

PROTECT OUR CLAN LEADER

Chapter 2 Where Did the System Go?

...

"It looks like we can only take it one step at a time," Wang Shouzhe's expression was somewhat solemn, but he quickly came to terms with it, realizing that, even without a golden finger, he still had some advantages.

At least after the fusion of memories, he found that although there were many strong masters in this world, the development of people's livelihood and the degree of advanced thinking were inferior to those of Earthlings, even though he was just an ordinary university graduate and employee...

Just as Wang Shouzhe was preparing to summarize his advantages.

Suddenly, the young servant Wang Gui rushed in frantically from outside, "Family Head, Family Head, something terrible has happened! Sixth Master Wang has been beaten, he has sent someone back asking for help!"

Sixth Master Wang?

Wang Shouzhe frowned slightly, memories flooding in, "It's Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai."

Wang Dinghai was Wang Shouzhe's paternal uncle, the sixth among the male members of the generation named 'Ding.' Although his talents and cultivation base were mediocre, he was relatively proficient in water skills and thus in charge of one of the family's industries — the fishing fleet.

Now that Wang Dinghai had been beaten, it meant that there must have been a change in the fishing fleet's situation related to the clan's property. This was a good opportunity to observe this world for himself.

"Stay calm. What dignity is there in such a panic?" Wang Shouzhe calmed himself down with this thought and sternly reprimanded, then said composedly, "Prepare the carriage, let's go and take a look."

"Yes, Family Head," Wang Gui hurriedly responded and ran to prepare for the journey.

Wang Shouzhe, following his memories, left his room and strolled leisurely towards the main gate of the main residence, observing each building facility and structure along the way to validate them against his memories.

On his way, he happened to meet his father's first wife, Gongsun Hui, with a grave expression, leading several of the head of household's guards, hurrying towards the main gate.

Wang Shouzhe greeted Gongsun Hui with proper respect, "Greetings to you, Madam."

Wang Shouzhe, now with merged memories, knew that since he had lost his mother at a young age, Gongsun Hui was his father Wang Dingyue's later legally married wife. She had given birth to a rightful daughter named Wang Luomiao, who was eight years old this year.

Therefore, although Gongsun Hui was Wang Shouzhe's stepmother, she was not his biological mother. However, her nature was kind and honest, and she had always treated Wang Shouzhe as her own, taking good care of him in every respect.

This was quite different from the usual tropes in fantasy novels.

Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe, Gongsun Hui immediately came forward and took his hand, her face full of concern, "Zhe Er, why have you come out? Have you eaten yet? Are you feeling any better?"

The rest of the household guards also hurriedly saluted Wang Shouzhe.

"Madam, I have no issues, and I finished the spirit meal you had prepared for me. We will talk more about it later," Wang Shouzhe discreetly pulled his hand free, his face earnest as he spoke, "Madam, you are leading the household guards, are you going to support Sixth Uncle? Allow me to accompany you."

Gongsun Hui's expression darkened, and after a moment's hesitation, she replied, "Zhe Er, since you have inherited the Clan Leader's position, you will inevitably face these things. Since you are well now, let's go and take a look together."

"Yes, Madam."

Together, they left the main gate of the main residence, which bore a plaque inscribed with the spirited characters 'Ping'an Wang Family', an impressive testament to their presence.

Yet, combined with the mottled lacquer of the corridors and the white lanterns inscribed with the character "Ding" swinging in the wind, it underscored the decline and desolation of the Wang family's faltering fortunes.

"Family Head, Madam Gongsun, the carriage is ready." The close attendant Wang Gui came running, "Swords and bows have been placed on the carriage."

After a brief discussion, Wang Shouzhe and Gongsun Hui shared a carriage, while the remaining four household guards each rode a yellow steed, escorting on both sides, heading towards Dingpu Ferry at Peace River.

On the journey, Gongsun Hui recounted the whole incident, detailing the causes and consequences.

Armed with the thinking of both his past and present lives, Wang Shouzhe quickly clarified the actual circumstances. Peace River was a large river stretching hundreds of zhang in width, rich in aquatic products with distinctive characteristics. The fishing fleets could generate long-term economic benefits through catching these products.

But where there were benefits, conflicts were often inevitable. The three prominent families of Ping'an Town were naturally unwilling to give up such a lucrative resource. After various struggles and compromises, the families each marked their own territory where they would not cross into another's realm.

From Dingpu Ferry towards the right, stretching for thirty li up to Chaotic Stone Beach, that was the waters of the Ping'an Wang family's territory.

However, in recent years, two other prominent families had continuously risen with an abundance of talented individuals, growing bolder by the day. Limited by the overall size of their holdings, it became increasingly tempting for them to reach into others' pots.

Bit by bit, their encroachment scheme played out, with the family's territory and assets shrinking year after year. The smaller the territory, the scarcer the resources, and the harder it became for clan members to grow, thus plunging them into a vicious cycle.

What made the situation even worse was that the Wang family's protector, the Elder Longyan of the Sea Stabilizing Needle, appeared to be weakening with each passing year. Recently she had been in seclusion, not even showing her face when such a big incident occurred in the family, inevitably leading to outside speculation about her ability to fight.

The situation was far from optimistic, Wang Shouzhe's brow furrowed.

Speaking of which, the Wang family's main residence was built near the mountains and by the water, no more than ten miles from Dingpu Ferry, on a well-maintained road that was solid and frequently repaired. With family guards clearing the way, their journey was smooth, and the carriage arrived in less than half an hour.

The ferry had already been one of Changning Guard's outposts at the founding of Ping'an Town. With over a hundred years of development, Dingpu Ferry had become a crucial thoroughfare connecting the north and the south.

All three major families of Ping'an had docks, ferries, shops, and other infrastructure there.

The ferry had some simple defensive structures; the walls were rather unsophisticated, only five to six meters tall, just sufficient to fend off small-scale beast attacks.

After entering the ferry, Wang Shouzhe and his entourage headed straight for the deep-water dock. Under the lengthy wooden pier were giant timber pillars thick enough for two people to embrace, extending the pier to water depths of about three or four Jiang, with lateral extensions forming individual berths.

At the berths there were various boats docked, including ferries, merchant ships, and fishing vessels.

From a distance, one could see two groups of people facing off at the end of the pier. Both were holding sticks and weaponised forks, their emotions running high.

"Sixth Master Wang, you sure have some nerve. Still daring to block your young lord Liu Yongzhou's way. Are you asking for another beating?" taunted a young man's voice.

"You little cur from the Liu Clan," hollered another man, voice thick with anger and excitement, "What's your skill other than sneaking attacks under the

water? If you're a real man, let's fight fair and square in the water with real knives and spears. I, Sixth Master Wang, will teach you how to be a proper human being."

"Sixth Master Wang, don't blame me for looking down on you. You've wasted your years on nothing, not an ounce of sense," the young man retorted with a sneer, "Ambush tactics are part of warfare; should we make a prior announcement forbidding the use of tactics before fighting? Oh, really, going back to the old ways. Better roll out of Ping'an Town sooner rather than later and stop wasting food."

The young man's group burst into laughter, echoing his mockery, shouting 'Roll out of Ping'an Town, roll out of Ping'an Town.'

Dingpu Ferry was bustling with a diverse crowd, including many passing travelers and merchants who had now gathered around to watch the excitement, their comments unceasing.

Today's conflict would inevitably spread far and wide with the legs and tongues of these onlookers. The Ping'an Wang family, having been on the losing end of this conflict, would become the talk of the town and a jest for some time, damaging the might of the Wang name.

"You Liu Clan whelp," the man's face turned beet-red as he reached the brink of rage, "you've gone too far, I, your Sixth Master, will take you on!"

"Wang family's old dog, come on if you dare!"

A fight between the two sides was about to erupt with the tension of a bowstring on the verge of snapping.

"Stop it!" Seeing the urgency of the situation, Gongsun Hui quickly stepped between them, "Wang Dinghai, Liu Yongzhou, both of you calm down, let's talk this through."

Wang Shouzhe, afraid that Madam Gongsun might be at a disadvantage, waved his hand, and four Wang family guards surged forward to protect her, while he followed closely, continuing to observe everything with a cool eye.

His observations and memories told him that the young man dressed in fitted aquatic gear with a short blade at his waist, who seemed somewhat frivolous, was called Liu Yongzhou, a member of the Liu Clan's Yong generation.

It was said that this young man excelled in aquatic warfare, particularly in the Water Escape Technique. He had once slain a Level One fierce beast, the Red-scaled Eel, weighing over 200 pounds with just a short blade. Liu Yongzhou had risen to fame at the age of merely twenty-three or twenty-four, becoming the Liu Clan's "Thousand-Mile Colt" in Ping'an.

The other man was lean and dark-skinned, clearly someone accustomed to making a living on the water. His head and arms were bruised, wrapped in linen, making him look quite disheveled.

That was none other than Wang Shouzhe's uncle—Wang Dinghai, specifically in charge of the family's fishing operations within their territorial waters. He too was proficient in aquatic combat and fishing, and the main hunter of the Red-tailed spirit bream that Wang Shouzhe had eaten earlier.

"Oh, if it isn't Madam Gongsun from the Wang family," young Liu Yongzhou greeted her carelessly with a grin. Then he sneered at Wang Dinghai, "Sixth Master Wang, to think you'd bring out your sister-in-law to back you against a junior like me—Yongzhou is impressed, truly unmatched."

"You..." Wang Dinghai's dark face flushed an even darker shade of red.