

# PROTECT OUR CLAN LEADER

## Chapter 26: Protect Our Clan Leader

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Wang Liuyu also fussed over Wang Luo Jing, clearly showing her sympathy for her niece who lost her father at a young age. She even specifically handed her a gold note worth ten Qian Gold.

"Auntie, Jing'er can't accept it. I heard that cousin Zhuo is currently striving to reach the third level of the Vital Energy Refining Realm, you should save it for him." Wang Luo Jing repeatedly waved her hands, refusing to accept it.

Usually, the resources for the cultivation of young clan members mainly come from the family's supply. In addition, some relatives with closer blood relations, such as parents, often try to support the younger generation.

However, Wang Luo Jing's father, Wang Dingbang, died five years ago, and therefore Luo Jing is disadvantaged in this aspect.

"Jing'er, if your aunt asks you to take it, just take it." Wang Liuyu said slightly annoyed, "Your father is gone, can't I, your aunt, help you out?"

"Luo Jing, just accept it." Wang Shouzhe said with a smile at his side, "Don't disappoint your third aunt's kindness."

He of course knew that recently, both Wang Luo Jing and Wang Shouzhe had shown great value. Gongsun Mo, their "cheap maternal grandfather," deliberately pulled the third aunt and uncle to accompany them, trying to further intensify the intimacy between the two sides and play the family card.

In addition, Luo Jing has the potential to become an Insect Master in the future. If not to win her over now, then when? Wang Shouzhe is naturally also pleased to see the relationship between the two sides becoming increasingly close, after all, the comprehensive strength of the Gongsun Clan is much stronger than the Ping'an Wang Family.

"Yes, fourth brother, thank you, third aunt." Wang Luo Jing obediently took it.

Then, the two families sat down and had a harmonious meal together.

But this time, the main character being praised was not Wang Shouzhe, but Wang Luo Jing.

"Luo Jing." Gongsun Mo affectionately filled her bowl with a portion of White Jade Spiritual Rice, a large piece of Spirit Horned Yak meat, and a large piece of Spirit Fish meat, "You've worked so hard today, eat more, don't hold back."

Wang Luo Jing was a bit confused, looking helplessly at Wang Shouzhe. The resources of any family are evenly distributed. Luo Jing, being a girl from the direct line of the family, wasn't high in the family's cultivation queue. The Spirit Food she could get every month was very limited. Where would she have such a luxurious eating method?

She pursed her lips, she wanted to eat, but she didn't dare.

"Eat, don't disappoint your grandpa's kindness." Wang Shouzhe said, lovingly stroking her head, "In the future, brother will try harder to let our family live a better life."

"Yes, thank you, fourth brother, thank you, Grandpa Gongsun." Wang Luo Jing obediently picked up her chopsticks and began eating the White Jade Spiritual Rice in large mouthfuls, her expression very satisfied.

Seeing her enjoying her meal so much, Wang Shouzhe felt relieved, but also heavy, feeling the pressure of being the leader of the clan.

"Zhe Er, we owe you a lot this time." Gongsun Mo poured some Spiritual Wine for Wang Shouzhe and said, "Our people have assessed that this time, because of your support, we will reduce the loss by at most 20% compared to last year, saving a loss of more than a thousand Qian Gold."

More than a thousand Qian Gold, both for the Gongsun Clan and the Wang family, is a huge sum. What Gongsun Mo cared more about was the friendly signal Wang Shouzhe sent to the Gongsun Clan.

It was also for this reason that the Gongsun Clan expressed their greatest sincerity in treating Wang Shouzhe and company, they ensured there was enough spiritual wine and food. This dinner alone would cost at least tens of Qian Gold.

"Grandpa is too polite to me." Wang Shouzhe took a sip of the Spiritual Wine and said modestly, "Speaking of which, this is also because of our good luck. My sister has just gained some knowledge of the Technique of Insect Control."

Gongsun Qiang, the Young Clan Leader sitting next to him commented with his eyes sparkling: "Speaking of which, Shouzhe, you are really lucky. As soon as you became the clan leader, you discovered an Insect Master in our family. I don't know if Luo Jing has found a suitor yet? Should we consider our Little Yan for her?"

"Huh?"

Wang Luo Jing, who was gobbling up her food, had her eyes widen in surprise as if she had been startled.

"Uncle, Luo Jing is only twelve years old." Wang Shouzhe's tone also radiated a hint of dissatisfaction, "Besides, our cousin is from the Gongsun clan's direct line, and our Luo Jing is just from the direct line, I'm afraid they don't match."

"No worries, no worries." Gongsun Qiang seemed to ignore Wang Shouzhe's underlying dissatisfaction, and continued to argue, "A good girl like Luo Jing, our family will never mind her bloodline."

Wang Shouzhe slapped his forehead: you might not mind, but our family does, right?

Luckily at this time, Gongsun Hui came forward to shield them from the barrage: "Brother, you're dreaming. Our Luo Jing is an Insect Master. Her future potential is infinite. For example, her ability to control the Nine-star Bug King alone means she's a popular figure in the whole of Changning.

After the Insecticide Powder incident from the Purple Abode Academy, which family would still want to use it?"

After a slight pause, Gongsun Hui continued: "Just take the sixteen thousand acres of fertile land in the Gongsun family for example. If medicine is applied once a season, twice a year, the annual consumption of Insecticide Powder would reach more than three hundred Qian Gold.

If our Wang family only charges the Gongsun family two hundred Qian Gold, and the Insect Master personally goes to exterminate the insects, would we do this business?"

Gongsun Hui's words seemed to awaken everyone.

Even Gongsun Mo was taken aback, and the look in his eyes as he looked at Wang Luo Jing was extremely serious, as though beholding a goldmine.

The ability of an insect master to make money was indeed formidable.

Regarding this business, Wang Shouzhe had already considered it. However, solely relying on one insect master, Luo Jing, the number she could cover in a limited short time would inevitably be limited. At most, she might be able to cover fifty to sixty thousand acres.

Yet, even so, simply by helping each clan exterminate insects, it would earn them at least seven to eight hundred Qian gold annually, and that was at a friendly discounted price.

Not to mention, insect masters excel in raising spiritual insects. Among spiritual insects, there are quite a few economic types like the spiritual silkworm and spirit bee."

Therefore, Aunt Gongsun Hui voiced Wang Shouzhe's thoughts: Gongsun Qiang, you have beautiful dreams. Whoever has such a golden child would not willingly give her away in marriage.

"Shouzhe, you really are blessed." Seeing Wang Shouzhe through different eyes, Gongsun Qiang was filled with envy and jealousy. He wished his family could also produce an insect master.

Unfortunately, producing an insect master is no simple feat.

First, those who possess the talent of an insect master are extremely rare. One must have the talent to communicate with insects, which is a rather unique gift.

Second, major clans themselves lack the heritage of an insect master, making it difficult to filter out people with the talent of an insect master from their clansmen.

According to the information obtained by the Gongsun Clan, there are only three insect masters in the entire Changning region. They are from the Liu clan of Shanyin, the Xu clan of Changning, and there is also an insect master serving in the City Defense Mansion.

The information is more detailed than Wang Shouzhe's, after all, the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang is more prosperous in the Spirit Platform family.

Because the Gongsun and Wang clans both have the intention to get along, they all had a good time during the dinner.

The next day.

Wang Luo Jing, who had rested, continued to tame the newly captured King of the grass-bug and Nine-star Bug King. After many experiences, Wang Luo Jing seemed to have made considerable progress, she tamed several Bug Kings within half an hour.

By the afternoon, she had already released the Bug Kings into the other two farms. Next, the head of the Gongsun clan's household needed to continue to capture wild grasshoppers and nine-star insects and replenish the wheat fields of the farm.

With the restraint and leadership of the Bug Kings, these grasshoppers and nine-star insects will not leave.

"Big Brother Four, the taming level of these Bug Kings is too shallow," Wang Luo Jing said, looking a little tired, "I'm afraid their wild nature will recover in a few days, so we'll have to do it again then. Big Brother Four, let's go to the Lu Clan of Yingxiu first."

"Luo Jing, you look a little tired," Wang Shouzhe said with concern, "why don't you rest for the night before..."

"Big Brother Four, I'm okay," Wang Luo Jing shook her head, "The signs of a pest outbreak are becoming more and more apparent. If we wait until tomorrow to go, the Lu family will suffer huge loss. Big Brother Four, I know your relationship with the Lu Family of Yingxiu ..."

Relationship, yes.

Indeed, from the perspective of blood relations, the Lu family of Yingxiu and Wang Shouzhe are very close. His mother, who passed away early due to illness, was a beautiful young lady from the Lu family of Yingxiu, as well as the sister of the present clan leader, Lu Zhengxiong.

Moreover, the wife of Lu Zhengxiong was from the direct lineage of the sixth generation of the Wang family and therefore Wang Shouzhe's maternal aunt, Wang Liuling.

This custom of intermarriage was often observed among the prominent families of Profound Martial world. Marriages between the direct members of two families brought them closer.

The only unfortunate event was the early death of Wang Shouzhe's mother, Lu Mengxue, when he was six years old, leaving behind a young son and daughter. The memory of his birth mother was always the toughest to bear, causing him great pain whenever he remembered her.

Fortunately, his stepmother Gongsun Hui treated him very well since childhood, as if he was her very own, which gradually helped him accept his stepmother and thus reduced much of his inner trauma.

As his memories and feelings merged more and more deeply, Wang Shouzhe began to feel that he was more and more a part of this world, as if he had grown up here since childhood. The memories of Earth, on the other hand, gradually seemed like a dream.

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## Chapter 27 Family Tradition and Education (Thank You for Your Support) \_1

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"Thank you for your hard work, Luo Jing." Wang Shouzhe didn't want to delay any longer and bring unnecessary losses to the Lu Family.

Moreover, Lu Family's two uncles have always been good to him and his sister, Wang Luoyi. Even if they could only meet once in one or two years, the Lu Family would often send their head of household to give gifts to Wang Shouzhe, Wang Luoyi, and even to their Aunt Gongsun Hui's daughter, Wang Luomiao.

"I'm not troubled at all, I've been eating well these past few days." Wang Luo Jing replied with a faint smile, "I feel energized." Saying that, she even especially made a gesture to show her strength.

"Oh, come off it. You scrawny little girl, stop showing off in front of me. We must set off soon." Wang Shouzhe said warmly with a smile, "You should have a sip of the Spiritual Wine and then have a good sleep in the carriage."

"Big Brother Four, I will grow up." Wang Luo Jing pouting a bit in dissatisfaction, "Big Brother Four can't underestimate Jing'er."

"I did not underestimate you, I dare not underestimate you." Wang Shouzhe helped her onto the carriage, "My Luo Jing is the future great Insect Master. Maybe Big Brother Four needs your protection, how dare I underestimate you."

"So it's settled, in the future if anyone bullies Big Brother Four, Luo Jing will let the insects bite them."

"Ok, ok, you can say whatever you want. Now, go to sleep."

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The carriage slowly moved along a smooth road.

Wang Shouzhe rode on a black horse, escorting the carriage alongside a few other household heads. There were two routes to the Lu Clan of Yingxiu, one went through the sunny side of Longji Mountain, while the other went around the dark side of the same mountain.

Of course, now there was no way they would go around the Yinyu Family's side of the mountain, so they chose the sunny route.

This was one of the main reasons Wang Shouzhe prioritized helping the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang to stabilize the crisis first.

Originally, Gongsun Qiang wanted to accompany them, but Wang Shouzhe rejected him. Firstly, he couldn't bear Gongsun Qiang's low social skills, and secondly, the Gongsun Clan was busy with disaster relief and didn't have enough people.

Moreover, Aunt Gongsun Hui had voluntarily decided to stay in Shanyang for the time being, saying it was a good opportunity to accompany her parents. In fact, she knew her presence in the Lu Family would be inappropriate.

As the group moved on, they entered a dense forest and the road gradually became more rugged and bumpy.

Wang Shouzhe frowned slightly, "Wang Zhong, this road is not very easy to navigate, how far is it to Yingxiu?"

"Family Head, this forest is the boundary between Shanyang and Yingxiu, about seven or eight miles wide." said Wang Zhong, who was familiar with the route, "After crossing the forest, we'll reach the famous Yingxiu Lake. You haven't been to Yingxiu for several years, and all the previous journeys took the major road on the shady side, so you may not be familiar with this part of the road."

"Everyone, the forest is usually more dangerous, so everyone needs to be vigilant."

At his shout, each of the household heads perked up, becoming more alert.

"Wang Zhong, is there something wrong with this forest?" Wang Shouzhe also became more vigilant, "Are there rumors of fierce beasts?"

In this world, it is no game. The appearance of a fierce beast may lead to casualties.

"Family Head, in border areas like this, Profound Martial families from both Shanyang and Yingxiu take turns to patrol. Most of the slightly threatening wild animals were killed off long ago, let alone fierce beasts." Wang Zhong shook his head, "We, as the household heads, train for situations like this. In terrains where vision is poor, it's our duty to be extra cautious in case of any situation."

The team continued onward without any surprises until they reached a small stream that crossed the road.

Suddenly!

Wang Zhong's face changed, he raised his hand and called for a stop.

The coachman, Old Wang, quickly halted the carriage, the other household heads unsheathed their weapons, being extremely vigilant.

Wang Zhong dismounted and walked over to the side of the stream, he picked up a small fragment of cloth. His face suddenly became serious, and he said to the following Wang Shouzhe, "Family Head, this piece of cloth was cut by a sharp blade and there are some bloodstains on it. There are also some traces of poorly cleaned blood on the stones by the stream."

There seemed to be some situation.

The most feared thing when traveling in the wild is unexpected incidents, Wang Shouzhe said with a serious expression, "Wang Zhong, tell me your judgment."

"Judging from the cloth, it's fine grey-striped cotton fabric, quite pricey. Ordinary tenant farmers, civilians, hunters, and so forth wouldn't afford such an expensive piece of clothing, and if they did buy it, it would be worn on festive occasions." As a head of household, Wang Zhong had been trained by his elder family members since childhood, so he was quite familiar with this.

"Therefore, this person is likely to be a Profound Martial practitioner of a higher status than a commoner. But, he isn't of a very high status, as noble individuals like yourself, Family Head, would usually use more expensive brocade fabric."

"So he's either a household leader, or a common member of a Profound Martial prominent family." Wang Shouzhe nodded, "Or maybe a peddler."

"Peddlers usually travel in groups." Wang Zhong shook his head, "Family Head, look at these footprints, they should all be from the same person, and he seems to have headed deep into the dense forest, hmm, as if he's avoiding pursuit. Therefore, there's a high chance this person is a fugitive Independent Cultivator, or a traitor from a certain family.

He probably heard our voices and rushed into the depths of the forest without even having time to conceal his traces."

"Can we catch him?" Wang Shouzhe uttered solemnly, "We came from the Shanyang side, and there weren't any rumors about fugitives or traitors, so it's highly probable that this person came from the Yingxiu side. Regardless of the situation, let's capture him first."

"Don't worry, Family Head." Wang Zhong's eyes flickered with a cold glimmer, "This person is already injured, and his hurried movements are hard to conceal. I will take a couple of brothers and bring him back."

"Wang Yong, Wang Wu, you follow them." Wang Shouzhe commanded, "Safety comes first. If things get tricky, call for backup immediately."

"Yes, Family Head."

The three commanded agents then proceeded, spreading out a bit and tracking the traces in a triangular formation. And within the time it took to burn an incense stick, a miserable cry could be faintly heard from the depth of the forest.

Soon, the three agents of the Wang family came back to the carriage with a heavily bound man.



"Family Head, we have accomplished our mission." Wang Zhong threw the captive to the ground and bowed, "This felon seems to be around Level Four in the Vital Energy Refining Realm, and judging from his clothes, he appears to be an Independent Cultivator."

"Hmm, hmm~" The man's eyes were filled with fear, his mouth was stuffed and his entire body was tied up. All he could do was twist and turn to get Wang Shouzhe's attention.

"Let's hear what he has to say." Wang Shouzhe ordered.

"Yes, Family Head." Wang Zhong removed the rag from his mouth.

"My lord, no, sir," the middle-aged man, who looked somewhat wretched, instantly began to plead, "I was just passing through your esteemed territory, I committed no crime. Please have mercy and spare me. I have Qian Gold on me and a Profound Martial Cultivation Technique, it can serve as my ransom."

"Whether you committed a crime or not is not for you to decide." Wang Shouzhe made a gesture to Wang Zhong.

Wang Zhong quickly searched the man and found a total of 5 Qian Gold, 17 Copper Coins, 56 shillings and a worn-out Profound Martial Cultivation Technique in a package on him.

"Small Circulation Qi Blood Transport Method".

Wang Shouzhe frowned as he looked through it. It was an ordinary Cultivation Method. The Wang family had a copy in their archives. It was used to build foundational skills in the early stage of training for the household servants. However, this method had a few clear errors and omissions.

But overall, it did fit the state of a destitute Independent Cultivator. Independent Cultivators care the most about improving their cultivation base, so they would spend any money they got their hands on, on resources for cultivation.

"How did you get injured?" Wang Shouzhe looked at the deep knife wound on his shoulder.

"I ran into some bandits." The Independent Cultivator said with an honest look on his face, "I stumbled into the forest while fleeing, tried to treat the wound, and then ran into you."

"You're lying. This area is where the territories of the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang and Lu Clan of Yingxiu intersect. Who would dare commit a crime here?" Wang Zhong rebuked angrily, "Confess honestly, or I'll chop off your head."

"I've been wronged, my lord. I've been wronged!" The Independent Cultivator cried out in panic, "Those bandits disguise themselves as peddlers and usually only bully Independent

Cultivators passing by. They wouldn't dare to lay a hand on prominent Profound Martial families like yours."

"That seems to make sense." Wang Shouzhe said unmoved, "Take him to Yingxiu. Let the Lu Clan investigate the matter. If what he said is true and he's not a criminal, we'll return his possessions and let him go."

Every Profound Martial prominent family has their code of conduct. Regardless of how much Qian Gold he has, be it tens or hundreds, or even more, Wang Shouzhe would never rob him or even resort to murder just for a small gain.

It's a matter of family tradition. Once you cross that line, you'll bury a great menace within the family. How would the servants and members of the family who participated in this event feel? Would they develop bloody and brutal thinking? Would their values get distorted?

The next time they encounter similar situations, would murdering and looting become second nature?

A family or power that values interest above all else, enough to commit crimes, can be rampant for a while but will definitely not last.

Any Profound Martial prominent family that has been passed down for hundreds, or even thousands of years, must have good family traditions and a highly reputable character. Its members must have strict behavioural norms and principles.

However, as soon as Wang Shouzhe finished speaking, the Independent Cultivator's face turned ashen and he cried out, "My lord, I was wrong, don't take me to Yingxiu. I beg you, I have some hidden possessions. If you let me go, they are all yours."

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## Chapter 28: Lu Clan of Yingxiu\_1

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The reaction of this independent cultivator took Wang Shouzhe somewhat by surprise, and his face immediately darkened: "It seems you have committed no small crime in Yingxiu."

"Sir, I'm to blame, I was overtaken by greed." The independent cultivator confessed in tears, "We are a group of peddlers traveling together. We just passed by Yingxiu and saw a wealthy family marrying off a daughter. We had intended to leave immediately after a drink or two, but noticed that the wedding gifts were extremely substantial.

There were hundreds of Qian Gold pieces and two hundred-year-old ginseng plants that were worth a fortune. We had a terrible idea and sneaked into the wealthy family's house and committed robbery..."

Throughout his confession, Wang Shouzhe's face became darker. This group of independent cultivators had the audacity to silence anyone who discovered the theft and then seize the goods.

Luckily, these cultivators started to quarrel due to their greed. In the end, the one who had been laughing last was this independent cultivator. It's just that he had some bad luck. While treating his wounds in a dense forest with few people around, he ran into Wang Shouzhe's group.

"Sir, as long as you swear to spare my life," the independent cultivator pleaded, "I'm willing to reveal the location where the stolen goods are hidden, and offer everything to you."

The independent cultivator seemed to know something about the way the Profound Martial prominent families operate - if Wang Shouzhe swore in front of his subordinates, he wouldn't break his word.

Otherwise, how would a head of a household who could abandon his vows at will make his subordinates feel? Would they be able to trust the head of household's words in the future?

Wang Zhong and the other subordinates also turned their eyes on Wang Shouzhe, with some anticipation in their eyes. The stolen goods were quite valuable. If they could get them, it would help alleviate the Wang family's financial strain.

After a brief thought, Wang Shouzhe mounted his horse: "Take him with us, hand him over to the Lu clan in Yingxiu for their disposal."

"Yes, head of the household." Wang Zhong was slightly stunned but carried out his order faithfully. He gagged the independent cultivator's mouth and threw him onto the back of the horse, ignoring his cries and struggles.

"Go!"

The coachman, Honest Wang, cracked his whip, and the two sturdy horses pulled the carriage slowly along the rugged and muddy road.

After a short while, Wang Zhong rode up to Wang Shouzhe and asked in a low voice, "Head of the household, are we really giving up those goods? If you don't want to dirty your hands, I can take care of it. Just give me some time, and I assure you, he'll spit out the hidden location."

"Our time is precious. We have no time to play treasure hunting games with an independent cultivator," Wang Shouzhe said lightly. "And remember, Wang Zhong, as a member of the Profound Martial prominent families, we should take a long-term view. There is no wall that doesn't leak. If we upset the Lu family because of this, our loss will be ten, even a hundred times this loot.

Most importantly, if we undermine our conscience, embezzle the loot, and let the criminals go, how can we face our Old Ancestor Zhou Xuan, who expanded our territories and established our family? And how can we face our Old Ancestor Longyan, who protected our family single-handedly for several decades?"

This is an issue of family belief, and the greatest belief for most families is their founding ancestor.

Wang Zhong shuddered, full of shame, "I understand, sir. I let my judgment be clouded by personal gain."

"Greed is human nature, but how we restrain it is very important," said Wang Shouzhe calmly. "Take those independent cultivators for example. They couldn't control their greed and committed a crime together, and then they couldn't control their greed and started fighting amongst themselves. If they lack such self-discipline, can they escape a second, third time?"

"Head of the household, if those independent cultivators commit a crime once and escape, won't they be fine if they don't commit a crime again in the future?" Wang Yong rode over on his horse and chimed in.

"There may be such people, but they are very few," Wang Shouzhe smiled. "Imagine, if they couldn't resist the temptation for the first time, how could they resist the second time once they've tasted the sweetness? That kind of greed will eventually lead them to their doom. I don't want the stolen money, not because I simply don't want it, but because I'm scared.

I'm afraid I won't be able to control my own greed and gradually lead our family to decline."

The subordinates all fell into deep thought, showing admiration in their eyes as they looked at Wang Shouzhe.

"Head of household, I have a feeling that our Wang family of Ping'an will rise under your leadership," Wang Zhong said with emotion.

"Ha, your flattery might be a bit clumsy, but I do enjoy it."

"Head of household, I'm not trying to flatter you. I sincerely believe so."

"Yes, yes, we also believe so," agreed the other subordinates, chiming in one after another.

Meanwhile...

Inside the carriage, Wang Luo Jing, who had already awakened and witnessed all of these, glowed with anticipation and deep thought. She felt safe and steady whenever she was with her fourth brother.

For nothing else but for her fourth brother, she thought to herself, "Luo Jing, you must work hard to share the burden on the shoulders of your fourth brother."

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Less than an hour later...

Wang Shouzhe and his group emerged from the forest and walked onto the wide highway.

First to meet my eyes is the expansive and boundless Yingxiu Lake, where the tall reflection of the Longji Mountain falls into the water, staining it an inky green. The lake breeze bundles with mist, repeatedly blowing with a coolness amidst the start of summer season.

Upon the vast lake, large fishes occasionally leap up, splashing a great spray of water. Various aquatic birds frolic in the thick reeds.

Without any doubt, not only does Yingxiu Lake possess a beautiful landscape, but it also has abundant natural resources. In comparison to the rivers of Peace River that are in continuous torrent, the enchanting elegance of Yingxiu Lake is more subtle and refined.

At this moment, a knight team hastily gallops from afar, and halt their horses down in front of Wang Shouzhe and his companions.

"Huff!"

The leading rider is a vigorous man in his thirties. Carrying a strong bow on his back and a treasured blade at his waist, he radiates an extraordinary aura. Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe, he first hesitates, quickly followed by hearty laughter: "Zhe Er, it hasn't been much time since we last met, yet you've already grown more heroic.

It seems like becoming the Clan leader has changed your temperament significantly."

"Uncle, why did you personally come to receive us?" Wang Shouzhe responded hurriedly with a salute.

This man is Lu Zhengjie, direct younger brother of Wang Shouzhe's biological mother, Lu Mengxue — he is the pillar of strength amongst the young generation of the Lu Clan of Yingxiu. At only a little over thirty, he has already achieved Level Eight of Qi Refinement Realm, making him a likely candidate to break through to Spiritual Platform Realm.

Just a little while ago, he rushed to Ping'an Town to attend Wang Dingyue's funeral, hence his recent separation from Wang Shouzhe.

"It's not specifically about receiving you." Lu Zhengjie's smiling face instantly freezes. "Recently, some bandits who disguised themselves as peddlers wiped out a rich merchant's family, killing seven people. After investigating, we discovered they fled towards Shanyang. We are still tracking these culprits. I heard from the head of household about your arrival in Yingxiu.

Go ahead to meet your elder uncle. I currently don't have time to accompany you back."

"This is quite a coincidence," laughed Wang Shouzhe. "I just came from Shanyang, and along the way, I happened to catch a criminal. After an initial interrogation, he seems to be part of the same gang of criminals uncle mentioned."

"What?" Lu Zhengjie is startled.

Following this, Wang Shouzhe hands the criminal over to Lu Zhengjie and narrates the details of the events: "I'll leave this criminal in your care, uncle, but he's already hidden the stolen goods. I don't think I should interfere with this matter. You can send your own people to interrogate him."

"Looks like it's going to save us some trouble then. Lu Yi, I entrust the handling of this matter to you. Try your best to recoup the stolen property and provide an explanation for the surviving members of the rich merchant's family," Lu Zhengjie exclaimed gleefully, ordering the assigned man.

The Profound Martial prominent family has many privileges locally, but they also bear the responsibility of protecting the common people under their rule.

"Yes, Deputy Leader," a man with a somewhat grim and fierce face stepped forward, grinning cruelly. "This thief is really audacious, daring to commit crimes on our Lu family's territory. If he falls into my hands, I guarantee he'll be begging for death but won't receive it."

This savage statement actually prompts Wang Shouzhe to take an extra look at him.

"Lu Yi is quite adept at interrogations," Lu Zhengjie says with a smile. "You can send some qualified leaders from your household to learn from him."

To that, Wang Shouzhe gives a non-committal response.

If it's purely about investigation, Wang Shouzhe's 'knowledge' is quite substantial. His understanding of different methodologies in this area is broad, accumulated from various modern crime dramas, spy dramas...such avenues where the means are scientific.

Not dwelling much on the topic, as soon as the task of capturing the fugitives had been accomplished, Lu Zhengjie personally led Wang Shouzhe back to the Lu family's main residence in Yingxiu.

Contrary to the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang, who has built their main residence halfway up the mountainside, assuming an impenetrable fortress-like mentality, the Lu family's main residence in Yingxiu is somehow placed on a peninsula in the lake, with the waters forming a natural defensive moat on all three sides.

Based purely on blood relations, Wang Shouzhe's connection to the Lu family is very deep; therefore, he is naturally provided with high-level hospitality.

Before he even enters the door, a young girl dressed in red rushes out, flinging herself into Wang Shouzhe's arms: "Cousin Shouzhe, Xiaoxiao missed you so much."

Lu Xiaoxiao!

The current Clan Leader Lu Zhengxiong's beloved daughter, conceived in his old age.

However, before Wang Shouzhe can respond, Wang Luo Jing, hidden behind him, suddenly clutches his hand: "Fourth Brother, Jing'er is feeling a little unwell."

Unwell?

Wang Shouzhe is taken aback, quickly grasping her little hand out of concern: "Luo Jing, where do you feel unwell? Is it possible that you..."

Before he can continue his sentence, he notices the glaring hostility between both girls as their eyes lock onto each other, their animosity completely unhidden and sparks flying.

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## Chapter 29 Crystal Dew Drink\_1

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"Who are you?" Lu Xiaoxiao, holding onto Wang Shouzhe's arm, glared at Wang Luo Jing, "Let go of my cousin Shouzhe's hand already. You should feel ashamed as a girl."

In Changning, the region of defenders, most of the girls from prominent families do not rank their names in order. They are quite free and easy. However, because the Ping'an

Wang family has a long history, the Zhou Xuan Old Ancestor personally set the form for naming girls, which is a tradition that has been followed till now.

"I'm Fourth Brother's sister, and Fourth Brother is the one who dotes on me the most." Wang Luo Jing, without any concession, held onto the other arm and jeered, "I think it's you who should be ashamed, lunging into my brother's arms the moment you see him."

"You're lying. Cousin Shouzhe dotes on me the most." Lu Xiaoxiao said, puffing herself up, "Every time we meet, Cousin Shouzhe always brings me gifts."

"Fourth Brother treats me the best. He even gave me a Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive to play with the day before yesterday, which is worth more than two hundred Qian Gold." Wang Luo Jing raised her head in a boastful manner.

"Cousin Shouzhe, I want a Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive too." Lu Xiaoxiao felt somewhat inferior at once, and began to act coquettishly towards Wang Shouzhe. She was usually pampered and spoiled, and probably had no idea what a Purple Crystal Spirit Bee was.

"Uh..." Wang Shouzhe was a bit speechless. How could these two little girls start fighting over him as soon as they met? Especially Luo Jing, who is actually a year younger than Lu Xiaoxiao and normally very well-behaved, but at this moment was striving for favor.

"Shouzhe, did you really buy a Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive for the child to play with?" Lu Zhengjie, a small uncle who was accompanying them, was also taken aback. "Isn't that too extravagant and wasteful? Now I'd like to see how you deal with your cousin."

More than two hundred Qian Gold - this was a large sum of money for both the Wang and Lu families. For example, the fishing team of Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai consists of ten boats, which after working hard in the wind and rain for a year, would only profit around two hundred Qian Gold.

Being one of the staple industries of the Wang family, Fenggu farm consists of two hundred tenant farmers and a few thousand acres of farmland. Operating on this scale for a year, the profit generated would be only six to seven hundred Qian Gold, and this is just the profit on paper.

There were indeed some gifts prepared for this visit to the Lu family, but they were all small trinkets.

"Little Uncle, there's more than meets the eye with this." Wang Shouzhe bitterly smiled and said, "Why don't you try to coax your niece? Even if they sold me now, I still wouldn't be able to afford a Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive."

"I'm not capable of persuading her." Lu Zhengjie hastily shook his head and said, "This girl is usually the most spoiled. Both the Old Ancestor and the elder brother can't do anything with her. Shouzhe, you'll just have to fend for yourself."



The Old Ancestor also spoils her?

Wang Shouzhe was somewhat stunned. The Old Ancestor of the Lu family, Lu Mingsheng, was the direct line of the Lu family's Ming generation. He was more than one hundred years old now, right? In terms of lineage and bloodline, he was Wang Shouzhe's outer great-grandfather.

Most of the Old Ancestors of the Profound Martial prominent families don't like to show their faces. They are usually absorbed in self-cultivation, focusing on advancing their skills. Only on major events would they emerge to take the stage.

Wang Shouzhe, now eighteen years old, had final counts in remembrance of seeing the Old Ancestor Mingsheng. He was only summoned once, when his potential was tested to be good at the age of seven. Old Ancestor Mingsheng praised him and rewarded him with some resources.

Keep in mind, Wang Shouzhe's potential was almost of Middle Grade, but still only had such treatment. What merit or ability does this little girl Lu Xiaoxiao have, to be spoiled by the Old Ancestor...?

However, since things have come to this point, he could not afford a gift worth two hundred Qian Gold, and even if he could afford it, he would not be willing to give it. He could only perfunctorily say to Lu Xiaoxiao, "Xiaoxiao, that beehive happened to be something your cousin stumbled upon..."

"Wow! Cousin Shouzhe doesn't like me anymore. Wuhu, cousin is mean." Upon finding out she couldn't have it, Lu Xiaoxiao immediately felt thoroughly outdone. She ran back to the house crying.

Meanwhile, Wang Luo Jing clung to Wang Shouzhe's arm, wearing a pleased expression as if she had defeated a villain. This cheeky behaviour led Wang Shouzhe to roll his eyes – she was such a little girl, even getting jealous over such things.

However, such an incident was just a small hiccup, and Wang Shouzhe didn't mind.

Subsequently, under the guidance of little Uncle Lu Zhengjie, both Wang Shouzhe and Wang Luo Jing arrived at the main hall of the Lu family's main residence.

Meanwhile, the clan leader of the Lu Family, Lu Zhengxiong, and his legal wife from the Wang family, had already dressed formally and were waiting.

Lu Zhengxiong was already in his fifties, with a square face and three strands of goatee, exuding an extraordinary aura.

His legal wife, Lu Wang, was actually Wang Shouzhe's eldest maternal aunt—Wang Liuling. Her actual age was already over fifty, but she was well-preserved and elegantly dressed, sitting there like an attractive middle-aged woman.

"Uncle, Auntie, I, Shouzhe, along with my fifth sister, Wang Luo Jing, pay our respects to you." Wang Shouzhe stepped forward, following the ceremony of juniors greeting elders. He had already sent his steward ahead to inform them that this trip was to pay respects to elders, not to meet as the clan leader.

"Shouzhe, please get up." Lu Zhengxiong came forward to help Wang Shouzhe up and looked him up and down, "It's been a while since I've seen you, and you have grown so phenomenally."

"Zhe Er, Zhe Er." Wang Liuling also came forward to hold Wang Shouzhe's hand, showing great affection, "You've just taken on the role of clan leader, and you're already so busy. I'm sorry for the hardship."

Wang Liuling, his maternal aunt, had previously personally visited the Wang family to mourn. She had already grieved for the death of her younger brother. Now, she was more concerned about her nephew, Wang Shouzhe.

"Uncle, Auntie, it's nothing," said Wang Shouzhe, "Our Wang and Lu families are linked by blood. Helping each other is our inherent duty."

Because his biological mother was a legitimate daughter of the Lu family, Wang Shouzhe had a deep affection for the Lu family since childhood. The exchange of main lineages between the previous generations made the blood ties between the two families exceptionally close.

After a short cordial conversation, Aunt Wang Liuling took Wang Luo Jing aside to chat.

Meanwhile, Lu Zhengxiong sat opposite Wang Shouzhe for a discussion. But what he brought out to serve was not the usual spiritual tea, but a special Crystal Dew drink, a specialty of Yingxiu's Lu family.

The Lu family had the advantage of occupying the Yingxiu Lake. Not only did they achieve certain results in aquaculture, but they also fenced off a piece of "spirit water" to specifically grow a kind of underwater spirit plant—Crystal Dew Grass. The Crystal Dew Grass would produce a thumb-sized spirit fruit that looks like a grape, but transparent as cicada wings.

The juice from it, chilled, makes an excellent drink.

Drinking it, the cold and clear sensation travels down your throat and into your stomach, and then the coolness spreads throughout your body, making you tremble slightly, giving a feeling of comfort as if your marrow had been washed.

Speaking of which, this was the third time Wang Shouzhe had tasted Crystal Dew drink. It was a rare spirit drink with a high cost. Even the direct descendants of the Lu family rarely had the chance to taste it.

The Yingxiu Lu family was not a very powerful clan, having only one old ancestor holding the fort. But their Crystal Dew drink was a major specialty. Currently, most of the production is supplied to the Purple Abode Academic Palace, with a small part shared among the direct descendants of other powerful families.

As for how much net profit they earned each year, Wang Shouzhe couldn't tell but estimated that it would not be less than eight or nine hundred Qian Gold.

Apart from the one for Wang Shouzhe, Wang Luo Jing also received a glass. It was her first time tasting such a fine drink, her eyes were wide open.

After the good drink, there was also a treat of spirit food, which made Wang Shouzhe and his sister full of vitality and vigor.

Then, they naturally got down to business. Wang Luo Jing cooperated with the Lu family members to carry out the operation of exterminating insects. The mode was simple, just copying the approach of the Gongsun Clan in Shanyang. Moreover, the Lu family in Yingxiu didn't have much farmland, only six to seven thousand acres, so it wasn't too difficult to handle.

Originally, Wang Shouzhe also wanted to help, but before his departure, he received a message from Old Ancestor Mingsheng, summoning him for a meeting.

This left Wang Shouzhe filled with apprehension. Would it be possible that Lu Xiaoxiao had run to Old Ancestor Mingsheng to slander him, causing him to hold a grudge against Wang Shouzhe?

However, this absurd thought only flashed through his mind and then disappeared. Old Ancestor Mingsheng was the bulwark of the Yingxiu Lu family, he wouldn't get involved in the minor disputes between the younger generation.

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## Chapter 30 Mingsheng Old Ancestor (Seeking Recommendation Tickets)\_1

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Soon, guided by the maid, Wang Shouzhe had arrived at the backyard of the Lu Family's main residence, where Elder Mingsheng, the reclusive cultivator, resided.

This place was close to the Yingxiu Lake, a towering and magnificent building, from where almost half of the lake's scenery could be seen. The lake breeze, the wave noise, the leaping fish, the singing birds, all these elements integrated this architecture into nature.

Standing before a tower called "Yingxiu Ascending Moon", Wang Shouzhe greeted, "Wang Shouzhe from the Ping'an Wang Family is seeking an audience with Elder Mingsheng."

"Come in."

A gentle voice sounded directly into Wang Shouzhe's ear.

Following the instruction, Wang Shouzhe climbed up the solid wooden steps to the high floor of the tower. Outside the tower window, a grey-robed old man sat with his back to Wang Shouzhe, fishing in the Yingxiu Lake from his chair.

His posture seemed casual, but Wang Shouzhe couldn't see through him at all, as if he was an insurmountable mountain range, or a deep and unfathomable lake.

Next to him was a twelve or thirteen-year-old girl in red clothes, which was Wang Shouzhe's cousin, Lu Xiaoxiao. She was glaring at Wang Shouzhe, obviously still angry.

"Grandpa, you know how annoying Cousin Shouzhe is." Lu Xiaoxiao pouted, "Why does that Wang girl get the Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive, and Xiaoxiao doesn't?"

"Uh..." Wang Shouzhe found it funny and put his hand on his nose, realizing that this silly girl even ran here to tattle on him.

"So how should I discipline your cousin?" The old man asked nonchalantly, "You said last time that you liked your cousin Shouzhe the most. Now you don't like him anymore?"

"I still like him, but my mother said that the Wang Family is in a bad situation and they are lacking money everywhere." Lu Xiaoxiao answered earnestly, tilting her head, "I think cousin Shouzhe must be very short of money. How about you give cousin Shouzhe five hundred Qian Gold so he can buy a Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive and give it to me? Then I won't be angry with cousin Shouzhe."

"Why do you need five hundred Qian Gold?" the elder asked surprisedly, "as far as I remember, a common Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive costs only two or three hundred Qian Gold. Could it be that the prices have risen so much?"

"It's hard for Cousin Shouzhe to go buy the beehive."

Pfft!

Wang Shouzhe almost spat out blood upon hearing this. His cousin's logic was truly powerful. To get a beehive, she was even prepared to make Elder Mingsheng pay. He

couldn't listen to this anymore, and immediately interrupted, coughing twice, "Shouzhe meets Elder Mingsheng."

Unexpectedly, Elder Mingsheng ignored Wang Shouzhe completely, and continued talking to Lu Xiaoxiao, "So, if your cousin Shouzhe bought you a Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive, would you listen to grandpa?"

"I would!" Lu Xiaoxiao nodded firmly.

An elder Mingsheng nodded slightly, turned around, smiled at Wang Shouzhe, and threw several gold tickets towards him.

Wang Shouzhe hurriedly caught them, taking a closer look, they were actually five hundred Qian Gold tickets. He was taken aback. What was going on? Could it be that...

"Shouzhe, did you hear that?" Elder Mingsheng's face, which appeared to be only fifty years old, showed a playful smile, "Go and buy a Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive for your cousin Xiaoxiao on the way back. The rest is your running fee."

"Elder..." A cold sweat was dropping from Wang Shouzhe. He quickly said, "This really can't happen. If cousin Xiaoxiao really likes the Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive, I'll find a way to buy one."

"Enough, you don't know what situation your Wang Family is in right now?" Elder Mingsheng waved his hand irritably, "Take these Qian Gold first, prepare more cultivation resources, and talk about the Purple Crystal Spirit Beehive when you have spare money."

There was a little warmth in Wang Shouzhe's heart. He bowed and said, "Thank you, Elder, for your support." It looked like Elder Mingsheng intended to support him, and he naturally wouldn't be pretentious. He took the money for now.

"You should thank your cousin Xiaoxiao." Elder Mingsheng laughed, "If wasn't for her persistence, I wouldn't be willing to give up this Qian Gold." For the Lu Family, five hundred Qian Gold was quite a large amount of money, after various huge expenditures, a year might not even be able to save up this much.

"Thank you, cousin Xiaoxiao." Wang Shouzhe also bowed in thanks.

"Hmph." Lu Xiaoxiao turned her head away and snorted, seeming unwilling to pay any attention to him.

"Xiaoxiao, you must prove your worth, don't be outshined by that little girl who's an Insect Master." Mingsheng, the old ancestor on the side "stirred the pot" and said, "If you can successfully learn the skill of the Array Master and become a Level One Array Master, I guarantee your cousin Shouzhe will be impressed."

"Array Master?"

"Wang Shouzhe was surprised to hear and said: "Old Ancestor, could it be that cousin Xiaoxiao has the talent for Formation learning?"

"What, does it mean that your Wang family can produce an Insect Master, but my Lu Family can't produce an Array Master?" Mingsheng jokingly replied.

Wang Shouzhe broke a cold sweat: "Old Ancestor, I meant no such thing. It's just a bit surprising. Congratulations to you, and to cousin Xiaoxiao."

In his heart, he was actually marveling at the unpredictability of talent. He vaguely remembered that Lu Xiaoxiao did a poor job learning the Nine Chapter Arithmetic, and yet she possessed the talent for Formations...

"Great Grandpa, from now on I will work hard, no more laziness." Lu Xiaoxiao obediently responded, "Once I become a Level One Array Master, I'll show that insect master what I'm made of. I'll definitely not let cousin Shouzhe think less of me."

"That's the spirit. Now you are acting like a true descendant of Lu Mingsheng. Let's lay a good foundation, and later, I'll take you to find a master." Mingsheng was pleasing towards Lu Xiaoxiao. He casually waved his hand at Wang Shouzhe, "Shouzhe, you can go about your business."

Was he being treated as a handyman?

Wang Shouzhe was speechless, but he would not mind it, for the reward was five hundred Qian Golds. The fact that Lu Xiaoxiao possessed the talent for Formations was a great thing. She was his double cousin and they were very close in blood relation.

However, since he had the rare chance to see Mingsheng, Wang Shouzhe did not want to waste the opportunity, so he asked: "Old Ancestor, I have a few obscure spots in my Cultivation. I hope you can give me some pointers."

"You cheeky boy, don't push your luck," Mingsheng retorted, "Isn't your Old Ancestor Longyan already knowledgeable enough that you need guidance?"

"More perspectives lead to better understanding," Wang Shouzhe replied with a grin, "Multi-verification will greatly benefit my path to the Spiritual Platform. The environment here is great for practicing, I'm sure my progress will be quick..."

He put on a pestering posture as if he would not leave if Mingsheng didn't guide him. As a junior, it was nothing wrong to act a bit cheeky towards his great grandfather.

"Alright, alright, ask away, and once you are done, leave immediately. Don't disturb my Cultivation," Mingsheng helplessly replied.

Wang Shouzhe quickly asked all the prepared questions he had.

Mingsheng, in fact, was merely pretending to be reluctant. And he of course took Wang Shouzhe's questions seriously, carefully considering each of them before answering. But as the questions progressed, Wang Shouzhe's inquiries became tougher and even Mingsheng had to ponder before he could answer.

Before he reincarnated, Wang Shouzhe was a quiet person who only knew how to practice by himself and dared not ask questions to his Old Ancestor Longyan. But the Wang Shouzhe of today was completely different. The modern earthman's thinking had influenced him, causing him to ask many cultivation questions from different angles.

This is one of the differences between a child of a Prominent Family and an Independent Cultivator, having elders to guide them in the family.

"You little rascal, that's enough. I also need to cultivate." After answering questions for over two hours, Mingsheng was exhausted. Where on earth did this boy get so many strange questions? If he continues to ask questions like this, Mingsheng feared he wouldn't be able to answer them all.

For what he did not understand, he couldn't just pretend to know. If any problems occurred, wouldn't that harm the boy?

He was now at his limits!

At first, Lu Xiaoxiao was listening with interest, but as the conversation went on, she became more and more confused and bored. Eventually, she fell asleep.

"Thank you, Old Ancestor, for your guidance. I now have a better understanding," said Wang Shouzhe. He stood up and said, "I wish Old Ancestor a swift completion of the Profound Achievement and hope you ascend to become a Celestial being soon."

Mingsheng was quite pleased with these words. Being in the mid-stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm, he was still struggling forward. But who among those who reached the Spiritual Platform Realm didn't want to strive further?

Everyone knew that under the Spiritual Platform Realm all are mortals with a lifespan of no more than a hundred years. Reaching the Spiritual Platform Realm, one's lifespan would double to two hundred years at its utmost limit. This is why those in the Spiritual Platform Realm were called Old Ancestors as they often outlive their descendants.

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