

FROM BESTSELLING AUTHOR ARISE ZHANG, ALSO KNOWN AS

FEI TIAN YE XIANG

Book

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# DINGHAI FUSHENG RECORDS



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# DINGHAI FUSHENG RECORDS

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# DINGHAI FUSHENG RECORDS



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DINGHAI FUSHENG RECORDS (NOVEL) VOL. 1

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# Chapter 1

**J**IN DYNASTY. Fourth year of the Taiyuan<sup>1</sup> period, first day of the Second Lunar Month, Xiangyang.

A sudden snowstorm swept through the ancient city overnight. The wave of cold froze the few remaining warm lights; the only sounds left behind were the rustling of snow and the crackling of charcoal in stoves.

Outside the city, two hundred thousand Qin troops surrounded Xiangyang, waiting for the final battle against the Jin defenders.

Chen Xing had been clueless about the city's affairs, and now he felt quite anxious. He could have arrived at any other time, so why had he chosen to come now? It had taken all his effort to somehow muddle his way into Xiangyang City, and now he had to look for someone inside the city—which was like trying to find a needle in a haystack! Even if he did find the one he was looking for, how was he supposed to get out of the city by morning?

Xiangyang City had been under siege for a full year, and its ammunition and provisions had long been exhausted. The foot soldiers were too hungry to fight and the civilians too weak to flee, yet they all still had the energy to curse. Tensions were running high and people were causing disturbances everywhere.

Once he found his way in, it was no easy task for Chen Xing to locate Zhu Xu, the Governor of Liangzhou the one who was in charge of defending the city. He made his identity known to the governor, but before he could explain his purpose for coming here, Zhu Xu had already summoned all the military counselors and generals under his command. In an instant, the hall was filled with people, some standing and some sitting as they waited for Chen Xing to speak.

“Repeat it once more, in front of everyone. What are you?” Zhu Xu asked.

Dressed in a black robe, Chen Xing sat upright before him. He answered earnestly, “E-x, ex, o-r, or, cist.”

“He said he’s a mage,” Zhu Xu said to the crowd.

“Not a mage,” Chen Xing explained patiently, “I’m an exorcist. That’s the third time I’ve said it.”

The resplendent lights in the main hall of the governor’s manor cast a luminous glow over Chen Xing, accentuating his features. He was dressed entirely in black, a striking contrast against his fair complexion. Draped in an intricately patterned Han brocade robe, he had a tiny medicine bag strung at his waist and cloud-wading boots gracing his feet, and he held a small, gold-plated hand warmer. His eyes were covered with a black cloth that revealed only his rosy lips and high nose bridge—he was blind.

“Let me introduce myself,” the young man continued. “My name is Chen Xing, the 481st successor of the Divine Land’s exorcists and the only Great Exorcist left in this world. I’m sixteen years old this year, five foot eight, 143 pounds. I’m from Hanzhong, and I’m also the inheritor of the exorcists’ great undertaking in the human world. I came to Xiangyang on official business, and I hope to obtain Zhu Xu-daren’s assistance. Here, please take a look. This is a document issued by the Great Jin’s Minister of Appointments, Xie-daren—Xie An.”

In the crowded governor’s manor, the counselors whispered among themselves, and the generals under Zhu Xu’s command eyed the uninvited guest with suspicion.

“Xie-daren?” The handwritten order was passed around the crowd. “Where are the reinforcements?” Zhu Xu demanded. He could barely contain his frustration. “I asked Xie An for reinforcements, and he sent me a mage? What’s the meaning of this?”

“Well, I don’t know about any of that,” said Chen Xing sincerely. “And I’d like to reiterate once more—I’m not a mage.”

As the murmurs quieted, Governor Zhu Xu’s heart quickened, finally prompting him to voice the question that had long been weighing on his mind. “Can you help push back the huge army outside the city?”

Chen Xing scratched his neck, thinking. “It’s hard to say; that depends on the situation. But it’s most likely impossible.”

“Exorcist.” One of the generals who had just been observing until now spoke. “Can you scatter beans and turn them into an army?”

“No,” Chen Xing replied.

“Have you ever divined through the stars?” Zhu Xu asked. “Can you command the wind and rain to help everyone in Xiangyang out of this dire predicament?”

Chen Xing was speechless. He pointed at his blindfold. They wanted him to divine through the stars? How was he supposed to do that if he couldn’t see them?

“Kid!” another general chimed in. “Do you know any magic? Can you perform some kind of magic trick? Even if it’s just for show, it doesn’t matter! If you do it in front of the people, it’ll give everyone the confidence to defend the city!”

“Scattering beans to create an army is just something written in books to deceive people,” said Chen Xing innocently. “There’s no such magic in the world. Well, at least not yet.”

Governor Zhu Xu let out a sigh, as did everyone else in the hall. Their disappointment was palpable.

“Lord Governor,” Chen Xing said, “the purpose of my trip here is to find someone.”



The crowd in the hall started to disperse. Zhu Xu, who thought he had finally been thrown a lifeline, asked insipidly, “Who is it?”

“A person destined for me,” Chen Xing replied seriously. “My Protector Martial God is in Xiangyang City. This person is extremely important, not just to me, but also to the entire world.”

Zhu Xu looked at Chen Xing doubtfully.

“This destined person has appeared three times in my dreams,” Chen Xing explained, “each clearer than the last. From my latest dream, I’m certain that this person is in Xiangyang City. As long as I can find him, I’ll—”

Zhu Xu felt like he had just seen a glimmer of hope, and his heart flew to his throat. “You’ll help us break through the Qin army?”

“No... I’ll leave without delay,” said Chen Xing earnestly. “Everyone’s really busy, I dare not hold you up from fighting your war.”

Zhu Xu couldn’t bring himself to reply.

“Please gather all of the city’s able-bodied men in one place,” Chen Xing continued. “For my evaluation...for me to seek out my Protector Martial God. I assure you that this matter is of great concern to the millennial well-being of the Divine Land. <sup>2</sup> You will not regret it.”

Zhu Xu wanted to ask, *What kind of joke is this?* This young man didn’t seem to be lying, though. If this truly was some kind of prank, there would have been no need for him to venture into the city during its most perilous hour. To be frank, Zhu Xu didn’t know how he’d managed to infiltrate the city in the first place. Perhaps it was because he would be on his last legs in a few more days, or maybe the phrase “millennial well-being” had struck a chord with him, but regardless, hope was growing fainter by the day. At the very least, he had a document from the Ministry in his hands. Zhu Xu suddenly found himself struck with an idea—he wanted to discern the true intentions behind the young man’s mysterious actions.

“All the able-bodied men are in the army,” Zhu Xu said coldly. “Look for him there, and we’ll talk again once you’ve found him.”

Two hours later, the remaining 12,200 officers and soldiers in the city were called over and assembled urgently on the field outside the governor’s manor. Many were even yawning.

Snow fell lightly at dusk. A couch had been placed at the manor’s entrance, and Chen Xing sat on it, looking down at the dense, dark mass of people below. There were spirited discussions happening down there. People had been in want of food since the beginning of winter—several months now. As soon as the army gathered, it was as if they had found an outlet to vent their frustration, and they all started clamoring at once.

“Silence! Silence!” the chief general commanded in a loud voice.

Seeing the situation turn dire, Zhu Xu realized that a riot was imminent if things continued like this. “Start now,” he urged.

Chen Xing was speechless. He raised his hand slightly, and it trembled a little before he finally put it back down. A military counselor from the governor’s manor noticed this small detail. “You seem to be a little nervous,” he said softly.

Chen Xing immediately refuted this allegation that harbored evil intentions. “I’m not nervous at all.” *Not among these people.*

Chen Xing waited for a long time, but the guidance he expected never appeared. He listened carefully, but within that endless darkness, only the rustling of the snow could be heard. *Heart Lamp, quickly...tell me where the Protector Martial God is. I’m running out of time!*

The clamor intensified. The soldiers below grew increasingly furious, their curses filling the air, and some had even begun demanding provisions. Suddenly, in the darkness within the blindfold, a distant light appeared.

*Found him!* Chen Xing got up at once and hastened toward that light.

“Hey! Hey!” exclaimed the generals stationed beside Zhu Xu. “Where are you going?!”

Chen Xing briskly passed through the first row of soldiers, heading toward the eastern side of the training ground, so Zhu Xu had no choice but to make his way down the stairs and follow suit. Soon, the generals started dispersing the soldiers, urging them to return to their posts. The crowd realized that they had been involved in yet another farce. Everyone sighed in frustration and cursed out loud before heading home.

After he left the field, Chen Xing turned in the direction of the governor’s manor. He looked every which way before making his way to the west side of the manor. “What is this place?” he asked.

Zhu Xu and a group of soldiers caught up with him. They lifted lit torches to look at Chen Xing.

“The dungeon,” said Zhu Xu.

A white light suddenly appeared in front of him. It was even nearer now.

“Open the door,” Chen Xing said seriously.

A general wanted to stop him—“You can’t go in! Inside is...”—but Zhu Xu motioned for someone to open the door.

Chen Xing, still blindfolded, proceeded through the underground passages of the governor’s mansion, illuminated by flickering oil lamps. He made a turn and headed straight for the deepest part of the dungeon. Before him, the guiding light pulsed occasionally, like a heartbeat. At times the room was bathed in brilliant light, while at others it plunged into complete darkness, with only occasional flickers emanating from deep within the cell.

In the depths of the dungeon, the cells on both sides were filled with eerie white bones and the mournful cries of prisoners. At the end of the