

Protect OCL 41

Chapter 41: 41 Paying respects! Old Ancestor Longyan

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[Family Industries]

[Fishing Fleet]

[Changning Fish Market]

[Fenggu Farm]

[Prosperous Farm]

[Xinmao Silkworm Manor]

There are altogether five sectors, each of which has an option to (click to view details). Naturally, Wang Shouzhe clicked on the Fishing Fleet.

The page "leaps" to the detail page of the Fishing Fleet.

[Fishing Fleet]

Small Fishing Boats: 9

Medium Fishing Boats: 1

Fishing Crew Members: 46

Family Manager: Wang Dinghai

Average Annual Income of the Past Five Years: 606 Qian Gold

Average Annual Expenditure of the Past Five Years: 385 Qian Gold

Average Annual Net Profit of the Past Five Years: 221 Qian Gold

Average Annual Catch of Spirit Fish over The Last Five Years: 400 catties

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Suggested Improvements: To develop a variety of fishing gear for efficient mixed fishing operations

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This Year's Target:

Net Profit Target: 1000 Qian Gold

Spirit Fish Target: 1000 catties

This is the simple panel of the Fishing Fleet, which records the financial data before Wang Shouzhe took office. It also features directions on improvements to take, and the profit target for this year.

According to Wang Shouzhe's estimation, this goal is easy to achieve. After all, it's the peak season now, and due to the shortage of food caused by an infestation, fish as a substitute for staple food will inevitably increase in price.

For the Fishing Fleet and Fish Market sectors, Wang Shouzhe's total profit target is 2000 Qian Gold.

The only issue is that with increased fishing efforts from the Fishing Fleet, it may gradually disrupt the ecological balance, although there won't be any major problems within a few years.

However, this is not a long-term solution.

For a Xuanwu Prominent Family, only long-term and stable sources of income serve as the real pillar industries. In the short term, huge profits can only serve as a supplement to the family's industries.

Just like the [Fenggu Farm]industry, it is a true century-old foundation that can continuously provide resources to a Xuanwu Family for hundreds of years.

This point is very important.

The Xuanwu World is not short of riches. All sorts of miracles - finding treasures by luck, encountering the legacy of a predecessor, or coming across two high-level Fierce Beasts that die together - these can all make you rich overnight.

But what comes after the riches? No matter how much resources are available, they will be exhausted. Only the family's heritage can sustain prosperity in the long run.

Take Wang Shouzhe himself for example. Now at the age of eighteen, he's at the High Level Six of the Qi Refinement Realm, consuming resources close to 200 Qian Gold each year. According to the family's estimation, he can reach Peak Qi Refinement Realm in about twenty years. By then, he will be thirty-eight, still in his prime.

Given that the resource consumption of 200 Qian Gold remains constant, a full twenty years would require the consumption of 4000 Qian Gold.

Of course, it's impossible for it to stay constant. Once he reaches the Qi Refinement Realm Level Seven or Eight, his annual resource expenditure will skyrocket. To cultivate from his current level to the Peak Qi Refinement Realm, he would have to consume at least 8000 Qian Gold of resources.

Where do these resources come from? They are all squeezed out, bit by bit, from the annual outputs of each of the family's major industries. Those sectors that can bring long-term steady profit are the true family foundations.

It's also for this reason that with the current situation of the Wang family, they lack the power to cultivate a second Wang Shouzhe. Otherwise, even if the aptitude is slightly lower, as long as one is willing to invest resources, a young master could still be cultivated.

In fact, if resources are increased by one or two times on Wang Shouzhe, or even invested in without considering the cost, he won't have to use twenty years to reach the Peak Qi Refinement Realm at all. Maybe it will only take fifteen years, or even ten years or less.

This is also why it's hard for Independent Cultivators to achieve anything. Independent Cultivators don't have a solid foundation. They may get their hands on resources if they're lucky, but might also starve if they're not.

Independent Cultivators who can cultivate to the Spirit Platform Realm are either incredibly talented with luck or extraordinarily lucky.

Therefore, although it seems like Wang Shouzhe has a lot of resources with over ten thousand Qian Gold, it's just the total expense of the family over several years when times are tough. Without proper planning, this would just fuel a fire for the Wang family, but wouldn't sustain them in the long run.

Looking at the "Rudimentary System Panel" he created, Wang Shouzhe's mind was also racing, how to spend money effectively was a problem he had been pondering over for the past few days.

What does the family need most right now? Of course, it is the lack of a Spirit Platform Realm expert. Such a person could replace the position held by Old Ancestor Longyan, serving as a long-term protective umbrella for the family. After all, Old Ancestor Longyan's injuries have never completely healed, and the situation is getting worse.

But is over ten thousand Qian Gold enough to cultivate a Spirit Platform Realm master? Obviously, it is not. If Spirit Platform Realm experts were that cheap, the overall financial capacity of the Ping'an Wang Family would have easily solved the problem.

Even all the Spirit Platform Realm ancestors of the Xuanwu prominent families would become commonplace. Therefore, this option is already ruled out and needs no consideration.

The money can be spent entirely on developing more family estates...

Wang Shouzhe has carefully considered this issue. However, how many family estates can over ten thousand Qian Gold develop? It is important to know that some of what are called the pillar estates are known for their large scale, long development cycle, and relatively low return on investment.

Take Fenggu Farm of Wang family for example, how many elders have poured their heart and money into it? But how much profit does it actually make each year? If the weather is good, a net profit of seven or eight hundred Qian Gold is already considered good.

In the long run, it is inevitable to increase investment in pillar industries. But "distant water cannot put out a nearby fire", so for now, Wang Shouzhe has put a circle around this idea, leaving it undecided.

Or perhaps, buy a large number of cultivation resources to supply himself and the potential family members?

Wang Shouzhe has certainly considered this point.

But here there is still a problem of decreasing marginal utility. Can he, Wang Shouzhe, consume "Little Pei Yuan Dan" every day and cultivate to the Spirit Platform Realm even after several years?

Obviously not...and let alone the Spirit Platform Realm, it might not even be possible to cultivate to the Vital Energy Refining Realm Level Nine.

Even if he could brutally consume resources and manage to cultivate to the Qi Refining Realm Level Nine in just a few years, what then? Could he solve the fundamental survival problem of the family?

If even he, one of the youngest with the best talent in the family, can't do it, what about the others?

His sixth grandfather, Wang Xiaohan, once failed in his attempt to reach the Spirit Platform Realm. Although his current state is declining with age, and is only stuck at Qi Refining Realm Level Nine, and no longer at his peak as before.

If he were given abundant resources and confidence, he would also have the opportunity to return to the peak of Qi Refining and make another attempt at the Spirit Platform Realm. This is the fastest method Wang Shouzhe could think of to add a Spirit Platform Realm ancestor to the family.

But this amount of resources is far from enough to support the cost of reaching the Spirit Platform Realm. Furthermore, in order for Sixth Grandfather Wang Xiaohan to adjust to a state that could reach the Spirit Platform Realm, it would by no means be accomplished overnight.

Wang Shouzhe thought about it, if he could find a way to cure Old Ancestor Longyan's injury and prolong her life with this money, that would really be the most pressing matter.

But it's quite clear, that it is absolutely impossible to cure Old Ancestor Longyan completely with this money. If spending over ten thousand Qian Gold could cure her, the family would have already done so long ago, even if it meant selling their woks and pans.

So even if she could be cured, but the cost of curing her would inevitably far exceed the cost of cultivating one or even several Spirit Platform Realm experts.

Perhaps a large sum of money could simply alleviate her injuries and prolong her life a little bit.

Just list it as a backup option for now, Wang Shouzhe thought with a frown.

He really envied those transmigrators who possessed a real golden finger system, where any problem could be solved with the golden finger, spending their days in leisure and fun, killing anyone in their way, living frivolously.

Not like him, who had to use his little money sparingly, and had to spend several months slowly cultivating, just to advance from the high level six to level seven in the Qi Refining Realm, and this was because he had more resources, which made his speed much faster than others.

But on second thought, he felt that this world was quite real, the path of the strong has always required steady and gradual progress.

While he was lost in thought, Gongsun Hui sent her maid Xia He to call him, saying that Old Ancestor Longyan wanted to see him.

Old Ancestor Longyan wanted to see him?

Wang Shouzhe was stunned for a moment, then immediately gathered his spirits. The old ancestor had been in seclusion for a few years, and rarely summoned the family's descendants. She didn't even show her face at Wang Dingyue's funeral, which showed that her physical condition was not very good.

Even Wang Shouzhe, who was the most favored among the seventh generation, hadn't seen the old ancestor for more than a year. On usual days, it was Gongsun Hui who took care of the old ancestor.

"Thank you for your trouble, Miss Xia He." Wang Shouzhe was quite polite to Xia He.

Xia He hurriedly returned polite: "Family Head is too polite. If Family Head has no pressing matters, please come with me to see the Old Ancestor."

She was a close person to Gongsun Hui, and had been trained from the age of nine, and was now nineteen years old. Although she lacked the talent to cultivate, she was quite intelligent and could both read and write, as well as proficient in Nine Chapters Arithmetic.

A lot of accounting work by Gongsun Hui was done with her help.

Soon after.

Wang Shouzhe followed Xia He towards the side residence. The side residence where Old Ancestor Longyan lived was quite close to Zhuwei Lake. Not long after, Wang Shouzhe arrived at the side residence called the "Long Yan Habitat".

In order not to disturb Old Ancestor Longyan's cultivation, this surrounding area was a forbidden place for the family, and no one could trespass without being summoned by the old ancestor.

Gongsun Hui was already waiting at the entrance of Long Yan Habitat. After they met, she said in a clear voice, "Old Ancestor, Shouzhe is here."

"Shouzhe, come in."

A calm and serene voice gently sounded at the entrance.

"Yes, Old Ancestor." Wang Shouzhe took a deep breath, slightly calming his emotions, and then walked into the Long Yan Habitat.

This was a simple courtyard decorated in a minimalist and non-extravagant manner. In the yard, ordinary flowers and plants were simply planted, swaying slightly with the breeze.

In the pavilion, a thin woman was leaning against the railing, back facing Wang Shouzhe, looking at the scenery of the garden. Her long white hair was casually draped over her shoulders.

The sight of that white hair gave Wang Shouzhe an inexplicable pang of pain. It came from the deep memories of his previous life — when Wang Shouzhe was young, he clearly remembered that half of Old Ancestor Longyan's hair was white.

But in just over ten years, it had all turned white.

Wang Shouzhe felt a lump in his throat. He stepped forward to bow and said, "Shouzhe pays his respect to the Old Ancestor."

Chapter 42 Old Ancestor Wants to Travel_1

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The feeling when facing Old Ancestor Longyan was entirely different from when he saw Old Ancestor Mingsheng. Although Old Ancestor Mingsheng appeared somewhat old, she exuded an aura of a man in his prime.

Old Ancestor Longyan, on the other hand, was not only thin but also seemed to carry a hint of melancholy. No wonder, considering her deteriorating condition in recent years, she had significantly reduced her consumption of Spirit Food in order to save for the younger generation in her family.

As a cultivator in the Spirit Platform Realm, her physical strength was far superior to those in the Vital Energy Refining Realm. However, according to the Law of Conservation of Cosmic Energy, energy cannot be created out of nothing and the more robust the body, the greater the energy consumption.

Ordinary food was simply too inefficient in terms of energy transformation for someone in the Spirit Platform Realm. Hence, such a cultivator usually needed to sustain themselves on Spirit Food to maintain their physical strength, or even to enhance themselves.

But ever since the sixth Grand Elder, Wang Xiaohan's failed attempt to reach the Spirit Platform Realm, resources within the family became even scarcer. Consequently, Old Ancestor Longyan gradually reduced her Spirit Food intake. Today, she only consumes 80 catties of Spirit Rice, 100 jin of Spirit Fish and Spirit Meat, and 2 Level Two Solid Yuan Pills each year.

The total cost of the Spirit Food amounted to just 36 Qian Gold, while the two Solid Yuan Pills were merely another 60 Qian Gold.

A venerable Spirit Platform Realm cultivator who consumed less than 100 Qian Gold resources a year was probably just enough to maintain her quiet cultivation state...

In fact, she wasn't the only one doing so.

The other old members of the family also only took in sufficient Spirit Food and resources to maintain their bodies. Their cultivation levels had been stagnant for many years. They gave all their opportunities to the younger and more promising generation.

"Shouzhe, are you sad?" Old Ancestor Longyan did not turn around. Her voice was somewhat vague and ethereal, devoid of the raspy tone typically heard in older women.

"I just feel a little bad for Old Ancestor," Wang Shouzhe replied honestly.

In truth, Old Ancestor Longyan was only 115 years old, just a few years older than Lu Clan's Old Ancestor Mingsheng, still far from her life expectancy in the Spirit Platform Realm.

When she was thirty years old, she had advanced to the Spirit Platform Realm. At sixty, she reached the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. Since then, she had maintained her wealth of youth and beauty at their peak.

Back then, how proud and ambitious she was, aiming to reach the Heavenly Human Realm, a higher level of cultivation!

Alas.

The beast catastrophe in the year 3095 of the Changlong Calendar had ruthily dragged the Ping'an Wang Family down from the clouds and into the mud, simultaneously clipping the wings of Old Ancestor Longyan.

"Tides rise and fall, flowers bloom and wither, these are just ordinary occurrences in the world," Old Ancestor Longyan said calmly, slowly turned around, "I heard about your recent exploits from Hui'er. You've done well."

Although her figure was slightly thin, coupled with common cotton clothes and cloth shoes, it gave her an ethereal aura a common feature of Celestial beings. Her star-like eyes were deep as a hundred-foot pool, completely impervious.

The only regret for Wang Shouzhe was that Old Ancestor Longyan wore a veil over her face, obscuring her features.

However, Old Ancestor had been wearing the veil since as long as Wang Shouzhe could remember. He had never seen her true face.

"Thank you for your praise, Old Ancestor," Wang Shouzhe responded with a salute, "As long as Old Ancestor doesn't find me reckless." He paused before curiously asking, "Did Old Ancestor ask me to come over because you have instructions for me?"

He was somewhat nervous, fearing that Old Ancestor Longyan might not agree with his implementation of the rank competition mechanism. The older generation in the family valued unity and harmony among family members. They might worry that competition for ranks might lead to internal strife and conflicts.

"Shouzhe, you are the Family Head," Old Ancestor Longyan said calmly, "I won't meddle in your affairs."

"Then Old Ancestor, this time..." Wang Shouzhe was a bit puzzled, Old Ancestor Longyan wasn't the type to call him over for a casual chat and give compliments.

"I need you to make arrangements and accompany me on a trip to the Hundred Islands Guard," Old Ancestor Longyan said.

Hundred Islands Guard?

Wang Shouzhe was stunned. Only after quite a while did he remember that it was a guard city near the Eastern Sea. It was understandable for his delayed reaction since he never left Guard City Changning since he was born, how could he think of a place that far?

Moreover, ever since that disaster, Old Ancestor Longyan had never stepped outside Guard City Changning.

Suppressing his curiosity, Wang Shouzhe saluted and said, "I understand, please wait for two days, Old Ancestor, I'll make arrangements now." Regardless of Old Ancestor Longyan's intention, Wang Shouzhe could not refuse her request.

After receiving the order from Old Ancestor Longyan, Wang Shouzhe returned to his courtyard, taking out the provincial map to inspect and to calculate the itinerary.

Sectrecy was the first concern when Old Ancestor Longyan decided to travel.

Even though it was the peak period of the insect catastrophe, and both the Liu Clan and Zhao Clan were frazzled, they could still not let down their guard.

Additionally, they must consider Old Ancestor Longyan's physical condition, saving her from any unnecessary bumps during the journey, which also brought with the need for someone to serve her along the way. The choice of the person to serve her would also require careful consideration.

In just a short while, he had drafted the itinerary and plan for this trip.

"Wang Gui," Wang Shouzhe called in the servant boy, "Go invite my Fourth Aunt Xu, and Wang Licui over."

Wang Gui was confused: "Fourth Aunt Xu? Which Xu?"

"You boy, of course, it's from my Fourth Uncle's family. Can't you remember the few dozen people in our family, from the elderly to the young, and their families?" Wang Shouzhe frowned, almost kicking him.

"Could it be that the Family Head wishes to meet Madam Rou." Wang Gui quickly nodded and ran out, "I'll go right away."

However, it was not surprising that Wang Gui was confused. Firstly, there was more than one Xu in the family. Secondly, Wang Shouzhe's Fourth Aunt Xu Zhirou had always kept a low profile, and had become even more secluded after Fourth Uncle Wang Dingbang died five years ago.

Nonetheless, Wang Shouzhe had a profound impression of Fourth Aunt Xu Zhirou. She was from the direct lineage of the Xu Clan of Jingsha, and after Wang Shouzhe's biological mother passed away when he was young, it was Xu Zhirou who took care of him.

Even after his stepmother, Gongsun Hui, married into the family, Xu Zhirou was there to lend a hand for a good while. After all, Gongsun Hui was then a young and pampered lady, and Xu Zhirou had to guide her step by step.

In his memory, Xu Zhirou was gentle and meticulous, yet remarkably talented. She was good at cooking and skilled at creating little trinkets to please him.

His confused and heartbroken younger self was cared for by his Fourth Aunt, helping him through the most difficult times. Unfortunately, after Fourth Aunt became pregnant with his Fifth Sister, Wang Luo Jing, she returned to her maternal home for her confinement half a year later.

Since then, Wang Shouzhe had been living with his stepmother Gongsun Hui until he moved into his current courtyard when he was fourteen, to live on his own as the Young Clan Leader.

Choosing Fourth Aunt Xu was because Wang Shouzhe highly regarded her gentleness and meticulous nature. During the Ancestor's journey, it was necessary to have an experienced and mature woman by his side. After much thought, Fourth Aunt seemed the most suitable.

Setting aside his random thoughts for now, Wang Shouzhe continued to refine his travel plan.

Not much later, Fourth Aunt Xu Zhirou and Wang Licui were led into his side hall by Wang Gui.

Wang Shouzhe had last seen his Fourth Aunt during his father's funeral. As a female member of the family, she naturally busied herself with various tasks. Unfortunately, at the time, Wang Shouzhe was in a haze and didn't talk much with her.

Now, taking a closer look, he saw Xu Zhirou dressed in a plain cotton dress with subtle patterns, without any extra jewellery, neat and clean. The only difference from his memory was that she now had signs of aging common to middle-aged women.

It was not surprising, she had given birth to three children and her husband, Fourth Uncle, had passed away five years ago. Taking care of the children was already a handful for her.

"Xu pays her respects to the Family Head," Xu Zhirou gently curtsied.

Hastily bowing her head at the Family Head's side, Wang Licui hurried to show her respect : "Licui pays her respects to Fourth Uncle."

"Fourth Aunt, there's no need for formalities. As before, you may call me Shouzhe." Wang Shouzhe quickly returned Xu Zhirou's bow, "Come, come, sit and let's chat." Then he turned to Wang Licui with a smile, "Sit down as well, young lady."

After expressing their gratitude, they sat down.

Wang Gui busied himself with serving tea and fruits before leaving.

Wang Shouzhe first caught up with Xu Zhirou for a bit, then turned his attention to Wang Licui, upon seeing her chewing on a piece of candied fruit, he couldn't help but laugh, "What have you been so busy with recently, little girl?"

Wang Licui quickly swallowed the half-chewed candied fruit and answered anxiously, "Fourth Uncle, I haven't been up to much, just reading and practicing cultivation daily."

This girl was the daughter of his eldest brother, Wang Shouxin. She was sixteen years old this year, the eldest among the girls of the family's eighth generation. Consequently, people in Shouzhe's generation affectionately called her "the big girl".

"Well, sounds like you've been hardworking. Good, very good." Wang Shouzhe was reassured, at least one of the girls in the family knew the importance of studying hard. Immediately, he said with a smile, "In that case, Fourth Uncle will test your knowledge. If you pass, there will certainly be a reward."

"What?"

With that, Wang Licui's pretty, slightly chubby face turned deathly pale, and her little legs began to shake. To her, Fourth Uncle was ten times scarier than her father, Wang Shouxin. Her eldest brother, Wang Zongwei's miserable situation was proof of Fourth Uncle's ruthlessness.

Regret filled her heart and moistened her eyes. If she had known that she would be tested by Fourth Uncle today, she would have crammed and worked harder these past few days.

But who could have known that this would happen?

It was a buzzing chaos in her head...

Truly.

A disaster from the sky!

Chapter 43: Legend! Jiaolong Gang_1

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Wang Shouzhe's face was almost turned black, seeing such a guilty tale from this young lady, clearly she must have been neglecting her studies. Yet, she has the audacity to claim that she studies and cultivates every day in front of him?

"Shouzhe, stop scaring the girl, look, she is about to cry." Seeing her reaction, Xu Zhirou, a gentle-hearted woman, pulled her into her arms and laughed, "Don't worry, child, your Fourth Uncle is just teasing you. Think about it, if he was really going to quiz you, would he only call you?"

So that's how it was.

Wang Licui breathed a sigh of relief, immediately relaxing. She was so scared, she quickly ate a piece of candied fruit to calm her nerves. Right away, she picked up a piece of candy fruit and started eating it contentedly.

Seeing this, Wang Shouzhe's face grew even darker. This damsel's transition from surviving a calamity to becoming a foodie was too swift, wasn't it? Didn't she have a care in the world?

With her being so relaxed, could any quiz really help?

He had originally planned to pick two female relatives from the family to accompany his journey, serving Master Longyan's daily needs, one of them should be older and steadier, while the other should be younger with more energy and vitality.

Wang Shouzhe was, of course, satisfied with his Fourth Aunt Xu, but there was just the matter of this damsel, Wang Licui...

What a headache!

Among the younger female relatives in the family, only his blood sister Wang Luoyi, his fourth younger sister Wang Luotong, and his grandniece Wang Licui were available. Since this journey was going to pass through Donggang, and his sister Wang Luoyi was already engaged to the young master of the Donggang Chen clan, bringing her along would certainly be inappropriate.

As for Luotong, she is busy attending to the last leg of the food transportation process. Once she finished this task, Wang Shouzhe planned for her to follow their Aunt Gongsun Hui and handle the consequent affairs for the sake of training.

Thus, he did not want to disrupt Wang Luotong's original schedule.

After thinking it over, the only candidate who was idle and suitable was Wang Licui. Looking at her in her inept state, he felt an urge to replace her with a smart and nimble maid.

However, this idea faded almost as soon as it came. Since the girl still refuses to study diligently, it would be better to take her along and discipline her properly. Let her experience a bit of the Tight Hoop Spell.

Moreover, the habit of the girls in the family not taking their studies seriously has become a common trend. Young ladies like Luotong and Luo Jing are no exceptions. Presumably, the other little ladies are no better. The boys might fare a little better, given the extra pressure from the elders.

This unhealthy family trend needs to be rectified when he returns.

With that thought in mind, Wang Shouzhe temporarily returned to the main topic, "Fourth Aunt. This time I called you here because I need you to embark on a journey that might last about ten

days. You should go home and prepare, we will depart the day after next at dawn. Do you have any concerns?"

Although Xu Zhirou was a little puzzled, she still rose to her feet and nodded, "No problem, everything is up to Shouzhe."

Wang Licui's head was full of questions and excitement. Are they leaving on a long journey? Is Fourth Uncle taking her to Changning? In her mind, Changning was already far enough. After all, she hadn't been there more than twice during her entire life.

As such, two days passed in a blink.

In the early morning, just as the sky was getting light.

A four or five zhang long black-clothed boat sailed from the backyard dock of the Wang's main house into Zhuwei Lake, then proceeded towards Fenggu Farm.

Wang Shouzhe had plotted this route for Master Longyan who wanted to travel discreetly. If they took the carriage towards Dingpu Ferry to board a ship, it would be too conspicuous.

It was better to follow the food transportation line, go through the Fenggu Sluice, and take the large ship. After all, that area was their own territory.

There were not many people accompanying Master Longyan on this trip. Wang Shouzhe took along the two heads of the household, Wang Zhong and Wang Yong, plus his Fourth Aunt Xu Zhirou and the young Wang Licui. Counting the Old Ancestor, it was only six people.

Wang Zhong and Wang Yong were in charge of the boat. Although they were not professionals, it was quite simple for Profound Martial experts like them to control this type of medium-sized black-clothed boat. When both of them were at the oars, the boat moved quite swiftly.

Inside the black-clothed boat.

Wang Licui's eyes were wide open, gripping her bundle tightly, and not daring to draw too much breath. Fourth Uncle hadn't told her in advance that they would be travelling with Master Longyan.

That's the Old Ancestor of the family, an existence even more frightening than Fourth Uncle.

The surprise Fourth Uncle gave was too big to digest.

"Old Ancestor, the itinerary and arrangements are as such. Fourth Aunt and Licui are responsible for taking care of your daily needs." Wang Shouzhe respectfully introduced the various arrangements for this trip to Master Longyan.

"I have faith in Shouzhe's work." Longyan's Old Ancestor was quite pleased with Wang Shouzhe's arrangements, then she turned to Xu Zhirou and said, "Zhirou, I appreciate your efforts on this journey."

Xu Zhirou humbly responded, "Serving the Old Ancestor is both my duty and my honor."

Afterward, Old Ancestor Longyan turned her gaze towards Wang Licui, a rare softness appearing in her eyes, "It's been two years since I last summoned you. You've grown into a young lady now. How are your studies progressing?"

Old Ancestor Longyan was usually quite kind to the younger members of the family. Especially considering she was the third generation granddaughter of Old Ancestor Zhou Xuan, while Wang Licui was already the eighth generation of their line.

"Huh?" Wang Licui was taken aback for a moment, another question about her studies?

Luckily, thanks to the previous example set by her Fourth Uncle, she was prepared.

Wang Licui rolled her eyes and hurriedly said, "I have been studying very hard lately, I can recite some articles for Old Ancestor to listen to..." As she spoke, she eagerly began reciting an article- 'Observing the Heavens on a Night atop Tianlan'.

This piece, composed by a powerful cultivator and literary master from a thousand years ago, was grand and magnificent in expression, and deeply loved by later generations.

Literature, in any civilization, holds important value as it shapes character and adds cultural depth. If humans only knew of fighting and killing, and didn't cultivate body and soul, spending their lives merely pursuing power and slaughter, then what distinguished them from barbaric beasts?

Wang Shouzhe listened as she recited smoothly, even with a hint of dramatic flair. He couldn't help but feel amused. Her so-called 'recent hard work' probably just referred to her cramming over the past few days, right? Most likely, she could only recite this one piece fluently, right?

However, he didn't expose her. After all, it seemed Old Ancestor was quite pleased, praising and encouraging her with a few words.

The canopy boat meandered towards Fenggu Farm but did not stop there. It passed directly through the lock gate at Fenggu Sluice. Everyone debarked the boat, walked over the lock gate where a medium-sized riverboat was already waiting.

This mid-sized sailboat could steady even if loaded with horse carriages. It was unknown where Wang Dinghai had borrowed it from.

"Shouzhe, as per your instructions," Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai greeted them, "The cabin has been slightly remodelled to include a temporary lounge. All this secrecy... what are you planning... Huh?"

Wang Dinghai suddenly noticed Old Ancestor Longyan standing behind Wang Shouzhe. His eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. Was this a joke? The Old Ancestor had actually come out...

Sweating profusely with fear, he was about to bow when Wang Shouzhe stopped him, "Sixth Uncle, stop," he ordered. "Just navigate the boat to Donggang well."

"Yes, yes, I will navigate well," Wang Dinghai paled, hurriedly invited Wang Shouzhe and the others into the temporary lounge in the cabin, then wordlessly headed off to pilot the ship.

When the Old Ancestor travelled, it was always a major event.

However, no matter how big the event, it would always be of less importance than the security of Old Ancestor Longyan. Therefore, under his command, the ship slowly left the deep waters outside Fenggu Sluice and steadied in the middle of Peace River.

Reaching the centre of the river, the wind and waves became stronger. The sails unfolded neatly, the dense sailcloth billowing in the wind caused the speed of the ship to gradually increase.

On Earth, a ship's speed was measured in knots.

However, in Da Qian of this world, they still calculated based on how many miles were travelled per two hours. With today's southeast wind and a rapid eastward waterflow, their speed unknowingly increased to around fifty-sixty miles in two hours.

Although it sounded fast, it only equated to a speed of around ten kilometers per hour, only two or three times the speed of a normal adult walking.

Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai, a master who earned a living on Peace River year-round, was as skillful as flowing water in piloting the ship. Inside the rest cabin, Wang Shouzhe and the others did not feel much discomfort from the movement.

However, Wang Shouzhe, being young and vigorous, found it boring to stay in the cabin. So after asking for Old Ancestor's permission, he went out to the deck to enjoy the scenery. Seeing Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai steering the ship, he went to have a look.

"Sixth Uncle, this seems like a good ship. It appears to be a merchant ship, where did you borrow it from?" Wang Shouzhe surveyed the ship. The sailors on board were clearly not from the Wang family's fishing fleet.

Wang Dinghai responded while steering the ship, "You sent someone to tell me to find a good ship, so I borrowed one from a friend in Jiaolong Business Bank's Changning branch. That guy owed me a favor after an accident happened in our territory to the ship team he was in charge of. It was I who risked my life to save him."

Jiaolong Business Bank?

Wang Shouzhe had heard of the Bank. They operated along the entire Peace River, from Dahuang County in the far west to Longzuo County, crossing several administrative districts. They had branches in every riverfront city.

This was a business bank with overall strength not inferior to that of the Qian Family. However, since they only operated water routes along the river, and didn't compete for local resources with local families, they were well-separated, like wells and rivers.

"Shouzhe," Wang Dinghai warned solemnly, "Don't think about getting into a river shipping business. The Jiaolong Business Bank is not to be provoked. Remember, they were once known as the Jiaolong Gang and are a society secretly supported by several powerful families.

Only in the last few decades have their business operations increased significantly, leading them to change from a gang to a business bank. They have signed non-aggression pacts regarding their interests with every local family."

God! It turned out that it was a business bank that whitewashed its previous reputation as a crime syndicate. No wonder they could occupy Peace River, a strategic waterway.

However, Wang Shouzhe didn't know whether to laugh or lament. When he read fantasy novels on Earth, Jiaolong Gang was merely a minor force, a stepping stone for the protagonist to gain experience in the early stages.

When it came to him, they were all of a sudden an intimidating behemoth not to be provoked!

Chapter 44: Matrimonial Cliques

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But on second thought, it made perfect sense. If Jiaolong Business Bank weren't strong enough, how could it monopolize the entire business along the Peace River?

The annual revenue thus generated must surely reach astronomical figures.

With such enormous revenue, recruiting and nurturing talents would naturally fall into place.

This is the so-called principle that the stronger one is, the more money one has, and the more money one has, the stronger one is. This concept applies universally across all worlds.

The boat made swift progress along the river. In small-talk conversation between Wang Shouzhe and Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai, they soon left the exclusive territory of the Wang family. To their left was the Chaotic Stone Beach and to their right, a steep cliff.

The forthcoming water area was the territory of the Zhao Clan in Ping'an Town. In Wang Shouzhe's understanding, this was an exclusive economic zone divided up after protracted wrestling among various powers.

After another ten miles along the waterway, the right bank was the Shanyang area, where the Gongsun Clan's stronghold resided. Compared to the small area of Ping'an Town where three prominent families compete, only two prominent families resided in Shanyang Town. Among them, the comprehensive strength of the Gongsun clan in Shanyang far exceeded that of the Cao Family.

Marriage alliances were very important among the Profound Martial families. Not only did they need to ensure the continuation of their bloodlines, but they also provided a means for alliances and diplomacy. As a rule, families from the same area didn't intermarry.

Just like the Wang family, Liu Clan and Zhao Clan in Ping'an Town, they didn't intermarry among each other. This signified an unspoken understanding that one hill cannot accommodate two tigers, and that they would eventually have to merge.

Similarly, when forming an external marital alliance, one could not choose to form an alliance with two families in the same area. As the Wang family and the Gongsun family of Shanyang were in an alliance through marriage, they absolutely couldn't form an alliance with Shanyang. This is considered a big taboo.

In return, the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang naturally wouldn't form alliances with the Zhao Clan or Liu Clan in Ping'an.

Thus, the dozens of prominent families in Changning, though seemingly complicated, were actually divided into five or six factions through marriage alliances.

Wang Shouzhe admired the picturesque scenery along the way while sorting out his thoughts. The future development of his family necessitated consideration of factions formed through marital alliances.

Take the Xu Family of Changning as an example. The Xu family currently had three members in the Spirit Platform Realm, their strongest old ancestor had already reached the advanced stage of the Spirit Platform Realm, barely inferior to the peak strength of the Wang family.

However, the two families, being in-laws, still maintained a direct marriage alliance. The main business of Xinmao Silkworm Farm was silkworm rearing, and it relied on the Xu Family for survival. The Xu family, for example, bought silk cocoons at a price 20% higher than others, showing that they still regarded the Wang family with affection.

If one day he, Wang Shouzhe, attained the Spirit Platform Realm, wouldn't he remember the kindness of the Gongsun clan, the Lu Family, and others? Everyone could face adversity at some point. Remembering the once-mighty Wang family, hadn't it also fallen from grace?

"Shouzhe, look, that's the Zhao Clan's fishing fleet." Wang Dinghai suddenly called out.

Wang Shouzhe glanced over the river surface and spotted a fishing fleet operating in the distance. Among them, two were medium-sized fishing boats. The dozen or so fishing boats spread out impressively, indicating that they were more advanced than the Wang family in terms of the scale of their fishing boats.

No wonder, out of the three prominent families in the small Ping'an Town, the Wang family was the weakest. Firstly, the Wang family had always had a tough fate. Secondly, the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan had deliberately joined hands to suppress them.

However, both the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan knew that once the Wang family collapsed and disappeared, Ping'an Town would become their battleground. From the fact that the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan did not intermarry, it was clear that there was an unspoken understanding between them.

"Haha, they are still using the outdated fishing method of casting the net from a fleet of boats." Wang Dinghai sneered as he steered the boat. A sense of superiority arose in his heart.

It was no wonder. Since Wang Shouzhe had introduced the fixed lift net technology, Wang Dinghai had secretly erected 30 fixed lift nets at various hidden spots along both shores. At those fishing points, he had erected simple and crude huts for two fishermen to alternate between work and rest.

Moreover, fishing with these fixed lift nets, which used a seesaw mechanism, was extremely simple and easy. Even an ordinary underage person could easily handle it without much effort.

Fishing at night on the river was risky, and boats seldom went out unless necessary, usually returning to the port before nightfall. However, lift nets could be used to fish without light at night, and it was much safer on the shore than on the river.

Fish tend to move closer to the shore as evening falls and night comes, as there's more opportunity for food near the shore, and the darkness gives them a sense of security.

During this fishing season, a fixed lift net could catch up to one or two thousand pounds in a single night, if luck was on their side. Even if not, they could easily get four or five hundred pounds.

With thirty lift nets, they've been catching an average of twenty thousand pounds every day in the past two days! That's two hundred loads of various types of fish...

For the sake of secrecy, Wang Dinghai had already ceased daytime operation of the lift nets. He disassembled the nets during the day, flattened the frames, and covered them with grass. Then, quickly reassembled them as the evening fell, making the most of the night to fish.

After all, daytime catch rates were much lower than nighttime, so it was better to increase the level of secrecy.

During the day, to avoid attracting attention, the fishing fleets had to go out unless there was anything else important. The daily catch of tens of pounds during the fish season gradually didn't meet Wang Dinghai's expectations. He was contemplating catching more with a scoop net.

When Wang Dinghai reported these matters in a soft voice to Wang Shouzhe, Wang Shouzhe felt deeply moved. The natural resources of this world are indeed abundant. Even the European and American countries known for their rich natural aquatic resources could not compare to this world.

"Sixth Uncle, try to preserve the resources as much as possible," Wang Shouzhe said with both joy and worry. "In the future, we should release the small fish of the same species."

"How could we do that?" Wang Dinghai widened his eyes. "These are money. We make several tenfold daily. Besides, if we don't fish, other families will." After a pause, he couldn't stand Wang Shouzhe's gaze, and had to say awkwardly, "If you really object, let the boatmen gather the small fish and throw them all into the Peace River, as if we are breeding them ourselves."

I will just have to add a few more scoop nets and catch more big fish."

"That works too." Wang Shouzhe knew that the older generation's thinking was strictly based around poverty. He understood that the progressive thinking of protecting natural resources wouldn't be accepted immediately.

The boat quickly passed the Zhao Clan's boats, keeping a distance of two miles, and gradually moved away from them.

The journey from the entrance of Fenggu Sluice to Donggang is about 120 miles. With the current, it would only take two and a half hours to reach Donggang.

The river here was wider, shaped like a large trumpet mouth, and the current was slower. On the left side of the trumpet, the Liu Ping Mountain Range stretched without end.

The Liu Ping Mountain Range and the areas behind it were dangerous and belonged to one of the uncultivated wild areas. The beasts became more formidable the deeper one went, and even ancestors of the Spirit Platform Realm could perish randomly.

On the right side of the river was a vast plain. From the maps and on-the-spot observations, Wang Shouzhe deduced that it was an alluvial plain.

This fertile land was home to the prominent Donghaei District of Longzuo County.

Donggang Town was the furthest eastern extension of the Changning District, bordering the Donghaei District.

Donggang's geographical location was excellent, with a natural deep-water port providing shelter from the wind. Over time, it became a prosperous port with developed transportation and concentrated commercial trade.

The Chen Clan of Donggang, who were related to the Wang family by marriage, were one of the prominent families here.

The Chen clan was a family that had primarily operated a shipping business for generations. Despite being established less than a hundred years ago, the family was relatively young, and its pioneering ancestor had already passed away. Despite appearing to lack a strong background, in reality, the clan currently had two ancestors in the Spirit Platform Realm.

The elder ancestor was just over a hundred years old, while the younger one was in his seventies.

Besides, the Chen Clan's current leader, Chen Dewei, had reached the peak of the Qi Refinement at the young age of forty-two. He was now polishing his skills and preparing resources, ready to attempt to advance to the Spirit Platform Realm in six months to a year, or two years at most.

Once the Clan Leader Chen Dewei successfully advanced, the Chen clan of Donggang would become a three-Spirit Platform family, which would further solidify the clan's foundation.

Producing a Spirit Platform Stage cultivator every thirty years showed the considerable wealth and destiny of the Chen Clan of Donggang.

As Wang Shouzhe looked at the thriving buildings of Donggang from a distance, he felt deeply moved. Compared to the Chen clan, the destiny of the Wang family of Ping'an had been quite poor.

Fortunately, they now had him, Wang Shouzhe.

Suddenly!

A ship sailed out from the inner harbour. It was unique because it hoisted a large clan flag which depicted a golden flag bird flying over the sea.

On the lookout tower, a flag signalman was waving the flag.

"Shouzhe," Wang Dinghai said joyfully, "That's the Chen Clan of Donggang's ship. They're using flag signals to ask if we are visitors from the Wang Family. It looks like they've sent someone to welcome us."

"Hmm." Wang Shouzhe nodded. He had previously sent a steward to notify the Chen Clan of their journey. It was accepted etiquette for the Chen Clan to send someone to welcome visitors.

Wang Shouzhe guessed that it was the Young Clan Leader, Chen Fangjie because this person was soon to become his brother-in-law...

Chapter 45 Donggang Chen Clan_1

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Unless Chen Fangjie is not in Donggang, if he doesn't come to meet us, it would undoubtedly be a thorough disdain for the Wang family.

Given the profound marital ties between the two sides, such rudeness would certainly not occur.

Indeed, after Wang Dinghai responded in flag language, the other party's ship quickly got closer. Standing at the bow of the ship was a young man dressed in brocade, handsome and valiant.

With Wang Shouzhe's vision, he recognized the young man from afar. It was indeed Chen Fangjie, the Young Clan Leader of the Chen Clan of Donggang. After arranging a marriage with Wang Shouzhe's sister, Wang Luoyi, he had come to visit the Wang family previously.

Also, when Wang Dingyue passed away due to his injuries, he represented the Chen Clan to pay condolences. However, because the two sides were not formally married yet, he could not wear mourning clothes according to traditional rules.

Chen Fangjie apparently also noticed Wang Shouzhe. He showed a smile on his face, gave a push on the ship's bulwarks with one foot and leaped over like an arrow off the string, even turned a roll in mid-air and landed steadily on the deck.

Smiling, he cupped his hand and complained to Wang Shouzhe: "Shouzhe, you should've notified me a few days earlier that you were coming to Donggang. Then I could've sent a ship to pick you up."

"Nice to see you, Brother Chen." Wang Shouzhe returned the courtesy, "The decision to travel was made quite hastily, please forgive me."

Yes, this Chen Fangjie was to be his future brother-in-law. However, until the day the marriage is formally completed, it is not appropriate to address each other recklessly.

While talking, Wang Shouzhe silently sized him up. Compared to last year, Chen Fangjie, a year older, appeared more heroically charming. Even with Wang Shouzhe's Cultivation base, it was quietly hard for him to discern Chen's current state.

Quite clearly, Chen Fangjie had already reached the seventh level of the Qi Refinement at a tender age, and not just at the beginning of it. This already counted as a very outstanding young genius. From the surface, he seemingly didn't seem inferior to Wang Shouzhe.

However, Wang Shouzhe was very calm and confident at heart. Chen Fangjie's overall level was at most equal to Wang Shouzhe before he crossed worlds. As for now, he had enough confidence that he would surpass Chen by a large margin when he reached Chen's age.

At the same time, Chen Fangjie was also secretly measuring Wang Shouzhe and internally he was equally amazed. He had previously thought highly of Wang Shouzhe's talent and dedication to cultivation, but felt that his overall temperament was a bit naive and in need of refinement.

Unexpectedly, in such a short time, he found him transformed in terms of temperament and demeanor. More surprisingly, Wang Shouzhe's aura faintly exerted pressure on him. This suggested that Wang Shouzhe was not far off from breaking through to the seventh level of Qi Refinement.

The seventh level of Qi Refinement at eighteen!

If put in the greater Changning area, already would rank among the best and was quite rare. It was not until he reached the age of nineteen that he entered the seventh level of Qi Refinement. This future brother-in-law seemed to be no simple character.

With this thought, Chen Fangjie's sense of familiarity deepened: "Shouzhe, what are you talking about? What need for such formality between us? After seeing my father, I will take you around Chen Port to have a good time, as a distraction."

"Brother Chen, if it were usually, I would not refuse," said Wang Shouzhe with a smile, "But after paying a visit to Uncle, I have to rush to the Hundred Islands Guard."

Although he held the status of a Clan Leader, but Chen Dewei, the Clan Leader of the Chen Clan, was his sister's future father-in-law, a senior. On moral and practical grounds, he should make a visit when passing by.

"Hundred Islands Guard." Chen Fangjie's expression slightly turned solemn, "You did mention this matter in the previous letters you had sent. However, Shouzhe, I must remind you, Hundred Islands Guard is a remote island city. Longzuo County's influence there is weak. It's filled with all sorts of people, unlike our orderly Changning area."

"Brother Chen, I understand," Wang Shouzhe replied seriously, "But I will need the Chen Clan to arrange the route for this trip."

Following the Peace River further, it would be the East Sea area after exiting the trumpet mouth.

The ship borrowed from Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai could navigate the Peace River without any major issues. But if they were to enter the sea, the ship was largely deficient. Seagoing ships not only need to be large and stable but also need to possess outstanding storm-resistant abilities and experienced sailors.

In short, the mysterious and unpredictable sea is not so easy to venture into, especially in this Mysterious Magical World.

"Well, it's not exactly troublesome." Chen Fangjie hesitated slightly, "As you may know, our Chen Clan's merchant ships set sail to the Hundred Islands Guard once every month. However, most of the transportation is various goods. Aside from the crew cabin, there are only a dozen guest rooms reserved for guests, although the overall conditions are rather simple.

If you really need to go, I can vacate some places. We could set off this afternoon and arrive at the Hundred Islands Guard the day after tomorrow morning. But our ship can only dock at the Hundred Islands Guard for five days."

A sea ship is a massive investment, and the cost of each voyage is also very high. Back-and-forth routes, tides, and weather all require calculations and estimations.

Wang Shouzhe, of course, wouldn't be impolite to demand that the Chen Clan provide a boat solely for him, and he promptly expressed that he was completely willing to share, asking Chen Fangjie to arrange for three guest rooms.

Once the itinerary was confirmed, Chen Fangjie naturally didn't interfere any further, and agreed to the arrangements.

Then, guided by a pilot boat, Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai's boat docked ashore. Elder Luo Yi and the others temporarily remained on board. Meanwhile, Wang Shouzhe accompanied Chen Fangjie to visit Chen Dewei, the current clan leader of the Chen family, according to the formalities.

Chen Dewei naturally gave Wang Shouzhe a corresponding courteous reception and expressed his gratitude to the Wang family for their early warning about the Honey Worm Plague. For the Chen Clan, their primary business is not in agriculture, and the family only owns two small farms totaling three to four thousand acres. With this early warning, the overall loss would not be too significant.

Meanwhile, Chen Fangjie rapidly helped Wang Shouzhe arrange for the sea voyage and introduced several members of the Chen Clan who would be joining them to Wang Shouzhe, instructing them to take good care of Wang Shouzhe and his party.

As Wang Shouzhe had rejected his offer to accompany them on board, he slipped Wang Shouzhe a booklet before their departure. This booklet contained information about all the different influential powers within the Hundred Islands Guard.

Not long after, at the deep-water port of Donggang, Wang Shouzhe's party discreetly boarded a ship named the Jun Yao. Named after the Chen family's "Jun Yao Old Ancestor", this ship could deter some petty ill intentions.

Once on board, a Chen Clan member named Chen Fanghua courteously led them to their rooms.

Chen Fanghua is the elder cousin of the young clan leader Chen Fangjie. He had reached the high level five of Qi Refinement Realm at just 25 and was considered an elite among the younger generation of the Chen Clan.

The three guest rooms were interconnected, with one serving as a special room for honorable guests.

Being able to provide such a room in such a rush shows Chen Fangjie's high esteem for Wang Shouzhe, leaving no stone unturned in his efforts.

"Thank you, Brother Chen," Wang Shouzhe said, giving a customary bow to Chen Fanghua, "I hope for your continued help during our upcoming journey."

"Of course, of course," Chen Fanghua hastily responded, "You are honorable guests of our young clan leader, therefore you are honorable guests of the Chen Clan. Please, make yourselves comfortable. If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask me."

With that said, he excused himself and left. The ship was about to sail, so it was the busiest time for him.

To avoid unnecessary attention, Wang Shouzhe had asked Chen Fangjie to keep his identity secret. Thus, the members of the Chen Clan on the ship simply knew them as the young clan leader's honored guests.

Once they were alone,

Wang Shouzhe bowed to Elder Luo Yi, saying, "Elder, I apologize for the inconvenience of taking a cargo ship." To charter an entire ship would not only be expensive, but also would not be as straightforward.

"No problem. Your arrangement is very appropriate," Luo Yi responded calmly with neither delight nor distress, "Traveling with the Hundred Islands Guard is the most secure method to keep things quiet and efficient."

"Fourth Aunt, can you help Elder have some rest?" Wang Shouzhe then addressed Xu Zhirou, "This trip is going to take more than twenty hours, we would not want the elder to get tired."

"Rest assured, Shouzhe. I'll make sure the elder is well taken care of," Fourth Aunt Xu Zhirou answered seriously, then helped Elder Luo Yi into the superior room.

The superior room was divided into two sections for the honored guest and their entourage to rest separately.

Just as Wang Licui was about to excitedly follow them into the room, she was stopped by Wang Shouzhe, "Girl, come here first. I have something to talk with you about."

"Yes, Fourth Uncle."

Wang Licui's heart fluttered. Had she done something wrong? She immediately followed him into the next room with a gloomy look on her face.

Seeing her expression, Wang Shouzhe swatted her forehead in irritation, "What's with that face? I'm your Fourth Uncle, not a man-eating monster."

Wang Licui quickly switched expressions, forcing out a sheepish, nervous smile in an attempt to appear pleasant.

Chapter 46 Gold of Hundred Islands Jinsha_1

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Seeing such a pitiful expression, Wang Shouzhe's mouth twitched a couple of times. He took several deep breaths to calm himself before saying, "Fine, fine, you didn't do anything wrong. Come, take a seat."

Immediately, Wang Licui found a stool to sit on, perching at the very edge, posed as if she were ready to be chided by her Fourth Uncle.

"I can tell, the Old Ancestor is quite fond of you." Wang Shouzhe said, "Spend more time with her on our journey, keep her company."

So it's about this? As long as I'm not getting chastised, it's all good.

Wang Licui loosened up slightly from her tense state, consistently nodding in agreement. She moved slightly back on the stool, took out a preserved sweet snack to calm herself, then began eating it with delight.

Seeing her carefree manner, Wang Shouzhe felt a twitch in his eye.

From within his sleeves, he casually threw her two books, "These are 'Selected Poetry and Verses of Longzuo' and 'Recluse's Pen Talks at Cuiju Mountain'. I just bought them in Donggang, supposedly with deep literary messages."

Pausing for a moment, he continued, "During morning recitations, I heard you recite 'Observing the Sky at Night on Tianlan', brimming with emotion and rhythm. It seems you have a talent for literature. Why not familiarize yourself with these two books as quickly as you can, then recite them to the Old Ancestor for entertainment.

She loves children who are diligent in their studies, surely she will be pleased."

"What?!"

Wang Licui's eyes bulged out, candy stuck in her mouth, a look of shock filled her chubby cheeks. Fourth uncle, are you, are you, are you a devil?

"Hmm, your surprised yet excited expression pleases me," Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "Do you like them?"

Tears rolled down Wang Licui's cheeks as she forced a grin and said through a sobbing voice, "Thank you, Fourth Uncle, I love them..."

"Licui, seeing your tears of joy, reassures me that all my efforts have been worthwhile," Wang Shouzhe said, patting her head apologetically, "Sorry, in our haste, I only managed to buy two books. Upon our arrival at Hundred Islands Guard, I'll get you more. Who knows, our family might produce a literary genius."

Wang Licui felt her world crumbling, the color of life stripped away, leaving nothing but bleakness.

Thankfully, she still had her candies.

The sweetness in her mouth seemed like the only vibrant hue in her life now; her only source of hope.

"Oh, one more thing." Wang Shouzhe frowned, "These candies are fine to have now and then, but too much can hurt your teeth and lead to weight gain. Look at your round face. Hand them over, I'll keep them safe for you."

Boom!

Those words struck Wang Licui like a bolt of lightning. Tears welled up uncontrollably as she slowly took out a packet of candies.

"That's not all, is it?"

And then, she took out another one.

"Ha-ha~"

And another one.

After rummaging around to produce five packets in total, Wang Licui clutched the two books, sobbing, "That's it, there's no more. Fourth Uncle, it's getting late. I-I'll go study now..."

Then she ran off swiftly, as if escaping a blazing inferno.

Once she was gone, Wang Shouzhe chuckled to himself, brewed a pot of tea and began drinking it in satisfaction - a helpless little girl like her was no challenge to him.

Disciplining his niece was a mere interlude.

After taking a moment of respite, Wang Shouzhe pulled out a booklet provided by his future brother-in-law Chen Fangjie. He slowly began to flip through it. The Wang family had heard of the Hundred Islands Guard but had little detailed information about them in their records, and whatever information they had was outdated.

The Chen Clan of Donggang had more dealings with the Hundred Islands Guard, so their information was naturally more comprehensive. The booklet contained a list of forces, families, situational patterns, and individuals not to be trifuriously with in the Hundred Islands Guard.

Reading the booklet made Wang Shouzhe wide-eyed with shock. The power dynamics of the Hundred Islands Guard were indeed much more complex than those of Changning. Firstly, it was home to dozens of prominent families, big and small.

Some of these families, while weaker in power, independently occupied an island. Others were stronger and powerful enough to rule over several, even over a dozen islands.

The main island is called Golden Sand Island, which was said to have been rich in gold sand a thousand years ago, provoking a bloody struggle among some Profound Martial families. The Daqian Officials dispatched powerful forces to suppress the fighting and established the Hundred Islands Guard on the island to stabilize the situation.

However, several hundred years later, the gold sand had been completely depleted, and some residual Profound Martial Families took control over the Hundred Islands, gradually evolving into the current territorial layout.

Because of the complex and remote geographical environment of the Hundred Islands Guard and the depletion of gold sand, the control of the Daqian Officials here has gradually weakened.

Therefore, there are bound to be some Independent Cultivators who are wanted for crimes, sons and daughters expelled from prominent families, or pirates and bandits seeking to wash off their infamy who would venture into the Hundred Islands Guard.

Fortunately, the Chen Clan of Donggang has been operating on the main island of Golden Sand among the Hundred Islands Guard for many years. They have extensive connections and a solid foundation, and any ordinary person would not dare to provoke them easily under their protection.

As long as one does not recklessly stir up trouble, safety is not an issue. Otherwise, Chen Fangjie would absolutely not dare to allow Wang Shouzhe to go to the Hundred Islands Guard. If anything serious were to happen, how could Chen Fangjie make up for it?

However, amidst the chaos of the Hundred Islands Guard, some unique industries have been born that don't exist elsewhere.

For example, the black market!

The Golden Sand Black Market is one of only two businesses run by the Tianren family in the Hundred Islands Guard and has a history of two hundred years. In the black market, all identities can be disguised and hidden. If you have money, you can secretly buy what you want in the most confidential manner. You can sell your items secretly, even if they are banned goods or stolen property!

The black market doesn't care who you are or where your money and goods came from - they only maintain order, credibility, and take a cut.

Order and credibility are the foundation for a black market's survival.

Because those who go to the black market are often extremely sensitive to the exposure of their identity and origin. Any slight sign of trouble would deter them. Hence, it is clear that the Golden

Sand Black Market, which has stood tall for two hundred years and continues to grow in scale, must place a great emphasis on credibility and order.

Upon seeing this news about the black market,

Wang Shouzhe had a vague suspicion in his heart that the Old Ancestor Longyan must have come for the black market, and with Wang Shouzhe's wisdom, he mostly guessed the purpose of her trip.

Immediately his brow furrowed, this was something he didn't want to see. After disembarking, he needed to talk to the Old Ancestor Longyan. There were certain things that needn't be done to that extent.

However, since she is the Old Ancestor, once she makes up her mind to do something, she must have thought about it for a long time. How could he persuade her to change her mind?

Wang Shouzhe's face grew heavier, and his fingers drummed against the table as he thought rapidly.

Time passed bit by bit.

More than twenty hours flew by, and the massive seafaring vessel docked at the deep-sea harbor on Golden Sand Island of the Hundred Islands Guard.

Wang Shouzhe and his party disembarked from the ship Jun Yao, basking in the strong scent of the sea wind. As it turned out, the merchant ship Jun Yao was very stable at sea, having safely and uneventfully reached the Hundred Islands Guard.

Now, Chen Fanghua, a member of the Chen Clan, stepped forward and greeted respectfully, "Young Master Wang, as instructed by the young clan leader before his departure, I am to arrange accommodation and guide for you and your party."

Wang Shouzhe was amused. It seemed that his future brother-in-law was worried about him running into danger on the island, and had specifically arranged for his clan members to manage his accommodation and itinerary.

"In that case, I must thank you, Brother Chen." Wang Shouzhe was unfamiliar with Golden Sand Island, so having someone else arrange things was ideal. Besides, he needed to accept the kindness of his future brother-in-law, Chen Fangjie.

Knowing that "Young Master Wang" has female family members, Chen Fanghua had arranged a carriage for them. Old Ancestor Longyan, his fourth aunt, and their maid all got in the carriage. Wang Shouzhe and his two household heads, Wang Zhong and Wang Yong, were temporarily assigned three purebred horses.

After that, Chen Fanghua, accompanied by a household head, led Wang Shouzhe's party towards the inner city of Golden Sand Island.

As they walked, Chen Fanghua chatted casually with Wang Shouzhe about the local customs of Golden Sand Island. For example, Golden Sand Island is the largest island among the Hundred Islands Guard. However, due to the abundance of rock and other impurities in the soil, very little fertile land can be cultivated.

"That's why, among the cargo we carry, half are food crops and various kinds of meat, and the rest are daily necessities. These ordinary items actually yield good profits in the Hundred Islands Guard," Chen Fanghua did not shy away from sharing this common business knowledge. It was evident that he wanted to build a good relationship with Wang Shouzhe.

"Doesn't the Daqian Law stipulate that food cannot be speculated?" Wang Shouzhe asked curiously.

"Young Master Wang, the Daqian Law doesn't hold much sway in the Hundred Islands Guard," Chen Fanghua explained with a smile, "Besides, we are not speculating on food, we are bartering. Although the Hundred Islands Guard doesn't produce much food, it is rich in various marine delicacies and oyster cement. When transported inland, they can still generate considerable profitability."

Wang Shouzhe knew that maritime trade in this era must be highly profitable, but it was also risky and difficult. Building a merchant ship is not only costly but also requires deep professional knowledge.

Besides, the training of seamen and professional sailors is extremely challenging. Even a slight mishap could result in the loss of a ship, leading to a total loss of investment.

Therefore, it's practically impossible for ordinary families to venture into the maritime trade sector. No wonder the Chen Clan of Donggang has become increasingly prosperous over the past century.

Chapter 47: Turn the Tables! Old Ancestor Longyan_1

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"What is oyster cement?" Wang Shouzhe put down his maritime merchant thoughts and asked curiously.

"Oyster cement is a building material made by objects like oysters, shells, and so on, processed by kiln-burning and other methods." Chen Fanghua explained, "Using oyster cement and river sand in a suitable ratio can ensure a good bond between bricks, tiles, and stones, making the stones as solid as a whole. It is often used in the walls of prominent families or government offices.

Because it isn't mass-produced, its cost is relatively high. Since you come from a noble lineage, young master Wang, it's completely normal for you to be unfamiliar with this basic building material."

"I see." Wang Shouzhe 'understood suddenly', full of joy, "Reading ten thousand books is no better than traveling ten thousand miles. I did gain some new insights."

It sounds like a type of cement? Wang Shouzhe began pondering, how had he never thought of something like cement? Even if it isn't sold, this product would be extremely beneficial to the basic construction of the clan.

That being said, Wang Shouzhe only had a vague idea about how cement is produced. As long as there is a general direction and a willingness to put in some manpower and funds, it will eventually be produced.

Moreover, buildings with concrete structures are very sturdy. Be it the construction of houses or the creation of water conservancy facilities, it is very beneficial in enhancing the overall safety of the clan.

Immediately, Wang Shouzhe included the cement industry into his future research and development plans.

"Young Master Wang, the best thing about the Hundred Islands Guard is the exquisite seafood." Chen Fanghua continued, "Fresh seafood is very difficult to store and transport, so most of the

seafood transported to the mainland are usually salted and dried. If you want to eat seafood, it's best to consume it while it's still fresh. Today, I have arranged for you to have a taste....."

"Thank you for your kind intentions, Brother Chen." Wang Shouzhe refused, "However, the journey by sea is exhausting, and my family is a bit tired. After resting for a few days, I'll repay your kindness by being the host."

He and Old Ancestor Longyan traveled all the way to the Hundred Islands Guard, not just for a bite of delicious seafood. Besides, Wang Shouzhe had a lot of things to discuss with Old Ancestor Longyan.

"Then we'll do as Young Master Wang wishes. But since the Young Clan Leader commanded me to entertain the honorable guests well, I'll have to ask you not to put me in a difficult situation, and let our Chen Clan be the host." Chen Fanghua said with a smile.

Lingering along the way and chatting about this and that.

After a short while, they entered Golden Sand City, the main city of the Hundred Islands Guard. This city stood on an island, and every rock used for its construction was rugged and sourced locally. Wang Shouzhe specifically noticed that between the rocks, there was a certain white lime filler, which must be the oyster cement that Chen Fanghua had mentioned earlier.

If even the city wall uses oyster cement, it shows that the adhesives made by mixing oyster cement and sand are very strong. But, which is stronger, this material or concrete?

This question will need to be corroborated once Wang Shouzhe "develops" cement, so for now, he sets it aside.

Once they were in Golden Sand City, they stayed at a high-end inn. With the arrangements made by Chen Fanghua, the "natives of these parts" easily secured a large dwelling for Wang Shouzhe and his party to stay in.

The dwelling had seven or eight rooms, and the environment was peaceful, enough space for everyone to comfortably stay.

After everyone had retired to their rooms to rest, Wang Shouzhe had also taken a bath. After resting for over half an hour, he went next door to visit Old Ancestor Longyan.

Standing at the door of the old ancestor's room, he knocked on the door, lowering his voice to call out: "Old Ancestor, ShouZhe requests an audience."

After a while, Fourth Aunt Xu Zhirou opened the door and said: "ShouZhe, the Old Ancestor invites you in."

"Four Auntie, my dear girl. You must have been tired after the long journey, go back to your room to rest. I have something to discuss with Old Ancestor." Wang Shouzhe said as he entered the door.

"Yes, ShouZhe," Xu Zhirou bowed slightly and, pulling the still confused Wang Licui along, left, closing the door behind her.

After they left, Wang Shouzhe walked to Old Ancestor Longyan with a bow, "ShouZhe invites Old Ancestor, sorry for the intrusion."

The Old Ancestor Longyan's profound eyes swept over Wang Shouzhe, calmly saying, "ShouZhe, you look solemn and serious. Could it possibly be, you've come to advise me not to sell my personal spiritual treasures?"

Wang Shouzhe couldn't help but laugh bitterly, Old Ancestor Longyan has pre-emptively taken the lead. However, he has already weighed this matter in his heart. He immediately put on a serious face and said, "After skimming through the information about the Hundred Islands Guard, I found that Golden Sand Island has a famous black market, so I dared to guess the purpose of Old Ancestor's visit.

But ShouZhe has a slight doubt, is Old Ancestor planning to sell the Dragon Smoke Sword, or the Turtle Scale Treasure Shield?"

Old Ancestor Longyan's eyes remained unmoved, saying, "The Turtle Scale Treasure Shield is of no use to me anymore."

Wang Shouzhe trembled slightly, bitterness in his heart, the confirmation was the worst among his various speculations. When the old ancestor said that the Turtle Scale Treasure Shield was useless, it meant that the Dragon Smoke Sword was still useful.

The Precious Shield for defense, the Spirit Sword for attack, she undoubtedly chose to abandon defense and switch to offense.

"I, Shouzhe, dare to speculate about the old ancestor's intentions. If I'm wrong, please correct me," Wang Shouzhe pondered, "The old ancestor wants to sell the Turtle Scale Treasure Shield to gather resources for me to advance to the Spirit Platform Realm."

Once I reach the Spirit Platform Realm, the old ancestor will take action and capture either the Zhao Clan or Liu Clan's old ancestor to secure future prospects for our family!"

By the end, Wang Shouzhe's voice was trembling.

Longyan's ancestor remained silent for a while, her ethereal eyes calm. After a moment, she slowly shook her head: "Shouzhe, your guess is wrong."

His guess was wrong?

Relief washed over Wang Shouzhe, and joy filled his heart. Fortunately, Longyan's ancestor was sensible...

However, Longyan's ancestor calmly said, "If I wait until then, I'm afraid I won't have the strength to take action."

"Old Ancestor..." Wang Shouzhe's face changed, but before he could speak, he was interrupted by Longyan's ancestor, "Shouzhe, I know you care for me, but I am aware of my injuries. I can't hold on for much longer..."

The fleeting pain in her face then returned to calm. Her voice was ethereal, "Who do you think Wang Longyan is? Rather than lingering in pain and dying slowly, it is better to go out brilliantly like fireworks while I still have the strength. I will take both the Zhao and the Liu Clan's traitors with me. Shouzhe, you can rest assured."

Rest assured?

How on earth can I rest assured?!

Wang Shouzhe trembled in his heart, wanting to swear. Longyan's ancestor's plan was too crazy. It must be stopped. He took a deep breath and said, "Old ancestor, even if you succeed, the regular forces of the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan are stronger than our Wang Family!"

"We have the Liu Family," Longyan's ancestor calmly replied.

The Liu Family... Yes, Wang Shouzhe remembered, the daughter of the Liu Family was his betrothed. So that was it, when Longyan's ancestor personally proposed to the Liu Family in order to speed up the marriage, she had already planned this. If the two were married, the Liu Family would definitely not sit idly by when the remnants of the Liu Clan and Zhao Clan retaliated.

"In that case," Wang Shouzhe said solemnly, "my wedding night is the best time to take action. First, on my wedding night, the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan would never expect the old ancestor to suddenly take action. Secondly, at that time, our Wang Family will have numerous guests, the Liu Clan and Zhao Clan wouldn't dare to fight back."

Longyan's ancestor's frail body shook slightly, then she slowly shook her head and said, "This plan is ominous for you. It's not conducive to your reputation. Do not mention it again."

Wang Shouzhe started laughing, "The old ancestor can sacrifice her life for the family. As a youngster, what's there for me to be concerned about?"

"You are still young and the greatest hope for the future of our family," Longyan's ancestor lightly said, "When I die in battle, the Dragon Smoke Sword will pass on to you. You must take my body to the Purple Abode Academic Palace, deliver it to my teacher, Master Binglan, tell him that Wang Longyan, out of her capriciousness, has failed her teacher's expectations.

Hope to return to the sect after death."

She brought Wang Shouzhe to the Hundred Islands Guard and did not truly hide her plan from him, as this matter still required his cooperation.

"I understand," Wang Shouzhe held his fist in salute respectfully.

"Aren't you going to argue any more?" Longyan's ancestor was a bit surprised. According to her original plan, with Shouzhe's filial nature, he would definitely argue hard, and she was prepared to suppress him with her status as the ancestor.

"If there are no other variables, the old ancestor's plan is the only one that can assist the Wang family in quickly turning the tables." Wang Shouzhe calmly replied, "The old ancestor's injuries have clearly reached a stage where they are on the brink of losing control. As proud and unrivaled as you are, would you tolerate dying slowly in pain?"

Dying gloriously in battle while simultaneously resolving the family crisis and allowing the world to witness your world-renowned beauty would naturally be the best choice."

"Quite right, I, Wang Longyan, have always despised hesitation and procrastination." A touch of fervor passed through Longyan's ancestor's calm eyes, "Shouzhe, your understanding is the greatest comfort to me."

"Old ancestor, I spoke of a prerequisite; without any other variables, your plan would be the best." Wang Shouzhe wore a relaxed expression as he laughed, "I too have a plan, with the ultimate goal being - Wang Shouzhe taking hold of the Spirit Platform Realm, becoming the pillar of our family, and you, Longyan's ancestor, dealing with your own affairs."

If you feel guilty towards Master, go and apologize to him yourself."

"What?" No matter how well Longyan's ancestor could control her emotions, she was still shocked, disbelief filled her eyes.

Chapter 48: Old Ancestor Longyan's Injury_1

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However, Elder Longyan, having been alive for over a hundred years and having experienced many ups and downs, was not a person easily shaken.

In just a few moments, she calmed down and her gaze cooled, "Shouzhe, I admit that you are admirable; able to profit greatly even in perilous situations. But this small amount of money is simply a drop in the ocean when it comes to healing my injuries."

Upon hearing this, not only was Wang Shouzhe undeterred, he felt elated. "From your words, Elder, it seems your injury can still be treated?"

"It's difficult, as hard as ascending to the heavens." Elder Longyan said calmly, "Even if my Wang family exhausted all its resources, it would be far from enough. Therefore, Shouzhe, stop entertaining wild thoughts. It would be most prudent to use that money to hasten your pursuit of the peak of the Vital Energy Refining Realm."

Naturally there were difficulties, otherwise the Wang family wouldn't have just stood by and let the Elder be left untreated. The cost was certainly something the Wang family couldn't afford, even if they sold all their property and land.

Wang Shouzhe's expression turned serious, "Then Elder, could you please elaborate on these difficulties, so that I can put these ideas to rest?"

"Very well, if I don't explain clearly, I'm afraid you won't let go." Elder Longyan's expression softened considerably. She could see that Shouzhe truly cared for her. She continued, "The individual who conspired with the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan to attack me was no ordinary practitioner of the Spirit Platform Realm.

He possessed the pure energy of Yin Sha, and I suspect he had ties with the Yinsha Sect from the Extreme Western Land. I guess he committed some crime, evaded pursuit, and infiltrated the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan as an Independent Cultivator."

"Yinsha Sect?" Wang Shouzhe, despite his knowledge, had never heard of this name before.

"It's a nefarious sect, with overall strength not inferior to the Purple Abode Academic Palace." Elder Longyan explained, her eyes flickering with a touch of gravity. "Everyone knew about the ambitions of the Zhao Clan and Liu Clan, but when I crossed blows with them, I realized that this individual was likely the puppeteer behind the scenes.

Hence, despite the peril, I exploited my superior cultivation base and the two spiritual treasures I possessed to slay him on the spot. However, disciples of the Yinsha Sect truly were formidable. His retaliation before his death cost me greatly."

Even though this life-and-death battle took place fifty years ago, the memories were still fresh in Elder Longyan's mind.

Wang Shouzhe was also secretly terrified. This Mysterious Magical World was considerably larger and more complex than he had imagined. Indeed, he had every reason to believe that what Elder Longyan had uncovered was merely the tip of the iceberg.

"At that time, I had already broken the Turtle Scale Shield, and I was hit directly by his Yin Sha Palm with all his strength." Elder Longyan's eyes turned frigid as she spoke, "This palm was extremely sinister, it not only gave me severe internal injuries, but the Yin Sha energy even eroded my organs.

No matter how hard I tried to dispel it, it clung to me like a maggot in the bone, making my injuries extremely difficult to heal."

Wang Shouzhe was profoundly affected. He had previously looked down on this Mysterious Magical World a bit, but in actuality, this world was extremely dangerous. Battle was not like in the fantasy novels he had read before, where the protagonist had infinite lives to squander, would wage life-or-death battles over trivial disagreements, treating them as part of daily life.

This was utterly ridiculous.

Any battle had the potential for accidents. Fifty years ago, that life-and-death battle, for the mysterious Yinsha Sect, the accident meant paying the price of life.

As for Elder Longyan, it meant enduring half a century of unspeakable torment and torture.

Simultaneously, it left a profound psychological impact on the ancestors of both the Liu and Zhao clans towards Elder Longyan. Even to this day, they did not dare to force the Ping'an Wang Family excessively, fearing that in a fit of rage, the Elder might take them down with her!

Every combat-related decision must be made carefully, considering the likelihood of unexpected occurrences, and whether one could bear the consequences of those accidents!

Elder Longyan had no choice but to fight at that time, otherwise the Wang family would have been wiped out.

"Elder," Wang Shouzhe took a deep breath, "Let's discuss how to treat you." After hearing about the battle from the past, Wang Shouzhe was even more determined to help Elder Longyan, regardless of the cost.

"There are two major obstacles in treating my injuries." Elder Longyan stated, "Firstly, the Yin Sha poison that has been eroding and growing within me for fifty years is becoming increasingly tenacious. Under its persistent weakening, I'm slowly losing my ability to suppress it.

Secondly, my organs have been severely damaged and due to the entanglement of the Yin Sha poison, they've never completely healed. Over time, the damage has become critical."

She paused for a moment before continuing, "To dissolve such a severe Yin Sha poison, one must rely on a Level Three Dan medicine called Fire Yang Pill, which will suppress and eradicate the Yin Sha poison."

"If it's a Level Three Dan medicine, unless it's a rather rare one, although expensive, it should still be possible to obtain, right?" Wang Shouzhe furrowed his brow, feeling that it couldn't be that simple.

Usually, the price of a Level One Dan medicine is around ten to twenty Qian Gold, a Level Two den medicine is around several tens to over a hundred Qian Gold, and a Level Three Dan medicine ranges from several hundreds to thousands of Qian Gold.

"Fire Yang Pill is a standard Level Three Dan medicine, produced by many alchemy masters, it is not hard to find. One can even buy a pill for about three hundred Qian Gold." A look of helplessness flashed in Old Ancestor Longyan's eyes. "However, you need to take a pill every month and slowly suppress and grind down the Yin Sha poison. Also, you need to take this medicine for a long period of time.

If you're lucky, you will be able to completely eradicate the Yin Sha poison in ten years."

Once a month? Doesn't that mean 3600 Qian Gold a year?

Even Wang Shouzhe couldn't help but gasp. In reality, before Wang Shouzhe transmigrated, the total profits from all the family's businesses did not reach this figure!

And this amount of profit could just barely cover the entire family's expenses, with no surplus at all.

In fact, any family's income on record isn't small, but the expenses are massive. Even for a relatively prosperous clan like the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang, after subtracting the large expenditures of the family, the surplus Qian Gold rarely exceeds 1000.

"That's not all, to resist the power of the Yin Sha, I need to maintain good health, need ample supply of Spirit Rice and Spirit Food every month, and long-term use of Cultivation Pills to strengthen myself," Old Ancestor Longyan said, "This cost alone is at least 600 Qian Gold per year."

"Moreover, starting from the second year, I would need a Level Three healing holy medicine known as the Creation Pill to treat the damage of my internal organs. The Creation Pill is much harder to obtain than the Fire Yang Pill, and more expensive, costing 1000 Qian Gold per piece.

That's 12,000 Qian Gold a year." Old Ancestor Longyan said calmly, "If I am lucky, my injury will be mostly healed in about ten or eleven years. If the estimate is wrong, it might extend for another two or three years."

Having said all of this, there was a sense of relief in Old Ancestor Longyan's eyes. She knew the affection her clansmen had for her. At the beginning, didn't the younger generation want to help cure her?

But they simply couldn't afford the treatment. If they insisted on it, they would surely pull the Wang Family down without curing her. Forget about the Wang Family, even the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang and the Liu Family of Shanyin couldn't afford such a treatment.

Perhaps the Xu Family of Changning could barely afford it, but the entire treatment process would certainly greatly weaken the Xu Family.

At that time, she saw despair, helplessness, and pain in the eyes of her family. If it hadn't been for Shouzhe's insistence, she really didn't want him to go through this too.

"So, Ancestor, your injury does not need a mass investment of resources at once, but can be treated gradually." Wang Shouzhe's eyes lit up as he quickly calculated, "The total cost for the first year is about 4100 Qian Gold, but from the second year, there will be an additional 12,000 Qian Gold of expenses! The total cost of the treatment would come to around several tens of thousands of Qian Gold.

Good, good, good!"

"Good, good, good!?" Old Ancestor Longyan looked somewhat puzzled. The situation was bad to the point of hopelessness and yet Shouzhe was saying it was good?

"Ancestor, you must not misunderstand." Wang Shouzhe calmed down and said, "I said it was good because the actual situation is simpler than I estimated."

But he also felt a touch of emotion. No matter which world, falling ill is always burdening. On Earth, many families with decent financial conditions have been devastated because of a major illness in the family.

Turns out, it's the same in a mystical and magical world!

"Simpler?" Old Ancestor Longyan's delicate body slightly trembled, shouldn't he be feeling desperate?

Chapter 49: Taking Revenge for Old Ancestor_1

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The simplicity to which Wang Shouzhe was referring was only relatively simple; it was much easier than coming up with hundreds of thousands of Qian Gold all at once.

In reality, even if he were to make an extra ten or twenty thousand Qian Gold in the second year, it would not be an easy task. It required careful planning and intelligence. But, the old ancestor had to be saved. He didn't want to see the old ancestor who had fought to protect the family for half her life, die tragically.

Moreover, the old ancestor, Longyan, was a strong fighter. If she recovered her strength, how could the old ancestors of the Liu Clan and Zhao Clan be her match?

Thinking about this...

Wang Shouzhe bowed and said, "Old ancestor, rest assured, I will take care of this."

This time when he left, he had intended to buy some things from the Hundred Islands Guard. Therefore, he brought along ten thousand Qian Gold Notes, making his pockets bulge. As for safety, there was no need to worry. If the old ancestor accompanied him, it would still be very safe.

If a situation arose where even the old ancestor couldn't calm things down, there was nothing he could do about it.

"Shouzhe..." The old ancestor, Longyan, was full of doubts. In her view, it was due to the current situation and fortune that Wang Shouzhe could make a big profit. Would such opportunities always be present?

"Let the old ancestor hold off on any plans for now, and wait for my decision a year later. Give me a chance to prove myself, and also give the old ancestor a chance to turn the tables." Wang Shouzhe was very confident. With his transmigrator's vision and mindset, making money naturally wouldn't be slow.

Only after a year, would the old ancestor deeply understand.

Seeing Wang Shouzhe's strong confidence, the old ancestor Longyan finally nodded slowly, as a sign of agreement. "However, the Turtle Scale Treasure Shield is of no use to me. After selling it, it can provide you with some resources."

Wang Shouzhe didn't object to this decision. This was the old ancestor's spiritual artifact, and she had the right to dispose of it. Besides, Wang Shouzhe didn't believe that he wouldn't be able to afford a spiritual artifact in the future. At most, he could buy an even better one for the old ancestor.

Since he had persuaded the old ancestor, he briefly left.

Everyone rested for the night.

Early the next morning, Wang Shouzhe invited Chen Fanghua over and asked him to take everyone for a stroll around Golden Sand City. Everyone could relax, and Wang Shouzhe could use the chance to investigate the overall market of the Hundred Islands Guard; even if it just increased his knowledge, it would be good.

Chen Fanghua knew Golden Sand City very well, and he was quite eloquent. He took everyone on a leisurely walk around, occasionally discussing the local conditions and customs. It actually opened

Wang Shouzhe's eyes, improved his mood, and he even bought a few sun-dried snacks for Wang Licui.

That girl would forget all her worries when she had something to eat, and she seemed extremely grateful to Wang Shouzhe.

"Young Master Wang, going in here will lead us to Independent Cultivator Street," Chen Fanghua introduced. "Most cities set up a dedicated street for independent cultivators, which not only earns some stall fees but also prevents them from setting up stalls all over the place."

Wang Shouzhe understood. Similar places were also found in Changning Weicheng, where he had inadvertently picked up a beehive. However, picking up bargains at independent cultivator stalls was a low chance event. In most cases, you would be scammed or end up buying items of little value for a high price.

These so-called Heaven and Earth Treasures and secret martial arts skills were sold up through flattery, each seemingly more superior than the last. Wang Shouzhe was just casually looking and gaining some knowledge. With his current understanding, it was almost impossible to find bargains.

However, there were more independent cultivators on Golden Sand Island compared to Changning Weicheng, and their overall strength was stronger. Along the way, Wang Shouzhe had already met three or four whose auras he could not discern. Clearly, their cultivation base was a lot higher than his.

It seemed the opportunities around Golden Sand Island were no more than those in Changning Weicheng, which attracted more powerful independent cultivators to try their luck.

For those who were stronger than him, they would remain inscrutable unless they released their aura.

Suddenly!

Longyan, who had been silent, stopped abruptly. Her gaze swept over an independent cultivator at a stall, and her brows furrowed slightly. Unintentionally, her body seemed to shake slightly, showing signs that she was struggling to control her emotions.

Wang Shouzhe was puzzled. He quickly took a step forward to stand between Longyan and the independent cultivator, drawing the independent cultivator's attention. He smiled and said, "Your pearls are not bad, how much for the whole lot?"

Big spender!

The independent cultivator's attention was immediately drawn to Wang Shouzhe. He immediately introduced, "Sir, these spirit material pearls contain spiritual energy and were all taken from clams that I personally dived for in the sea. They are superior materials for the level two spirit pill, the 'Beauty Maintenance Pill'. There are thirteen pearls of various sizes in total.

It will be 30 Qian Gold for you."

Seeing that Wang Shouzhe was well-dressed and had an entourage, the independent cultivator didn't dare to neglect.

"10 Qian Gold." Wang Shouzhe started to pretend to negotiate, bargaining the price. The stall owner held firm to his price. As the two of them haggled over the price, Wang Shouzhe was puzzled. He saw that the old ancestor's mood had changed so significantly, it was clear that she had encountered something major.

Could it be that she had discovered a big opportunity to pick up a bargain on this stall?

Wang Shouzhe found ways to distract while waiting for Longyan's instructions or action.

As an immortal, Longyan soon calmed down. Her lips behind the veil moved slightly, conveying her intentions to Wang Shouzhe.

The message she delivered left even a transmigrator like Wang Shouzhe taken aback. However, he contained his emotions, while bargaining the price, he started to ponder how to execute his plan.

Bargaining is a very common affair, and for independent cultivators, a few dozen Qian Golds is already a significant amount.

Soon, Wang Shouzhe came up with a plan. Standing up reluctantly, he said, "Never mind, this young master will look elsewhere." Regardless of the stall owner's attempts to coax him to stay, Wang Shouzhe led his group away from the street of independent cultivators.

"Brother Chen," Wang Shouzhe greeted, "my great niece and Fourth Aunt are a bit tired. Could I trouble you to take them to a restaurant ahead for a meal? Wang Zhong, Wang Yong, you two safeguard Miss Licui and Madam Zhirou."

"Yes," the two household heads responded in unison.

As a clever individual, Chen Fanghua immediately recognized that he was being sent away as Wang Shouzhe didn't want him to see something. He replied, "Rest assured, Young Master Wang. I will take good care of the young mistress and the lady."

Xu Zhirou's eyes flickered, but she ultimately remained silent. However, Wang Licui, hearing about delicious food, drooled and her regard for Wang Shouzhe increased significantly. She thought in her heart, I was wrong about Fourth Uncle. He really does care about me...

After everyone had left, only Wang Shouzhe and Old Ancestor Longyan remained. They moved to a quiet spot where Wang Shouzhe asked in a serious tone, "Old Ancestor, can you confirm this matter?"

"There's no mistake," the voice of Old Ancestor Longyan was icy cold, pulsing with unspeakable hatred, "I have been tormented by this evil for fifty years, not a single trace of Yin Sha can escape my detection."

Wang Shouzhe was taken aback, now certain of the matter. In a low voice, he said, "Old Ancestor, this other force from the Extreme Western Land is beginning to infiltrate Changning Weicheng. I fear the situation may not be as simple as it seems. There could be a larger force behind them. If we wish to take our revenge, I'm afraid..."

The Wang family was simply too weak right now. No matter what the enemy's plans were, once they got entwined in it, their destruction was certain.

A deep sense of powerlessness showed in Old Ancestor Longyan's eyes. The overall strength of their family was too weak to even exact revenge.

"We ask for your patience, Old Ancestor. Once you have recovered from your injuries, our family's strength will have greatly increased," Wang Shouzhe said seriously, "as for this vendetta, we will take our revenge slowly! However, it is currently possible to alleviate some of your anger."

Old Ancestor Longyan had begun to feel somewhat hopelessly disappointed, but upon hearing this, his eyes brightened. He asked in a low voice, "Shouzhe, what are you planning to do?"

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As dusk approached and darkness was about to fall, the independent cultivator street vendors began to pack up their stalls. The independent cultivator who sold sea pearls also planned to pack up. It was common for goods not to sell for a few days.

Just then, a burly man in his thirties or forties appeared before the stall. With a commanding presence, he stated, "I'll take all these pearls."

As he paid, he "accidentally" revealed a small stack of gold notes, their honey-gold hues incredibly eye-catching. Every note was evidently worth 100 Qian Gold, totaling to no less than a thousand Qian Gold.

The independent cultivator, entranced by the sight, revealed deep greed in his eyes. Even for prominent families with established businesses such as Profound Martial, a thousand Qian Gold was a significant amount, let alone for independent cultivators.

After that, the plot naturally unfolded. The independent cultivator set his sights on the hunky man, inviting him for a drink and a meal. After a few drinks, he discovered the hunky man's background - he had "struck it rich" elsewhere and just fled to the Hundred Islands Guard to take refuge.

After they convivially clinked glasses, the two men seemed to have become like sworn brothers. When the hunky man suggested going to have some 'fun' after their meal, the independent cultivator energetically promised to take him to a great spot. After paying the bill, he led the burly man through the city's maze of streets and alleys.

Eventually, in a highly secluded corner of an alley, the "independent cultivator" revealed his true colors. As a peak Level Seven Qi Refiner he had even roped in an accomplice of the Level Six Qi Refining Realm to deal with a small Level Four Qi Refiner.

His plan was foolproof.

Unfortunately for him, there would always be a bigger fish in the sea.

Just as they were greedily preparing to make their move on the drunk "hunky man", a hazy sword light appeared out of nowhere and assassinated the two men in one swift move.

How could those two ever have anticipated a spiritual platform realm expert launching a stealth attack with spiritual weapons? They didn't even have a chance to react before they lost their lives. The hunky man broke out in cold sweat, his legs shaking slightly.

"Old Ancestor, are you all right?" Wang Shouzhe rushed over from a short distance away. Supporting the slightly breathless Old Longyan Ancestor, he asked worriedly. His cultivation base was lower than that of the independent cultivator, so he didn't dare to stay too close, for fear of being discovered.

Even though he was shocked in his heart, he realized that if a Spiritual Platform Realm Elder attacked a Qi refinement realm, the latter was almost certain to die.

"It's okay, I'm fine." Within a few breaths, Old Ancestor Longyan was able to temporarily suppress the backlash of the evil qi within his body. His eyes were slightly red, a sign of his satisfaction and relief.

"Wang Zhong, quickly gather the spoils of battle." Wang Shouzhe ordered Wang Zhong, and with the fastest speed, they gathered the spoils of war. Following that, he and the Old Ancestor quickly disappeared into the alley.

Within a short period of time, only two corpses were left in the alley.

Chapter 50: Longyan's Decision_1

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Not much later.

In the private room of the inn where Wang Shouzhe and his group were staying, Wang Zhong, who had quickly changed outfits halfway there, placed the spoils of war, Qian Gold and other things

used as bait on the table. His voice trembled slightly, "Family Head, I have successfully completed the task."

Clearly, for the head of household Wang Zhong, today's events were somewhat overly thrilling and stimulating.

"Wang Zhong, you have done well," Wang Shouzhe complimented, then sternly said, "But remember to keep this matter a secret. We are dealing with the accomplices of those devils who had injured Old Ancestor Longyan in the past. We doing this out of revenge."

He was very satisfied with Wang Zhong's overall execution of the task. Among the two heads of household who had followed him, Wang Yong had more talent and strength. However, Wang Zhong was more intelligent and calm in handling a task of this difficulty.

Wang Zhong had grown up listening to stories about Old Ancestor Longyan's contributions to the clan and admired her greatly. Upon hearing this, his eyes filled with hatred, "Those thieves deserved to die. Family Head, you can rest assured, this matter will never leave my lips, even if it cost my life."

Soon after, Wang Shouzhe waved and awarded him 20 Qian Gold. Overwhelmed with joy, Wang Zhong expressed his gratitude before leaving.

When it was only Wang Shouzhe and Old Ancestor Longyan left, Wang Shouzhe put out another round of booty on the table and began to carefully inspect it.

Truth be told, this operation was somewhat rushed and reckless for Wang Shouzhe, but he felt compelled to do it. After all, this was about venting some pent up anger for Old Ancestor Longyan, who had been tortured by Yin Sha for a full fifty years. Who could imagine the pain she had suffered?

As for capturing that "Independent Cultivator" and forcing him to reveal the identity of his mastermind, Wang Shouzhe had naturally considered this. However, doing this was too risky and could easily lead to the downfall of his clan. Also, even if he forced them to disclose information, what then?

This "Independent Cultivator" was obviously just a pawn, the real mastermind was undoubtedly in the Spirit Platform Realm.

If not handled well, it would result in the loss of everything they had. It's better to avoid any association.

Old Ancestor Longyan agreed with this. Killing one of their minions had already eased a lot of her anger. Her deep affection for the clan made her reluctant to see Wang Shouzhe take unnecessary risks.

"They're common items, various Qian Gold coins, pearls, a Little Pei Yuan Dan, and other miscellaneous items. There's no letters or identity seals." Wang Shouzhe catalogued the spoils, taking out the valuable items. Aside from the miscellaneous items, the most noteworthy were an old-fashioned bound book and an object resembling a jade gourd.

The book had no title. Upon opening it, it was discovered to be a guide on how to refine the Yin Sha energy of the world into one's body, gradually changing their mysterious energy to the attribute of Yin Sha.

Furthermore, this book also mentioned a unique secret technique on how to hide the Yin Sha energy within one's body, making them appear to others as a regular Profound Martial practitioner.

From this, one could see that Old Ancestor Longyan's sense of smell regarding Yinsha energy was extremely sharp. Maybe it was far surpassing that of ordinary Spirit Platform Realm elders.

Upon seeing the book, Wang Shouzhe's heart started to pound. An idea emerged from within, nevertheless, this idea was ...

"Shouzhe, you seem hesitant. Have you discovered something?" After a short period of recuperation, Old Ancestor Luo Yan, who had just opened her beautiful eyes, asked.

Despite only having killed two Qi Refinement Realm minions, she had prepared for any unexpected circumstances by launching a surprise attack at full force. As a result, she was feeling a bit unwell.

"Old Ancestor, take a look at this book, please." Wang Shouzhe respectfully handed her the book.

At first, Old Ancestor Longyan glanced at it calmly. Shortly after, her eyes also became uncertain. After a long silence, she closed the book and began thinking. Clearly, this matter was deeply affecting her.

Wang Shouzhe did not disturb her but waited patiently by the side.

After a while, Old Ancestor Longyan slowly opened her eyes and looked at Wang Shouzhe, "Shouzhe, what do you think of this?" With his continual performances, she began to hold him in higher regard. On such a critical matter, she even wanted to hear Wang Shouzhe's opinion.

After a brief consideration, Wang Shouzhe responded, "Before making a decision, let's think through the situation. Judging from the book, it appears to be a Cultivation Method from the Yinsha Sect for tempering Yin Sha energy, converting it into Yin Sha Mysterious Energy.

Given to temporary recruits among the outer disciples, it is likely used to cultivate external minions and is not the core Cultivation Method of the Yinsha Sect."

The old ancestor Longyan nodded in approval at Wang Shouzhe's words. Indeed, if those were the core cultivation methods of the Yinsha Sect, they would never be so easily leaked.

After a pause, Wang Shouzhe asked again, "Just how confident are you with such a rudimentary refinement method, old ancestor?"

The old ancestor Longyan meditated for a moment and replied, "This Yinsha refinement method, although elementary, is used to cultivate independent cultivators. However, it is ultimately a transmission of the Yinsha Sect and is not to be taken lightly. For ordinary independent cultivators, their understanding of Yinsha power is not deep enough to switch too quickly. However, I ...

I should be able to do that quite quickly!"

Wang Shouzhe understood.

The old ancestor Longyan had been tormented by the poison of Yinsha for fifty long years, struggling day and night against it. The poison of Yinsha had now spread all over her body, even permeating all five organs and six entrails.

Her understanding of the poison of Yinsha surpassed not only those of the outer sect disciples of the Yinsha Sect but also the inner sect disciples and even the core disciples.

"The old ancestor's hesitation means there must be a drawback," said Wang Shouzhe, deep in thought. "If the old ancestor converts the power of Yinsha, I'm afraid it would be difficult to advance her cultivation realm."

"Indeed," the old ancestor Longyan agreed, "After all, this secret technique is not the core cultivation method of the Yinsha Sect; it cannot support me on the Celestial being's path. If it was just this, I would be satisfied to recover to the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. However, this would mean that I have fully betrayed my sect; I have failed my master's kindness.

Moreover, I have to conceal my actions to avoid being mistaken as a spy of the Yinsha Sect."

These were all drawbacks, especially since the old ancestor Longyan had a very strong sense of belonging to the Purple Abode Academy. She joined the academy at eighteen, and by the age of sixty, she had already reached the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm.

The master, Cang Lan, had even gifted her the Spiritual Artifact Turtle Scale Treasure Shield, demonstrating the high expectations placed on her by the Purple Abode Academy.

If it were not for her mishaps fifty years ago, with the talents of Old Ancestor Longyan, she might be an important figure in the Purple Abode Academy by now.

"In this case, do not practice this method," said Wang Shouzhe after considering for a moment. "Anyhow, we do have a solution for that. As long as the old ancestor's injury heals, there may still be a chance to advance after steady accumulation."

"No, I still want to cultivate the power of Yinsha," the old ancestor Longyan hesitated for a moment, but eventually, she made up her mind. "The previous solution was too time-consuming and resource-demanding. If I transform the Yinsha power within me for my own use, a significant amount of resources can be saved."

One other consideration she did not mention was that she did not want Wang Shouzhe to bear such a tremendous pressure. Even if he could bear it, it would be better to use those resources within the family.

"Master, Master, Longyan is reckless once again. I will repay your kindness and virtue in my next life." Sadness flashed across the eyes of the old ancestor Longyan, loaded with deep remorse.

"Sigh!"

Wang Shouzhe sighed softly in his heart, knowing that once Longyan had made up her mind, not even the resurrection of the old ancestor Zhou Xuan could possibly dissuade her.

However, from Wang Shouzhe's perspective, whether it is Yinsha Mysterious Energy or Purple Abode Mysterious Energy, both are some form of power. There is no right or wrong in power. What matters most is the user's mindset.

"This jade gourd bottle," old ancestor Longyan picked it up, analyzed it, and said, "It should be a container used to store Yinsha Qi. It still contains some Yinsha power, which is of great use to me. Shouzhe, I'll decode the conversion method of Yinsha and the method to conceal it. You should take some rest."

With that, she proceeded to leave Wang Shouzhe and return to her room.

Wang Shouzhe was a bit stunned. His old ancestor Longyan was incredibly decisive. Once she made up her mind to do something, she would act immediately sans any discussion.

He quietly collected the gold notes and other miscellaneous prizes. His thoughts swam, recognizing that though old ancestor Longyan's choice had many drawbacks, the benefits were also evident.

First, it could save a considerable amount of resources. Secondly, her recovery would undoubtedly be much faster than the original plan. Once her chronic ailment was completely cured, it might mean the end of the Zhao Clan and the Liu Clan.

This was probably one of the significant reasons for old ancestor Longyan's decision. She was in a hurry to avenge her grievances.