

Protect OCL 121

Chapter 121: Feast! Return with the Game

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At these words, all eyes turned to Liu Yonghao. Some were questioning, some envious.

"Liu Yonghao, what makes you sure that this python was hunted by your family?" Liu Ruolei scolded him in a sweet and angry voice. "From this far away, you can recognize your family's men?"

"Miss Ruolei is right." some peddlers chimed in, "We are too far away, we can only determine it's a python head by comparing it with the litter, and only with some difficulty. What makes you so confident that the Liu Clan killed it?"

Upon hearing these words, whispers of ridicule filled the air, mocking Liu Yonghao for bragging.

Although Liu Yonghao is a direct descendent of the Liu Clan, his reputation is not good. Only a few months ago, he had been severely beaten by an eleven-year-old girl just outside the Wang family's house!

"You know nothing." Liu Yonghao hollered back, his ears were bright red in embarrassment.

"Though we're far away, we can see two long beams protruding from the top of the carriage. That's the carriage my father personally modified to load more goods, something I've never seen any of your families do."

Upon hearing Liu Yonghao's explanation, people strained their eyes to look, and those with better eyesight could indeed see the beams protruding from the litter, and exclaimed: "Just as the Young Master Liu said, it must be Liu family's carriage."

"Ha-ha!"

The Liu and Zhao clans' young ones burst into cheers. Those two clans have always been in cahoots. Or in their words, they share the same sentiments and interests.

If the leading carriage belongs to the Liu Clan, then the large caravan must be a joint fleet of the Liu and Zhao clans.

They had been waiting for a long time, and finally the return of their own family's caravan was in sight.

"Young Master Liu, your family is going to get rich!" Some peddlers who had been traveling around, began to flatter him. "That Level Three Peak Python alone would fetch a fortune."

The flesh and bone of Level Three beasts are incredibly expensive, often costing one Qian Gold per pound on average. And most Level Three beasts have extremely large bodies, weighing thousands of pounds, if not more.

The Python Swallow is a Level Three beast with a body that is notably long and weighs above average.

However, a Level Three Peak Python Swallow probably weighs at least five or six thousand pounds, and is more expensive than ordinary Level Three beasts.

Besides, many materials from the Python Swallow are quite valuable, such as its large gallbladder, a premium material for Level Three Dan medicines, and its skin, which can be used to make high-quality leather armor.

Apart from its flesh, the most expensive part of it is probably its single horn, which, although not qualified for crafting Spiritual Artifacts, can be used to make powerful weapons for those in the Vital Energy Refining Realm.

These items, which are not considered Spirit Instrument Level but have good effects for Qi refining, are often called Little Spirit Treasures. Wang Shouzhe's Breath Concealing Jade Pendant is a rather common Little Spirit Treasure.

Therefore, a Level Three Peak Python Swallow is likely worth ten thousand Qian Gold or more.

It sounds like a lot of money.

But when ordinary ancestors encounter such a fierce python, they should be thankful if they can escape with their lives, let alone kill it.

The continuous flattery drowned Liu Yonghao. Those peddlers' intentions were simple - to suck up to the Young Clan Leader of the Liu Clan and hopefully get a good deal on scraps later on.

Strange?

Liu Yonghao was thoroughly enjoying the sensation, but he also felt something was not quite right. As the Young Clan Leader, he knew the general purpose of his father's trip to the frontier, which was not mainly for hunting, but to target the Wang family.

Could it be that everything had gone so smoothly? The ancestors and their allies, worn out, went out for a hunting break and made some extra money on top?

The more he thought about it, the more probable it seemed, and Liu Yonghao became excited and nervous.

The more excited the young ones of the Liu and Zhao clans became.

The more worried Liu Ruolei became, her face becoming paler and paler.

"Ruolei, it will be okay." Liu Yuanrui comforted, "Brother Shouzhe is a blessed man, he probably just got delayed on the road."

At the same time.

More and more people were gathering on the city wall, all drawn by the commotion.

At the same time.

Another carriage arrived in Zun City. From the carriage emerged Gongsun Hui, Wang Luoyi, and Wang Luomiao of the Wang family.

They would come everyday to see if they could welcome Wang Shouzhe and his party. As soon as they got out of the carriage, they heard the whispered discussions, and hurriedly climbed the city wall.

"Uncle Gongsun, Luoyi, Miaomiao." Liu Ruolei approached them with a worried expression, "Everyone's saying that the returning caravan belongs to the Liu and Zhao clans."

"Ruolei, trust in Shouzhe." Gongsun Hui, who was involved in the family's affairs, had a clear understanding of Shouzhe's abilities and maintained a calm composure.

"It's snowing! It's snowing!"

Some people started to shout.

Sure enough, tiny snowflakes began to flutter down from the sky. As the wind blew, it brought along a snow flurry that obstructed the view, making the image of the caravan even more blurry.

The faces of the Wang family members turned grim.

This snow looked quite heavy and it would be trouble if Shouzhe and his party didn't return before the roads got blocked by it.

However, the young members of the Liu and Zhao clans seemed to be more elated, and various rumours began to circulate.

Suddenly!

Someone called out, "Town Defence Envoy is here for inspection!"

Town Defence Envoy, Lei Yangqiu!?

That was a significant figure in Ping'an Town, a prodigy from the Celestial being family, whose status was far above that of the young people from the Liu and Zhao clans.

Chapter 121: Feast! Return Full of Prey

He strode onto the city wall like a dragon and a tiger, and the surroundings instantly quieted down, all looking at Lei Yangqiu with awe, as he was surrounded by a host of official soldiers.

Lei Yangqiu bore the responsibility of guarding and pacifying the region, and Zhou Xuanguan was his jurisdiction, the most important line of defense.

"Madam Gongsun." As soon as Lei Yangqiu saw Gongsun Hui, he went forward to salute with his hands folded, smiling genially as he greeted Luoyi, Luomei, and Ruolei, among others.

Gongsun Hui quickly had all the juniors return the salute.

Everyone was on the city wall waiting for the caravan to approach. After a good while, the caravan reached the city gates. By then the wind and snow had intensified, and everyone could only see a rough outline; the huge caravan had many horse-drawn litters with their tops removed, seemingly loaded with game—judging simply by their silhouettes and auras, most appeared to be fierce beasts.

It seemed to signal the hunter's triumphant return.

There was naturally a group of knights in the caravan, but in the blizzard conditions, everyone had scarves covering their necks and most of their faces.

"Okay." Liu Yonghao silently pocketed bribery from a merchant representative and said modestly, "I will take you to see my father, but no guarantees whether it will succeed or not."

"Haha, as long as Young Clan Leader Liu can lead the way, it will be fine." The merchant representative laughed.

The other merchant representatives and peddlers also gathered around, each trying to hook up with Liu Yonghao. Judging from the spoils partially revealed by the caravan, the Liu Clan was set to make a fortune this time.

"The Ping'an Wang Family's autumn and winter hunting team has returned, please, gate officer, lower the drawbridge and open the gates," a knight in the caravan said out loud as he stepped forward.

"The Wang family?"

The crowd's buzzing and excitement seemed to freeze instantly.

Following Liu Yonghao's previous assertions, everyone thought this was a caravan of the Liu and Zhao Clans, so how did the Ping'an Wang Family suddenly come into the picture?

The gate officer was also confused and demanded, "Aren't you the Liu Clan's caravan? How did it become the Wang family's?"

"What nonsense are you talking about?" The knight outside the city removed the scarf from his face, revealing the stern countenance of a middle-aged man. "I am Wang Dingzu of the Ping'an Wang Family. Quickly lower the drawbridge and open the gates."

Wang Dingzu!

He was none other than the Deputy Garrison Commander of Ping'an Town, naturally holding a prominent position. Many of the city's defenders and gate officers recognized him.

"Sure enough, it's Deputy Garrison Commander Wang."

"Quickly open the gates, open the gates."

With the sound of the winches, the city gate slowly opened, and the drawbridge was also slowly lowered, bridging the protective moat.

"It's Uncle Three, definitely Uncle Three," Wang Luoyi exclaimed as she grabbed Liu Ruolei's hand, excitedly saying, "Ruolei, they were mistaken, this is our Wang family's caravan."

Liu Ruolei's pretty face blushed slightly, and she secretly "pffft" under her breath, "This Miss is not one of the Wang family," but her expression could not hide her excitement and joy, "Where is Brother Shouzhe then? Everyone is so wrapped up, you can't even see clearly who is who."

"There—there's my brother, the one on the black horse," Wang Luomei climbed onto her mother, pointing at a knight and saying, "I recognize that horse, it's called Black Wind, such an unpleasant name."

"Liu Yonghao, didn't you say this was the Liu Clan's caravan?"

"Yes, you were so certain, and we all believed you."

"Impossible... impossible!" Liu Yonghao's expression turned rigid, his eyes vacant and disbelieving, "How could it be the Wang family? Those horse-drawn carriages, many of them are ours from the Liu Clan. Could it be they returned together?"

His words quieted the surrounding crowd, as it was not outside the realm of possibility.

As the city gate opened, the gate officer shouted, "Deputy Garrison Commander Wang, is your Wang family in a joint caravan with the Liu and Zhao Clans?"

"How could that be possible," Wang Dingzu said loudly. "We've always had a strained relationship with the Liu and Zhao Clans, so of course, we each go our own way."

As these words came out.

"An uproar ensued on the city wall."

Particularly among those peddlers and merchant representatives, they immediately surrounded Liu Yonghao, "This is clearly the Wang family's caravan, yet you insisted it was the Liu Clan's. What are your motives? Isn't this a scam to get our money?"

"Impossible, impossible." Liu Yonghao rushed to the battlements and yelled, "Those horse-drawn carriages there are clearly our Liu Clan's, look, there are our markings on the litters. Wang Dingzu, why would the Liu Clan's carriages be in your troop?"

That certainly caught many people's attention, the markings of the Liu Clan were quite distinct.

For a moment, there was a flurry of conversation among the people.

"Hmph! What's so strange about that," Wang Dingzu said loudly. "We hunted a lot on this trip, and it so happened that we found a batch of unclaimed carriages in the camp, so we took them to use. Such things are quite common in the borderlands."

Indeed, this is so.

Wild territories are perilous, and anything can happen there.

Some hunting teams that set out to hunt fierce beasts end up being hunted by them instead. It's completely normal for other teams to acquire the leftover supplies, and countless such incidents have occurred.

"You're talking nonsense, you clearly robbed our Liu Clan's carts and stole our prey," Liu Yonghao roared furiously.

Just as Wang Dingzu was about to speak.

Wang Shouzhe rode forward on his horse and said calmly, "Uncle Three, there's no point arguing with a child. Let's enter the gates."

Wang Dingzu laughed heartily, "Shouzhe is absolutely right." Then, with a wave of his hand, he commanded, "The Clan Leader has ordered, enter the gates."

"Enter the gates!"

Following that command.

The vast caravan started moving again, the leading carriage crossing the drawbridge first, then passing through the city gate, the causeway, and into Zun City. The carts behind followed one by one through the gates.

At this moment.

Everyone was convinced that this was not a convoy of the Liu or Zhao clans at all - there wasn't a single person from either clan present.

The peddlers and representatives from various businesses grew angry, they circled Liu Yonghao, demanding back the bribes they had given him.

Then, they rushed over to where Wang Luoyi and Gongsun Hui were.

"Madam Gongsun, do you remember me? Little Six from Li's Shop."

"Miss Luo Yi, this rouge produced in Tian Nan Prefecture is perfect for complementing your noble aura and peerless beauty."

"Miss Luomiao, here's a humble trinket for you, and I'd be grateful if you could introduce me to your brother."

Only eight years of age, Luomiao's eyes were wide with astonishment. There were such tactics? So, I, Miss Luomiao, have become an important figure as well?

Then, gleefully accepting all sorts of bribes without refusal, she smiled so broadly that her little mouth wouldn't close, revealing several newly missing milk teeth sockets.

"Miaomiao, you must not accept gifts from others," Gongsun Hui said sternly, "It could put your brother in a difficult position. Return them all."

"Mmm~" Poor Wang Luomiao, who hadn't even had a chance to warm up to her gifts, reluctantly gave each back.

Although Gongsun Hui was usually good-tempered, she was uncompromising when it came to family discipline. At her young age, Wang Luomiao had already experienced more than her fair share of chastisement.

"Look, look, from that carriage, there's a tiger head peeking out, with a white forehead and a golden body," someone from the crowd heading towards Zun City called out, "Isn't that a grown Level Three fierce beast - the White-browed Golden Tiger?"

"First a Python swallow, now a White-browed Golden Tiger, my goodness, has the Wang family hunted two Level Three fierce beasts?"

"Look at what's in those carts, the infamous Top Level Two Iron-backed Wild Pigs."

"What of Level Two when there are so many Level Three beasts?"

"No, no, look... there are many of them!"

On closer inspection, indeed there were. Three or four carriages were filled with Iron-backed Wild Pigs of various sizes. The largest one was particularly imposing, easily weighing over a thousand pounds.

Besides that, another twenty or so piglets of the Iron-backed Wild Pigs, their legs tied up, were stuffed into the carts, grunting.

The crowd gasped in shock!

The Wang family had caught so many Iron-backed Wild Piglets - were they planning to breed them?

"There's a big black turtle at the back of the convoy..." "That's a Level Three Water Elemental Turtle, and it's still alive! It's carrying several fierce beasts as prey on its back."

The return of the Wang family's caravan was like setting off a grand feast.

The onlookers marveled, shocked, and in disbelief.

Meanwhile, the members of the Liu Clan were pushed to the side, ignored by all.

Liu Yonghao sat on the ground, completely plundered and blankly muttering to himself - Impossible, this can't be happening!

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With the Wang family's caravan, one by one, they entered Zun City.

The noises of spectating and chattering were growing louder and louder especially from the itinerant traders and distant Independent Cultivators. As they were shocked by the display, they also spread the formidable reputation of the Wang family.

A prominent family must have an intimidating presence to create a sense of awe from people and dissuade them from any malicious thoughts. On one hand, it reduces unnecessary trouble; on the other, the bigger the fame, the easier it is to benefit.

At the same time, while maintaining their intimidating presence, prominent families also have to keep their real depth mysterious.

In simple terms, they must show their might, making people think the Wang family is very powerful while maintaining a sense of mystery about just how powerful they are.

The intricacies and mysteries within this must be carefully pondered and grasped.

For this reason, under the arrangement of Wang Shouzhe, the head of the Python swallow was placed atop the first carriage, and the head of the White-browed Golden Tiger was "unintentionally" semi-concealed in the litter.

The Water Elemental Turtle, carrying a load of prey, unrelentingly paced into Zun City, elevating the shock of the spectators to an extreme point.

After the shock, a sense of awe developed towards the Wang family. With the ability to tame even Level Three Fierce Beasts, the rise of the Wang family seemed inevitable.

They parade through the streets flaunting their achievements, laying the foundation for the Wang family to dominate Ping'an Town in the not-so-distant future.

What to display, what not to display, and how to display each thing, are all the results of the Wang family's deliberations, not random decisions.

While the spectators couldn't help but sing the praises of the Wang family, they turned the conversation to Wang Shouzhe, agreeing that he's a young and promising Clan Leader with a limitless future.

"Big Brother!"

Wang Luomiao broke free from her mother's hand and pounced over. Her face was so flushed with excitement, her eyes full of pride and admiration for her big brother.

Those road-blocking peddlers, Independent Cultivators, merchant representatives, and town guards, all consciously made way for her.

She is the Wang family's younger daughter from the main branch—Wang Luomiao, Clan Leader Wang Shouzhe's half-sister from a different mother, her status incredibly noble.

She leaped forward with her short legs that hadn't fully grown out yet.

Suddenly, Wang Shouzhe extended his arm to catch her and pulled her up onto the horse. Together, they rode out of the interior of Zun City. He laughed and asked, "You little thing, it's only been a month since I last saw you, how did you become even more adorable?"

"Big Brother, your words have gotten sweet." Wang Luomiao happily giggled, "It wasn't in vain that Ruolan and I wrote a letter to praise you greatly."

"Eh... you actually wrote a letter to Miss Ruolan?" Wang Shouzhe said, unable to help but laugh and cry, "With your scribbles that look like devil's symbols, could you even present them? Isn't that just revealing the lack of cultural foundation in our Wang family?"

"Wang Shouzhe, you, you, you, you've gone too far. I'll fight it out with you." Wang Luomiao got so angry she bared her teeth and swung her claws, "After all I did to cheer up sister-in-law, you this blockhead. Hum, hum, hum, I originally planned to show you sister-in-law's reply, now hum, even if you beg me I won't show you."

"I never really wanted to see the secret talk between you girls."

"You, you, you, next time I write to Sister Ruolan, I'll say what a big baddie you are."

"As you wish. If I can't get a wife, I'll use you, the legitimate daughter, to win approval for a marital alliance."

Gongsun Hui, who was following closely behind, watched this scene with a mix of amusement and contentment.

Whenever Shouzhe and Luomiao meet, they always have to go through this routine, and Shouzhe actually quite enjoys it.

And Luomiao, even after being infuriated each time, would always throw herself back into her brother's arms.

The affection between Shouzhe and Luomiao is truly deep.

Afterwards, Wang Shouzhe dismounted his horse to thank Gongsun Hui, Liu Ruolei, and Liu Yuanrui. Then he rejoined the caravan, marching grandly towards the Wang family's main residence.

A lot of people trailed behind them to watch the excitement, and the number only increased.

Zhou Xuan Guan Weng City, which was bustling just a while ago, emptied out in the blink of an eye, leaving only members of the Liu and Zhao families and some soldiers who had a duty to guard the town, rendering it deserted.

Lei Yangqiu, Town Protector of Ping'an, watched this scene and looked at the increasingly heavy snow, sighing.

"There's been a complete change of climate in Ping'an Town."

The faces of the young people of the Liu and Zhao families had completely fallen. Many with fragile hearts who couldn't bear the pressure simply collapsed and started to cry on the ground.

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The Wang family's caravan moved slowly.

A distance that would usually take less than an hour and a half to travel was dragged out for two and a half hours.

Following the caravan were as many as three to four thousand people. Seen from a high vantage point, it was like a dark sea of people.

The Wang family's main residence had long since received the news, and the remaining clan members, house servants, and maids were all ready to receive them outside the gate. Fearing there wouldn't be enough hands, they even gathered many people from the peripheral branches to help with the handling.

"Shouzhe." Wang Shouxin approached, his face flushed with excitement.

The Wang family had been declining for fifty years and he, Wang Shouxin, had lived for forty-three years, never seeing such a glorious period for the Wang family.

He promptly advised, "Some strong prominent families, if there is a huge bounty from the autumn-winter hunting season, creating a spectacle, will take out a small portion of the prey, usually the common ones. Then they cook them on the spot and distribute the meat to the destitute who couldn't afford meat all year around."

"At the same time, some strong prominent families will also sell half or a whole Fierce Beast at a lower price to low-tiered local families to win over popular sentiment and enhance their prestige. This tradition is called 'Celebrate the Surplus Banquet'."

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Of course, during the forty-three years when Wang Shouxin was alive, the Wang family did not have the power or the status to host a "Celebration Feast".

Every time the autumn and winter hunts were held, the Wang family often went discreetly, returning quietly.

Back when Old Ancestor Zhou Xuan was alive, when the harvests were goods, he would host a Celebration Feast.

These words spoken,

A few older clansmen immediately showed a strong expectation in their eyes. The Wang family had fallen from grace for fifty years and now that they have finally turned things around, they wanted to boost their honor and influence in their territory.

"Alright," Wang Shouzhe pondered briefly and said, "I remember we have five or six ordinary savage bulls and wild warthogs left. Take one of each, pickle the rest and store them in the cold storage. Also, take out some of the meat from the family's storage to be used for the Celebration Feast. This will also help clear some space in the storage."

"Also, set up a few porridge stalls as there may not be enough meat for everyone since we have so many people."

"As for the low-priced sale of the Fierce Beast's meat, use that Level One high blue hoofed savage bull. That one alone weighs about three thousand jin, which should be more than enough. Be sure to warn those inferior families, if they dare to sell the cheap Spirit Meat to Peddlers, don't blame the Wang family for being merciless."

The family's food storage was not small, but this time the harvest was too astonishing. It seemed as if the cold storage would not be enough.

Moreover, it was estimated that even with so the many members of the Wang family openly eating, it could last for a good two years.

"Good." Wang Shouxin was extremely excited, and immediately set off to arrange the Celebration Feast as per the agreement.

When the public populace and some of the local low-tier Profound Martial families found out that the Wang family was preparing to host a Celebration Feast with an unusually large amount of ingredients, everyone was immediately abuzz with excitement.

In the past decades, the Liu Clan and Zhao Clan have taken turns to host the Celebration Feast. But the scale of their feasts were very small, not even a tenth of what the Wang family was holding this time. They were merely putting on a show, claiming to be the "Top Prominent Families" of Ping'an Town.

Hosting a Celebration Feast did not necessarily need the Clan Leader, Wang Shouzhe, to step in. His brothers and sisters, along with womenfolk of the family, were more than capable of handling it.

At this time, Wang Shouzhe, along with Liu Ruolei and Liu Yuanrui, returned to the main residence and went to visit Old Ancestor Zhisheng without delay.

Of course, Old Ancestor Longyan and Old Ancestor Xiaohan accompanied them as well.

This was a necessary courtesy, as Old Ancestor Zhisheng had rushed to help defend the Wang family's main residence without hesitation when they received the news.

The favor he did for them was not trivial.

After some polite talk and formalities, Old Ancestor Zhisheng finally retired.

Naturally, Wang Shouzhe wouldn't let Old Ancestor Zhisheng work for free. A carriage of Spirit Meat and Spirit Rice would be delivered directly to the residence of the Yinyu Family in Shanyin soon after.

After handling all the matters,

Wang Shouzhe finally felt completely relieved and relaxed. It was as if a huge burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

He then took a long, comfortable bath, instructed Wang Gui not to let anyone disturb him, and lied in bed for an entire day and night, not worrying about a thing.

During this period, dealing with both the Liu Clan and Zhao Clan was tiresome indeed. The most important thing was he couldn't afford to make even a slight mistake.

But now, he was truly relaxed.

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The Wang family's Celebration Feast was extremely lively, as if it were the most festive celebration in all of Ping'an Town.

Almost everyone was talking enthusiastically about only one topic - the Ping'an Wang Family.

The other two prominent families in Ping'an Town, the Ping'an Liu Clan and the Ping'an Zhao Clan, seemed to have been forgotten in the corner, and no one was mentioning them any more.

It was as if there was only one prominent family in the large Ping'an Town — the Ping'an Wang family.

At this time,

A carriage bearing the insignia of the Daqian Officials quietly pulled up in front of the main residence of the Wang family.

The first to get off, was a middle-aged man in an imposing town defender's uniform, who was naturally Town Defender, Lei Yangqiu.

Then, two seventy or eighty-year-old men shakily stepped out of the carriage.

There was still a bustling crowd in the square in front of the Wang family's main residence. Some were lining up for porridge and meat, and others were low-tier local Profound Martial families who were using their hard-earned Qian Gold to buy low-priced Spirit Meat.

This was an opportunity most normal people would not want to miss.

However, the Wang family was always clear about who could buy and how much they could purchase based on their quota.

And the residents enjoying the Celebration Feast with porridge and meat also had to have local household certificates and had to register so that they would not eat over and over again.

Anyone who dared to act recklessly would face the dealing hand of the Wang family.

But even with such strict control, there were still numerous people lining up, even three days later.

"Huh, the Wang family is really on the rise." Town Defender Lei Yangqiu praised with a smile before addressing Wang Luoqiu who was distributing meat, "Little Sister Luoqiu, surely you still remember me?"

Wang Luoqiu glanced at him as her hands continued to move briskly, dividing meat and porridge, her voice nonchalant, "Yes, I remember you, the one who was scolded to tears by my fourth brother.... your surname was Lei or something...."

Lei Yangqiu's face fell. He thought to himself when he had ever been scolded to the point of crying.

Of course, he wouldn't argue with a little girl. So, Lei Yangqiu laughed dryly and said, "Ah, let bygones be bygones. By the way, is your fourth elder brother around? I would like to see him. Miss Luoqiu, could you please pass the message for me?"

"Can't you see that I'm busy?" Wang Luoqiu replied impatiently. She then called out to an attendant, "Junyan, go find Wang Gui and tell my fourth older brother that there's a guy named Lei or something looking for him. Oh right, he's the Town Defender."

"Yes, Sixth Miss." Ouyang Junyan shrunk his neck and quickly ran off to deliver the message.

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He felt a sense of awe in his heart, dealing with Miss Six brought a certain prestige, even the esteemed Town Protector had to wait for her.

Soon!

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Inside the main hall of the Wang family's front house.

Wang Shouzhe and Lei Yangqiu were sitting face to face, sipping tea and chatting casually from time to time.

Lei Yangqiu kept emitting hearty laughter, occasionally endorsing Wang Shouzhe's viewpoints, as if a subordinate facing a leader.

The two old men in their seventies and eighties were standing with their heads lowered, their hands folded and hanging down, standing tremblingly as if waiting for the decree of fate.

These two elders, naturally, were the clan elders of the Liu and Zhao clans.

After three rounds of tea.

Lei Yangqiu asked cautiously, "Brother Shouzhe, as the Town Protector of Ping'an, there are some things I have to manage, whether I like it or not, with so many eyes above watching me. I just want to ask, how does Brother Shouzhe plan to deal with the remnants of the Liu and Zhao clans?"

"Deal with?" Wang Shouzhe leisurely sipped his tea and said, "Protector Lei is joking, the Wang family is a law-abiding traditional prominent family, we don't have the power to deal or not deal with other families."

Lei Yangqiu knew that Wang Shouzhe was not easy to provoke and was somewhat prepared. He immediately said: "Brother, let's not beat around the bush. Everyone knows what happened between your Wang family and the Liu and Zhao clans in the extraterritorial domain, and since it's a done deal, no one will pursue it."

"However, some things on the surface still need to be handled properly, so as not to be blamed by those above. I can't bear it."

"Protector Lei must not talk nonsense, what's this extraterritorial mess?" Sipping his tea, Wang Shouzhe glanced at the two elders and said resoundingly, "I'll say it again, our Wang family is a law-abiding prominent family. We always stay away from illegal practices."

The two elders immediately trembled, their bodies shaking.

Lei Yangqiu grumbled to himself. Indeed, With Wang Shouzhe's abilities, He could annihilate people while remaining lawful. Of course, he wouldn't risk doing illegal things.

Lei Yangqiu smiled bitterly at Wang Shouzhe's indifference: "How about this, I will propose a solution, Brother Shouzhe, just listen."

Wang Shouzhe made no comment.

"The situation is like this. There are precedents for the kind of thing that has happened among your three clans in the Great Qian Land, and even in Longzuo County or Changning garrison. The traditional approach is that if one side withdraws from the clan dispute and flees to another place, the other clan should not pursue further," said Lei Yangqiu judiciously.

"Now, only the old, weak, women and children, and underage men remain of the Liu and Zhao Clans. I think we could follow some precedents, all their assets could be bought by the Wang family at half the price. Then the remaining members of the Liu and Zhao clans can take the money to a far-off jurisdiction, buy some land, and maintain their lives. And they swear never to return to Longzuo County."

After saying this, Lei Yangqiu carefully observed Wang Shouzhe's expression.

Unexpectedly, Wang Shouzhe didn't say a word, continuing to sip his tea, looking completely aloof.

Lei Yangqiu was quite helpless, but as the Town Protector, he had to get involved in this mess.

He continued to persuade: "Leader Wang, look, the remaining people, old, weak, women, and children, after leaving the jurisdiction, even if they can establish themselves elsewhere, they will just be a small insignificant family. There is absolutely no chance they could come back to become a Rank 9 prominent family in this lifetime."

"A hundred years later, nobody will probably remember the Wang family!"

"If you, Leader Wang, plan to drive to extinction these old, weak, women, and children, your clan's reputation will be harmed once this news spreads."

"Hehe~ Brother Lei, you always make me out to be the bad guy in your words. Those are not acceptable! Although I can't bear to part with my old neighbors, the Liu and Zhao clans can leave anytime they wish to relocate, no one is stopping them," Wang Shouzhe said with a smirk.

This Wang Shouzhe is really hard to communicate with, Lei Yangqiu felt extremely frustrated.

If he hadn't been governing Ping'an and received so many favors from the Liu and Zhao clans, he really wouldn't want to get involved in this muddle right now.

Looking at the current situation, without your agreement, Wang Shouzhe, would they dare to randomly sell their clan's property and run away?

There are countless people in this large family, both old and young. Aren't they afraid of encountering "ambushing bandits and river pirates" on their journey and ultimately leaving no remains behind?

"Three folds. I'll make the decision for them. After all, they were the ones at fault first. They'll liquidate their assets at a third of the price and give them to the Wang family." Lei Yangqiu said, "Leader Wang, give me a straightforward answer; if it's a go, it's a go, if not, I'll get out of here immediately and stop meddling in your business. Even if Shangfeng is to blame, I won't get involved."

Wang Shouzhe hesitated slightly, feeling that he had exerted enough pressure, and then said lightly, "Since Operation Lei has spoken, I should give you face."

Lei Yangqiu heaved a sigh of relief, thanking him for his face. Before he could speak, Wang Shouzhe spoke again and said, "However, I have two conditions."

"Brother Shouzhe, say what they are. I'll try to mediate." Lei Yangqiu said earnestly.

"Firstly, whichever county they migrate to must be decided by our Wang family. I will keep an eye on the situation there." Wang Shouzhe stated.

Lei Yangqiu agreed without hesitation, "That's not a problem. However, Leader Wang, as much as possible give them a way to survive; don't send them to a county where they can't survive."

"Send them to Liu Clan's Northern Ridge Province and Zhao Clan's Southern Desert County then. They're only a few thousand to tens of thousands of miles away." After Wang Shouzhe casually designated a place, he continued, "Secondly, they must leave behind their male youths aged between twelve and sixty."

They should serve hard labor for five years in our Wang family to atone for their ancestor's sins."

Lei Yangqiu's face soured, thinking to himself that Wang Shouzhe was indeed ruthless.

Without those young men, wouldn't the Liu and Zhao Clans face additional hardship in such remote and unfamiliar counties? They would probably be targeted and bullied by the local families.

And after serving five years of hard labor, how many of those young men would still have the spirit left in them? How would they harbor any more ambition to contend for power?

It's over!

The Liu and Zhao Clans are essentially finished. In the future, they would at most be an ordinary Profound Martial family, and nobody would remember the Wang family or Ping'an Town anymore in just seventy to eighty years, let alone a hundred.

The two elderly clan leaders also wore extremely uncomfortable expressions.

Wang Shouzhe's strategy is to completely extinguish their potential for a comeback. He plans to never let the Liu and Zhao Clans rise again.

However, if they don't agree, it's likely that not a single person from the Liu and Zhao Clans will be able to leave Ping'an alive.

"Let it be, let it be. The Liu and Zhao Clans should be thankful that Leader Wang is offering them a chance of survival." Lei Yangqiu concluded, "Everything will be done according to Leader Wang's plan."

As for him, Lei Yangqiu, he believed he had done right by the deceased Liu Zhde and Zhao Bojun. He couldn't possibly offend Wang Shouzhe, who had a promising future, for the sake of those two dead ancestors, could he?

"Yes, Lord Lei." The two clan elders, despite feeling desolate, were in no position to determine their own fate. In unison, they bowed and thanked Leader Wang, "Thank you, Leader Wang, for giving us a way to survive."

"In that case, there is no need for me to keep you for a meal, Officer Lei." Wang Shouzhe poured tea, seeing his guests off.

Lei Yangqiu led the two remaining Elders and bid Wang Shouzhe farewell with a smile, "I have bothered Leader Wang too much, farewell, farewell."

As they reached the main hall's entrance, Wang Shouzhe's voice once again reached them, "Officer Lei, before you leave, don't forget to take their Prominent Family seals. Some families are not worthy of such honor, even if given the opportunity."

Lei Yangqiu was taken aback and hurriedly bowed his head, "Of course, of course, we will follow everything Leader Wang says."

When Lei Yangqiu got into the carriage and watched the Wang family's doorway gradually disappear into the distance, he couldn't help but sigh deeply.

"After today, the Wang family will definitely hold the power in Ping'an Town."

What Lei Yangqiu did not know was that, after they left.

Wang Shouzhe carelessly pulled out a small notebook system and seriously updated one item in the reputation column.

[Clan Reputation]: [Township Hope (100) Covering the Sky with a Single Hand]

Chapter 123 Welcoming the Bride! Fire-treading White Cloud

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Time flies.

It's been ten months since the Houses of Liu and Zhao were extinguished and completely removed from the stage.

During these ten months, the Wang family celebrated many joyous events. The Spiritual Platform banquet for the sixth grandfather, Wang Xiaohan, was held very grandly. Subsequently, the wedding of his older sister, Wang Luoyi, and Chen Fangjie took place.

In just a few days, it will be his own, Wang Shouzhe's, wedding day.

The Wang family is truly thriving, with continuous joyful affairs.

It's also the upcoming autumn harvest season.

In Fenggu Farm.

In the thousands of acres of fertile land, the mid-late stage rice plants, filled with grains, sway like ocean waves in the wind; it's a spectacular sight.

Tenant farmers are busy in the fields, carefully tending to the rice plants, fertilising when necessary, and identifying the barnyard grass that has slipped through the net among the rice plants.

Barnyard grass looks very much like rice plants, and could be considered the ancestor of rice. Our ancestors selectively cultivated the barnyard grass generation after generation to produce the rice we have today. Barnyard grass grows wild and is hard to eradicate, competing with rice for precious nutrients.

If not properly managed, it will certainly affect the grain filling of the rice.

Although the work of the tenant farmers is laborious, this year they all display a look of joy and satisfaction amid their arduous tasks.

That's because this year, the main family brought in a new variety of rice. They are planning to plant this new variety in half of the land of Fenggu Farm.

Initially, the tenant farmers were grumbling in private, fearing that the new rice variety would not adapt to the local soil and climate, and if the harvest is poor, it would affect their share of the yield.

However, the main family kindly promised that for tenant farmers who plant the new rice variety, they would distribute the minimum annual average income. If there is a bumper harvest, they could get an additional distribution.

Thus, after planting for a season.

The closer it gets to the grain filling stage, the more the tenant farmers see the advantages of the new rice variety. Not only are the plants tall and not easily lodged, but the grains are also bigger and more numerous than the common variety.

Many of the tenant farmers are old peasants, and they know that if things go as they are, this year's yield per acre may increase by a catty of rice, and the quality is very likely to be better.

Currently, the price of new rice is already slightly higher. Even if calculated at the original price, every twenty acres will yield an extra Qian Gold in profit! This income is pure additional revenue, excluding taxes, fertilisers, bulls for ploughing, labour, and so on.

When this is divided among each tenant farmer, it amounts to thirty copper coins per head!! If there are also improved varieties of wheat, wouldn't there be an extra sixty copper coins in a year?

How could the tenant farmers not be happy about this?

This additional income can be saved entirely, for future dowry for their children, or to send their kids to learn a craft. With a crafted skill, not only will they no longer need to labour in farming, but their income will be higher, and even finding a bride will be much easier.

Many tenant farmers have begun to imagine that in the future, they would be able to save up Qian Gold more quickly to buy enough farmland to make their descendants self-sustaining farmers.

With this in mind, their enthusiasm for work has increased.

...

At the same time.

Standing at the head of the fields, the spirited fourth grandfather, Wang Xiaozhi, excitedly says, "Shouzhe, the Wang's No.9 rice variety that you researched is indeed a high-quality variety. If all our farms were to plant the Wang's No.9, we would earn a lot more this year."

Now the Wang family has abundant food, so those senior members who used to be frugal, like Wang Xiaozhi, have been ordered to supplement their diets with spirit food and even use the Little Pei Yuan Dan to cultivate more diligently.

As a result, Wang Xiaozhi looks good this year and even seems to have gained a few more years of youthfulness. Even if there's no hope of reaching the Spiritual Platform in this life, at least he can live healthily for much longer.

Wang Shouzhe doesn't want these elders, who have strived hard for the family for a lifetime, cultivating generations of children, to be unable to walk their own path past eighty, leading a desolate old age.

"Fourth Grandpa, let's plant it on another piece of land next year to see if there are any problems. If nothing goes wrong, we would convert to Wang's No.9 on all our farms," Wang Shouzhe, who was quite satisfied with the Wang's No.9 that he painstakingly developed, responded.

The reason he was able to research a variety of rice was due to his mystical and elusive bloodline abilities. When he discovered that he could make dead wood come into spring and flower in an instant, he had already thought of cultivating spiritual medicines and grains.

Unfortunately, after some research, he realised he was oversimplifying things.

Reviving dead wood and making it flower instantaneously can only be applied to ordinary plants.

Moreover, they can't be catalysed in an extremely short amount of time out of nowhere, because without the replenishment of nutrients and rapid catalysis, their potential for life will be exhausted and they will wither quickly.

For spiritual grains and plants like them, of course, there's not a complete lack of catalytic effects.

However, for catalysing a single sprig of White Jade Spiritual Rice, if catalysed hastily in an extremely short time, the rice husk in the end would be empty.

If cultivated normally and nutritionally enhanced, it would take Wang Shouzhe more than ten days to mature it and end with a sprig of White Jade Spiritual Rice.

And that's just one plant; the cost-effectiveness is extremely low.

As for the catalysis of spiritual medicines like ginseng, that's even more unspeakable. More than ten days of painstaking catalysis could only increase the year count of the ginseng by a year at most. The effect of the catalysis is but a chicken rib.

However, Wang Shouzhe speculated that it was because his mysterious bloodline level was too low and too thin. Perhaps one day when the mysterious bloodline awakens to its peak, he might be able to catalyse a hundred-year-old ginseng in a flash.

But the current situation is that stimulating spiritual seeds is really too tiring and not cost-effective.

After repeated considerations, rather than stimulating spiritual seeds, it would be better to improve the common rice and wheat seeds first. Therefore, he built a lab and started small-scale catalysis of rice seeds.

His bloodline ability has a great advantage over ordinary plants.

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Approximately, with only one part of the greenhouse experimental field and as long as the field is properly nourished, he needs only a few days to bring the rice in the experimental field to maturity and harvest.

Therefore, he decided to use his new ability to cultivate rice.

The original rice, ironically, came from the Liu and Zhao families, whose farm yield was so low it was unbearable to see. The rice that could still survive despite such a reduction in yield must undoubtedly be a superior part of the crop in terms of pest and disease resistance.

Starting from this basis would simplify things a lot.

Then, he cultivated new varieties of rice generation by generation. The pitifully scarce and fragmented knowledge of agriculture and breeding from his previous life was utilized by him bit by bit.

After spending a full half year, he bred fifteen varieties of rice, each with its own advantages.

However, in the end, he chose the Wang's No.9, a variety that was "mediocre" in yield and not outstanding in pest and disease resistance, as the species for large-scale experiments.

The reason was simple, the most significant feature of this variety's genetic mutation was that if the seeds were soaked in low-concentration saltwater, the offspring could no longer reproduce.

In layman's terms, only the Wang family can cultivate the first generation as the original species. Seeds that have been soaked in low-concentration saltwater can only be used for eating, not as grain seeds, after they have grown into offspring.

This could effectively prevent the leakage of good varieties.

As Wang Shouzhe knew, many long-established or powerful families would cultivate their good breeds generation by generation, whether with high yield or high quality.

They cherish these good breeds and only use them in their own farms. When selling to the outside, they will always shell the grains. Because once it is sold as grain seed, the whole variety will be spread out.

However, Wang Shouzhe's Wang's No.9 has no such concern.

Wang Shouzhe was contemplating.

Wang Xiaozhi said, "Shouzhe, I know you care about this mass production. But you should hurry back. Your big wedding is in a few days, and the whole family is busy preparing for it. You can't keep running to the fields."

"I'm just taking a look, I'll go back, I'll go back." Wang Shouzhe smiled and took his leave.

In fact, he also knew that the Wang family had been preparing for his big wedding for a long time. Wedding dresses and such were made more than half a year in advance.

His second brother, Wang Shouyi, had already commissioned various merchants to buy high-end ingredients from Longzuo County and even surrounding areas half a year ago.

The rest of the family members had also been busy for quite a while.

Moreover, many daughters who had married out of the family returned to the Wang's main residence with their husbands and children. They were both celebrating and helping out.

On his way back in the carriage, Wang Shouzhe sighed. He was filled with emotion. Unconsciously, he was about to get married!

What he found most strange was that, so far, he has never seen the bride.

The two of them didn't know what the other looked like.

Moreover, up to now, the two of them had only a few minor exchanges in the air.

This was even more exaggerated than Wang Shouzhe's online dating experiences on Earth.

But in this world, such marriages of the legitimate children of the prominent families are quite normal.

Before Chen Fangjie and his sister Wang Luoyi got married, they only came to the Wang's main residence once and dared not come again afterward. They were fearful of violating rules and being killed by Wang Shouzhe.

"Hehe~ but such arranged marriages are also quite nice." Wang Shouzhe smiled. In contrast, dating and marriage on Earth took so many years. How troublesome.

...

Time passed by a few more days.

Golden October.

The autumn sky was clear and crisp.

It was a season of harvest, and a suitable season for weddings.

This was also a very important season for Shanyin Town in Changning.

Because, in Shanyin Town, which is dominated by the Yinyu Family, it was the wedding day of their legitimate daughter.

In celebration of this joyful event, the Yinyu Family had announced that the farmland within their territory would be exempted from the Prominent Family Tax for this season's autumn harvest.

What a huge sum of money that was!

The amount of fertile land within the Yinyu Family's territory that needed to pay the Prominent Family Tax was about seventy thousand acres. The amount of the Prominent Family Tax that was not collected was as high as more than seven hundred Qian Gold.

For most ordinary independent cultivators, it was great news. Paying less tax in the autumn harvest season, tens of copper coins less, was enough for them to have a full harvest year.

From this, one can see the overall financial strength of the Yinyu Family. The lack of more than seven hundred Qian Gold is not a big deal, truly incomparable to those ordinary prominent families.

At the entrance of the area controlled by Shanyin Town, there stood a door tower watchtower. On the top of the gate tower, there was a stone plaque with the word "Shanyin" engraved on it.

This was a line of defence and checkpoint, where a member of the Liu Clan and a team of family guards and servants were stationed all year round. Anyone who entered Shanyin Town, especially those independent cultivators and peddlers, would be questioned and registered.

This was what made Shanyin different from the other towns. It could prevent the entry of most fugitive criminals and instill fear in those criminals who wanted to cause trouble.

As a result, the crime rate within Shanyin has always been the lowest among all the towns in Changning, and life is stable and orderly.

At the same time, next to the gatehouse, a large open space had long been guarded by members of the Liu Clan. They had set up sunshades, and a team of drummers and suona players were ready.

At the time of the morning.

A large number of Shanyin commoners had already gathered near the gate tower.

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Among them were farmers, small merchants, artisans, some Profound Martial practitioners from lesser families, peddler, and quite a few Independent Cultivators and so on. People of all ages and both men and women were present.

They engaged in animated discussion, and occasionally peered outside the gate tower, as if they were eagerly anticipating something.

"I heard that the groom is the young clan leader of the Ping'an Wang Family? I wonder what he looks like. I hope he's good enough for our Miss Ruolan."

"Brother, you're way behind. The groom is already the clan leader of the Wang family."

"Clan leader? How old must he be then. Our Miss Ruolan wouldn't be going to marry a widower, would she?"

"How could it be a widower!? Our Miss Ruolan is the noble Eldest Daughter of the Liu Family. I've heard that the groom is only nineteen years old, at the peak of youth, just one year older than Miss Ruolan."

"He might be fine in terms of age and status, but that Ping'an Wang Family, aren't they a small family from some remote corner south of the Peace River?"

"Yes, Ping'an Town was only established a hundred years ago. I heard that there are still fierce beasts in the area they govern."

"Oh, heaven! Will our Miss Ruolan have to suffer in such a poor, savage land? Isn't a place with fierce beasts dangerous?"

In this world, many ordinary people were born and died in the same place.

Living a lifetime, if they had the chance to visit the County Town once, it would already mean they lived well.

Ping'an Town and Shanyin Town were separated not only by mountains but also by rivers. Most common folks only heard about things from others, who can really know all the information?

However, some Independent Cultivators and wandering merchants who had been north and south were a bit more knowledgeable. They spoke up for Ping'an Town: "Under the control of the Wang family, Ping'an Town has developed quite rapidly. Although it's currently not as good as Shanyin, it does have great potential for future growth.

As for the occasional sighting of fierce beasts in the territory, it does happen, but it's inevitable as they are close to the frontier."

"The Wang family's clan leader, Wang Shouzhe, is quite an outstanding young talent. He is well-respected in Ping'an Town and is suitable for your Miss Liu."

With the refutation of the Independent Cultivators and wandering merchants, some of the Shanyin Town commoners have developed some impressions about Ping'an Town and Wang Shouzhe.

But still, many hold onto their prejudices.

"The occasional presence of fierce beasts is still the presence of fierce beasts. Our Miss Ruolan getting married to such a wild place is too hard."

"Wang Shouzhe? That's such an ordinary name. I wonder what he looks like. Hopefully, he's somewhat handsome and heroic, seven or eight times like the Young Clan Leader Yuan Hui would be fine."

"How can he be compared to Young Master Yuan Hui? It would be nice if the groom was half as good as Young Master Yuan Hui."

Various discussions continued without stopping.

Suddenly.

A few quick-witted young men came running back, their faces flushed and they excitedly shouted: "They're here, they're here, the Ping'an Wang family's wedding procession has arrived, the groom is here."

For a moment.

Everyone quieted down, craning their necks to look outside the gate.

Not long after, around the corner of the road, the wedding procession slowly emerged.

Leading the team was a young man dressed in a wedding robe with a large red flower ball hanging from his chest.

He wore a purple jade crown on his head, a tight red wedding robe, embroidered with phoenixes on a dragon-patterned base, its style was extremely intricate and complex. This symbolized the couple's wish to manage the family harmoniously after marriage.

Around his waist hung a pouch full of treasures, which represented the wealth of the groom's family and their ability to provide a worry-free life for the bride. This was to be given to the bride, representing her future control of the finances.

A jade sword and a small exquisite purple gold bow were worn on his right side, symbolizing the martial power of the groom's family and their ability to protect the wife and children.

The boots he wore symbolized the groom's future ascent, and the wish for the family's development and growth.

These adornments all had their particular traditions in this world.

These were the customary attires of the standard family clan leader, or the heir's wedding. Direct descendants or legitimate sons from the family could not wear such a wedding robe.

"Eh, the groom looks upright, and his face is handsome like jade. He looks very handsome and heroic," praised a scholar.

"As I look at the groom's wedding robe from afar, it seems to emit streaks of red and golden light. Could it be... the legendary Gold Fire Dual Spirit Silk Robe?" A well-informed independent Cultivator exclaimed.

"Brother, what is this Gold Fire Dual Spirit Silk Robe? Isn't it just a wedding robe? What's all the fuss about?"

"Hehe, there are many types of Spirit Silkworms in the world. For example, Ice Spirit Silkworm, Fire Spirit Silkworm, Gold Spirit Silkworm and so on. But no matter which kind of Spirit Silkworm silk, they are all very expensive. Even a handkerchief made of Spirit Silkworm silk is a treasure for ladies from prominent families," said the cultivator.

"The most suitable material for a man's wedding robe is the Dual Spirit Silk Robe, made primarily with Fire Spirit Silkworm silk, and supplemented with Gold Spirit Silkworm silk. These two kinds of spirit silkworm silks have a natural reddish or golden luster, which makes the wedding robe extremely extravagant."

"But the making of a wedding robe requires a great amount of material and intricate workmanship, which makes it even more expensive. That gown the groom is wearing, I imagine it's worth no less than two thousand Qian Gold!"

"Two thousand?"

Be it civilians, independent cultivators or peddlers, all were stunned.

That's a fortune!

The key point was that a wedding robe was worn only once in one's lifetime... One time and it costs two thousand Qian Gold, that's extravagant!

"In the County Town of Longzuo County, I saw such a wedding robe. It was worn by the young clan leader of a celestial family when he was getting married," bragged the Independent Cultivator proudly of his knowledge.

Could a groom who could afford such a wedding robe be from any ordinary family?

Almost everyone immediately looked at the groom with reverence.

"Hey, don't just look at the robe. Look at the horse the groom is riding!" Another well-informed Independent Cultivator shouted.

Following his prompt.

Everyone realized that the horse the groom was riding was far from ordinary.

They saw the majestic horse with a single horn on its head, its body as red as fire. Its hooves were white like clouds, vigorous and imposing, full of spirit.

Its steps were light, as though it was treading on clouds and flying in the air.

"This is... the legendary Ten Thousand Gold Spirit Beast Famous Steed."

"Fire-treading White Cloud!"

Indeed.

A robe worth a fortune, a horse worth ten thousand gold, and the prince comes to marry the noble lady!

Chapter 124 Celebration! Magnificent! Phoenix Qi Ming_1

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The prized steed worth tens of thousands of gold — Fire-treading White Cloud.

Most people in their entire lives may never have heard that such a horse worth thousands of gold pieces exists in this world, let alone seen it with their own eyes.

The moment that image flashed by, however, the crowd of not less than a thousand onlookers immediately went into a frenzy.

This was the grandeur of the wedding of the young clan leader of the Celestial Prominent Family! It indeed gave him a great prestige. It seems that Miss Ruolan's husband's family is not simple.

The groom, despite how one looked at him, was becoming increasingly pleasing to the eye; it was as if he was shining brightly, emitting brilliance all over his body.

Meanwhile...

Wang Shouzhe's wedding procession was slowly approaching the ceremonial gate.

Trailing behind Wang Shouzhe, the one leading the charges, was a group of relatives dressed in glamorous and festive clothing, all riding high-headed tall horses.

Other than Wang Shouzhe, the most prominent one was none other than Chen Fangjie, the young clan leader of the Chen Clan.

He had been in the spotlight for the past year.

First, his father, Chen Dewei had managed to break through to the Spirit Platform Realm, after long years of accumulation. Then, he married Wang Luoyi, the eldest daughter of the Wang Family. His heart brimmed with pride and fulfillment.

Now, as Wang Shouzhe's wedding was taking place, Chen Fangjie, being the elder brother-in-law, naturally needed to help out.

He, of course, willingly took on the responsibility of escorting the groom safely to his bride.

However, Wang Shouzhe's wedding attire was indeed too dazzling; it was far more elaborate than his own during his wedding.

That's the worst thing about comparisons.

"Brother-in-law,"

While Chen Fangjie was atop his tall horse and grumbling to himself, the third elder of the Shou generation, Wang Shounuo, nudged his horse to ride next to him, and said with a sigh, "Two months ago, when I attended your and Luo Yi's wedding, I thought you were the most handsome and stunning groom I'd ever seen. But now, compared to Wang Shouzhe—aiee..."

Chen Fangjie's face darkened. Wang Shounuo, why are you bringing up such uncomfortable topics?

Wasn't my icy silkworm silk wedding robe splendid enough? Fine, I admit it doesn't compare with Shouzhe's. But, it was summer! If I had worn the Golden Flame Dual Spirit Silkworm Clothes like Shouzhe's, wouldn't I have died of heat?

Chen Fangjie grumbled internally while outwardly chuckled, "Shounuo, aren't you twenty-one years old now? Getting on in years, why haven't you arranged a marriage yet? Oh right, I heard from our Chen's sisters that you attended a Mid-Autumn Festival social mixer for the unmarried youth of the direct bloodlines some time ago, right?"

This time, it was Wang Shounuo's turn to have his face darken. Brother-in-law, this was a stab in the back! That Mid-Autumn Festival social gathering was nothing more than a show of ostentation. Unfortunately, he had never experienced such a situation before. As a result...

However, those girls of the direct line bloodlines were quite interested in Wang Shouzhe, bombarding him, Wang Shounuo, with questions about Shouzhe.

He could only maintain a broad smile and reply, "I just went there to broaden my horizons. I've been so busy with family affairs recently that I don't have time for a relationship. Unlike you, brother-in-law, riding on a Qian Gold horse to marry my Sister Luo Yi."

Chen Fangjie's face darkened again. In his mind, he was constantly complaining. What's wrong with a Qian Gold horse? Wasn't a Qian Gold horse of higher quality? Plus, my strange and unique horse is worth three thousand Qian Gold coins.

Do you think everyone is as wealthy as Wang Shouzhe?

Then, both of them started grinning through their teeth. You jabbing me, me jabbing you. They were having fun badgering each other, but their hearts were bleeding bit by bit.

Wang Shouzhe in the front, who had improved a lot in all kinds of physical qualities over the past year due to either the nurturing from his bloodline or the fast advancement in his cultivation pathways, turned around and said, "Third Brother, brother-in-law, that's enough. Bring up the wedding money box."

"Shu Yong, Shu Lian, bring up the wedding money box." Wang Shounuo urgently shouted.

Then, the fifth child Wang Shou Yong, and the sixth child Wang Shouliao obediently dismounted, sprinted back to the carriage, each carrying a large box to Wang Shouzhe, and opened the two boxes.

A whole box of small, shiny shillings was revealed.

As well as a whole box of maltose candies. These maltose candies were all wrapped in small pieces with oil paper, stacked neatly.

Over a year, Shu Yong and Shu Lian, two major boys in the family, have grown a lot. Not only have they improved rapidly in cultivation, but even their frames have become bulky, like two little adults.

As soon as they saw the Wang's wedding procession carrying out the box of wedding money, the onlooking crowd became excited and swarmed over.

The Wang family was indeed generous, even preparing two boxes of wedding money.

Following protocol, Wang Shouzhe dismounted, took a handful of shillings and maltose candies in each hand, bowed to the spectators in Shanyin and said, "I, Wang Shouzhe, the clan leader of the Wang family, have come to your precious land of Shanyin to marry a noblewoman of the Liu Family. Thank you all for coming to support."

He then scattered the shillings and maltose candies, and the people of Shanyin immediately scrambled for them.

Especially, the maltose candies were very expensive. One would need to spend three or four shillings to buy a small piece. For most ordinary families, maltose candies were a luxury.

"The Wang Family is generous, even scattering maltose candies. We support Clan Leader Wang marrying our Miss Ruolan."

"Miss Ruolan and Clan Leader Wang make a perfect couple. Congratulations."

"We wish Clan Leader Wang and Miss Ruolan to have a baby soon."

The spectators and villagers were all saying various auspicious phrases. Whoever raised their voice the loudest, Wang Shouzhe would scatter towards them, and the atmosphere instantly became very lively.

Afterwards, Wang Shounuo, Chen Fangjie, and the younger brothers joined the ranks, speeding up the scattering, making the scene very lively and spectacular.

This was one of the distinctive customs of this Profound Martial world.

No matter whose daughter was getting married, everyone wanted to do it with much pomp and circumstance. The more excitement, the better it symbolized the grandeur of the marriage and the future happiness of life.

Chapter 124 Celebration! Magnificent! Phoenix Qi Ming_2

The louder Wang Shouzhe made the celebration, the more honour it brought to the Liu family.

Maltose were rare goods; not only did the children scramble for them, but so did the adults. However, since they were all neighbours and friends, there was orderly conduct and no chaotic scrambling.

Suddenly.

A little girl aged around seven or eight failed to seize any maltose she desired several times in a row. She sat down on the ground and burst into a loud wail.

Wang Shouzhe instantly flew over to her, helped her up, and gave her a whole handful of maltose.

The little girl was so overcome with joy she began to cry and thanked Wang Shouzhe saying, "Thank you, bridegroom brother. I wish you and the bride sister many offsprings, several children as handsome as the bridegroom brother."

Her words of blessing sounded rather pleasant.

Wang Shouzhe enjoyed it and handed her another round of sweets.

Then, he was immediately surrounded by the crowd.

Luckily, Shounuo and his team came over carrying boxes to break the crowd.

This bustle lasted for nearly thirty minutes.

At this point, those from the Liu clan, who had been waiting on the sidelines, specifically to greet Wang Shouzhe, came out to put an end to this segment: "This is good enough, don't spoil the auspicious time intended for our bridegroom."

The Liu family commanded significant respect. The villagers readily stepped away, satisfied and clearing the path.

A member of the Liu Clan stepped forward, smiled and bowed to Wang Shouzhe, saying, "I am seventh elder, Liu Gaoyun of the older generation in the Liu Clan. Brother Shouzhe, the journey here must have been exhausting, please come inside the shade to enjoy a cup of sweet tea and take a short rest."

"So it's Seventh Uncle," Wang Shouzhe hurriedly paid his respectful greetings, "The Seventh Uncle personally guiding me, it's very overwhelming."

The younger generations too came forward to pay their respects.

At the same time, three elders in this marital procession team, Gongsun Qiang of Shanyang Gongsun Clan, Lu Zhengjie from Lu Clan of Yingxiu and Wang Dingzu from Ping'an Wang Family each stepped forward to greet Liu Gaoyun.

The first two men were Wang Shouzhe's uncles, and Wang Dingzu was his third uncle. This convoy included elders from both his maternal and paternal clans and had everyone required.

Meanwhile, Wang Dingzu presented a red envelope to Liu Gaoyun's team who had come to receive them. Liu Gaoyun received the biggest red envelope containing twenty pieces of Qian gold, for leading the way.

The band, specifically prepared by the Liu Clan, set a boisterous mood by playing cheerful festive music.

After having the sweet tea and a brief rest.

Lu Zhengjie came forward and said, "Brother Liu, it's about time. Please lead the way."

The time to receive the bride and then return to the Wang Family is always tight.

Liu Gaoyun, who received a sizeable red envelope, didn't want further complications. He immediately announced, "Guide the bridegroom into the house."

Then, the members of the Liu Clan took the lead, opening the way with the matrimonial convoy following behind. Behind them and around, an increasing number of spectators were following and watching. It was a lively and spectacular event.

When they were less than five miles from the main residence of the Liu Family, the path ahead was made of broad and sturdy slate.

By this time, the number of onlookers had increased significantly, and they started calling for more excitement. The band at the back was about to start playing.

They were about to step into the gates of the Liu family and without any lively programmes, it wouldn't be in accordance with the rules.

In the convoy, Gongsun Qiang and Lu Zhengjie exchanged a glance, knowing it was time for them to take the stage.

During the bride-fetching process, the uncles from the bride's side usually came forward to support their nephew's show.

However, Wang Shouzhe was a mite special; he had two maternal clans.

Months before the bride-fetching, the two maternal clans squared off over this particular segment.

The cause of this, of course, was the two old ancestors who squared off first.

Mingsheng's old ancestor and the other old ancestor pit against one another, arguing over who was the true maternal clan of Shouzhe.

Now both clans, one side held the family blood and the other held the moral high ground.

Naturally, neither would capitulate to the other.

And so, the tension extended to this moment.

"Strike up the joyful music." The well-prepared Lu Zhengjie, who had been instructed by Mingsheng's old ancestor, launched his gong and drum band before their arrival.

Soon after, the sound of the gongs and drums vibrating, the atmosphere heated up instantaneously.

The crowd of spectators cheered.

"Is that all?"

Gongsun Qiang, who was also given a stern talk by the ancient ancestor, showed a look of disdain. "My brother Lu, could you show a bit of cunning when managing the affair for your nephew?"

With that, Gongsun Qiang clapped his hands.

Following that, a small group hanging at the rear of the convoy sprung into action. They were a carefully dressed acrobat team flipping and dancing, performing fire-breathing stunts on the go.

The scene was undoubtedly lively, immediately drawing the attention of the crowd. Even peripheral members of the Liu Family started to gather, enjoying the spectacle and cheering.

"This acrobat team was specially hired from Longzuo County." Gongsun Qiang said proudly, "Many prominent families in Longzuo County use this troupe for their weddings. Our old ancestor said that Wang Shouzhe is the legitimate grandson of our Gongsun Clan. On his wedding day, we must make it as lively as possible and can't be careless."

Wang Shouzhe in the parade looked helpless. These two uncles have been bickering all the way, neither willing to bow down to the other. He couldn't intervene in such matters, and besides, it's a wedding. It was normal for people to vie, competing in merrymaking.

Unexpectedly!

Lu Zhengjie, Wang Shouzhe's uncle, raised the corner of his lips, "Just this?"

Following that, he carefully took out a red fan from the jade box. As soon as it appeared, a wave of heat surged out.

"The Fan of Fire Departure?"

Wang Shouzhe was taken aback. Really? The Lu Family actually brought out The Fan of Fire Departure just for the sake of saving face. That thing was a spiritual artifact, a great weapon in the battlefield!

Lu Zhengjie solemnly said, "In order to stage this show, the old ancestor allowed me to use this fan and spent five fire spirit stones to infuse the Fan of Fire Departure with energy, taking a whole month to train it."

After saying that, he waved the fan.

Suddenly!

The Fan of Fire Departure burst into bright flames, and a majestic Fire Phoenix illusion lept out from within, dancing in the sky with blazing flames, creating a visually stunning impact.

Immediately after, another Fire Phoenix flew out from the Fan of Fire, chasing and playing with the previous one, as if they were an immortal couple.

"Wow!"

The crowd burst into a frenzy. Such a wedding scene was unheard of, unseen before. Even the direct bloodline members of the Liu Family were startled and ran out of the main house to watch.

Goodness!

Despite their worldly experiences, they had never seen someone use a spiritual artifact to set off fireworks at a wedding.

This Wang Family's wedding procession really knows how to entertain.

However, the livelier the wedding procession, the more it flattered Liu Family.

This indicated that the party getting betrothed regarded this marriage very seriously and were earnest in their approach.

If the wedding party didn't make any preparations, hurriedly arrived and hastily departed, it would make the Liu Family lose face.

It would feel as if they didn't value their legitimate daughter.

Two months ago, when Chen Fangjie came to get married, he also made this part of the wedding very lively. They even invited an exotic dance troupe from overseas to liven up the atmosphere, giving the common folks in Ping'an Town quite the spectacle and broadening their horizons.

Yet Chen Fangjie's celebration seemed lacking compared to Lu Zhengjie's grand display. Filling a spiritual artifact with five fire spirit stones just to set off grand fireworks, that truly was extravagant.

In this way.

The direct bloodline members of the Liu Family were pleased. The Wang Family was extravagant in setting off fireworks, obviously esteeming Miss Ruolan very much.

This scene also reached the main residence of the Liu Family.

So much so, that the clan leader and his wife of the Liu Family, who were guarding the main hall, couldn't help but sing praises.

Among the wedding party, Lu Zhengjie was quite pleased with himself, and looked provocatively at Gongsun Qiang, "After all, he's a legitimate grandson adopted from outside. They're not really putting their hearts into it. Unlike our Lu Family, who share direct blood ties with Shouzhe."

All eyes then fell on Gongsun Qiang.

He rolled his eyes, "That's all?"

Then, Gongsun Qiang waved his hand, with a grand air, "Come, come, let everyone experience the grand finale that we of the Gongsun Clan have prepared for our legitimate grandson."

What?

It's already come this far, and the Gongsun family still has a grand finale? The onlookers and members of the Liu Family were all astounded, eagerly anticipating what was next.

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...

Wang Shouzhe was also taken aback, he didn't expect Gongsun Qiang, who is not known for his tact, to actually have a trump card up his sleeve?

It was then that he remembered.

It seemed that Gongsun Qiang had brought two extra carriages before arriving, and no one knows what was inside.

Could it be... within those carriages...

While everyone was still puzzled.

Suddenly.

The doors of the two last carriages in the procession were opened, and a massive object stepped out from each of them.

"Thump!" "Thump!"

Accompanied by two loud noises, the bluestone road shattered.

What came into everyone's view were two giant statue-like objects.

They were about ten feet tall, broad and fat, and their bodies seemed to be forged out of some kind of black crystal stone, exuding an intense sensation of power.

"What are these?"

The direct descendants of the Liu Family who were onlookers, exclaimed in surprise, "Are these the two black stone puppets of the Shanyang Gongsun Clan?"

The Liu Family was quite familiar with these two puppets.

The Liu Family of Shanyin and the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang were separated by a mountain ridge. To be exact, they shared the same mountain ridge.

With both parties co-governing this land, friction was inevitable.

Conflicts over mineral resources between the two clans were not uncommon, and there was some resentment on both sides.

These two black stone puppets usually worked in the Gongsun Clan's mine. However, they would occasionally appear during bouts of conflict.

With their immense power and seeming invulnerability, no one could suppress these two black stone puppets, except for the old ancestor of the Liu Family.

After suffering a few losses, the Liu Family had begun considering procuring two puppets of their own to guard the disputed mines.

They had already found a seller through their old ancestor.

But unexpectedly, Gongsun Qiang audaciously brought the two black stone puppets onto Liu Family's territory. He truly had some nerve.

Wang Shouzhe was flabbergasted.

Dear uncle, aren't you just organizing a wedding? Why does it feel like you're here to cause a ruckus?

What was most astonishing was that a large drum was hung on the chest of each of the black stone puppets. These drums were specially made for the battlefield, with a diameter of about ten feet and weighing a thousand pounds. Even a qualified martial artist would find it hard to move them.

But hung on the two puppets, they seemed steady and effortless.

Gongsun Qiang then brought out a small array plate. The plate was forged completely out of black stone with many peculiar runes engraved on it.

He pressed his palm on the small array plate, and mysterious energy continuously poured in.

Then, something extraordinary happened.

The two black stone puppets began to move.

"Boom!"

Their fist-like hammers ruthlessly pounded on the big drums. The drums suddenly emitted a powerful sound that caused everyone's eardrums to tremble and their hearts to race.

"Boom!"

"Boom! Boom!"

As they pounded rhythmically on the drums, an upbeat wedding song was played with an increasingly faster rhythm.

Even the heavy footsteps of the black stone puppets seemed to blend with the sound of the drums, making the atmosphere even more joyous and the tune even more magnificent.

It was as spectacular as it was shocking.

Wang Shouzhe was stunned.

Uncle, your ideas are quite remarkable.

The expressions of the Liu family members were also very strange. They watched this scene with their mouths hanging open, wondering whether Gongsun Qiang was here to celebrate his nephew's wedding or to wreak havoc.

Caught by surprise, they found themselves stuck on how to handle the situation.

On the other hand, the onlookers were less complicated in their thoughts. They were first shocked, and then became incredibly excited. Waves of cheers followed one after another, and the sound was like a tsunami resounding through the sky.

Seeing this, Gongsun Qiang also became increasingly excited.

He continued to manipulate the small array plate in his hand, accelerating the rhythm of the black stone puppet's drumbeat, making the drum music even more impactful and the rhythm even faster.

However, impressive as the scene was, the black stone puppets were too heavy. Each step they took left a hole in the bluestone road. The area they strolled had become a disaster scene.

The Liu family's expressions became stranger and more suspicious.

It seemed Gongsun Qiang was deliberately causing trouble under the guise of the wedding procession, and destroying their property.

But they had no evidence.

"Nephew, my trick is pretty good, isn't it? I had these two black stone puppets on standby for two months, it took a lot of effort to train them." Gongsun Qiang grinned at Wang Shouzhe, his face full of pride, "Does the 'War Drum Phoenix Seeking Phoenix' sound good? Aren't I making you proud, uncle?"

Wang Shouzhe couldn't help but grimace. Thanks a lot, uncle.

Looking at the reactions of the Liu family members. If it wasn't for this being a joyous occasion, they would probably seize you, thrash you thoroughly, and then chase you out of Shanyin Town.

But Lu Zhengjie, who was standing on the side, couldn't help but give in: Gongsun Qiang, you win!

I salute you!

Luckily, despite the weird situation, the actual effect was quite good. All the bystanders were caught up in the excitement. They swayed and danced to the strong drum beats.

Even the Liu family couldn't find a problem with this. They let Gongsun Qiang continue his antics. After all, he is the bridegroom's uncle and is supposed to contribute to the wedding procession.

With the two black stone puppets leading the way and the Fire Phoenix and Fire Phoenix dancing and resonating in the sky, Wang Family's wedding procession reached the entrance of the Liu Family's main residence amidst the festive atmosphere and cheers of onlookers.

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Both uncles finally withdrew their divine skills, the Fire Phoenix in the sky disappeared, and the puppet in front of them returned to the carriage with its heavy footsteps.

"Wang Shouzhe, the bridegroom of the Wang family, has arrived."

The main gate of Liu's house was already open, and upon the loud announcement by Liu Gaoyun of the Liu family, several members of the Liu clan who were the principals immediately greeted them from the main residence, according to the proper etiquette the Wang family's wedding procession was invited through the main gate.

Relatives and followers who had joined the procession were all taken care of by Liu's family, with only Wang Shouzhe being invited into the main hall.

The layout of the Liu family's main residence was grandiose, and today it was decorated even more resplendently, with big red "Joy" characters and silk flowers seen everywhere, presenting a panorama of jubilation.

The Clan Leader of the Liu family, Liu Gaowang, and the father-in-law's wife, Mrs. Xu, were both dressed in their formal attire, suitable for significant occasions, and were waiting solemnly for Wang Shouzhe to come and pay respects.

Upon seeing this, Wang Shouzhe straightened himself up, sorted out his dress and hat, and respectfully stepped forward: "Greetings to my father-in-law and mother-in-law."

His father-in-law, Liu Gaowang, coughed lightly, and a close attendant immediately helped Wang Shouzhe up in a respectful manner.

"Good, good, good~" Mother-in-law Mrs. Xu carefully examined Wang Shouzhe, becoming even more satisfied the more she saw, "Shouzhe indeed looks as handsome and gallant as the rumors said. Please, sit, sit, and have some tea and snacks."

Wang Shouzhe sat down as instructed, his back straight as a rod, not daring to show the slightest hint of laxness.

After a round of tea and snacks, and a few pleasantries, the ceremony was considered to have moved forward.

Mrs. Xu said: "Shouzhe, it's almost time for the auspicious hour. Ruolan is waiting for you in the backyard, go ahead and attend to your duties."

"Understood. Then I will take my leave now."

Wang Shouzhe stood up, bowed, and respectfully left the main hall, leading a group of young friends towards the courtyard.

The Liu family's main residence, the courtyard.

It was a neat and organized landscape with flower patches and trees, as well as a large area of solid stone pavement, which could be used as a martial arts field.

The courtyard also had a corridor connecting all the different doors and courtyards.

If one wanted to go to the backyard for the wedding ceremony without wanting to jump over the wall, this place was a must-pass location.

Young men and women from the Yuan and Wan generations of the Liu family, particularly those who hadn't yet married and still brimming with youth, had been stationed here for quite some time, their expressions filled with excitement.

The leader was Liu Yuanrui, the direct second son of the Yuan generation. Among those under eighteen years of age, he held the highest status.

Today, Liu Yuanrui was dressed in gorgeous and festive clothing, hands tucked in his sleeves, his gaze sweeping across everyone sternly: "Did everyone understand what I just ordered?"

"Understood." The young men and women of the Liu family, all brimming with energy, boomed in response.

"Our slogan is..."

"Brother-in-law, brother-in-law, my sister is the eldest." "Family Head, Family Head, must put on a majestic look." "Big things or small, wife is in charge." "If you dare to disobey, ask our uncles and aunts."

Their voices were loud and vibrant, even causing the air to tremble slightly.

"Oh, Yuanrui, you've created quite a lively scene here." At this moment, Wang Shouzhe and his young brothers entered the courtyard. Seeing the bustling scene, he understood that the wedding ceremony had entered the next stage.

Liu Yuanrui also greeted them with a face full of smiles, politely bending his hand in salute: "Brother-in-law, you've finally arrived. I've been waiting here for quite a while."

Upon seeing the throng of young people from two generations, all exuding an air of "tiger wolves", and looking at him with predatory gazes, Wang Shouzhe couldn't help feeling a chill down his spine, and somewhat nervously said, "Yuanrui, we've known each other for quite a while now, with feelings like those of actual brothers. I'm sure you know what kind of person your brother-in-law is.

So how about we skip these old-fashioned rituals, hmm?"

Before Liu Yuanrui could answer...

Chen Fangjie, his brother-in-law standing to the side, chuckled and said, "Shouzhe, I remember when I went to your house to propose two months ago. I said the same thing to you. What was your answer then?"

"Uh... Okay." Wang Shouzhe helplessly and honestly replied, "I said at the time that a wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime event. It should be held in a grand manner, with a sense of ceremony, so that there would be more memories in the future."

"Thanks to your gracious treatment, the memory of my wedding ceremony is unforgettable and permanently engraved in my heart." Chen Fangjie started to speak, but his eyes became moist. The rite of passage of his wedding had been too, too impactful at the hands of Shouzhe...

Even thinking about it now, he couldn't help shedding a tear. Getting married really wasn't easy.

"Brother-in-law, you volunteered to help with the wedding preparations this time." Wang Shouzhe said with sudden understanding, "So you were waiting for me here. This is indeed the workings of Heavenly Dao's reincarnations."

"Not at all." Chen Fangjie, having spent a lot of time with Wang Shouzhe, had developed a thicker skin, "I simply thought that I could not let any regrets mar your grand wedding."

Liu Yuanrui also chimed in with a smile, "Your words, brother-in-law, always inspire deep reflections in me. In that case, let's not waste your precious time and begin the ceremony immediately."

"Yuanrui, you're a scholar, stay composed." Wang Shouzhe, knowing that he couldn't avoid this, folded his hands and threatened, "You're sixteen this year as well; sooner or later, you'll have to get married too."

"Of course, being a scholar and your brother-in-heart, I would never cause difficulties for you, brother-in-law.", Liu Yuanrui said politely and inquired, "Are you ready, brother-in-law?"

"I'm ready." Wang Shouzhe took a deep breath, preparing himself.

"Ahem!" Liu Yuanrui spirited up, started a discourse, "For our Profound Martial family, the most important thing is 'martial'. How does one protect their family without martial power? Brother-in-law, doesn't what I say makes sense?" Liu Yuanrui smiled at Wang Shouzhe.

"It does." Wang Shouzhe nodded.

He had to admit this.

"However, today is a joyous day for your wedding, it's not suitable to brandish weapons. How about this, brother-in-law, show us your strength today, and we'll consider it passing the test." Liu Yuanrui said courteously.

"It's that simple?"

Wang Shouzhe was suspicious.

"Just that simple." Liu Yuanrui smiled and nodded, "You are my dear brother-in-law, I, as your nephew, would not intentionally make it difficult for you."

With that, he raised his hands and gently clapped them.

Suddenly,

A deep voice came from the side corridor, "Yuanrui, here I am."

As the words fell, heavy footsteps followed.

A nine-foot-tall giant man carrying a boulder on his shoulder came striding over. His burly body, covered with muscular bumps and a face full of beard, made him look like a god of war on the battlefield.

Wang Shouzhe's eyes twitched, having a bad premonition.

The burly man with a big thump threw the boulder on the ground, creating a pit hole in the thick green stone floor.

Liu Yuanrui bowed to Wang Shouzhe with a grin, "Brother-in-law, since we are like brothers, I won't make things difficult for you. You only need to lift this stone ball above your head to pass. We, your nephews and nieces, will then acknowledge your ability to protect my sister."

"Um..." Wang Shouzhe broke into a sweat, looking suspicious, "Yuanrui, this doesn't seem right, does it? This part of the ceremony should only include unmarried peers or juniors, why is this man participating?"

Liu Yuanrui grinned, "Brother-in-law, he is our youngest brother from the Yuan generation."

With that, he turned to the giant, "Come on, Yuanqiang, tell your brother-in-law how old you are this year."

The towering man scratched his head, smiling goofily at Wang Shouzhe, "Brother-in-law, my name is Liu Yuanqiang, I turned eighteen this year."

Eighteen years old!

Wang Shouzhe was taken aback.

It took him a while to recover, coughing awkwardly, "This Brother Yuanqiang...looks quite...quite mature."

Liu Yuanrui remained very "cheerful", giggling as if he had stolen a hen, "Brother-in-law, Yuanqiang has been practicing a strong cultivation technique since he was little, that's why he looks more mature."

Mature! Do you call this mature?!

Corner of Wang Shouzhe's mouth twitched, he couldn't help but complained in his heart. This rascal Yuanrui, when scholars decide to shamelessly, they really have more to them than martial artists.

Chapter 126 Mighty! Dominant Brother-in-law

...

Everyone's attention was on Wang Shouzhe, no one noticed a pretty sixteen-seventeen-year-old maidservant quietly appearing at the corner of the corridor on the other side.

After taking a peek at the scene, the little maid immediately ran back as fast as her legs could carry her, her face filled with gravity.

Shulan Court.

Today is the joyful day for the new bride.

Early in the morning, the Shulan Court was cleaned up several times, even the blue bricks on the corridor were washed with clear water to shine like new. All the lanterns below the corridor were changed to red, and even the trees in the court were adorned with delicate red lanterns, a sight full of festivity.

In the boudoir, the new bride, Liu Ruolan, was sitting at the dressing table, surrounded by a few beautiful middle-aged women, helping her carefully applying makeup.

Because it's a big wedding, the wedding dress is extravagant, to avoid rouge and makeup getting onto the dress, it is necessary to apply the makeup first, style the hair bun before wearing the wedding dress.

At this moment, only half of the makeup was applied on Liu Ruolan, and even so, she had delicate eyes, clear, intelligent, and sparkling. She may not be a rare celestial beauty, but she is a beauty nonetheless. Just by sitting there, she has the refined restraint of a daughter of a prominent family, yet subtly exuding an air of elegance uncommon to ordinary girls.

This elegance doesn't come from pampering, but from being in a wealthy and powerful family background, nurtured bit by bit, rarely successfully emulated by outsiders.

But perhaps she was too nervous today, her body was a bit tense, and her long eyelashes couldn't help trembling slightly.

"Miss Ruolan, every girl has to go through this. Besides, I've heard that your new husband is both talented and handsome, with outstanding character. He's a perfect gentleman," the beautiful woman who was helping her to apply makeup said in a soft, comforting voice.

"Mm, thank you Sixth Auntie," she thanked with a gentle nod of her head, a hint of anticipation and timidity crossing her eyes.

The beautiful woman had dexterous hands, and in a moment she was done with her hair bun.

Her lips were coated with crimson, the bright color enhancing her fair and delicate skin, making her look more attractive, like a blooming peony flower.

Liu Ruolei, who was by her side, couldn't help but feel envious as she saw how breathtakingly beautiful her sister looked, "Sister, you look exceptionally beautiful today, just like an immortal girl from the heavens. Brother-in-law is indeed lucky to have you as his wife."

Hearing Liu Ruolei's words, the beautiful woman at the side applying makeup laughed, couldn't help but tease, "Ruolei, if you're envious, I can certainly help you find an eligible bachelor whom you'll fancy?"

The beautiful woman speaking was Wang Liuzi, the fourth among the Liu family descendants with the surname 'Liuzi'. Her husband is an elite clan member of the senior 'Gao' generation of the Liu family's direct vessel.

If she had married into another family, she should have gone back to the Wang family for support some time ago.

Her presence here with Liu Ruolan reinforced their closeness.

Liu Ruolei, flushed to the roots of her hair, quickly changed the subject, "Yuanrui couldn't sit still since early in the morning and wanted to show off in front of sister, I wonder how he's faring right now?"

As she spoke, a pretty maidservant suddenly rushed in through the door.

She looked slightly flustered and blurted out as soon as she entered, "Miss, something's not right. Master Yuanrui has gone too far."

"Sister, he..."

Liu Ruolei didn't even complete her sentence when her expression changed drastically. She quickly asked, "Qiao'er, what happened?"

"Master Yuanrui enticed Master Yuanqiang to make the new master lift a huge, huge stone ball." As she spoke, Qiao'er gestured with her hands, that was the stone ball Master Yuanqiang used for martial arts practice, which weighed nearly two thousand pounds. Even Master Yuanhui would find it difficult to lift."

Qiao'er said with great concern, "The new master is such a handsome man, if he hurts himself, what will we do?"

A middle-aged woman beside them covered her mouth and laughed, "Qiao'er, Miss Ruolan hasn't even gotten married yet, and you, as a housemaid, have already started worrying about the new master. How shameless~"

"Don't worry. Yuanrui is a scholar and knows the rules; he won't get out of line," another accompanying middle-aged woman laughed, "The new young master is coming to pick up his bride. If we don't put some pressure on him, won't Ruolan be bullied once she goes over there? This is Yuanrui being concerned about his sister."

"Anyway, these are old customs. If the couple wants to live in harmony and the family to prosper, one needs to be virtuous and careful. Only then when one considers everything for the husband's sake, one can gain respect. How can one always rely on one's family, huh?"

Liu Ruolan's eyes flickered slightly, but she was still worried, and in a soft voice, she said, "Ruolei, go and supervise them for me. Don't let Yuanrui and those kids play too much. Just enjoy and lighten up the mood."

"Yes, sister. I'm leaving right away."

Liu Ruolei was also a bit restless, anxious that her sister's husband might be at a disadvantage, and immediately rushed out after excusing herself.

...

Meanwhile, in the courtyard.

"Yuanrui, what should I do if I can't pass this challenge?" Wang Shouzhe knew his brothers-in-law are just messing around, naturally he wouldn't really mind, and asked with a laugh.

With his hands behind his back and a comfortable posture, Liu Yuanrui said with a charming smile, "Brother-in-law, as you know, as long as you give up, you can pass all the challenges."

Wang Shouzhe knew, and this is the rule of the Profound Martial clan families.

Chapter 126 Mighty! Dominant Brother-in-law

The little brothers-in-law and the little sisters-in-law would often show off their strength to the groom right before their sister's wedding as a way of standing up for her. This tradition is meant to serve as a warning to the groom to never let their sister suffer after marriage.

Of course, this is just a traditional custom. Nowadays, it has evolved into a process within the grand wedding ceremony, mainly to create a festive atmosphere and bring joy to everyone.

"Yuanrui, you will have to marry a wife one day too, and when that happens, don't blame me for coming to your wedding," Wang Shouzhe said with a grin. "You know well the tricks the groom tends to pull, so let's just call it a truce here, to end this cycle of tit for tat."

To his surprise, Yuanrui shrugged it off, saying, "I don't care. I'm a scholar, what's wrong with backing down a bit? After all, I will be relying on my wife to protect me anyway."

Wang Shouzhe couldn't help but break out in a cold sweat. Indeed, a person is invincible when they lose all shame.

In a previous life, an author named Le Ao once said, "When you decide to just let go, you'll find that all things in the world suddenly become quite clear."

There seems to be some truth to that.

"Brother-in-law, just admit defeat if it gets too much."

"Yeah, yeah, don't worry. My sister will have your back in the future."

The younger brothers-in-law and the sisters-in-law started egging him on.

Chen Fangjie, on the side, was also laughing heartily.

Looking back two months ago, Wang Shouzhe had treated him the same way, it was karma in action. Unable to withstand those tactics back then, he had to admit defeat on the spot.

"Well...If it's for my wife, it's not a big deal to admit defeat," Wang Shouzhe, with no shame at all, still kept a cheerful smile on his face. "However, I want to try first. If I can't do it, then I'll give up."

"Brother-in-law, you're so impressive and powerful."

Cheers from the brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law echoed around. Each one of them looked forward expectantly, wanting to see how the groom would lift this megalith.

"Shouzhe, be careful. Don't strain your back. It'll be disastrous if it affects the wedding night," Chen Fangjie chuckled maliciously on the side.

True to his status, the married man didn't shy away from embarrassing the younger bachelors.

Ignoring him, Wang Shouzhe bent down, patted the boulder, and said to Liu Yuanqiang, "Yuanqiang, this boulder must weigh around a thousand kilos, right?"

Liu Yuanqiang laughed stupidly, "Brother-in-law, this boulder actually weighs two thousand kilos."

"My, you've been seriously honing your strength." Wang Shouzhe exclaimed.

However, having this muscular giant call him brother-in-law felt strange and inexplicably uncanny.

"Be careful, Fourth Brother."

Wang Shu Yong, Wang Shoulian voiced their worries from the side.

Being the real brothers they were, came through at the right time, always considering their elder brother's sake.

"Relax, I am just going to give it a try."

Wang Shouzhe casually reassured them, then placed his palms on the stone and gave it a slight push to feel its weight.

Suddenly,

He pressed, twisted, and lifted the massive stone, easily raising it over his head.

How is this possible?

The smiles on the faces of Liu Yuanrui, Chen Fangjie, and others instantly froze.

This feat of strength stunned everyone, even the towering muscular Liu Yuanqiang was shocked with his eyes wide open and mouth agape, unable to accept what he just saw.

This boulder weighed two thousand kilos and even he struggled to lift it.

"Brother-in-law, you are really powerful. I admire you."

The big muscular brute had a straightforward personality. Recovering from his shock, his face showed admiration.

The rest of the brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law also began to cheer after a moment of surprise: "Good job, brother-in-law! You're indeed strong. Truly a real man!"

In the Profound Martial world, it is really that simple. If you are strong, you can easily conquer others.

"Yuanrui, have I passed your test? Am I qualified enough to protect your sister?"

Wang Shouzhe smiled at Liu Yuanrui, still appearing calm and relaxed.

Even now, while lifting the boulder, he looked as if he still had energy to spare.

No one knew that as Wang Shouzhe's bloodline awakened, his physical abilities improved day by day. Coupled with his daily strength training, he was quite confident about his power.

Yuanrui's test was a piece of cake for him.

It took a while for Liu Yuanrui to recover from the shock. He shook his head with a bitter smile, "I underestimated you, brother-in-law. The strength you possess is truly admirable. I believe there will be no problem in you being able to protect my sister."

"Hehe~"

Wang Shouzhe chuckled and suddenly shouted at Liu Yuanqiang, "Big guy, catch!"

With that, he twisted his arm, turned around, and the boulder immediately started spinning, flying towards the muscular giant, Liu Yuanqiang.

Liu Yuanqiang hurriedly caught it with both hands.

The boulder kept revolving in his hands, causing him to stagger back several steps, nearly dropping it.

Lucky I was quick to react, or I would have made a fool of myself, thought Liu Yuanqiang, who was frightened. He was just about to put the boulder down when...

Before he could react, Wang Shouzhe lunged forward, grabbed his waist, and heaved him upwards.

Instantly, Liu Yuanqiang felt as if he was floating in the air.

Then he felt a sudden downward pull, and he was suspended halfway in the air.

Confused, he had no idea what had happened. His mind buzzing as if he was floating.

All he heard was a wave of astonishment. Although he was clueless, the people around him saw everything clearly.

Wang Shouzhe had thrown him into the air, grabbed his legs, and now was holding him up in mid-air as if he was lifting a cauldron.

Chapter 126 Mighty! Dominant Brother-in-law

As their brother-in-law and sister-in-law, they watched in awe.

Was their brother-in-law so powerful?

Such terrifying power, not to mention Yuanqiang, even the firstborn of the direct line, Yuanhui wouldn't match it.

So...

Yuanrui was completely convinced and said with a bitter smile, "Brother-in-law, let Yuanqiang down. He's still young, don't scare him."

"Alright."

The phrase "he's still young" caught Wang Shouzhe off guard and nearly deflated him.

With a loosening of his hands, he gently set the burly Yuanqiang on the ground.

He handed him a red envelope, and pat his shoulder: "Yuanqiang, go and play."

"Thank you, brother-in-law."

Yuanqiang happily hugged his stone ball and ran off cheerily, soon disappearing in the distance.

After this round, people's view of Wang Shouzhe had changed somewhat, now tinted with awe and admiration.

Meanwhile...

The maid Qiao'er, who had been standing at the end of the corridor, was also flushed with excitement. She immediately turned and ran back to the courtyard at a rapid pace.

"Miss, the new brother-in-law is amazing! Such great strength, even Young Master Yuanqiang can't match." She excitedly recounted what had just happened to Ruolan.

Wang Liuzi, the fourth aunt, joyfully commented, "Indeed, the finest steed in the Wang family, my nephew Shouzhe, is extraordinary."

"The new brother-in-law's strength is so great?" The two middle-aged beauties were slightly taken aback, then smiled suggestively, "Our Ruolan is indeed fortunate."

At this moment, the bride Ruolan, who was quite smart, had a blank look on her pretty face.

Of course, having a strong husband was great, but how did that connect with being fortunate? She was utterly puzzled.

At this time, the maid Qiao'er, who had finished reporting, had already run out again to keep watch.

Meanwhile, in the courtyard...

Wang Shouzhe asked: "Yuanrui, isn't it about time? Can I go get your sister now?"

At this point, Yuanrui had recovered from the shock. He continued to smile and said in response: "Brother-in-law, I'd love to let you through, but it depends on whether the younger brothers and sisters agree."

Speaking, he looked at the brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law standing behind him.

The younger siblings immediately got energized and shouted in unison: "We disagree! We're not satisfied! Brother-in-law, take another round!"

"Alright~ Whatever moves Yuanrui has, just bring them on. If I can do it, I will. If I can't, I will admit defeat."

Wang Shouzhe understood that just one round might not be enough to handle these lively rabbit kids and girls.

"Brother-in-law is so bold!" Yuanrui laughed, "Then don't blame me for being rude."

"Our prominent Xuanwu family are pioneers. What's the purpose of our lives? To eat, of course. My sister is marrying into the Wang family, she might as well have some meat to eat. Brother-in-law, isn't that right?"

"You're right." Wang Shouzhe agreed.

"And how do we get meat? Of course, by hunting. Our ancestors of the Xuanwu family survived by hunting, and archery is most important in hunting. So, brother-in-law, let's see your archery skills."

Wang Shouzhe really wanted to say that meat could also be obtained by farming, but to comply with Yuanrui he swallowed his words.

"Okay, I would appreciate it if Yuanrui could provide me with a bow and arrow." Wang Shouzhe was quite confident about his archery. His archery had always been excellent, and after awakening his bloodline, it improved rapidly.

This point, not only did he not understand it himself, even the Old Ancestor was a bit stunned. However, his strength was still inferior to that of explosive war bodies and his archery was also not upto the level of some innate godlike archers.

In any case, he was strong in all aspects, but he was not the absolute strongest in any of them.

Unexpectedly, Yuanrui started laughing again: "What's the point of just demonstrating archery? I have already arranged for a competitor for brother-in-law."

With that, he clapped his hands twice.

As his applause subsided, a thin figure rolled in from outside the fence.

He stepped in the air several times, his movements were outstanding. Within a few breaths, he landed in front of Wang Shouzhe.

Wang Shouzhe scrutinized him. He was thin and refined, but his face was somewhat wretched. A quiver of arrows hung at his waist, and a bow on his back, showing that he was an expert archer.

However, this man seemed too mature, probably in his forties.

Wang Shouzhe was surprised and hesitated: "Yuanrui, is this also a younger brother?"

Yuanrui shook his head: "Not exactly."

He calmly looked at him: "Yuan Shan, why don't you introduce yourself to my brother-in-law?"

The slender man nodded and greeted Wang Shouzhe politely: "Greetings, brother-in-law. I am Liu Yuanshan, forty this year, and unmarried."

He emphasized the word "unmarried" to specify his eligibility to participate in this game.

"Ummm ... This ..."

Wang Shouzhe sweated profusely.

This elder brother was honest, but being unmarried at forty didn't seem to be something to brag about, was it?

"Is my brother-in-law's expression implying you're despising me?" Liu Yuanshan's glanced at Wang Shouzhe regretfully.

"How could that be?" Wang Shouzhe laughed, "Brother Yuanshan, joining the game to add color to my wedding, that's welcoming."

"In that case, let's start the next game." Yuanrui chuckled, "Brother-in-law, please see, there are some copper coins hanging over there."

He spoke and pointed to the other side of the courtyard, indicating for Wang Shouzhe to look in that direction.

Wang Shouzhe glanced over, but saw nothing.

He gave Yuanrui a suspicious look: "Where?"

"Look a bit further."

Yuanrui continued to grin broadly.

Wang Shouzhe looked again, still seeing nothing.

"Even further."

As if anticipating Wang Shouzhe's reaction, Yuanrui leisurely added.

Wang Shouzhe looked further along his direction, finally spotting a couple of large copper coins hanging from a tree about thirty feet away.

Before Wang Shouzhe could say anything, Chen Fangjie gasped: "Yuanrui, aren't you being too brutal? Leave a bit of face for your brother-in-law."

Despite his words, he quietly signaled his approval with a thumbs-up: Good job.

Yuanrui shot back an equally triumphant look, appreciating Chen's advice by letter.

Then, the two broke into a knowing grin, as if victory was already in their hands.

Chapter 127: The Phoenix Falls, The Hidden Dragon Rises_1

...

At that moment, Liu Ruolei pushed her way through the crowd and pinched Liu Yuanrui sharply, "Brother~ Just go easy on him, okay? You don't really want to embarrass my husband, do you? Be careful, or I'll deal with you later."

"Ouch, my dear sister. I am just upholding a tradition among prominent families like ours. We are a respected household, we cannot forsake our traditions." Liu Yuanrui's light-hearted mood vanished instantly after the pinch.

"I don't care, this is sister's wish." Liu Ruolei whimpered, "If you don't listen, I'll report you to sister."

Liu Yuanrui shuddered, he was well aware of his sister Liu Ruolan's temper. She might seem elegant and gentle on the surface, but once provoked, it would be hell to pay.

At that point, it wouldn't matter that he was Liu Yuanrui, even if his father Liu Gaowang intervened, it would be worthless. It's safe to say that he would be dead meat.

Faced with no other option, Liu Yuanrui reluctantly agreed, "Fine, fine. I'll lower the difficulty level for my brother-in-law."

"Brother-in-law, you just need to shoot the three copper coins from half the distance, about fifteen feet, to win."

"That's more like it," Liu Ruolei said with slight satisfaction, "Sister said, such obsolete traditions aren't good."

"Ruolei, I'm your brother too, stop quoting 'sister said' all the time." Liu Yuanrui glared at her in irritation, "You can try to convince an in-law when I get married."

"Hmph, I don't care about your fate." Liu Ruolei rolled her eyes, "In any case, don't bully my brother-in-law."

After Liu Ruolei delivered the message, the other nephews and nieces also trembled and quickly changed their stance. They thought, hmm, half the distance seems fair. Otherwise, it would be too unfair for brother-in-law.

Liu Yuanshan, although his cultivation level and other aspects were mediocre, he was the first master in archery among his generation.

And he was already in his forties.

Their brother-in-law was only nineteen, how could he compete?

The nephews and nieces, one after another, began to change their stance to be more considerate towards their brother-in-law.

With such a rapid shift in attitude, Wang Shouzhe was a bit taken aback, his unknown wife seemed to have considerable influence.

All Ruolei had to say was a few words, and those energetic young lads and girls suddenly became docile?

Could his wife be a tigress?

"Hey, brother-in-law, what are you thinking?" Liu Yuanshan urged, "Are we still on? Don't worry, I'll make your loss clean and swift, out of respect for Ruolan."

Wang Shouzhe was speechless, how unique your respect is.

No wonder you're still unmarried at forty. Serves you right!

Despite his inner grumbling, Wang Shouzhe politely saluted, "Brother Yuanshan, please."

The Liu Family was large, with many members in Yuanshan's generation, Wang Shouzhe had no idea of Liu Yuanshan's ranking.

Liu Yuanshan didn't decline, he let out a laugh and took out his bow and arrows.

From a distance of thirty feet, he aimed and shot.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh~ three sharp arrows were almost simultaneously released.

The arrows flew with lightning speed, almost too fast for the naked eye to follow.

"Clang, clang, clang!"

Upon hearing the consecutive sounds, all three copper coins were hit and exploded simultaneously. The arrows continued to fly forth, embedding themselves half a foot deep into a tree.

"Good, good archery!"

The nieces and nephews around applauded in unison.

Undoubtedly, they were greatly satisfied with Liu Yuanshan's archery skills, which were undeniably impressive. It was no surprise that he was renowned among most in the Vital Energy Refining Realm.

But how come brother Yuanshan, with such excellent archery skills, still can't find a wife? Sigh~~

Meanwhile, Liu Yuanshan himself was quite pleased, casting a glance at Wang Shouzhe.

As he had boasted before shooting, he intended to make Wang Shouzhe lose without resistance.

"Brother-in-law," Liu Yuanrui casually laughed, "As long as you can do the same at half the distance as Brother Yuanshan, you pass. If not, just surrender gracefully. I've already catered to you enough."

Catering to your brother-in-law? You're just afraid of getting beaten by your sister, aint' you? thought Wang Shouzhe, sizing him up quietly.

Then he calmed himself and chuckled, "Well, it's no big deal to give in to my wife. But I'd still like to give it a try. As for the shortened distance, I'd rather not, it would feel like I'm chickening out."

"Okay, Brother-in-law is quite bold, hand him a bow and arrows."

Upon Liu Yuanrui's command, a strong bow was quickly provided.

Wang Shouzhe tried it out. Although the bow was flexible, which would have been a problem while hunting fierce beasts, it would be enough for this competition.

"Brother-in-law, hang in there." Liu Ruolei cheered from the side, "Stabilize your mind, aim well, you only need to hit one coin."

Once Liu Ruolei started, the other nephews and nieces also chimed in, "Brother-in-law, take it slow. Brother Yuanshan has been single for forty years, he had plenty of time to improve his skills, you're still young, it's not the same."

Liu Yuanshan's heart dropped, Ruolei's words were utterly devastating. What's the connection between being single and practicing hand speed? He was confused, sensing something was off.

Soon, under everyone's watchful eyes, it was Wang Shouzhe's turn to shoot.

Chapter 127 Phoenix Falls, Hidden Dragon Rises _2

He began to shoot his arrows.

The archery style he used was also the continuous arrow launch technique.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, three arrows were unleashed at once.

As soon as Wang Shouzhe shot his arrows, Liu Ruolei's side immediately applauded and cheered.

No matter the result, at least their brother-in-law's posture looked much better than Liu Yuanshan's.

The main reason was his attractive looks, any pose he struck looked good.

As for his archery skills, she didn't care. After all, her brother-in-law was the clan leader and others would naturally take the lead in hunting.

"Chunk! Chunk! Chunk!"

Three arrows, released almost simultaneously, were embedded in the tree, the arrow shaft buried more than halfway in.

The crowd all looked startled.

No way!

Brother-in-law can't even shoot a single Copper Coin?

Even though nobody had much hope for his archery skills, isn't it a bit shocking for a clan leader with a direct lineage to have such mediocre skills?

Suddenly.

"Ting, ting, ting!"

With three crisp sounds, three Copper Coins fell almost simultaneously onto the bluestone ground, creating a series of clear sounds.

What happened? What's going on? The young uncles and aunts were all astonished.

Only Liu Yuanshan's eyes widened, looking at the scene in surprise.

After several moments, he bowed to Wang Shouzhe with a bitter smile: "Brother-in-law, I admit defeat. There truly are better skills beyond my own."

Chen Fangjie, who was standing by and watching the excitement with a grin on his face, also looked surprised. Wang Shouzhe's archery skills were too formidable.

With his three arrows, he had managed to cut the silk thread suspending the Copper Coins.

He couldn't help but smile bitterly. Having never seen him shoot arrows before, he thought Shouzhe's archery skills were unremarkable.

Wang Shouzhe is truly Wang Shouzhe, he can't be compared to others.

"Anyway, he's my own uncle, it's not so bad even if he is slightly stronger." Chen Fangjie could only comfort himself in this way.

Following Liu Yuanshan's explanation by the side, those young uncles and aunts who didn't understand finally realized that Shouzhe's archery skills were so sophisticated.

"Brother-in-law is really something, he's a master archer." Liu Ruolei cheered happily, causing Liu Yuanrui to look amused and exasperated.

You, laughing away happily after I've lost in such a miserable manner for the sake of my sister.

Isn't this just being biased toward outsiders over one's own family? It's really a case of girls not being sentimental once grown up.

Wait, not sentimental?

Younger sister, you must not entertain any inappropriate thoughts. Your brother-in-law is your brother-in-law

Meanwhile.

After this scene ended,

The little maid, Qiao'er, again rushed back to the backyard.

Her beautiful face was filled with excitement as she vividly described Wang Shouzhe's impressive performance to everyone: "The new young master is too awesome, his archery skills are even better than young master, Yuanhui." This girl even carelessly compared him with Liu Yuanhui without considering young master's feelings in the process.

All the women in the room looked surprised, they all knew Wang Shouzhe was smart, but they didn't expect his martial abilities to be so formidable too.

Even Wang Liuzi was astounded, her nephew truly was full of surprises.

In the eyes of the bride, Liu Ruolan,

There was also a hint of joy and shyness. This engagement was originally decided by the family, and she didn't have a choice in it. But as she got to know Wang Shouzhe more, she began to develop some affection for him.

Which young woman wouldn't appreciate having a worthy husband?

Wang Liuzi, sitting at the side, chuckled covering her mouth. She looked a little proud and said, "This time, Yuanrui is in a bind. Ruolan, let's prepare quickly. My nephew will be coming in to fetch his bride soon."

Prior to this, many of the Liu clan members were opposing this marriage with lots of rumors being whispered around. As a member of the Wang family, Wang Liuzi, heard many of these rumors and even argued with some people.

But as the Wang family rose in stature, the gossip began to fade. Now that her nephew had shown his might and shocked his Liu clan peers, as an aunt, she was full of pride. From now, she could hold her head high among the Liu clan's women.

As Wang Shouzhe's fourth aunt, who would dare to despise her?

"Not at all" Maid Qiao'er pouted and said, "Young master Yuanrui is very cunning. He has prepared three challenges."

"They have done both tests of archery and strength, what could Yuanrui possibly have up his sleeve?" Wang Liuzi curiously asked.

"This time, young master Yuanrui said he will do it himself."

"Doing it himself?"

Wang Liuzi was laughing so hard, she was almost crying. She covered her mouth and giggled, "With Yuanrui's three-legged cat kungfu skills, how can he compete with Shouzhe? Isn't this masochism?"

All of a sudden.

Wang Liuzi's laughter halted abruptly.

She realized something was not right and her beautiful face turned stern, "Can it be that Yuanrui wants to have a poetry competition with Shouzhe? This time, Shouzhe is afraid he might be completely defeated."

Meanwhile, at the courtyard.

Wang Shouzhe also looked surprised at Liu Yuanrui and said, "Yuanrui, what did you say? You want to have a poetry competition with me?"

He expressed his astonishment to this. A literati from a martial world wants to compete in poetry with a transmigrator from Earth?

How...how should he proceed?

"Brother-in-law, I admit your Profound Martial skills are formidable. But as a Profound Martial family, merely inheriting martial force doesn't cut it. Otherwise, what distinguishes us from fierce beasts from the wilderness? Cultural heritage is also an invaluable treasure for our kind." Liu Yuanrui said earnestly.

Wang Shouzhe felt an uncanny familiarity with these words. He realized it was what he had said to Wang Licui and Wang Luoqiu to encourage them to read and enrich their cultural knowledge.

"Alright, I must admit your points are valid. Go ahead and set the rules Yuanrui." Wang Shouzhe said helplessly, "This is the last round right? We have to return to Ping'an today."

Chapter 127: The Phoenix Falls And The Hidden Dragon Rises_3

"Of course, as long as my brother-in-law clears this last hurdle, he'll be able to marry my sister smoothly." Liu Yuanrui looked relaxed and confident, grinning sheepishly, "Of course, failing the test could work too, he could still marry my sister after admitting defeat."

"Fine, but I'd like to reiterate I don't care about the admission of defeat, I just want to give it a try." Wang Shouzhe said calmly.

This was the third time Wang Shouzhe had said this.

The first two attempts, surprisingly, were successful.

Could a miracle happen for the third time? The onlooking younger brothers and sisters started to cheer, "Go, brother-in-law, defeat Yuanrui."

Liu Yuanrui's face darkened, "Whose side are you siblings on?"

However, for the last challenge, Liu Yuanrui had full confidence. As a scholar, excelling in poetry and composition is a must.

If he couldn't even beat his brother-in-law at this, what was the point of all his study?

"Ready, brother-in-law?" Liu Yuanrui said confidently.

Wang Shouzhe laughed: "Please pose the question, Yuanrui, let's get on with it."

Liu Yuanrui looked around, smiled and said lightly: "Since it's my sister's wedding today, the topic should be about my sister naturally. Let's see who can praise my sister better in a poem."

The spectators cheered. The topic was apt. It would also test the literary knowledge of the brother-in-law. Even if he could not beat Yuanrui, he would pass as long as he can come up with something decent.

Wang Shouzhe thought for a moment and said, "Please start first, Yuanrui. I want to learn from you."

Liu Yuanrui did not refuse. He cleared his throat in a pretentious manner, thought for a moment, and began his recitation.

...

The elegant maiden hidden within her boudoir

A matchmaker guides the way with a lantern in hand

Today she will be wed to a Wang family lad

A phoenix falls on its treasure land, thus sprouting a lurking dragon

...

As the poem was recited, there was a roar of applause from the crowd.

Even Wang Shouzhe subtly nodded in agreement. Yuanrui, as an educated person, indeed had certain standards.

He did not directly describe how good his sister was, but used descriptive techniques to elevate her.

Especially the last line, "A phoenix falls on its treasure land, thus sprouting a lurking dragon", instantly elevated the entire poem!

While praising his sister, he also complimented the Wang family and Wang Shouzhe. A hidden dragon located in a treasure land, it sounded pleasant.

But all in all, he praised his sister who was marrying Wang Shouzhe. Her marriage would greatly benefit his future, as she is a woman of prosperity.

It also informed Wang Shouzhe that being able to marry Ruolan was a fortunate event.

The whole poem was very flavorful and apt for the occasion.

"Now it's your turn, brother-in-law. Don't rush, you can take your time. After all, we have plenty of it." Liu Yuanrui's voice was filled with confidence.

Of course, he had been refining this poem for three months, just waiting for today. How could he not be confident?

"Alright, let me think."

Confronting this excellent poem, Wang Shouzhe got serious.

Meanwhile.

Naturally, this poem was quickly passed to the backyard by the maid, Qiao'er.

After savoring the poem, Liu Ruolan copied it by hand on a piece of paper, and read it again carefully, a slight satisfaction in her eyes, "Yuanrui indeed loves his sister."

"Yuanrui's study has not been in vain." The middle-aged women also praised one after another.

Wang Liuzi became worried, "Oh no, Yuanrui's poem is excellent. My nephew Shouzhe might be overshadowed."

"Auntie Seven, it's okay." Liu Ruolan gently held Wang Liuzi's hand and reassured her, "This three-challenge thing is just for the young people to have fun. My feelings for...uh... for him..."

When she said this, her face flushed with shyness. In short, she wouldn't hold any prejudice against him for not being able to write a good poem.

Nevermind!

I will write one too, to lend him a little support.

But Yuanrui's poem is extraordinary. If I want to surpass him in such a hurry, there's some difficulty, but at least it may save his grace.

While Liu Ruolan was thinking, her hand holding the brush wrote down a poem.

"Qiao'er, you quietly give it to him, don't let others see."

The maid Qiao'er was immediately dumbfounded.

Mistress, how am I supposed to slyly give him the poem in front of everyone?

Chapter 128 Bringing Home a Beauty_1

...

Alright then!

The little maid Qiao'er felt rather helpless, but as the mistress dictated, so she followed.

She pondered, how could she deliver this poem to the new groom amidst such a large crowd?

Meanwhile, in the courtyard.

Wang Shouzhe took time to sit leisurely on a stone bench and began to contemplate.

Honestly, Yuanrui's poem had placed a great deal of pressure on him.

As a transmigrator filled with ancient poetry and prose, he could choose any renowned piece at random and it would defeat Liu Yuanrui's.

Nevertheless, this was his own wedding, and he wanted to write a poem himself, no matter how imperfect it might be, it was still his. The idea of using plagiarized poems to deceive his wife just didn't sit well with him.

Liu Yuanrui and others didn't push him, they watched their brother-in-law bemused as he wrestled with his thoughts. They knew that composing a poem wasn't easy, especially a good one.

At this moment.

The maid Qiao'er from the backyard hurried out, pushing through the crowd and bumping heavily into Wang Shouzhe.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, new groom. I walked too hastily and bumped into you. Did it hurt?"

While Wang Shouzhe was stunned, the maid slyly slipped a paper into his hand, then winked at him, indicating you know what.

Then, she bolted away.

The girl certainly breezed in and out like a gust of wind,

which left Wang Shouzhe both amused and bemused. It felt as if the lady in the back was becoming impatient, sending a small maid to give him a completed poem.

Wasn't this cheating?

Well, how can a wife helping her husband be considered cheating?

This was called love!

Thinking of this, Wang Shouzhe felt a slight warmth in his heart.

But Liu Yuanrui had been left standing there stunned.

Wasn't that Qiao'er, the maid who serves my sister?

She barged into my brother-in-law, stuffed a piece of paper into his hands, right in front of everyone, do they think everyone's blind?

This was blatant cheating!

In an instant, Liu Yuanrui felt tears well in his eyes. He had worked hard to support his sister, yet everyone seemed determined to undermine her.

If you're going to cheat, at least be subtle about it, and spare some dignity.

Qiao'er's technique was indeed clumsy.

The other young uncles and aunts had also seen this, but they all kept mum, as if they hadn't seen anything.

It was clear that the lady in the back was helping the new groom cheat; who dared to cross her after years of accumulated power?

Feeling helpless, Liu Yuanrui said, "Brother-in-law, have you finished thinking? Let's get started."

Considering the poem was from his sister, no matter how it turned out, they would cheer for it. Otherwise, if they annoyed his sister, the consequences were unimaginable.

The siblings nodded in agreement, "Yes, let's start, brother-in-law."

But Wang Shouzhe shook his head, saying no, no, I still haven't thought it through.

This provoked an eye roll from Liu Yuanrui.

How long was he going to play pretend? It was obvious that my sister was helping him cheat, yet he was still claiming to not have thought it through.

Alright then, perform to your heart's content, since my sister herself decided to help out.

After a while, Wang Shouzhe finally stood up, "I have thought it out. Yuanrui's poem was very good. As the brother-in-law, I can only attempt to match it. Forgive me if it doesn't turn out well."

"Alright then, bring it on, brother-in-law."

The siblings started cheering, looking forward to hearing the poem. Everyone knew that Wang Shouzhe's poem had been composed by the sister in the back, so no matter what, they were obliged to applaud enthusiastically.

Wang Shouzhe started reciting with hands clasped behind his back, pacing a bit in the courtyard, "The Goddess in her Immortal Palace pities Life on earth, Holding the halberd, she stands watch through the long night."

"?"

Upon hearing this, an image sparked in everyone's mind, it seemed to tell the story of a goddess in her heavenly palace, concerned for Life on earth, dealing with mortal affairs while a guard holding a halberd stood watch at the palace gate, accompanying her through the long night.

Before they could process this, Wang Shouzhe recited the next line, "The wheel of Epoch turns a thousand times, Until they unite as one in the mortal realm."

The siblings began to comprehend. This was a story where their sister was the goddess who cared for Life, and the brother-in-law was the silent guardian. The goddess, whether for the sake of redeeming Life or not, descended to the mortal realm and fate led her to the faithful guardian, leading to their union.

It sounded pretty good, the sister had been exalted very highly.

Then they began to cheer loudly, this was a poem written by their sister, and it was quite tastefully done.

"No, this isn't right!" Liu Yuanrui exclaimed, "This isn't my sister's work. She would never portray herself as a goddess and the brother-in-law as a night watchman."

"Oh, really?" the siblings realized, but then again, brother-in-law's poem was quite decent, it just felt a bit short on something.

"It's good enough. The brother-in-law is already versatile for this standard."

"Indeed, even though it falls slightly short compared to Yuanrui's poem, he certainly raised our sister's status." The Liu family had always encouraged the appreciation of culture, everyone had discerning tastes.

"He made it, he made it." Liu Ruolei immediately exclaimed joyously, "Everyone step aside, don't delay the groom in receiving his bride."

Chapter 128 Bringing Home a Beauty _2

Even Chen Fangjie admired, saying: "I didn't expect that Shouzhe has some poetic talent, even stronger than mine."

Suddenly!

Liu Yuanrui, with a solemn expression, stopped everyone and said, "Everyone, wait."

"Huh?" All eyes fell on Liu Yuanrui. "Yuanrui, you cannot be serious. My brother-in-law's poem is already pretty good, are you still going to give him a hard time?"

Liu Ruolei glared at him resentfully: "Yuanrui, don't go too far."

"Don't misunderstand, don't misunderstand." Liu Yuanrui hastily surrendered, "The poem by my brother-in-law is indeed not bad, but I think it lacks something. Brother-in-law, isn't there another half to this poem?"

The other half?

Everyone was stunned. Yuanrui seemed to have a point. The poem felt incomplete, as if it was begging for more.

All eyes were now focused on Wang Shouzhe.

Wang Shouzhe did not put on airs and continued to recite the second half of the poem: "I fear my delicate wife may ride the wind and leave, falsely claiming a chill in heaven's chambers."

"?"

Everyone could feel something, all of them were drawn into the emotional state of my brother-in-law. Imagine a palace guard who, after waiting for countless years, was finally able to marry a goddess. This was naturally a great joy.

However, he was afraid that his beloved wife would one day ascend to heaven. So, he lied to her, saying that heaven was not a good place, showcasing his fear.

"Good, good! 'I fear my delicate wife may ride the wind and leave, falsely claiming a chill in heaven's chambers.'" Liu Yuanrui was cheering him on.

The others also followed suit.

Then, Wang Shouzhe recited the long-prepared final line: "Holding hands with our children, eyes misty with longing, praying for eternal rest under the same pillow!"

With the final words pronounced:

Everyone was stunned. They could all see the image of brother-in-law Wang Shouzhe, holding the hands of his children, eyes filled with tears, as he unwillingly watched the goddess prepare to ascend to the heavens. He even brought his yet-to-be-born children into the equation, was there no limit to his shamelessness?

The final line was even more shameless! Praying for eternal rest under the same pillow.

Was it not enough for him to marry his sister this lifetime, he wanted to marry her for ten thousand lifetimes? Disgusting, absolutely disgusting!

As evidenced from the poem:

The Goddess of Immortal Palace cherishes life

Standing guard before the palace through long nights

Cycles of epoch turn again and again

Finally in the mortal world, their lives intertwine

I fear my delicate wife may ride the wind and leave

Falsely claim a chill in heaven's chambers

Holding hands with our children, eyes misty with longing

Praying for eternal rest under the same pillow

...

Everyone fell silent. Although the poem was no earth-shattering masterpiece, the theme for today was to praise Sister Ruolan in the most flattering manner possible.

There was no doubt that Liu Yuanrui's praise was very charming and reflected a deep sense of feeling.

But brother-in-law's poem...

This was not merely praise anymore.

This was flattery.

Coupled with the fact they were husband and wife, the flattery was tactful, smooth, and natural. Brother-in-law was indeed a rare genius.

"Sigh~" Chen Fangjie, with his hands behind his back, looked up to the heavens and sighed deeply, "I thought I was unrivaled in the art of flattery. But compared to Shouzhe, I am as different as mud and clouds. I submit! I admire!"

"Whimper~" Liu Yuanshan started sobbing, heart-broken.

"Brother Yuanshan, why are you crying?"

"I understand now."

"Brother Yuanshan, what have you realised?"

"I understand why I'm still single."

"Brother Yuanshan, since you have understood, there is still hope. Keep going!"

"There's no hope for me." With tears streaming down his face, Liu Yuanshan ran off, yelling out in despair, "Because I can never write such shameless, cheesy poetry...whimper~" His figure disappeared into the distance, his cries gradually fading away.

Watching his retreating figure, everyone couldn't help but sigh, "Brother Yuanshan, the reason you can't get a wife is not merely because you can't write such poetry."

Then, everyone admired brother-in-law Wang Shouzhe. They could never create such boot-licking poetry.

Especially the young aunts, they began to find pen and paper, blushing as they copied down the poem. Even though the poem was not about them, reading it over every night was a pleasant sensation.

Holding hands with our children, eyes misty with longing, praying for eternal rest under the same pillow.

Brother-in-law is so bad, hehe~

Even Liu Yuanrui bowed respectfully to Wang Shouzhe: "Brother-in-law, I admit defeat."

"Hehe~ don't mind it, don't mind it. Yuanrui, you are still young." Wang Shouzhe, with a thick face, patted his shoulder and said seriously, "Once you grow up, your skills will certainly be no less than mine."

"Hey, where's Ruolei? She seemed quite spirited earlier, how come she's vanished? I was hoping she could guide the way."

"Forget it, forget it! Let's hand out the red envelopes."

Once again, a whole box of red envelopes was being offered to younger uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, and all the other young ones.

"My brothers, join me to fetch the bride." Wang Shouzhe waved his hand, with the Wang family members answering in unison. Everyone marched to the backyard, full of energy.

The three challenges have been passed, and beautifully so. Red envelopes were generously given out, naturally, no one was going to stop them now.

...

At the same time, Wang Shouzhe was heading towards the backyard.

The young maid Qiao'er had already reported back with the poem. Her speed was exceptionally fast, coming and going like the wind.

Alongside her was Liu Ruolei, voicing her discontent, "Brother-in-law is so bad. Not only does he want to marry my sister this lifetime, but he also fantasizes about being together with sister for eternity. Greedy."

Upon hearing this, everyone in the room turned to look at her.

Chapter 128: Winning the Beauty Home_3

Hm?

Isn't such an avowal a good thing? Why was Ruolei so enraged?

Realizing her verbal slip, Liu Ruolei quickly shut her mouth. But her heart was still full of exasperation. Such a fantastic poem, why could it not be for her?

Meanwhile, Qiao'er was excitedly stating, "The poem the new son-in-law wrote was truly wonderful. I'm almost moved to tears."

At this point, Liu Ruolan had already copied the poem onto paper and read it twice carefully, her face becoming redder with each reading.

She let out a sigh of contempt, evaluating, "It is indeed somewhat frivolous."

However, despite her words, her eyes were full of shy delight, her cheek flushed, throbbed slightly, and she murmured to herself, "Hand in hand shedding tears, hoping to share the same pillow till the end of time, how brazen!"

It was evident that Wang Shouzhe's poem had indeed struck a chord in her heart.

Between a husband and wife, being a little frivolous isn't a big deal.

The conversation was happening inside the room.

From outside a voice called, "Miss-wait, get ready, the new son-in-law is here."

By then, Liu Ruolan was already dressed in her bright red wedding attire, and several aunts hurriedly placed a red veil over her head and instructed her to sit on the bed.

"The new son-in-law may now enter the bridal chamber."

Following the directive, Wang Shouzhe stepped into the bridal chamber.

Several middle-aged women curiously looked Wang Shouzhe up and down, praising, "The new son-in-law is indeed handsome and extraordinary, a true gentleman."

The bride, covered by the red veil, trembled slightly, resisting the urge to peek.

Wang Shouzhe was jubilant as he acknowledged the aunts and presented them red envelopes.

He gave a considerable red envelope, particularly to his fourth aunt, Wang Liuzi.

Four-Aunt Wang Liuzi was extremely delighted and hurriedly uttered, "Shouzhe, aren't you going to present the 'Treasure Bag of Ten Thousand Gold Coins' now?"

Upon hearing this, Wang Shouzhe quickly unfastened the 'Treasure Bag' from his belt, walked briskly to the bride and handed it to Liu Ruolan, softly saying, "Ruolan, the auspicious time has come. Come with me back to the Wang family."

The 'Treasure Bag' contained small trinkets made of gold or jade carved into shapes like grains, fruits, fish, meat, and even a tiny abacus made of pure gold, entrusting his future finance to her.

Liu Ruolan, her head covered with the red veil and clutching the 'Treasure Bag,' was filled with shyness and anxiety as she nodded slightly and whispered, "Mm."

Wang Shouzhe was overjoyed and exclaimed, "Yuanrui, aren't you going to come in?"

At this point, Liu Yuanrui stepped into the bridal chamber, cheerfully greeting, "Congratulations, brother-in-law, you have finally won the beautiful lady."

"Thank you, Yuanrui, for going easy on me. To be able to marry Ruolan, it's my privilege for three lifetimes." Saying this, Wang Shouzhe presented a big red envelope, "Yuanrui, the hard work is on you now."

According to custom, an unmarried younger brother-in-law should lift the bride onto the bridal sedan.

Liu Yuanrui accepted the large red envelope without hesitation, patting his chest and saying, "Alright, leave it to me. Despite my frailty, I have been working out recently."

Having said this, he carried Liu Ruolan and headed out of the bridal chamber.

He hadn't taken more than two steps before Liu Yuanrui murmured softly, "Eh, sister seems to have lost weight recently. I suppose it's out of concern for me, Yuanrui. Last time I practiced carrying...."

He never finished his sentence, but abruptly shouted in pain, quickly apologizing, "Sister, I was wrong."

Then, carrying his sister, he made a mad dash outside.

Wang Shouzhe let out a cold sweat. This youngster indeed liked to court death. He naturally pretended to hear nothing and dutifully followed.

Afterward, they bid farewell to his father and mother-in-law in the main hall.

It was then Yuanrui carried the bride out of the Liu family's front door.

After a series of ceremonies, the bride got into the large bridal sedan.

While Wang Shouzhe rode his horse at the front of the procession.

"Lift the sedan." After Gongsun Qiang's command, the procession began to move slowly, leaving Shanyin amid cheers from the crowd, heading towards Ping'an City.

The returning procession was more than twice the size it was on the way.

The Liu clan members led the nuptial convoy which was massive. Carriages in the rear of the procession carried the dowry of the Liu family.

The scale of the dowry was indeed indicative of the immense wealth of the Liu family.

Wang Shouzhe, dressed in extravagant wedding robes, riding on Fire-treading White Cloud at the front of the procession, felt high-spirited.

Living for two lifetimes, this was the first time he was marrying a wife.

From today, he would begin his new life.

One of the four greatest joys in life, the wedding night, was slowly revealing itself before his eyes.

Indeed, and with the whimsical spring breeze, the spirit of life must be celebrated to the fullest.

Wedding night, I'm coming!

Chapter 129: Wedding Night

...

As Wang Shouzhe's wedding procession made its way back,

the Main Residence of the Ping'an Wang Family

was also bustling with activity, as the entire family had sprung into action, each person responsible for their own tasks.

Some female relatives, such as the eldest sister-in-law and the fourth aunt, were in charge of the kitchen and the arrangement of dishes and seating. Even Wang Luoqiu, Wang Licui, and Wang Luo Jing were involved in the work, each responsible for various things.

However, Wang Licui originally wanted to manage the kitchen or the food supplies, but was unanimously rejected by everyone.

Instead, she was appointed to oversee the entire setup of the banquet on the square, which was meant for common folks and most of the extended family members who didn't qualify to enter the Main Residence and participate in the wedding banquet.

The Wang family was going to set up a banquet that lasted for three days and nights, welcoming all comers, a truly generous and impressive gesture.

Some distinguished guests were arranged to be seated in the open-air section of the Wang family's central courtyard, which were the primary seats.

Then, for even more esteemed visitors, such as the Clan Leader, Shopkeeper Qian, the Protector of Lei Town, and various Old Ancestors of different clans, Xiaohan, the Old Ancestor, would personally attend to them and entertain them.

Their feasts were arranged in several elegant halls.

As for Old Ancestor Longyan, she had never been fond of socializing, so she was only arranged to make an appearance during Shouzhe's wedding ceremony.

Guests from all quarters arrived at the Wang family residence in succession.

The men of the family, one by one, assumed the responsibility of reception, all radiating joy—Shouzhe's marriage was a major event, after all.

It also symbolized the rise and continuation of the family's fortune.

The Wang family of today was no longer the Wang family of the past.

A family with three Spiritual Platforms.

Dominating Ping'an Town singlehandedly, such a family had the air of rising and rejuvenating.

Soon after, Wang Shouzhe's wedding procession arrived at the Ping'an Wang Family at the same time as the Liu Family's bridal escort.

This naturally led to a series of lively ceremonies and then the wedding vows in the main hall.

Gongsun Hui had already dressed up, sitting proudly at the main seat, her face full of happiness. As the father's first wife and a widow, today, her status was the highest.

For Shouzhe's marriage, she was naturally overjoyed and secretly shed tears of happiness. Over the years, since she had remarried into the Wang family and had raised Shouzhe and Luo Yi, it had been far from easy.

As a stepmother, of course, it was much more difficult than for an ordinary mother,

Following this was the ceremony of the wedding vows. This ceremony was indeed a very lively part of the event, with all the relatives and friends sending blessings.

Afterward, the bride was the first to be sent into the bridal chamber.

As the groom, and as the head of the household, Wang Shouzhe still needed to socialize with the guests outside.

Some close-knit families had not just clan leaders and relatives arriving, but even Old Ancestors made quiet appearances, personally congratulating Wang Shouzhe.

This level of face was not common for the marriage of an ordinary family heir.

For these relations and allies, Wang Shouzhe naturally could not neglect them.

Thus, the festivities continued until the evening.

...

After a day of socializing, even Wang Shouzhe, who was nearing the Level Eight of the Vital Energy Refining Realm, felt somewhat worn out.

But fortunately, everything had concluded.

After entertaining the guests, Wang Shouzhe, slightly tipsy, returned to his courtyard with relaxed and joyful steps.

In the master bedroom,

the lights were bright and festive, the red candles burning intensely.

The bride, Liu Ruolan, sat obediently on the bed, patiently waiting for her husband to return.

The bed was covered with a bright red quilt, scattered with dates, lotus seeds, Qian Gold, and more than a dozen dazzling Spirit Stones.

"My lady, you have worked hard," Wang Shouzhe said, suppressing his excitement as he stepped forward and bowed deeply.

"Husband," Liu Ruolan replied softly with a hint of shyness in her voice.

Next was the unveiling and the sharing of the Conjugal Cup Wine.

These had already been prepared by others and were placed on the low table beside the bed.

After receiving Liu Ruolan's consent, Wang Shouzhe lifted the Jade Ruyi and said, "My lady, please forgive my forwardness."

He then gently lifted her red veil.

What he saw was a youthful and beautiful face.

Adorned in a bridal headdress and robes, she had a lovely oval-shaped face, a broad forehead like cicada's wings, gracefully arched eyebrows, and almond-shaped eyes that were clear yet shy and moist.

She clenched her hands tightly, her head bowed, not daring to look at Wang Shouzhe.

Wang Shouzhe was stunned for a few moments, unable to avert his gaze.

As it turned out, this was his first time seeing Liu Ruolan.

For someone who had lived two lives, this was his first time marrying a bride—and such a great beauty at that, which made him feel like he was in a daze, as if it weren't quite real.

"Husband!" Liu Ruolan trembled slightly, as if anxious about something, and said weakly, "Do I not look nice to you?"

"You look beautiful, very beautiful. My lady is like a Goddess from heaven. To have married you, I still feel somewhat unreal, afraid that you might ride the wind away," Wang Shouzhe replied, nodding repeatedly.

His words reminded Liu Ruolan of his frivolous poem, causing her to bury her head even deeper into her clothing in embarrassment.

"My lady's dress is extremely beautiful, but the rouge and powder are not good for your skin if left on for too long," Wang Shouzhe said.

As a transmigrator, Wang Shouzhe knew that it wasn't good for a woman to sleep with makeup on, and thus he wasn't in a rush to drink the Conjugal Cup Wine. He immediately fetched some warm water and a towel, helped her remove the bridal crown, and took off the decorative robes.

"Husband, where is it customary for a man to help a woman remove her makeup?" Liu Ruolan was moved by Wang Shouzhe's attentiveness, yet felt a bit apprehensive, "Maybe we should call Qiao'er from the side room to help."

"No matter, in the privacy of our chamber, there's no need for such formalities," Wang Shouzhe replied.

He didn't want anyone else to disturb them and personally helped her remove her makeup. In no time at all, her natural beauty was revealed, her skin so delicate that it seemed it could be broken with a puff, her cheeks blushing with shy radiance.

Chapter 129: Bridal Chamber Candle Night

Compared to her heavily made-up look from earlier, she was less glamorous and dignified now, but imbued with a much stronger sense of youthful charm, radiating vitality.

"My lady, you truly are a beauty."

Liu Ruolan blushed slightly. She had been sneaking glances at Wang Shouzhe the whole time and murmured, "My lord, too, is quite handsome and extraordinary."

It was clear that she was very satisfied with Wang Shouzhe's appearance.

Although it was an arranged marriage and she had no say in the choice of her spouse.

If said spouse happened to be a handsome and heroic youth, it would naturally make her happier. Moreover, this lord was very gentle and thoughtful.

There was a small table beside the bed, with some delicate pastries on it and a small charcoal heater warming a pot of wine.

Wang Shouzhe, knowing she probably hadn't had anything to eat all day, quickly brought her a plate of pastries, saying tenderly, "You must be hungry, my lady. Would you like to eat something?"

Liu Ruolan nodded gently and thanked her lord.

Then, she delicately picked up a piece of pastry and slightly turned her body, covering her mouth as she chewed slowly and gracefully.

She certainly was the daughter of a prominent family, Wang Shouzhe thought to himself.

Compared to his niece Wang Licui, who ate food as if she were a bandit and could starve you to death if you didn't grab quickly enough.

Just as he was thinking about Wang Licui, suddenly!

Noisy sounds came from outside the courtyard.

"Fourth Uncle, Fourth Uncle, are you there?"

To his surprise, there was Wang Licui's voice. Then she started knocking on the door vigorously, "Fourth Uncle, why did you lock the door?"

Wang Shouzhe broke out in a cold sweat: what rotten luck, the person he was thinking about was at the door.

Didn't this niece realize that it was his wedding night?

As if he would leave the door unlocked for a random intrusion.

Liu Ruolan looked puzzled.

On seeing her expression, Wang Shouzhe said helplessly, "I apologize, my lady. It's just my niece Wang Licui. She's a notorious chatterbox without a delicate bone in her body." "She's one of the little devils in the family."

"I've heard about this kid," Liu Ruolan said, lightly covering her mouth with laughter, "It's no big deal. Which household doesn't have a few little devils?" The Liu family also had its fair share of eccentric young people.

Knowing the character of Wang Licui, Wang Shouzhe knew there was no avoiding it.

She might even break the door down if it wasn't opened.

After getting Liu Ruolan's consent, Wang Shouzhe went forward to open the door, preparing to scold her with a straight face.

But upon seeing him, Wang Licui complained, "Fourth Uncle, what were you doing that took so long?"

Then she barged into the room with a large wooden basin. Followed by a big gang of people.

Wang Luoqiu, Wang Luo Jing, and even the little ones, Wang Luomiao and Wang Luolan, all followed her in.

Furthermore, there were also his second niece Wang Liwan, nephew Wang Zong Chang, and the youngest brother Wang Shouye.

This scene left Wang Shouzhe dumbstruck. What on earth had just happened? Was this a mini-rebellion?

"Fourth Uncle, Fourth Uncle, what's with that expression? I noticed that Fourth Auntie didn't eat much, and you were too busy drinking and not eating, so I thought I'd bring you something to eat."

Wang Licui pouted, putting on a show of being hurt for doing a kindness.

"And what about the rest of you?" Wang Shouzhe looked at the others.

"We came to see the sister-in-law." Wang Luoqiu was straightforward, "We didn't get to see her during the day because of the red bridal veil." Apart from Luo Qiu's path to becoming empress, there was little else she was curious or concerned about.

Seeing that Liu Ruolan was smiling, and seemed okay with it, Wang Shouzhe said to Wang Licui, "What are you waiting for? Hurry up and present any good food you've brought to your auntie."

Suddenly, there was a lot of hustle and bustle as the younger generation of Wangs came in, some bearing gifts, others pitching in to set up a hot pot station.

Liu Ruolan, on the other hand, was very generous and had already prepared red envelopes, distributing them one by one.

"Fourth Auntie, this is Fourth Uncle's favorite clear broth hot pot. I had it prepared especially for your late-night supper," came Wang Licui's voice.

Always known for her sycophancy, she seemed to have quickly realized who would be calling the shots in the family from now on.

On her very wedding night, she'd come to win Fourth Aunt's favor.

The girls were efficient.

Soon, a clear-water hot pot was ready, the water boiling inside the copper pot.

Wang Shouzhe and Liu Ruolan, accompanied by the youngsters, gathered around the table and cheerfully started eating the clear-broth hot pot.

Although the eating hot pot made him happy, Wang Shouzhe felt a bit awkward. This was his wedding night. Surely these kids weren't here to cause mischief?

Liu Ruolan seemed to have never tasted clear broth hot pot before. She was very gracious in front of the children and seemed to enjoy the meal a lot.

Moreover, her nervousness seemed to have dissipated significantly.

Gradually, she became familiar with her brothers and sisters-in-law. Especially Wang Luomiao, who used to write to her a lot. The two were quite close.

The hot pot meal turned out to be fun for everyone.

Wang Shouzhe quietly observed that Ruolan was nearly full and stopped using her chopsticks.

He then cleared his throat and said, "It's getting late. You all should be getting on with whatever you should be doing." He began shooing people away.

It was a joke. Every moment of the wedding night was precious, it being his first, he certainly couldn't spend it eating hot pot till daybreak, could he?

"Fourth Uncle, aren't you being ungrateful? I'm not full yet," grumbled Wang Licui.

"You never get full. Take it away and eat it slowly," he replied.

Without any hesitation, Wang Shouzhe kicked all the youngsters out and locked the door quickly.

Chapter 129: Bridal Chamber Candle Night

He finally let out a sigh of relief and said to Liu Ruolan, "Madam, it's getting late, we should drink the conjugal cup wine."

"Yes, my Lord." Liu Ruolan blushed and nodded. She knew exactly what these words implied.

But before Wang Shouzhe could fetch the conjugal cup wine.

Outside, there was a commotion again, and Wang Licui's loud voice was heard, "The moon outside is quite nice, let's eat in the yard."

Then a group of younger brothers and sisters started eating hot pot and singing songs in the garden, creating a lively atmosphere.

Wang Shouzhe opened the door and walked out with a gloomy face.

He realized that these kids had conspired to mess with him.

How was he supposed to consummate the wedding like this?

Even if he had thick skin, Ruolan would be embarrassed.

"Eh? Fourth Uncle, are you still hungry?" Wang Licui blinked her innocent eyes.

Wang Shouzhe chuckled coldly. Did they think that just by hanging out in his yard they could mess up his plans?

This courtyard had been personally managed by Wang Shouzhe for a year now.

He placed his hand on the porch, and a surge of profound green mysterious energy infused into it.

Suddenly, the dormant vine arrays hidden in his courtyard seemed to have received some instructions.

They came to life.

Stem after stem of the vines started growing wildly, dancing seductively like sinister tentacles in the yard.

Wang Luomiao, Wang Shouye and the other kids were scared and they quickly surrendered, screaming as they ran out of the yard.

Wang Luoqiu, Wang Luo Jing, Wang Licui, on the other hand, were very brave.

They resisted even when faced with the menacing onslaught of the vine array.

Unfortunately, they had underestimated Wang Shouzhe. The vine array in his courtyard was a result of careful research.

He had selected many basic vines and improved upon them time and time again, ultimately forming the current vine array.

It could be said that as long as they were in his courtyard, even those at peak Qi Refinement level, would have to submit.

Under Wang Shouzhe's control of the mysterious energy, the wildly growing vines quickly bound Wang Luo Qiu, Wang Luoqing and Wang Licui into a bundle, and dragged them out of the yard.

The world suddenly became quiet.

Only Liu Ruolan, standing at the entrance of the bridal chamber, looked astonishingly at Wang Shouzhe.

"Don't be alarmed, Madam, it's just my bloodline talent." Wang Shouzhe explained, laughing as he turned his hand and a few seeds appeared.

These seeds were also something he had carefully cultivated recently.

Their most notable feature was that they were large and contained a great amount of energy.

As his profound, slightly green, mysterious energy entered, the seeds began to grow in his hand.

From sprouting, growing leaves to blossoming, the entire process was completed in just about a dozen breaths' time.

The flowers bloomed in an instant.

His palm was now holding a handful of delicate flowers, stunningly beautiful.

Liu Ruolan's beautiful eyes were full of surprise. Her husband's talents were far more impressive than she had imagined.

She didn't expect that her husband had such a powerful bloodline talent hidden.

But she was still very happy. The stronger her husband was, the happier she was naturally.

Wang Shouzhe, with the bouquet in hand, led her back to the bed.

He casually pressed on the wooden bed, which immediately sprouted into fresh branches and leaves just like a tree reviving in spring.

The seeds he had previously put next to the bed also grew in an instant. Soon, his bed turned into a vibrant mini flower bed.

Such a "romantic and picturesque" scene surprised and delighted Liu Ruolan, greatly relaxing her nerves.

"Madam, it's time for the conjugal cup wine."

Wang Shouzhe picked up the pot of constantly warm conjugal cup wine.

"Yes, as my Lord says." Liu Ruolan blushed and gently nodded her head.

The conjugal cup wine, also known as the nuptial wine on Earth, is a ceremony to help the new couple relax by using the power of alcohol.

They drank three rounds of the wine.

Liu Ruolan, overwhelmed by alcohol, her pretty face gradually reddened. Her eyes softened, shimmered with a haze of allure and a hint of spring.

Blushing heavily, she gently bit her bottom lip as if she had made up her mind. She then reached under the quilt where she was sitting and pulled out a box. Keeping her eyes closed, she handed it to Wang Shouzhe.

"My love, what is this?" asked Wang Shouzhe, somewhat baffled.

"You, you should look for yourself." Liu Ruolan closed her eyes tightly; her delicate body quaked with apparent shy tension.

Wang Shouzhe opened the elegant box only to find a booklet inside.

When he flipped through the booklet, his eyes widened in surprise, "This is..."

He released an involuntary laugh filled with disbelief, it was an H Picture Collection.

The small figures depicted were remarkably lifelike, and they were complemented by text descriptions that made their purpose all too clear.

He couldn't believe that Liu Ruolan had given him this, "My love, what, what is the mean of this?" Could it be a guide to our wedding night?

At his words, Liu Ruolan blushed so hard she looked like a bright red apple. She let out a soft "tsk" before calling him a "fool".

This thing was given to her by an aunt just before her marriage who had secretly handed it over to her. Her aunt had even given her a thorough explanation and instructions.

At the time, she was stunned. Who knew that bridal chamber etiquette involved such embarrassing marital rituals?

Furthermore, her aunt instructed her.

To give this booklet to the groom after they had drunk the Conjugal Cup Wine.

Seeing her bashful behaviour, Wang Shouzhe finally understood. This, after all, wasn't Earth!

The people here usually marry at a young age, and often lack knowledge of sexual matters prior to marriage.

At the time of their wedding, most of them are clueless about this.

Unlike on Earth, where everyone seems to be an experienced driver.

On a couple's wedding night, both the husband and wife navigate the waters with a practiced hand.

Clearly, Liu Ruolan worried that he might be clueless and therefore provided the booklet.

"Rest assured, my love, I don't need this," assured Wang Shouzhe, a few sips of wine already loosening his tongue. He casually tossed the crudely made booklet aside.

Joking aside, he had already been taught by plenty of teachers in his previous life. Besides, he had had two girlfriends, why would he need such a basic tutorial?

Hmm?

At his words, Liu Ruolan's eyes rounded in surprise. She looked at Wang Shouzhe with a hint of disbelief, seemingly asking where he'd learned all this.

She was utterly clueless about these matters just the day before yesterday; she was totally naïve and ignorant.

According to what her aunt had told her, most men are as uninformed as she was about these matters because families don't teach them.

Typically, it falls to the wife to instruct her husband on their wedding night.

Still, Wang Shouzhe's look of a seasoned pro unsettled Liu Ruolan.

Alright then.

Recognising that he'd misspoken, Wang Shouzhe.

He hurriedly forced out a couple of awkward laughs, "My love, please don't misunderstand; I merely saw a bit in some classic texts, I only know a little bit, just a little bit. Please teach me well," he said, causing even himself to blush. When compared to the pure Ruolan, he seemed...

Surprisingly, Liu Ruolan naively believed him, yet she felt something was off but couldn't put her finger on what it might be.

With her knowledge, of course, she couldn't imagine that her handsome young husband was in fact a seasoned veteran.

"Husband, blow out the candle," Liu Ruolan was burning up now, extremely nervous, but as her aunt had said, a girl always must go through it once.

One must go through the marital rituals to conceive a child.

Wang Shouzhe's emotions were excited as he scooped her into his arms and gently placed her on the bed.

"Husband, I'm scared, you must be gentle with me," Liu Ruolan was now at the peak of her anxiety.

"My dear, I don't know either, you'll have to teach me," Wang Shouzhe said shamelessly.

"But, but I don't really understand either."

"Then let's not blow out the candle," Wang Shouzhe suggested. He picked up the earlier despised booklet and proposed with grave seriousness, "Let's study together, make progress together, and slowly grow together."

His hand swept over the curtain made of vines and blossoms, and it slowly closed.

"Husband!"