

PROTECT OUR CLAN LEADER

Chapter 6 Understanding Prohibited Fishing Gear_1

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"Um... Shouzhe, are you somehow displeased with our fishing team?" Wang Dinghai asked, somewhat tentatively.

Displeased? He was more than displeased. Wang Shouzhe muttered to himself, then said solemnly, "Sixth Uncle, what's the annual output of our fishing and hunting team? What about the expenses, the profits?"

At this question, Wang Dinghai looked at him in surprise - how could he possibly answer that?

"Zhe Er, let me answer that." Gongsun Hui cut in, "For the past few years, I've been managing the family's overall accounts. Our fishing and hunting team has a total of nine small fishing boats and one medium-sized fishing boat. For the past five years, the average annual catch has been about 6,700 shi (a measure of volume), which brought in 486 Qian Gold.

Each year, we catch an average of 400 jin of Spirit Fish, which brings in 120 Qian Gold. So, the average annual total profit is 606 Qian Gold."

Now it was Wang Shouzhe's turn to be surprised. He looked at Gongsun Hui. He knew his mother was in charge of the bookkeeping, but he never imagined she knew the numbers so well.

However, the amount of the catch seemed far too small. Ten boats together, on average, caught only twenty shi, or about two thousand jin of fish each day!

"Why are you so surprised, Zhe Er?" Gongsun Hui asked calmly. "Despite my Profound Martial talent not being particularly strong, as the direct descendant of the Gongsun clan of Shanyang, I am expected to be proficient in Nine Chapter Arithmetic. With your father being the Clan Leader, it's natural that I should help him manage the accounts."

As she spoke, Gongsun Hui's eyes started to show a trace of melancholy. For all these years, she had painstakingly kept the accounts in pristine condition, knowing every single data by heart, only to find that her husband, Wang Dingyue, did not pay them any attention.

Reminded by her words, Wang Shouzhe remembered the customs of this Profound Martial world. Marriages in the Major Clans were always direct line to direct line, main branch to main branch. Since his mother Gongsun Hui, was a direct descendent, she was expected to marry a Young Clan Leader of another family.

Just as when he, Wang Shouzhe, would marry in future, it must be to a direct descendent of some other family.

The conversation sidetracked a bit, but since Gongsun Hui was so knowledgeable about the subject, Wang Shouzhe quickly picked up his spirits: "Earlier, Sixth Uncle mentioned how valuable the fish we catch are, so why does an annual catch of around 6,700 shi worth only 486 Qian Gold?"

"The fish your sixth uncle mentioned are high-value breeds, favored and enjoyed by people of esteemed clans. Not all of our catch are of such high value. Besides, our clan also runs fish stalls where the catch is categorized and processed for selling, including fresh, cured, smoked, etc. This part of the profit is considered within the income of the fish stalls.

That is another matter altogether," Gongsun Hui explained clearly. "The internal consumption of the Wang family will also be counted in the accounts with the amount of Qian Gold we used for purchases."

"Please continue, Mother," Wang Shouzhe said respectfully, "About expenses and net profit, for example."

For the first time, somebody was taking interest in the accounts, and Gongsun Hui perked up: "Speaking of expenses, currently we have 46 fishermen, and their annual salaries, considering the monthly stipend, cost 151 Qian Gold. The maintenance of the ten fishing boats, including the repair and maintenance of various tools, cost 92 Qian Gold.

In addition, the annual average tax is 72 Qian Gold and the average compensation fund is 60 Qian Gold. After deducting all expenses, the average annual net profit is 221 Qian Gold. This does not include the family tribute that your Sixth Uncle is entitled to, which is accounted for separately."

Hearing this, Wang Dinghai's face reddened somewhat, and he said awkwardly: "Why is the net profit so little? I thought at least it would bring the family four to five hundred Qian Gold profit each year."

"If you have any doubts about the accounts, Uncle, feel free to take a look at the books anytime," Gongsun Hui responded calmly.

"No, no, no, Fifth Sister-in-Law, I didn't mean it that way," Wang Dinghai quickly waved his hands, "I'm just a crude man who knows only fishing. Shouzhe, there's no pleasure in listening to these dull accounts. Let your Sixth Uncle show you some real skills~"

"Sixth Uncle, take it easy," Wang Shouzhe said, trying to calm him down. Then he frowned at Gongsun Hui, "Two questions. First, what are the taxes based on? And second, what exactly is the compensation fund?"

"Shouzhe, the Peace River has strong winds and stormy waves, and dangerous currents lurk under the water. Occasionally, there are some formidable aquatic Fierce Beasts as well," Wang Dinghai hurried to explain, "Even if your Sixth Uncle is very careful, it's inevitable that some crew and fishermen will be lost to the river.

Without high monthly wages and a compensation fund, no one would take the risk to join our team."

"As for the taxes, they are calculated based on the size of fishing boats. Each small fishing boat pays 6 Qian Gold per year, and each medium-sized boat pays 18 Qian Gold per year," Gongsun Hui added.

A fixed quota tax, huh.

But Wang Shouzhe could understand. In this world, where economic development was quite primitive, a fixed quota tax was the best method.

Having gathered all the information, Wang Shouzhe bowed to Wang Dinghai: "Sixth Uncle, I didn't realize how dangerous the fishing industry in Peace River is. Thanks for your hard work and the contributions you've made to our family over the years."

Wang Dinghai let out a sigh of relief and laughed awkwardly: "Shouzhe, just don't blame our team for earning so little. To be honest, when my fifth brother was Clan Leader, I even suggested expanding the fishing fleet. I can manage ten boats or even more than twenty. I could recruit more fishermen, so we could earn more Qian Gold for the family.

Plus, this thirty-li section of Peace River could easily accommodate twenty-something fishing boats. The Liu Clan, for example, have over twenty boats~"

"Another tens of boats?" Wang Shouzhe asked excitedly, "Could you elaborate?" To expand the family, Qian Gold was the most critical resource.

"Let me explain." Gongsun Hui, knowing Wang Dinghai's poor calculation skills, took over: "I'm aware of the Sixth Uncle's plan. He wants to add two medium-sized fishing boats and ten small ones. With each medium-sized boat costing 120 Qian Gold and each small boat costing 45 Qian Gold, the total investment would be 690 Qian Gold.

As long as we could hire the required number of fishermen, the books would balance in three years."

"Bouncing back in three years seems doable," Wang Shouzhe nodded in agreement, "Even if we stop doing this in the future, selling off those fishing boats wouldn't mean a loss."

Wang Dinghai's face lit up at the remark, revealing a certain look of finding someone who truly understood him. He slapped his thigh and said, "Fifth Sister-in-Law, I told you this idea was possible. I just don't get why, although I'm willing to contribute more to the family, my fifth brother still doesn't agree."

At this, Gongsun Hui's face turned somewhat awkward: "Sixth Uncle, you need to know that the Wang family has been short of money in all aspects these years." She let out a soft sigh. She agreed with the plan of expanding the fleet, but Wang Dingyue was strongly opposed. Even her proposal to borrow money from her mother's family had been adamantly rejected by Wang Dingyue.

"Shouzhe, so you're agreeing to expand the fleet?" Wang Dinghai asked, tentatively.

"Zhe Er, if you need to expand the fleet," Gongsun Hui hesitated a little, then said, "I can go back to Shanyang to raise some Qian gold." It was embarrassing to borrow money from one's maternal family, but for the development of the clan, she had to put aside so much.

"No, I disagree," Wang Shouzhe said after thinking about it.

What?

Wang Dinghai's face darkened a bit.

Even Gongsun Hui looked at Wang Shouzhe in confusion. Didn't he just say it was feasible? Could it be that like his father, he insisted on saving face rather than allowing her to raise funds?

"Things change over time," Wang Shouzhe said, frowning. "The clan's development can't be separated from Qian gold, but to get more Qian gold, we must expand the clan's output."

"Isn't that wrong, how can we increase the output without expanding the fleet?" Wang Dinghai stared at Wang Shouzhe, expectantly.

Wang Shouzhe chuckled mysteriously, "Uncle, you know a lot about fishing. I have a few ideas to discuss with you. Have you ever thought of a method of fishing called trawl netting? This is a coordinated way of fishing that involves two boats."

Then, Wang Shouzhe squat down, pulled Wang Dinghai with him, and started to draw a sketch on the deck.

Trawling was a very common fishing method on Earth where Shouzhe was from. It was a professional method of fishing; its efficiency was far beyond any recreational tool, such as throwing a net.

Without the excellent natural environment in Peace River, Wang Dinghai's unprofessional fishing method would surely end up bankrupt.

Of course, the severity of trawling, which was highly damaging to the natural environment, was a source of resistance for Shouzhe. But with the survival of the clan at stake, he had to develop it, sooner rather than later.

At worst, once the clan had developed and become powerful, they could give up this method of natural capture.

"Shouzhe, your idea is very astonishing," Wang Dinghai, a pro in this field, quickly understood the principle but frowned and voiced out his concern, "But such a huge net, not to mention how difficult it would be to make, our fishing boats can't pull it, can they?"

Unable to pull it!

Right, Wang Shouzhe suddenly realized where the problem lay; a sailing boat was incapable of the pulling power that oil-powered mechanical boats have. There was no way it could pull a giant net.

"We'll start with something smaller, mainly aiming for something that can be moved," Wang Shouzhe said. "First, we'll try a small trawl net about thirty or forty feet wide and sixty or seventy feet long. This will be in the shape of a large bag and will have bristles inside to prevent fish from escaping..."

"That might be worth a try," said Wang Dinghai, his eyes shining, "I'll go back and get twenty net-weaving workers to start on it. It should be finished in about two months."

Twenty people, two months...

Wang Shouzhe couldn't help feeling helpless; the productivity of this Profound Martial World was indeed low. But it's precisely because of this that the natural resources of this world are so well preserved.

In contrast, the nearby sea areas in Wang Shouzhe's world were being pounded flat by trawling, forcing the government to enact various fishing bans. The power of trawling was not something to be joked about.

"Don't rush, uncle, take a look at this other fishing tool. Although it's not as effective as trawling... it's simple to operate, and even common people could operate it if it's deployed correctly."

Afterwards, Wang Shouzhe sketched out another type of fishing tool for Wang Dinghai, called a lifting harp. It was somewhat similar to casting a net, but while casting involved trapping fish from above, the lifting harp scooped them up from below.

Overall, the lifting harp was more complex than casting a net, but once fixed and leveraged, it was simpler and less labor-intensive. Its advantage is that, once set up, any common laborer, even minors, could operate it.

Furthermore, the lifting harp had a stronger evolution form, which is the river-barring gillnet. If this could be manufactured, its lethality would be as strong as a small trawler, if not stronger.

"Shouzhe, where did you get all these wonderful ideas?" Wang Dinghai was so excited that he began to tremble, "If all these could be realized, we'd be rich."

"I came across them while reading an old book when I had free time," Wang Shouzhe said. "Uncle, how about trying out the ground cage and soul confusing array?"

Both the ground cage and the soul confusing array were highly lethal fishing tools, so lethal that they had been banned by the government and placed on the illegal fishing gear list. Both of these were passive-type set fishing gear.

Once set up and cast, they only needed regular checks, much like botting in a game... you didn't have to do anything, just collect the harvest at a set time.

Wang Dinghai was about to go crazy. As a Profound Martial "professional fisherman," Wang Shouzhe seemed to have opened a new world to him.

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