

Envelope 1751

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Chapter 1751: Total Domination

“What? For me?” Su Xiaoman pointed at herself. Her heart was keeling over inside her chest, and her face turned beet red. “I cannot accept such an expensive gift!”

Chen Xiaobei smiled. “This belonged to the Divine Tiger Faction’s ancestor. Are you sure you don’t want it?”

“We don’t even know if it’s the real thing!” Su Xiaoman said doubtfully.

“Young lady! Watch what you’re saying! Don’t speak so carelessly!” The shopkeeper snapped. “Go ask around and see if anyone dares to sell counterfeit items in Yellow Wind? I would never do it, not even if I had the courage of a lion!”

“Boss, don’t get so upset! I can tell that this is the real deal!” Chen Xiaobei said.

With the Eight-Diagram Qi Observational Skill, Chen Xiaobei could see the unmistakable thick purple-gold aura discharging from the Tiger Claw Scythe.

Only a high-value antique object would give out purple-gold aura. So, the scythe was definitely authentic.

“You have a very good eye, sir!” The shopkeeper nodded. “Very few people know about this Tiger Claw Scythe. I’ll give you a friend’s price... you can have it for one million medium-grade Spiritual Stones!”

“No problem! Take it down!” Chen Xiaobei nodded.

“No! No! No! This scythe is too expensive! I can’t take it!” Su Xiaoman shook her head. Her family’s entire family property’s worth was not even 100,000 medium-grade Spiritual Stones. How could she accept a gift worth 1 million?

“An ignorant country bumpkin who doesn’t know what’s what!” A shrill voice suddenly said.

It was a woman in a bright, pretty long dress. She walked to the store and snatched the Tiger Claw Scythe. “One million medium-grade Spiritual Stones for a one-of-a-kind Tiger Claw Scythe. That’s dirt cheap! If this bumpkin doesn’t want it, I, Yun Ziqiao, will take it!”

The look Chen Xiaobei gave this unreasonable woman was glacial. Her rude affront about Su Xiaoman being a country bumpkin aggravated him a hundred times more.

Su Xiaoman stiffened. She was at a loss. She had been reserved about receiving such an expensive gift but seeing someone else simply snatch it away sparked a crestfallen feeling and a reluctance in her.

The shopkeeper did not say anything to regulate the situation. His eyes were glued to the woman named Yun Ziqiao.

Admittedly, this woman was a sight to behold – attractive face and alluring body, wrapped in a long, flowy dress, drawing lewd looks from lustful, wondering eyes as she walked past them.

She was at that charming age between a teenager and a mature woman, and her prideful personality appealed to men's dominant nature.

If they could subdue this wild mare, it would give them a sense of accomplishment.

Of course, the perverts in the market only dared to watch her from afar. None of them had the balls to approach her because right next to this attractive woman was a handsome escort dressed in clean and neat clothing.

Anyone with eyes could tell that this fine young man was probably the son of some powerful faction.

No point courting a rebuff.

"Boss!" The young man said. "I'll make you sorry if you keep staring at Ziqiao like that!"

"I'm sorry... sorry... I had no intention to offend..." The shopkeeper quickly averted his eyes. "I'm selling this Tiger Claw Scythe for one million medium-grade Spiritual Stones! If Miss Yun pays now, you can take it away with you right away!"

"What nonsense!" The young man gave the shopkeeper a disgusted look. "I, Du Tiannan, am here! How can I let Qicao pay for it?"

"Huh? Bro Tiannan wants to buy it for me?" Yun Ziqiao flashed the young man a fetching smile.

"Of course!" Du Tiannan said in a smug tone. "I am happy to buy you gifts!"

The shopkeeper took the opportunity to suck up to this aristocrat. "Young master Du is so chivalrous! So gracious! No wonder you are able to captivate Ms. Yun's heart!"

"Don't talk about these useless things." Du Tiannan snapped. "For the sake of my Divine Fist Du Family's face, take 50% off the price! You agree, right?"

"What?! 50%?" The shopkeeper's eyes nearly fell out.

"What? Is my family's face not worth 500,000 medium-grade Spiritual Stones?" Du Tiannan smirked. "You just need to nod, and if you cause any trouble within a 100,000-mile radius of Divine Fist's mansion, just use my name, Du Tiannan and you'll be guaranteed to protect yourself!"

It was evident to the onlookers that it was not because this Du Tiannan could not afford to pay one million medium-grade Spiritual Stones for the scythe but because he wanted to bargain to gain a petty advantage at the shopkeeper's expense.

His true purpose was to show off his lineage in front of Yun Ziqiao.

"Yes! It is! It is worth 500,000 medium-grade Spiritual Stones!" The shopkeeper nodded compliantly. "So, it'll be like what you said, young master Du! 50% off! The next time I travel within your region, I would be looking forward to your protection!"

These black-market merchants made their living by felonious means! To have the protection from a legitimate protective umbrella would mean that they would gain a huge advantage over their competitors. That included gaining the advantage from both black and white sides.

Trading 500,000 medium-grade Spiritual Stones for protection from Divine First's mansion would actually allow us to earn back the Spiritual Stones that we spent on them, not to mention an unimaginable amount of profit before we even realize it!"

This deal was extremely worth it!

"Well said!" Du Tiannan lifted his chin. "Next time you're in trouble, just mention my name!"

Yun Ziqiao looked at him with adulation in her eyes. "Bro Tiannan is so cool! No one is brave enough to refuse to give face to Divine Fist!"

"However big your face it, we should still give priority to the person who came first!" Chen Xiaobei reached out his right hand and took the Tiger Claw Scythe back from Yun Ziqiao.

"You... You snatched my scythe?" Yun Ziqiao was startled.

"You took this scythe from my friend. It only makes sense for me to take it back." Chen Xiaobei said.

"Hmph! How dare you talk to me like that?!" Yun Ziqiao planted her arms on her waist. "Look all around you. Every single one of these men here are polite and courteous to me! But you? You don't know how to treat a woman! You snatched the scythe from my hands! How rude! You're a barbarian! I'm starting to wonder now if you're even a real man!"

"If I'm not a real man, are you one then?" Chen Xiaobei retorted.

"I..." Yun Ziqiao was foaming at the mouth. "I am a lady born with natural beauty! I have the looks! I have the body! Any normal man would drool at the sight of me! You are the only one who turns a blind eye! You know what I think? You're a eunuch who can't get it on! You're not a man!"

Chen Xiaobei was unfazed by the woman's slanderous remarks. "I was not pointing fingers at you. But speaking of beauty, I could simply choose from any one from my group of lady friends, and they would still be a million times better looking than you! An ordinary woman like you is supposed to make me drool? Go and reincarnate immediately! We'll talk about it in your next life!"

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Chapter 1752: 100% Discount

"You... You, You, You..." Yun Ziqiao screamed, red-faced. "Bro Tiannan! This asshole is bullying me!"

Although Yu Ziqiao was not an extraordinarily beautiful woman whose looks were capable of causing the downfall of a city or state, she was still an exquisite woman regardless.

Since a young age, she had had a sundry of suitors who filled her ears with praises and flatteries about her looks.

This was the first time she had encountered someone as infuriating and pesky as Chen Xiaobei.

Even Su Xiaoman was shocked that this composed and slightly stand-offish Child Zhufeng would utter such harsh and sharp words!

"You callous son of a bitch!" Du Tiannan stood in front of Yun Ziqiao protectively, glaring at Chen Xiaobei. "How dare you bully Ziqiao meimei! You disrespect me!"

Chen Xiaobei hissed, “Did you show me any respect when you snatched the Tiger Claw Scythe away?”

“What the hell are you that you’re worthy of our respect?” Du Tiannan chided in a patronizing tone.

“Were we not in Yellow Wind now, I would have slapped you a hundred times!”

“Heh, at least you are aware that this is Yellow Wind!” Chen Xiaobei scoffed. “The rule in Yellow Wind mountain runs on a first come first serve basis! I saw the Tiger Claw Scythe first and I was going to buy it for my friend! You barged in – that’s a violation of the rules!”

“That country bumpkin was the one who said she didn’t want it!” Yun Ziqiao snapped. “She gave it up! Why can’t we buy it huh?”

Chen Xiaobei growled at her, “Not only are you commonplace, but you also seem to be missing a large chunk of your brain!”

“Missing a chunk of my brain?!” Yun Ziqiao shrieked in ferocity. “You are the one who’s brainless here! Bro Tiannan!!! Look! He insulted me again!”

Chen Xiaobei said, “I was ready to buy the scythe for my friend. My friend only refused it to be polite! At the end of the day, whether we buy it or not is still for me to decide! You don’t even know that! If that’s not a sign of brainlessness, then what is?”

“I...” Yun Ziqiao froze. Her face had darkened considerably.

“That’s enough, asshole!” Du Tiannan barked. “You said that you saw the scythe first, but who can be witness to that? There’s no proof! I can also very easily say that you were the one who cut in and broke the rules!”

Chen Xiaobei turned his eyes to the shopkeeper and asked, “Boss, are you still not going to say anything about this?”

“I...” The shopkeeper was unaccommodating. “My... memory is not very good. I remember... I think... Young Master Du came first!”

Du Tiannan had the Divine Fist Sect behind him. No one would refuse to give face to the Du family.

By comparison, Chen Xiaobei was just a nameless commoner.

Thus, while there were many witnesses around, none of them were willing to offend Du Tiannan for Chen Xiaobei’s sake.

Du Tiannan jutted his chin self-congratulatorily. “Did you hear that, dumbass? I came first! You have three seconds to get out of here or else, I’ll get the regulatory affairs manager and get him to kick you out!”

Chen Xiaobei nearly broke into laughter. “Regulatory affairs manager? Are you talking about Liu Xiaosi?”

“Liu Xiaosi?” Du Tiannan shouted. “Is something wrong with you? Master Liu Si is Yellow Wind’s pillar! How dare you so disrespectfully call him Liu Xiaosi? You’re a dead man! You’re dead for sure!”

Chen Xiaobei shrugged. “Liu Xiaosi! If you want to become a half-cripple, then continue to hide in the crowd and watch!”

“Huh?” Master Liu Si quickly scurried over. “Sir, please don’t misunderstand! I was distracted and replying to some messages just now! I was not just standing in the crowd, watching and doing nothing! You have to believe me, sir!”

Du Tiannan’s jaw fell open.

Everyone else was just as dumbfounded.

Who would dare believe that Master Liu Si would actually come running at Chen Xiaobei’s call?

What was more inconceivable was the way Master Liu Si spoke so respectfully and so nonchalantly to Chen Xiaobei.

What was so special about this Chen Xiaobei?

It was very unlikely that Chen Xiaobei was the owner of this black market, right?

The conversation had Du Tiannan, Yun Ziqiao, and the shopkeeper feel a chill run down their spine.

“Master... Master Si...” The shopkeeper gulped, wiping his sweat-ridden brow with his sleeve.

Smack!

Master Liu Si stared the shopkeeper down and gave him a hard slap across the face. “Don’t you know the rules of the Yellow Wind black market? Don’t you know the master’s temper?”

“I didn’t know that you are here, Master Si... I realize I am wrong now... Master Si, please... please be lenient and have mercy on me...” The shopkeeper plopped down onto the ground and repeatedly thumped his head on the floor.

“There’s no point for you to beg me!” Master Liu Si hissed. “If this Childe chooses not to spare you, I will have to deal with this in accordance to the rules – destroy your cultivation, and ban you from Yellow Wind black market forever!”

The shopkeeper exhaled, and bowed to Chen Xiaobei crying, “Childe! Have mercy! I was ignorant! Please just give me one chance... please...”

Chen Xiaobei shrugged. “I can do that but I’m hoping you can give me a 100% discount on this Tiger Claw Scythe!”

“100%?” The shopkeeper nodded profusely. “No problem! This scythe is free! Consider it as my gift to you!”

“Alright! Good!” Chen Xiaobei smiled and handed the scythe to Su Xiaoman. “Here you go, Xiaoman!”

Su Xiaoman accepted the Tiger Claw Scythe with both hands stiffly held out. Having never set her hands on something of such value, she was nervous and happy, her heart racing wildly in her chest.

“Master Si... I...” The shopkeeper imploringly looked at Master Liu Si.

“Consider yourself lucky!” Master Liu Si hissed. “Next time, conduct your business by the book! If you commit outrages like this again, I will not be so forgiving!”

“Yes, yes, yes...” The shopkeeper quickly scurried back into his burrow. He would not dare to show his face again.

“Childe! How should we deal with these two idiots?” Master Liu Si asked.

Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao’s chests tightened, afraid that Chen Xiaobei was going to retaliate unsparingly.

But Chen Xiaobei merely shrugged. “I’m feeling pretty good today. So, I won’t bother myself with the two of you! Give yourself ten slaps, hard enough that I can hear it. Then, we’ll consider this matter settled!”

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Chapter 1753: Careful Planning

“Childe... Look... That was all a misunderstanding...” said Du Tiannan, who had now changed his attitude in a flash. “I was ignorant! I didn’t know that you were that close to Master Liu Si! I am willing to apologize!”

“I... I am sorry too...” Yun Ziqiao hid behind Du Tiannan, putting away all the arrogance and vanity he previously had.

“Huh, apologize? If apology matters, why did you ask for the regulatory affairs manager then?” Chen Xiaobei said.

“Half a minute ago, you took my scythe, and was going to file the suit first! You were about to get the manager to kick me out of the black market! Do you think that an apology would suffice? Just because you said a sorry, I can pretend that nothing happened? There won’t be an easy ending for you!”

The corner of Du Tiannan’s lips twitched. “Childe! In Jianghu, it’s better to gain a friend than make another enemy! Even if you do not accept my apology; for the sake of Divine Fist Sect, you should seriously consider changing your mind...”

Chen Xiaobei laughed. “What a joke! I don’t have any relations with your family at all. Why should I give face to you?”

“You...” Du Tiannan’s face squirmed in a spasm of rage.

In Black Tortoise continent, not only was the Divine First Sect considered the most powerful faction, but they were also definitely one of the upper mid-tier factions!”

Its name alone, the Divine Fist Sect, could make both the black and white sides show them some good old respect.

But not only did Chen Xiaobei not give face, but he also went ahead and gave him a tight slap. This was the very first time Du Tiannan encountered such an arrogant person.

Chen Xiaobei shrugged. “I shall not say more. If you refuse to slap your own face, I guess we’ll just have to follow the rules!”

Du Tiannan could not decide. If no one else was around, then it would have been fine. But with hundreds of eyes watching him, and in front of the woman he admired, slapping his own face, even if it were just ten strikes would bring shame to his and his family's face!

He would never look the same to Yun Ziqiao, and would lose any opportunity to win her over ever again!

Du Tiannan found himself at a crossroads.

"Why are you doing? Go ahead and slap yourself!" Liu Si barked. "Childe Chen has already been very lenient with you! If you don't start slapping yourself now, I will just play according to the rules, and destroy both of your cultivation. I will then ban you from Yellow Wind forever! These are the rules of the old master!"

Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao inhaled sharply. When they heard the name old master, they quivered as if they had been struck by lightning.

"We were wrong... We are willing to slap ourselves..."

Du Tiannan gritted his teeth, raised both hands to his face and slapped himself ten times in the face.

"Bro Tiannan... I..." Yun Ziqiao had never been struck by anyone before. She never thought her first time would be her slapping herself.

"Ziqiao... It's okay... We have no choice..." Du Tiannan cried. "Old master's rules.... You probably already know the outcome... Even if our family came together, we would still not be strong enough..."

"I..." Yun Ziqiao had no other choice. So, she struck herself in the face ten times before everyone in the black market.

"Master Liu Si, can we leave now?" Du Tiannan's face was burning hot. His only wish now was to escape all the unwanted attention.

Master Liu Si glanced at Chen Xiaobei. When he saw that Chen Xiaobei had no problem with it, he snapped, "Go!"

Du Tiannan quickly grabbed Yun Ziqiao and left the scrutinizing gaze of the crowd.

Master Liu Si said, "Childe... Shall we continue our walk elsewhere?"

Chen Xiaobei shook his head. "I'm not in the mood anymore. Find us a place to rest. Inform us tomorrow when the auction begins!"

"Are you here to join the auction?" Master Liu Si said. "I'll go arrange a resting place for you now... but the remaining five bottles of wines, I haven't found anything to exchange..."

"Don't worry, I'm not that greedy!" Chen Xiaobei said. "I already got a free Tiger Claw Scythe. I won't make things difficult for you!"

Chen Xiaobei handed over five bottles of Hundreds Fruit Dragon Dick Moonshine to the man eager to regain his vigour.

“Thank you! Thank you...” exclaimed Master Liu Si who was clearly euphoric. “I will go get a place ready for you now! If you need me, just hit me up!”

Chen Xiaobei was being nice and mean at the same time. This ensured that Liu Si stood on his side.

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Chen Xiaobei and Su Xiaoman were allowed to rest for the night in the market’s private luxury cavern to wait for the auction the next day.

Master Liu Si even assigned people to serve them with sumptuous fragrant tea, fragrant dim sum, and fresh fruits. It was all a very thoughtful gesture.

After everyone else was gone, Su Xiaoman asked, “Childe Zhufeng, there’s something I don’t quite understand... There was no need to create such a big scene today although... it was very satisfying to teach Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao a lesson. Showing off your ability like that will make you the focal point of the black market! This will just invite more trouble...”

“I did it on purpose!” Chen Xiaobei grinned. “The Yellow Wind black market’s rules are very strict, and no one would dare violate it! Even if I have a target on my back, I am completely safe!”

“So, you purposely made a scene so that people will target you?” Su Xiaoman looked at Chen Xiaobei quizzically. “But how does that benefit you?”

“I was just testing my luck – to see if I could catch the black market’s old master’s attention!” Chen Xiaobei said. “If he does, then he will want to talk to Liu Si! Liu Si will not lie, so he’ll talk about my godly wine! If the old master is interested in this wine, I’ll leave this place with bulging pockets!”

“Oh!” Su Xiaoman gasped. “Childe Zhufeng! You are incredible! I thought you had ill intentions when you made them slap themselves! You simply deliberately created a scene to achieve an objective!”

Chen Xiaobei shrugged. “The world is a game of chess; one thinks three steps ahead before making a move! Cudgel your brain a little more, and always plan ahead so that the road ahead will be easier!”

“Think three steps ahead before making a move! That’s a very good rationale!” Su Xiaoman applauded. “Childe Zhufeng, you really are my idol! Most people can’t even come up with such philosophical statements!”

“Philosophical? It’s nothing...” Chen Xiaobei scratched his head awkwardly. Who knew huh, that King of Glory line could be used to act cool?

It now seemed that this game was not completely useless after all!

“But, what if the old master is not interested in you? There’s no problem with his... ‘root’...” Su Xiaoman blushed.

“I was just testing my luck!” Chen Xiaobei shrugged. “That old master is not a common man. Who knows, he might foresee into the far future?”

“I don’t quite get what you mean...” Su Xiaoman shook her head.

“Don’t crack your head over it! We’ll find out tomorrow!” Chen Xiaobei answered. “Rest up! I’ll continue to cultivate!”

Chapter 1754: A Big Business Opportunity

Ding!

[Cultivation: Middle phase of Ethereal Cultivation; Lifespan: 2,570; Health: 244,000; Combat power: 224,000]

Tonight, Chen Xiaobei had spent a good ten hours cultivating nonstop, increasing his health and combat power by 1,000.

It was not a lot per se, but at the very least, it was improving every day.

Chen Xiaobei looked around and saw that Su Xiaoman was not in the cavern, so he packed up and left.

Just as he walked out of the cave, Su Xiaoman came running to him. “Childe Zhufeng! You’re awake, finally! I’ve been walking around for nearly half a day!”

“So? Did you find anything interesting?” Chen Xiaobei asked.

“I did! There sure are a lot of big shots this morning!” Su Xiaoman nodded and then pointed at a man up ahead. “Look at that fatty wearing expensive clothes! That’s a wealthy businessman from the Black Tortoise imperial city – Zhu Youfu! His net worth is over dozens of billions! He’s literally rolling in money!”

“Tens of billions? Medium-grade Spiritual Stones?” Chen Xiaobei exclaimed.

All of Chen Xiaobei’s assets combined were only around 1.5 billion medium-grade Spiritual Stones.

Chen Xiaobei could have easily been amongst the richest men in the Nine Zones but here in the Black Tortoise continent, Chen Xiaobei’s financial power was not even worthy to be mentioned.

Xiaoman then pointed in another direction. “And over there! That outrageously beautiful woman in black! She’s the core disciple of Qin Family! The Qin Family is in the top-tier of the richest families in Vermillion Phoenix! Qin Yitian is the number one genius of her generation in her family! She came all the way here by herself! There must be something that she really needs to buy here!”

“Qin Yitian?” Chen Xiaobei turned to look and his eyes widened.

The woman was stunning. Tall and shapely, she carried the body of a demon’s*!

This was exactly what Chen Xiaobei had talked about – beauty that put Yun Ziqiao to shame.

Strangely, none of the men dared look straight at Qin Yitian’s bewitching looks!

They knew who she was and were too afraid of the Heaven Dominating Faction and the Vermillion Phoenix Qin Family to offend her in any way.

Those who did not know who she was were repelled by the intense murderous intent that she exuded.

“Childe...” Su Xiaoman said nervously. “Don’t stare at her like that... You’ll only attract trouble...”

Chen Xiaobei quickly averted his gaze and sighed. “That woman’s murderous intent is freaky! She looks like she had just killed millions of people!”

“Of course!” Su Xiaoman said in almost a whisper. “Qin Yitian has a very special type of blood running through her veins. When she was just born, a Three-star Earth-God Instrument, the Heaven Reliant Sword, fell from the heavens and made her master! The sword had never left her side ever since. The sword’s murderous intent has a big influence on her. After a while, she didn’t even have to speak to exude her terrifying murderous intent!”

“What blood could it have been that could cause a Three-star Earth-God Instrument to voluntarily acknowledge her as its owner?!” Chen Xiaobei gasped.

Back in the Divine Dragon Ruin, the Green Dragon Emperor and the Vermillion Dragon Emperor had to offer a blood sacrifice to the sword before having to spend billions of Spiritual Stones to unleash the power of a Three-star Earth-God Instrument.

This Qin Yitian, on the other hand, became the master of a Three-star Earth-God Instrument from birth! The gods in the heavens must surely adore her!

“I’m not sure either...” Su Xiaoman said. “I have heard people say that she’s the one in hundreds of millions Spirit Sword Master! Her family and Heaven Dominating Faction groomed and trained Qin Yitian like she’s the finest of treasure!”

“Spirit Sword Master?” Chen Xiaobei scratched the back of his head. “Ah, forget it. We’ll never have anything to do with Vermillion Phoenix anyway. We don’t need to study this Qin Yitian! Did you find anything else?”

“Yup!” Su Xiaoman answered. “Do you see that young man covered in gold and jade? He’s Jiang Songtao, the only son of Jiang Fengming, an equipment crafting master! The Jiang family assets are worth over ten billion. They are considered the top-tier family in Black Tortoise imperial city! The young master Jiang must have come here himself to collect materials for equipment crafting!”

“Ten billion?” Chen Xiaobei looked puzzled. “How could an equipment crafting master be so rich? Is the equipment crafting industry that lucrative over here?”

“Of course!” Su Xiaoman nodded. “Equipment crafting master, alchemists, Traditional Chinese medicine doctors, and talisman crafting masters – these are four of the most scarce major occupations! There are only a dozen or so in Black Tortoise’s population of three billion people! That’s why this vast market is dominated by a few talents!” Su Xiaoman explained. “Just like your wine, they are the only family of equipment crafting master! One million for a bottle, non-negotiable! The patient had to spend money and yet they are grateful to you! How could you not earn money with this system!”

“Makes sense!” Chen Xiaobei nodded.

It was just like oil back on earth which was monopolized by the few big kahunas. The profits they earned are generous, to say the least.

Chen Xiaobei pondered for a moment and asked, “Can you give me the specifics? How high is the equipment crafting industry’s profit margin?”

Su Xiaoman answered, "I'll give you an example. The market price of a One-star Earth-God Instrument is 100 million medium-grade Spiritual Stones! In reality, you only need a small number of Earth-God items and a rather large number of Spiritual items to manufacture one! The actual cost of it is probably nowhere near one-tenth of the price that they are selling it for in the market!

"Above all, Earth-God Instruments are priceless most of the time. You may not be able to get one even if you have 100 million! Normally, you can only get it if you fork out two to three hundred million. That's twenty, thirty times the cost price! Almost the entire price is pure profit!"

"That's incredible!" Chen Xiaobei's mind was whirring. "I could earn a lot of money if I open an equipment crafting shop!"

"Childe Zhufeng, calm down! Equipment crafting may be profitable but the process is very difficult!" Su Xiaoman frowned. "It could take anywhere from a few years to a decade to complete the production of one Earth-God Instrument! Say you fail in the middle of the process, all the resources and energy you invested would be wasted! If everyone could craft equipment so easily, then this industry wouldn't have been so lucrative!"

Chen Xiaobei was not discouraged by this.

He had the Earth-God grade Green Jade Cauldron and Sanmei True Fire.

Last time, it took him only six days to complete the upgrade of his Nightstalker Outfit with the Earth-God material called Milky-Wat Patterned Cloth!

Chen Xiaobei already had all the hardware to craft equipment.

The only problem was that he did not have any blueprints of the equipment!

Like making medicine and pills, only with a blueprint could he pick out the few materials or ingredients he needed and craft them according to the specifications to complete an item with a Spiritual Attribute!

Only with a blueprint could Chen Xiaobei set up an equipment crafting shop with absolute confidence!

Then Chen Xiaobei's wealth would soar, and it would only be a matter of time before he became the wealthiest person in all of Black Tortoise!

"Childe Zhufeng? Stop daydreaming!" Su Xiaoman cried. "Look over there! I'm afraid we're going to have a problem!"

"Huh? What problem?" Chen Xiaobei turned to look, a furrow creeping into his brows.

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Chapter 1755: Something's Not Right

Chen Xiaobei followed Su Xiaoman's finger and asked, "Where are they going?"

He was referring to Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao who had supposedly left yesterday after the incident at the store.

Du Tiannan was walking shoulder to shoulder with the Black Tortoise imperial city tycoon Zhu Youfu, addressing him as uncle, in a very intimate and friendly way.

Yun Ziqiao had employed her good looks to strike up a conversation with the equipment crafting master's son Jiang Songtao! Whenever she had a chance, she would exchange glances at him; probably even having the mind to make an intimate move!

"Zhu Youfu was worth a few billion, and the Jiang family's assets was worth over ten billion. Either one of them can cause us major trouble during the auction!" Su Xiaoman said worriedly.

"That's very likely..." Chen Xiaobei nodded. "But the auction is about to start. I don't have time to alter the situation. We just have to be cautious every step of the way!"

"I thought you always think three steps ahead?" Su Xiaoman pouted.

"I did." Chen Xiaobei said impatiently. "This happened so suddenly. I'm no prophet. How could I have predicted that this would happen?"

"That's true..." Su Xiaoman nodded.

"Childe Chen! Ms. Su!" Master Liu Si greeted with a broad smile on his face. "The auction is going to start soon! I've already arranged two VIP seats for you. You can go in now!"

"Let's go..." Chen Xiaobei nodded.

...

Under Liu Si's lead, they made their way quickly to the auction.

The Yellow Wind black market auction was conducted in a natural annular cave.

Considering its mediocre size, it could only seat about three hundred people.

Those who attended the auction were all affluent men and women. Unless they had a net worth of 500 million medium-grade Spiritual Stones, they would not have been allowed to enter the venue!

The combined buying power of these three hundred attendees far exceeded the three thousand who attended the auction in Black Tortoise imperial city.

As usual, Liu Si was being very hospitable.

"Please, please take a seat!" he chimed.

Once Chen Xiaobei and Su Xiaoman were seated, Liu Si had his boys bring them tea and dim sum.

"Liu Si, you go ahead and do what you need to do. Don't worry about us!" Chen Xiaobei waved him away.

"There's no rush, Childe Chen. I need to talk to you first!" Liu Si leaned in and whispered, "I reserved these two seats in secret. Actually, only guests with 1 billion or above of medium-grade Spiritual Stones are allowed to sit here... So, if people do talk to you later, you have to pretend you're very rich! If the beans are spilled, I'll be in a lot of trouble!"

Liu Si saw how young Chen Xiaobei was, and deduced that he could not possibly possess wealth over one billion medium-grade Spiritual Stones. As a precaution, he gave Chen Xiaobei a heads-up just in case.

“Alright.” Chen Xiaobei nodded.

Liu Si continued, “Also, please don’t simply call out during the auction. If you can’t pay up, your cultivation will be destroyed and be banished forever from this place!”

A smiling Su Xiaoman nodded. “Don’t worry! We won’t do that!”

Like Liu Si, Su Xiaoman did not think that Chen Xiaobei could have amassed so many Spiritual Stones.

Nevertheless, Chen Xiaobei was not bothered to correct them. “Liu Si, did something happen? You’re here, aren’t you? Why do we have to be so polite?”

“You’re right!” Liu Si lowered his voice even further. “The old master will be today. I have to behave myself!”

“He rarely comes, right?” Chen Xiaobei asked.

“Not rarely, he practically never comes!” Liu Si said. “He’s probably here today because of Qin Yitian!”

“Qin Yitian is that powerful huh?” Chen Xiaobei asked.

Liu Si nodded. “Qin Yitian is powerful but the Qin Family is even more powerful! The old master had always wanted to expand his black market business in Vermillion Phoenix. If the Qin Family gives them the green light, then it would be easier for us to manage the black market!”

Ding Ring Ring!!

Liu Si’s phone suddenly rang.

Glancing at his phone, his face scrunched up immediately.

“Old master is here! I have to go welcome him! Remember what I told you. Don’t break any rules!” Liu Si reminded them before leaving.

After a few minutes, all the seats at the auction were completely filled.

As expected, Du Tiannan sat next to Zhu Youfu on the opposing side, whereas Yun Ziqiao seated himself next to Jiang Songtao in the VIP seats right in front of Chen Xiaobei.

Wounds open when meeting enemies. They had only just taken their seats when Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao began unabashedly pointing fingers at Chen Xiaobei. Even an idiot could tell that they were badmouthing Chen Xiaobei.

Regardless, Chen Xiaobei was unperturbed.

Su Xiaoman, on the other hand, was getting agitated. “Childe Chen, do you have a plan in mind? What if they compete against you when you’re bidding for the Black Water Stone? You might lose!”

“I haven’t thought of anything yet,” replied Chen Xiaobei as he shook his head. “Even if they don’t compete against me, there are still many who would love to get their hands on the Black Water Stone... it sure won’t be cheap...”

“Then what should we do?” Su Xiaoman nervously chewed on a nail. “What if you don’t have enough Spiritual Stones to buy the Black Water Stone? It’s going to be really difficult to find another one!”

“I know... It’s not an ideal situation isn’t it...” Chen Xiaobei said. “But we can only wait and see.”

“Wait for what?” Su Xiaoman asked.

At that moment, a commotion was spreading from the door of the auction into the entire cave.

“Hey, look! Isn’t that elderly gentleman the owner of the black market? Liu Si looks like a little eunuch next to him!”

“Yeah! That is the master behind the scenes of Yellow Wind black market! Heaven Dominating Faction’s core elder and self-titled, Xuankong Zhenren*! Liu Si is just the guard dog who looks after the old man’s house!”

“Who is that girl next to Xuankong Zhenren? She’s so pretty! But... somehow, she makes me really uncomfortable!”

“Are you serious? You don’t know the famous Qin Yitian?”

“She... She’s that Heaven Dominating Faction’s core disciple? Vermillion Phoenix Qin Family’s number one prodigy? Qin Yitian?”

“Yes! That’s her! You better don’t stare at her like that! She might just claw your eyes out!”

“No, she won’t... This is Yellow Wind black market! Would she dare to fight here?”

“She doesn’t have to do it herself. She just needs to say the word and Xuankong Zhenren will fight for her!”

“This woman is too powerful... Better not mess with her...”

...

The chatters continued until Xuankong Zhenren and Qin Yitian walked up to the VIP seats in the center of the room.

Xuankong Zhenren raised a hand, and the noise was instantly hushed.

“The auction begins now!”

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Chapter 1756: Insufficient Financial Resource

At Xuankong Zhenren’s direction, the auction officially began.

A stunningly fine female auctioneer walked on the stage. Her voluptuous body and short skirt turned heads before she even spoke.

When she did, a melodic voice greeted the audience, which somewhat lifted the tense atmosphere.

Without much delay, the auction items were taken out one by one.

While the Yellow Wind black market auction wasn't large by any means, the things they sold here were rare and premium products of impeccable quality!

The first item on auction was One-star Earth-God grade! Any conventional market would not carry this item, not even if you had the money!

Such was why only the wealthiest of the wealthy were allowed to attend the Yellow Wind black market's auction. Obviously, they were ones who had the means to buy these good quality items.

The final transaction price for the auction items beginning from the first were all well above 300 million medium-grade Spiritual Stones.

A Two-star Earth-God Instrument had even been sold for two billion medium-grade Spiritual Stones before.

Even if Chen Xiaobei did not buy the Black Water Stone, he would still be unable to afford this Two-star Earth-God Instrument.

All he could do was sigh and lament on his insufficient finances! If only. He made up his mind. Once he had dealt with this urgent matter, he needed to find a way to earn as many Spiritual Stones as possible!

Then, finally!

After all the One-star and Two-star Earth-God Instruments had all been procured, the time had come for the last epic item.

"Our honored guests! Please allow me to present today's last epic item!"

The pretty auctioneer smiled gracefully at the audience, drawing everyone's attention to the stage.

An equally attractive attendant carried a platter onto the stage, uncovered.

On the tray was a black jade the size of an egg. Water rippled on its surface, and it had a cold, dark-colored light glowing around it. One look at it could easily tell that it was definitely not a common item.

"I probably don't need to explain anything more about this auction item! Most of our honored guests today have come just for this!" The auctioneer introduced. "I would like to announce today's epic item, the Three-star Earth-God Black Water Stone! The bid starts at 100 million medium-grade Spiritual Stones! Each additional bid must not be less than 10 million medium-grade Spiritual Stones!"

Thrilled, Chen Xiaobei raised his hand. "I bid 110 million!"

Immediately, his enemy's eyes turned on him.

Du Tiannan grumbled, "Shishu Zhu! That is the asshole who humiliated me! Our families are long-time friends. You have to help me take him down!"

Zhu Youfu's thick sausage-like lips spread into a smile, "Don't worry, my dear! My ultimate target today is to get that Black Water Stone! Even if you didn't tell me that, I am not about to let that kid get it!"

Du Tiannan raised his chin and pointed a finger at Chen Xiaobei, "Hey kid, you want to buy the Black Water Stone? You've got to wait until your next life!"

Yun Ziqiao also shouted at the same time, cooing, "Songtao gege! That kid is very mean! Can you outbid him for the Black Water Stone? I really want to see his dismal expression!"

"No problem at all!" Jiang Songtao smiled. "To tell you the truth, my father recently decided to make a Two-star Earth-God instrument. He has everything he needs except for the Black Water Stone! That's why I brought 3 billion with me today! No one will be able to take it from me!"

"Wow! Songtao gege! I can tell you, that was manly!" Yun Ziqiao said adoringly.

Encouraged by the confidence boost, Jiang Songtao looked very pleased with himself.

Yun Ziqiao turned around and hissed at Chen Xiaobei, "Hey asshole! Did you hear that? The Jiangs are a top-tier family. They have really deep pockets and he's going to crush you like a bug!"

Regardless, in the face of Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao's taunts and insults, Chen Xiaobei was stoic with calm.

After all, his financial resource was limited. Even if he did his best, he would not be able to beat his opponent anyway. Using words to retort them was meaningless and useless.

"Great. Just great..." Su Xiaoman murmured with hints of despair. "I knew it. Showing off at this time will definitely bring trouble to oneself! We should've taken a step back yesterday. We shouldn't have made Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao slap themselves. Perhaps we should have all just talked it out!"

"Silly girl..." Chen Xiaobei sighed. "The Black Water Stone is extremely rare! Even without Du Tiannan and Yun Ziqiao, there would still be plenty of fat cats clawing each other for it!"

"That..." Su Xiaoman looked around.

Alas! That was the truth. Unfortunately for Zhu Youfu and Jiang Songtao, they were not the only ones as many of the guests were also eager to get their hands on this extraordinary relic.

"Young master Jiang! You are quite the madman!" A silver-haired man grinned. "Why don't you just bid three billion? I, Gui Sha will just bid a thousand more!"

Jiang Songtao swallowed. "There you go again, making jokes, Elder Gui Sha... There's no need for us to flash our trump cards so quickly, right?"

"Why not?" A bald hunk asked. "The Black Water Stone is very rare. I, Nine-Lives Dhutanga, have been waiting for thirty years for this! I'm not here to laugh and giggle with you lot! I've brought my entire fortune here today! I must get it, come what may!"

"Hehehe...." A woman as skinny as a stick laughed mockingly. "Nine-Lives Dhutanga, is your entire fortune as much as mine eh?"

"Huh?" Nine-Lives Dhutanga frowned. "Shitai White Bone! You... You too... want the Black Water Stone?"

"It's not just her... I will not give it up that easily either!"

"The Black Water Stone is priceless. I will fight hard to get it!"

...

All at once, nearly all the wealthy individuals in the VIP seats expressed a similar attitude – they all must, one way or another, have the Black Water Stone!

“Hey, asshole! You’re so done! Hehehe...” Du Tiannan was still pointing his finger at Chen Xiaobei.

“Silver-haired Gui Sha! Nine-Lives Dhutanga! Shitai White Bone! These are three evil persons that lead some top-tier factions! They are rich enough to go against the entire country! Compared to them, you are nothing!”

Yun Ziqiao was not about to be left out of it either. “Hey asshole! See? So many people of means are determined to get the Black Water Stone! The hammer price could be over five billion! You only added 1,000 to the starting bid! How pathetic! Wake up! This is a game for the wealthy, not a poor bastard like you!”

“It’s over...” sighed a deflated Su Xiaoman upon hearing the extremely discouraging lingo.

Chen Xiaobei said nothing back. If he had had enough Spiritual Stones, he would surely have used them to smash Yun Ziqiao and Du Tiannan’s faces in.

The problem was that Chen Xiaobei was simply not wealthy enough in comparison to all these magnates!

“Elder Xuankong,” Qin Yiyian’s eyes fell on Chen Xiaobei. “Who is that guy?”

Chapter 1757: Bringing out the Sincerity

“That’s strange...” Xuankong Zhenren narrowed his eyes. “Yitian, you haven’t spoken a word since the beginning and the first thing that came out of your mouth is to ask about some nameless nobody? What is it about him that draws your attention?”

Qin Yitian answered, “I don’t think he’s a nameless nobody! A nobody wouldn’t be so calm and poised when people are mocking and taunting him in front of all these people!”

“Mm... That’s true!” Xuankong Zhenren nodded, then he turned around and asked, “Liu Si! Who is that guy over there?”

Liu Si stammered, “He’s my friend...”

“Friend?” Xuankong Zhenren’s eyebrows went up. “I heard some chatter about how you helped a kid and caused the Du Family and Yun Family’s juniors to lose face. Is that him?”

Liu Si swallowed. “You really do have such keen intelligence and excellent judgment! Nothing that happens in Yellow Wind black market can ever be hidden from you!”

“Liu Si! I appointed you to be the regulatory affairs manager because you observe the law faithfully, and because you are adaptable!” Xuankong Zhenren said. “The Du Family and the Yun Family may not be the top-tier families, but how could you offend these two families for the sake of a nameless nobody?! Be frank with me, what’s so special about that boy?”

“I won’t keep the truth from you! I helped him because he used a medicinal wine to cure my... injury...”

“Your injury?” Xuankong Zhenren repeated. “You mean the one you spent thousands on and sought the help of dozens and doctors but could not heal?”

“Yes... Yes...” Liu Si nodded. “His medicinal wine is really one of a kind. Not only was it excellent wine, but its medicinal properties were even more incredible... I could feel the healing happening almost immediately after drinking it!”

“It’s really that incredible?” Qin Yitian studied Liu Si doubtfully.

“I would never lie to you!” Liu Si bowed his head. “This matter involves the happiness of the rest of my life. I don’t simply make claims when it comes to this!”

“Alright!” Qin Yitian nodded. “I will go buy some of that medicinal wine off him later!”

“AH? No... Ms. Qin...” Liu Si shifted his weight to his other feet. “That medicinal wine is for men only... You cannot drink it...”

Qin Yitian replied, “Apart from medicinal wine, his medical skills should also be pretty good, right?”

“Medicinal skills?” Liu Si quickly nodded. “Yes! And he’s unusually good! The condition of my injury is embarrassing so I’ve never told any outsiders about it. He merely looked at my Qi, and didn’t even take my pulse and he was able to tell me where am I hurting.”

“What? He didn’t even take your pulse?” Both Qin Yitian and Xuankong Zhenren exclaimed.

Seasoned as they were, they had never heard of such a thing.

“Yeah, he didn’t!” Liu Si confirmed. “All he did was look at me. He told me about how my injury had worsen and even told me when I was injured! It was really incredible! That’s why I stood by him against the Du and Yun family...”

Xuankong Zhenren nodded. “It sounds like he’s a really gifted person! Liu Si, arrange a private meeting with him for me. I want to see if I could bring him under my wing!”

“Elder Xuankong! Don’t you think you’re taking this too a little simple?” Qin Yitian shook her head. “That young man’s medical skills are rare! You could even say he’s a godly doctor! If you can rope him in with just one meeting, I’m afraid there would soon be millions of people lining up to see him!”

“What do you mean?” Xuankong Zhenren frowned.

“There are only a handful of godly doctors in this world!!” Qin Yitian exclaimed. “People with such exceptional talents would never be willing to be placed under someone’s wing! Being associated with him would probably be quite a feat in itself. To take him under your wing would be wishful thinking!”

“You have a point there...” Xuankong Zhenren frowned. “But what if that kid was just using some kind of illusion, a sleight of hand, and is not the real deal? Then wouldn’t it be a waste of my time to show me his sincerity?”

“Since you have concerns about it, then let’s make a bet! I bet that he’s the real deal!” Qin Yitian declared as she stood up from her seat.

And as she rose, so did all the eyes in the cavern train on her, followed by pin-drop silence.

Qin Yitian was the only person at this auction who had equal footing with Xuankong Zhenren. No one dared to disregard her.

"Everyone!" Qin Yitian spoke in that cool, aloof voice of hers. "Can you please show my Qin Family from Vermillion Phoenix some face?"

The wealthy started to tremble in their seats.

Silver-haired Gui Sha was the first to respond. He got up from his seat and said, "You're too polite, Ms. Qin! The Qin family had been kind to me. Say the word, and consider whatever you want done!"

Nine-Lives Dhutanga gulped. "Ms. Qin, you alone can have all the respect in this world. It's not necessary for you to use the name of Qin Family! This is getting really serious. Say no more. I will grant you this face!"

Shitai White Bones answered, "Who would dare refuse to give face to Qin Family? Ms. Qin, tell me what you need! I will do as you say!"

"That's right! We will give face to Qin Family!"

Zhu Youfu, Jiang Songtao and the rest of the VIP guests had very visibly pledged their allegiance. Not one person said 'no'.

"Good! Thank you, everyone!" Qin Yitian looked around at the people. "I was hoping that all of you will give up bidding on the Black Water Stone and stop raising the bid!"

Her statement yielded cries of surprise and questions.

Qin Yitian answered, "I don't wish to explain the reason behind my request, but I can say that you will benefit well if you to give face to our Qin family!"

"I give up!" Silver-Haired Gui Sha relented.

"We... We give up too..." said Nine-Lives Dhutanga and Shitai White Bone.

The three of them had previously been adamant and dead-set on getting the Black Water Stone. Now, they gave up on a very important bid just like that because of Qin Family. One could only imagine how powerful Qin Family was in this Jianghu.

"We all heard you, Ms. Qin... We give up... too..." The rest of the bidders were not as powerful as the first three. So, they dared not do otherwise.

"Good, I thank you all, once again!" Qin Yitian turned to the auctioneer and said, "As no one is bidding for the Black Water Stone, you can close the auction now!"

"Huh?" The auctioneer was startled. This was an unprecedented situation leaving her bereft of words to announce the abrupt closure of the auction. In a panic, she looked to Xuankong Zhenren for help.

Xuankong Zhenren made no comment but turned to Qin Yitian and said in an almost inaudible voice, "Yitian... Your good faith is going to cause the auction house to lose profit from the Black Water Stone. I'm afraid this will not do!"

But Qin Yitian did not relent. "Once this matter is concluded, Elder Xuankong can claim a piece of land from us and develop it into another black market!"

"Are you for real?" Xuankong Zhenren's eyes sparkled.

"Of course!" Qing Yitian answered. "You are my elder in Heaven Dominating Faction! But in Vermillion Phoenix, I can make decisions that concern you!"

"Good! Alright! It's a deal!" Xuankong Zhenren was overjoyed. He stood up and announced jovially, "I hereby announce that the Black Water Stone is sold for the price of 110 million medium-grade Spiritual Stones!"

All of a sudden, everyone fixed their eyes on Chen Xiaobei.

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Chapter 1758: Shocking Everyone

Chen Xiaobei was the first to bid, and following the not-less-than-10 million rule, he bid exactly 110 million!

Then, Qin Yitian stepped in and told everyone to stop bidding. As a result, no one bid higher than Chen Xiaobei.

Xuankong Zhenren himself concluded the transaction, and the Black Water Stone practically fell into Chen Xiaobei's hands!

"My... God... Am I dreaming?" Su Xiaoman could not believe what had just happened.

Half a minute ago, she was ready to throw in a towel. She did not think that Chen Xiaobei would win the bid for the Black Water Stone.

Considering the bleakness of the situation, Su Xiaoman never expected that things would take such an abrupt 180-degree turn!

"That's not possible... it's impossible... I must be hallucinating..." Du Tiannan's finger was still pointing at Chen Xiaobei.

A while ago, he had claimed that Silver-Haired Gui Sha, Nine-Lives Dhutanga and Shitai White Bone were some of the richest evil persons in this Jianghu! He also said that Chen Xiaobei was not a nobody when compared to them.

Against the odds, however, the three bosses had just given way to Chen Xiaobei. This served as a harsh, invisible slap across Du Tiannan's face.

"Hey! Idiot! Put your middle finger away!" Zhu Youfu grabbed Du Tiannan's finger. "If you want to die, don't drag me down with you!"

Du Tiannan held his breath nervously.

Yun Jiqiao's face was red as a tomato, and she was shaking.

“That guy... Who the hell is he...” Yun Ziqiao’s muttered through quivering lips. “Qing Yitian actually used her family name to give him extra support... and Xuankong Zhenren closed the bid... He bought an item worth 5 billion for 100 million... now that’s unbelievable...”

“Stupid woman!” Jiang Songtao scolded. “You’re still hung up on lambasting that guy? Do you want to die?”

“Songtao gege, why are you suddenly so fierce...” Yun Ziqiao cooed.

“Go away! Don’t call me gege! We’re not that close!” Jiang Songtao said. “Even an idiot knows that man is a powerful and influential individual! If you want to continue to ridicule him, that’s your problem! Don’t involve me!”

“I...” Yun Ziqiao inhaled nervously. Her face was as pale as a sheet. “That... He won’t kill me, right... I won’t do it again... I won’t...”

All the wealthy VIPs started looking up to Chen Xiaobei with respect and admiration. They were all secretly trying to guess who this Chen Xiaobei actually was!

Once again, Chen Xiaobei ignored them. He paid for the Black Water Stone and completed the transaction!

Now, there was only one last material he needed before he could upgrade his Netherspirit Battlescouter.

Once he had done that, he could choose his Heavenly Path Reward, then use the Ambergris to increase his cultivation.

“Excuse me, sir!” Qin Yitian walked up to Chen Xiaobei and said, “Now that the auction is over, can we chat in private?”

“That would be an honor!” Chen Xiaobei nodded. He turned to his companion and said, “Xiaoman, go find Liu Si. I will contact you later!”

“Alright.” Su Xiaoman pouted as she watched Chen Xiaobei leave with Qin Yitian.

...

In the private VIP cave.

Qin Yitian and Chen Xiaobei sat opposed to each other, face to face.

“You really are an extraordinary person!” Qin Yitian said. “Most people wouldn’t even dare look me in the eye!”

“Ms. Qin, your eyes are something out of this world!” Chen Xiaobei replied. “Most people see the austere exterior and shrink back, but I see a beautiful soul through your beautiful eyes! I just couldn’t stop myself from looking at you!”

Qin Yitian was surprised by his answer but she did not show it. “To tell you the truth, I don’t like slippery-tongued and smooth-talking people!”

Chen Xiaobei said, "I was just stating a fact. If you think I'm trying to hit on you, then pretend I said nothing!"

Qin Yitian did not know how to answer him so she changed the topic. "Why are you not surprised at all that I helped you? Did you expect it to happen?"

Chen Xiaobei shrugged. "It was outside of my expectation but it was within my reasoning!"

"Outside expectations? Within reasoning?" Qin Yitian's eyes flickered. "Let me guess! You used your exceptional medical skills to hook Liu Si, then cause trouble to draw attention so that Xuankong Zhenren will notice you. You wagered on him helping you because of your medical skills! That was your plan, right?"

Chen Xiaobei was impressed. "Ms. Qin! It's more difficult for smart women to get married! Your guess is accurate to the T. I'm beginning to feel a little unsafe! Nothing can escape you!"

Qin Yitian ignored his compliment and continued, "You said out of expectation because Xuankong Zhenren did not notice you for your medical skills! But it was within your reasoning because I did!"

Chen Xiaobei nodded. "Ms. Qin's eyes are great at noticing details like that! I'm impressed!"

Qin Yitian answered, "Since you've accepted my help, we're considered friends, right?"

Chen Xiaobei nodded. "Of course! Here's my phone number! You can contact me anytime if you need anything! Also, it's not limited to just medical help. I'm willing to help with any other matters!"

Qin Yitian looked pleased. "With your promise, I'm not worried anymore! Oh, right! I still haven't gotten to know your name!"

"I am Chen Zhufeng!"

"Zhufeng..." Qin Yitian echoed. "If there's nothing else, I'll leave now. I will be staying in Black Tortoise for some time. I might need you to come back to Vermillion Phoenix with me later!"

"I have one question!" Chen Xiaobei took out his list. "Can you please take a look at the things on this list and see if there's any way of acquiring them?"

Qin Yitian read the list, and her forehead creased. "These are all Three-star Earth-God Items. They are about as rare as the Black Water Stone!"

"So, you don't have any leads..." Chen Xiaobei said. "Never mind, I was asking, just in case. I wasn't really hoping for much!"

Xuankong Zhenren entered the cave, and asked, "Can I take a look at the list?"

"Of course!" Chen Xiaobei nodded. "If you can help me, I will make sure to remember your kindness!"

Xuankong Zhenren skimmed the list and said, "I don't know where to get these two Earth-God medicines, but I do know where to get the last Earth-God material on the list!"

"If you would be so kind as to enlighten me!" Chen Xiaobei beamed eagerly.

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Chapter 1759: Before the Storm

The cause for Chen Xiaobei's delight was because that item on the list was the final material he needed before he could upgrade the Netherspirit Battlescouter!

He had acquired everything on the list, and this was the one last thing he needed.

"Evil-spirit Warding Crystals!" Xuankong Zhenren read the list. "This is an extremely rare Three-star Earth-God item. The chances of finding its crude ore without an owner are close to zero!"

Chen Xiaobei said, "If that's the case, then we would have to look for those that possess this item!"

"That's right!" Xuankong Zhenren nodded. "To my knowledge, Royal Dome Starfield emperor's military tag is made of an Evil-spirit Warding Crystal! During a war, the military tag would be used to maneuver Royal Dome's hundreds of thousands of soldiers! When there's no war, it is stored inside the Royal Dome's exchequer!"

Chen Xiaobei's eyes lit up. "Thank you, elder! I know what I have to do now!"

Xuankong Zhenren gave him a questioning look. "What are you going to do? Break into the exchequer? Young man, unless you have a Three-star Earth-God backing you up, this rash move is going to get you killed!"

Royal Dome's Evil-spirit Warding Crystal had been made into the emperor's military tag. They would not just give it away like that. If Chen Xiaobei wanted it, the only way to get it was to rob the treasury!

This would mean that Chen Xiaobei was at risk of making the entire Royal Dome starfield his enemy!

Qin Yitian nodded. "Childe Chen! The all the Nine Zones starfields have Two-star Earth-God Divine Instruments to protect their pwn starfield! On top of that, they have Earth-God battle formations. With hundreds of thousands of men, their combined energy would be similar to a Three-star Earth-God! Even I wouldn't dare steal from them!"

"Thank you for showing concern!" Chen Xiaobei nodded. "I know what I'm getting myself into. I will be very careful!"

"Alright!" Xuankong Zhenren nodded. "Our Childe Chen here doesn't look like someone without tact. You should know what you have to do!"

Chen Xiaobei nodded again. "Thank you for the pointers, elder. I will return the favor when I get the chance!"

Xuankong Zhenren smiled and said nothing more.

Qin Yitian did not make any more comments either.

Chen Xiaobei treated Xuankong Zhenren and Qin Yitian very differently.

To Xuankong Zhenren, Chen Xiaobei merely said that he owed him a favor. Once it was paid, they would owe each other nothing.

But with Qin Yitian, Chen Xiaobei left her his phone number, volunteering to not only provide medical help but in other areas as well!

To Qin Yitian, this return of favor itself was worth what she did for Chen Xiaobei.

Their relationship was based on an exchange of benefits, not really any kind of friendship. Reciprocity of favor was far more important in this case.

After that, the three of them parted ways.

...

Chen Xiaobei returned to Black Tortoise Imperial City with Su Xiaoman.

There, both of them parted ways, and Chen Xiaobei headed straight for Saint Duke Starfield.

He arrived just in time to meet the deadline for the second task of the betrothal contest.

He just needed to rest for a night in Saint Duke's capital city. He would then head to the castle tomorrow and get ready for the third task!

Chen Xiaobei found an ordinary hotel to spend his night.

"I have 45 days left until my deadline with Lady Nuwo! My cultivation is still a whole chunk away from the peak of Ethereal Cultivation!" Chen Xiaobei was leaning against the bed, making plans.

"To break through to God-Ascension cultivation before the deadline, I will need to upgrade my Netherspirit Battlescouter as quickly as possible or I won't have enough time! not mentioning the time I need to do the upgrade. After receiving the final task for the betrothal, I should head to Royal Dome starfield to get the Evil-spirit Warding Crystal. Everything else should be left for later!"

The deadline was getting closer. Chen Xiaobei had to map out every step he was about to make and attempt to save as much time as possible.

Luckily, everything else he had to do after that was pretty much within his control.

If everything went according to plan, Chen Xiaobei was confident that he could ensure that Saint Duke was kept away from the fires of battle forever.

But there was one thing Chen Xiaobei was not sure about.

"The core members of Saint Duke's royalty are probably having a sleepless night..." Chen Xiaobei sighed. "Maybe, as Ling Qingfeng said, they would see me as Tenshou's mole... or perhaps they would have a meeting to discuss how to deal with me..."

About ten days ago, when Chen Xiaobei and Wugui Kojiro showed up together, Ling Qingfeng had mistaken Chen Xiaobei as a Tenshou spy.

Although he was able to prove his innocence through the auction, he could not explain his relationship with Wugui Kojiro.

This was because Chen Xiaobei had used the Heavenly Dog Biscuit to control Wugui Kojiro.

The Heavenly Dog Biscuit was a top-secret affair. He could not let any outsiders find out about it.

More importantly, with the war at bay, Saint Duke royalties were on their toes, all wary. Even if Chen Xiaobei were to tell them the truth, they would not believe him.

Owing to this, he would rather not explain himself. At the end of the day, the truth – cold hard facts would knock away all suspicions!

...

Saint Duke palace's secret meeting room.

It was deep into the night, but the lights remained burning in the meeting room. All of Saint Duke's core members were present.

"No one has said anything for nearly one hour now. Doesn't anyone have any solutions regarding the latest intel?" Luo Qiongcang held a stack of documents as he said, "About twenty days ago, that kid was seen with Wugui Kojiro at the Crimson Moon Auction House in Black Tortoise Imperial City. This proves that he's really Tenshou's mole!"

He continued, "Then, ten days later, this Tenshou spy returned to Divine Dragon starfield with Ling Qingfeng and stayed there for half a month! I have every reason to suspect that this mole has formed an alliance with the Dragon Emperor on behalf of the Tenshou Emperor! They will launch a joint attack on us soon enough! I'm not exaggerating when I say that this is the final juncture between life and death for Saint Duke's royalty! If we can't come up with a solution, we'll all be dead!"

Luo Qiongcang's brows were furrowed, and his face had soured into a sickly shade of green. The imminent danger ahead had caused him to lose all the composure an emperor should have.

"Brother... We really don't know..." Luo Shanhe said helplessly. "Tenshou and Royal Dome have been allies for a while now. Then the spy had just formed allies with Neptune and Divine Dragon... That's four starfields in total who are going to attack us... We're all going to die... There's no doubt about it!"

"You mean we should just give all of it up?" Luo Quingcang bellowed. "Then why the hell are we having this meeting? Why don't you all go clean your necks, and wait for the enemy to come and chop your head off!"

Luo Puti suddenly spoke, "Calm down, father..."

[Red Envelope Group of the Three Realms](#)

Chapter 1760: Default Winner

"Puti! Have you thought of something?" Luo Qiongcang leaned forward inquisitively.

The other core members of the royal family sat upright in their seats as well, ears pricked up.

Since the betrothal contest plans were decided, Luo Puti had been devising plans and drawing up her strategy behind the scenes. Both the first and second tasks were her ideas which had produced effective results with very clear and well-defined intentions.

On that account, her opinions were taken seriously and highly regarded.

“I don’t have a solution yet... But, the situation is not as bad as you think!” Luo Puti said. “The first task earned us a lot of Earth-God grade materials. We were able to use this month to convert them into interstellar weapons enough for 100,000 men!”

Everyone in the room nodded in agreement. Luo Puti’s plan had indeed worked very well in their favor!

Luo Puti continued, “As for the second task, our goal was to incite opposition between the competitors and the Tenshou-Royal Dome alliance! According to our intel, when Feng Chongwu and Yun Changxiao were hunting for the Giant Barbarian Tiger, they were interrupted by Tenshou and Royal Dome soldiers and had sustained pretty serious injuries! Their sifu is a core elder of Heaven Dominating Faction! He will definitely avenge his beloved disciples! For the third and also final task, I am setting a forty-five-day time limit so that we can contact Feng Chongwu and Yun Changxiao’s sifu and invite him to exact retribution with us! Getting this core elder’s support on top of the Fengs and Yuns assistance will surely boost our combat force!”

After finishing her speech, Luo Puti received looks of approval and commendation.

She was not finished, however, and continued saying, “One final thing though – Helian Tulong! During the second task, no one from either Tenshou or Royal Dome dared to cross him! This tells us that the Helian Family is extremely powerful! Making Helian Tulong the Fuma will entitle us to the Helian Family’s aid! Even if a war is to break out, we would at least have a chance!”

“Make Helian Tulong the Fuma?” Luo Shanhe looked confused. “But the third task has not even been announced or completed yet. What if he loses?”

“Don’t worry!” Luo Puti replied. “The third task is for the contestants to present a betrothal gift that will win my heart! This is a very subjective assignment. I just need to say that Helian Tulong’s gift moved me and he’ll be crowned the winner!”

Luo Shanhe praised, “Luo Puti, that is a very well-rounded plan! It seems I was worried for nothing!”

Luo Qiongchang, however, did not share his brother’s excitement. “What about that Tenshou spy?”

“He probably won’t be back!” Luo Shanhe replied. “According to the reports, he left the ten-thousand mountains only a few days into the second task! There’s no way he could’ve captured a Giant Barbaric Tiger!”

“That’s true...” Luo Qiongchang nodded but heaved a sigh. “How unfortunate. The Giant Barbaric Tiger is made up of treasures! If that spy could bring one back, we can exchange it for even more interstellar weapons!”

“I think he’ll come back!” Luo Puti remarked. “That Royal Dome spy Ximen Shuoxue didn’t capture a tiger. He’ll be eliminated from the competition! That Tenshou spy is their last pawn. They won’t let him give up that easily!”

Luo Shanhe frowned. “You mean that Tenshou will find a way to help that spy to get a Giant Barbarian Tiger?”

“It’s very likely!” Luo Puti nodded. “Since there’s only one final task left, the Tenshou will want their spy to stay in the competition to beat Helian Tulong!”

“That can be easily taken care of!” Luo Qiongchang expressed. “If that Tenshou spy dares to come back, I will kill him myself! Then he won’t be able to join the final round!”

“No! Don’t!” Luo Puti shook her head. “I will decide the winner for the final round! Helian Tulong will win! We cannot kill that spy so Tenshou will still think they have a chance at winning the third round! If we kill that spy, we’ll startle the enemy and they might retaliate and attack!”

Luo Qiongchang inhaled sharply. “That is a very rational thought! If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have even thought of that!”

Luo Puti answered lovingly, “Father, you’ve spent half your life in battle. You’ve used the direct manner of solving problems. It’s only understandable that you’re not used to these kinds of labyrinthine plans!”

“That’s true! All these fighting and warring has muddled my old brain!” Luo Qiongchang smiled. “We are so fortunate, though! The heavens have taken care of us and our ancestors have protected us when they allowed you to return to me! As long as you are here, things will take a turn for the better!”

Luo Puti merely nodded. An empty look in her eyes and a deadpan look accompanied her pretty face where delight should have been.

Luo Qiongchang waved his hand and announced, “Everyone, you may be dismissed. We’ll do as Luo Puti proposed!”

The people left the meeting room assured by Luo Puti’s sound analysis and steady plan.

When everyone had left, the Emperor turned to his daughter, a solemn expression on his face. “Puti, you did very well. You were able to dispel the core members’ fears with a few words! If the plan goes well, we’ll be able to survive this tribulation...”

“That is my duty...” Luo Puti’s tone was sharp and chilly, showing no delight whatsoever at the idea of the plan succeeding.

Luo Qiongchang sighed deeply. “I know that this must be difficult for you... this being so unfair and all...”

“It’s nothing! This is the path that I’ve chosen!” Luo Puti said icily. “For the sake of the 13 billion innocent citizens of Saint Duke! For the hundreds of Saint Duke’s Luo Family members! For the sake of my foster parents, Luo Bin and Lin Xue! No matter how unfair it is to me, it is still worth it!”

“Mm... It’s good that you have straightened it out with yourself...” Luo Qiongchang sighed again. “It’s late. Go back to your room and rest! After collecting the Giant Barbarian Tiger, we’ll need to go to Apocalypse Starfield to exchange them for weapons! We also need to contact the Feng Family and the Yun Family, as well as their Heaven Domination Faction’s core elder... For the next 45 days, we’re going to be really busy and very tired...”

“I know...” Luo Puti nodded somberly before leaving the room.

She had just stepped out of the meeting room when a red spider crawled out of her pocket, and climbed up her shoulders.

“Little Hong... There are only forty-five days left...” Luo Puti’s tone was heavy and burdened. The icy coolness on her face melted away exposing barren exhaustion and loneliness.

“Arrgggh! For the 80,002th time, my name is not Little Hong!” The little spider gestured angrily. After he calmed down, he pondered while asking, “45 days to what? Complete your sentence!”

Luo Puti did not understand the creature so she said nothing else and dragged herself back to her room.

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The second morning.

Chen Xiaobei arrived early at Saint Duke’s palace. After flashing his Bridal Token, he was immediately escorted inside.