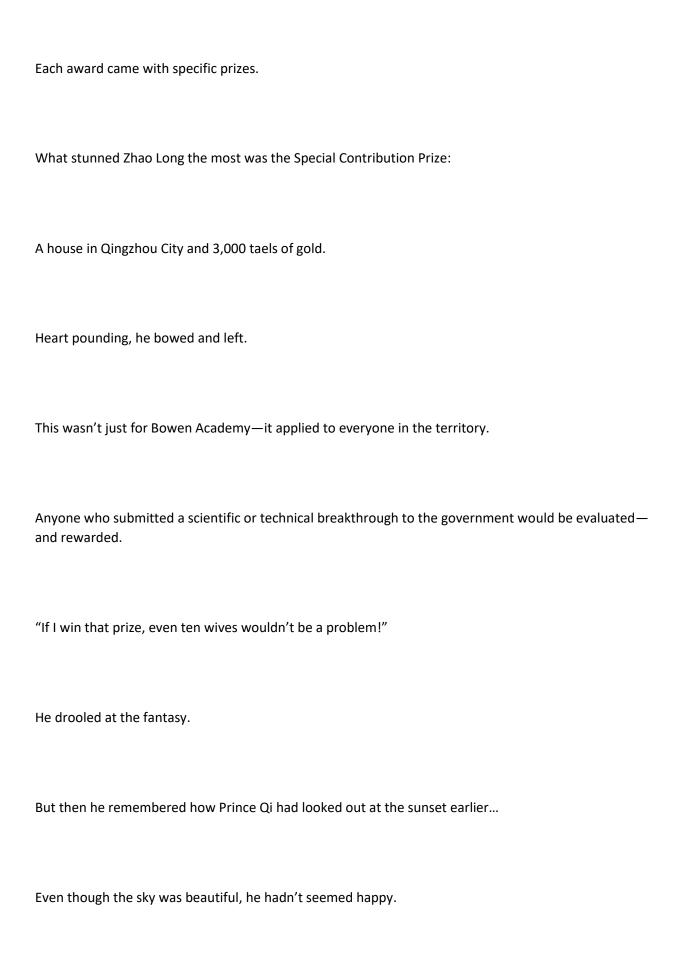
I. Dynasty 319

Chapter 319: Natural Disasters Cannot Be Stopped
In the glow of sunset, Zhao Long's profile was lit in red by the lingering twilight.
On their way back from Bowen Academy, he grinned and said to Xiao Ming,
"Your Highness, many students were inspired by the reward notice.
Some even said they're determined to surpass Lu Tong!"
"Good. These students really needed some motivation," Xiao Ming nodded.
"Here, take this and post it in each department tomorrow."
Having followed Xiao Ming around every day, Zhao Long and Zhao Hu had become informal students Over time, they had even learned to read.
Zhao Long glanced at the new document Xiao Ming handed over. It listed detailed reward categories, including; Scholarships, Scientific Innovation Awards, Progress Awards, Special Contribution Prizes



The sunset was indeed stunning—like colored glass painted across the sky.
But to Xiao Ming, this beauty was dangerous.
There's an old saying:
"Morning glow brings rain, evening glow means drought."
Right now, Qingzhou was filled with sunsets.
That meant exactly what Pang Yukun had warned about: drought was likely on the way.
Historically, Henan, Hebei, and Shandong were hotspots for droughts and locust plagues.
There had been many disasters and uprisings in these regions.
In the 1942–1943 Henan Famine, under the Nationalist government, severe drought hit in July, followed by a locust plague, leading to a massive famine.

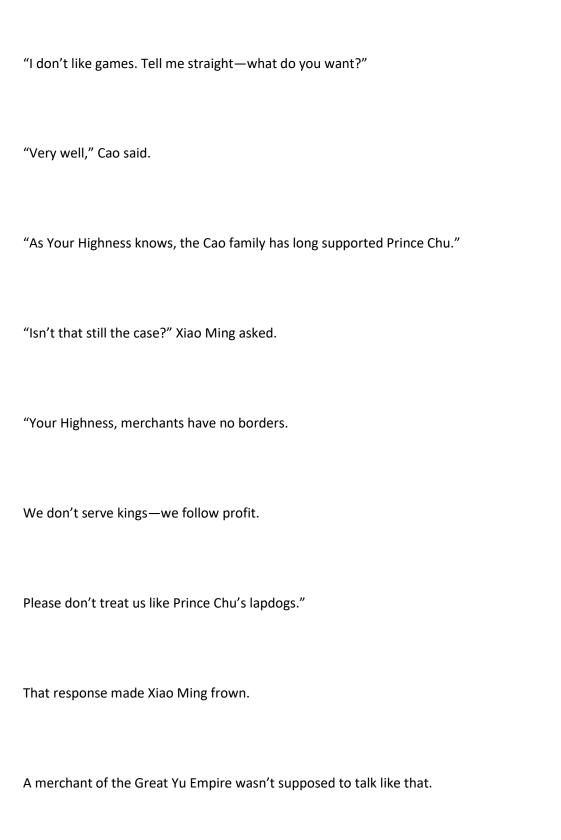
The entire province starved. Countless people died.
Worse, the drought happened while China was at war with Japan, making things even more devastating.
Now, the Blood Wolf Tribe was watching hungrily from the north.
If drought led to chaos in Bingzhou or Jizhou, all the progress Xiao Ming had made might fall apart overnight.
But he was only human.
He couldn't stop natural disasters or change the politics of other princes' territories.
Bingzhou was controlled by Prince Liang, Jizhou by Prince Yong. Xiao Ming couldn't interfere even if he wanted to.
All he could do was protect his own land.
"Let it rain.





He was clearly testing the visitor.
Cao Zhengyang, who had left Lin'an seven days ago, was sent directly by the family to Qingzhou.
Without flinching, he replied:
"They say Your Highness is a man of vision—a model for the entire Great Yu Empire.
I didn't expect you to care about birth status.
Pity—I thought you were different."
"How dare you!"
Li Kaiyuan snapped.
"How can you speak to His Highness like that?
If I had known, we'd never have sold you the mirrors!"





"In this empire, merchants are servants of the nobility. What else could	I they be?"
"True," Cao admitted.	
"But Your Highness is different.	
You want to rebuild the country through commerce.	
Maybe you can create a land where merchants are free."	