

Longevity 137

Chapter 137: Zhao Feng: Delivered Battle Merits?

Han Xi spoke with a touch of helplessness. "Building a force requires money. A lot of money."

Zhao Feng had left Han Xi ninety-nine percent of the gold from his Portable Space, which amounted to over seven thousand gold pieces and several hundred thousand coins. In just three short months, nearly forty percent of it had been spent, which illustrated the immense daily expenses. Building a force was simply burning money. The costs of food and shelter for everyone in the organization, the continuous recruitment that Zhao Feng had not halted, and the procurement of ores and medicinal materials all required money.

Zhao Feng, however, was quite calm about it.

"What's the status of the medicinal materials I had you procure?" Zhao Feng asked.

"My Lord, we've procured a great deal. They are all piled up in the warehouse now," Han Xi replied promptly.

"And how is the wine brewing coming along?" Zhao Feng asked again. This wine was the key to making his force self-sustaining.

"We are waiting for you to unseal the vats, My Lord," Han Xi said respectfully. "However, according to the brewers, your method is far superior to any other in the world. If we were to sell this, it would truly be unmatched."

The brewers he had recruited, aside from a few from the general populace, were all court brewers from the Han Royal Palace. When the Qin Army broke through the palace, the situation had been utterly chaotic. Zhao Feng had his men secretly intercept these brewers while they were being imprisoned, and to the outside world, they were declared dead. During the chaos of the Han Capital's fall, the orderly Qin Army still executed a great many rioters. Some of the men under Zhao Feng's command had been recruited from among those very rioters.

"Take me to see it," Zhao Feng said immediately. He was also very curious about the wine brewed using distillation and purification methods from a future era.

Han Xi immediately stepped forward to lead the way. He brought Zhao Feng to a large brewing room lined with barrels full of wine mash. The moment they entered, a rich, fragrant aroma of wine filled the air; the scent alone was wonderfully invigorating.

"My Lord," Han Xi began with a smile, "the grain we purchased has been used to brew one hundred large barrels. The purity of each one absolutely surpasses the Royal Court's brews. Even after being diluted, it will still far exceed any strong liquor on the market."

Zhao Feng didn't reply. He walked over to a large barrel, opened the lid, and an even sweeter, more potent aroma of wine wafted out.

"It smells wonderful," Zhao Feng said with a smile. "Worthy of a brewing method from the future. Even without the precise machinery of later eras, it still surpasses the wine of this age."

He then picked up a ladle, scooped some from the barrel, and drank it all in one go. A smile spread across Zhao Feng's face. "Good wine. Now this is real wine! What I used to drink was just water."

Hearing Zhao Feng's praise, the brewers in the workshop all let out a collective sigh of relief, their faces breaking into smiles. Their very lives were in Zhao Feng's hands. If the brewing had failed, their heads would have rolled.

"Reward all the brewers," Zhao Feng declared, turning to the nearly twenty of them. He then looked at Han Xi. "Find their families and secretly bestow 5,000 coins upon each household."

"Yes, My Lord," Han Xi responded immediately.

"Thank you for your immense generosity, My Lord!" The twenty brewers knelt before Zhao Feng, their faces filled with gratitude.

"You all belong to me now, and you have participated in brewing this secret wine, so I don't need to explain its importance," Zhao Feng said to the brewers before him. "The force I am building is still in its infancy, so you cannot leave. However, I will not forget your contributions. All the credit for your deeds will be bestowed upon your families."

"We are indebted to you for your generosity, My Lord! We swear to serve you to the death," the brewers replied in unison, their voices filled with respect.

Zhao Feng then turned back to Han Xi. "How many locations have you found for the taverns?"

"My Lord," Han Xi replied promptly, "I have already purchased ten suitable properties for taverns in Wei City, Xinzheng, Yang City, and eight other cities."

Zhao Feng ordered immediately, "Dilute the wine and get the taverns operational. If we don't start turning a profit, the gold and silver I left you will run out sooner or later."

"My Lord, the taverns can open as soon as the wine arrives," Han Xi said respectfully. "However, as for the name of the establishment, we ask that you bestow one."

"The name?" Zhao Feng mused for a moment.

"Let's call it the Immortals' Liquor House," Zhao Feng said with a smile.

"An excellent name," Han Xi praised at once. "My Lord, you are truly inspired. That name alone is unforgettable."

Zhao Feng's gaze returned to the vats of wine in the workshop. "And this liquor... let's call it 'Drunken Immortal'."

"Furthermore, when you sell it, don't just target the wealthy gentry and rich merchants. You must also cater to the common folk," Zhao Feng instructed.

"Please elaborate, My Lord," Han Xi said, looking puzzled.

"It's simple," Zhao Feng began to explain. "We will divide the wine into several grades. The higher the grade, the higher the purity and the richer the fragrance. The top-grade wine will be priced at one gold piece per pot. From there, the price will scale down to ensure that even common people can afford it. However, even our lowest grade must be stronger than any other liquor on the market. This way, we will have a constant stream of money flowing into our coffers."

"Moreover," Zhao Feng continued with a smile, "the highest-grade Drunken Immortal won't be something you can just buy with money. A customer must first spend over ten gold pieces in the tavern to even be eligible to purchase it."

As he listened, Han Xi's understanding grew. "By doing this, the top-grade Drunken Immortal becomes our tavern's signature draw, a status symbol that will attract countless people who wish to try it."

"That's the method," Zhao Feng confirmed. "You can figure out the specific pricing tiers based on what you see in the market. The main goal is simply to make money. Once the taverns are well-established, we'll roll out a true membership system and make our establishments the most famous in the land." Zhao Feng finished with a faint smile.

Even though he had never studied finance in his previous life, he had heard enough about it. Applying modern business models to this era was simply a crushing advantage.