

PROTECT OUR CLAN LEADER

Chapter 11: The Hope of the Whole Family_1

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Wang Shouzhe came with a purpose today, but he was still calm and collected, casually chatting with Wang Xiaozhi about strange and interesting things.

When he mentioned that he and Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai had caught a 150-pound Red-scaled Eel by chance last night, Wang Xiaozhi excitedly smacked his thigh: "That little rascal Define the Sea wouldn't be able to catch one in two years, you two must have been lucky this time."

Although the Red-scaled Eel is not as good as the Red Tail Spirit Log, it is considered a highly nourishing food and is ranked among the spirit foods.

Spirit food is a great way to quickly replenish the vital energy of a Profound Martial cultivator and is a necessity for every Profound Martial cultivator. Even people like Wang Xiaozhi, who are over seventy years old and whose cultivation base has stagnated and even begun to regress, need to supplement with spirit food from time to time.

Otherwise, their vital energy will be insufficient, and their physical decline and loss of cultivation base will accelerate.

For the younger generation, spirit food is even more necessary for replenishing vital energy, which can help them grow faster and better.

As the two of them chatted and laughed, within half an hour, the cooks and two maids had prepared some farm dishes, including fresh chicken, duck, fish and goose, as well as a large stone bowl of braised pork belly.

"Shouzhe, you come here rarely, and your elder uncle doesn't have anything else to entertain you with." Wang Xiaozhi went into the bedroom and in a short while, brought out an antique wine pot, smiling and saying, "Taste my treasured wine, drink as much as you can and take the rest home."

As they were talking,

A tanned, mud-covered young man came in and said cheerfully: "Grandpa, you are showing favoritism. You always refuse to give me a sip of your White Jade Spiritual Wine. But today, as soon as my fourth brother arrives, you bring out the whole jar."

"You little rascal, how do you compare yourself to Shouzhe?" Wang Xiaozhi laughed and scolded as soon as he saw the young man, "I can't believe you actually made it back for dinner on time, go wash up quickly, I'll count you in for a cup."

"Third brother." Wang Shouzhe greeted with a smile. He knew this was Wang Shounuo, the third ranked among the Shou generation of the seventh generation of the Wang family.

"Four brother." Wang Shounuo quickly returned the salute respectfully, then laughed and said, "I'll go wash up now, and take care of my fourth brother later." Then he quickly excused himself.

By the time the table was set with bowls, chopsticks, wine cups and all, Wang Shounuo had already washed up and eagerly sat down to the right of Wang Shouzhe, smelling the food with a starving look in his eyes. He fervently eyed the pot of White Jade Spiritual Rice Wine, chuckling, "Thanks to brother's visit, we can have a great meal. It's been so long since we had a meal together.

I'll toast you a few more cups later."

"You've worked hard enough for the family, third brother. I should be the one toasting you," Wang Shouzhe laughed.

"Luotong, go pour wine for your fourth brother." Wang Xiaozhi was in a great mood, a glowing smile on his bronzed face. He casually instructed.

"Yes, grandpa." Wang Luotong picked up the jug and filled Wang Shouzhe's cup, then Wang Xiaozhi's, and finally Wang Shounuo's cup.

The wine was pure white in color and gave off a rich, aromatic scent. Just one sniff was enough to invigorate the senses.

As the two girls, Wang Luotong and Wang Luo Jing, prepared to return to their small table in the kitchen to eat, Wang Shouzhe took the initiative to speak, "Fourth uncle, I'm not a stranger here. Let the fourth and fifth sisters sit down and eat with us."

Wang Xiaozhi was taken aback, but didn't want to let Wang Shouzhe lose face, so he laughed and said, "Since your fourth brother asked, let's eat together."

"Thank you, Grandpa, thank you, fourth brother." Wang Luotong and Wang Luo Jing both obediently sat down at the last place.

After that, the table was full of liveliness as everyone clinked their cups in joyful toasts.

The two girls ate quietly, refilling the cups when needed.

"Good wine." After downing half a cup, Wang Shouzhe already felt a burning sensation in his belly. His vital energy was surging inside his body, and his energy levels were gradually increasing.

The White Jade Spiritual Rice Wine was brewed from White Jade Spiritual Rice and a lot of valuable medicinal herbs. Its effects of replenishing vital energy and blood were far superior to ordinary spirit foods.

However, its price was also quite "impressive". A pot of White Jade Spiritual Rice Wine weighing several jin easily cost several Qian Gold coins, so even Wang Shouzhe could only afford to enjoy it once in a while.

Moreover, spiritual wine like this could only be used as an auxiliary spirit food and should be consumed only occasionally. If one became addicted and spent all day in a drunken haze, it would not turn out well.

At this moment, Wang Luo Jing, who was quietly eating her meal, looked at the wine jug from time to time, licking her lips as if she was craving a taste.

"Luotong can have half a glass, and Luo Jing, being too young, can only taste the bottom of it." Wang Shouzhe picked up the jug and poured some for his two sisters.

"Thank you, Fourth Brother," said the two girls gleefully expressing gratitude. It was clear they had been pining for spiritual wine for quite a while.

At that moment, the older Wang Xiaozhi's face twitched as if he felt some sort of pain. He muttered quietly, "Shouzhe, isn't it a waste to let these two girls sip on that spiritual wine?"

Wang Shouzhe responded with a twitch of the eyelid; the unabashed gender bias of his Great Uncle, valuing males over females, was indeed something to be reckoned with.

"Great Uncle, they are our children all the same," Wang Shouzhe replied, smiling.

"Not the same, not the same, girls will get married sooner or later," Wang Xiaozhi continued to grumble, "Shouzhe, you're at the crucial stage of attacking the seventh level of the Qi Refinement Realm. You should drink more; Shounuo, you should sip less, and leave more for Shouzhe."

Wang Shounuo quickly put down his cup with an embarrassed grin.

In the eyes of old folk like Wang Xiaozhi, Wang Shouzhe, the direct-line Clan Leader, is the hope and future pillar of the family. His value is much higher than even his own grandson, Wang Shounuo, let alone two "monetary loss" granddaughters.

Lucky for him, his grandchildren were used to this and managed to enjoy the meal. However, under Wang Xiaozhi's guidance, plenty of spiritual wine remained, along with half a tenderloin. Preparations were made to send both back to Wang Shouzhe's courtyard for his private consumption.

Witnessing Wang Xiaozhi's blatant favoritism, Wang Shouzhe felt rather helpless and decided to let him be for now.

After the meal, Wang Shouzhe proposed, "Great Uncle, the primary reason for my visit to Fenggu Farm was to learn about agriculture from you."

"Agriculture?" Wang Xiaozhi asked, his forehead creasing into a frown, "Shouzhe, you are the Clan Leader. At present, the most important thing is to focus on your cultivation, striving to advance to the Spirit Platform Realm. You must not let farming and other miscellaneous matters distract you. Great Uncle and your third brother will handle all of it."

Wang Shouzhe's aim was to learn more about Fenggu farm and its operations. If possible, he wished to infuse some modern thinking into the farming practices. However, he realized after interacting with Wang Xiaozhi that the old man, despite his loyalty to the family, held stubborn and outdated beliefs.

Unlike Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai, who was always obedient, Wang Shouzhe feared to upset Wang Xiaozhi with even a casual mention of his plans. He decided to change the topic, "Great Uncle, you're mistaken. As Clan Leader, I should at least know a bit about our family's business operations. How about this? I'll take a tour around the farm accompanied by Third Brother to appreciate the pastoral scenery."

"You.....alright, let Shounuo keep you company for half a day. The wheat is in its grain-filling stage now and there are many tasks to be done in the field; I won't be able to accompany you." Saying this, Wang Xiaozhi picked up his farming tools and rushed off to the field.

Hehe~

Even though he was the Clan Leader, these old men in the family still treated him like a child, hoping that he would utilise his talents and cultivate to attain the Spirit Platform Realm.

It kind of felt like they saw him as a good luck charm or lucky pet, didn't it?

Actually, if everything were comfortable and peaceful, Wang Shouzhe himself was quite keen to be a 'lucky pet'. However, the weakening power of the Wang clan over the years left them vulnerable. If this trend continued, the Ping'an Wang family might soon be wiped out, disappearing from the pages of history.

While the Wang family still had its foundation, it was crucial to rise, even if it meant having the most basic self-protection ability.

"Fourth Brother, I'll take you around; if there's anything you don't understand, feel free to ask me," Wang Shounuo stood up and bowed, showing courtesy and a bit of awe towards Wang Shouzhe.

On one hand, Wang Shouzhe was the head of the direct line, and on the other, his personal strength was many times greater than his.

"Thank you, Third Brother," Wang Shouzhe replied politely.

"We're going too," Wang Luotong and Wang Luo Jing chimed in and they followed enthusiastically. Wang Gui came after them, carrying Wang Shouzhe's sword and bow and arrows, followed by four armed household guards.

The siblings strolled leisurely on the farm. It was early summer and quite hot. Hot, humid wind blowing on the face made the air feel thick and heavy.

"Our Fenggu Farm was an industry personally opened by our ancestor, Zhou Xuan, a hundred years ago," Wang Shounuo said proudly, "Our ancestor, at that time, organized the redirection of tributaries, dredged silt, reinforced the riverbank, and constructed a water sluice gate at the upper reaches of the Fen Gu tributary, thus forming the embryonic form of Fenggu Farm.

In the following years, our people continued to rectify and cultivate the barren land, transforming this arable, semi-dry wasteland into fertile farmland. With their dedicated efforts over generations, today we have 3,567 acres of top-quality farmland and 200 tenant farmers!"

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Chapter 12 Signs of the Insect Plague_1

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With just Fenggu Farm alone offering so many fertile fields, there were a couple of hundred tenant farmers too?

Wang Shouzhe looked across the patchwork of fields, crisscrossed with large and small irrigation ditches, and felt somewhat moved internally. This was indeed the family business that had been handed down for hundreds of years.

"Our Fenggu Farm adheres to traditional winter wheat and summer fallow crop rotations. Now is exactly when the winter wheat is about to mature, and it's a busy season for cultivating summer fallow seedlings," said Wang Shounuo, with a slight joy on his face.

"This spring, ample rainfall did not flood the field, while the abundant sunshine did not scorch the plants, which is very beneficial to the growth of winter wheat. It seems that it will be a bumper harvest season."

At this, Wang Shouzhe was somewhat pleased. The difference between a good harvest and a poor one of grains was significant. More grain harvest meant the family had more funds for development.

"That's not right," Wang Luo Jing, who was like a little tail-following insect, began to pout. "Third brother, you're wrong. I'm afraid it will be a poor harvest for this year's winter wheat."

What?

Wang Shounuo's smile became a bit rigid instantly, and he sternly said, "Luo Jing, you little girl can't talk nonsense. Even Grandpa and some of the old experienced tenant farmers say that there is an eighty to ninety percent chance of a bumper harvest this year. You're so young, what do you understand? If Grandpa hears you predicting a poor harvest, I'm afraid he will scold you again."

Frightened by his words, Wang Luo Jing instantly hid behind Wang Shouzhe.

"Third brother, our fifth sister is still young, children are innocent. Why are you fussing over her?" Wang Shouzhe comforted her by rubbing her head a couple of times with a smile.

"Fourth brother, there's something you don't know," Wang Shounuo reluctantly chuckled, "What you don't know is that though our fifth sister is young, she is quite eccentric. She loves to play with all kinds of insects all day. When she was two or three years old, she could sit in the yard and watch ants for days.

Some time ago, she even begged me to catch a 'grass something king of the insects' for her. She cried and threw tantrums when I wouldn't, forcing me to wander all over the mountains for four or five days to catch just two~ I was bitten all over by mosquitos."

"It's the king of the grass-bug, as recorded in the ancient Insect Scripture." Wang Luo Jing stuck out half of her head from behind Wang Shouzhe and corrected Wang Shounuo seriously, "Brother, it's shame you are so handsome but empty-headed.

Even though the Profound Martial prominent family establishes itself with martial force, cultural literacy and knowledge are also the foundation of a family's heritage."

Especially the latter half, she mimicked the way Wang Shouzhe scolded them to mock Wang Shounuo.

No doubt, Wang Shounuo's face turned dark and he grumbled, "Yes, yes, yes, I'm not knowledgeable. Next time you beg me, I won't help you catch bugs anymore."

"I'll ask fourth brother for help. Fourth brother is ten thousand times more capable than you," Wang Luo Jing said, hugging Wang Shouzhe's clothes tightly, seemingly having found her backbone, and her tone was full of confidence.

Wang Shouzhe couldn't help but laugh seeing this. It seemed she was indeed quite peculiar, just a little reserved in front of him, so much so that she almost made Wang Shounuo faint due to frustration.

"Alright, alright, Luo Jing, tell me, how is it going to be a poor harvest this year with such favorable weather?" Wang Shouzhe casually asked, "Don't be afraid, it's okay even if you are wrong."

With the backing of Wang Shouzhe, Wang Luo Jing emboldened herself, "The winter last year was too warm, there was only a slight snowfall."

Wang Shounuo immediately rolled his eyes: "It's true there's a saying that 'a timely snow promises a good harvest,' but it's just an old saying. Do you mean that if it does not snow, there will definitely be a poor harvest this year?"

"It's different," Wang Luo Jing said earnestly, "The winter last year was warm, and indeed the rainfall this spring was good. But, it has not rained for more than ten days now, and the weather is dry and hot."

"Luo Jing," Wang Shounuo said nonchalantly, "We have already opened the sluice gate of the Fenggu tributary for irrigation. The winter wheat won't lack water. Besides, the good sunlight helps the wheat grains grow fuller."

"But it also helps aphids grow," Wang Luo Jing countered, rolling her eyes.

Aphids?

Wang Shounuo shivered, hesitating, "The appearance of aphids is unavoidable, they crop up every year, causing some reduction in yield... Furthermore, last winter we did spread Insecticide Powder in the fields."

However, as he spoke, he sounded somewhat unconvincing. Aphids are the natural enemy of winter wheat. A small-scale outbreak is still manageable; it may result in a reduction of grain yield at most. But a massive outbreak would be a disaster.

According to the Wang family's records, the most severe instance was an aphid disaster 73 years ago. This disaster spread across Longzuo County causing an 80% reduction in winter wheat yield that year. The grain prices soared in a short period. The prominent

families could survive on their reserves, but many poor freemen had to resort to selling off their children.

What's more terrifying is that this insect disaster lasted for three years. Even some of the prominent families couldn't withstand it. If the Purple Abode Academic Palace hadn't intervened by importing a large amount of grain into Longzuo County and mass-producing traditional Insecticide Powder, Longzuo County would have probably turned into a desolate land with corpses everywhere.

Wang Shouzhe frowned, "Luo Jing, do you have any evidence to support what you're saying?"

Fenggu Farm and Prosperous Farm are the Wang family's two main grain production bases. If there were really an outbreak of aphids, it would be worse for the present Wang family.

"Brother, try examining a few wheat spikes that are in the filling stage." Wang Luo Jing also looked a bit serious.

The words made Wang Shounuo a bit nervous; he walked into the field, randomly picked a wheat spike, flipped through, and noticed some tiny green spots on the wheat spike which had just started to fill.

After turning a few more spikes, some had more, some less, but undeniably, these were all aphids.

Wang Shouzhe was at the High Level Six of the Vital Energy Refining Realm. His physical strength and eyesight far exceeded that of ordinary people. Looking around, he saw that the green spots were all chubby little insects. He was slightly taken aback, "Aphids?"

Wang Shouzhe had few accumulated knowledge about this. He could hardly guess that it was a kind of aphid. He was not interested in agriculture, hence powerful algorithm apps did not push this kind of content to him.

"It's true the number of aphids this year is more than usual." Wang Shounuo said, puzzledly, "But that doesn't mean we're going to have a locust plague, right? They can be controlled with a mixture of wood ash juice and insecticide powder. At most, the production will slightly decrease compared to last year."

"Brother!" Wang Luo Jing stopped in her tracks, "I've already said that there's a big problem with the climate. Too many insect eggs were left in the soil last year. Soon, maybe tomorrow or the day after, a large number of aphids will emerge from the ground. In seven or eight days, it will likely trigger the second wave."

"You guys come over here". Wang Shouzhe called out to a few tenant farmers not far away who were working, "Pull out the wheat in this small patch and turn the soil."

"This... Young Master Shounuo..." The tenant farmers shrank back, looking at Wang Shounuo with doubts. They dare not, and they were reluctant to do it. The wheat would be ready for harvest in another ten or so days. It was precious food.

"Listen to the Clan Leader." Not wanting to offend Wang Shouzhe, Wang Shounuo went forward and started to pull out the wheat.

The tenant farmers also picked up their hoes and started turning the soil.

In a short while, all the wheat in the small patch was pulled out, and the soil was turned over.

"This..." Wang Shounuo carefully inspected the roots of the pulled-up wheat, his face gradually changing from serious to shocked. "How could this be? How could this be?"

Many white spots on the roots were truly terrifying. Most of the wheat roots had them; the only difference was the number.

There were also many white spots in the turned-over soil, if you looked carefully.

A shudder came over Wang Shounuo. He had a bad feeling about this, "Quick, go get grandfather."

"Quickly, notify grandfather, and tell all the tenant farmers to quickly soak the stored wood ash." Having studied agriculture with his grandfather for two years, Wang Shounuo had learned some basics.

The tenant farmers began to busy themselves.

In a short while, Grand Elder Wang Xiaozhi had arrived. His face was extremely distressed: "How could this be? How could there be so many aphid eggs growing in the soil? After the autumn harvest last year, like always, we deep ploughed and spread insecticide powder. Could there be something wrong with the insecticide powder?"

"Grandfather, last year was a warm winter..." Wang Luo Jing gently reminded him.

"You little girl, I've been farming all my life, could I not understand as much as you?" Wang Xiaozhi scolded, as if his tail had been stepped on. "Ten years ago, it was also a warm winter, and the climate was exactly the same as this year. Yet, Longzuo had a bumper harvest with grain abundantly stored! In my opinion, the problem lies with the insecticide powder.

That damned Qian Family's store, they must have sold fake insecticide, and I even stocked up on a large quantity of their insecticide when it was cheap!"

Listening to their discussions, Wang Shouzhe remembered some fragmented knowledge and couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows: "The Qian Family's stores are all over Longzuo. They always pay attention to their reputation. If their fake insecticide led to a locust plague in Longzuo, they certainly wouldn't be able to bear the consequences.

Could there be a possibility that aphids, no, honey bugs, have survived through repeatedly resisting the insecticide, particularly the ones with strong drug resistance, and have gradually spread?"

Although his previous life's Wang Shouzhe did not deal with agriculture, he still knew that whether it was bacteria, viruses, or organisms, they would all constantly undergo genetic mutation and evolution. This evolution was almost unpredictable, but most of them would be eliminated by nature.

Those honey bugs that evolved towards drug resistance, and survived and proliferated during the constant battles with the insecticide, were also reasonable.

But Wang Xiaozhi couldn't understand what biological evolution meant. He just frowned and said: "Shouzhe, don't talk nonsense here. The previous insecticide worked fine, why doesn't it work this year?"

"Grandfather, I think my fourth brother is right." Wang Luo Jing said, "Grandfather, you forgot, you've been complaining these years. It seems like the insecticide is becoming less and less effective. Why are there aphids every year?"

Wang Xiaozhi's face stiffened, and his expression became increasingly difficult to look at. In recent years, especially since the bumper harvest ten years ago, there was a gradual increase in the number of aphids. However, because the overall impact was still within tolerance, he only found it a nuisance.

Wang Shouzhe was almost certain that resistant aphids had proliferated. The warm winter of the previous season allowed most of the insect's eggs to survive. So, the current situation arose due to this year's climate being suitable for aphids.

This is a big problem. Even Wang Shouzhe felt his scalp tingling. He's not capable of mixing up new "pesticides"...

Indeed, misfortunes never come singly! With this disaster, the days of the Wang family will become even more difficult, won't they?

"Fourth brother." Wang Luo Jing pulled on Wang Shouzhe and took him aside. She whispered, "I have a way to solve the aphid problem, but I'm scared of Grandfather, so I dare not say it!"

What?

Wang Shouzhe was taken aback. He looked at her in disbelief.

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Chapter 13: Talent! Insect Master_1

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"Fourth Brother, do you not believe me?" Wang Luo Jing's little face slightly fell.

"Fourth Brother, I suggest you listen to this little girl." An older Wang Luotong also came over, "Although Luo Jing is young, she has always loved playing with bugs since she was a child. She's quite knowledgeable about them and has a knack for attracting them."

"Interesting~" Wang Shouzhe suddenly livened up, his eyes gleaming, "Firstly, slowly tell Fourth Brother how you intend to deal with the aphids, we have plenty of time."

"In recent years, Grandfather has been complaining that the aphid infestation has been increasing, reducing the crop yield compared to previous years." Wang Luo Jing said faintly, "So, I thought that if I could solve the aphid problem for Grandfather, he would surely be pleased. Then, I could plead with him not to marry my sister off. I don't want sister to leave~"

Wang Luotong's face turned pale instantly, lowering her head, not daring to speak. This kind of matter was not something she could decide on.

"If you really can solve the aphid disaster, Fourth Brother promises to protect you both." Wang Shouzhe firmly promised, "If you don't want to get married, you won't have to."

"Thank you, Fourth Brother." Wang Luo Jing's eyes lit up, "Actually, I have long seen in the 'Insect Scripture' that ancient people used to control aphids with grasshopper insects. But in recent years, grasshopper insects have become scarce.

Last year, I bred some aphids and grasshopper insects and it turned out to be effective, so this year, I asked Brother to catch two Grasshopper Insect Kings from the mountains. I have spent some effort to domesticate them..."

"Wait..." Wang Shouzhe's face changed, "What is 'Insect Scripture'? And you managed to domesticate the Grasshopper Insect King?"

"The 'Insect Scripture' is just an ancient book that I found in the family library." Wang Luo Jing said innocently, "The 'Insect Scripture' explains how to domesticate insects and it's not that hard. If Fourth Brother wants to learn, I can teach you."

Not that hard!?

Wang Shouzhe's face blackened a bit, he was quite familiar with Profound Martial World after integrating the previous owner's memory. A small number of people in this world like to control spiritual insects for production or combat, essentially being referred to as Insect Masters.

However, the status of an Insect Master is considered somewhat niche due to their high requirements for talent, even higher than that of an Alchemist's. The reason is simple, regular people who are slightly smart can barely learn Alchemy, however the cost is enormous with limited achievements.

But for a profession such as an Insect Master, if you don't possess the rare talent to communicate with spiritual insects, you can't even make a start in it.

Therefore, Insect Masters are very niche and ordinary children from prominent families have not even heard of them. According to Wang Shouzhe's knowledge, only the Xu family of Changning and the Liu family of Shanyin secretly cultivated two Insect Masters.

If Wang Luo Jing has the talent of an Insect Master...

For a moment, Wang Shouzhe's heart was pounding.

"Fourth Brother, what's wrong with you?" Wang Luo Jing waved her hand in front of him, her mouth pouting in anger, "Does Fourth Brother not believe me, too?"

"Believe, I believe." Wang Shouzhe nodded vigorously, "My little Luo Jing is the smartest, Fourth Brother is very interested. Let's go somewhere far and you can demonstrate for Fourth Brother. "

"Okay, those two Grasshopper Insect Kings are in Fourth Brother's carriage." Wang Luo Jing seemed very pleased when agreed upon, "Sister and I will get them."

Wang Shouzhe suddenly remembered, when he saw the sisters this morning, they were each carrying a strange large box. He initially assumed they were their personal belongings. As they were the private property of the girls, it was inappropriate to intrude so he simply asked them to put it in the carriage.

Looking at it now, it seemed they had planned to try something on the farm.

"Let the house warrior do it." Wang Shouzhe beckoned.

The house warrior who was waiting in the distance ran over quickly and respectfully asked, "Clan Leader, what's your order?"

"Wang Wu, Wang Yong. Go to the carriage and bring the two boxes of Miss Luo Jing."

"Yes, Family Head."

The two house warriors ran away and returned in less than an hour, each holding a box.

"Wang Gui, Wang Wu, you guys go to Grand Elder and see if there is anything to help with." Wang Shouzhe dismissed them all, anyway he saw that Wang Xiaozhi there seemed to be thinking of using ash juice to control the aphids, it should be short of manpower.

The heads of the household were all Profound Martial practitioners, which made them much more efficient than ordinary tenant farmers.

More importantly, the matter wasn't yet settled, and he didn't want to make it public knowledge.

After Wang Gui and the other four household heads had left, Wang Shouzhe personally carried two large boxes, and together with Wang Luotong and Wang Luo Jing, they ran off to a remote wheat field.

The three thousand-odd mu of land was like an ocean. This place was deserted and vacant, perfect for a demonstration.

Wang Shouzhe peeled back the wheat stalks and, as expected, there were some green aphids in the wheat field. The tiny bugs gave him chills.

"Luo Jing, show your fourth brother what you can do."

"Hmm~ The outbreak of honey bugs this time was earlier than I thought," said Wang Luo Jing, her expression heavy and uneasy. She carefully opened one of the boxes.

Wang Shouzhe peeked curiously into the box, immediately his fear of clusters setting in, raising goosebumps all over his body. For the box was full of leaves, and from the leaves grew strands of string-like objects, densely covered in round dots.

"Fourth brother, sister, could you lend a hand?" Wang Luo Jing took out the "leaves" one by one, "Place one leaf every ten feet."

Wang Shouzhe's mouth twitched a little - this girl had quite the nerve, bossing around even the Clan Leader. But he obediently followed Wang Luo Jing's instructions. With his high cultivation base, he grabbed a "leaf" and flung it casually, and the "leaf" landed perfectly on the spot.

According to Wang Luo Jing's "instructions", a few dozen leaves needed to be scattered for each mu of wheat field. She just opened one of the two boxes, filled with several hundred "leaves", only enough to cover about ten mu of land, a mere drop in the bucket for the vast wheat field.

After about fifteen minutes of scattering the leaves, Wang Shouzhe and Wang Luotong stood by Wang Luo Jing, waiting patiently as she instructed.

"Fourth brother, these Grasshopper Insect eggs are in their third day," explained Wang Luo Jing, "They hatch slower in the dark box. Once they see sunlight, they'll hatch very quickly."

Alright~ You're the expert here, what you say goes.

When it came to his blind spots in knowledge, Wang Shouzhe was always humble, never presumptuous. Time trickled by, and in less than an hour, changes occurred in the first few leaves scattered - small, peculiar-looking insects began breaking out of their shells with difficulty.

The leaves were right before their eyes, allowing them to observe those tiny bugs closely. They were less than two millimeters in size, beetle-like in shape but with two large pincers protruding from their heads, making them quite ugly in appearance.

After hatching, they remained motionless, quietly hanging on the strands.

After a while, they finally began to move, slipping down the strands onto the leaves, leisurely spreading out in all directions. Seemingly innately able to sense the location of food, they effortlessly climbed the wheat stalks.

Suddenly!

One of them encountered an aphid and ferociously pounced on it. It clamped onto the aphid with its pincers and began to suck from it. Within a short period, the poor aphid was sucked dry, its empty shell scattering in the wind.

The Grasshopper Insect larva then continued to climb forward in search of its next prey.

"Impressive!" exclaimed Wang Shouzhe, "These little bugs are fierce."

"Fourth brother, when I was raising Grasshopper larva before, I calculated that it only takes them ten days to pupate. During this time they can eat nearly a thousand honey bugs. For the first two days after birth, when they are very small, they can only eat about ten or so a day," Wang Luo Jing was used to playing with these creatures and thus felt no surprise at their behavior.

"If that's truly the case, while the yield of the wheat field on this ten-acre piece of land will be slightly reduced, it can still be saved," Wang Shouzhe remarked with admiration, but also worriedly added, "But just our Fenggu Farm alone has several thousand mu of wheat."

"Fourth brother, don't worry, that was just a test," Wang Luo Jing opened the other box, which no longer held Grasshopper Insect larvae, but colorful little beetles instead.

"Isn't this..." Wang Shouzhe was taken aback as he recognized those beetles, "The seven-spotted ladybug?"

"Fourth brother, you recognize it too? But the Insect Scripture calls it the Nine-dot Beetle, not the Seven-spotted Beetle." Wang Luo Jing took out a fist-sized beetle, dotted with nine spots, and affectionately caressed it, "I'll call you the Nine-star Bug King from now on."

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Protect Our Clan Leader

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Nine-star Bug King!

Wang Shouzhe's mouth twitched a few times, his fifth sister was usually inconspicuous, but in private, she was somewhat... hair-raising.

"Buzz buzz!"

The fist-sized Nine-star Bug King's carapace opened, and its membranous wings vibrated rapidly in response to her.

At the same time, Wang Luo Jing took out a jade bamboo flute from her waist, put it to her lips, and began to play. It was a unique rhythm, sharp and high-pitched, grating on the ears.

But the Nine-star Bug King was very familiar with the sound, and with a tremor of its wings, it emitted a constant buzz. The rest of the smaller Nine-star Insects in the box took flight, surrounding the Nine-star Bug King like a shifting cloud.

Following Wang Luo Jing's command, the Nine-star Bug King led the charge towards the wheat field, followed by the insect swarm of thousands that rushed forward like a fierce wind. Despite being ladybugs, those in the Profound Martial world were apparently much more ferocious.

They landed on the somewhat shriveled wheat spikes and feasted on the aphids they caught. Their combat power was incomparable to that of the Grasshopper Insect larvae. In just half a quarter of an hour, each Nine-star Insect had taken down at least five or six aphids.

With such a biological legion deployed, they were truly invincible.

"Luo Jing, well done, well done," Wang Shouzhe can't help but offer his hearty praise, "With skills like yours, our Wang family's grains can be saved."

"Fourth brother, it's not enough," Wang Luo Jing shook her head and said, "From the grain-filling stage to maturity, the wheat has only a dozen days left. The more we delay, the more yield loss we risk."

Her grandfather, Wang Xiaozhi, had dedicated his life to farming, and she had been deeply influenced by him since she was young. Without saying another word, she took out two large bugs, as thick as arms and withered in color, from the Grasshopper Insect box.

"Fourth brother, these two King of the grass-bugs have laid too many eggs and might not live more than a month," Wang Luo Jing said with a mix of distress and guilt, "I hope in their final days, they can make one last effort for the family."

As she spoke, she played the Jade Bamboo Flute again. This time the sound was completely different from when she directed the Nine-star Bug King, very low-pitched. The two withered and faded King of the grass-bugs suddenly awakened and flew off into the distance.

Their speed was incredibly fast, and they disappeared without a trace in a few breaths. As they flew, their mouthparts kept trembling, emitting a low-frequency sound.

"Fourth brother, the King of the grass-bugs has the ability to summon companions," Wang Luo Jing remarked, "I hope they can call back more companions. Now there are fewer and fewer Grasshopper Insects in the wild, only some left in the mountains."

Upon hearing this, Wang Shouzhe also reflected on the matter. It was likely due to the Insecticide Powder introduced by the Purple Abode Academic Palace, the decline in aphids had led to a reduced population of Grasshopper Insects.

Now, with the emergence of aphids resistant to pesticides, there was a crisis brewing for the Grasshopper Insects, signaling that a major event was likely to unfold.

Two hours later, one of the King of the grass-bugs had returned, bringing back an army. They flew around the wheat field, voraciously preying on aphids, and what's more terrifying was that, while feasting, they began laying eggs on the blades of wheat spikes.

As nighttime approached, another King of the grass-bug returned, bringing even more of its kind. The vast army of Grasshopper Insects left Wang Shouzhe wondering if the aphids in thousands of acres of wheat fields would be enough to feed them.

Moreover, the copious eggs they laid would hatch in just a matter of days, and even the tiny larvae should not be underestimated.

This magnificent sight gradually caught the attention of the tenant farmers, who then reported it to Wang Xiaozhi. When Wang Xiaozhi arrived later and found out that it was his granddaughter Wang Luo Jing's doing, he was so astonished he was at a loss for words.

In an instant, he was overtaken by emotions, muttering incessantly, "This time our Wang family is saved, saved indeed."

"Fourth Grandfather, our other two farms also have a substantial amount of crops," Wang Shouzhe said. "As for the specifics, I won't get involved. You can discuss it with Luo Jing yourself." Although the Silkworm Manor specialized in sericulture, it also cultivated quite a bit of wheat.

"This..." Wang Xiaozhi's face fell at the prospect of discussing matters with his youngest granddaughter.

"Fourth Grandfather, if you feel that Luo Jing is superfluous, I can take her back with me, so she won't be in the way here," Wang Shouzhe said with a smile.

"She's not superfluous, not in the way," Wang Xiaozhi quickly shook his head, his face contorting with a strained smile as he looked at Wang Luo Jing. "Luo Jing, we still need to figure out a way to save the other two farms. Whatever you want to do, just let your grandfather do it."

Wang Shouzhe laughed. Although Old Wang Xiaozhi was stubborn and sexist, his loyalty and sense of belonging to the Wang family was beyond question. If he could change his mindset, he could still be a pillar of the family.

Seeing that Wang Xiaozhi had changed his attitude, Wang Shouzhe pulled him aside and spoke with a grave expression, "Fourth Grandfather, it seems that this insect disaster is not exclusive to our Wang family. I dare not speak for Longzuo, but in the vicinity of Changning, I'm afraid there's at least a forty to fifty percent decrease in production."

"Isn't that a good thing?" Wang Xiaozhi, taken aback, then let out a naive laugh. "If other families have a poor harvest, only our family will have a good yield..."

"In this world, good and bad often have no absolutes," Wang Shouzhe said coldly. "Sometimes what seems like a very good thing can turn out to be bad."

Wang Xiaozhi shuddered and then realized, "Do you mean that other clans will be envious of us?"

"If it were just a matter of envy, that might be tolerable," Wang Shouzhe said, looking extremely solemn. "As the saying goes, people don't fear scarcity as much as they fear inequality. If everyone is affected by a disaster, that's one thing. But if the Wang family alone has a good harvest, not just enemy clans, but even those with a good relationship with us may become resentful.

One wrong move, and our Ping'an Wang Family could become the target of all."

"What should we do? Our Wang family is already in a precarious situation; if we..." Wang Xiaozhi's anxiety flared, given his limited understanding of these matters as a clan elder who had long focused on farming.

"Don't panic, Fourth Grandfather, sometimes a bad situation can turn into a good one," Wang Shouzhe said confidently with a smile. "It depends on how we handle this and steer the situation to our advantage. Let's consider, starting with the Xu Family from Changning, the Gongsun Clan from Shanyang, and the Liu Family from Shanyin—these three clans.

They have long-established marital alliances with our Ping'an Wang Family, sharing naturally close ties, so we must find a way to assist them."

In fact, Wang Shouzhe had the best impression of the Gongsun Clan from Shanyang, and not just because his current father's first wife was from the Gongsun Clan. The Gongsun Clan had a generous and straightforward clan spirit, and they did not scorn the Wang family even though it had fallen on hard times.

Of course, this also had to do with past marriages between the direct lines of both families. The grandmother of the current Clan Leader of the Gongsun Clan, Gongsun Mo, was Wang Lingdie, a direct descendant from the fourth generation of the Wang family.

The Xu Family from Changning was itself a very powerful Profound Martial family, not much inferior to the Ping'an Wang family even at its peak. At that time, the direct lines of both families were intermarried, and their relationship was close.

Unfortunately, later on...

Wang Xiaozhi nodded with a complex and regretful expression, "That's right, these three families are deeply intertwined with our Wang family through marriage. It's just a pity about Sister Zhenmei..."

Wang Shouzhe knew what he was referring to. After the upheaval in the Wang family, to solidify the relationship with the Xu Family from Changning, under the arrangements of Old Ancestor Longyan, Grand Aunt Wang Zhenmei from the fifth generation of the Wang family was married to the first-born heir of the Xu family.

And Wang Zhenmei did not fail her mission, conceiving a child of the direct bloodline after several years, which brought the two families' relationship to its closest. Tragically, Grand Aunt Wang Zhenmei died inexplicably in childbirth, leading to a sorrowful outcome of one death and two lives.

At that time the Wang family was inconsolable with grief. The brothers of the 'Xiao' generation went to cause an uproar at the Xu family's estate in Changning. Even Old Ancestor Longyan was disturbed enough to personally examine the corpse and only gave up when no evidence of foul play was found.

Since then, the intimate relationship between the Wang family and the Xu family became strained, with marriage alliances limited to only the direct descendants and no longer involving the direct line.

Similarly, the relationship between the Liu Family from Shanyin and the Wang family was also somewhat intricate and complex, which is difficult to summarize in a few words.

Complex as it may be, the bloodline ties between them cannot be erased, and in times of crisis, they still need to support each other.

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Chapter 15 So Delicious! My Dear Granddaughter_1

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"Besides, families like the Lu Clan of Yingxiu, Xu Clan of Jinsha, and Chen Clan of Donggang also must be helped actively." Wang Shouzhe said seriously again, "Over the past forty or fifty years, our Wang family has intermarried with them, and we have established deep relationships with each other."

These three clans are not very powerful, but it's precisely because of this that they have intermarried with the now-declined Ping'an Wang Family. The relationship with the Lu Clan of Yingxiu is the closest as Wang Shouzhe's biological mother comes from the Lu clan's direct line.

Also, currently, Wang Liuling, the legitimate wife of the clan leader of Yingxiu Lu Clan, is from the sixth generation of Wang family and is Wang Shouzhe's maternal aunt. This makes their relationships extremely intricate and close.

"That's right, these three families are quite close to us. So, Shouzhe, what are you thinking?" Wang Xiaozhi nodded in agreement. He has two daughters one of whom is married to the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang, and another to Chen Clan of Donggang. His promising son, who passed away at a young age, Wang Dingbang, married the direct descendant of Xu Clan of Jinsha.

"Fourth Grandfather, we need to quickly sort out the causes and impacts of the outbreak of the insect plague. I will send a messenger to notify these six families overnight," Wang Shouzhe spoke rapidly, "The Yinyu family in Shanyin and the Xu family in Changning have already nurtured an Insect Master within their families.

As long as we provide a proper solution, I believe they can handle this crisis on their own. Besides, the primary business of Jinsha Xu Clan and Donggang Chen Clan isn't farming, after we've fulfilled our duty of informing them, it's enough to minimize their loss."

After a pause, Wang Shouzhe continued, "Among all, the Lu Clan of Yingxiu and Gongsun Clan of Shanyang appear to be a bigger concern. First, we need to inform them as soon as possible. Furthermore, we must actively lend them our support and express our good intentions to the fullest.

This way, even if they suffer massive losses from the plague of insects, their feelings toward us would be gratitude rather than resentment."

This series of calculations and discussions left Wang Xiaozhi slightly surprised. He never could have imagined that the sudden outbreak of an insect plague could lead to such a complicated situation.

More importantly, Wang Shouzhe was able to arrange everything meticulously in such a short period, taking everything into consideration.

"Shouzhe, it seems I've underestimated both you and Luo Jing," Wang Xiaozhi sighed with a bitter smile, "Your generation is certainly more talented. We, the oldest generation, are truly getting old."

"Fourth Grandfather, you're being too modest. If it weren't for your generation holding down the fort, these junior generations wouldn't have had the chance to stand firm," After paying his respects, Wang Shouzhe jokingly added, "Besides those six families, particularly the Liu Clan and Zhao Clan..."

Wang Xiaozhi's expression turned rigorous, "Don't worry, Shouzhe. Over the next ten days, we will make sure the information about the insect plague is blocked off from our three estate farms."

Unexpectedly, Wang Shouzhe smiled slyly, "It is impossible to hide the outbreak of an insect plague, since every family has a farming expert. In less than three days, the entire Changning defense area will be in an uproar. By the way, Fourth Grandfather, didn't you stockpile some inexpensive Insecticide Powder?"

With the mention of it, a regretful expression filled Wang Xiaozhi's face: "Yes, the Insecticide Powder bought during the winter season last year were the cheapest in years, and we received a huge discount for our bulk purchase.

I was considering that all our three estates would need Insecticide Powder, so after discussing with the elders, we stockpiled a large amount, enough for us to use for three years. Now, we still have goods worth more than 300 Qian Gold left. It's a huge loss! After this insect plague, how could those insecticides be useful?"

The family is already hard-pressed as it is, and losing another 300 Qian Golds in an instant is enough to send Wang Xiaozhi to his grave out of guilt.

"The Insecticide Powder should still be somewhat effective, right?" Wang Shouzhe pondered for a moment, his mind racing at a million miles per hour.

"That's not entirely true, dealing with the mature honeybugs is actually more difficult than the bug eggs." Wang Xiaozhi's face was very solemn, "I just tried it. I needed to double the dose mixed with wood ash juice to quickly eliminate the honeybugs. And that doesn't include the subsequent hatching of the honeybugs."

Then, Wang Shouzhe began to fire off questions like a machine gun.

Wang Xiaozhi had been awed before, so he didn't dare to underestimate Wang Shouzhe again. He patiently answered all the questions. He was now seventy-five, had been turning his hand to farming since the age of fifteen under his father's guidance, with sixty years of experience, he was unquestionably seasoned.

"So it seems, under ordinary weather conditions, the value of wheat yields per acre in winter is about 15 Copper Coins." Wang Shouzhe sorted out the data quickly, "After deducting taxes, tenant farmer wages, farming tools, cattle, seeds and Insecticide Powder etc. the amortization of Insecticide Powder is around 1 Copper Coin, leaving a total of 8 Copper Coins gross profit per acre.

If this bug disaster is not handled properly and production reduced by fifty percent, the farm would suffer a slight loss. The more the reduction, the greater the loss..."

"If we do nothing, I'm afraid the production will fall by about seventy percent." Wang Xiaozhi shook, and he seemed to understand what Wang Shouzhe meant, roughly estimated, "During the outbreak of the bug disaster, if we increase the use of Insecticide Powder by 2 Copper Coins, we can keep the disaster within twenty percent less than usual."

"Currently, Da Qian implements a unified grain reserve system, and any family or businesses caught manipulating the grain price in good or bad harvest years, would be committing a serious offense." Wang Shouzhe continued to gather the ints, "Therefore, on the basis of a seventy-percent reduction, each one-percent reduction in loss would be worth 1 Copper Coin 50 shillings.

Reducing the loss by half would be worth 7 Copper Coins 50 shillings. So the question is, if there are no Insect Masters to deal with the honeybugs, is it worth putting 2 Copper Coins into the Insecticide Powder!?"

"Worth it!" As soon as Wang Xioazhi heard Wang Shouzhe's analysis, he immediately nodded quickly, "Even if it costs 4 Copper Coins, I would do it." At the same time, his eyes lit up, excitedly, "From what you're saying Shouzhe, does that mean the three hundred Qian Gold's worth of Insecticide Powder we have stored is not only not a loss but could be worth six hundred Qian Gold?"

Good, good, good, I was derided for stockpiling Insecticide Powder by those guys."

"At least worth six hundred Qian Gold. Our family houses Luo Jing, the Insect Master specialized in handling honeybugs, those Insecticide Powders are really superfluous.

But compared with the entire Changning defense region, Insect Masters are just a drop in the bucket, and most families will still have to rely on Insecticide Powder to resist the disaster." Wang Shouzhe's expression was calm, "Congratulations dear fourth grandpa, you've made a big profit for our family."

"Hahaha, awesome." Wang Xiaozhi's face turned ruddy with laughter, "My Luo Jing is really a treasure. She is truly worthy of being my Wang Xiaozhi's granddaughter."

The corner of Wang Shouzhe's mouth twitched, this fourth grandpa really had a thick face. Just a moment ago he was valuing boys over girls and constantly saying that girls were a burden. But now, Luo Jing became a treasure.

However, when it comes to Luo Jing, the future Insect Master is really a treasure. Even if the Insecticide Powder continues to be effective in the future, she could save the family a whopping hundred or two hundred Qian Gold's "pesticide fee" per year. Moreover, the money saved is all pure profit.

"However, all of this is thanks to your blessing, Shouzhe." Wang Xiaozhi was grinning from ear to ear, "The fourth grandpa understands your words, sometimes bad things can turn into good things. Shouzhe, you are a fortunate person, when you become the clan leader, our Wang family will surely get better and better."

Even though superstition should not be encouraged, Wang Shouzhe still quite appreciated Wang Xioazhi's faith in him.

Moreover, with his advanced thinking, if he couldn't seize some business opportunities in this bug disaster, it would be a waste to be a transmigrator. The grain prices were under strong control by the Daqian Officials to prevent speculation, but the Daqian Officials haven't forbidden the speculation of Insecticide Powder, have they?

A plan was gradually taking shape in his mind.

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