a question:

Despite having eight supernova explosions, why were only seven mentioned above?

That's right.

The remaining supernova explosion was the Crab Nebula supernova of 1054 AD that Old Su personally experienced.

Simultaneously.

It was the most widely observed supernova explosion in human history.

Its distance from Earth is about 6500 light years, meaning what we see now is a scene that occurred 6500 years ago.

Analyzing historical records indicates.

The supernova explosion that created the Crab Nebula happened in April or early May, and by July, when brightest, it had an apparent magnitude between -7 and -4.5.

During that time, it was brighter than any celestial body in the night sky except for the Moon.

This spectacle even lasted until the 21st century in later generations:

At that time, the Crab Nebula still possessed numerous elliptical filamentary structures surrounding its diffused blue core region in the visible light zone.

Spanning 6 arcminutes in length and 4 arcminutes in width.

It is one of the celestial bodies with the largest apparent diameters.

Of course.

Also one of the most beautiful celestial bodies. (Interested individuals can search for it, it's really stunning, and visitors to Shanghai can spend 60 to buy an astronomy museum ticket, definitely worth it)

However, compared to the first observation of the Moon, Xu Yun did not personally get involved this time.

Instead, he let Old Su try it himself.

As the saying goes.

Teaching someone how to fish is better than giving them fish; if you only impart knowledge blindly, everything will revert to its original state once you leave.

"Yes, yes, rotate the Star-finding Mirror first, wait, it's gone too far."

"Move the cross-wires a bit closer....."

Seeing Old Su humming and fiddling with the equipment, Xu Yun appeared very patient.

Compared to those rarely-read Readers from the past life, Old Su was practically a model student.

After a while.

Seeing that Old Su had adjusted it almost correctly, Xu Yun asked:

"Old Sir, do you recognize the position of Bi Su?"

Old Su quickly nodded without much hesitation and said:

"Bi Su, one of the 28 lodges, the fifth lodge of the Western White Tiger.

In the star chart authored by this old man, the position of this star is marked."

Bi Su, also known as Bi Yue Wu.

It is composed of eight stars and is one of the ancient star officials in Huaxia.

The origin of Bi Su is quite simple:

Its eight stars combined resemble the shape of the Chinese character '丫', which the ancients thought looked similar to a long-handled tool used for capturing small animals, called 'Bi'.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 216 155: Myths from Beyond the Sky (6.6K)_2

[908 words]

Thus, as the story continued, it became named as Bi Su.

Of course.

There's also a more intuitive illustration—have you seen Jupiter's fork?

Yes, that's the thing.

In modern astronomy, Bi Su is located in Taurus, adjacent to Pleiades.

Aldebaran among them has a diameter of about 53 million kilometers, which is 38 times that of the Sun, and is extremely bright.

On October 19, 2005, the sky presented an astronomical spectacle where the stars of Bi Su vied for brightness with the moon.

Back then, in many small places, you could still find quite a few 'conmen' setting up telescopes on the streets, luring children to look at the stars, charging ten yuan per view.

Now, those who drive an SUV dragging telescopes worth thousands in the amateur astronomical circles achieved their initial capital accumulation through such means.

The perspective returns to its original place.

Old Su, being the person most familiar with star maps at the time, quickly locked onto the region where Bi Su was located, following Xu Yun's guidance.

Xu Yunjian continued:

"Sir, if my memory serves me right, that supernova is to the northeast of Bi Su..."

Upon hearing this, Old Su quickly locked his gaze on the star-finding mirror, adjusting the screws and continuing to calibrate.

Seeing Old Su becoming more adept at the operations, Xu Yun wanted to tell his classmates from the previous life, 'Look at Old Su.'

Of course.

By then, those cheeky readers would probably screenshot the power ranking chart from a starting point, tag me back as a counterattack—"Look at the Eagle!".

Damn tentacle monsters.jpg.

And so.

After a while.

Old Su suddenly showed a startled expression, beckoning Xu Yun with his left hand:

"Xiaowang, come take a look, is this star... or rather this object, the Crab Nebula?"

Xu Yun quickly leaned forward.

At this moment.

In the field of view of the star-finding mirror in front of Old Su, a small, high-brightness white light cluster could be faintly seen.

Xu Yun was all too familiar with the shape of this light cluster, nodding immediately:

"Indeed, this is the Crab Nebula."

Old Su was delighted upon hearing this, immediately energized, quickly following the operations Xu Yun had taught him to perform the final focus.

After a quarter of an hour.

Old Su suddenly let out a light surprise, saying:

"Huh? Xiaowang, isn't this incorrect?"

Xu Yun winked at him:

"Sir, what's incorrect?"

Old Su glanced at him, pointing at the image in the eyepiece, said:

"Why is there no star in this light cluster, as if it's just a glowing gas cloud?"

Actually, friends who understand the Crab Nebula should all know.

At the core of the Crab Nebula, there is a pulsar with a diameter of 20 kilometers.

However, due to limitations in equipment precision, Old Su obviously couldn't see the innermost conditions—even the Hubble Telescope would need an exposure of more than 24 hours.

Thus, Old Su could only judge based on the intensity of the luminous body, thereby concluding that there are no planets within the entire nebula.

Xu Yun paused for a moment without directly explaining, instead saying to Old Su:

"Sir, have you ever seen fireworks?"

Old Su stroked his beard, nodded:

"Indeed."

Fireworks appeared during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, became popular in the Song Dynasty, and are now relatively common.

For example, "Heaven-Shattering Thunder" Ling Zhen in Water Margin.

Besides overseeing the production of firearms, he was also responsible for making fireworks, which were set off during festivals in Bianjing.

Xu Yun paused briefly, then asked:

"May I ask, sir, what is the usual scene after the fireworks soar into the sky?"

Old Su pondered for a moment, then clamped his left hand fingers together, mimicking an explosive gesture:

"First, they rise to a certain height, suddenly explode, momentarily shining as bright as daylight, and then turn into ash... wait!"

As Old Su spoke, he suddenly realized something.

He lifted his head abruptly, his gaze fixed on Xu Yun:

"Xiaowang, are you saying... that the white light we saw fifty years ago, or the whole of Bianjing saw, was precisely the scene of that guest star's explosion?"

Xu Yun nodded heavily in affirmation:

"Indeed."

Old Su's pupils suddenly shrank.

The star....

Exploded?

What we can see now is just the lingering afterglow?

Old Su's chest heaved a few times, then he took a deep breath, asking:

"Xiaowang, how does that star compare to Earth?"

Xu Yun thought for a bit, then answered:

"In terms of mass... over three million times, at least."

It's well known.

Due to its insufficient mass, the Sun cannot become a black hole or a neutron star.

In the final stage of a star, it can only first become a red giant, then turn into a white dwarf.

Only stars with more than eight times the solar mass will first expand into a red supergiant, and then explode in a supernova.

Eventually turning into a black hole or a neutron star.

Of course.

There are also cases where a white dwarf eventually turns into a neutron star, though these are relatively rare.

To supplement understanding of how terrifying a neutron star is, here's a more intuitive number than density:

The diameter of a neutron star is generally about ten kilometers, but its spin rate can reach hundreds of revolutions per second.

Yes.

Per second, not per minute.

That is, within the blink of an eye.

The fastest spinning neutron star discovered so far is named PSRJ1748-2446ad.

Despite it looking like a code, it's actually terrifying:

With a diameter of 20 kilometers, its rotation speed reaches as high as 716 revolutions per second.

You can visualize the scene to your liking, it doesn't need further elaboration.

In other words.

The progenitor star of the Crab Nebula was massive enough to undergo a supernova explosion, indicating its mass was at least eight times that of the Sun.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 217 155: Myths from Beyond the Sky (6.6K)_3

[982 words]

The mass of the Sun is 330,000 times that of Earth, so conservatively estimated, the progenitor star of the Crab Nebula is over three million times the mass of Earth.

Gulp——

Upon hearing this number, Wang Yue couldn't help but swallow heavily.

As a general who has long fought on the western front, he is quite familiar with the number 'ten thousand.'

For example, tens of thousands of soldiers, tens of thousands of pounds of grain, and tens of thousands of copper coins, etc.

But a stellar body three million times the mass of Earth...

Three million times...

According to Xu Yun's explanation.

The area of Bianjing City only occupies one five-hundredth of the Great Song (the Song Dynasty's territory is small), and the Great Song itself is only one-twentieth of the continent it is on...

My goodness.

Wang Yue suddenly realized that his brain seemed to be a bit inadequate.

In fact, it wasn't just Wang Yue.

Everyone present, upon hearing this number, almost uniformly had their minds go blank for a moment.

After regaining their senses.

The crowd simultaneously made a unanimous action:

They lifted their heads and looked towards the Milky Way Galaxy.

A little over a week ago.

Xu Yun, through Cavendish's torsion balance experiment, and with the assistance of Old Jia and others, deduced the mass of Earth:

Approximately 6 times 10 to the 24th power.

And three million times that number...

Looking at the vast cosmos, Old Su suddenly felt an unprecedented sense of dread:

Under this galaxy, humanity is indeed so insignificant...

At that moment.

Zhang Shuye, who had remained silent, couldn't hold back any longer. He cupped his hands towards Xu Yun:

"Mr. Wang, if it is as you say, in this boundless emptiness where Earth resides, could there be other planets with life?"

Xu Yun was silent for a moment, then shook his head in confusion:

"Sorry, this commoner does not know."

Unlike those previous pretense of ignorance, Xu Yun was speaking the truth this time.

Extraterrestrial life.

It is a highly contentious topic even in the 21st century of future generations.

There are philosophical aspects, as well as scientific ones.

Just like how Old Su finds it difficult to truly comprehend the concept of a mass three million times that of Earth.

Future generations of humanity are perhaps just another stage of Old Su.

But as for Xu Yun personally...

He holds an optimistic view towards extraterrestrial life.

That is, Earth is not alone, it's just that humans have yet to encounter them.

Even if he disregards rebirth and the mysterious halo, he would not change his mind.

After all, the universe is just too vast.

The known universe has observed roughly hundreds of billions of galaxies, and the Milky Way Galaxy is just one very ordinary galaxy.

Within the Milky Way Galaxy, there are also hundreds of billions of stars.

The Sun is just an extremely ordinary star.

In the entire universe, there are as many as 30 trillion trillion stars. Who can guarantee that there is no other life or even civilization beyond Earth?
(doi.org/10.1038/nature0957, data from "nature")

In summary.

The psychological and ideological impact brought to everyone present by today's observations was truly immense, creating a somewhat heavy atmosphere.....

And just when Old Su was about to lighten the mood a bit.

Xiaoli suddenly exclaimed in surprise, pointing towards the direction of the Big Dipper:

"Look over there, there's a comet!"

Upon hearing Xiaoli's words.

Everyone present immediately turned their heads and looked north.

Indeed.

They saw, in a corner of the sky, a long tail slowly flying southward.

Exactly.

A comet is what the ancient Huaxia referred to as 'Starbo.'

This is a common term for comets in ancient Huaxia, other names include 'Pong Star' and 'Long Star.'

It first appeared in the "Spring and Autumn" records of the 14th year of Duke Wen of Lu:

"In autumn, in the seventh month, a Starbo entered the Big Dipper."

Although the name Starbo seems quite elegant, in ancient Huaxia, the implications of comets were not very positive.

In the populace, it was often called a 'broom star' and a 'disaster star,' believed to bring misfortune.

Even someone as rational as Old Su couldn't help but frown when he saw a comet.

But he didn't notice.

Among a group of people frowning, with heavy expressions, and even a faint hint of fear.

Xu Yun, facing the comet, let out a slight sigh of relief.

Goodness.

Finally, you're here.

Indeed.

This comet is one of Xu Yun's core targets this time!

It is designated as 109P/Swift-Tuttle, which returns approximately once every 130 years, and is not a particularly famous comet.

Xu Yun remembers it not by calculating the date, but through memory:

He is from Min Province, Hu Qingren, and his hometown has a renowned figure named Cai Boyi, one of the few historical figures from his hometown.

When Xu Yun was young, he often played near Cai Boyi's stone tablet, which is why he remembers so clearly that Cai Boyi passed away on August 4th, 1100 AD.

According to the epitaph records.

A comet passed the night before Cai Boyi's death, which later became associated with Cai Boyi's cause of death.

Later, when he attended Ke Da, Xu Yun even specially researched the comet's information to confirm its origins.

Two strong impressions combined, impossible to forget.

However, while he cares.

109P/Swift-Tuttle, being not a particularly famous comet, is difficult to observe its nucleus and hair structure through a telescope.

With its relatively fast speed and limited time to adjust the telescope mount, Xu Yun gave up the idea of observing it.

He simply stood on the high platform midway up the mountain with the others, watching the comet disappear into the distance.

A quarter of an hour later.

The comet vanished to the south.

Xu Yun slowly turned around and looked at the not-so-distant Great Song Capital.

Looking at the brightly lit Bianjing City, the corners of his mouth gradually curled up:

Tonight, Xiaozhao and others left the capital to observe the stars; presumably, some artist is also paying attention here.

That is to say.

He will likely see that comet streaking across the sky with his own eyes...

"Next, it's up to you. Don't disappoint me..."

"Rye Erguotou."

.....

Note:

In light of staying up all night to write, please give me some monthly votes, sob sob sob.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 218 156 Sports to Watch in Song Dynasty (6.6K)

[930 words]

After the comet disappeared.

Everyone at the scene continued to observe the sky.

This scene, unprecedented in ancient Huaxia, genuinely sparked an intense interest among the crowd.

Even Old Li, Wang Hou, and Zhang Shuye couldn't help but step forward several times to take a look at the stars.

Of course.

While broadening their knowledge, there were also moments of conceptual upheaval.

Especially for Xiaoli.

It's uncertain if, after tonight.

This famous future Layman Yi'an will still write the "Fisherman's Pride" with lines like 'Could Nature be partial with intent, thus teaching the moon its pretty form.'

Or "A Cut of Plum" with 'When the geese return, the moon fills the west tower.'

Then another hour passed.

Near the end of the Hai hour... which is around eleven o'clock in the evening.

Everyone finally finished their night's observation.

After which, Old Su left Mr. Xie and the donkey in place, responsible for winding up the telescope back down the mountain.

He himself took Old Li, Wang Hou, and others down the mountain first—planning to spend the entire night recording everything observed tonight in writing.

Xu Yun, as a guest, naturally was among those descending the mountain, but compared to Old Su and others' excitement, he felt a subtle confusion:

Even though I invented the telescope, why hasn't the Halo indicated the task's completion?

Could it be that...

Old Su's so-called unfulfilled wish wasn't about observing the starry sky in person?

But then again, it makes sense.

Following the normal trajectory, without my appearance, Old Su clearly wouldn't think of or understand the concept of 'planet.'

That means he surely has some thoughts about the stars, but probably not an obsession to clearly see the stars' appearance in person.

At most, he'd doubt whether there were people gnawing on spicy rabbit heads on the moon or not.

The curiosity Old Su exhibited about the starry sky over this period is largely due to Xu Yun reopening a door for him.

So, unexpectedly...

Old Su's 'obsession' in his heart probably stems from other causes.

Then what exactly could it be?

Xu Yun slowly shook his head.

This matter can only be explored by finding opportunities to verify it with Old Su in the coming days.

Subsequently, the group descended the mountain guided by torches and returned to Bianjing by carriage—since the Song Dynasty didn't have a curfew, and Old Su had already informed the City Patrol Office before leaving, so there wasn't much difficulty returning to the city.

An uneventful night passed.

.....

"Dong dong dong——"

Early the next morning, Xu Yun was awakened by the knocking on the door:

"Brother Wang, Brother Wang, it's morning!"

Xu Yun rubbed his sleepy eyes, stretched lazily, and drowsily said:

"Who is it? Wait a minute....."

Ever since he moved to the East Wing reserved for guests, he generally woke up naturally each day; it was the first time someone called him to wake up.

Afterwards, he got dressed and yawned as he opened the door.

He saw standing outside the door was a familiar face:

Zhang San, Third Brother.

As expected.

Besides this lad, ordinary servants wouldn't dare knock on his door.

"Brother Wang."

Seeing Xu Yun looking half-awake, Zhang San quickly waved two tickets in his hand:

"Haven't you always wanted to watch a cuju match? There's a big game today, and I barely managed to snag two tickets.

You weren't around yesterday, so I hurried to find you this morning, do you want to go?"

"Cuju?"

Hearing this word, Xu Yun instantly shook off his sleepiness, coming alive with excitement:

"Where is it being played? How much time until it starts?"

"Outside Daxiangguo Temple at Ju City, it starts in about an hour."

Hearing this, Xu Yun tossed out a sentence and turned back into his room:

"Wait for me a moment, I'll change clothes and then we'll head out."

The so-called cuju is none other than the famous cuju.

Little known.

The birthplace of modern soccer is John Bull, but the birthplace of ancient soccer unequivocally belongs to Huaxia.

In fact.

If one were to talk about the history of ancient Huaxia's cuju, it can at least be traced back to the Warring States period.

For instance, in the "Records of the Grand Historian: Su Qin's Biography" it is recorded:

"Linzi is very wealthy and real, its people all play pipes, beat zithers, and tread cuju."

This is the earliest record of cuju in known history.

By the Tang Dynasty.

Cuju had further developed into a sport with detailed rules, and its popularity was evident in people's work.

That is to say, during the Tang Dynasty, cuju was not only a court entertainment activity but was also popular among the common people.

By the Song Dynasty, cuju had reached its historical peak.

It's no exaggeration to say.

Cuju was the national sport of the Song Dynasty.

The fervor of the Song people for cuju, and the popularity of cuju matches, was in no way inferior to the World Cup fever in the modern world.

From the emperor and noble officials down to the common people, everyone was a die-hard cuju fan.

Even young children had immense love for cuju, and they developed early football clubs, or rather, cuju teams.

There were many professional cuju performers at the time who earned their living by showcasing their cuju skills, even ascending to upper-class statuses.

For example, Gao Qiu in "Water Margin" rose to power through cuju and flattery.

In the future, Xu Yun was indeed a true old soccer fan, having witnessed the shamelessness of Korea in 02 and personally experienced the Istanbul miracle of 05.

But unfortunately.

In the future, although his country was powerful, it remained somewhat lackluster in football.

In the 02 World Cup, he couldn't attend in person, but on June 5, 2010, that vibrant red at Wembley originated from Xu Yun's hand—at that time, he was an exchange student in John Bull, so he specially went to the scene to support it once.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 219 156 Sports to Watch in Song Dynasty (6.6K)_2

[931 words]

That was also the first time in his life he appeared on CCTV, although it was only for a brief two seconds.

Unfortunately, since 2010, the national soccer team's performance has been deteriorating.

Before Xu Yun time-traveled, they even embarrassingly lost to Jiaozhi.

Thus, after arriving in the Song Dynasty, it was only natural that he wanted to watch a Cuju match.

A quarter of an hour later.

Having finished dressing, Xu Yun hurriedly left his room, randomly asked a servant in charge of the guests' meals for two sesame cakes, and then set off with Zhang San.

Daxiangguo Temple was located northeast of the Vermilion Bird Gate, to the right of Imperial Street, marking the standard core area.

Xu Yun had been on this route a few times, but unfortunately, he hadn't seen a particular chubby monk.

Of course.

As the most bustling temple nowadays, the Cuju location certainly wouldn't be right next to the temple:

The Ju City where the match took place was about four or five hundred steps away from Daxiangguo Temple, seemingly a venue specifically set for large Cuju events.

"Cuju is divided into three types: confrontation, banquet, and non-goal play."

Arriving at the edge of Ju City, Zhang San pointed at the internal field, separated by a wall, and said:

"Confrontation involves goals at either end, with opposing team members competing to kick the Cuju into the opponent's goal to win."

"The banquet style involves placing a two-foot-high 'Flirtatious Eye' in the center, with each side taking turns to shoot, and the one that gets the Cuju through the 'Flirtatious Eye' the most wins."

"Non-goal play involves no goal and is more about freestyle arts and techniques; those street performers you see kicking the ball use this style."

Xu Yun nodded in understanding.

According to Zhang San's description.

Confrontation is similar to modern soccer matches, the banquet style resembles penalty shootouts, and non-goal play is essentially a showcase of skills.

Actually, Xu Yun didn't know.

The skills in non-goal play are called techniques, which Wu Cheng'en later referenced in Chapter 73 of , leading to the phrase "showing all one's skills."

Xu Yun then looked at Zhang San and asked:

"Third Brother, where are our seats for watching the game?"

"Oh, no rush, no rush."

Zhang San waved the ticket in his hand and explained:

"We have tickets, so our seats won't be taken. It's a bit early to enter now, let me take you to see something interesting first."

Xu Yun was immediately puzzled:

"What are we going to play?"

Zhang San pointed in a certain direction:

"The gambling house!"

"Gambling house?"

Xu Yun blinked, then realized:

Goodness.

How could I forget this other 'national pastime' of the Northern Song?

After all, this was an era where even the Emperor wouldn't hesitate to gamble for his favored concubines...

Then, under Zhang San's guidance, they arrived at a street with a strong gambling house vibe.

This very moment.

The street was lined with more than ten large and small shops, with people constantly coming and going, making the business seem extremely prosperous.

There were those betting with four or five copper coins.

And those betting with jade hairpins and silver bracelets.

And others throwing down Money Shop receipts...

Among those placing bets, Xu Yun even saw a few government officials in official robes!

What a crazy era.....

While Xu Yun was astonished, Zhang San was cleverly looking for a suitable shop:

"Liu's odds have always been low, not worth it...."

"Zhao's House has a bad reputation; rumor has it they often default on payments....."

"Lin Family Gambling House employs numerous thugs, said to rob people on their way home....."

Seeing Zhang San analyzing each shop, Xu Yun glanced at him:

"Third Brother, how much are you planning to bet, given your fear of dirty dealings?"

Zhang San puffed out his chest confidently:

"Six cents!"

Xu Yun: "..."

Then Zhang San spent an entire round before finally locking on his target:

A stall rumored to be backed by a Third Master Level boss.

The two teams in today's match were both 'Clubs' and of considerable notoriety:

The home team was the Central Capital Imperial Guard stationed in Bianjing, and the challengers were the Northwest Imperial Guard, who had just returned with Wang Hou and Tong Guan. (It was supposed to be a different imperial guard, but the entire chapter got flagged before, and I couldn't change it, so I'm using Central Capital as a substitute.)

Seeing Xu Yun and Zhang San approaching the stall, a waiter-looking servant quickly came over:

"How can I help you two patrons wager today?"

Xu Yun glanced at the stall's surface, and curiosity sprang up in his mind, so he asked before Zhang San:

"This little brother, what kinds of bets can we place?"

"Oh, there are plenty."

Seeing Xu Yun's decent fabric and polite demeanor, the servant eagerly started explaining with his fingers:

"The simplest is the win-loss outcome, with naturally low odds, place your bets."

"Next is the exact score, like three to one, four to two, with varying odds."

"Then there's the total score parity, total score over-under, and even how many goals each 'Ball Head' can score."

"For example, the Central Capital Imperial Guard's strongest Ball Head Ma Zeben, a pot maker from the Artifact Bureau, has an unbeatable move called Swallow's Nest....tsk tsk, even the officials give him a thumbs-up!"

Listening to the servant's endless talk, Xu Yun thought for a moment and said:

"Then I'll bet ten cents on the Central Capital Imperial Guard to win."

He wasn't a gambler, nor did he expect to win a large sum.

After all, the saying goes, nine times out of ten, gamblers lose, and falling into this trap would be catastrophic.

The ten cents he wagered weren't much, purely because he time-traveled to this era and just wanted a little fun.

Then Zhang San also wagered six cents, likewise betting on the Central Capital Imperial Guard to win.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 220 156 Sports to Watch in Song Dynasty (6.6K)_3

[950 words]

Upon receiving the ticket stubs.

Xu Yun followed Zhang San back to the sidelines, using the two original tickets to enter the venue.

The area of Ju City is much smaller than a modern football field, with square walls surrounding it, and at the center of the field stood one team in blue and another in white.

The goal is supported by bamboo poles, leaving a net at the opening.

However, unlike in later generations.

Each team has two goals, called the Left Pole Net and Right Pole Net.

"Captain Ma Zeben, Qiaoqiu Gao Shu, Zheng Jia Huang Bo, Head Jie Shi Ze, Left Friend Shen Wenyao, Left Pole Net Shen Yusun, Right Pole Net Qian Gengyuan, Scattered Li Xueyu..."

Seeing the 'starting lineup' handed out when entering, Zhang San showed great confidence:

"Gao Shu and Ma Zeben have been partners for many years, last time against the Hezhong Imperial Guard, Ma Zeben scored seven goals by himself!"

In ancient Cuju.

Everyone can be categorized based on their position and duties into ball workers, ball heads, and main and assistant defenders, among others.

The ball workers mainly handle receiving and passing, being the most numerous in a Cuju match, somewhat similar to modern midfielders.

The ball heads are those responsible for scoring, equivalent to forwards.

As for the main and assistant defenders, they are quite special:

This position allows the use of hands.

They can use their arms to hold the opposing offensive players, primarily tasked with blocking opponents' shots and passing the ball to their own ball workers or ball heads.

Without considering the former, they are equivalent to modern football defenders.

The scattered Li operates freely, being able to do anything except using hands in the opponent's area, except overall goalkeeping.

As the players took the field, the audiences were also becoming very lively.

Perhaps due to the home court atmosphere, they even gave the Western Army team a rather friendly greeting:

"Hey you tricky Western Army birds, dare you come before me? Grandpa will slap you twice!"

"You worthless rascal, know me, I'm Mei Dong from the 'Wind-Swaying Lotus' of the west city!"

"You thieving bastard, not even your damn luck!"

And amid these greetings, the match began.

Bang——

With the referee striking the gong.

The Zhongjing Western Army, having got the serve, immediately launched an attack.

At the moment the gong sounded, the tall, strong Ma Zeben energetically dashed forward, bursting with incredible explosiveness, pulling out half a body length.

His partner Qiaoqiu Gao Shu gently made a feint, pretending a direct pass but actually making a juke to dodge a Western Army player attempting to intercept the pass.

"Beautiful, what a skillful dry-land fish-picking!"

Facing the incoming opposing player Zheng Jia, Gao Shu lightly stepped on the ball and executed a spin in place.

Zhang San's voice grew louder:

"Gao Shu's special move, turning the universe!"

After dodging two opposing players, Gao Shu did not hesitate with ball control anymore.

With an instep push.

He accurately passed the ball to another ball worker running into an open spot.

The ball worker, taking advantage of the opponent's disordered defense, skillfully controlled the ball and quickly made a centering pass.

This centering pass accurately locked onto Ma Zeben who was at the opponents' 'Self-defense District'... that is, a no-hands zone, of such precision to make even Ashley Young envious.

Now, Ma Zeben's position was behind the net guard, if he handled it right, this opportunity could be considered an open goal!

However, it seemed Ma Zeben was not quite himself, as he didn't go for a direct shot but opted to stop and adjust.

By this time, the opposing players were closing in, and he could only kick the ball hastily.

Ultimately, this weak and powerless shot was firmly captured by the opponent's Left Pole Net net guard.

Seeing this situation.

There was a burst of regretful murmurs from the stands.

Xu Yun clicked his tongue softly, shaking his head.

It was quite clear.

The game had just started, and Ma Zeben hadn't found his rhythm yet.

However, before the regretful murmurs fully faded, the situation on the field suddenly changed.

The Western Army's net guard, after securing the ball, quickly stood up, making a big kick that accurately found a teammate ball worker.

The ball worker faced the imposing Central Capital Team Head Jie without changing his expression, coldly smirking.

He then gently flicked the ball, kicking it onto his own back.

Zhang San called out once more:

"Double Shoulders Holding the Moon!"

Though the Head Jie could use hands, they could only block the opponent with their arms.

They could not touch the ball.

Nor could they initiate an elbow strike.

Thus, facing the opponent's maneuver of flicking the ball behind them, Head Jie Shi Ze was unable to stop it.

And the Western Army's ball worker did not linger.

First juggling the ball a few times on his back, he managed to land the ball onto the heel of his right foot.

While his left foot flicked...

"Crossed Flowers..... Oh dear!"

This move, similar to modern day flower stepping, caught everyone by surprise, even leaving Zheng Jia momentarily stunned.

And in the direction the ball worker played to, a figure was rushing forward.

As the figure sped forward, their right foot's instep slightly turned, effortlessly receiving the ball.

Now in front of him, aside from the two pole net guards, there was a vast, empty open space.

In other words...

A one-on-one with the goalkeeper!

The Western Army's ball head hesitated not a bit, slightly adjusting his pace, rushing towards the Left Pole Net.

Then, facing the severely focused net guard, the ball head calmly crafted out a chip shot.

Seeing this Cuju wrapped in leather, it drew a beautiful arc skimming over the net guard's fingertips.....

Plop——

The ball flew into the net!

"1 to 0!"

Meanwhile.

A suddenly annoyed male voice resonated beside Xu Yun:

"Damned Ma Zeben, couldn't you have just tapped it into the open goal earlier?"

.....

Note:

You can guess who this is, guess correctly and earn three extra updates, until the next chapter is updated.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 221 157: The Brightest Light in the Late Northern Song Dynasty (5.6K)

[972 words]

"Damn Ma Zeben, why didn't he just shoot at the open goal and be done with it?"

Hearing this warm and intimate greeting.

Xu Yun instinctively looked in the direction from which the voice came.

He saw that the speaker was a middle-aged scholar in his forties, not tall, with a small beard.

His clothing was relatively plain, and he looked quite ordinary, with nothing special about him.

The scholar was standing about two positions behind Xu Yun, no wonder his words could be heard so clearly.

Seeing Xu Yun looking at him, the scholar, feeling he had misspoken, hastily cupped his hands toward Xu Yun to show his apology.

Xu Yun also politely smiled back at him, without expressing any complaint.

Having witnessed numerous local Jing-Hu derbies as a fan, he had experienced plenty of fan dramas in later years.

In fact, such incidents were not too bizarre domestically; some derbies abroad were truly thrilling, requiring a large contingent of riot police, sometimes even sparking riots.

After all, it was just a bit of excitement, given the strong Cuju atmosphere during the Song Dynasty, it's normal for the Capital Imperial Guard to have some die-hard fans.

Therefore, Xu Yun didn't pay much attention to it, turned back, and continued watching the match.

Seeing that the Capital Imperial Guard he supported conceded a point, Zhang San, beside Xu Yun, was no longer as relaxed as at the start.

He was seen gripping his betting slip tightly, shouting with other surrounding fans:

"Score one, score one!"

"Quickly equalize!!"

In this tense atmosphere, the Capital Imperial Guard restarted the ball at the midline.

Perhaps after some communication following the loss.

Compared to the previous play, this time the Capital Imperial Guard's actions were much more streamlined.

A standard all-out attack, with great openings and closures.

Within just five minutes.

The Capital Imperial Guard organized three more attacks, each closer to the goal than the last.

"Oh, just a little bit off!"

After Ma Zeben failed with a header attempt, Zhang San was a bit frustrated but also notably more optimistic:

"Brother Wang, if they keep playing like this, I'm sure the Capital Imperial Guard will soon equalize."

But to his surprise, Xu Yun shook his head slowly:

"I don't think so."

Zhang San, after all, had a child's temperament, and since Xu Yun never put on airs in front of him, he was a bit unconvinced, and asked back:

"Brother Wang, what do you mean by that?"

Xu Yun pointed his chin towards the Capital Imperial Guard's backfield and indicated several positions:

"The coordination between Zuo Peng and Zheng Jia seems somewhat out of sync, especially Zuo Peng, who has repeatedly lost possession under the opponent's double-teams.

If it weren't for the other players covering positions, the offensive might have been cut off long ago.

As for Zheng Jia...

He looks tall and strong, good at defending, but he's quite slow when moving, while the Western Army's Ball Head and ball worker are very fast.

If the opponent uses quick and agile tactics... there might be some unforeseen events."

After speaking, Xu Yun shook his head, with a less than optimistic expression.

The Zuo Peng he mentioned referred to the player mostly stationed in the backfield among the ball workers.

His role was more defensively oriented, but he couldn't use arms to block opponent players like the regular and vice guards; his main function was to serve as a transition from defense to attack.

According to the functions of later football roles, it was about fifty percent similar to the role of a 'defensive midfielder.'

Defensive midfielder, as the name implies.

Its importance is akin to that of a person's waist.

If your waist is straight.

Your whole body can stand tall, move freely, and swiftly.

But if your waist is weak.

Your whole body will become listless, even losing mobility.

In Xu Yun's view.

The Zuo Peng of the Capital Imperial Guard seemed technically somewhat disjointed, which means he's unable to protect the ball; when pressed, he could only quickly pass it away.

As for the other Zheng Jia...

This person reminded Xu Yun of the later Manchester United player Niu Kui'Er.

Tall and burly, turns as slow as if in 0.25x speed, likened to an aircraft carrier turning.

So, adding these two positions together, there existed a possibility of losing possession under high pressing, allowing opponents to play behind the defense.

After hearing Xu Yun's analysis, before Zhang San could respond, a voice of admiration suddenly came from beside him:

"What a quick and agile!"

Xu Yun looked over and was immediately amused—the speaker was none other than the middle-aged scholar.

Seeing Xu Yun's gaze on him, the middle-aged scholar cupped his hands again toward him, but this time with a much more formal attitude:

"This young master speaks concisely, yet every word hits the nail on the head. I spoke abruptly earlier, and I beg for your forgiveness."

Xu Yun quickly smiled and returned the gesture.

From a fan's perspective, having one's opinion accepted by others is always a comforting thing, both in the past and present.

The middle-aged scholar seemed interested in befriending Xu Yun and began to speak:

"May I ask, sir..."

Before he could finish, another burst of exclamations erupted on the field.

Qiaoqiu Gao Shu from the Capital City Team had just received the ball and was about to organize an attack when two aggressive enemy ball guards appeared in front of him, with a look that said they were going to topple him.

Seeing this, Gao Shu had no choice but to kick the ball to the backfield, preparing to coordinate scheduling through Left Friend Shen Wen Yao.

However, just as the Cuju was rolling towards Zuo Peng.

Several players from the Western Army sped up, recklessly heading towards the Western Army's Zuo Peng, clearly intending to close in and attack.

The Zuo Peng of the Capital Army was startled by this, quickly transferred the ball to his more backed-up Zheng Jia.

As a result, due to great pressure, Zuo Peng made some errors in strength and accuracy when passing, forcing Zheng Jia to turn back to retrieve the ball.

Meanwhile, in the stands.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 222 157: The Brightest Light in the Late Northern Song Dynasty (5.6K)_2

[1,008 words]

Those like Xu Yun, who have a bird's-eye view of the battlefield, can see it all.

At this moment, not far behind Zheng Jia, there's a blue figure sprinting swiftly!

This person is none other than.....

The West Army Captain!

The only other player on site, apart from Ma Zeben, qualified to strike the goal!

In contrast, Zheng Jia from the Capital City Team moves like an old ox chewing grass.

With a swift turn and burst of power, he is easily overtaken by the West Army Captain.

Another breakaway!

What follows next is simple.

The West Army Captain runs with the ball just like last time, coolly shoots low to the near corner, and scores!

2-0!

Seeing this scenario.

The spectators erupted into a furious outcry, their emotions surpassing even the first time.

"Damn!"

"Huang Bo, I'll curse your family! You've worn yourself out in brothels?"

"Stupid Capital City Team!"

Beside Xu Yun, Zhang San opened his mouth helplessly, but said nothing.

He could feel the sixty cents he had bet slipping further away from him...

"Ah, sir, you were right after all."

The middle-aged scholar sighed and shook his head, as if reminded of something, then said:

"It seems that in this year's 23-road tournament (the 24-road one won't be until 1106), there is little hope for the Capital Imperial Guard Team."

Upon hearing this, Zhang San instinctively responded:

"But the Capital City Cuju Team changed their coach last year, I heard he's a famous educator from Daming Prefecture....."

The middle-aged scholar gave him a glance and sneered:

"The affairs of Cuju are under official departments, and the officials change like water, what can be said? It's just the same old soup in a new pot!"

"Guo Zizhi also said: 'In the past, when my banners were flying high, it was a division of tigers and pernicious geniuses from Daming Prefecture! You mere kids, what can you achieve?' What can our Cuju achieve?"

"With tomb wood already sprouting, how can Shen Wenyao dare to strive with Zuo Peng, can he excel in his duty?"

"No, it's like an ant trying to move a mountain."

In the end, the scholar sighed once more, pessimistically saying:

"Soon we won't be able to defeat Dai Prefecture, Deng Prefecture, or Yue, let alone Fang La's team. This is not something I can foresee."

Xu Yun: "..."

Indeed.

No matter the era, fans' rants remain remarkably consistent...

Afterward, the Chinese scholar looked at the dejected players from the Capital City Team at the center of the field and said to Xu Yun:

"Today, it seems the Capital City Team doesn't stand a chance of winning, but meeting someone who understands the game is quite lucky for me. I am Zong Ze, courtesy name Ru Lin. May I ask your name, sir?"

"I am Wang Lin, courtesy name... uh, wait?!"

Xu Yun found this cross-time soccer friend quite intriguing. Just as he was introducing himself with a couple of words, his eyes suddenly widened:

"Wait a minute, what did you say your name was?"

The middle-aged scholar chuckled nonchalantly, thinking Xu Yun didn't hear clearly due to the noisy scene. He repeated:

"I am Zong Ze, courtesy name Ru Lin, currently making a living in Lai Prefecture."

Xu Yun's breath slightly hitched as he fought back a surge of excitement, asking once again:

"May I inquire if you were an Advanced Scholar in the Sixth Year of Yuan You?"

Hearing this, Zong Ze made a light questioning sound and looked at Xu Yun in surprise, asking:

"Have you heard of my humble name, sir?"

Xu Yun's pupils contracted heavily.

Oh my god.

Oh my god!

Just coming to watch a soccer match, and I'm meeting Zong Ze??????

If the martyr Wang Bing and his son, who would rather die than surrender in Taiyuan, were the flickering stars in the dark sky of the late Northern Song Dynasty,

Then Zong Ze, without a doubt, was the supernova that exploded between the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties in that starry sky!

In fact.

Like Wang Bing, before the Jingkang Incident, Zong Ze was just an ordinary official suppressed by treacherous officials.

He was an Advanced Scholar in the Sixth Year of Yuan You and had served as a county magistrate multiple times.

Although wherever he governed, he benefited the people and achieved remarkable political success.

Yet, before 1126, the highest position he had held was Assistant Governor of Dengzhou.

But later, during the Jin Soldiers' invasion of the Song Dynasty, the over-sixty-year-old Zong Ze seemingly transformed, displaying tremendous military talent.

In the winter of 1126, the Jin Soldiers besieged Bianjing.

As mentioned earlier.

Among the organized troops, only Zhang Shuye led thirty thousand troops to aid the king.

While in the unorganized rebel army, Zong Ze organized the largest civilian rescue force.

At that time, he intercepted the Jin soldiers' retreat and continuously defeated them along the way.

In 1127, he won thirteen battles against the Jin People at Kaide and then defeated the strongest Jin Wuzhu cavalry at Puyang, with zero defeats.

Later, the Jin People called Zong Ze, addressing him directly as Grandpa Zong.....

Unfortunately, Emperor Qinzong of Song was weak and incompetent, opening the city to surrender to the Jin Army early in Bianjing City; what can you say to that?

Later, upon hearing that the Jin Soldiers coerced Emperors Hui and Qin to head north, Zong Ze immediately led his troops to Huazhou, passed through Liyang, and reached Daming.

He intended to cross the Yellow River directly, seize control of the Jin People's retreat route, and intercept back Emperors Hui and Qin.

However, not one loyalist soldier arrived, and Zhao Gou sent another letter saying let's just retreat to the capital city, giving up the dragons, big and small, if they're lost, so be it.....

After Zhao Gou ascended the throne, Zong Ze submitted more than twenty memorials requesting Zhao Gou return to the capital, but he was blocked every time by treacherous officials like Huang Qianshan.

Zong Ze could only stay in Bianjing, summoning up over a million rebel army with his own effort—this portion later became a main force under Yue Fei's command.

Yes, Yue Fei.

This renowned national hero was also someone Zong Ze discovered as a talent:

When Yue Fei violated military law and left Wang Yan's unit, it was Zong Ze who defended him and allowed him to atone for his crimes with meritorious service.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 223 157 The Brightest Light in the Late Northern Song Dynasty (5.6K)_3

[689 words]

Finally, Yue Fei was nurtured into a famous anti-Jin hero of the Southern Song and became his successor.

Unfortunately, Zhao Gou, this odd teammate, only knew how to indulge in pleasure, and Zong Ze, having been coldly treated for a long time, succumbed to illness, with a poisonous sore growing on his back.

On July 29, 1128, the last day of Zong Ze's life.

Lying on his deathbed, Zong Ze spoke not a word about family matters; his words were all about his unending obsession with the Northern Expedition.

He called out three times, "Cross the river! Cross the river! Cross the river!" and then passed away, at the age of 70.

Just like a supernova that cannot completely illuminate the night.

Although Zong Ze exploded with the brightest light of his life, he still could not change the declining fate of the nation.

All he could do was to use his heart's blood to make that humiliated history a little less dark.....

Thinking of this.

Xu Yun's chest heaved heavily a few times, and after forcing himself to calm down, he said to Zong Ze:

"Mr. Rulin, this junior's name is Wang Lin, courtesy name Xiaochun, a guest at Duke Zhao's Mansion, and I've heard the master mention your great name."

"Duke Zhao?"

Zong Ze stroked his beard, recalling briefly, and said:

"Could it be the Crown Prince's Grand Protector, Su Song, Su Zirong?"

Xu Yun nodded:

"Indeed."

Only then did Zong Ze show enlightenment, feeling somewhat emotional, he said:

"So, it's Mr. Zirong's guest. Back then, I had several encounters with Mr. Zirong, and I didn't expect that after years, Mr. Zirong still remembers me, this Door God."

Then Xu Yun thought for a bit and asked:

"I once heard the master mention that Mr. Rulin seemed to be serving in an official capacity in another region. May I ask why you are in the capital today?"

Hearing this, Zong Ze shook his head with a gloomy expression, not saying a word.

What Xu Yun did not know.

More than two years ago, Zong Ze had served as the County Magistrate of Quzhou Longyou, with remarkable achievements, and by the rules, he should have been promoted one rank.

However, he had offended Wu Chuhou before, so in the end, he was only transferred back to the capital, receiving a lateral transfer to Lai Province Jiaoshui, continuing as a County Magistrate.

And it is precisely because of this.

He came to Ju City today to watch the soccer match, originally thinking to relax, but did not expect to witness a defeat.

And just at this moment as Xu Yun and Zong Ze were chatting.

A burst of angry shouts sounded again from the surrounding stands.

Xu Yun followed suit and looked towards the field.

As expected.

3-0, the score obtained through high pressing.

Seeing this situation.

Feeling hopeless, Zhang San finally couldn't hold back.

He clenched his ticket tightly, leaned forward passionately, charged his right hand to make a fist, and shouted along with the surrounding crowd:

"Damn it, refund!"

.....

"Damn those sly Capital Army, they play terribly!"

By the fence outside Ju City.

Zhang San kicked a stone aside, full of resentment, following beside Xu Yun, muttering endlessly:

"Conceding six goals, it's shameless, I reckon even the girls in the brothels are better than them!"

Not long ago.

After letting in the third goal, the Capital Forbidden Army team completely lost their fighting spirit.

In the remaining time, they were seized upon by the Western Army, who scored another three goals through Ball Head.

This supposedly strong duel between the armies ended with a 6-0 score.

In fact, Zhang San's frustration was not purely because he lost six cents.

As a substitute level servant at the Su Mansion, that was at most just a night snack for him.

He engaged in some bets before the match purely for more fun, to make the process a bit more thrilling.

But to have multiple goals conceded on their home ground was very displeasing to Zhang San.

Given today's performance, when next year's various Cuju competitions come around, the Capital Forbidden Army team will likely end up at the bottom again.

Compared to Zhang San beside him, Xu Yun's mood was not so complicated and appeared indifferent.

Firstly, he had no emotional attachment to the Capital Forbidden Army team, and secondly, because he was more focused on Zong Ze...

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 224 158: Observations at Fan Building (6.6K)

[984 words]

Need to know.

It's currently only the year 1100, with a full 26 years to go before the Jingkang Incident.

This time is undoubtedly a bit short to curb the development of the Jin People:

The Jurchen people had already been merged into a Military Tribe Alliance by Wanyan Wugunai over twenty years ago.

Currently, Helib of the Jurchen has been dead for eight years, and Wanyan Aguda has already risen to power, so curbing them is certainly too late.

But for a Northern Song official like Zong Ze, it's somewhat long.

According to the normal trajectory.

Zong Ze would serve as County Magistrate in various places over the next ten years, and about fifteen years later, he would be promoted to the Dengzhou Assistant Governor, a Senior Sixth Grade official position.

After that, he would request retirement to return home, and it wouldn't be until 1124 that he would be appointed as Ba Prefecture Assistant Governor.

That time is a full 24 years from now.

In other words, it took Zong Ze 24 years to rise from a Senior Seventh Grade County Magistrate to a Senior Sixth Grade Assistant Governor.

There is only a Junior Sixth Grade gap between the two ranks.

For an official with Zong Ze's ability, this situation obviously wastes a lot of time.

It's an extreme waste of time.

Therefore, both emotionally and rationally, Xu Yun hopes to find a way.

To allow this national hero to have a smoother journey in this timeline.

At least give him a chance to fully utilize his abilities, and to avoid the tragedy of the bright moon shining on a ditch.

Just as Xu Yun was pondering how to speak, someone suddenly patted his shoulder from behind:

"Hey, Xiaowang?"

Xu Yun turned his head and saw standing behind him a familiar face:

Wang Bing.

At this moment, Wang Bing was dressed in casual clothes, accompanied by someone whom Xu Yun vaguely recognized, looking unusually high-spirited.

Xu Yun quickly clasped his hands in salute and asked:

"Captain? Are you here to watch the Cuju match today too?"

"Not entirely for the match."

Wang Bing smiled and patted the shoulder of the young man beside him, explaining:

"Today the captain of the Western Army is my personal guard. As the chief, I naturally have to be present to cheer."

Upon hearing this, Xu Yun turned his gaze to the young man.

This young man was tall, well-proportioned, and had slightly tanned skin, looking quite capable.

Earlier, due to the distance between the field and the stands,

Xu Yun's impression of the Western Army captain was limited to his skills; he couldn't see his appearance clearly.

But hearing Wang Bing's words, he could somewhat see the resemblance.

It's no wonder he felt a vague sense of familiarity upon first seeing him.

Then Xu Yun suddenly thought of something, clasped his hands towards the young man, and praised:

"So this is the 'Ball Head' who made six goals? A true hero in appearance. My name is Wang Lin, may I ask for the hero's name?"

The young man looked at Wang Bing, and after receiving the superior's permission, he quickly returned the salute:

"Thank you, Mr. Wang, for your praise. I dare not call myself a hero. My humble name is Zhang Yuan, from Bingzhou."

Xu Yun nodded thoughtfully, breathing a slight sigh of relief:

Hmm.

At least he's not named Gao.

Then he carefully recalled all the Northern Song figures he knew and realized he hadn't heard of such a person in his memories.

So it seems...

Is this person most likely just an ordinary personal guard?

If that's true, then it's a pity—with his superb ball skills, in the 21st century, he could earn at least ten million a year.

If he could go abroad, he might even be dubbed "the hope of the entire village," and even have a slim chance of becoming a national idol.

However, Xu Yun didn't know.

This Zhang Yuan, although left little record in history, was also a well-known hero:

He killed Wanyan Zonghan's nephew during the Battle of Taiyuan, covering Wang Bing and his family in a street fight, sustaining dozens of sword and spear wounds, and ultimately died of exhaustion.

After his death, Zonghan trampled his body with a horse, beheading him and hanging him on the city wall, worthy of respect and lamentation.

The conclusion of Hao Siwen in "Water Margin" was modeled on Zhang Yuan's experience.

Yet Xu Yun was not an artificial intelligence and did not realize that the soldier in front of him was not just brave on the field.

Then he thought of something, and pointed to Zong Ze, telling Wang Bing:

"Captain, let me introduce you, this is an old student of the Master, Zong Ze, the County Magistrate of the Sixth Year of Yuan You, an Advanced Scholar."

Wang Bing had already felt an inexplicable familiarity with this scholar, and before noticing Xu Yun, he had first noticed this person.

Therefore, upon Xu Yun's introduction, he quickly clasped his hands and said politely:

"I am Wang Bing, Loyal and Brave Camp Captain of Leopard Strategy Army, courtesy name Zheng Chen, greetings to County Magistrate Zong."

Zong Ze also hurriedly returned the salute:

"Ru Lin is just a Civil Servant, how could I accept such a grand gesture from Captain? If Captain esteems me, just call me Brother Zong."

Wang Bing, being a soldier by background, was straightforward and immediately agreed:

"That's great, then Brother Zong should also stop calling me Captain, you can also call me Brother Wang!"

Seeing these two, one literary and one martial, engaged in intense conversation, Xu Yun couldn't help but feel a wave of emotion in his heart.

In the original historical trajectory.

There was no record of any interaction between Wang Bing and Zong Ze, nor did their regions of service overlap.

When Wang Bing defended Taiyuan to the death, Zong Ze happened to be arduously fighting in the Western Capital.

Wang Bing ultimately waited in vain for reinforcements.

Similarly, there were no helpers beside Zong Ze.

In the midst of relentless warfare, surrounded by the stench of blood.

Did they ever raise their heads and ask the heavens, on this vast land, is there a fellow righteous warrior anywhere?

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 225 158 Fan Building Insights (6.6K)_2

[921 words]

They could not see each other with their eyes, yet they were under the same starry sky when they looked up.

They never met in life.

But in this timeline.

Two figures, pillars of their people, crossed paths because of him.

Seemingly ordinary, just a mutual introduction with a bow.

But in Xu Yun's eyes, it was an image worthy of being remembered for a millennium.

You're not alone in your path!

After the introductions were complete, Wang Bing glanced around, pondered for a moment, and said:

"Brother Zong, Xiaowang, since it's near noon, why don't I be the host and we go to Fan Building for a meal and chat?"

Gurgle—

Upon hearing the term Fan Building.

Zhang San, who had been staring at Zhang Yuan and cursing him for costing him six cents, suddenly showed a change in expression.

He swallowed hard.

In the Northern Song period, restaurants were classified by level of decoration with different titles.

The lowest-grade eateries were called "Foot Stores."

For instance, the soup stand where Xu Yun and others had sour plum soup earlier was a type of Foot Store.

And even the human flesh bun shop run by Sun Erniang in Water Margin was a type of Foot Store.

Above the Foot Store was the "Main Store," which was basically the equivalent of high-end restaurants.

In the current era, there were 72 high-end restaurants in Bianjing City.

The most top-notch among them were Pan Building, Cloud Building, and...

Fan Building.

If Pan Building, Cloud Building, and other restaurants could be compared to ordinary five-star hotels of later generations.

Then Fan Building was undoubtedly the Waldorf of the Song Dynasty.

The cheapest dish there would cost nearly a hundred wen; an ordinary banquet wouldn't cost less than three taels of coins!

Such a price for someone like Zhang San, a servant, was unimaginable expense.

Just like later generations' workers earning five to six thousand, they might occasionally grit their teeth to afford a 428 meal at all-Island.

But asking him to go for two to three thousand kaiseki cuisine?

Perhaps in a lifetime, only occasions like their ten-year wedding anniversary might break this ban.

Therefore, upon hearing Wang Bing was prepared to host at Fan Building.

Zhang San kept glancing at Xu Yun with hopeful eyes.

He didn't hope to sit at the table to eat and drink with the others, but, given his relationship with Xu Yun, packing some leftovers shouldn't be a problem, right?

"Fan Building ah....."

At this moment, Xu Yun's mind was not as complex as Zhang San's.

Yet, as a foodie, he was indeed curious to see this Waldorf of the Northern Song era.

Adding that he somewhat understood Wang Bing's financial state, affording a meal at Fan Building was not a burden:

This Captain just made significant achievements on the western line, and the court rewarded him with a sizable sum.

Additionally, due to his 'allegiance' to Tong Guan's faction.

This time, Tong Guan didn't deliberately pocket the rewards, handing them entirely to Wang Bing and his brothers.

According to what Wang Bing once mentioned while drunk.

This reward was estimated to be four to five hundred taels of coins, enough for an average person to earn over a dozen to twenty years, more than enough for a meal at Fan Building.

Wang Bing's proposal matched Xu Yun's intention, so he proactively invited Zong Ze:

"Mr. Rulin, since the Captain intends so, why don't we move to Fan Building for a discussion?"

He paused, recalling Zong Ze's historical character, and added:

"Rest assured, Captain is spending the rewards from the recent victory on the west line, absolutely not taken illicitly."

Zong Ze, eager to befriend Wang Bing, hesitated for a moment and finally nodded:

"Since that's the case, I, Zong Mou, gladly accept."

Wang Bing laughed heartily and waved his left hand in a grand gesture:

"Then to Fan Building we go, we won't return until we're drunken!"

The party then walked along the Imperial Street for a short distance and soon arrived at a massive complex:

This was a composite restaurant formed by five interconnected buildings with flying bridges connecting them, pearl curtains and ornate door frames.

Intricate eaves catching sunlight, painted beams soaring with the clouds, green railings embracing window sills, and emerald curtains hanging high on doorways, all looking extremely lavish.

Upon arriving outside the building, Zhang San couldn't help but be awestruck:

Old Su, though wealthy, wasn't a corrupt official nor someone obsessed with extreme luxury.

Hence, in front of Fan Building, even the main courtyard of Old Su's residence pales in comparison.

Seeing Zhang San fixing his gaze on the hotel's grand facade, Wang Bing smiled and patted his head:

"Daytime is not yet the liveliest time at Fan Building; come night, Fan Building becomes ablaze with candlelight, bright as day."

"Look over there at the main corridor?"

"By then, there'll be at least a hundred singing princesses aligned on both sides, ready to entertain guests."

Xu Yun, too, raised his head in interest, curiously glancing at the upper floors.

Frankly speaking.

As a transmigrator from later generations, Fan Building's so-called 'luxury' was unimpressive to him, mainly viewed with a sightseeing mindset.

Later times had many retro attractions, lacking for nothing similar or even more intricate buildings.

His curiosity was due to the divide between times.

After all, no matter how retro it gets in later times, it can't recreate such real scenes.

Secondly.....

It was due to the historical rumor that Emperor Huizong often visited Fan Building with Li Shishi for clandestine meetings.

As a human drilling machine who fathered 66 children before being captured.

Who knew if Zhao Ji might just be in one of Fan Building's rooms, holding out, awaiting reciprocation?

The party, led by Wang Bing, entered Fan Building one after another.

The first floor of Fan Building was an open dining area, also there was the hall.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 226 158 Fan Building Insights (6.6K)_3

[848 words]

However, compared to ordinary restaurants, each table in the Fan Building is separated by a screen, greatly ensuring dining privacy.

Xu Yun and his entourage entered.

A swift servant quickly threw a towel over his shoulder and stepped up respectfully, saying:

"Honored guests, your presence truly brightens our humble establishment, but the main hall is currently full. May I invite you to the upstairs?"

Wang Bing glanced at him and handed over a few rare pieces of silver to the servant:

"Is there a private room available?"

The servant accepted the silver and carefully examined it.

His gaze lingered on the Imperial Secretariat seal for a moment, and his smile became even more radiant:

"Yes, yes, yes, the Fenglin Crossing on the third floor is vacant; shall I show you up?"

Wang Bing nodded:

"Lead the way!"

"Alright, to the Fenglin Crossing for five!"

Fifteen minutes later.

Xu Yun, Wang Bing, and Zong Ze each took their seats.

Zhang San and Zhang Yuan were placed at the servant's table opposite the private room entrance.

"Jade Sunflower Treasure Fan... Proud to Be Number One... Dragon Soars and Phoenix Dances... Pomegranate Blossoms with Auspicious Colors... Spring Breeze on Horseback... Snow-Cleared Soup... 轟繁頰牋縶...."

Wang Bing grandly ordered a few dishes.

After exchanging the menu with the waiter, he took the initiative to pour a cup of wine for Zong Ze and Xu Yun.

Then, he raised his cup and said to Zong Ze and Xu Yun:

"Brother Zong, though today is our first meeting, it feels like reuniting with an old friend. Come, Mr. Wang toasts to you!"

Zong Ze picked up his cup and lightly clinked it with his, and the three of them drank their wine in one gulp.

"Ah..."

After setting down his cup, Zong Ze smacked his lips in reminiscence.

For a scholar, there's no love greater than that for wine; he couldn't help but praise:

"I've long heard that the cider of Fan Building is an exquisite wine, and today's tasting indeed lives up to its reputation.... Well, Brother Wang, why are you smiling?"

Wang Bing stifled a laugh, took a wineskin from his waist, and poured a bit into Zong Ze's cup:

"Brother Zong, give this a try."

Zong Ze, puzzled, picked up the cup, about to taste it, when his nostrils flared slightly:

"Hiss, such a strong wine aroma!"

Then he glanced at Wang Bing and Xu Yun, changing his initial intention to gulp into small, slow sips.

After a few seconds.

Zong Ze raised his eyebrows and, astonished, asked Wang Bing:

"Captain, what is the origin of this wine? While the taste is somewhat inferior to cider, the intensity is several times stronger!"

Wang Bing laughed heartily, pointing at Xu Yun:

"This is the distilled wine created by Xiaowang. Even the toughest drinkers in the army can handle no more than two jin (32 liang) before falling to the ground, unconscious."

Zong Ze gave Xu Yun a surprised look.

Initially, seeing Xu Yun as someone unfit for martial training or guard duties, he assumed the young man was a scholar or accountant.

But now it seems...

Things aren't as simple as he imagined?

He then picked up his cup again and sipped a small mouthful.

The spicy sensation immediately filled his esophagus, and he regretfully remarked:

"A pity Li Taibai has passed; otherwise, I would like to see whether the Qinglian Scholar still dares to utter the bold phrase 'I shall drink three hundred cups at once' in the face of such strong wine!"

Wang Bing also nodded in agreement, then shifted the topic to ask:

"Brother Zong, earlier I did not inquire in detail; may I know where Brother Zong is currently serving?"

Talking about his position, Zong Ze's face couldn't help but slightly darken.

Though not career-driven, his heart is filled with patriotism, and naturally, he holds some expectations for his official career.

Yet, things don't always go as he wishes; he let out a light breath, saying:

"I, Zong Mou, was originally serving in Quzhou Longyou, and a while ago, I was commanded to return to the capital to deliver a report.

Though the formal appointment hasn't been issued, it's expected I'll be the County Magistrate of Lai Province Jiaoshui."

Wang Bing furrowed his brow and asked:

"When Brother Zong was in Quzhou Longyou, were you serving as a County Magistrate or County Captain?"

"Not so; I was the County Magistrate then."

Wang Bing hesitated for a moment, refilled Zong Ze's cup with wine, and asked:

"Could it be that Brother Zong made some errors while in office....."

Zong Ze shook his head again:

"In the three years of my tenure, my performance evaluations have always been excellent, without a single slip."

"Then why.....?"

Zong Ze sighed softly, revealing what he hadn't told Xu Yun previously:

"In a past imperial exam, I critiqued the factional struggles with ten thousand words, offending Wu Chuhou, thus..."

Bam!

Before Zong Ze finished speaking, Wang Bing slammed his fist on the table:

"The treacherous officials ruin talented men loyal to the country!"

Zong Ze likewise sighed deeply.

He picked up his cup, sipped alone, and the strong wine eased a bit of his resentment.

After a pause, he said to Wang Bing:

"Brother Wang, stationed year-round at the western front, it mustn't be easy, right?"

.....

Note:

Previously, a reader mentioned that alcohol solutions have no taste, but I wrote about distilled wine... The kind that's fifty or sixty degrees, not distilled alcohol....

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 227 159 The Completely Rotten Western Army (5K)

[2,222 words]

"The Western Front..."

Upon hearing this term from Zong Ze's mouth, a complex expression flashed in Wang Bing's eyes.

However, just as he was about to speak,

the voice of a young servant suddenly came from outside the door:

"Gentlemen, your dishes are ready. May I enter to serve them?"

Seeing this, Wang Bing quickly put away the wine pouch.

He also drank the remaining half glass of distilled wine in one gulp before responding:

"Come in."

"Alright!"

After receiving Wang Bing's approval,

the young servant immediately pushed the door open and entered, swiftly retrieving several dishes from a vermilion lacquer food case he carried, placing them on the table one by one:

"This is the Jade Sunflower Treasure Fan..."

"This is Proud to Be Number One..."

"This is..."

The young servant was quite perceptive and, realizing that Wang Bing and the others had matters to discuss, sped up his actions and speech significantly.

In no time at all,

six dishes, one soup, and several bowls of rice were placed on the table.

Then Wang Bing gave a few more instructions regarding the side table for his attendants, asking the young servant to serve some food to Zhang San and Zhang Yuan before signaling him to leave.

After the young servant left,

Wang Bing first proactively placed some food into the bowls of Zong Ze and Xu Yun, estimating that the young servant had walked far enough away, he then sighed and said:

"Brother Zong, although I, Wang Bing, was killing enemies on the Western Front, there are certain words I cannot deceive you with—the matters of the Western Front can be summed up in one word: chaos!"

"Chaos?"

Zong Ze was slightly taken aback and asked:

"Brother Wang, I, Zong Mou, have been hurrying to the Capital City for the past ten days, and everyone I met on the road said that the Western Army has won a great victory and that the Qingtang Region will soon be recaptured. Why do you speak of chaos?"

Wang Bing sighed heavily, shaking his head.

He took out his wine pouch and poured himself another cup, sipping it leisurely.

As the wine went down,

a mouthful of alcohol breath was exhaled along with some turbid air:

"Brother Zong, you may not be aware that the chaos on the Western Front can be divided into internal and external chaos."

Zong Ze quickly assumed a listening posture, while Xu Yun, beside him, also eagerly pricked up his ears.

Although he was a transmigrator from a later age, his knowledge of this era was mostly on a macro level.

For example, he knew the Northern Song would fall 26 years later, he knew that the neighboring Danluo Kingdom had just suffered a great raid by Korea,

and he knew that thousands of miles away, there was a country called the Holy Roman Empire, where the emperor and the pope were on the verge of tearing each other apart over the right to appoint bishops...

But when the focus was narrowed down to a specific region or a particular battle line, he would encounter extremely solid information barriers.

Because historical records are limited in what they can document, many things cannot be described in detail:

Unless you could create the internet in the Song Dynasty and cultivate a group of typists.

Thus, in terms of details,

Wang Bing is undeniably a vast, new source of information.

Subsequently, Wang Bing took a bite of food to suppress the effects of the wine and continued:

"The so-called internal chaos refers to numerous internal issues of the Western Army, starting with the empty salaries."

"Brother Zong, may I ask a question—my position in the army is that of a Captain, a Senior Seventh Grade rank, which entitles me to command a battalion."

"Currently, there are 497 people registered under my command. Can you guess how many of them are real and how many are drawing salaries fraudulently?"

Zong Ze glanced at him.

After thinking for a moment, he tentatively offered a number:

"...Three hundred?"

"Three hundred?"

Wang Bing shook his head, a mocking smile forming on his face.

He dipped his forefinger in wine from his cup and wrote several traditional Chinese characters on the table:

One hundred fifty-nine.

Zong Ze's pupils shrank instantly in shock:

"This... only one-third are real?"

Wang Bing nodded emphatically:

"That's right. You must know, Brother Zong, the place where I am stationed is the Taoxi Border, where a skirmish occurs on average every ten days."

"If such a critical location is subject to salary padding, what do you think of the entire Western Front?"

Hearing this, Zong Ze remained silent, while Xu Yun also heaved a heavy sigh.

Empty salaries.

This was also one of the topics he had discussed with Xiaozhao before.

The truth Xiaozhao revealed after drinking was also a key factor in his decision to take certain actions.

In the Northern Song period,

it was well known that the Zhe Family Army and Zhong Family Army were highly effective, capable of fighting three times their number in the same formation.

This was partly due to the training effects of Old Zhong and others.

But equally important was the fact that these 'X Family Armies' were generally at full strength for a long period.

For example, with the same nominal strength of a thousand troops,

Old Zhong's forces, if not fully staffed,

could at least field around nine hundred real soldiers, possibly approaching full strength.

But other units suffering from empty salaries could barely field three to four hundred soldiers, so how could they be effective in combat?

For instance, later when the Jin Army attacked Bianjing,

although the registered soldiers in Bianjing numbered two hundred thousand, apart from the thirty thousand brought by Zhang Shuye, the entire Bianjing City could muster only a little over twenty thousand warriors.

A nearly ninety-percent empty salary ratio—can you believe this was the Imperial Guard protecting the Capital City?

Wang Bing took a pause, cautiously walked to the window to sense any disturbances,

and, after ensuring nothing was amiss, returned to his seat, continuing in a lowered voice:

"Besides empty salaries, another aspect of internal chaos is... deduction of military merits!"

With that, he took out several pieces of official silver from his pocket, tossing them lightly in his hand while smiling bitterly:

"Brother Zong, you might not believe it, but after participating in dozens of battles large and small, this is the first time I've seen so much reward silver."

"Normally, for ten taels of official silver awarded by the court, only one tael would eventually reach us."

"Hm, outrageous!"

Zong Ze, who had always despised corruption, couldn't contain his anger upon hearing Wang Bing's words:

"Brother Wang, is there truly no one in the military to appeal or seek justice?"

Wang Bing shook his head with a bitter smile, looking at him with an expression of 'you are naive':

"Seek justice? Is it that easy?"

"Those people are shrewd. They never embezzle the relief funds, only the reward silver. How could ordinary soldiers know how much reward silver they can really get?"

"Whenever soldiers receive letters from home, learning that the families of fallen comrades have all received relief funds and knowing their own affairs are secured, who would fuss over the reward silver?"

"Even if there were officers who submitted reports to complain, those reports would never reach the officials' desks — although our dynasty prioritizes scholars over warriors, there is still some interaction between them, and those people have everything well taken care of."

Hearing this, Xu Yun suddenly thought of a name:

Li Gang.

Indeed.

This Li Gang has nothing to do with that later Li Gang.

He was a figure during the late Northern Song Dynasty, a typical example where personal virtue contradicted capability.

Li Gang organized the defense of Bianjing City and had fierce conflicts with the party led by Wang Boyan and Huang Qianshan that advocated surrender.

From a standpoint, he was a typical representative of the resistance faction.

Additionally, he was one of the staunch supporters of Zong Ze and supported Yue Fei's anti-Jin struggle until his death.

From a contribution perspective.

He was undoubtedly a Good Minister during the Southern Song, and his proposed plans could even be considered the 'revival strategies'.

But in stark contrast to his contributions and abilities was his personal virtue.

Setting aside the smear on Lv Haowen, his avarice was also quite severe:

On one hand, he supported rectifying military and political corruption and issued 21 new military regulations.

On the other hand, he turned around and embezzled seventy percent of the compensation relief funds...

While serving in the taxation of Nanjian Prefecture, Sha County, he copied the Western Army's corrupt practices, embezzling over fifty thousand coins over four years.

Actually, Li Gang's case wasn't unique.

Among all the Western frontline generals in the late Northern Song.

Apart from Liu Fa, Old Zhong, and Old Zhe.

Even the renowned veteran Wang Hou was once involved in embezzling funds...

"Wealth indeed stirs the human heart..."

Zong Ze sighed and shook his head, clinking a cup of wine with Wang Bing, then asked:

"Brother Wang, aside from internal strife, I wonder what this external strife entails?"

This time, Wang Bing still didn't directly answer his question but asked back:

"Brother Zong, having served as a county magistrate on the frontier, you should know where our dynasty's external threats primarily come from."

Zong Ze nodded.

His initial posting was at Daming Prefecture, also a crucial borderland:

"On the western front, we confront Western Xia, while the Liao People are eager in the north. Beyond these two, the remaining Qiang People and Wokou are nothing more than remnants."

Wang Bing slightly nodded:

"Indeed."

If we compare the Song Dynasty territory to a person.

Then to this person's right is the sea, directly ahead lies the Liao Kingdom.

At ten o'clock is Western Xia, to the right are Tubo and Dali.

The most threatening to the Song Dynasty are Western Xia and Liao Kingdom, though Song-Liao conflicts are relatively less—not because the Liao People are passive, but because 95 years ago, the Song Dynasty and Liao Kingdom signed the famous Treaty of Chanyuan.

Some people see it as a humiliating submission while others regard it as a wise decision.

In any case, after the signing of the Treaty of Chanyuan, on the surface, disputes between Song and Liao lessened considerably.

It even led to a flourishing cross-border trade.

However, peace is one thing.

But akin to the hawk and the rabbit later on, in the eyes of Song people like Zong Ze, the Liao Kingdom remains a potential enemy.

Hearing the resentment in Zong Ze's tone, Wang Bing paused for a moment before slowly saying:

"Then...may I ask Brother Zong, have you ever heard of the Jurchen tribe?"

"Jurchen?"

Zong Ze was taken aback, contemplating for a moment, and somewhat uncertainly said:

"The Jurchen Brother Wang refers to, could it be the Zhueng People south of Liaoyang?"

Wang Bing nodded:

"That's correct, it is indeed this tribe."

Zong Ze blinked, puzzled:

"Brother Wang, I, Zong Mou, heard that after the Liao Dynasty wiped out the Mohe People, the Zhueng tribe split into two."

"The two tribes were named Sheng Jurchen and Shu Jurchen, somewhat similar to the vassal Qiang tribes of our dynasty."

"What, according to Brother Wang, the Jurchen tribe appears rather threatening?"

Wang Bing gently shook his head:

"It's just a hunch. While fighting on the western front, I, Mr. Wang, heard that there was a warrior among the Jurchen named Wanyan Aguda, renowned for his unmatched bravery."

"In recent years, it seems the Emperor Daozong of the Liao is also nearing his end. Nine years ago, Yelv Yanxi was established as the heir to the Liao throne, and upon Daozong's passing, it will surely be this man who ascends."

"But this man is known to be ignorant and tyrannical, and it's rumored there is discontent among the Jurchen tribes within the Liao people."

"Currently, there seem to be voices in the court hoping that the officials could offer some support to the Jurchen, to assist them in causing some trouble for the Liao..."

Xu Yun had been quietly observing from the side, but upon hearing Wang Bing's words, he was taken aback and couldn't help but interject:

"Captain, does the court plan to support the Jurchen?"

Wang Bing sighed. It was evident he didn't seem to favor this plan much:

"It seems so..."

Xu Yun's brows immediately furrowed.

In the future where he came from, there was never a conclusive determination in the historical community regarding whether the Song Dynasty had supported the Jin Kingdom—because there was too little historical material for reference.

Some believed the Jurchen were fully aided by the Song Dynasty itself, a self-inflicted problem.

Others thought the Song Dynasty proposed cooperation only after seeing the Jurchen grow strong.

But regardless of which view, it is certain that Zhao Ji had indeed committed an audacious maneuver:

In the autumn of 1109, Zhao Ji sent the Jurchen many siege engines along with blueprints and craftsmen.

Along with an uncertain amount of provisions, which traveled via the Korean sea route...

Though no detailed records can confirm that Wanyan Zongwang employed identical siege weapons during the attack on Taiyuan.

But from a logical standpoint.

When the Jin Army attacked Taiyuan, they would almost certainly utilize these highly efficient Central Plains weapons unless they're out of their mind, or at least an improved version based on them.

With such generous assistance, how could one not sigh?

"The situation is quite dire..."

Wang Bing seemed to have hit a nerve, shaking his head again, he said:

"Presently, the western front is embroiled in continuous conflicts, the cavalry of the Western Xia bandits is strong, with many warhorses, while our dynasty has very few horses.

Some warhorses, after prolonged running and fighting, experience severe hoof damage.

Even if their stamina is still sufficient, they can only retreat to the rear, serving as transport horses or packhorses...."

"?"

Wang Bing had not finished his remarks when Xu Yun's face revealed a question mark:

"Severe hoof damage? Captain, are the warhorses on the frontlines not equipped with horseshoes?"

....

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 228 160 Military Divine Artifact! (New group established, group number in author's note)

[1,823 words]

"Horseshoe?"

Hearing this word come out of Xu Yun's mouth.

Wang Bing was momentarily stunned:

"Is that a nuclear weapon?"

Xu Yun thought for a moment and took out a piece of paper and a pencil from his belongings.

This was a pencil he had made in his spare time not long ago, simpler than those in later generations, made of a wooden stick + a lead core.

Although the writing effect is not as clear as the industrial pencils of later generations, it suffices for emergency use.

At least in terms of efficiency and convenience, it is far superior to ink brushes.

He first drew a diagram of a horse on the paper, and then drew an arrow extending out from the horse's hoof.

Indicating an enlarged view of this area.

Then he drew a simple diagram of a horseshoe at the end of the arrow and pushed the paper in front of Wang Bing:

"Captain, this is a horseshoe, also called a horse hoof."

"It's a smooth iron plate, bent into a ring at each end, which fits perfectly under the horse's foot."

"It not only protects the hoof but also makes the hoof grip the ground more firmly, preventing slipping."

Wang Bing took the diagram and glanced at it, thoughtfully saying:

"Horseshoe, that's an interesting name..."

Seeing this, Xu Yun cautiously asked:

"Captain, have you never seen this in the military?"

Wang Bing shook his head, his tone very certain:

"I've never seen it."

Upon hearing this, Xu Yun was somewhat baffled:

Could it be possible?

The Song Dynasty didn't have horseshoes?

This is the 12th century AD.....

If he remembered correctly, Rome had invented this thing as early as the 1st century BC.

Actually, Xu Yun didn't know.

Since the hoof is a keratinous layer, similar to human nails, it doesn't really cause obvious pain.

In the soft soil and grasslands of the Central Plains, hoof wear is not particularly severe, and thus it was relatively neglected throughout successive dynasties.

Therefore, historically.

It wasn't until after the Yuan Dynasty that horseshoes began to be officially popularized locally.

Of course.

In later generations, a horseshoe was unearthed at Ancient Anshan City, and after dating, it was calculated to be from around the 2nd century BC.

This timeline was around the establishment of Lelang Commandery in the Western Han Dynasty, and can be said to be the earliest traceable finished horseshoe.

But like some other special inventions in history.

The early appearance of an item doesn't mean it was accepted and applied by people at that time.

Let alone universally applied on a societal level.

Here's a simple example:

Back when the Han Dynasty was launching northern expeditions against the Xiongnu, horses were sent out seventy to eighty thousand strong and returned three to four thousand.

During battles, horse losses even exceeded those of soldiers.

For example, records in the "Comprehensive Canon" state:

(Emperor Wu of Han) had four hundred thousand horses in his stables. When the Xiongnu invaded, Wei Qing and Huo Qubing led an attack with one hundred thousand cavalry and fourteen thousand private horses, pursuing and heavily defeating the Xiongnu. Ten thousand Han horses died, and although the Xiongnu retreated sickly afar, Han was also short of horses and could not continue the pursuit.

And among these horse casualties.

The vast majority of Han horses lost their combat effectiveness due to hoof wear and eventually fell to the desert.

If horseshoes had truly been popularized during the Western Han period, such vast losses of horses would undoubtedly not have occurred.

To be honest.

Huaxia has always had vast lands; it's quite normal, perhaps even inevitable, for some border regions to have come up with horseshoes.

But due to their isolated nature, they couldn't achieve large-scale popularization, which is an unarguable fact.

Some things were invented and used by us, and we must not yield an inch, as they are the toil of our ancestors.

For example, traditional Chinese medicine and traditional festivals.

However, from the perspective of the times, we lagged behind in some things, and there's no need to stubbornly claim them forcibly.

If we constantly claim that everything is our invention, wouldn't we be just like the Stealing Country?

Thus in the present era.

Individual tribes in mountainous areas may possess horseshoes or similar hoof protectors.

But within the ranks of the Western Army in the Song Dynasty, horseshoes are indeed a rarity.

Of course.

Just because they haven't seen it doesn't mean it's nonexistent.

Yet, as a promising talent to oversee Taiyuan's defenses in the future, Wang Bing almost immediately realized it was a good thing upon Xu Yun's introduction of the horse iron hoof:

Most battle horses' hooves are damaged because they first soften in cold, damp environments before getting worn down by hard mountain rocks.

Leading to excessive wear or hoof disease.

If horseshoes could truly be made and popularized.....

Claiming it could change the tides of war might be an exaggeration, but reducing military horse loss significantly is certainly feasible.

However, soon, Wang Bing's expression calmed down:

"Xiaowang, your idea is good, but it has a fatal flaw."

Xu Yun blinked:

"What flaw?"

"Let me ask you, what's the weight of a single horseshoe you designed?"

Xu Yun thought for a moment; most later generation horseshoes are made of aluminum, with a single one weighing about 1.5 jin.

Since theoretically, the density of steel is three times that of aluminum, a single horseshoe would weigh around...

"About four jin."

Wang Bing nodded, this figure was about what he expected:

"A single one weighs four jin, a horse has four legs, a set of four would be sixteen jin."

"Currently, our western front has over twenty thousand warhorses, and covering them all requires 320,000 jin of refined iron."

"It wouldn't be difficult for the Court to produce 320,000 jin of refined iron, but how long will these iron shoes last?"

Xu Yun couldn't help but raise a question mark on his face:

"What?"

Seeing he didn't quite understand, Wang Bing further explained:

"Take, for example, the standard eight types of swords for the Imperial Guard. The so-called eight types refer to the hand sword, curved sword, crescent moon sword, halberd sword, eyebrow sword, phoenix beak sword, and pen sword. The Western Army mainly equips with the hand sword."

Wang Bing, in casual attire today without any weapons, gestured a virtual sample about fifty centimeters long:

"The hand sword is two chi and one long, forged from refined steel."

"Generally speaking, assuming you survive multiple battles, a hand sword can accompany you through about three great battles of a thousand people each before it develops a break."

"If that's the case with the hand sword, there's even less to say for horseshoes. When the western front truly employs horses, a campaign's journey to and fro won't be less than 500 li."

"With such a scale of wear, how long can a pair of horseshoes last?"

Upon hearing this, Xu Yun suddenly laughed—he knew where the problem lay.

Indeed.

He had forgotten one thing:

Before the Bessemer Steelmaking Method was invented in 1856, both the East and the West could hardly address the issue of impurities in steel.

For instance, sulfur, and phosphorus.

In steel smelting, the lower the sulfur and phosphorus levels, the better. If it's high, the steel becomes brittle.

Moreover, increasing by one ten-thousandth significantly impacts mechanical performance.

Modern steel requires very low levels of sulfur and phosphorus. For example, ordinary steel requires sulfur content below five ten-thousandths, and phosphorus below four-point-five ten-thousandths.

High-quality steel demands stricter standards.

Sulfur below four ten-thousandths, phosphorus below four ten-thousandths.

High-grade steel is even higher:

requiring sulfur below three ten-thousandths, phosphorus below three-point-five ten-thousandths.

Although during the same period, domestic refining techniques were generally ahead of the West.

But that was only a lateral comparison.

From the perspective of later generations.

The mass production techniques of steel at that time were quite mature, but the quality was indeed not great.

Because, in ancient times, there was no concept of trace elements, naturally, there was no desulfurization or dephosphorization process.

They only knew that northern iron was more brittle than southern iron, but they didn't know why.

At this period.

Craftsmen mainly relied on the mechanical performance differences during folding and hammering to "knock off" impurity slags, which is the so-called refined steel.

Imagine it like this:

You and another person both have a large maltose sugar block mixed with a lot of sand.

You have advanced techniques, you can dissolve the sugar block, filter out the sand with cloth, then evaporate the water to recondense the sugar block.

The other person can only pull the sugar into long strips and pick the sand with tweezers.

After one round, fold the sugar and stir it, exposing the inner layer of sand and picking it again.

Round after round, even if he picks a hundred times, it still falls far short of your level.

Picking a thousand times might achieve a slightly gray color, but no visible sand to the naked eye.

If you ask him to pick more, he can't do it.

And these sand particles are the fracture points in the steel. Although invisible to the eye, they shatter upon impact during use.

Therefore, Wang Bing's concern is quite reasonable:

320,000 jin of steel equals 160 tons, not a small number to be taken lightly.

There is a rumor in later generations that during the reign of Emperor Shen Zong of Song, steel production reached 150,000 tons annually, comparable to 17th-century Europe as a whole.

But in reality...

This number is incorrect.

This number originates from Robert Wright's "Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny":

["Like a typical market economy, large-scale production began showing its strengths in medieval China. Factories with up to 500 looms and ironworks with thousands of workers had appeared. By the late 11th century, China could produce 150,000 tons of iron annually, a capacity Europe only reached by 1700."]

According to the more detailed "Iron Coins and Iron Production in the Song Dynasty" research, the usual iron production in the Song Dynasty was about fifty thousand tons.

Further refined steel was around three to four thousand tons, not exceeding five thousand tons.

A considerable portion of the remaining iron was used to produce iron pots.

On such a production basis.

If it were possible to ensure that horseshoes could be replaced every few years or even once a year,

Then the Court might bite the bullet and allocate such a resource.

But if horseshoes cracked without running a few trips, the Court wouldn't play the fool.

In reality.

The reason the Yuan Dynasty could popularize the use of horseshoes was related to better steel smelting techniques in that era.

Even before the Yuan Dynasty, not all European armies would adopt horseshoes.

Looking at the worried expression on Wang Bing's face, Xu Yun couldn't help but sigh slightly.

Darn it.

If only I was someone unknown.....

Then he took a deep breath, looked at Wang Bing, and said:

"Captain Wang, to tell you the truth, in the Wind Spirit Moon Shadow Sect, there was once a blacksmith named Kobe.

"Every day at the hour of Yin, he would rise early and spend decades deeply researching, eventually developing a technique to further refine steel."

"This technique is not difficult, and the cost is not high, yet it can make refined steel ten times more wear-resistant....."

Clang——

Just as Xu Yun finished speaking.

Wang Bing couldn't hold it and the wine cup in his hand fell to the ground, shattering into pieces.

Yet, he didn't care a bit about the fragments underfoot but instead stared straight at Xu Yun:

"Xiaowang, is what you say true?"

.....

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Chapter 229 161 The Beginning of the Sudden Change (Part 1) (6.2k)

[882 words]

Three weeks later.

Su Mansion.

It was still the same small courtyard where Xu Yun previously prepared the generator.

At this moment, the courtyard had been cleaned up, even the stone tables and flowers had been moved away.

In the entire courtyard.

Only in the center was left a bizarre device with a brick-arched top, somewhat resembling a coffin.

Beside the equipment stood Old Su, Wang Bing and his brother, Zong Ze, Wang Hou, Siegfried, and...

An old man with white hair and beard, yet energetic and sprightly.

Of course.

Xu Yun was also present.

He was fully focused on the arched device's interior, not moving his eyes.

Estimating that it was about time, he turned his head and said to Old Chief Steward Xie:

"Old Chief Steward, you can stop now."

Upon hearing this, Old Chief Steward Xie quickly responded yes.

He turned around and halted the donkey that was pulling the bellows, and very kindly placed a large handful of grass in front of it:

"Hurry up and fill your stomach, you'll need to work again later."

Brother Lv:

"...."

Xu Yun then looked at Siegfried, who had been waiting there, cupped his hands and said with a smile:

"Master Qi, thank you for your trouble."

"Young master is too polite, it's just my duty."

Siegfried returned a very reliable look, took several craftsmen to the equipment, and used an iron rod to pry open a preset lid.

As the lid was pried open, a stream of intensely hot molten iron began to slowly flow into a small dug pond.

Next, according to Xu Yun's prior instructions, Siegfried lightly and evenly scattered pig iron powder into the molten iron in the small pond.

Meanwhile, several others stirred quickly with willow sticks.

Seeing this situation.

Xu Yun finally felt a bit relieved.

In ancient Huaxia, bai-lian steel and forged steel were the two most common steel casting methods.

Take the artifacts from the Song Dynasty's Artifact Bureau as example, the sulfur content was about 0.11% or roughly one per thousand.

Mentioned earlier.

The difference of each ten-thousandth in sulfur and phosphorus in steel makes a world difference, a completely different concept.

Modern steel technology basically uses this difference as the grade demarcation line, dividing into ordinary steel, high-grade steel, premium steel, peak premium steel, consummate premium steel, semi-transcendent steel, and so on.....

In summary.

Compared to the ten-thousandths five of modern ordinary steel, Song Dynasty ordinary steel products were six whole orders of magnitude worse.

Even compared to the best steel products of the Artifact Bureau, the grade gap at most shortened to about 4.5.

Thus, Xu Yun, following the 'task is to make a scene' idea, simply decided to go big:

He combined the Bessemer Steelmaking Method with the Late Ming's Ingot Steel Technique, and using the local 1956 small volume furnace as a template, designed a two-cubic-meter reflective furnace.

The so-called reflective furnace.

Refers to a chamber type flame furnace.

Fuel burns in its combustion chamber, and the heat generated is reflected by the furnace top to heat billets in the heating chamber.

Heat transfer inside the furnace relies not only on flame reflection, but more importantly on radiation heat transfer from the furnace top, walls, and hot gases.

Thus there are certain requirements in design specifications.

The reflective inverted arch furnace bottom Xu Yun adopted this time was brick-built, about 900 millimeters thick, layered from bottom to top as follows:

Furnace bottom cast iron plate, 20 millimeter asbestos board, 300 millimeter clay brick, 100 millimeter ramming material layer, and finally a top layer of magnesium brick inverted arch.

What?

You ask how to get magnesium bricks?

By calcining magnesite at high temperature, then crushing it to a certain size to become sintered magnesia.

After pressing, fine quality magnesium bricks can be obtained.

Considering the test preparation of Horse Iron Hoof melt ratio and depth were small, Xu Yun used a 129° arch center angle. (Shouldn't be wrong, 300 millimeters of magnesium brick, can anyone verify?)

Thus.

The furnace internal temperature could easily reach over 1600 degrees, even close to 1800.

Besides the equipment.

Xu Yun also made some improvements regarding raw materials.

For example, coking coal isolated from air, using coke instead of coal as fuel.

And using the Ingot Steel Technique for decarburization and so on.

Of course.

The more crucial step was another one:

Adding the bellows for pulling.

This step had no resource consumption, and no manpower cost, just a bit exhausting for the donkey.

After a while, Siegfried signaled to Xu Yun:

"Mr. Wang, the molten iron has turned spongy."

Xu Yun walked quickly to the spout, and as he neared, a wave of heat welled up:

"Master Qi, have all the pig iron filings been added?"

"All added."

Xu Yun nodded slightly:

"Then cut up the sponge iron and place it on the second layer, inject oxygen."

Having practiced the related procedures before, Siegfried, without much effort, transferred the molten iron with pig iron filings into the second layer of the reflective furnace.

The second layer temperature of the reflective furnace was much lower than that of the first; this stage's main purpose wasn't calcination, but...

Injecting oxygen.

Or more precisely...

Injecting pure oxygen.

Exactly.

Pure oxygen.

This was also why Xu Yun had confidence in forging steel with lower impurity content:

As everyone knows.

Producing pure oxygen is easy for anyone, surely no one doesn't know how, right?

Ahem.....

Considering the extremely high temperature of the reflective furnace, Xu Yun did not use electrolysis of water:

Electrolysis of water not only consumes a lot of energy but also tends to mix hydrogen gas.

Once hydrogen and oxygen concentrations reach a certain limit, some Deidara behaviors easily occur inside the reflective furnace.

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- Chapter 230 161 Start of the Sudden Change (Part 1) (6.2k)_2 -

Chapter 230 161 Start of the Sudden Change (Part 1) (6.2k)_2

[902 words]

Therefore, this time Xu Yun chose a method of laboratory oxygen production that adhered to later standards.

That is, heating potassium permanganate to collect oxygen.

First, Xu Yun used Old Su's connections to find pyrolusite, a very common ore, which could be found in abundance in Bianjing City.

Then it was heated with potassium nitrate, producing potassium manganate.

Next, it was electrolyzed in an alkaline solution with an oxidant.

This way, potassium permanganate was obtained.

Huh?

You ask how the potassium nitrate was obtained?

Remember when preparing chlorine, the potassium nitrate salt bridge was made from saltpeter obtained through the sour plum soup shop? (See Chapter 123)

So it's still the same saying:

Xu Yun's invention of the generator and electrolytic cell was far from just a show-off endeavor.

Next, he instructed Siegfried to move the copper tube transmitting oxygen to the second-level entrance.

Although copper's melting point is just below 1100 degrees, the temperature in the second-level reverberatory furnace wasn't very high.

Additionally, the copper tube was merely connected to the groove, so there was no concern about the copper tube melting.

"Be careful... Slowly poke it in... it's very sensitive... get ready, it's about to come out... watch carefully, don't let the water inside splash out..."

Connected to the copper tube was a self-suction pump designed by Old Su. As the valve opened, a large amount of oxygen was quickly transported to the second level.

This pure oxygen rapidly combined with the carbon, phosphorus, and sulfur in the spongy molten steel, oxidizing and then escaping through the blower outlet pulled by Brother Lv.

In merely two quarter-hours, the purity of the molten steel was elevated to an extremely high level — relative to this era.

"What a pity... what a pity...."

Seeing the molten steel already entering the final stage, Xu Yun couldn't help but slightly shake his head.

Seeing this, Wang Bing couldn't help but ask:

"Xiaowang, what are you pitying about?"

Xu Yun sighed and said:

"We didn't have enough preparation time nor sufficient technical equipment; the hardware conditions are somewhat lacking."

"Therefore, theoretically, the durability of the cast finished steel can only reach about fifteen times that of ordinary steel at most..."

Wang Bing:

"o_O?"

Xu Yun didn't notice Wang Bing's expression. This statement, which seemed pretentious to Wang Bing, was, in fact, Xu Yun's honest thought.

After all, if conditions allowed.

Without many steps, simply adding nickel and chromium to the molten steel could easily enhance the quality of the steel tenfold — making a difference in magnitude.

Unfortunately.

Limonitic nickel ore in the world is mainly distributed in tropical countries within 30 degrees north and south of the equator.

Although there are some limonitic nickel ores domestically, they are distributed in the Northwest and Northeast, not in the Central Plains.

For example, Longyou, Zhuzhou, and White Mountain Pine Water.

The latter two are currently not within the Song Dynasty's territory, and although Longyou belongs to the Song Dynasty, it is a crucial borderland in the war against Western Xia.

Currently, Longyou primarily focuses on defensive works, and its resource development is far from reaching the levels of later generations.

Therefore, Xu Yun's idea of further refining could only die prematurely, awaiting future fortunate individuals to discover it.

After about another hour.

He reckoned the time was about right and said to Siegfried:

"Master Qi, the hour has arrived; the rest is up to you."

Siegfried nodded towards him, instructing the other craftsmen to remove the softened molten steel and begin forging.

Pa-pa-pa—

Under Siegfried's stirring, the cotton candy-like molten steel gradually began to solidify.

Feeling the resistance, Siegfried sensed the time was ripe and poured it into a horseshoe mold.

In future generations, many people, influenced by some films or civilian horseshoes, believe a horseshoe to be a very simple tool.

But in reality.

The horseshoes for military horses and racehorses are extremely complex, far from appearing so simple and light.

For example, a single horseshoe in the Olympic equestrian competition weighs 2.2 pounds, which is 1.99 jin, made entirely of aluminum alloy.

The Brisbane Museum in Kāngaroo has preserved an iron horseshoe from the 1956 Melbourne Olympic equestrian obstacle course, weighing up to 3 kilograms.

Why is this thing so heavy?

Because in addition to the horseshoe itself, the assembly requires no fewer than seven nails for reinforcement, plus a sheet of iron similar to a shin guard at the top.

With so many combined joints, it's no surprise the horseshoe isn't light.

Returning our gaze to the original place.

About 20 minutes later.

The molten iron casting was completed.

Xu Yun took over from Siegfried, using long tongs to seize the cast horseshoe and immerse it in water.

This is a common operation seen in TV series, known as quenching.

Its primary purpose is to quickly condense the iron blank into a hard solid form.

But from a relevant professional perspective.

Although the act of quenching is simple, its principle remains relatively complex.

Sizzle—

With a sudden rise of white smoke.

The internal structure of the steel rapidly transformed into austenite and then quenched at a rate greater than the critical cooling speed to form metastable martensite.

The deformation further introduced high-density dislocations, while rapid cooling led to a degree of supercooling that significantly increased the nucleation rate of new grains, resulting in fine-grain strengthening.

The feedback of the above two internally manifested externally as.....

Quenching and forming completed.

In movies, the blacksmith's shop usually stops after quenching, but mechtechs... ahem, mechanical engineering students should know.

Significant stress and brittleness exist internally in the quenched piece.

If not promptly subjected to a tempering step, deformation or even cracking often occurs, leading to various troubles in practice.

For instance, an untempered shovel may develop nicks after just scraping the ground a few times.

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Chapter 231 161 The Beginning of the Sudden Change (Part 1) (6.2k)_3

[795 words]

Thus, Xu Yun tempered the horseshoe once again, finally completing its forging.

A quarter of an hour later.

Xu Yun held the cooled horseshoe with his bare hands, walked over to Wang Bing and the others, and handed it to the elder:

"Chengxuan Envoy Zhong, this is the horseshoe, please have a look."

That's right.

Upon hearing this surname, readers might have already guessed:

This person is the renowned Old General Zhong, the current leader of the Zhong Family Army, and the military soul of Great Song after Liu Fa's passing...

Zhong Shidao!

Earlier, when connecting with Wang Hou, Xu Yun specifically asked Wang Bing to investigate Old Zhong's whereabouts.

Eventually, he learned that Old Zhong indeed returned to Bianjing with the Western Army.

After all, the core of the western front operation this time was Weizhou, and Old Zhong, as the prefect of Weizhou and deputy envoy of the Yingdao Army, had to handle the logistics of soldiers, provisions, and clothing.

With the return of a phase victory, the probability of his return to the capital was no less than seventy percent.

Although Old Zhong was not greedy for money and had a high sense of integrity, aside from a few defeats, he had no blemishes in his life.

But this doesn't mean he was without desires.

Quite the contrary.

As the leading figure of the Zhong Family Army, Zhong Shidao always vied for every merit:

After all, it was the results of his own blood and sweat, nothing to be embarrassed about.

If you don't fight for benefits for your subordinates, how will others respect you?

Later, Xu Yun, using the horseshoe as a lure and Old Su's introduction, invited Old Zhong to his residence.

However, upon arriving, Old Zhong's attitude towards Xu Yun was rather indifferent, even grimmer than Old Jia's.

For instance, at this moment.

Seeing Xu Yun, such a young man, confidently claiming that the hardness of the horseshoe was ten times that of ordinary steel.

Old Zhong's eyes were filled with doubt.

After all, he was not the same as Old Su, a civil servant.

The nature of soldiers is mostly straightforward; say what they think, but out of respect for Old Su, he refrained from any outburst.

He glanced at Xu Yun a few times, then accepted the horse iron hoof.

He felt it all over with his hand and gently flicked it with his index finger,

Moments later.

Old Zhong's expression slightly tensed, with a hint of surprise flashing across his face.

As a commander stationed outside for many years, his familiarity with steel was astonishingly high.

Merely by touching it.

He could judge by quality, smoothness, and resonance whether it was lower grade steel, middle grade steel, or upper-grade steel.

Based on the tactile feedback just received.

This few-pound horseshoe in front of him seemed indistinguishable in material from upper-grade steel.

Which means...

This young man appears to have some real skills?

After all, he had watched the Military Equipment Bureau's forging process, which was much slower than Xu Yun's in both procedure and efficiency.

However, what Old Zhong hadn't expected was.

Some steel is called upper-grade because it is merely upper-grade.

While some steel is judged upper-grade only because in the current knowledge system...

There is only upper-grade steel.

Then Old Zhong pondered for a moment, took a saber from his belt.

This saber was a refined blade gifted by the late Emperor Zhezong of Song, made from the finest batch of fine steel from the fifth year of Shao Sheng.

Not to say it could cut through iron like mud.

At least, with one strike, it would leave a notch on a chariot's steel axle.

In several life-and-death combats, Old Zhong even used it to pierce through an enemy's chest armor heart guard, which is much thicker than a horseshoe.

After preparing his weapon.

Old Zhong placed the horseshoe on the table, measured it with the knife, and asked Xu Yun:

"Young brother, may I test it with a strike?"

Xu Yun quickly made an inviting gesture:

"Such is my wish, I would not dare ask."

Old Zhong thoughtfully looked at him once more.

Unless something unexpected happened, this young man's skills should be genuine.

Yet he seemed slightly arrogant or had a mysterious confidence.

But if he really could mass-produce superior steel.

For the court... especially the Western Army, that would be a good thing.

Therefore, he hesitated for a few seconds.

He didn't apply full force, planning to make a small break to save Xu Yun some face.

Hand raised.

The knife fell.

Clang—

With the sound of a brilliant light of sparks accompanying the contact, the short knife in Old Zhong's hand...

Suddenly cracked from the edge, eventually breaking into two.....

...

Note:

Some classmates say they are short a few points of fan value. If it's close, you can long-press a paragraph, and the minimum reward is 2 points.

If it's much more, you don't need to forcefully make up for it, fan value should be constant, and in a few days, it should suffice. I set it based on full subscription + 2 monthly passes.

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Chapter 232 232: 162 The Beginning of the Shock (Part 2) (5.8k)

[970 words]

In the instant when Old Zhong's half of the blade in his hand snapped.

The entire courtyard suddenly plunged into silence.

The air froze, and even a pin drop could be heard.

Indeed.

Because the horseshoe has a certain thickness.

When the short knife contacts the horseshoe, the short knife gains no advantage and is inherently at a certain disadvantage.

But don't forget.

This knife of Old Zhong is not an ordinary knife, Old Zhong once used it to break through heavy cavalry heart protection mirrors!

If he weren't the grandson of Zhong Shiheng, and had made great achievements as the Jingyuan Prefecture Commander.

He would have had no chance of obtaining a weapon of this material.

Soon after, Old Zhong was silent for a moment.

He didn't bother with the blade head on the ground but instead put down the knife handle and picked up the horseshoe on the table.

At that moment.

In the area where the horse iron hoof and the knife tip met, apart from a very slight white abrasion, no nick was visible.

Seeing this, Old Zhong's breath momentarily halted.

Then he abruptly looked at Xu Yun, his beard briefly floated in the air for half a second, and he asked:

"Mr. Wang, how many of these iron tools can you forge?"

"The Imperial Envoy can call me Xiaowang."

Xu Yun respectfully cupped his hand toward Old Zhong, showing deference to the veteran general no less than Wang Bing:

"As you can see, as long as the iron ore quantity is adequate, we can forge as many as needed."

Old Zhong pondered for a moment, then turned to eye the coffin-like reflecting furnace and pointed to the magnesium brick at the top:

"If I'm not mistaken, this should not be ordinary clay bricks, I wonder about its material..."

Xu Yun thought for a while and said:

"Please wait for a moment."

After speaking, he went to an area by the wall where materials were stored, lifted the shading cloth, and searched it briefly.

Shortly thereafter.

He came back holding a white mineral.

He handed the mineral to Old Zhong and asked:

"Imperial Envoy, do you recognize this item?"

Old Zhong took the mineral, looked at it for a few moments, stroked his beard, and uncertainly said:

"If I'm not mistaken, this seems to be... porcelain ash stone?"

Xu Yun nodded affirmatively:

"Correct, it is porcelain ash stone, a common mineral seen everywhere on Qinfeng Road."

"We only need to calcine it at high temperatures, then crush it and compress it using brick-making methods, and magnesium bricks can be easily prepared."

Old Zhong's pupils contracted again.

As an old general who has fought on the western line for years, he is very familiar with this stone:

Searching outside any camp on the western line for half an hour, unless you're possessed by a Kunlun Slave, you will certainly return with a large basket of porcelain ash stone.

In western line fortifications.

This mineral, being extremely fragile, is not even considered scraps, specifically used to house prisoners.

What Old Zhong isn't aware of is.

The so-called porcelain ash stone is the later known magnesite, one of the minerals with the highest reserves in our country.

Two-thirds of the world's magnesite reserves are concentrated locally, totaling over thirty billion tons.

Which means.

The seemingly most special material in the whole iron-making process is in reality an extremely easily accessible resource!

Of course.

Strictly speaking.

In the entire process, the pure oxygen preparation step is technically the hardest, involving many chemical reactions and even electrical issues.

But given that Old Zhong hasn't been exposed to the microscopic field, Xu Yun didn't touch upon it too much.

This is also part of the confidence he maintains to keep the technology from being revealed.

After all, whether it's the military or the court, their scale wouldn't worry too much about the depletion of common resources, because they are confident of exchanging for greater benefits.

Then Old Zhong glanced again at the break in the knife handle in his hand, turned to make eye contact with Wang Hou, who was a bit older beside him.

The two older generals over fifty mutually saw the same idea in each other's eyes with extreme tacit understanding.

Then, Old Zhong lightly coughed and asked Xu Yun:

"Prince... Xiaowang, considering this, may I say..."

"If the iron ore is sufficient, you can produce countless molten iron, and aside from horseshoes, you can also forge knives or armor of the same material?"

Hooked.

A trace of a curve appeared at Xu Yun's mouth corner but he quickly suppressed it.

He touched his nose and replied seemingly casually:

"Correct, weapon and armor are just mold problems, unrelated to the craftsmanship."

"If the Imperial Envoy is willing, making an iron house is no problem, likewise as sturdy as the horseshoe."

This time, Old Zhong's expression didn't falter, but his left hand holding the knife handle instantly exerted a little more force.

It truly is possible!

One must know.

Like the horses.

In the western line... or say on all battlefields throughout history, the attrition of weaponry and armor is likewise a significant concern.

Taking Emperor Wu of Han's expedition against the Xiongnu as an example.

According to records in the "Comprehensive Canon."

Up to the time before Huo Qubing's sealing at Langju Xu, within Han's military provisioning, 'weapons were replaced forty thousand times', "foot soldiers rotated numbering hundreds of thousands in the army."

Before sealing Langju Xu, Huo Qubing and Wei Qing each led an army of fifty thousand, meaning fifty thousand consumed two hundred thousand weapons—actually, assessing from later achievements, Huo Qubing likely consumed more resources than Wei Qing.

Additionally worth mentioning.

The "Comprehensive Canon" documents weapon quantities as "times."

In other words, excluding bows and arrows, mainly referring to knives, spears, swords, etc.

At that time, Huo Qubing mainly engaged the Xiongnu Left Prince's Division, inflicting a loss of ten thousand while killing seventy thousand, during a penetration of over a thousand miles, undertaking eight large-scale battles of thousands and more than a hundred small battles.

If one casually counts ten minor battles as one major, then on average, every three major battles would result in a weapon being destroyed.

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Chapter 233 233: 162 The Beginning of the Shock (Part 2) (5.8k)_2

[908 words]

Of course.

If you really calculate, it cannot be done this way, but the final numbers probably won't deviate much.

After all, historical records of logistics aren't scarce, and around a thousand years ago, on average, it took three or four major battles to destroy a weapon.

From this, one can see.

Before the enhancement of steel and iron technology during the Yuan Dynasty, how significant the weapon attrition was in wars.

And if it were only about high weapon attrition, that wouldn't be the end of it.

You break, I break too, it's just a comparison of material reserves.

The fear is that on the battlefield, other people's weapons are better than yours. After one strike, your blade breaks while theirs remain intact, becoming quite the spectacle for Meledi watching a movie.

Thus, the moment assurance was secured from Xu Yun's mouth.

Old Zhong and Wang Hou, the two senior generals with the highest ranks in the army (Tong Guan is no longer even the Governor of Xixia, He, Lan, and Huang), immediately thought of the possibilities of weapon application.

Imagine.

When two armies engage.

The enemy ferociously swings a large blade at you, yet clad in heavy armor, you remain unmoved, allowing the opponent to strike at will.

Your health bar merely shows '-1' '-1' continuously, and when you grow impatient, you raise your knife hand, striking to decapitate both their weapon and head.....

Slip.

Old Zhong wiped away non-existent drool, anxiously inquiring:

"Xiaowang, could you impart this skill to the Artifact Bureau... no, to the Military Equipment Supervision?"

"Old Zhong and Commander Wang can assure you here that the Court will certainly grant you a great reward!"

Upon hearing this, Wang Hou nodded vigorously in agreement:

"Chengxuan Envoy speaks the truth. If you truly offer this skill, the two of us will surely commend you before Your Majesty!"

Your Majesty?

Emperor Huizong of Song?

Xu Yun shook his head slightly in his heart, but outwardly he feigned hesitation, saying:

"Offering this skill isn't difficult, if I intended to hide my talent, I wouldn't have sought Master Qi for assistance. The main issue is still one thing...."

Old Zhong glanced at him, asking:

"What is it? Is it that only that donkey knows how to operate the bellows? This is simple, just feed it more fodder."

"If iron is poured every half an hour, letting it rest one hour daily, over 20 cauldrons of molten iron can be produced, which is sufficient."

Xu Yun shook his head:

"No... Sigh, let me be straightforward, based on the technique passed down from Wind Spirit Moon Shadow Sect, if certain materials are added during the iron casting process, the product can be enhanced two or three dozen times....."

Clang——

Upon hearing Xu Yun's words.

Old Zhong, who never thought he would lose composure today, failed to contain his emotions once again, inadvertently loosening the knife handle in his hand.

With a clang, it fell to the ground, meeting the knife blade again.

He just stared blankly at Xu Yun, mouth twitching slightly, looking nothing like the high and mighty War God he was earlier:

"Xiaowang, are you saying adding certain materials can enhance the horseshoe base two, three, four times?"

"To the Chengxuan Envoy, it's two, three dozen times."

Xu Yun corrected Old Zhong and continued:

"Two, three dozen times is just the base, if the conditions of the materials are right, enhancing four to five dozen times is not difficult...."

Gulp——

In the silence, Wang Yue, who had just recovered, swallowed his saliva.

If that kind of blade hits the body, even allicin won't save it, right?

Old Zhong opened his mouth, instinctively wanting to refute with "nonsense".

But his peripheral vision caught the broken blade and handle on the ground, and he involuntarily stopped the retort at his throat:

"Xiaowang, do you have proof of what you say?"

"Of course."

Xu Yun nodded, retrieving another dagger from his person, and handed it to Old Zhong:

"Try this."

Old Zhong took the dagger, weighing it in his hand a few times.

How to put it.....

There wasn't a discernible difference in quality, and the feel wasn't distinguishable either.

He glanced at Xu Yun, without needing further explanation, he swung the blade toward the horse iron hoof.

Clang——

A crisp collision sound rang out.

Where Old Zhong's dagger had cracked earlier, leaving only a small mark on the horseshoe, an exceptionally deep cut appeared this time!

If Old Zhong struck a few more times, he could undoubtedly sever it completely!

Old Zhong exhaled heavily through his nose.

I must admit.

Xu Yun brought him far too many surprises today.

Wang Hou, standing nearby, stepped forward quickly, feeling the crack on the horseshoe, then focusing on the dagger in Old Zhong's hand.

Turning around, with gaze fixed on Xu Yun, he asked:

"Xiaowang, is this dagger the product containing those materials?"

Xu Yun nodded:

"Correct."

As the two conversed, Old Zhong also snapped back to reality, asking urgently:

"Xiaowang, what exactly is the material you mentioned?"

Xu Yun raised his eyelids, glanced at him, and said slowly:

"This material is called nickel, derived from an extracted mineral material."

Old Zhong was no fool and immediately realized from Xu Yun's words another implication, guessing:

"Xiaowang, is such mineral difficult to mine, hence its rarity?"

Xu Yun shook his head, saying:

"The mining difficulty of nickel ore isn't high, but its distribution is somewhat unique....."

"How unique?"

"Its deposits are not in the Central Plains but in Yilu."

As is well known.

Nickel can expand the γ -phase region in steel, forming an unlimited solid solution, with a maximum solubility in α -iron of about 10%.

Moreover, it will not form carbides, increasing the product's corrosion resistance.

It is an excellent hardening material.

Iron products with and without nickel are like fried rice with or without Laoganma, completely different in nature.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 234 234: 162 The Beginning of the Shock (Part 2) (5.8k)_3

[719 words]

The difference between the two, whether in terms of durability, hardness, or internal stress, is more than two levels apart.

The dagger in Xu Yun's hand was mixed with a proper amount of nickel, raising its relevant attributes to an astonishing height.

Of course.

Due to resource issues, the nickel Xu Yun used this time was not from ore, but rather from a meteorite that Old Su had acquired.

This dagger was his ultimate goal!

Through two comparisons, he proceeded to clearly tell Old Zhong a fact:

Now, there is a skill that can be described as a dimensional reduction strike in front of you, whether in attack or defense, it is overwhelming. It's just that one of the raw materials is rather rare, are you...or is the Court interested?

If interested.....

Then go find it in Yilu!

Yilu is what future generations call the White Mountain Pine Water.

It is also one of the local nickel ore producing places.

Of course.

Judging from the maps of later generations, Zhuzhou has the highest amount of nickel ore, followed by Longyou.

The third is White Mountain Pine Water, with reserves seven or eight times less than Zhuzhou.

But don't forget.

Currently, Zhuzhou belongs to Liaoxi, which is within the Liao Kingdom's heartland.

If one could reach Zhuzhou, extract nickel ore and transport it stably back...then what's the need for nickel ore, wouldn't unification have already been achieved?

Not to mention Longyou.....

It's because the Song Dynasty never gave up on the westward line, the presence or absence of nickel ore would not change its importance, so there's no need to put more effort into it.

Anyway, if the Song Dynasty were to find nickel ore in other places in the future, Xu Yun could easily deflect with a 'I don't know', and no one would accuse him of holding back.

As for why he specifically mentioned Yilu.....

Because at this time, in Yilu there is a man named Wanyan Aguda, who recently welcomed a grandson...

Even Wang Bing, who is far on the western line, has heard of Wanyan Aguda's name. If the Song Dynasty were to see the unified Jurchen tribes, coupled with some backhand strategies of their own, it would surely be interesting.

The most crucial point is.

Although Yilu, like Zhuzhou, is located behind the Liao People's lines.

But unlike reaching Zhuzhou, which is all via land, Yilu can be bypassed by water route.

At that time, as the Song People circle around, they will discover that the Danluo Kingdom has been nearly wiped out by Korea, leaving only a father and son with the surname Gao.....

Then as soon as the Song People dig a little deeper, they will learn another thing:

Korea after plundering the Danluo Kingdom's treasury is exceedingly wealthy now, with a century of opulence matching the income of the rich Song Dynasty for over a decade.

And Monarch Wang Song's demeanor during audience, greatly contrary to poverty, bears the shadow of King Zhou of Shang.

Not long ago, a recent earthquake in the Imperial Capital Haojing was rumored to be caused by the King's cruelty.....

Anyone in the Song Dynasty with some sense would think of using the pretext of upholding justice for the Danluo Kingdom to plunder Korea.

By that time, Xu Yun will definitely have left this era.

But as long as he leaves some descriptions of Korean ginseng before departure, Korea will unlikely escape from the clutches of future dynasties.

After taking Korea.

The Song People continue on the route to Yilu will find yet another small island.

On the island is the main base of the Wokou, with about forty thousand people now...

Plan successful.JPG.

If in the future a visionary Monarch appears, Southeast Asia will likely also fall into the hands of the Great Song.

And shortly after Xu Yun and Old Zhong Wanghou introduced the nickel ore.

Elder Xie, originally resting with Brother Lv, suddenly appeared outside the courtyard.

He walked quickly over to Old Su, whispered a few words in his ear.

"What?"

After listening to Elder Xie's words, Old Su's face suddenly turned stern.

Then he glanced around, coughed lightly.

Instructed Elder Xie:

"First Year, take the servants as well as Master Qi and others to rest.

They have been working hard for a long time, must be hungry, instruct the kitchen to prepare more food for them."

Elder Xie nodded respectfully, beckoning the idle people present to leave.

After Elder Xie went down.

Old Su took a deep breath and said to the people around:

"We will discuss this matter in the next chapter."

.....

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 235 163: The Gathering Storm (4.6K)

[2,086 words]

In the courtyard.

Looking at the solemn-faced Old Su, Wang Bing couldn't help but step forward and ask:

"Uncle, is everything alright in the palace?"

Among the people Old Su had left, except for Xu Yun, all were officials within the Great Song system.

This included persons like Zong Ze, who had ties with Old Su, but the relationship was not particularly close.

Therefore, it was not unexpected that something happened in the palace—it was likely not a high-level secret, and within several hours or one or two days, it would gradually spread.

Old Su evidently didn't plan to be secretive; after being silent for a moment, he slowly uttered a few words:

"The Empress Dowager... has passed away."

"?!"

Upon hearing Old Su's words.

The courtyard was silent at first, then it erupted into a commotion.

Old Zhong's eyes flickered a few times, and he asked with a frown:

"Mr. Su, when did the Empress Dowager pass away?"

Old Su glanced around, ensuring there were no idle people nearby, then said:

"This is news just passed on by the palace guards, at most no more than an hour and a half ago—yesterday, Prince Jian even went to pay respects to the Empress Dowager."

Hearing this, Old Zhong sighed slightly.

Empress Dowager Xiang was five years older than him, being a great-granddaughter of Prime Minister Xiang Minzhong from Emperor Zhenzong's era, while he was the grandson of Zhong Shiheng.

Xiang Minzhong, being the head of the civil servants in court, never got along well with Zhong Shiheng.

The animosity between the two was passed down to the next generation; it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call it a generational feud.

During Old Zhong's childhood, he frequently had childish disputes with Empress Dowager Xiang. (See "Song History·Volume 335·Biography Ninety-Four")

After both had grown up.

Empress Dowager Xiang married Emperor Shen Zong Zhao Xu, while Old Zhong studied under Zhang Zai and became a Third Class Officer.

Later, Old Zhong offended Cai Jing by discussing labor laws, and Cai Jing's faction accused him of "slandering the martyrs," resulting in his dismissal and party registration.

Old Zhong was thus sidelined for a full ten years.

In contrast, Empress Dowager Xiang was very close to Cai Jing and could even be considered one of Cai Jing's confidantes.

For example, after Emperor Huizong ascended the throne, Cai Jing was initially demoted, but it was Empress Dowager Xiang who ordered Huizong to retain Cai Jing for the completion of historical work.

Although Cai Jing was dismissed again months later due to memorials by Gong Fu, Chen Shixi, and others, he managed to connect with Han Zhongyan during his stay in the capital, leading to his later resurgence.

Of course.

At that time, Cai Jing was still engaged in historical work in the capital, and many subsequent events hadn't yet occurred.

But this did not change Old Zhong's negative perception of Cai Jing—after all, ten years of resentment couldn't be dispelled by a single dismissal of Cai Jing.

Because of this.

The conflict between Old Zhong and the Empress Dowager gradually reached an irreconcilable stage.

However, as neither were overly tyrannical as 'sovereign and minister', there was always a prerequisite for their contention:

The stability of the state.

For instance, the Empress Dowager knew the Western Army couldn't do without Old Zhong, so she suppressed him but never went to extremes, like Zhao Gou—or Wanyan Gou—executing Yue Fei, severing their own arm.

Empress Dowager Xiang's method was to support Wang Hou, Old Zhe, and even Tong Guan, allowing them to gradually replace Old Zhong's position in the Western Army.

Old Zhong acted similarly, never letting personal relations affect border military affairs.

But now that the Empress Dowager has passed...

The situation has become somewhat subtle.

After all, everyone knows the character of the current Prince Duan...

Nothing else needs to be said.

Just the fact that he fathered thirty-one sons and thirty-four daughters before being captured is indicative of what kind of Emperor he was.

Then Old Zhong suddenly thought of something and said to Old Su:

"Mr. Su, what about Wang Zezhi? Where is he now?"

Old Su lifted his eyelids to look at him, quickly realizing what Old Zhong was worried about, and said:

"Don't worry, as reported in the First Year, there's only precaution in the guard, with no signs of mobilization."

The Wang Zezhi in Old Zhong's mouth, whose real name is Wang En, is currently the Commander of the Palace Guard, one of the standard 'Nine Grand Commandants', and he also oversees the guard, trusted deeply by Huizong.

In modern terms, Wang En is like the commander of the security regiment, the confidant among confidants.

Hearing that Wang En wasn't making any big moves, Old Zhong took a deep breath:

It seems that the Empress Dowager's passing wasn't kept a secret, it indeed was a natural death...

Then he thought for a moment, turned to Wang Hou, and said:

"Chu Dao, the Empress Dowager has passed, our identities are somewhat sensitive, let's first return to the Wuxin Army."

Wang Hou nodded, agreeing:

"Good."

Seeing this, Old Zhong once again cupped his hands towards Old Su and Xu Yun, saying:

"Mr. Su, Brother Wang, with the sudden change, as a Border Commander, I am constrained by circumstances and must take my leave."

"Brother Wang, once the funeral for the Empress Dowager is handled, I will visit you again to discuss matters of skill."

Xu Yun, still in shock, instinctively returned the courtesy upon hearing this:

"Imperial Envoy, please go without concern. If needed, just send someone to notify me."

Old Su looked around at the few people, pondered for a moment, then said:

"Brother Wang, Ru Lin, Zheng Chen, Zheng Ru, since you are either civilians or low-ranking officials, you should first return to your rooms. I will see off Envoy Zhong and General Wang."

Wang Bing and the others exchanged glances, then simultaneously obeyed:

"Yes!"

Then they all took their leave, and Xu Yun calmly returned to his room.

After closing the door.

He leaned his back against the door, resting his head on the door panel, and sighed with complexity.

If it was just speculation before.

Now he was confident that Empress Dowager Xiang indeed took that fall for Old Su.

Otherwise, under normal circumstances.

Though her health wasn't good, Empress Dowager Xiang could have at least lived another four months, passing away only in the spring next year.

Which means he, as a small butterfly, indeed affected some of the historical trajectory within this dungeon.

Thinking of this.

He couldn't help but turn around to face a direction, slightly bowing as a sign of respect.

Although he never met Empress Dowager Xiang.

In some sense, her passing four months earlier had a causally linked relationship with his arrival, though not factual.

Therefore, Xu Yun's gesture wasn't significant, nor was it pretentious, but rather a courtesy from principle.

He then walked to the desk, picked up a pen and paper, and wrote a letter using Morse code:

"Heimai Erguotou Initiate....."

".....the Empress Dowager has passed away, the plan codenamed 'Listeners Unheard' can officially begin implementation..."

"Such and such... like this and like that..."

An hour passed.

Xu Yun sealed the written letter with oil wax and tucked it into his sleeve.

He went out to find Mr. Xie, the Old Chief Steward, and asked:

"Old Chief Steward, is Third Brother at the residence right now?"

Mr. Xie, who was busy preparing an eulogy for Old Su, wiped the sweat off his forehead and said:

"Yes, he is here. I just saw him in the South Wing, should I send someone to fetch him now?"

"I would appreciate it, Old Chief Steward."

"It's a small matter, just wait a moment."

Mr. Xie cupped his hands towards Xu Yun, stopped a servant, and entrusted him with the task of finding Zhang San.

The servant acknowledged the order and promptly set off.

Xu Yun parted ways with Mr. Xie and returned to the small courtyard.

After about a quarter of an hour.

Zhang San appeared outside Xu Yun's courtyard:

"Brother Wang, I heard you were looking for me?"

Xu Yun nodded and handed him the envelope, instructing:

"Third Brother, please take this letter to the household in River King Lane where we went before, and say it's handed over to them by Niao Jiulianye."

Zhang San nodded, thumping his chest:

"Understood, leave this to me!"

After Zhang San left.

Xu Yun stood with hands behind his back, sighing softly.

.....

In the following half day.

With free time on his hands, Xu Yun gradually witnessed the dissemination of information:

During the first few hours after the Empress Dowager Xiang's passing, only officials like Old Su were aware of the situation.

But as the first half of the day passed.

Yue Lian and several senior servants in the household vaguely got the news, whispering among themselves.

Later, Xu Yun wandered on the street and found many people greeting each other with cryptic remarks, akin to riddle tellers from later generations, starting with "Hey, have you heard?"

The other person, seeing this, would mysteriously point to the sky, sharing a smile that spoke volumes without words.

By nightfall that day.

Zhang San returned from delivering the letter, akin to petty traders selling electronic watches in the 1990s, furtively tugging at Xu Yun's sleeve, first thing saying "Brother Wang, the Empress Dowager is gone....".

Another night passed.

Early the next morning.

Clang——

On Vermilion Bird Street, a servant from Jingzhao Prefecture struck the mourning bell, officially announcing the death of the Empress Dowager to the world.

According to the regulations in "Ritual Records·King's Regulations".

When the Emperor passes away, it requires seven days until the funeral and seven months until burial.

For the feudal lords, it is five days until the funeral and five months until burial; for ministers, knights, and commoners, it is three days until the funeral and three months until burial.

Among them, the treatment of the Empress Dowager is somewhat similar to that of the Emperor, with seven days until the funeral and five months until burial.

However, this requirement in the Zhou rites mainly arises for selecting a burial site and divining an auspicious date for the burial.

Plus, it allows time for various feudal lords to rush to attend the funeral, hence the relatively lengthy period.

Of course.

There was also a rumor that the ancients wanted to see if the deceased would resurrect, a saying open to interpretive perspectives.

By the time of the Song Dynasty.

The burial period for Emperors was shortened to 3-5 months.

The customs for the Empress Dowager's burial were changed to a minor funeral on the third day, the major funeral on the fifth day to enter the coffin, and burial could occur within one to two months later.

What?

You ask why in the sweltering summer, the body does not smell or decay?

The reason is quite simple.

Before the major funeral, ice blocks would be placed under the deceased Empress Dowager or Emperor's body and replenished continually.

Additionally, before the Zi Palace is consecrated, whether the funeral hall or the mausoleum, it would be wrapped with layers of ash, charcoal, bamboo mats, etc.

These materials play a role in isolating air and moisture, to some extent.

Meanwhile.

The Palace's Mummification Officials, responsible for funerals, would also soak the body in special essential oils for a period, applying some wax.

After the official burial, the coffin exterior would also be coated with 49 layers of lacquer — of course, the 49 layers are the Emperor's treatment, the Empress Dowager's treatment, due to reasons the foolish author couldn't find, is just roughly overseen.

If encountering some extremely extreme cases, the inside of the coffin might be filled with mercury, looking quite 'relaxing.'

Although Old Su, being retired, only needed to attend on the day of the major funeral and present the eulogy.

Nonetheless, this was a sensitive matter, so Old Su dared not take any negligence.

Thus, the second day's three-person small class, for the first time, saw only Xiaoli present.

In the class.

Seeing Xiaoli diligently attending the lecture, Xu Yun wrote a few words on the blackboard:

"Miss Li, today we will learn about a geographical concept called orographic rain."

Xiaoli blinked her eyes:

"Orographic rain?"

Xu Yun nodded and said:

"Correct, orographic rain is one of the four major forms of rainfall in the world, with the other three being frontal rain, convective rain, and typhoon rain."

"The name orographic rain comes from its occurrence due to the obstruction effect of the terrain."

"When moist air currents are forced to rise by mountain ranges or other highlands, the temperature drops, eventually causing precipitation."

"The slope where precipitation forms happens to be the windward side, hence this mountain face is the windward slope."

"The visual spectacle before the formation of this type of rain is often overwhelming, as if the heavens and earth are collapsing. For instance, in the Tang Dynasty, Xu Hun wrote a poem in 'East Tower of Xianyang City' depicting orographic rain."

"Clouds rise over streams as the sun sets at the pavilion....."

"Before mountain rain... fills the wind in the tower."

.....

Note:

Huawei Honor 60, Huawei Nova9, Xiaomi 11, Xiaomi 10s, Redmi K40, are any readers using these models? Currently considering a choice of five, any suggestions?

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Chapter 236 164: Shock! (6.4K)

[929 words]

The news of Empress Dowager Xiang's passing came extremely suddenly.

Except for a few insiders, the vast majority were not psychologically prepared.

This news was like a torrential downpour.

Bringing a touch of coolness to this Great Song metropolis that should have been as hot as summer.

For instance, many shops on the bustling Imperial Street closed their doors.

Outside the Vermilion Bird Gate, the number of soldiers inspecting those coming and going increased significantly.

Their expressions were stern, not permitting laughter.

The night market of Bianjing, which should have been lively, suddenly turned cold, replaced by a curfew; painting boats and taverns were not allowed to open.

Zhang San also informed Xu Yun.

The Cuju match originally scheduled to start in five days was postponed indefinitely.

In the entire Bianjing, slaughtering livestock and holding weddings were prohibited.

All temples in the capital had to ring their bells a total of ten thousand times.....

It can basically be said this way.

In these two months before Empress Dowager Xiang's burial, the financial income of the entire Bianjing City was expected to lose more than seventy percent.

And what was more oppressive, even frightening, was another matter:

As of now in early August, the death of Emperor Zhezong Zhao Xu occurred...

On February 23, 1100 AD, just five months ago.

Previously mentioned.

According to the rules outlined in "Ritual Records-King's Regulations."

After the Emperor's death, seven days must pass before the embalming, and seven months before burial.

The burial time for emperors of the Song Dynasty was a bit earlier, usually three to five months.

And according to "Song History," Volume 18 "Chronicles of Emperor Zhezong":

"In the spring of the third year, on the day of Xinwei in the first month, the Emperor fell ill, unable to attend court.... On the day of Jimao, the Emperor perished."

"On the day of Jiwei in April, he was posthumously titled Emperor Qin Wen Ruiwu Zhaoxiao, temple named Emperor Zhezong.... On the day of Renyin in August, buried in Yongtai Mausoleum."

According to the lunar and solar calendar comparison table for August 1100, the day of Renyin in August is the 25th. (Refer to wannianli.tianqi.com/rilibiao/1100/)

That's right!

At this point in time...

Emperor Zhezong hadn't been buried yet.

Less than a month before the late emperor's burial, the Empress Dowager suddenly passed away.

Such an event would not be a good omen in any feudal dynasty and undoubtedly impact royal power.

And besides the "mandate of heaven," there was another "human event" that was quite coincidental:

Due to bluntly calling Prince Duan frivolous in front of Empress Dowager Xiang, Zhang Dun had already submitted his resignation as Prime Minister in May.

Although Zhao Ji did not agree to his request, by the current August, Zhang Dun was already residing in a temple, not participating in political affairs.

The second Prime Minister, Han Zhongyan, would not take office until June of the following year, meaning...

The Great Song Court presently had no Prime Minister in place!

Thus, Old Su's temporary residence, as a former Prime Minister, suddenly became vibrant these days.

This retired four-generations elder once again passively returned to the public sight.

.....

Half a month later.

"Alas..."

After seeing off an Assistant Minister from the Ministry of Personnel.

Old Su dragged his slightly weary body back to the living room and said to Zong Ze beside him:

"Ru Lin, how many guests have visited the mansion today?"

Zong Ze had originally been waiting for his appointment document, but with the affair of Empress Dowager Xiang's death, his appointment was of course indefinitely delayed.

Thus, with Xu Yun's connection.

This 'Grandpa Zong,' who had a teacher-student relationship with Old Su, temporarily stayed at Su Mansion, helping Old Su with some official documents.

After several days of cooperation.

Old Su found that Zong Ze's ability was much stronger than he had imagined.

Some of his ideas were sharp and immature yet rather novel and reasonable.

So on some occasions, he brought him along, acting as a secretary, while handling the coming and going of guests.

Upon hearing Old Su's query, Zong Ze quickly replied:

"In response to the teacher, this is the seventh one."

Old Su nodded slightly, reached out to rub his shoulder, suddenly thought of something, and asked again:

"By the way, where is Xiaowang?"

"Seems to be teaching Miss Li at the academy."

"And what about Prince Jian?"

"His Highness still hasn't arrived."

Old Su frowned deeply.

It had been nearly half a month since Empress Dowager Xiang's passing, the Empress Dowager's body had already been placed in a coffin with great ceremony seven days ago.

Xiaozhao was not Empress Dowager Xiang's biological child, so theoretically, he should have been able to leave the palace once or twice at least.

He paused for a moment, sighed, and said:

"Ru Lin, come with me to see Xiaowang."

Zong Ze respectfully said:

"Yes."

It's a pity Xu Yun wasn't present; otherwise, hearing Old Su's words, he would have been glad he hadn't used a false name of Ji.

Then Old Su, accompanied by Zong Ze, walked another stretch, and the two soon arrived at the courtyard of the three-person class.

As soon as they approached the courtyard entrance.

Old Su heard Xu Yun's voice:

"Miss Li, today our myth-busting class is about a pair of animals, mandarin ducks."

"Ancient people considered mandarin ducks as a symbol of love, like Lu Zhao Lin wrote in the 'Ancient Meaning of Chang'an,' 'To become one with another, why reject death? We wish to become mandarin ducks rather than envy immortality,' you must have heard of it?"

"But in reality, mandarin ducks exhibit promiscuity."

"For example, nearly all male mandarin ducks will cheat, abandoning the female mercilessly after mating, searching for the next partner."

"Moreover, female mandarin ducks also mate with different males and can conceive multiple times."

"Thus, in the same nest, although the ducklings have the same mother, they may have different fathers."

Old Su and Zong Ze:

"...."

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Chapter 237 164: Shocking Change! (6.4K)_2

[938 words]

Then Xu Yun paused for a moment and continued:

"Next, let's talk about 'Lying on Ice to Seek Carp' and discuss whether it... based on the thermal energy formulas that we learned before."

Old Su heard this, and a few black lines appeared on his forehead.

He strode into the courtyard, gave a light cough, and interrupted Xu Yun:

"Ahem... Xiaowang, you're in class."

Xu Yun was enthusiastically speaking, and when he heard this, he turned around instinctively and was momentarily stunned at seeing Old Su:

"Master, why are you here?"

Old Su thought to himself that it's fortunate he came, otherwise one day he might see Old Li coming with a kitchen knife to seek justice.....

However, despite his inner grumbling, he said aloud:

"Well, having just seen off a guest, I thought I'd take a detour and check on you, and incidentally, tell you something."

Xu Yun blinked and asked:

"What's it about?"

Old Su pointed his chin at the waist badge that marked Xu Yun as a Guest and said:

"Xiaowang, you are now on the guest list of the mansion, receiving the offerings given to a guest."

"According to the custom, a month from now, when the Empress Dowager's Zi Palace is entombed, you will have to accompany the mansion servants outside the Vermilion Bird Gate to bid farewell. You need to prepare for this."

Xu Yun was slightly stunned and asked in confusion:

"A month? The Empress Dowager... entering the mausoleum so soon?"

Old Su nodded, glanced around, and uttered a few words:

"The former Emperor will also be buried together."

Xu Yun opened his mouth, wanting to ask some things, but then he reacted on his own.

Indeed.

According to the timeline.

It's about time for the burial of Emperor Zhezong's coffin, estimated to be about a week or two away.

Emperor Zhezong's mausoleum is the Yongtai Mausoleum, whereas Empress Dowager Xiang is to be buried with Emperor Shen Zong at the Yongyu Mausoleum.

Both are among the Song Mausoleums and are located in what is now known as Gongyi, approximately 300 meters apart in a direct line.

The locations are close, and the funeral standards are similar.

Thus, Emperor Huizong decided to postpone the burial of Emperor Zhezong by half a month and bring forward the burial of Empress Dowager Xiang by half a month.

This way, the two events could coincide at a single point in time.

Anyway, the flexibility of burial dates within the imperial family nowadays is quite considerable, unlike during the Zhou Dynasty where a wait of seven months was mandatory.

Longer or shorter durations are neither here nor there.

For example, Emperor Wen of Han Liu Heng delayed burial for a full eleven months.

Whereas Emperor Jing of Han only delayed burial by forty days before entering the mausoleum.

In fact.

The evolution of coffin delay now isn't even connected to preventing revival.

This practice is purely to reassure the entire court about one thing:

There's nothing suspicious about the former Emperor's cause of death, feel free to verify it yourselves.

Of course.

Old Su's words carried another meaning:

Since Empress Dowager Xiang has already passed, Xu Yun, as a former male actor, should see her off emotionally and logically.

After all, as the saying goes.

The debts of the deceased are absolved.

Unfortunately, Xu Yun wasn't aware of Old Su's imaginative interpretations; he innocently thought it was merely a matter of customary practice, so he immediately agreed:

"Rest assured, I'll definitely join the servants in attendance, just have Mr. Xie call me before departure."

Only then did Old Su nod in satisfaction, turning towards Xiaoli and asking:

"Qingzhao, how is Prince Jian today?"

Xiaoli first offered a salute, then a trace of worry appeared on her face, and she shook her head, saying:

"Uncle Su, His Highness has rarely left the palace recently, as though being restrained. If it weren't for the regular exchange of letters, I'd believe something had happened to him."

Xu Yun was startled by the mention and keenly picked up on a word:

"Wait,... letters?"

Xiaoli was taken aback and then nervously explained:

"..... It's just that the atmosphere in the capital has been strange recently, not convenient for His Highness to leave the palace, so they're merely exchanging communications."

Xu Yun glanced at Little Doudou thoughtfully and dragged out his voice:

"Oh——...."

"Alright, alright."

Seeing this, Old Su interjected to ease the situation for Xiaoli and said:

"Xiaowang, don't tease her. Tomorrow I'll have Yuan call a tailor, and we'll have a suitable outfit made for you; everything else can remain as is."

Seeing Old Su bringing the conversation back to the matter at hand, Xu Yun promptly abandoned his playful thoughts and replied earnestly:

"Understood."

.....

Zhao Ji, although not Empress Dowager Xiang's biological son, had always treated her as his birth mother.

Thus, after Empress Dowager Xiang's passing.

Zhao Ji voluntarily abstained from political matters, keeping vigil day and night before the Empress Dowager's Zi Palace.

Even the Emperor did this, so naturally, no one would dare to disrupt openly.

Therefore, within the month after Old Su and Xu Yun's conversation.

Everything seemed calm, just awaiting the coffin's burial so Bianjing could return to normal.

But those truly understanding the capital's dynamics could see.

Beneath this semblance of calm, there was a hidden current ready to break the surface at any moment.

For instance, according to Old Su.

In those days.

Many individuals originally aligned with Empress Dowager Xiang's faction were hastily changing allegiance, pledging loyalty to Zhao Ji.

Some of Xiaozhao's subordinates were subtly probing the situation concerning Xiaozhao's biological mother, Noble Consort Zhu, seemingly wavering between loyalty and betrayal.

One official, descended from frontier Frankish ancestors and responsible for white fabric production in the Weaving Bureau, went straight to align with Zhao Ji.

Especially on the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival, when an earthquake struck Lu Dong.

Though the quake was minor, causing little death or injury, various rumors began circulating among the people.

Just like that.

A month passed quickly.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 238 164: Shocking Change! (6.4K)_3

[967 words]

The time quickly arrived at the day when Emperor Zhezong and Empress Dowager Xiang were to be interred.

On this morning.

Xu Yun, having donned his attire in advance, followed Mr. Xie's lead, walking with dozens of servants from the mansion to outside the Vermilion Bird Gate.

According to the pre-arranged funeral procedures.

The guests' position was to be before the servants and after the family clan members, playing a transitional role.

Since none of Old Su's other children were in Bianjing, only one Xiaosu Six was standing at the front with Old Su today.

Accompanied by Xiaosu Six's three sons: Xiaosu Version One, Version Two, and Version Three.

As for the number of guests, it was relatively large:

Although initially, the Old Su Mansion had only three guests, recently, besides Xu Yun, civil servants or mathematicians like Zong Ze, Old Jia, and Liu Yi were also entered into the guest register by Old Su.

Thus, the current number of guests at the Su Mansion had reached eleven, slightly more than the number of main house members.

Standing next to Old Su's family were other meritorious figures from the capital, mostly within the Second-Grade Group, each exhibiting a courteous manner.

After all, though Old Su had retired, he was once a former Prime Minister and bore the title of Counselor to the Crown Prince and Duke Zhao.

Just like this.

After about an hour or so.

Dong dong dong—

Three massive bell chimes suddenly echoed from the nearby Daxiangguo Temple, closest to the Imperial Palace.

It was unclear what method they used, but it seemed to amplify the sound considerably.

After a while.

From the Right Changqing Gate, a vast funeral procession emerged, marching slowly.

This was a coffin-bearing team consisting of seventy-two people, the earliest professional funeral escort team from Bianjing and surrounding areas.

Over the past ten days, they had undergone numerous rehearsals.

The so-called rehearsals.

Referred to bringing a solitary dragon wood of the same weight as the coffin, with a full bowl of water placed atop it, to ensure the coffin team could carry it ten miles without spilling a single drop as a successful trial.

Following this coffin-bearing team.

There were those pulling a Yellow Dragon canopy, flanked by White Silk Curtains.

Further back were sixty-four flag-bearers with faces painted with strange colors.

They carried tens of thousands of citizens' banners and parasols, reciting something as they walked.

Next came the ceremonial guard unit, holding weapons and paper effigies high.

They were reminiscent of cosplayers in future conventions hoisting paper character spouses.....

Of course.

In this kind of setting, the presence of the sorna, a soul-stirring instrument, was also indispensable.

According to Old Su's prior introduction.

The entire Emperor Zhezong funeral entourage comprised one thousand six hundred and thirty-three people, with three shifts of pallbearers rotating to proceed to the Imperial Mausoleum.

And that was not all.

Having served as Emperor in the past and being successfully laid to rest knew.

Upon reaching the Imperial Mausoleum.

The successor emperor still needed to pour libations three times, place the ritual books and treasures onto the seats inside the Underground Palace, and cast auspicious soil into the gold well of the coffin bed.

Then, eunuchs held lamps as the successor emperor personally guided the Dragon Casket into the Underground Palace, with ministers following in subsequently.

Once at the coffin bed.

The Artisan Association removed the Dragon Casket and officially placed the Zi Palace, with the emperors and ministers performing rituals before departing the Underground Palace.

Lastly, the artisans set up the Dragon Mountain Stone... also the Coffin Stone, supporting with natural stones outside the stone door to fully seal the stone door and remove the wooden tracks to close off the Underground Palace.

Once the successor emperor and ministers returned to the surface.

They also had to grieve again before the Stone Five Offerings, escort the Divine Tablet to the Capital City for enshrinement at the Grand Ancestral Temple, completing the interment process.

However, not everyone could participate in this step:

Only officials of Senior Fourth Grade and above, holding actual positions, could tag along.

For someone like Old Su, already retired, the furthest he could go was outside the Vermilion Bird Gate—even as a former Prime Minister.

After Emperor Zhezong's coffin departed, it was Empress Dowager Xiang's turn to be interred.

Similar to Emperor Zhezong's grand affair.

Empress Dowager Xiang's procession still featured coffin bearing, banner holding, and sorna playing.

However, compared to the more than a thousand people in Emperor Zhezong's entourage, Empress Dowager Xiang's funeral procession was slightly smaller.

Xu Yun estimated that the numbers might only be around six hundred, at most eight hundred.

Just like this.

After three full hours, both coffins finally left Bianjing.

And this also signified the complete withdrawal of Emperor Shen Zong's two closest individuals from the historical stage.

The Great Song, formally entered the Grand Send phase.

According to regular history.

In another twenty years.

Emperors Huizong, Qinzong, and Gaozong of Song, would perform a series of unparalleled and unrivaled farce actions in human history.

The mountains and rivers fell, the national fortunes collapsed.

A century later, in the Battle of Yashan, one hundred thousand citizens sacrificed their lives for the country.

Sealing this farcical yet humiliating operation with a tragic note of blood and tears.

After the funeral procession was completed.

With no further tasks, Xu Yun and others returned to the Su Mansion, continuing with their respective duties.

Just like this.

Days passed quietly, one by one.

On a certain day three months later.

On this day.

Xu Yun was instructing Old Jia and others on the solution techniques for quintic equations, while Old Su listened with keen interest, and Xiaoli was still sporting spiraled mosquito coil eyes.....

At this moment.

Mr. Xie the Chief Steward hurriedly walked over from afar, accompanied by a somewhat unfamiliar maid.

Xiaoli, having understood not a single word, was the first to notice the newcomers, raising an eyebrow in astonishment:

"Xiaoyun, why are you here?"

"Miss, something has happened!"

The maid, who had been trying to keep a composed face, couldn't hold it any longer upon seeing Xiaoli, instantly bursting into tears and saying:

"Master... Master has been taken away!"

....

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 239 165: Li Qingzhao Imprisoned!! (6K)

[940 words]

Inside the courtyard.

Upon hearing Xiaoyun's words.

Xiaoli, originally puzzled about how her maid could have ended up at the Old Su Mansion, was momentarily taken aback.

She suddenly sprang to her feet, even knocking over her chair without noticing, staring in shock at Xiaoyun:

"What? What's wrong with the master... what happened to him?"

Xiaoyun wiped the tears from the corner of her eyes and choked out:

"The master was resting in the study when suddenly a group of people burst into the house and took him away..."

Upon hearing this, Xiaoli's pupils contracted, her body swayed slightly, and her eyes instantly filled with tears.

However, having once experienced exile with Old Li ten years ago, she steadied herself and asked:

"Without any proof or evidence, why did they arrest people?"

Xiaoyun shook her head, replying, aggrieved:

"Steward Chen asked the same question at the time but was rudely pushed aside by the leader, who is known as Zhao Yuanpeng..."

"What? Zhao Yuanpeng?"

Upon hearing this name, Old Su's eyebrows furrowed immediately, exclaiming in surprise:

"How could it be him?"

Upon hearing this, Xiaoli immediately looked at him, her tears carrying a sliver of hope:

"Uncle Su, do you know him?"

Old Su nodded slightly, his brows still tightly knitted:

"He is the Standard Sixth-Grade Chief Eunuch in the court, known for being stubborn and insidious."

"More importantly, although his official rank is not high, he is a former commander of the Imperial City Department, whom all officials avoid."

Upon hearing the words 'Imperial City Department,' Xiaoli tightened her grip on Xiaoyun's hand again.

Speaking of ancient espionage organizations.

The majority of people might immediately think of two names:

The Jinyi Guard of the Ming Dynasty and the Blood Drop of the Qing Dynasty.

But in reality.

To maintain the rule of the Feudal Dynasty, almost every emperor in history established some special inspection agencies.

For example, the Observation Official was established in the early Cao Wei.

The Sui Dynasty had Observation Officials.

Wu Zetian created the Plum Blossom Imperial Guard, who liked to stamp a small plum blossom on their elbow, claiming that they had come by imperial decree to 'pick' you!

As for the Imperial City Department.

It was the espionage agency during the Song Dynasty.

Initially, the Imperial City Department wasn't called that, it was called the 'Wude Bureau.'

In the Sixth Year of Taiping Xingguo, a certain unnamed automobilist at Gaoliang River gave up morality, thus it was renamed to the 'Imperial City Department.'

According to records in Song History: Imperial City Department:

"Imperial City Department, staffed by seven officials, including those above Doctor of Martial Arts and the Chief Eunuch, and Chief officer, responsible for the prohibition on entering and exiting the palace. All matters relating to the Zhou Lu Guard and the palace gate opening and closing schedule are under their jurisdiction."

Furthermore, based on the division of functions, the Imperial City Department had different positions and personnel allocations.

Some were responsible for personal protection of the Emperor, acting as guards.

They do not belong to the Three-Yamen System but do similar tasks, used to balance the Palace Guard under Wang En previously mentioned.

Others specialized in inspecting the officials.

For instance, Zhao Yuanpeng who captured Old Li belonged to this category of official and held a rather high internal ranking.

Realizing this.

Old Su grew increasingly puzzled:

"However, while Zhao Yuanpeng is indeed an inspector, his actions this time do not conform to the rules..."

Xiaoli hurriedly asked:

"Uncle Su, what rules?"

Old Su quickly glanced at her out of the corner of his eye, shook his head, and did not speak.

Having served as a Prime Minister across four dynasties, although he somewhat despised the Imperial City Department's claws of the celestial family.

Over the years, he has come to understand some of their internal rules to some extent.

He knew very well.

Although the Imperial City Department had great power, it was not without constraints.

For example, internal officials could not easily leave the Imperial City, and family members could not easily leave the capital, as well as.....

The Imperial City Department only had the power to inspect, not to arrest.

In other words.

Allowing the Imperial City Department to break the rule and arrest someone requires the Emperor's approval.

To be more precise, it requires a decree directly conveyed by the Emperor.

However, considering that such words would bring no benefit to the current situation and might even make Xiaoli worry unnecessarily, Old Su chose to keep the information concealed.

Then he thought of something and turned to ask the teary-eyed maid Xiaoyun:

"Xiaoyun, did Zhao Yuanpeng only take Uncle Wen?"

Xiaoyun timidly nodded:

"Yes, they only took the master."

"What about items?"

"It seems they searched the study for some things, then drove all the servants away, left guards, and sealed the main door."

Upon hearing this, Old Su pondered for a moment, forming a vague judgment, then said to Xiaoli:

"Qingzhao, the fact that the servants from Uncle Wen's mansion were unaffected indicates that this matter either involves high-level individuals, irrelevant to ordinary servants."

"Or it is merely a trivial matter, such as colleagues being taken away to assist with inquiries and so on."

"But regardless of the scenario, you, being Uncle Wen's daughter, won't be easily released like a servant. If there's no accident, someone will likely come to take you and keep you confined."

"Remember, wherever you're taken to in the future, do not panic excessively. I will be outside maneuvering for Uncle Wen."

"Moreover..."

"Although the one in the palace is a bit muddled, he is not a tyrant. You needn't worry too much about suffering harm; maintaining your composure is crucial."

Xiaoli lightly nodded, evidently prepared, attempting to speak.

Just at that moment.

Zheng Kuan, the guest responsible for guarding the residence, suddenly rushed in from outside the courtyard and hurriedly said:

"Sir, it's bad, a group of people arrived outside with a Golden Decree from the palace, saying they want to take Miss Li!"

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Chapter 240 165: Li Qingzhao Imprisoned!! (6K)_2

[974 words]

Old Su exchanged a glance with Zong Ze beside him:

"They've come so quickly!"

As soon as he finished speaking.

Seven or eight men in plain clothes flooded into the courtyard.

Leading them was a small-statured middle-aged man with triangular eyes, exuding a somewhat sleazy demeanor.

This kind of appearance usually disqualified one from holding office in ancient times.

This person clearly knew Old Su, as he entered the courtyard and presented a small golden token, bowing slightly to Old Su:

"Zhao Yuanpeng, the Chief Eunuch, at your service, Mr. Su. I've intruded upon your esteemed residence today under orders to take the daughter of the Assistant Minister, Miss Li Qingzhao, with me."

"This warrant serves as proof, and I ask Mr. Su not to obstruct."

Old Su discreetly cast a 'remember what I told you earlier' look at Xiaoli, then nodded slightly:

"Since the Chief Eunuch has the warrant, I have no reason to obstruct."

"However, Chief Eunuch, since Uncle Wen is an old acquaintance, may I be so curious as to ask what crime he has committed?"

Zhao Yuanpeng forced an unpleasant smile, responding:

"Mr. Su, this involves significant matters at highly elevated levels."

"If I divulged the reasons, I fear I might not keep my head by tomorrow. I beg your pardon, Mr. Su."

Perhaps considering Old Su's personal prestige and connections, Zhao Yuanpeng hesitated for a moment, then added:

"Mr. Su, we are acting under the orders of the Master, and from within, taking Miss Li for questioning, not detaining or imprisoning her, so you need not worry about any other issues concerning Miss Li."

After saying this, he glanced at Xiaoli, gesturing for her to proceed:

"Miss Li, the sedan chair awaits outside the residence, please."

Xiaoli looked at Old Su and Xu Yun, slightly bowed.

Then she released her tightly clasped hand with the maid Xiaoyun, wiping the maid's eye corner, as portrayed in "Do You Know, Do You Know, It Ought to Be Honeysuckle and Red Blossoms", and followed Zhao Yuanpeng out of the courtyard.

Old Su watched the group gradually disappear, sighing wistfully.

Not long after Xiaoli was taken away.

A sudden violent wind blew through the courtyard, the sky turned dark, and a torrential rain began to pour down.

Drip, drip.....

Old Su stood under the eaves, watching the storm and slanting rain ravage the courtyard, his expression not as relaxed as when he was dealing with Xiaoli earlier.

It was clear.

Judging from the behavior of Zhao Yuanpeng and the others, Old Li's arrest was surely connected to Zhao Ji inside the palace.

But Old Li was merely a Senior Fifth Grade official, what significant trouble could he have stirred?

As we know.

The Song Dynasty was not like the previous Tang Dynasty.

The highest rank among officials during the Tang Dynasty was Third Grade, with the positions of First and Second Grade being honorary and not dealing with state affairs.

However, it was different in the Song Dynasty, where many First Grade officials with real duties existed, both civil and military.

During the reign of Emperor Shen Zong, the number of First Grade officials in the court reached as high as thirty-eight.

A Senior Fifth Grade Assistant Minister was just an ordinary minor official.

Moreover, Li Gefei wasn't known to be indulging in politics, nor was there any news of him taking a side..... wait a minute!

Old Su's mind raced, and his heart suddenly chilled.

A possibility emerged in his mind:

Could it be.....

Prince Jian?

He then turned his head to Elder Xie, the Chief Steward beside him, and asked:

"First Year, how has Prince Jian been recently?"

Although he had retired for several years.

But the recent demise of the Empress Dowager Xiang, coupled with visits from numerous officials, stirred a peculiar feeling in his heart.

Hence, he reactivated certain connections to keep track of the developments in the capital.

And the one responsible for gathering this information was Elder Xie, who had followed him for decades.

Upon hearing Old Su's words, Elder Xie quickly responded:

"Sir, Prince Jian hasn't shown any unusual behavior lately. The only exception in recent months was moving out from the palace and temporarily residing in the Prince's Mansion on Donghua Lane."

Old Su nodded thoughtfully and turned to Xu Yun:

"Xiaowang, it seems you were the one who initially suggested that Prince Jian leave the palace?"

Xu Yun glanced at the low dark clouds in the sky, adjusted his emotions, and tried to maintain a calm tone:

"Indeed, at the time I believed that after the Empress Dowager's death, to avoid suspicion, Prince Jian should find a dwelling outside the palace."

Emperor Huizong of Song was born in June 1082, and is now just 18 years old.

Xiaozhao was born in 1083, a full year younger than Zhao Ji, and is only 17 years old now.

According to ancient customs.

Men came of age at 20, which was also the age when an ordinary prince would move out of the imperial palace and establish his own residence.

However, three months ago, after the interment of Empress Dowager Xiang, Zhao Ji had to observe mourning at the Song Mausoleum for a month.

Xu Yun seized this opportunity to persuade Xiaozhao to move out of the palace.

After all, with Zhao Ji mourning in Gongyi, a hundred concubines remained in the palace, who were only required to eat vegetarian meals according to the rites.

Xiaozhao, thanks to his mother Noble Consort Zhu being alive, could often visit the harem.

Upon reflection, it seemed rather inappropriate.

Therefore, out of consideration for avoiding suspicion.

Xiaozhao listened to Xu Yun's suggestion and proposed to Zhao Ji the idea of moving out of the imperial palace.

Even though Zhao Ji "had another five children" after being captured by the Jin people.

This was a matter of circumstances and didn't imply he had inherent minotaur traits or peculiar preferences.

Therefore, after Xiaozhao proposed this idea, Zhao Ji quickly gave his consent.

Aside from this.

Xiaozhao indeed had no other noticeable peculiarities during this period.

Subsequently, Old Su's chest rose and fell a few times, as if he had made some decisions, and said to Elder Xie and Zong Ze:

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Chapter 241 165: Li Qingzhao Imprisoned!! (6K)_3

[664 words]

"First Year, quickly send someone to gather information and see if you can uncover any inside details.

"If not, at least find out where Uncle Wen and Qingzhao are being held, and whether they are being mistreated."

"Ru Lin, you are an Advanced Scholar from the Sixth Year of Yuan You, according to our dynasty's correspondence system, there should be quite a few of your classmates stationed in the Capital City at this time."

"You can try to inquire, not seeking to know the truth, just understanding some details would suffice."

Mr. Xie and Zong Ze exchanged a glance and bowed in unison:

"Yes!"

After instructing these matters, Old Su let out a light sigh, his whole demeanor subtly withering a bit.

As a person within the officialdom.

Over the past fifty years, he had seen too many officials imprisoned for various reasons.

A few were released as innocent, most were exiled, taking to bothering others' sleep at Chengtian Temple for no reason.

And some were sent off to military service, or even...

lost their lives.

Old Li's current situation seemed ordinary, but Old Su had a vague bad premonition, far from being as calm as Xiaoli portrayed.

Or to put it more accurately.

This was a severe premonition never experienced in the past fifty years.

After Mr. Xie and Zong Ze left.

Old Su sent the insignificant Xu Yun back to the room.

And he went to the study.

Starting to write letters to a few old friends still in the court.

But what Old Su didn't expect was.

This thing he originally thought wouldn't be too sensational.

Turned into an incident that ignited the entire Capital City... no, the entire Great Song within just a few days!

The day after Old Li was arrested.

Zhao Yuanpeng moved again.

Barging into a certain mansion, and arrested Lu Tian, a professor at the Imperial College and Chongzheng Hall's speaker Cheng Yi.

Another day passed.

Chao Buzhi, an attache of the Ministry of Rites and editor at the History Hall, was arrested.

Over the next three days...

Dozens of officials, either in office or retired, like Lu Tian, Fan Chunli, Yang Wei, and Shangguan Jun.....

were all arrested!

Among them was a very famous person in later generations:

Su Zhe.

This arrest, led by the Imperial City Department, was like a sudden storm, giving no time for reaction.

Some people were even taken away from the banquet or boat without saying more than a sentence or two.

And if someone from later generations who were familiar with Late Song history were to discover...

Including Old Li.

The more than fifty officials arrested had different positions, ranks, and ages.

But they all shared one common identity.

And a few years later, they would be inscribed on a monument.

The monument numbered a total of three hundred and nine people, with the foremost being named Sima Guang.

That's right.

They were...

the Yuanyou Faction!

As the scope of the arrests expanded, a rumor gradually spread:

The Imperial City Department found a strange object called a Microscope at the home of Central Attendant Li Gefei!

Not only was it peculiar in appearance, but also bizarre in its interior.

We must know.

The current Emperor's name is Zhao Ji, born during the sun time, the character Ji belongs to the Bing Fire.

And those who understand the five elements know.

Two of the Heavenly Stems correspond to the five elements of fire:

One is Ding Fire.

The other is Bing Fire.

Where Ding Fire has an attribute of yin, it is a weak fire.

It represents the fire of candles and stoves, in short, the ordinary fires of the human world.

But Bing Fire is different.

Bing Fire attributes to yang, it is the fire of the sun.

It dares the frost and snow, shines upon all things, thus it is known as yang fire.

In other words.

The Emperor is yang, is light!

And on that object called a Microscope, there was actually something called...

Reflector!

Reflect upon reflection.

This is not instigating rebellion?

More crucially.

The people from the Imperial City Department also found on the base of the Microscope, in a concealed internal structure...

the current Emperor's name and birthdate!

...

Note:

A lot of comments say they are waiting for k50, how was the k50 at today's conference, is it suitable to purchase?

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 242 166 I Need an Explanation

[1,312 words]

A few nights later.

Dong dong dong—

"Brother Wang, Brother Wang!"

Xu Yun, who was about to sleep fully clothed, had just lain down when he was woken by the knocking on the door outside.

What also made his heart tighten was the voice of the person knocking:

It was neither Zhang San nor Yongzhu, but...

Mr. Xie, the Old Chief Steward!

"Coming, coming, just a moment!"

Guessing some matters, Xu Yun quickly dressed and walked to the door, opening it with a somewhat surprised expression:

"Old Chief Steward? Why are you here?"

Mr. Xie lowered his eyebrows, holding a lantern in one hand, and said:

"Brother Wang, the master has requested you in the study. It's best you come with me quickly."

Xu Yun took a deep breath, composed himself, and nodded:

"Then I'll trouble the Old Chief Steward to lead the way."

Mr. Xie nodded slightly and made a gesture inviting him.

The two proceeded under the night light and soon arrived outside Old Su's study.

Mr. Xie went to the half-closed door and said inside:

"Master, Brother Wang has been brought."

"Let him in."

Mr. Xie retreated a step, making way, and said to Xu Yun:

"Brother Wang, the master is waiting for you inside. I won't disturb you."

Xu Yun nodded in acknowledgment and walked to the door.

After hesitating for a few seconds, he finally pushed the door open and went inside.

This study was where Old Jia and others previously calculated the curvature function, but now only Old Su was inside, with kerosene lamps lit all around, making it fairly bright.

Seeing Xu Yun enter.

Old Su opened his eyes, which had been closed, and rubbed his temples wearily, gesturing for him to sit down closer.

Xu Yun obediently complied.

"Wang Lin."

After seating Xu Yun, Old Su gave him a deep look and asked:

"You've been at my residence for nearly half a year, haven't you?"

Xu Yun nodded:

"In ten days, it will be a full six months."

He had reached this world at the end of June, spending half a month treating Wang Yue, almost a month on lens calculations and telescopes, and another ten days waiting for the right time for observations.

Factoring in the three weeks for preparing the Horse Iron Hoof and the three months since Empress Dowager Xiang's death, it had been quite close to half a year.

Old Su then picked up a teacup, sipped the tea, and asked again:

"Then may I ask how have I treated you in these past days?"

Xu Yun was silent for a moment, then uttered four words:

"Grace as heavy as a mountain."

"And Prince Jian and Qingzhao?"

"They didn't look down upon my low status and befriended me beneath their rank."

"Ha, such grace as heavy as a mountain, befriending beneath their rank! Truly well-spoken!"

Old Su slapped the table heavily, angrily and painfully saying:

"Is this how you repay us?"

"Uncle Wen, Qingzhao, and the officials of the Yuanyou Faction imprisoned, Prince Jian confined. Wang Lin, are you pushing them to a dead end?!"

Old Su looked at him again, his tension visibly greater:

"At first, when I heard about the Reflector, I thought it was just a coincidence of nomenclature, not greatly related to you?"

"I thought my remaining network might still help exonerate Uncle Wen, just like Su Dongpo back then."

"But later I learned, under the base of the Microscope, there was a secret compartment engraved with the Emperor's name and birth date."

"I then fetched Ge Fei, and from his mouth, I learned that the secret compartment was part of the design you provided in the blueprints. During inspection, you went alone into the room for a moment..."

Looking at the furious Old Su, Xu Yun was silent for a few seconds and asked:

"Master, could it not be Master Qi, feeling resentment from past encounters, added these steps during the making of the Mirror Device, trying to frame me?"

...

Seeing his nonchalant expression, Old Su couldn't help but smile in anger:

"Wang Lin, do you really think I don't know?"

"Let's not mention Ge Fei's happy family, three generations living together, even if he wanted to trap you, he wouldn't have the means to reach such a high level of people."

"Because the source of this turmoil is the Master by the Emperor's side now!"

"And he was the one back then..."

"The individual you used my letter of introduction to visit!"

Speaking at this point.

A trace of regret appeared on Old Su's face.

Although he had heard the Master's reputation early on, a few months ago, this person's fame was limited to the public at that time.

Indeed.

Every day, many high officials and nobles visited his mansion, but reaching the level of 'ascending to Heaven's ears' was still quite distant.

Therefore, when Xu Yun proposed wanting to visit this person, Old Su assumed he just wanted to broaden his horizons.

After all, in this era, the belief in spirits and demons was prevalent, and even Old Su was somewhat indecisive about them.

But unexpectedly.

In just a few months passing.

This person's 'mana greatly increased', and more than that, he somehow connected with the officials.

Later, this person seemed to pull off some strange operations, making the officials impressed and appointing him as Master, reaching a high ministerial position.

If not for the absence of the 'National Preceptor' position in Northern Song, this person might have become the quickest rising oddity in history.

While inquiring about matters from friends, Old Su did not fail to express doubts about this person's swift rise.

But they told him that this person's cultivation had reached a sky-piercing level, demonstrating many divine means, commanding respect.

And in this incident.

Precisely this Master deduced through the stars, discovering the inscription under Lord Li's Microscope.

He also spent ten years of his lifespan in divination, pinpointing several Yuanyou Faction officials, and the Imperial City Department did find many contradicting letters in these officials' studies.

Thus, this led to the great upheaval in the capital.

To speak honestly.

If he had known today, Old Su would never have connected Xu Yun to that thread.

Thinking to this end.

Old Su glanced at Xu Yun, still a tinge of heartache in his eyes:

"At first, I wondered why with the exposure of Uncle Wen's matter, you, the designer of the Microscope, were not imprisoned. It turns out someone long ago obscured your track, truly a wonderfully played move."

He paused, ready to say more.

Before he could speak, voices came from outside between Zong Ze and Mr. Xie:

"Old Chief Steward, is the mentor inside? Something big has happened!"

"County Magistrate Zong, the master is with Wang....."

Old Su heard this and raised an eyebrow, giving Xu Yun a gentle glance, saying outwardly:

"Ru Lin, you may come in."

The voices outside instantly silenced.

Soon, the door was pushed open again.

Zong Ze hurried into the room, slightly stunned to see Xu Yun, but still said:

"Master, it's bad. The officials believe the Master's slander, blaming the comet months ago and the earthquake on the Yuanyou Festival on Prince Jian, citing his immorality in spying on Heavens' secrets. They have confined him and arrested Advisor Deng Duo at the mansion. The Prince... is in danger!"

Old Su, upon hearing this, his pupils contracted abruptly.

His chest heaved heavily a few times, and he closed his eyes, coldly looking at Xu Yun, saying:

"Wang Lin, is there anything you want to say?"

Seeing Old Su near the peak of anger, Xu Yun was silent for a bit and then said:

"Master, although Lord Li is imprisoned, and Prince Jian is confined, rest assured, they will remain unharmed, they will suffer no harm—at least in the short term this is so."

"Unharmmed?"

Hearing this, Old Su was again amused yet angered:

"Just relying on you, a whistleblower who used my introduction to connect with the Master? You can guarantee these?"

Upon hearing this, Xu Yun shook his head, seriously staring at him, said:

"Master, for us academics, the utmost priority is rigor."

"Could there be another possibility besides my role as a whistleblower?"

"For instance..."

"The Master... is actually my person?"

...

Note:

Not into gaming, rarely takes photos, mainly listens to music and watches videos, which is better, Xiaomi 10S or K50?

Actually wanted to buy the mate30, but it seems all available ones are refurbished...

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Chapter 243 167 Truth (6.6K)

[1,026 words]

"Master... is he your man?"

Hearing Xu Yun's words,

Old Su's anger, which had been simmering and ready to explode in his chest, suddenly came to a halt.

He froze for a few seconds.

After coming back to his senses,

He instinctively wanted to refute,

But thinking of the many strange aspects Xu Yun had shown before, the words of rebuttal that Old Su was about to utter were abruptly stuck in his throat.

After a while,

He forced himself to calm down, turned his head to Zong Ze and said:

"Ru Lin, I already know about King Jian's matter, you may withdraw for now."

Zong Ze quickly glanced at Xu Yun beside him, suppressing his curiosity as he saluted Old Su and said:

"Master, then this student will take his leave."

After Zong Ze left,

Old Su withdrew his gaze and coldly said to Xu Yun:

"Wang Lin, you say the Master is your man, but what proof do you have to demonstrate this?"

Alright then.

Seeing that Old Su had the patience to listen to his explanation, Xu Yun couldn't help but breathe a small sigh of relief.

Although he had rehearsed today's situation in his mind many times,

Reality is still reality; anything could happen, and the risks were still there.

No one could say for sure whether Old Su would become so furious that he wouldn't even give him a chance to explain.

He might directly smash a cup as a signal, and then a few death warriors might leap out from behind a screen and chop him to pieces, not leaving even a trace...

Then he took a letter from his sleeve, laid it flat on the desk, and pushed it in front of Old Su:

"Master, please have a look at this first."

Old Su took the letter, gently shook it, and began to read in confusion:

"My name is Guo Jing, a man from Bingzhou, originally the Deputy Spear Commander of You Wei, returned to the Capital City in the fourth year of Yongxi, and have long resided in the Capital..."

A few seconds later,

He suddenly lifted his head, staring at Xu Yun as if he were trying to see through him:

"This... what is this?"

Wang Lin smiled and nodded at him affirmatively:

"That's right, it's Master Guo's personal statement."

"Inside, it details his background, his deceitful methods, and a list of those he's deceived. It could be considered his pledge of allegiance to me."

Hearing this, Old Su's left hand holding the letter trembled slightly.

The right hand picked up the teacup to sip some water to steady himself, full of suspicion and uncertainty as he asked Xu Yun:

"Xiaowang, what on earth is going on?"

Seeing Old Su return to his usual manner of address, Xu Yun felt another wave of relief.

Although he had made some extreme preparations, whether he explained or not would not change the course of events.

But if he could salvage Old Su's perception of him, it would naturally be better, so he slowly said:

"Master, you may not know, this Master Guo's real name is Guo Jing, and he is a thorough fraudster."

"That day, when I came to visit with the invitation you lent me, I first exposed all his tricks and then taught him some even more sophisticated techniques."

"With this personal statement he wrote, using both the carrot and the stick method, I easily brought him under my control."

"Many things afterward were all arranged by me, the villain."

Those familiar with the history of the Late Song should know.

In the Late Northern Song Dynasty.

There were three Daoists with remarkable reputations in the political arena, each leaving different evaluations in history, namely:

Xu Zhichang, Lin Lingsu, and...

Guo Jing.

The most reputable among them is Xu Zhichang.

He was proficient in Daoist classics and was a famous religious painter during the Northern Song, who generally did not interfere much in politics.

In later collectors' circles, this person's artworks are not low in value either.

With an average price of around fifty to sixty thousand, the highest one even sold for four hundred and seventy thousand.

Next is Lin Lingsu.

Honestly speaking, his image in the official history isn't good.

At the peak of his power, he wielded great influence in the court, Cai Jing had to avoid his sharpness, and not a single good word can be found about him in the official history.

But on the other hand,

From the perspective of his contributions to Daoism, Lin Lingsu did have certain contributions:

He was the founder of the Shenxiao Sect, almost extinguished Buddhism by himself, and holds significant historical status in Daoism.

A more objective evaluation would place him as a controversial negative figure.

But as for Guo Jing...

He was entirely a pure fraud.

This oddity was a soldier in his early years, returning from the Western Front in 987 AD, and came back to Bianjing.

Since then, he had always been in Bianjing as a veteran without combat duties, liking to perform rituals for people; he was a true seasoned veteran.

By the time of the Jingkang Incident, Guo Jing was already over sixty.

At that time, Imperial Secretariat Sun Fu happened to learn of Guo Jing's name from a "Poem of Reflection," and found him within Bianjing City.

Since then,

This odd person began his astonishing performance:

First, he gathered a group of people, the number 7777, very likely a warning from Muay Thai in later generations.

These people had birth characters matching the Six Jia, hence they were also called the Six Ding and Six Jia Divine Soldiers.

According to Song History records,

Most of these people were beggars and rascals.

Soon after that, they were sent out of the city to confront the enemy.

Meanwhile, Guo Jing sat atop the wall performing rituals:

He stood next to a Celestial King statue and shouted, "You've been strengthened, charge," and then that was it.

Yes, that was it:

All 7777 "Divine Soldiers" were completely wiped out.

It was due to this defeat that the Jin People first set foot on the Bianjing City walls. (Those interested can read the Song History—Biography of Sun Fu, when the author finished reading, they sighed longingly...)

Additionally, it's quite amusing that.

Even in later generations, there were some who tried to defend the Six Jia Divine Soldiers.

For example, it was the only option, the combat effectiveness of the Six Jia Divine Soldiers was better than the Song Army, forcing the Jin Army to dispatch the main force to annihilate them.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 244 167 The Truth (6.6K)_2

[993 words]

Later on, Guo Jing was even described as a failed version of Saint Joan of Arc.

But what were the facts?

At that time, there was Zhang Shuye in the city, Zong Ze's army was on the way, and at the very least, there was also Li Gang.

Judging by the weapons distributed to the city's residents later and their effectiveness, holding out until Zong Ze came to the rescue wasn't that difficult.

Yet, the peculiar Sun Fu and Prime Minister He Li, two civil servants, along with Emperor Huizong's council, insisted on choosing Guo Jing.

Furthermore, the Six Jia Divine Soldiers did indeed fight the Jin Army's main force, but the problem was all four armies at the city gate were the main force.....

Just think about it, who would block auxiliary troops outside the gate at such a critical moment?

Moreover, aside from the Song History, Jin History also recorded this battle:

"Song General Guo Jing led tens of thousands of soldiers, approached Lou Room's camp, the active girl struck from the side, causing chaos among the enemy, which was then defeated, the king dispatched the active girl to lead elite troops to cut across, further causing chaos among the enemy, the king then directed the armies to advance for battle, with arrows flying by his hand, managing the reins, wielded a spear and rode to fight without concern, leading to a great defeat of the enemy, who fled to the city."

In other words.

When the group of Six Jia Divine Soldiers charged out, they headed straight for the Jin Army, and their momentum was probably quite ferocious.

Hence Lou Room slightly retreated, giving up the front of the main camp,

Letting them rush into the encirclement, then ordered the active girl to strike from the sides.

This simple bait and ambush tactic was turned into capturing a Jin Army big camp by those whitewashing factions.

Lou Room got injured by an arrow, turning him into the severely injured first general of the Jin Army Lou Room...

What can be said about this?

Some historical clowns, shameful to the nation, must be whitewashed against all odds, while some national heroes are held onto for nonexistent or trivial faults.

So seriously, sometimes you just have to question the intentions of those people.

Alright.

Back to the main topic.

Guo Jing, though a complete charlatan, was an excellent pick to fool Emperor Huizong:

Xu Zhichang was very laid-back, rarely interfering in political affairs, so he lived to 94 years old.

As for Lin Lingsu...

He wasn't in Bianjing, currently wandering elsewhere.

Besides, he was a legitimate patriarch in the Daoist School, making him a scapegoat would easily risk unavoidable backlash.

So after careful consideration.

Xu Yun eventually chose Guo Jing as his target. (The bounty ends, too bad no one guessed it right, though someone guessed Lin Lingsu which was gratifying)

The focus returned to reality.

Then Xu Yun paused, changed the subject, and asked Old Su:

"Sir, when you were inquiring for information, did you ever hear of this Master's abilities?"

By this time, Old Su's anger had mostly dissipated, replaced more by curiosity and doubt, so upon hearing this, he pondered:

"I once wrote to inquire through friends and was told that Master Guo possessed extraordinary abilities, far beyond the ordinary trickster."

"For example, retrieving objects from boiling oil, Celestial God Seizing Ghosts, burning ghost corpses with fire and so on....."

"If not for this, he couldn't have been so quickly appointed as Master by the officials."

What can be said?

Truly worthy of being a dynasty that reveres the supernatural to a historic extent in the top three.

Even a master of the era like Old Su carried strong personal emotions when mentioning divine anomalies.

Xu Yun looked around for a while and then took out a yellow paper from his sleeve, handing it to Old Su:

"Sir, take a look at this yellow paper, is there anything special about it?"

Old Su took the yellow paper, felt it, and shook his head:

"Seems like ordinary talisman paper?"

Xu Yun smiled mysteriously, took back the yellow paper, and pointed to a corner:

"Sir, may I use the study's lamp?"

Old Su nodded:

"By all means, go ahead."

After receiving Old Su's approval.

Xu Yun walked to the kerosene lamp near the desk, stood sideways, enabling Old Su's line of sight to fully view his actions.

Then he placed the yellow paper above the flame, gently shaking it a few times.

In no time at all.

The yellow paper started to heat up and burn.

At first, Old Su's expression was puzzled, not understanding the significance of Xu Yun's actions.

But as he watched.

His expression gradually became somewhat horrified:

He saw the dark flame on the paper slowly burn inward, not spreading over the entire paper, but burning out a peculiar shape!

It looked like...

A demon's shadow!

After a while.

Xu Yun placed the burned yellow paper in front of Old Su, respectfully saying:

"Sir, please take a look."

In truth, without Xu Yun's reminder, Old Su's attention was wholly captured by the yellow paper:

He saw on the yellow paper before him, the burned-out trace was a one-foot-long centipede!

Carefully, Old Su picked up a corner of the yellow paper, ensuring it was merely an empty pattern before softly exhaling in relief.

Then he turned to Xu Yun, eagerly asking:

"This..... what on earth is going on?"

Xu Yun gave him a small bear-like shrug and smiled:

"This is the so-called Celestial God Seizing Ghosts, in reality, just a simple trick."

Speaking, he tore a small opening in the yellow paper, pointing to some cotton-like material:

"The edges of this yellow paper are composed of asbestos netting, which can resist dark flames, whereas the centipede area is just ordinary yellow paper."

"Meanwhile, I also pre-coated the centipede area with a potassium nitrate solution using a clean brush."

"Potassium nitrate is colorless or slightly yellow, leaving no trace on the yellow paper either way."

"When the time is right, just pretend to catch ghosts, perform a mock combat between humans and spirits, and seize an opportunity to say the ghost is about to escape."

"Then perform the Gang Step, set up formations and rituals, wield a peach wood sword, putting on a show of fiercely battling the demon spirit."

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 245 245: 167 Zhang Truth (6.6K)_3

[1,157 words]

"After the duel of magic, take out the yellow paper, and say that the demon has already been sealed onto it. Then, when it is ignited, various shapes of demons can be seen."

The operation Xu Yun described was actually a very common 'exorcism' method during the Ming Dynasty.

Because according to technological development, the core material needed for the entire process... that is, potassium nitrate solution, would only start to become relatively common by then.

Of course.

Back then, Daoists didn't call it potassium nitrate solution; they called it yellow nitrate water.

The Song Dynasty hasn't developed to this point yet, but Xu Yun had already produced potassium nitrate while preparing the salt bridge and nickel steel,

with the help of this super-dimensional solution, it's extremely easy to feign the mysterious, and ensures that no anomalies are discovered.

As for Old Su's mention of retrieving items from boiling oil and burning ghost corpses...

In simple terms, it's quite straightforward.

The so-called burning of ghost corpses is actually a very "masochistic" performance:

The spellcaster gestures wildly, muttering incantations.

After a while, his fingers surprisingly begin to burn.

The spellcaster then takes a mouthful of water and sprays it onto the 'already beheaded' but unseen demon corpse on the ground and his own burning fingers.

In an instant, flames rise from the ground.

If conditions are right, you can even see wisps of ghost fire.

In reality.

This occurs because the spellcaster previously placed camphor powder, phosphorus, and sulfur on the ground.

During the performance.

The spellcaster first smears these on his fingers.

Because sulfur and phosphorus are flammable, and camphor is volatile, they ignite upon contact without harming the fingers.

At the same time, what the spellcaster sprays from his mouth is not water, but alcohol, thus creating a burst of flame, fully burning the demon corpse.

This is also a trick that appeared only in the Ming Dynasty. Compared to the original version, which might be exposed due to the 'alcohol smell,' Xu Yun provided medical alcohol.

Even though medical alcohol has a distinct smell, it's generally significantly different from regular alcohol.

If someone really inquires, it can be attributed to the demon-subjugating water from the 'blessing,' as a patch for the flaw.

As for retrieving items from boiling oil, it's unnecessary to explain further.

This should be a widely known little trick, quite popular even during the Qigong craze of the 90s.

However, let's correct a common misconception:

Many people believe that retrieving items from boiling oil involves placing vinegar under the pot, with oil on top, as vinegar has a low boiling point, moving upward when heated, thus appearing indistinguishable from oil.

But this is actually incorrect.

The boiling point of acetic acid is 118 degrees. Due to the water mixed in cooking vinegar forming compounds, it causes azeotropy, and its boiling point is definitely not 40 degrees as claimed.

The notion that vinegar's boiling point is only 40 degrees and the temperature is just 35 degrees when hands are put in the pot is a baseless rumor.

In reality.

The reason for this seemingly boiling oil, but actually low-temperature phenomenon.

Is due to substances like calcium carbonate and boric acid placed under the oil pot, which generate gases when heated, creating a false boiling effect.

So if any unfortunate transmigrator attempts this, remember not to add vinegar to the pot's bottom.

Otherwise, it'd be like Meledi watching a naughty movie while taking pills—a recipe for even greater amusement.

In summary.

These little tricks, seemingly incredibly simple to the latter-day observer, could easily deceive countless people in the Northern Song... or any ancient feudal dynasty.

Additionally, since Emperor Huizong was quite an easy-going emperor, it's no surprise to Xu Yun that Guo Jing succeeded in front of him.

Then Old Su suddenly thought of something and asked:

"But Xiaowang, I heard that other than subduing demons, Master can also predict the past and the present, grasping the forces of heaven and earth. How is this done?"

Xu Yun awkwardly scratched his head and pointed at himself:

"To be honest with you, the so-called all-seeing and all-knowing ability of Master..."

"Is nothing more than a small person like me calculating and determining the timing of the comet and Lu Dong earthquake, which Master Guo 'predicted'."

Old Su was taken aback by this, then memories of Xu Yun preparing in front of the telescope flashed in his mind, and he suddenly realized:

"So that's why you waited for over a dozen days before starting observations after making the lenses?"

"I thought the comet was merely a coincidental stroke of luck..."

"But... are such celestial phenomena and earthquakes really calculable by humans?"

Xu Yun's mouth twitched a few times:

"...Of course they can."

After he said that.

He silently added two words in his heart:

No way.

Not to mention the Song Dynasty, even in later times, comets and earthquakes are incredibly difficult to predict.

Comets are somewhat easier to discuss.

An astronomical object about 100 kilometers in size, approaching the sun and approximately 50 astronomical units from Earth, has a chance to be detected by infrared telescopes.

When it's about 28 astronomical units from Earth, there's a high probability it can be detected by the Hubble Space Telescope based on its color.

The speed of such interstellar objects relative to the sun is usually within 40 kilometers per second, which is quite slow compared to the distance.

Therefore, with the help of supercomputers calculating for several years, there is a fair chance to accurately determine a time when it can be observed with the naked eye.

But earthquakes are a different story entirely.

Even in the 21st century, no country can predict earthquakes with 100% accuracy.

At most, after an earthquake occurs at the epicenter, leveraging the fact that electromagnetic waves travel faster than seismic waves, people further away can be prepared in advance.

Even this is only in its infancy stage, with practical results mediocre, and the promotional significance exceeding actual value.

Xu Yun remembered these two incidents purely because he was a transmigrator:

The comet because it coincided with Cai Boyi's death, remembered from his childhood.

The earthquake was because it happened right on the Mid-Autumn Festival, not a day off.

Additionally, it was the year Emperor Huizong ascended the throne, making it unforgettable.

But according to the original timeline.

At this time, Empress Dowager Xiang had not died, so Zhao Ji only exempted Lu Dong from its annual tribute, thus smoothly averting the entire situation.

This is one of the core reasons why Guo Jing was willing to listen to Xu Yun after he came into power:

The way Emperor Huizong and court officials viewed him was the same way he viewed Xu Yun.

If initially, Guo Jing complied only under pressure, after a few predictions came true, he genuinely regarded Xu Yun as an immortal.

Unfortunately, Old Su didn't realize he had been fooled by Xu Yun—in fact, combining Xu Yun's earlier performance, Old Su believed this explanation by eighty to ninety percent.

Thinking of this.

A strong sense of bewilderment emerged in his eyes:

"Xiaowang, if you can ensure Uncle Wen and Qingzhao's safety, why go through all this trouble?"

.....

Postscript:

Have any readers just discovered our book in the last day or two? Could you tell us where you found it? Our bookmarks have strangely surged these past days...

...

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 246 246: Zhang 168: A Question That May Never Have an Answer (4.6K)

[1,877 words]

"Why did you do this?"

Hearing Old Su's question, Xu Yun was momentarily at a loss for words.

Indeed.

Why?

A strange emotion suddenly surged in Xu Yun's heart.

Anger.

Confusion.

And shame.

Perhaps in future generations, in that changed era.

Every compatriot of Huaxia, with similar experiences as mine, would choose the same path after coming to this dynasty...

Perhaps it could be called...

A common Huaxia person's national sentiment?

Then Xu Yun glanced at Old Su, his gaze lingering on his somewhat withered left hand for a while, and said to Old Su:

"Sir, would you like to hear a story?"

Old Su was silent for a moment, then answered:

"Go on."

Xu Yun nodded to him, took a deep breath, and said slowly:

"A few years ago, I had a dream."

"In the dream, my name was Wu Fan, and I was just an ordinary person selling milk a thousand years later."

"A thousand years later?"

Upon hearing this, Old Su was suddenly a little interested:

In ancient times, due to technological productivity, most people's thinking was limited, and their vision was quite narrow.

But this does not mean they never fantasized about the future.

One typical example was Shen Kuo, who lived in the same era as Old Su.

Although Shen Kuo's character was somewhat questionable, as he was the one who reported Su Shi during the Wutai Poetry Case, his abilities were undoubtedly those of a great master.

In his writings "Mengxi Bi Tan," he recorded many speculations about the future.

For example, he believed that petroleum would be very useful in future generations, and even speculated about its connection to 'engines':

"This substance will inevitably be widely used, starting with me. Petroleum is abundant, born from the earth and inexhaustible, unlike pine wood which will eventually run out."

Of course.

The 'engines' here do not refer to modern machinery but rather wooden devices like waterwheels.

Moreover, Liu Bowen from the Ming Dynasty once wrote a poem:

"Thousands of rivers in Jiangnan, mountains in Yun Gui by the thousands. Five hundred years later, Yun Gui surpasses Jiangnan."

In a sense, this is also a prediction of what might happen a few hundred years later:

He believed that after five hundred years, the resources in Yun Gui's countless mountains would be developed and utilized, making Yun Gui even more prosperous than Jiangnan.

And then there's "New Era" by the owner of Bihe Hall in the Qing Dynasty, which belongs to a rather fanciful imagination:

It speculates that by 1999, the Qing Dynasty's population would reach a trillion, with an army of six million—who knows where this ratio came from.

In short, the strength of the Qing Dynasty arouses suspicion and joint resistance from white nations.

At the same time, conflict arises between the descendants of the Xiongnu and Euro-Caucasians within the Xiongyelv Country in Europe, leading to internal strife.

So, the yellow-skinned Xiongnu king seeks assistance from the Qing Emperor, and the Qing Dynasty promptly dispatches troops to faraway Europe, challenging the white powers, ultimately forcing them to sign a peace treaty.

Thus, the war ends.

The Qing Dynasty enters the "New Era" as the victor.

By the way.

Four years after the publication of "New Era," the Great Qing collapsed.....

Truly a New Era.

So in hearing Xu Yun's mention of the 'future,' Old Su indeed showed some interest:

"What did you see?"

Upon hearing this, Xu Yun paused for a moment, saying:

"Some memories in the dream are unclear, seemingly consisting of many high-rise buildings reaching into the clouds and various strange devices."

"There were also many oddly dressed men and women, with seas calm and rivers clear, and the nation stable."

"But what impressed me the most was a history book I read, titled 'Shao Song'."

"A history book?"

Old Su seemed to guess what Xu Yun was about to say, adjusted his posture, and asked:

"What did the book say?"

"The book said tonight don't wait.... oh no, it recorded the final history of our dynasty."

Xu Yun raised his eyes to glance at Old Su, wondering whether to prepare some nitroglycerin for him, and continued:

"According to the book, our dynasty will fall in just over twenty years."

Upon hearing this, Old Su was first stunned, then shook his head:

"Over twenty years? I don't believe it."

Xu Yun gave a dry laugh, explaining:

"...After all, it's just a dream. Anyway, according to the book, although there are many reasons for the fall of our dynasty, the most direct one is some foolish... bewildering actions by the officials."

"For example, procuring 'Flower Stone Gang' from the south and constructing 'Genyue' in Bianjing, causing great hardships to the people and widespread uprisings."

"Then, when foreign enemies invade, they push all the way to Bianjing, where General Lao Zhong and Captain Wang fight to the death....."

".....Later, before the loyalist army reaches the Capital City, the officials open the city gates, voluntarily surrendering to the invaders, and then are taken to the enemy camp, leading to the fall of our dynasty..."

"Enough!"

Old Su's brows furrowed deeper as he listened, and finally, he slapped the desk and stopped Xu Yun.

After all, he was a former Prime Minister, and hearing such an outrageous end for his country from Xu Yun, only showing some restraint in his words indicated high self-restraint:

"Brother Wang, do you know what your fate would be if these remarks left the mansion?"

"To be honest with you, being torn apart by five horses would be lenient!"

"Moreover, these are just what you saw in your dream, and you make such changes based on such groundless speculations? Do you take me for a three-year-old child?"

Xu Yun remained silent.

In fact, he really wanted to tell Old Su.

That what he said is not a figment of his imagination, nor a dream, but actual history that had occurred.

He was not dreaming of the future but truly someone from the 21st century.

However, due to system constraints, he could not say these words, only able to briefly sketch the history through the so-called dream.

But no matter how real you describe a dream, it is ultimately an illusion, and it is very difficult to completely convince someone.

Unless you brought Old Su to the 21st century, took him to a library, and showed him that heavy "Song History," then everything might be proven.

But obviously, that is impossible.

Therefore, the question Old Su raised may never ever find an answer...

But on the other hand.

Xu Yun had no expectation of persuading Old Su so easily; he merely tried his best within his capabilities to let Old Su accept reality.

The current situation is already set, the Black Wheat Erguotou... or rather Guo Jing over there, has already ignited the boiler completely.

Regardless of whether Old Su believes his words or not, it cannot affect the direction of certain events.

And opposite him, Old Su, who stopped him from speaking further, now had an expression of skepticism and uncertainty.

Because he suddenly realized...

As Xu Yun finished narrating that 'dream'.

The absolute rationality within him remained, but emotionally, he felt a slight trust in these words.

Was it because Xu Yun previously showed too much oddity, making his words subconsciously highly credible in one's mind?

Or perhaps it matched the personality of Prince Duan he knew, something he indeed could do?

Or could it be a combination of both?

It is akin to a lottery pool in later generations where the probability of drawing an SSR is one in a million, theoretically normal people cannot win.

Yet many people are rationally aware of this, but emotionally cannot help but speculate in that direction; it's an instinctual human trait.

In summary.

Once this slight doubt appeared, Old Su would unwittingly have a thought:

If... only if, Xu Yun's words were true, then what would the Great Song do?

This thought is like a wooden splinter in the flesh, insignificant from a broader perspective.

However, from an individual's emotional viewpoint, it provokes a gnawing dilemma.

Then Old Su thought of the current situation in Bianjing, feeling a wave of powerlessness.

He felt like a lone boat on a vast sea, seemingly capable of 'water manipulation,' but in reality, being manipulated by the water, unable to change the overall situation.

Why would it be like this...

It's only been half a year...

But as he thought more, something suddenly seemed off to Old Su.

Even though Xu Yun described his dream and mentioned that the Great Song would fall, he never directly explained why he deliberately plotted against Old Li.

Not to mention celestial phenomena, earthquakes, and Prince Jian...

Wait?

Prince Jian?

In an instant.

A clear map of connections suddenly surfaced in Old Su's mind.

The initial point of the map was the Imperial Palace, representing Xu Yun's sowing of Guo Jing, a seed through Emperor Huizong's firm belief in ghosts and spirits.

Then, two lines extended downward from the Imperial Palace.

The first line slants to the lower left, ending with Old Li's name:

This line implicates him with treason through the microscope scheme, landing him in prison.

Under Old Li's name, another vertical line appears, ending with...

Yuanyou Faction:

Starting from Old Li's identification with the Yuanyou Faction, it extends through letters exchanged by several officials, magnifying the event and implicating the Yuan You Faction whom Zhao Ji already dislikes.

Imperial Palace—Old Li—Yuanyou Faction, let's call it the ministers' line.

Returning to the initial Imperial Palace, the other line extends vertically downward, connecting celestial phenomena and earthquakes.

Words below the line end with...

Prince Jian.

Using celestial phenomena and earthquakes to pin the crown of immorality, it imprisoned Advisor Deng Duo on charges of treason, pushing Prince Jian to the edge of a cliff.

Nicely put, it's called a passive situation; harshly, life and death lie on Emperor Huizong's whim.

Imperial Palace—Celestial phenomena and Earthquakes—Prince Jian.

This is called... the prince line.

Then Old Su thought of Wang Hou and Old Zhong whom Xu Yun had met before.

Mentioned earlier.

Old Zhong and Wang Hou have long been at odds with Cai Jing, and not long ago, Xu Yun claimed illness through Prince Jian to pass the Steel Refining Technique to Old Zhong...

If Xu Yun makes an issue out of this... no, he certainly will make it an issue.

This is the third line, let's call it the Border Commander's line.

Remember.

This coincides with the Western Army's triumphant return, over one hundred thousand Western Army soldiers await rewards, while most of the Capital Imperial Guard are stationed at the Imperial Mausoleum...

In this case....

An equation emerges:

Ministers + Imperial Family + Border Commander = ?

No, no.

At this point, Old Su shook his head:

Now half of the Yuanyou Faction officials are imprisoned, and Sima Guang, Wen Yanbo, Lv Gongzhu and others have passed away; the ministers' line lacks a leader.

This line lacks cohesion, too scattered to balance with the other two lines.

This line is incomplete, it lacks a central axis.

Central axis...

Could it be.....

Is it Zhang Dun who resigned outside the Temple?

No, Zhang Dun is not from the Yuanyou Faction; quite the opposite, he belongs to the Yuanfeng Faction.

Or perhaps Fan Wen Zheng's second son, Fan Chunren?

As Old Su pondered.

Outside the room, Mr. Xie's voice hurriedly echoed:

"Master, a general outside the main entrance bearing Prince Jian's royal waist tag said he's sent by Prince Jian inviting you and Brother Wang to the manor for an urgent discussion!"

Bang—

Hearing these words.

Inside, Old Su accidentally dropped the teacup onto the ground.

After a moment.

He smiled bitterly at Xu Yun, with a complex expression more intense than ever.

Indeed.

In today's Northern Song, there is one more candidate.....

This person has served four reigns without ever engaging in factional disputes, yet sat in the Prime Minister's position.

His prestige in the court is highly regarded, being one of the highest-rated Prime Ministers in the past hundred years after Sima Guang and Lv Gongzhu.

He is called...

Su Song.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 247 169: The Fine Tradition of the Old Zhao Family (8.4K)

[979 words]

Late at night.

The moon is bright and the stars are sparse; there's not a trace of dark clouds.

The early winter moonlight is clear and cold, faint and gentle.

Like flowing water, it quietly pours down from the starry sky, adorning the ground with an eclectic mix of shadows.

Under this tranquil and gentle moonlit night.

At this moment, in the east of Bianjing City, the atmosphere inside a certain building is inexplicably somewhat.....

Bleak.

This residence spans a vast area; judging by the specifications of the lion at the gate, it is a Prince's Mansion.

According to historical trajectory.

In three months, it will be renamed Prince Cai's Mansion and will become the site of a jail case famous in history, adding a negligible stain to the image of Emperor Huizong for posterity.

Of course.

This stain is negligible not because the jail case lacks notoriety, but because Emperor Huizong is truly so corrupt.....

But currently, Zhao Ji has not bestowed any rewards on the mansion's owner, so its name is still called...

Prince Jian's Mansion.

When Xu Yun and Old Su arrived at the doorstep of the mansion, guided there by their old acquaintance Wang Bing under the cover of night.

Xu Yun was surprised to discover that there was not a trace of the Imperial City Department's spies around the mansion.

Instead, there were several burly men standing at various corners, vigilantly observing the surroundings.

Could Zhao Ji have not sent anyone to monitor Xiaozhao?

This is evidently impossible.

Although Zhao Ji was inept, there was no way he would relax his surveillance on Xiaozhao at this critical moment.

Thus, it's very clear.

Xiaozhao must have activated some special trump cards.

While controlling the nearby spies, he tampered with their relay nodes, preventing their superiors from detecting any anomalies.

Upon reflection, this isn't hard to understand.

After all, Xiaozhao is Emperor Shen Zong's own brother and previously was a strong contender for the throne.

Moreover, Zhao Ji has yet to completely devour the remnants of the power left behind by Empress Dowager Xiang, so naturally, Xiaozhao still possesses some hidden trump cards.

For instance, by maneuvering some scheduling techniques, he arranged for the head responsible for information exchange at night to be his own person.

Thus, after controlling the spies around, the head pretends everything is normal, and the higher-ups at the Imperial City Department naturally won't pay attention.

But the reason trump cards are called trump cards is because they have non-replicable and irreversible qualities.

In other words, the trump card can only be used this once, and once the bowstring is drawn, there's no turning back.

Basically, once dawn breaks, even if Zhao Ji's information processing is delayed, he will realize some changes have occurred at Prince Jian's Mansion.

What follows will inevitably be a storm.

In other words...

Within several hours before dawn tonight, certain major events are bound to happen.

Or to be precise.

Events that will impact the fate of the nation.

Knock knock knock——

Leading Old Su and Xu Yun to the side door of the mansion, Wang Bing gently knocked on the door.

In less than a moment.

Creaaak——

The side door slowly opened, and an elderly porter poked his head out.

Wang Bing leaned forward, murmuring a few words to the porter and handed over something resembling a credential.

After a short while.

The porter withdrew behind the door and opened the side door wider.

Wang Bing turned his head and whispered to Old Su and Xu Yun:

"Uncle Sir, Little Wang, please."

Old Su glanced again at the few burly men outside the door, said nothing, and followed Wang Bing into the mansion.

Then the three walked a bit further, passed through several courtyard walls, and finally arrived outside a secluded courtyard:

"Uncle Sir, Little Wang, His Highness is inside; I'll take my leave."

Old Su nodded at him and led Xu Yun to the doorway.

After a moment of hesitation, he lightly pushed the door open.

Swish——

As soon as they entered the room, a dozen pairs of eyes instantly turned towards them.

Among them were Xu Yun's acquaintances and strangers he had never met, seated in two rows.

The officials and civil servants on the left exuded a strong atmosphere, while those on the right conveyed a sense of bleakness, with some even donned in armor.

Of course.

The most conspicuous was the one seated at the head...

Xiaozhao.

But currently, Xiaozhao was still dressed in regular attire, plain and unadorned, not yet clad in imperial robes.

Old Su first nodded to several acquaintances, then quickly walked up to Xiaozhao:

"Retired minister Su Song, pays respects to Your Highness."

Xiaozhao quickly supported him and said with emotion:

"Mr. Su, it has been a while; how is your health?"

Old Su gently nodded and looked at Wang Hou and Old Zhong beside Xiaozhao:

"Chu Dao, Uncle Yi, you... are indeed here."

Old Zhong's involvement in this matter was a judgment he made when analyzing the network diagram, and Wang Hou's presence was confirmed because of Wang Bing.

Wang Bing, being Wang Hou's distant nephew, inviting him over indicated that Xu Yun's line with the Border Commander must have succeeded.

Old Zhong looked visibly angry, resembling a raging Lion King, as he exchanged glances with Wang Hou, sighing:

"Mr. Su, you may not know, but officials have already instructed Tong Guan to lead the Imperial Secretariat, intending to lure the Zhe Family from Fu Prefecture into the capital, stripping their military power!"

"The Zhe Family have shielded the Central Plains internally and warded off barbarians externally for ten generations as generals, their loyalty unblemished, yet innocently doubted due to being descendants of Qiang Clan Zhejue Clan, where is the justice?"

"His Highness also learned from secret palace lines that officials intend to use the Refined Iron Technique to accuse me and Chu Dao of treason; already, Yong Nian and Liu Fa have been secretly imprisoned."

"We soldiers do not fear battle, nor death; dying wrapped in horse leather is an honor!"

"But if perishing due to officials' incompetence, what face do I have to meet the ancestors of Zhe and Zhe Families?"

"If we do not act now, we will follow the footsteps of Li Mu and Gao Jing!"

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Chapter 248 169: The Fine Tradition of the Old Zhao Family (8.4K)_2

[1,039 words]

Upon hearing Old Zhong's words, a few civil servants also became restless.

A septuagenarian elder stood up with trembling hands and bowed to Old Su:

"Mr. Su, what the Imperial Envoy said is indisputably true. Now nearly a hundred people from both the military and political sides are imprisoned, among them are individuals with substantial merits."

"The officials want to reinstate Cai Yuanzhang. Once this traitor regains power, the decades of effort by Immortal Emperors Shen Zong and Zhezong will be ruined in an instant!"

As soon as the elder finished speaking, the other civil servants began to echo him.

"Mr. Su, what Scholar Jiang said is correct. The officials are muddleheaded and incompetent; we cannot wait any longer!"

"Mr. Su, for the sake of the country and its people, make a decision quickly!"

"Ah, right, right, right!"

Upon hearing this, Old Su let out a slight sigh.

The old man who spoke was named Jiang Zhiqi, currently an Academician of the Longtu Pavilion and a high-ranking member of the Yuan You Faction.

Now, with Lu Tian, Fan Chunli, and others being arrested and imprisoned.

Jiang Zhiqi and Li Qingchen have become one of the highest-ranking 'leaders' within the Yuan You Faction.

Of course.

Fan Chunren, mentioned earlier, actually has a bit more seniority than the two, being an old figure akin to a living fossil.

But according to historical trajectory.

This elderly man is currently extremely weak, and in a little over thirty days he will pass away quietly in his sleep, leaving no possibility for him to step out and take charge of the situation.

Then Old Su turned and looked at Xiaozhao:

"Prince Jian, do you really plan to take this step?"

Old Su did not utter the word 'coup,' but Xiaozhao understood his meaning.

This Prince of Great Song, whose face was tense throughout the night, pulled a not-so-pleasing smile at the corners of his mouth and sighed:

"Mr. Su, this king only wants to survive."

Old Su could only remain silent for a moment.

After conversing with Xu Yun tonight, he actually understood the entire incident better than anyone else.

Therefore, he was well aware.

Except for Xu Yun, everyone present was pushed to this point by a great momentum, and Xiaozhao was truly not trying to play the victim.

Thinking of this.

He couldn't help but turn and look around the room.

At this moment, Wang Hou and Old Zhong already donned armor, ready to head to the battlefield at any moment.

Adding to the situation outside with those spies, certain things have reached the point where the arrow must be released.

What they are missing is the group of civil servants, or rather someone like himself who can reassure the Civil Servant Group.

After all, while the number of Yuan You faction members is considerable, the Yuan Feng faction is equally significant.

Even if you exclude ministers like Cai Jing and Zhang Dun, there are still many upright individuals among them.

However, Old Su is the only neutral Prime Minister in Great Song since its founding, never having sided with any faction nor participated in factional struggles.

He has both standing and connections, and even within the Yuan Feng faction possesses substantial influence, having done favors for many.

In reality.

This was also Xu Yun's open stratagem:

A coup is inevitable; this is the general trend that cannot be changed even by killing Xu Yun.

If Old Su does not step up, then inevitably many innocent ministers will be implicated.

It is even possible that some will lose their lives due to the heavy-handed measures taken during chaotic times.

But if Old Su does step forward, not everyone will escape harm, but at least he can protect the vast majority of good ministers.

Moreover, he can use his prestige to calm most opposing voices and ensure a smooth transition of power.

Supreme strategy without fighting...

Old Su slowly closed his eyes, and suddenly a series of images flashed through his mind:

Emperor Shen Zong was critically ill and, on his deathbed, held his hand, his breath weak:

"Zi Rong, the Crown Prince is young, the civil servants' rule, I entrust him to you..."

After Emperor Shen Zong passed away, Emperor Zhezong ascended the throne.

He devoted himself to assisting the government, cooperating with Emperor Zhezong to restart the Hehuang campaigns, with the two battles of Pingxia City nearly subduing Western Xia.

Unfortunately, fate is fickle; Emperor Zhezong died abruptly at twenty-five, without even an edict being issued.

During the selection of the throne, Empress Dowager Xiang jestingly appointed Prince Duan.

Ah, Prince Duan...

He forcibly took civilians' daughters, lazy and skittish, acting frivolously.

Among all the princes, he was the one with the worst reputation.

Though I have already retired, the words of Emperor Shen Zong still resonate in my ears.

Once a prime minister, always a prime minister.

Thinking of this.

Old Su couldn't help but lift his head and look at Xiaozhao:

"Your Highness, I...am willing to accompany His Highness to the palace."

Xiaozhao had originally braced himself for verbal sparring, but upon hearing that Old Su so easily supported him, he was momentarily stunned, then joyfully bowed:

"With Mr. Su here, this matter is settled!"

.....

After Old Su expressed his position.

The atmosphere at the scene immediately relaxed a bit.

Yes, just a bit.

After all, the affair that follows is of greater consequence, and if it fails, even losing one's head would be a minor setback; no one could possibly fully relax.

Then Xiaozhao came to the main seat and first bowed to everyone:

"Everyone, tonight the situation is urgent, so I won't go on at length... cough, cough, I won't waste words."

"General Zhong, I will leave the following tasks to you, to arrange the battle duties."

Old Zhong nodded at him and took a layout map of the Imperial Palace from Wang Hou's hand.

He spread it out, hung it on the wall, and simultaneously introduced:

"The Imperial City is located in the northern part of Bianjing City, with Outer Gates like the Left and Right Yamen, East Splendor Gate, Celestial Wave Gate, and Chenhui Gate."

"Inner Gates include Left and Right Changqing Gates, Left and Right Silver Platform Gates, Left and Right Jiasu Gates."

"Internally, the Imperial Guard is organized, managed as a unit, directly commanded by the Loose Robe Celestial Martial Officer, while the Palace Guard forms the institutional strength of the Imperial Palace Guard."

"Currently, most of the Capital Imperial Guard are stationed at the Imperial Mausoleum, while the interior is overseen by Grand Commandant Wang En, an official's confidant, absolutely impossible to turn."

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Chapter 249 169 Zhao Family's Fine Traditions (8.4K)_3

[1,020 words]

"Therefore, tonight I will personally lead the elite Western Army to enter the city through the New Cao Gate from outside the city—the guards of the New Cao Gate are loyal to His Highness, and we have already established contact with him in advance."

"At that time, we'll break through the East Splendor Gate and storm into the palace, defeating Jia Su on both sides, and directly reach the Forbidden City!"

Wang Hou also nodded; this plan was devised by him and Old Zhong together. He further added:

"What Uncle Yi mentioned is the best plan, but the risks mainly lie in two points."

"Firstly, the Western Army is stationed at Dongying outside the city, and the mobilization must be extremely swift, leaving no time for the Capital Imperial Guard to react."

"Secondly, the East Splendor Gate is easy to defend and hard to attack. To breach it and reach the Forbidden City in front of the Emperor, a bloody battle is likely unavoidable."

As soon as Wang Hou said this,

The atmosphere on site immediately became several degrees more tense.

You should know that.

Currently, though Tong Guan has not yet ascended as the Imperial Secretariat, out of the three major Imperial Guards of Great Song, truly effective forces being depleted only include the Hebei Imperial Guard.

The Capital Imperial Guard, although slightly inferior in combat prowess compared to the Western Army battle-tested over the years, isn't outrageously weaker by multiples.

Not to mention the Imperial Guard responsible for defending the Imperial City, considered absolutely elite within the Capital, with exceedingly strong combat power.

According to the longstanding system of the Imperial City,

The number of Imperial Guards on duty in the palace each day reaches a staggering eighteen hundred people.

Counting the Personal Guard Camp of the Guard Department, the total reaches over two thousand six hundred people.

Two thousand people...

With the palace walls and other equipment, plus giving them sufficient time to react, it's uncertain whether an attack could truly succeed.

However, compared to Wang Hou's impressively determined stance, Xu Yun's expression was far more subtle, tinged with amusement:

Won't Old Zhong and the others, upon arriving outside the gates only to find the two Eastern Palace gates wide open, mistakenly assume it's a trick of Empty City strategy?

That's right.

Xu Yun is stirring things up again!

In his past life, after Xu Yun ventured into writing by the sea, he had come across a lot of knowledge about historical coups.

Thus he knew clearly.

The palace gates would often become a solid barrier for the attacking side during a coup.

If the gates weren't breached in time, reinforcing defenders arrived, it could become a complete defeat.

As the orchestrator behind this coup, how could he leave this major problem unresolved?

To solve this issue, the first step is to confirm one thing:

The Western Army's position is at Dongying outside the city; entering the city can only be through the New Cao Gate.

After passing the New Cao Gate, to enter the Imperial Palace, only the two major eastern doors are available.

Although Xu Yun didn't know Xiaozhao's exact timing for action.

Considering the deteriorating situation in the Capital, estimating when events would occur was not difficult, whether within a week or after a week.

So, estimating the time is about right.

Xu Yun then communicated the matter to Zhao Ji through Guo Jing:

Your Highness, a true dragon transformed its path in the East Sea a few days ago, and you are the living true dragon. Therefore, the dragon energy will naturally be drawn into the palace.

Yet dragon energy is peculiar; once it enters the palace, it can be easily absorbed.

Thus, the best approach is to open the East Gate wide, without keeping guards inside the gate.

By then, I'll draw a formation; after dragon energy is refined through Wende Hall, Chuigong Hall, and Jiyin Hall, it can completely be absorbed by you!

Zhao Ji is a man who dared to open the city gates and unleash Six Jia Divine Soldiers even when the Jin Army reached the city, self-proclaimed Emperor Daojun, convincing him remains quite easy.

Not to mention the current Guo Jing, further empowered by Xu Yun, has turned into a master deceiver.

Honestly speaking.

If only observing what Guo Jing did, there's probably few alchemists in history as vigorous as him.

Today capturing ghosts, exorcising demons; tomorrow proclaiming a comet, and the following day, forecasting an earthquake—who could withstand such things?

Even if Emperor Qin Shi Huang or Emperor Wu of Han saw such a man, they'd definitely bestow the title of National Preceptor.

Therefore, after hearing about the matter.

Zhao Ji immediately approved Guo Jing's arrangement, leaving the two Eastern Gates completely open without reservation.

After completing the formation that day, Zhao Ji was even persuaded to shout, "The advantage is with me," a matter not fit for outsiders.

The scene shifts back to reality.

Tonight, the actions Xiaozhao embarked on truly are a race against time, with no room for delay.

Thus, after assigning the battle tasks, Old Zhong and Wang Hou promptly set out with several commanders.

Xiaozhao, Xu Yun, Old Su, and a group of civil servants, mounted on more than a dozen horses with hooves silenced by cotton, quietly departed from Prince Jian's Mansion.

The six arts of a gentleman are rites, music, archery, riding, writing, mathematics; riding belongs to the art of riding.

Hence, even an octogenarian like Old Su possessed commendable horsemanship.

Or did you think the car god of Gaoliang River could leave whenever they pleased?

A quarter of an hour later.

The group arrived at a landmark near the Imperial City:

The Great Goods Warehouse.

This was Xiaozhao's uncle's property, and upon knowing the plot, the surroundings had been cleared in advance.

Then everyone entered the prepared shelter and began waiting for Old Zhong's news,

An hour later.

The hour reached late-night Chou, about two in the morning.

Just as the group was sweating with anticipation, a rustling sound suddenly came from outside.

A moment later.

Old Zhong's tall figure sneaked out from outside the door; he hurriedly bowed to Xiaozhao:

"Your Highness, Dongying outside the city has been successfully controlled, under me the elite Western Army of 4396 men all entered the city!"

"Recently, with upheavals in the capital, the officials declared a curfew; now the watchmen throughout the eastern city are all our people, troops entering the city extremely smoothly; just..."

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Chapter 250 - 169: The Fine Tradition of the Old Zhao Family (8.4K)_4

[1,047 words]

Chapter 250: Chapter 169: The Fine Tradition of the Old Zhao Family (8.4K)_4

Seeing Old Zhong hesitating, Xiaozhao couldn't help but tense up:

"What is it?"

A hint of confusion flashed in Old Zhong's eyes as he said:

"Here's the thing, after the troops entered the city, I sent a few spies disguised as drunkards to scout the situation."

"The spies reported back that..."

"The East Splendor Gate and Chenhui Gate were wide open to the outside, not a soul was seen on the city walls, except a few Daoists performing rituals..."

"...?"

A question mark floated across Xiaozhao's face as he suddenly realized something, and asked:

"General Zhong, could there be some deceit involved?"

Old Zhong shook his head confidently, pulled out a roster from his body, handed it to Xiaozhao, and explained:

"Chu Dao conducted a personnel count after securing Dongying and found no troops were preemptively transferred from the capital, everything is normal."

"Perhaps... it's just the officials up to some mischief again."

Xiaozhao took a deep breath; at this point, there's no time to retreat, a look of resolve flashed in his eyes:

"With the arrow already drawn, it must be fired. General Zhong, prepare...To enter the palace!"

"Order received!"

Old Zhong clasped his fists towards Xiaozhao, turned back to the main force, and began the final combat preparations.

Very quickly, even Xu Yun, who had no combat tasks, was given a machete.

Along with.....

A small bottle.

According to Wang Bing, it's called...

He Ding Hong.

After a quarter of an hour.

The main force was divided into two parts, cautiously approaching the East Splendor Gate and Chenhui Gate.

According to the original battle plan.

The army can now light torches, raise commands, and set up ladders to start attacking and seizing the gates.

But the open palace gates changed Old Zhong and Wang Hou's minds temporarily:

They selected an elite infantry unit called 'capital', with a size of 105 people.

Then split it into two, carefully advancing towards the city gates.

A little while later.

The captain crouched and reported back:

"Report, there are a total of twelve Daoists stationed at the two palace gates, all are completely under control!"

Old Zhong glanced at him and coldly asked:

"Was there no noise?"

The captain smiled, shook his head, and said:

"Rest assured. Ten of them were sound asleep, snoring louder than our footsteps. By the time they reacted, their mouths were already sealed."

Confusion flashed again in Xiaozhao's eyes, increasingly unable to grasp Zhao Ji's intentions.

But soon, he still issued the order:

"In that case, the whole army should quiet down and sneak into the palace!"

According to Old Zhong and Wang Hou's earlier plan.

After breaching the East Splendor Gate, there were three gates in front of the crowd, including the Right Jiasu Gate and the Left Jiasu Gate.

If they could breach the Left Jiasu Gate, they'd reach the Imperial Ceremony Hall.

Beyond that was the Forbidden City.

Hence, whatever Zhao Ji might be up to, the fact that the East Splendor Gate could be crossed silently suggests that the next Right Jiasu Gate could catch the Imperial Guard unprepared, increasing the success rate of their action.

But soon, after advancing not far, the armies discovered.....

Even the Right Jiasu Gate was completely open, and no Daoists were stationed there either.

Xiaozhao:

"...0.0?"

What on earth is happening?

Then came the Left Jiasu Gate, equally deserted.

Seeing this scenario.

Even Wang Hou and Old Zhong, despite their decades of combat experience, were dumbfounded:

"0.0?"

On the other hand.

Perceiving the effortless approach to the heart of the Imperial Palace, the mood of the entire errant group instantly soared.

Despite the ecstatic surroundings of Civil Servants, Xu Yun's emotions were strangely melancholic, even furious:

Perhaps back when Wanyan Zongwang's brothers were outside Bianjing City, watching Emperor Huizong of Song and Emperor Qinzong of Song slowly walk out to surrender, Xiaozhao and the others felt exactly the same way...

More accurately.

Emperor Huizong of Song back then must have been far more outrageous than he is now:

Tonight, despite the palace gates being wide open, Bianjing lacked a formidable enemy outside and had Dongying guarding inside.

Excluding unique circumstances like Xiaozhao's, there was at least some theoretical security guarantee.

But during Jingkang?

That was truly a match of life and death...

Aside from bizarre and idiotic, Xu Yun simply couldn't find words to describe Zhao Ji.....

And so.

Just like that.

A group majestically passed through the three gates originally expected to consume a lot of time and arrived outside Huitong Gate within the Forbidden City.

Upon reaching this point.

Xiaozhao and the others were inevitably discovered.

But in a certain sense.

Whether discovered or not at this stage hardly mattered:

Now, with 80% of the Imperial Palace's guard forces stationed on the south, north, and west sides, completely unaware that the crystal from the Forbidden City had been stolen.

In the Forbidden City, only Wang En and Palace Guards led by the Imperial City Department were left, totaling just over 200 people.

against 4396.

Even with the help of the five-meter high walls of the Forbidden City, it's not even a comparable level of combat.

"Kill!!!!!"

"Charge!"

"Boom——"

At this moment, Zhao Ji was sleeping soundly with a certain Imperial Consort, dreaming of conquering the Liao Kingdom and forcing Yelv Hongji to open the city and surrender, while he was indulging in the consort of Emperor Xingzong of Liao.

Only to be rudely jolted back to reality by the sounds outside.

As the Great Song Emperor rubbed his eyes, a surge of fury arose in his chest.

He was about to summon an eunuch to inquire about the situation:

"Li Guding, get me..."

But before he could finish, the room was violently broken into.

"Boom——"

The Imperial Consort beside him awoke in shock, quickly pulling over the quilt to cover her jade body:

"Ah!!!!!"

Yet perhaps due to being exhausted by indulgence, Zhao Ji remained somewhat muddled.

In his blurred vision, he suddenly saw the shadows of ancestors like Zhao Kuangyin and Zhao Guangyi emerging, seemingly in the Chenqiao Posthouse?

At the same time.

Along with the shadows, a cold voice echoed in his ears:

"It's all over, brother."

.....

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