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Chapter 51: Hooked! The Hidden Puppeteer Takes the Bait_1

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"I've understood." A plan had formed in Wang Shouzhe's mind, he tactfully changed the subject, "Wang Shouliao, your fourth sister-in-law baked some pastries for me. I couldn't bear to eat them all, so I saved some for you."

Wang Shouliao's face experienced a subtle shift, managing a forced smile, "Thank you for your consideration, Fourth Brother. I had some dry food on the road just now."

"How can a young man like you only eat dry food?" Liu Ruolan mildly criticized, "First, have some pastries to fill your stomach, later your fourth sister-in-law will personally cook for you."

Wang Shouliao's face turned deathly pale, maintaining a forced smile, he said, "Thank you very much, Fourth Sister-in-law."

Wang Zongchang's legs were trembling, he proposed, "Fourth Uncle, I will carry out the task now."

"What's the hurry?" Liu Ruolan spoke with the air of an older sister or aunt, "You are all young and strong, no matter what you do, you must eat first. No one is allowed to leave, everyone stays for the meal."

Then Liu Ruolan leaves to prepare the meals.

She said she'll cook personally today.

The faces of three men from the Wang family turned grave; the atmosphere was heavy like the end of the world was approaching.

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Almost at the same time.

In the northwest of Changning Guard City, there was a vast ranch with rich pastures as far as the eye could see.

In it, there were herds of cows and sheep, as well as groups of robust horses galloping and training under the shepherd's guidance.

This was the famous "Huangfu Ranch", one of the main pillar industries of the Tianren prominent family, the Huangfu Clan.

The Huangfu Clan had taken root in Changning for hundreds of years, already having gone through one cycle of Celestial being succession, their position was as stable as Mount Tai.

In the middle of this vast ranch, there was a dormant circular volcano.

This was an inactive volcano, resulting in a large number of volcanic rocks in the land of this ranch, making large-scale farming difficult and unable to produce large areas of fertile fields.

The substantial amount of volcanic ash and minerals in the land, however, were suitable for the growth of grass, benefiting the development of animal husbandry.

As a result, the meat quality of the cattle and sheep produced by Huangfu Ranch was high, and the horses were also very strong, generating substantial economic benefits.

Right in the middle of the volcano, under the crater, hundreds of feet deep, there was a gigantic red rock.

A stone house was built on it.

Next to the stone house, there was a red lake of several dozen feet in radius. But what filled this small lake was not water, but continuously bubbling red magma.

The sweltering high temperature filled the air around it, distorting the surroundings.

From time to time, magma bubbles would rise from the magma lake, and with a burst, black smoke would ascend. These were ashes formed by impurities in the magma being incinerated due to high temperatures.

The temperature within the entire magma lake area was terribly high, an ordinary person entering the area would be charred in no time.

However, in such inhospitable conditions, an elderly man with red hair was sitting cross-legged on a bare red volcanic rock.

This volcanic rock was located in the middle of the magma lake, surrounded by bursting sprays of magma that resembled red fire blossoms. The surrounding air was continuously distorted, indicating an incredibly high temperature.

Yet this red-haired, elderly man sat there, seemingly at peace, appearing as comfortable as a fish in water.

His eyes were tightly closed, his breathing extended, imitating the rhythm of a dragon.

Each time he inhaled, he sucked in a large amount of the ultra-hot surrounding air into his lungs. When he exhaled, a stream of white breath would erupt.

With each inhale and exhale, the temperature of the surrounding air seemed to decrease marginally, and the magma in front caused layers of waves.

This cycle continued, over and over.

His complexion became red as if he had drunk old wine, and a wisp of green smoke rose from the top of his head.

At this moment.

A dignified middle-aged man in a regal dress was rushing down the stone steps that led to the inside of the circular mountain.

His pace was steady, moving gracefully, and fast. Although he moved quickly, he maintained a calm demeanor.

An aura of thin red energy enveloped his body, shielding him against the intense heat of the volcano.

Even so, by the time he arrived at the stone house by the magma lake, his face was sweaty, and red from the heat, clearly not at ease.

Still, he dared only to watch the fiery red-haired man from afar, not daring to disrupt him.

It was only after a long while that the red-haired man finished his cultivation.

Him, with his bare feet, casually walked over the bubbling magma and made his way over to the stone house.

Only at this point, the dignified middle-aged man in the regal dress respectfully greeted him, "Old Ancestor."

As he said this, he gracefully took off a jacket and draped it over their Old Ancestor.

"Jinghuan." The red-haired man glanced at him, "You know that my cultivation of the 'Red Dragon True Verses' is at a crucial point, I believe you wouldn't dare to disturb me without cause."

"Reporting to the Old Ancestor." The middle-aged man in the formal attire respectfully responded, "Old Ancestor, do you remember the Ping'an Wang Family?"

"Ping'an Wang Family?"

A line formed on the red-haired man's forehead, he seemed to be contemplating something.

After a long while, he finally recalls, "Now I remember. That's a pioneering family from outside, led by someone called Wang Zhuxuan. Even in my humble Changning Guard City, we have two Celestial Clans, yet he still dares to strive to be a Celestial Being. It's ridiculous~!"

The man in formal attire replied, "Yes, according to the Old Ancestor's instructions all those years ago, we took advantage of the beast tide and casually got in their way, causing them to falter."

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He spoke very nonchalantly.

They had no feud with the Wang family back then, they just casually wiped it out.

The red-haired old man slightly frowned: "Now that you mention it, I do recall it. This clan seems to have some relationship with the Wang family of Longzuo. Initially, the Wang family of Longzuo obtained a letter from the Academic Palace to protect that small clan. Why are you suddenly bringing up this trivial clan? Do you think they can honestly pose a threat?"

"Old ancestor." The man in the ornate robe spoke gravely, "This small clan is indeed turning the heavens upside down now. Recently, our clan members in the Purple Abode Academic Palace sent back news that this Wang family of Ping'an has, for some reason, produced no less than three Sky Prides.

Among them, two have been independently selected for cultivation as direct disciples by the Valley of Ten Thousand Butterflies and Leisure Peak."

"And their family head, Wang Shouzhe, is even more extraordinary..."

He explained some recent events at the Academic Palace to the old ancestor.

Of course, they did not receive news about Wang Longyan and Wang Licui, as they were keeping a low profile and were not known to outsiders.

"Old ancestor, if this trend continues, within two hundred years, I'm afraid the Wang family will surpass us. I wonder if they will investigate the events of the past?"

"The two from the Academic Palace are still too young to pose a threat in the short term." The red-haired old man said indifferently, "The teachers in the Academic Palace will not meddle in the disputes among local powerhouses. The real threat is the head of the Wang family, Wang Shouzhe."

His eyes were calm: "Back then, inhibited by the warning from the Academic Palace, we could not completely eliminate them. This time we must be more discreet, it is necessary to strike with a thunderous blow, directly aiming at their key point."

"Yes, old ancestor." The middle-aged man replied, "Moreover, our spies have discovered a top secret matter. Recently, the 'cement' that has been making waves in Donghaei is actually the masterpiece of the Wang family of Ping'an."

When he mentioned this matter, his eyes glowed.

No wonder the Wang family of Ping'an has risen so rapidly in recent years, it must be because they have gained a lot of resources by selling cement.

"Cement?"

The red-haired old man apparently did not know about this substance.

The middle-aged man explained it to him and then said, "Cement is sold at a high price. But in recent years, many buildings and infrastructures in Ping'an Town, including roads and river banks, have used a lot of cement. From this, we can infer that the cost of producing cement should be very low, making it extremely profitable. If we could get our hands on this business... "

Even the red-haired old man's breathing became a bit heavier after hearing this.

If a clan wants to develop and grow, they cannot do so without resources.

The Huangfu family is very powerful with numerous industries, huge scale operations, and an astonishing annual total income of around three hundred thousand Qian Gold.

However, their expenses are even more staggering.

With an old ancestor in the Heavenly Human Realm, over a dozen backbone figures in the Spirit Platform Realm, two Heaven-human Seeds, over a dozen Spirit Platform Seeds, plus two to three hundred key clansmen, over a hundred house servants and tributes, and one to two thousand other servants, the number is impressive.

The yearly expenses for all these people could reach astronomic figures.

How much surplus could be made from the three hundred thousand Qian Gold?

As the saying goes, "Each has difficulties of its own". Even though the life of a 7th-rank Aristocratic Family may seem luxurious, they too face their own unique challenges.

Without enough accumulation, the red-haired old man would not dare to go all out in cultivation and to break through to the Purple Abode Realm, otherwise he himself would become a resource sinkhole, making the growth of other family members an impossibility.

Their current plan and direction is to become a sixth-rank Aristocratic Family.

But if they could seize the cement industry, they could generate far more wealth than they have in Ping'an Town with the heritage of their Celestial-type family.

At that time, not to mention becoming a sixth-rank Aristocratic Family, accumulating wealth for a one or two hundred years, they might even have the qualifications to challenge and become an Aristocratic Family in the Purple Abode Realm.

Just as the saying goes - an innocent man gets into trouble because of his wealth. The Wang family of Ping'an is courting disaster upon themselves.

The red-haired old man's eyes flashed with a strong sense of greed, and a strong and suffocating aura gradually emanated from him.

"Jinghuan, you are free to proceed with this matter. But remember, you must make sure to leave no traces."

"Yes, old ancestor."

The middle-aged man's spirit was lifted; he realized that the old ancestor had approved his plan.

He was thrilled: "This marks the rise of our Huangfu family. I will make necessary arrangements now. Once the disaster relief team from the Purple Abode Academy leaves, we will take action."

...

A few days later.

Changning County.

First Capital City.

As the political center of the Guard City, the First Capital City is square and imposing, with a sense of grandeur, and its design details do not lose their dignity. Right in the center, there is a high tower from which the entirety of the Guard City can be viewed.

Outside the First Capital City, there is a vast square in each of the four directions.

The square is paved with blue stones, adorned with rune bricks interspersed, forming a huge protective array around the First Capital City.

That is to say, the city itself is an incredibly robust fort, capable of withstanding attacks from a Level Seven fierce beast for quite some time.

However, at the moment, the four vast squares are already filled with carriages. These carriages have different clan crests, representing the different aristocratic families attending the meeting in the First Capital City.

At this moment, inside the main hall, a large number of the members from the Eight Grade aristocratic families had already arrived.

There was Clan Leader Liu Gaowang of the Liu Family from Shanyin, and Elder Liu Zhisheng.

Obviously, since Clan Leader Liu Gaowang had not yet reached the Spiritual Platform Realm, he came to support Elder Liu Zhisheng.

In addition, there was the Clan Leader of the Chen Clan from Donggang, Chen Dewei.

As he himself was a Clan Leader in the Spiritual Platform Realm, only he came.

Similarly, there was the Clan Leader of the Gongsun Clan from Shanyang - Gongsun Yan.

Gongsun Yan was just twenty-three years old, but he was already at the peak of Rank Seven of the Vital Energy Refining Realm. With his composed and restrained demeanor, yet not lacking in majesty, he was the new Clan Leader of the Gongsun Clan.

As for his father, Gongsun Qiang, he was a Young Clan Leader all his life. In the end, he never had the chance to become the Clan Leader. After achieving the Spiritual Platform Realm, he became an Elder.

As for Wang Shouzhe's maternal clan, the Lu Clan of Yingxiu, they currently only have two cultivators in the Spiritual Platform Realm and have not yet met the threshold of the Eighth Grade Aristocratic Family. Therefore, they are not eligible to participate in this welcome meeting.

In addition, the Clan Leader of the established Eighth Grade Xu Family of Changning, Xu Anbang, was also waiting here early.

Aside from them, notable Clan Leaders like Party Zhenghe of the Dang Clan from Ningxi, Huangfu Deyun of the former Ma Huangfu's family, Lei Family of Wangxia and others have already arrived.

Among them, the former Ma Huangfu's family and Lei Family of Wangxia, were side branches split from the two Celestial families, Huangfu Clan and Lei Clan of Changning. Under the care of their main family, they developed into an Eighth Grade Prominent Family within a short span of one to two hundred years.

Together with Ping'an Wang Family, all eight Eighth Grade prominent families in the entire Changning Guarding Area are now gathered.

When Wang Shouzhe entered the main hall guided by a City Guard Mansion officer, the eyes of everyone in the room fell on him.

Clan Leaders of the Liu Family from Shanyin, the Gongsun Clan from Shanyang, and the Chen Clan from Donggang naturally all cast friendly and affectionate eyes.

The gaze of Xu Anbang, the Clan Leader of the Xu Family from Changning, is significantly more complicated.

Not long ago, the Xu Family of Changning, as an old Eighth-Grade Prominent Family, was high above and infinitely proud. Their relationship with the Ping'an Wang Family was extremely complex.

Over time, the two sides maintained contact less and less, maintaining the occasional marriage alliance only within the direct lineage.

But now, within a short span of ten years, Ping'an Wang Family has risen rapidly, occupying a healthy portion of Ping'an, not only having shifted the old Eighth-Grade Aristocratic Family in terms of power, but their future potential is also incalculable.

The Clan Leaders of the other Eighth-Grade prominent families also looked at Wang Shouzhe with meaningful eyes, as if they all had their own schemes and plans.

"Cousin Shouzhe." Gongsun Yan, the youngest clan leader present, was the first to greet Wang Shouzhe. He clasped his hands and said, "Why did you come so late? Everyone has been waiting for a long time."

"Cousin Yan." Wang Shouzhe replied with a smile, "I was at Ping'an Town. It's a long way to go, so it's normal for me to be late."

Afterward, Wang Shouzhe greeted each of the Clan Leaders individually and exchanged pleasantries.

Everyone present had status, so it was normal for close relations and allies to be intimate. Even with the other Clan Leaders, even if there had been some friction in the past, they would not lose their demeanor in such formal occasions. Each of them received each other with a smile, talked, and laughed as if they were good friends who had not seen each other for many years.

However, in this situation, the words everyone spoke were all devoid of any substance.

Just at the height of the hustle and bustle.

The officer outside shouted: "The Celestial Clan Leader of the Huangfu Clan, Huangfu Jinhuan has arrived..."

All those present who were talking and socializing immediately stopped, and their eyes turned to the doorway.

They saw a middle-aged man dressed in magnificent clothing stride in with the movement of a soaring dragon and charging tiger.

His eyes scanned the room, and a smile appeared on his face: "I'm sorry, everyone. I'm late."

After some general courtesy, his gaze fell on Wang Shouzhe.

And Wang Shouzhe's gaze also fell on him.

They locked eyes.

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A few moments later, Huangfu Jinhuan, smiling cheerfully, took the initiative to come forward: "I presume you are the Family Head of the Ping'an Wang Family, Wang Shouzhe? Just as the rumors say, you are indeed a luminary of our time."

Wang Shouzhe also grinned and gave a courteous bow: "I have seen Huangfu preface before. You are too flattering, too flattering. I'm still young and I hope to take the opportunity to learn from you."

Both family heads held hands, complimenting each other with manic smiles as if they were old friends reuniting.

The rest of the clans also stepped forward to exchange pleasantries with Huangfu Jinhuan. Everyone was so full of smiles that the atmosphere was truly harmonious.

Not long afterwards, the Lei family's patriarch, belonging to the Heavenly Human Realm, arrived at the meeting place, further warming up the occasion.

The two prominent families coexisting in this city did not have marital alliances, and nobody believed they were as harmonious as they made it seem.

But, that's how things work among the Profound Martial families. If there is no clear rift, in formal encounters they all maintain a facade of courtesy.

Thus, two seventh-rank Heavenly Human prominent families and eight eighth-rank prominent families were all gathered under one roof; a sight rarely seen throughout the history of Changning.

A moment later...

From outside, someone announced: "The City Lord has arrived."

As soon as these words were spoken, all the family heads stopped talking and looked at the main entrance with solemnity and respect.

At the main entrance, a middle-aged man clad in black armor strode in, accompanied by several deputies. He had a stern face, a drawn beard, and a straight posture. He walked with assured strides, exuding the aura of a powerful beast. Even without deliberate intimidation, he instilled a sense of fear in others.

His fierce bearing was characteristic of veterans who'd survived numerous battles. As he entered, the entire hall fell silent.

This was one of the three Tianren of Changning -- Xiahou Hongde.

He wasn't born into a local powerful family, but into a military family that served under the Daqian Military System, thus his path to power wasn't the same as that of local power magnates such as Wang Shouzhe.

As he swept his gaze over everyone, all the family heads bowed their heads slightly, showing a hint of reverence in their eyes.

Not only was he a Tianren Realm powerhouse, but he also represented the authority of Daqian, and was responsible for guarding the whole Changning.

In theory, he was the number one person in Changning.

However, to prevent city lords from turning cities into their own private domains, the City Lords that originate from the military system serve for a fixed duration.

Usually, a term lasts between twenty to thirty years for a city such as this.

Having served for over a decade, Xiahou Hongde, known for his fairness and integrity, had accumulated significant prestige in Changning, garnering the respect of all family heads.

Moving on from this side note...

After displaying his imposing aura, Xiahou Hongde, now radiated warmth, courteously inquiring about each Family Head.

Upon reaching Wang Shouzhe, his eyes paused, showing some peculiarities. His smile was more amiable than for others: "Master Shouzhe, in recent years, you have developed Ping'an Town at an amazing speed and many citizens have expressed their wish to migrate there. If I get a chance, I would surely visit and learn, and I hope that Master Shouzhe won't be stingy with the experience about governance."

"City Lord overpraises," Wang Shouzhe replied with a respectful smile, "It would be our honour to have your presence in Ping'an Town. When that happens, we'll need your guidance so that the development of Ping'an Town can reach a higher level."

The two exchanged a bit more small talk, but Wang Shouzhe could sense, Xiahou Hongde indeed intended to foster closer ties.

Apparently, the City Lord, who usually kept himself out of public eye, was sharp and had his own information channels. He probably had some knowledge about what happened at the Town Academy.

Afterward, the City Lord began to show interest in other families, demonstrating his friendly charm to everyone.

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At the same time...

Hundred Islands Wharf.

The history of this wharf was nearly the same as that of the Hundred Islands. The vermilion paint of the archway at the entrance was peeling off in places, the chrome on the plaque was fading, and the green bricks on the dock were showing signs of wear.

However, even today, it was as busy as ever.

The hustle and bustle of the crowd and the loud voices of merchants hawking their goods mingled with the rhythmic shouts of the dock workers, filling the entire harbor.

The towering sea vessels, loaded with cargo and freshly caught seafood, were moored in the harbour. Occasionally, rotten fish or shrimps were thrown back into the sea.

Under the piercing sunlight, in the moist sea breeze, the entire dock was filled with a damp salty smell.

This was the smell of the sea.

At the southeast corner of the dock, a large sea vessel bearing the flag of the Chen Clan of Donggang stood quietly in the deep-water dock, with a striking symbol on the flag.

Those in the know would recognize at a glance that this was a large cargo vessel from the Chen Clan of Donggang.

Wang Zongchang of the younger generation of the Wang family was directing two family heads and more than ten house servants, moving precious medicinal materials and some treasures and pearls from the sea onto the vessel.

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"Brother Wang Hu, be careful with that large box." Wang Zongchang reminded a house servant who was lifting a box onto the ship, "Those are all sea-flavored snacks and small dried fish. Please put them all in my guest room later, I'm afraid the rats on the ship might steal them."

For this trip to the Hundred Islands Guard, he of course paid out of his own pocket for some snacks, planning to give them to his younger siblings and some of the younger elders when he returned. The rest left, he would find an opportunity to send them to the Purple Abode Academic Palace to satisfy his sister Wang Licui's craving.

Although his sister Wang Licui was a foodie, she still had the demeanor of an elder sister and was very kind to the younger siblings.

"Second young master, don't worry." Wang Hu, a house servant in his mid-twenties, responded with a smile, "I followed your instructions and packed everything tightly, so it won't get damp or stolen. Moreover, I will also keep an eye on Little Bao and prevent him from sneaking any."

This Wang Fu was the son of the old house servant Wang Zhong. He had been nurtured by the family since he was young, and had started working for the family when he was sixteen. He had been serving for nine years and could be considered a direct servant of the Wang family, holding a high status within the family hierarchy.

With the increasing resources of the family, his father Wang Zhong also received allowances, and at his young age, he was already at Level Six of the Qi Refinement Realm, much stronger than his father was in his youth.

He was even more powerful than Liu Yongzhou, a direct descendant of the Liu family, who was considered a promising figure.

"Brother," voiced Wang Bao, who had just joined the rank of house servants at the age of sixteen or seventeen. His face turned dark as he retorted, "The second young master has already shared plenty with me. Where would I have the gall to steal any?"

This young man was very energetic and was the second son of house servant Wang Zhong. Because of his superior talent since childhood, and the opening of the family cultivation path, he received the best cultivation from an early age. Now, he is already at Level Five of the Qi Refinement Realm, surpassing his father at the age of thirty-five, and has immeasurable potential for the future.

Now that the Wang family was wealthy, they spared no efforts to cultivate these direct house servants.

At this time, the Wang family servants were busy loading the cargo onto the ship.

An old carriage arrived at the dock, and a few people dressed as travelling merchants got out. They were experienced peddlers, carrying plenty of goods and needing the help of dock workers to load their goods onto the ship.

There was a young peddler who seemed somewhat nervous, with slightly flickering eyes.

An older, bald peddler patted him on the shoulder and said in a low voice, "Zheng, stay calm. With Elder's injury this time, this crucial escort mission falls on us. But this is a great opportunity. As long as we complete the mission, the young master will definitely reward us."

"Brother Li," the young peddler whispered, "I heard that thing can actually..."

The bald man's expression tightened at the words, immediately chastising in a low voice, "Be careful with words! There are too many mouths around, the matter is important, we can't make any mistakes."

He then reassured Zheng in a low voice, "You can rest assured, there will definitely be no problems this time. Someone will meet us as soon as we arrive at Donggang."

He had full confidence etched on his face.

He had taken this route to many times, and had connections everywhere.

As they spoke, all of their goods were loaded onto the ship.

Wang Zongchang also noticed this group of peddlers but didn't pay them much attention.

Commercial ships of the Chen Clan of Donggang offered transportation services for peddlers, and at quite a high charge. Peddler groups like this were commonplace on the dock, cropping up one after another like carp crossing a river.

Within half a day, this cargo ship was fully loaded and set sail for Donggang.

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Meanwhile.

At the east gate of Changning Guard.

The city guards had cleared the area early in the morning. At this moment, apart from the soldiers holding long swords and a group of noble family heads outside the gate, there was no idle person to be seen.

The continuous rain had gathered a lot of water in the low-lying areas outside the city. If you carelessly stepped into it, you would immediately splash muddy water.

Luckily, all the heads of prominent families present had their bodies protected by Mysterious Energy, otherwise, they might be covered in mud, losing all decorum.

However, their attention was hardly on these small matters at the moment.

They were clustered around the City Lord Xiahou Hongde, eagerly peering into the distance as if they were waiting for someone.

Gongsun Yan, the new family head of the Gongsun Clan from Shanyang, had grown up listening to the grand deeds of Wang Shouzhe and was very close to him.

He seemed a bit nervous as he stood almost directly behind Wang Shouzhe. Unable to contain his curiosity, he asked, "Cousin Shouzhe, I've heard that the direct disciples of the Academy are all

cultivators in the Heavenly Human Realm. They're all very young and promising, far exceeding the families in these remote areas."

"Not all of them are Heavenly Realm cultivators, but the potential and prospect of direct disciples are indeed great." Wang Shouzhe explained, "Yet, they walk a different path from ours. The more they receive, the more they will have to give in the future."

He hadn't been idly staying in the Academy in the past days.

Naturally, he knew that the disciples of the Academy, especially the outstanding ones, not only receive high-quality cultivation resources from the Academy but also bear heavy responsibilities.

After all, the academy does not cultivate disciples to let them dominate in the civil society.

Just think, Master Binglan had three direct disciples, but only the youngest, Fang Youan, was at his side.

So where did the other two go?

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They naturally went to fulfill their responsibilities and duties.

Master Changchun had five direct disciples, and only the youngest sister Green Fern was by his side. It was obvious that they had their respective destinations.

The world was too vast, Changning was just a small corner, and there was still so much they didn't know.

"I see." Gongsun Yan, a steady and smart young man, instantly came to understand, "Even so, I deeply envy them."

From a young age, he had a not-so-reliable old father. Under the circumstances, he had to mature early.

But which teenager wouldn't have a yearning to venture out into the world and experience it?

The world is so vast, everyone wants to see it.

But once you become the clan leader, you become responsible for the entire clan's future, and your life is centered around the clan, leaving no chance for adventuring.

This is what Wang Shouzhe had said about everyone following different paths.

The other family heads were also quietly discussing, mainly about the disciples of the Purple Abode Academy.

For most Eighth and Ninth Grade prominent families, having a child admitted to the academy was indeed a matter of great pride. If they were to become a Core Disciple, it could totally transform the status of the entire family.

It was for this reason that the development of the Liu Family of Shanyin had been so rapid in recent decades. The City Lord was very polite to the Liu Family of Shanyin, there were signs of him trying to curry favor.

When talking with Liu Gaowang, the other family heads would inevitably commend the elder Xuanchao. It seemed that when Changning produced a Core Disciple of the Academy, they felt a sense of shared honor.

Just as everyone was in discussion.

A crisp crane cry suddenly echoed from the sky.

Accompanied by the call, a crane with black and white feathers, a long neck, and a red crown on its head suddenly broke out from the thick clouds and swooped towards the ground.

It was the Fourth Level flying Spirit Bird, Zhu Topecrane, raised by the Purple Abode Academy!

And behind it, a radiant, magical carriage was being pulled.

The carriage, bolstered by dark brown Spirit Wood and covered with Spirit silkworm silk curtains, was spacious and exquisitely carved. The vehicle was engraved with runes, and its whole body was

flowing with the bright light of Formation Energy. In the dim light of the sky, it stood out like a small sun.

Seeing this carriage.

The face of City Lord Xiahou Hongde immediately became serious, and the whispering family heads, too, became solemn.

At the same time, their eyes filled with envy.

Even an ordinary Celestial Prominent Family couldn't afford a Spirit Beast flying carriage. Probably only units as wealthy as the Purple Abode Academy could afford to provide Spirit Beast flying carriages for the travel of their direct disciples.

Wang Shouzhe was also a bit envious.

Even at the Heavenly Human Realm, mysterious energy would have difficulty supporting the consumption during long journeys of flight. If he had a Spirit Beast flying carriage, it would be very convenient to travel anywhere.

However, such a thing was so rare that he couldn't afford it for now.

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While this was happening.

In the sky, several young men and women were sitting in the crane-drawn carriage.

The leading young man, dressed in a sky-blue long robe, had handsome eyebrows, a gentle demeanor, and an impressive overall presence. All the men and women in the carriage looked to him as their leader.

This young man was indeed Fang Youan, the direct disciple of Master Binglan of the Mysterious Ice Palace.

To his left and right were three Core Disciples, two male and one female. They were young, but with extraordinary temperaments, among them was Ji Mingyu.

"Brothers." A Core Disciple, who was taking a flight on a Spirit Beast carriage for the first time, said in a voice filled with unrestrained excitement as he looked down at the land through the window, "Is that Changning below? From this angle, it really looks grand and majestic."

"Yangde senior brother." Ji Mingyu said, "You have been saying the same thing all the way. Stay calm later to avoid losing face in front of the local elites in Changning."

"Senior brother Mingyu, unlike you born in a noble family and have seen a lot from a young age." Yangde, the senior brother, chuckled, "This is my first time enjoying a Spirit Beast carriage ride thanks to senior brother Yu An. Don't worry, I won't lose face for the academy by keeping calm as befitting of a Core Disciple."

"Changning? Changning. Why does this name sound so familiar?" One female Core Disciple frowned slightly, "I seem to have heard it somewhere. Brother Yu An, is this your hometown?"

Fang Youan gave a wry smile, "Discussions of family background are prohibited in the academy, but I can make an exception for Sister Long Yan."

"So it's Sister Long Yan's hometown." Ji Mingyu suddenly got excited, "Does that mean we can meet Wang Shouzhe?"

Everyone looked at him with strange expressions.

You were just recently beaten up by Wang Shouzhe, weren't you?

Why are you so excited to mention him?

Chapter 53 Picking up the Leak! Wang Family's Future Development Plan_1

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While they have been chatting, the flying carriage slowly descended outside the east gate of Changning Weicheng.

"Tweet~"

The Zhu Topecrane flapped its wings and gracefully landed on the yellow mud, tilting its head to emit a soft cry.

The previously chattering carriage suddenly fell silent, and the three core disciples, including Ji Mingyu, subconsciously adjusted their clothes and displayed their best demeanor.

"Let's go~"

Fang Youan was the first to step out of the carriage.

It was a cloudy day, and the light outside the city was not good, but the appearance of these four still brought a sparkle to people's eyes.

Whether it was their appearance or temperament, all four of them were extraordinary. Particularly, their proud stance and spirit easily won over others.

Without question, each of them was a Sky Pride.

Especially Fang Youan, who was at the front, his temperament was one of a kind, showing a detached demeanor. He stood out among the crowd like a crane standing among chickens, even more outreaching in demeanor than the City Lord who was also a Heavenly Human.

Many noble family heads couldn't help but feel a touch of admiration and envy, spontaneously thinking, "If only our family could produce such a Sky Pride."

Even the heads of the Heavenly Human clans, Huangfu Jinhuan of the Huangfu Clan and the head of the Lei Family, were no exception.

Could it really be them?

In the crowd, Wang Shouzhe raised his eyebrows, somewhat surprised.

He had also thought about who would be the direct disciple from the Academic Palace this time, but he didn't expect it to be Fang Youan and his group.

However, thinking about it, it also made sense.

There weren't many idle direct disciples in the Purple Abode Academic Palace. It was quite reasonable for Fang Youan to bring some junior brothers and sisters for a large-task mission.

As he was pondering this,

City Lord Xiahou Hongde had already stepped forward with a smile plastered all over his face, cupping his hands in salute: "You must be the Sky Prides of the Purple Abode Academic Palace, right? I am Xiahou Hongde, the Changning City Lord. I greet the gifted of the Academic Palace. Please forgive my failure to welcome you properly."

Having said that, he also took out his identity token for verification.

Fang Youan also followed the rules, scanning the identity token with his spiritual sense. After confirming the other person's identity, he politely returned the salute: "City Lord, you are too kind. I am Fang Youan from the Mysterious Ice Palace of the Purple Abode Academic Palace, leading my junior brothers and sisters to assist in handling the disaster situation around Changning Guard."

While he spoke, he also took out his token and the appointment letters jointly issued by the Purple Abode Academic Palace and the Prefecture Mansion.

Xiahou Hongde didn't dare to be slack; he carefully checked the token and the appointment letters as per the rules.

After making sure there was no problem, he bowed even more respectfully: "I pay respects to the Inspector-General, and to the Inspection Officials."

Whether it was the appointment position of the visitors or their identity as direct disciples of the Academic Palace, he absolutely couldn't afford to treat them carelessly.

Let aside Fang Youan, the Inspector-General, who was in his youth, and had an unfathomable cultivation base. Behind him stood someone from the Mysterious Ice Palace, who was not to be provoked among those from the Purple Abode of the Academic Palace.

Moreover, he had heard that the disciples of the Mysterious Ice Palace in the Purple Abode Academic Palace each had a very strong combat capability, and each core disciple was an extraordinary warrior, let alone a Heavenly Human direct disciple. How could he underestimate him?

"City Lord, you are too kind. You are my senior, just call me Youan," said Fang Youan, who had a genial demeanor – a rarity among the Mysterious Ice Palace.

"I dare not. Inspector-General Youan," Xiahou Hongde said after exchanging a few polite words, "Let me introduce you to the clan leaders of Changning Weicheng."

As soon as he finished his sentence,

The Clan Leaders of the Celestial Lei Family and Celestial Huangfu Family, who had been waiting for half a day, immediately came forward with smiles all over their faces, followed by other clan leaders.

The arrival of a figure of the level of a direct disciple of the Purple Abode Academic Palace was a rare event in Changning Weicheng. If they were lucky enough to establish a connection and find good karma, it would only benefit their clans.

As for Wang Shouzhe, his reaction was a bit slower, so he was last in line.

His allies through marriage were also not particularly enthusiastic. After all, they had recently seen quite a lot with Wang Shouzhe. Even though the position of a direct disciple of the Academic Palace was noble, it was not so easy to get close to them. It was most practical to hold firmly onto Shouzhe's thigh.

"Inspector-General Youan, Inspection Officials, these are Clan Leader Lei Qiuwei of the Celestial Lei Family, and Huangfu Jinhuan of the Celestial Huangfu Family."

According to the rules, Xiahou Hongde introduced the two Heavenly Human Clans first.

Lei Qiuwei and Huangfu Jinhuan immediately greeted with smiles on their faces: "We greet the Inspector-General and the Inspection Officials."

Fang Youan wasn't one of those people who were out of touch with reality. He knew that when working locally, he needed to rely on the local powers, of course, he wouldn't superciliously snub them.

He was just about to return the gesture and introduce his junior brothers and sisters when,

Suddenly,

Senior Brother Yang cried out, "Isn't that Junior Brother Shouzhe?"

Junior Brother Shouzhe?

As soon as his words came out, all eyes were drawn to him.

Fang Youan also noticed Wang Shouzhe in the back of the crowd.

He was slightly startled, and somewhat delighted. He immediately bowed to Lei Qiuwei and Huangfu Jinhuan, apologizing, "Excuse me, gentlemen. I've just spotted an acquaintance. I'll need to greet him first."

Chapter 53 Picking up the Leak! Wang Family's Future Development Plan_2

Under the guidance of Fang Youan, a group of disciples from the Mysterious Ice Palace walked cheerfully towards Wang Shouzhe. As they walked, the people of Changning Guard kept stepping aside.

Without waiting for Fang Yu'an to speak, Wang Shouzhe took the initiative to salute: "It is an honor to see you, Senior Brother Youan, all other senior brothers, and this senior sister."

With a warm smile, Fang Yu'an reciprocated the gesture: "Junior Brother Shouzhe, it's been more than two months since our last hurried goodbye at the Academic Palace. I did not expect that we would meet again under these circumstances."

Ji Mingyu, Li Yangde, and another core female disciple, Qian Cailing, also hastily returned the salutations, all addressing him as "Junior Brother Shouzhe."

They all knew that Wang Shouzhe was a named direct disciple of Master Changchun.

Although the title carries the term "named", they all understand that this is but a necessary formality and Master Changchun could formally take Wang Shouzhe as a direct disciple anytime Wang Shouzhe wished.

Moreover, they thought it was only natural. This Junior Brother Shouzhe, not yet even thirty years old, had managed to defeat Ji Mingyu. Should he wish to join the Mysterious Ice Palace, it was highly likely that their Master Binglan would accept him as a direct disciple.

The customs of the Academic Palace were such, that one's background didn't matter. Even if you were born into a prominent Purple Abode family, if you lacked strength, neither the core disciples nor the direct disciples would care much about you.

However, someone like Wang Shouzhe, who had risen in status purely by virtue of his own strength, commanded even Ji Mingyu's respect and she avoided engaging him in battle anymore.

After exchanging courtesies briefly, Wang Shouzhe also came to know their names. He greeted them, "Senior Brother Yangde, Senior Sister Cailing. After we finish our business here, please do not leave in a hurry. Allow me to treat you all properly."

Seeing their familiar camaraderie, the complexions of the various Grade Eight Prominent Families subtly shifted. Allies and relatives naturally had smiles on their faces, whereas the faces of the others looked somewhat complicated.

The clan leaders of the two celestial families, Lei Qiuwei and Huangfu Jinghuan, apparently appeared quite awkward.

They had taken positions at the very front, trying to take advantage of their proximity to form relationships with the core disciples of the Academic Palace at the earliest opportunity, but they hadn't expected that these disciples would already be so familiar and close with Wang Shouzhe.

Even the City Lord Xiahou Hongde was taken aback for a good while. Only then did he step forward with a chuckle and say, "I am truly envious to see Clan Leader Shouzhe being so friendly

with the esteemed individuals. But, this is hardly a place for us to chat. I have prepared a banquet in the Hundred Flavors Pavilion in honor of the esteemed individuals to help them feel refreshed."

Clearly, he had noticed the awkwardness amongst the other families, and graciously stepped in to defuse the situation.

Meanwhile, Wang Shouzhe's standing in his mind unknowingly rose by several notches. It seemed that the information he had received about the Academic Palace was not comprehensive and he had truly underestimated Wang Shouzhe!

As for Fang Youan and his group, they naturally wouldn't refuse Xiahou Hongde's hospitable gesture and followed him into the city along with others.

Under the guidance of the city defense battalion, the group headed straight for the Hundred Flavors Pavilion.

Of course, the Hundred Flavors Pavilion of Changning Guard couldn't possibly compare with the grand headquarters of the Hundred Flavors Pavilion in Longzuo County.

Upon reaching the Hundred Flavors Pavilion, they found out that Qian Xuean, the shopkeeper of the Changning Guard branch of the Qian Family Business, was already waiting at the entrance.

With his belly growing bigger and bigger, he looked like the Mile Buddha, and greeted Fang Youan and all other core disciples from the Purple Abode Academic Palace with a smile.

Upon seeing Qian Cailing, he quickly bowed deeply and said, "Xuean pays his respects to Aunt Cailing."

"Oh, it's Xue'an." Qian Cailing examined him from head to toe, "I haven't seen you in two or three years and you've gained weight. So, you are also in Changning Guard."

Qian Cailing had a deep impression of this Qian Xuean.

He had originally been an insignificant bastard from the direct vessel family, yet he unexpectedly had become so successful and accomplished several great achievements for the family. Even the old ancestor of their family had mentioned him twice.

What kind of honor was that? Even as her, a core disciple of the Academic Palace from the illustrious Qian Family, she had also found her impression of Qian Xuean deepening more and more.

Qian Xuean, of course, was an opportunist, seizing every chance to run to the Academic Palace every two or three years.

Qian Cailing also had often received gifts from Qian Xuean, leaving a deep impression on her.

This little conversation might seem ordinary to others, but to the heads of families in Changning Guard, it caused their expressions to change and their hearts to become more solemn.

It seemed that among all the core disciples from the Academic Palace, this female core disciple named Qian Cailing, seemed to be the most inconspicuous, yet she turned out to be from the Qian family.

In the whole of Longzuo County, the Qian family was a well-known fifth-grade Purple Abode prominent family, holding a very eminent status, and almost no one dared to offend them.

Even Wang Shouzhe found himself looking at Qian Cailing a few times more, not expecting that Sister Cailing turns out to be Qian Xuean's aunt.

Indeed, the Academic Palace of the Purple Abode is a place teeming with exceptional talents.

Or more precisely, the Qian family of Longzuo indeed has profound and immeasurable foundations.

Afterward, it was naturally a warm reception. With the presence of Qian Xuean, a skilled socializer, the atmosphere became much more lively.

After the third round of toasts.

With a serious expression, Fang Youan respectfully addressed the guests at the banquet, "Everyone, we have eaten and drunk, but we must not slack off in the face of disaster. I, Fang Youan, have been

entrusted by the Prefectural Governor's Mansion and the Academic Palace to oversee disaster relief. I ask everyone present to give their utmost support.

City Lord, I noticed a significant number of refugees gathered near Changning Guard City when I was in the air earlier. Has proper arrangements been made for them?"

Upon mentioning the urgent matter, everyone's face turned grave.

Xiahou Hongde spoke with a solemn face, "The middle and downstream of Peace River have suffered severe damage. Many refugees are heading east. As only 30% of Changning Guard City is affected by the disaster, many refugees have gathered here without leaving. I have ordered the construction of several temporary refugee camps and opened granaries to provide porridge for the refugees.

But the number of refugees is increasing, and the amount of grain stored in Changning Guard City is limited. We can only hold on for so long."

Fang Youan frowned, "Some of us senior brothers have preceded you, and some junior brothers and junior sisters are coming by road, collecting food and fodder along the way. But I'm afraid these don't meet our immediate needs, and we will need the local prominent families to contribute."

When he said this, everyone fell silent for a while.

With a bitter smile on his face, Ningxi Dang's Party Zhenghe said, "Inspector-General, all lands of my Dang family in Ningxi have been submerged. The tenant farmers and common people in our jurisdiction have all fled to the town. If we don't receive help, I'm afraid my Dang family is going to..."

The other prominent families also showed bitter expressions, indicating that it is not the harvest season, and each family relies on their stored food to survive, each suffering considerable losses.

"We could still gather some food." Qian Xuean of Qian family business said, "I can muster some for the time being. The problem is that more and more refugees are gathering, and surely we can't just send them elsewhere? To the best of my knowledge, the two guard cities Dignan Town and Ze upstream suffered even more severe disasters.

Numerous fields and houses were swept away, especially in Ze Guard City, which is still submerged in water, with countless dead and injuries. The surviving common people and tenants are probably homeless."

"Humph!" A hint of killing intent swept across Fang Youan's eyes, "Dingnan and Zhenze, both guard cities, have been negligent in flood control, causing such a huge disaster. Their days of relaxation are probably over. Let's not talk about this for now. We still need to do find a way to settle these refugees."

With these words, there was another silence among the prominent families, each carefully contemplating the situation.

Wang Shouzhe understood. It was not their fault.

After hundreds of years of development, most of the territories of Changning Guard City's prominent families were already saturated. An increase in the number of tenant farmers and laborers would not bring significant economic growth but instead would increase various consumption, forming a burden.

However, they couldn't just dismiss Fang Youan's requests. He came with the title "Inspector-General".

He might look gentle now, but he could destroy an Eighth-Grade Prominent Family on a whim if angered.

After a brief consideration, the Family Heads began to express their stance - one family accepted one or two thousand refugees, and another accepted two thousand. Despite their greatest efforts, it still seemed insufficient considering the vast number of refugees.

Someone even suggested asking Donghaei Guard City or other guards to accept some refugees.

At this point, Huangfu Jinhuan stood up and said, "Our Huangfu family is willing to take in five thousand refugees."

Lei Qiuwei quickly added, "Our Lei Family is also willing to accept five thousand refugees."

With this, Fang Youan looked much relieved. At least, these local magnates were not simply shirking responsibility.

"Brother Yu An," Wang Shouzhe pondered for a while before standing up and saying, "Our Ping'an Town is willing to accept forty thousand refugees."

What?

Forty thousand refugees?!

Everyone was taken aback, their eyes focused on Wang Shouzhe, their faces filled with disbelief.

Wang Shouzhe, however, felt regretful.

If he could handle the sudden influx, he would really want to accept all the refugees. Because the more people the Wang family's upcoming development plans could accommodate, the better.

Chapter 54 Expansion! The Great Development of Ping'an Town_1

...

Wang Shouzhe's father-in-law, Liu Gaowang, sharply gestured at him.

Although you have good relations with the people from the Academic Palace, how can our Ping'an Town accommodate forty thousand people all at once?

Chen Dewei of the Chen Clan of Donggang, also looked at Wang Shouzhe with some apprehension. The total population of Ping'an Town was only forty thousand as of then, right?

Fang Youan stared intently at Wang Shouzhe, a hint of admiration in his eyes. "Junior Brother Shouzhe, I admire your determination to solve the problem. However, forty thousand is just too many. We should think of other ways."

Fang Youan was appointed to a large-scale task this time. As the Inspector-General, the effects of this disaster relief mission would also impact his career progression. How could he not be moved by Wang Shouzhe's accommodating endeavor?

"Senior Brother Yu An, we have to solve the problem since it exists," Wang Shouzhe said seriously, "Over the past two years, the Wang family has also stored some grain. If we buy more from other places, we can barely feed forty thousand refugees for a year or two.

During these one or two years, our Ping'an Town needs to dredge the river channels and reinforce the river banks, and we generally need more labor."

"Fine. Since Junior Brother Shouzhe is determined," Fang Youan said, "I will run some errands for you and try to exempt Ping'an Town from three years of taxes. You can collect taxes as usual for your own use." The fact that he could promise this meant he had certainty in delivering - a quid pro quo.

"Thank you, Senior Brother Yu An." Wang Shouzhe expressed his gratitude.

"Good courage, good strategy," Lei's Lei Qiuwei praised, "Since the younger Brother Shouzhe is so courageous, we, the Celestial Lei Family, should not fall behind, we will accept an additional five thousand people."

The other clans also indicated that they were willing to accept more refugees.

Among them were the Gongsun Clan from Shanyang, the Liu Family from Shanyin, and the Chen Clan of Donggang. They had all caught the subtle hint in Wang Shouzhe's eyes and decided, gritting their teeth, to accept an extra ten thousand people.

Under Wang Shouzhe's leadership, the initially complicated refugee problem was easily resolved.

Fang Youan instantly felt elated, raising his Spiritual Wine, "In the face of disaster, we in Changning County are so united. On behalf of the refugees, I thank you for stepping forward to take responsibility."

From thereon, naturally, everyone was greatly delighted.

After this welcoming feast,

The whole Changning entered disaster relief mode.

Similarly, under Wang Shouzhe's decision, the Ping'an Wang Family made full efforts to embark on a significant project.

The clan members, family heads, and outstanding personnel from branches.

They all threw themselves into work.

Expanding temporary refugee camps, redirecting food supplies, organizing refugee intake, filling out their registration, along with arranging other necessary follow-ups.

Of course, when the refugees had settled a little, the Wang family would organize them to either build river banks and dredge river channels, depending on their aptitude.

On the grand map of planning for Ping'an Town by Wang Shouzhe, the future waterways were intricately interconnected and he had to dig or expand some new river channels.

His plan was to gradually transform the entire Ping'an Town into a granary with countless fields.

And as the head of the family, he only needed to oversee the big picture and coordinate arrangements.

...

Prosperous Farm is one of the main foundational farmland of the Wang family.

After continuous development, compared to the situation of less than four thousand acres ten years ago, the fertile land of Prosperous Farm has now reached seven thousand acres, nearly doubling its size.

By now, Prosperous Farm had entered the bottleneck phase of land reclamation and it was difficult to further expand rapidly.

The reason is simple, it is surrounded by hills and mountains. All the terrain suitable for irrigation has been fully exploited.

What remained were highlands with great elevation. It would be a stretch to turn these into farmland. The biggest problem is irrigation. If water resources have to be transported by manpower, the final cost would be too high for even the Wang family to bear.

A similar bottleneck in land reclamation was already widespread in the whole Ping'an Town.

After long-term land reclamation and Wang Shouzhe's incentives,

The total amount of land owned by the Wang family in Ping'an Town,

has reached over sixty thousand acres, including thirteen large and small farms. The amount of land owned by other civilians has reached over one hundred thousand acres.

Adding up to a total of one hundred and seventy thousand acres of fertile land, which is ranked top three in the entire Changning area.

If they wanted to progress further, the only way was to make those terrains that are unsuitable for farming—suitable.

Ping'an Town is located amidst mountains, and most of its internal land is hilly. In an area no more than four thousand square kilometers, over seventy to eighty percent is hilly or mountainous land that is not suitable for farming.

Given the numerous hilly terrains in Ping'an Town, the best method Wang Shouzhe could think of is terraced farming.

In this world, agriculture has been around for a long time. Developing terraced fields in such hilly areas is not the unique innovation of Wang Shouzhe; there are many similar records in the Academic Palace.

However, terraced farming is neither mainstream nor niche in this world.

The reason is simple, the reclamation cost for each acre of terraced field is several times that of ordinary farmland. The cultivation is also challenging, on top of complexities with transportation and irrigation.

The resulted unit production cost far exceeds the purchasing price of grain.

Under such circumstances, which prominent family would want to develop terraced fields?

One day, Wang Shouzhe came to the Prosperous Farm.

The person now in charge of Prosperous Farm is a woman named Wang Juan, a female relative on the sidelines. She had been very intelligent since childhood, had received education in the clan school of the main Wang family residence, and had been developing in the Prosperous Farm ever since.

Chapter 54 Expansion! The Great Development of Ping'an Town_2

With her conscientious dedication and accumulated experience, she was becoming more and more outstanding, moving from an ordinary manager to a principal, and finally to a chief principal, making her a prominent figure among the collateral family members.

"Wang Juan, greeting the Family Head." Wang Juan, along with some of the principals from the farm, welcomed the arrival of Wang Shouzhe.

She was only around twenty-six or seven years old, but she carried herself with poise and efficiency. Even the old ancestor Xiaohan had been consistently singing her praises.

"Dispense with the formalities." Wang Shouzhe waved his hand dismissively. "I am primarily here to inspect the development and advancements in technology in the terraced fields. Wang Juan, lead the way."

Initially, his plan had been to develop the large terraces within the span of a year or two. However, recent flooding had resulted in a large number of displaced refugees.

Therefore, establishing terraced farm fields has become an imperative task at hand. Dredging rivers and constructing embankments wouldn't require so many workers. Even if the Wang Clan was wealthy, they couldn't afford to support so many idle people.

"Yes, Family Head." Without any unnecessary words, Wang Juan led the way straight away towards the experimental terraced fields.

The large experimental site was situated on the northern slope of the Prosperous Farm.

The northern slope, facing the south, received abundant sunlight. It has a mild gradient and offered extensive space for development.

There were a great number of terraces constructed upon the northern slope. As it was currently the time for wheat to head and fill the grain, upon Wang Shouzhe's glance over the fields, he saw an ocean of green stretching out before him in countless layers, varying in height - a truly spectacular sight.

"Reporting to the Family Head," Wang Juan led Wang Shouzhe all the way and reported, "This experimental terraced field area measures about three hundred acres, currently planted with our Royal Clan No.19 wheat variety. Since we have a better control over irrigation, it helps in more precise cultivation.

Therefore, these crops are growing very well, and the quality of the wheat produced might be even better."

"The main challenges in terrace cultivation lie in the difficulties of development, irrigation, and transportation." Wang Juan stated concisely, "Firstly, regarding transportation, as the terraced fields vary in height, transportation costs are high. Often, manual labour is required to carry the loads.

In response to this, following the Family Head's instruction, I have constructed cement roads like ribbons threading through the terraces. This way, we can utilise ox carts, horse-drawn carriages, or rickshaws for transportation. Despite requiring significant short-term investment, it greatly reduces the labour required for long-term transportation."

Upon checking, Wang Shouzhe saw a winding cement road meandering upwards among the elevated and intricate terraces, reaching the very top of them.

"Additionally, as per the Family Head's request for an experimental monorail transport vehicle, I have also built one." Wang Juan said, "At the highest point of the terraces, there is a winch. The torque generated by oxen can be used to drive the winch gear, pulling the monorail transport vehicle to the highest point.

Once loaded with grains, the transport vehicle can slide downwards due to its own weight. This makes the harvesting process even faster than in ordinary fields."

As she spoke, Wang Juan looked at Wang Shouzhe with admiring eyes. Truly, as the Family Head, he was full of brilliant and ingenious ideas.

The monorail transport vehicle was a product that Wang Shouzhe had requested craftsmen to experiment with over the years. It was not suitable for flat terrain, but rather for places with significant elevation differences. On Earth, it would have been used in mountainous orchards.

The problem, however, was the high demand for iron. Even the mere construction of a monorail required a substantial amount of iron.

For this reason, in recent years, Ping'an Town had been purchasing crude iron in large quantities from foreign merchants, not minding the premium prices.

After all, Ping'an Town had a massive demand for crude iron - it seemed to be needed everywhere.

"And what about irrigation?" Wang Shouzhe queried.

"We have planted a large number of Water-Storage Trees at high altitudes to maintain a certain water level. In addition, we have also excavated and cemented a water storage reservoir. The water from this reservoir can effectively irrigate all the terraced fields, and the surplus water can flow into the canal leading to the river." Wang Juan explained, "I also wish to seek the Family Head's guidance.

I plan to construct a large water storage reservoir at the top of the cliff in Fallen Eagle Gorge, taking advantage of its natural depression, and establish water channels in the air to connect all the water storage reservoirs in the terraces.

In case of water shortage during droughts, we would employ a water pumping system at the bottom of the Fallen Eagle Gorge, enabling us to draw water up to the top."

This plan?

Wang Shouzhe was quite startled by it. It seemed a bit ambitious, didn't it? This girl's mind seemed to be even more imaginative than his.

However, she had always proved herself to be smart and hardworking, with a strong foundation in academics.

When she used to tutor Wang Licui, Wang Shouzhe had seen her devotion first-hand.

It was clear that she had worked diligently during her younger days at the Clan School.

It was after that when he began noticing her.

"Family Head." Wang Juan said, "I have surveyed a great deal of terrain and have drawn up an initial set of blueprints. Although the initial investment will be massive, once successful, we would be able to convert all the hillside areas around Prosperous Farm into terraces and solve the problem of irrigation during droughts."

Her final sentence convinced Wang Shouzhe: "Just prepare a detailed plan along with some initial budget estimates, and then come see me."

"Yes, Family Head" Wang Juan's eyes sparkled with excitement. She felt lucky to have met a family head who allowed her to fully utilise her abilities.

"Also, prepare a plan for large-scale development of terraced fields," Wang Shouzhe added as an instruction.

The biggest issue with terrace fields lay in the investment it required. If you were to cultivate ordinary grains, you could end up bankrupting the Wang Clan. However, if one were to sow the Royal Clan No.19 Wheat variety, it would prove profitable over a long-term duration.

"Yes, Family Head."

...

In the dead of night, within the estuary of the Eastern Sea.

A large cargo ship, after enduring all sorts of stormy weather, arrived at the relatively calm estuary.

Inside a ship's cabin.

Wang Zongchang finished the last bit of his account books. After careful inspection, he found no mistakes. Only then did he stretch his back, feeling somewhat relaxed.

They were about to arrive at Donggang soon, and he had now completed a large part of his mission. He got up and went out of the cabin, onto the ship's bow to get some fresh air.

On this day, the moon shone brightly with numerous stars densely scattered across the sky.

Suddenly, a scolding voice came from the cabin, "Little Zheng, have you gone mad? How dare you tamper with this!"

"Get out of the way or die!" A violent voice roared.

"clang, clang, clang."

A series of sounds of knives and swords striking resonated.

"Don't you fear sir... Ah~" A scream echoed.

"I need power, I need revenge. Boss, I'm sorry!"

"I repeat, anyone who stands in my way will die," The voice roared incessantly.

Several crew members, instinctively, rushed over.

"Boom, boom, boom!"

As soon as they reached the cabin door, they were thrown back, landing on the deck. Their necks had been sliced open, and they'd met their end.

From the cabin, a young man smeared in blood rushed out. He held a steel knife in his hand with savage determination on his face, while his eyes emerged vicious and crimson.

He dashed towards the ship's railing unquestionably, ready to jump into the sea.

"Father, sister! I got the power!" The young man's eyes shimmered with red light. He yelled a bit unclearly, "Wait for me, wait for me! I'll surely avenge you."

The place was nearing the port. As long as he could escape into the sea, he was free to go anywhere in the vast world.

Suddenly!

A white sword aura cut through the night sky, targeting the young man.

Although the young man's state was peculiar, his reaction was exceedingly quick, waving the knife to parry.

"Clang!"

A loud sound of metallic collision sounded.

The young man seemed to have hit an invisible wall, stumbling back a few steps. His bloodshot eyes looked at the person in surprise and terror, roaring, "Who are you? How dare you stand in my way."

A gallant young man in Profound Martial garb, wielding a broad-bladed battle sword, his face as cold as water said: "Rascal, you've murdered and yet you still want to run? Surrender immediately, and come with me to Donggang to face your punishment."

This gallant young man was obviously Wang Zongchang, who had come to take a breather at the bow, but he hadn't expected to encounter this situation.

As an ally of the Chen Clan of Donggang, he wouldn't stand by and do nothing.

"Anyone who stands in my way will die!" The bloodshot young man roared wildly, charging at Wang Zongchang.

"Dare to resist." Wang Zongchang's face turned cold, his slight shift in figure made him appear like willow catkins wafting in the wind under the dark night sky.

The family skill of the Wang Clan, the "Willow Catkin Body Method," he had seemingly cultivated it to a masterstroke level.

With a flick of his wrist, the sword light flickered and slashed out. It was the Wang Clan Xuan Yuan Sword Technique, which was concise, profound and powerful.

Chapter 55 - Stable and Outstanding! Youth Elites of the Wang Family_1

...

The Willow Catkin Body Method and Mysterious Element Sword Technique of the Wang family had both reached the middle-grade level. This was significantly superior to the inheritance of typical families. The further one cultivates, the more extraordinary the power becomes.

However, both the movement technique and mysterious technique required persistent honing, and there were few shortcuts available. Even the simplest mysterious techniques could display remarkable power with years of sustained practice.

After Wang Shouzhe took up the position of family head, the training conditions for the Ping'an Wang Family kept improving. Everyone had the opportunity to become a Spiritual Platform seed and enjoy corresponding resources, provided they were willing.

However, this came accompanied with an extremely rigorous assessment system and a contribution point system.

The rate of cultivation progress, basic movement techniques and swordplay, string control, horsemanship, and even cultural courses were all included in the assessment. If the total score dropped below the threshold, there would be a warning. If the requirements were still not met after the warning, the access to cultivation resources would be revoked.

Therefore, the younger generation of the Wang family all cultivated with great dedication. Compared to Wang Shouzhe when he was a seed of the Spiritual Platform, they were just as assiduous.

Since childhood, Wang Zongchang has been more sensible than his older brother Wang Zongwei, able to calmly persist in honing himself. Over time, his foundation became exceptionally solid.

His Willow Catkin Body Method was flowing and natural, agile and graceful like a butterfly as he moved and dodged. Under the hazy moonlight, there were faint afterimages of himself.

His Wang Clan Xuan Yuan Sword Technique, in contrast, was polished by him to be as smooth and round as jade. Each move appeared simple but was as solid and unpretentious as steel forged through thousands of hammer strokes and hundreds of tempering processes.

As a result, Wang Zongchang favored broad and heavy swords. Although his sword was not a spiritual artifact, it was a rare hundred-refined, fine steel sword, weighing over twenty pounds.

"Ding ding ding!"

For some unknown reason, the young man's internal strength was unusually strong. Yet, even so, he was unable to withstand Wang Zongchang's continuous and increasingly powerful sword moves.

He was forced to retreat continuously, and his vitality was endlessly turbulent.

How could this be possible!

Madness escaped from the young man's eyes, he had already merged with that thing. He could clearly sense the terrifying power flowing incessantly.

How could he possibly be thoroughly suppressed by a young man who came out of nowhere?

"Die!" The scarlet-eyed young man roared angrily, swinging his sword. A sinister dark spirit of his sword aura attacked Wang Zongchang.

The surrounding air suddenly became frightful and cold.

"Yin Sha's aura!?" Wang Zongchang's expression suddenly changed, and he quickly retreated backward to avoid this sword strike.

He was both shocked and furious. He never expected to encounter a practitioner of the evil Yin Sha. The Wang family has a deep connection with Yin Sha; Grand Ancestor Longyan was injured by the power of Yin Sha and suffered for a full fifty years.

Luckily, Wang Zongchang wasn't a rookie. He has been assuming his family's tasks since he was thirteen years old. Not only has he earned quite a few Merit Points in various family tasks, but he has also been thoroughly tempered.

He always performed his best and fought against fierce beasts within his ability range in the annual autumn-winter hunting. His performance may not be as good as his two aunts and his older sister, but he does all he can.

Following a slight panic, he calmed down. Instead of risking a head-on collision with the young man, he adopted a hit-and-run tactic to avoid getting poisoned by Yin Sha.

This was the merchant ship of the Chen Clan of Donggang. As long as he could hold on for a while, there would be experts coming to rescue.

Immediately, he engaged the young man in an unending struggle like a willow catkin in the wind, blocking his escape route towards the sea.

"You!!" The eyes of the young man had turned completely blood-red, reaching an extreme level of fury. He no longer concealed the power of Yin Sha, but no matter how much effort he made, everything was neutralized by Wang Zongchang one by one.

He couldn't kill nor escape!

Without a doubt, Wang Zongchang's strategy was very prudent.

After just a dozen or so breaths, the support from the Chen Clan arrived. The person who came was Chen Fanghua, the one who was in charge of this merchant ship.

Chen Fanghua was an excellent clan member of the direct lineage of the Chen Clan whose strength was not weak originally. After the Chen Clan entered a major development period, they provided much more resources and treatment to the outstanding clan members, cultivating them with all their might.

The current Chen Fanghua was only in his thirties. His cultivation base had reached the peak of the seven stages of Vital Energy Refining Realm and was a minor expert.

He held a long spear in his hand and with an enraged face, he joined the battle, "How dare you, dog thief, to run wild on my Chen Clan's merchant ship."

"Uncle Fanghua, be careful." Wang Zongchang reminded, "He practices the evil Yin Sha, and there's something strange about him. Don't fight him head-on; mainly entangle with him."

Practitioner of evil Yin Sha?

Chen Fanghua's face drastically changed, he immediately became more vigilant. He teamed up with Wang Zongchang to engage the young man in struggle.

With this, the scarlet-eyed, wild youth was forced to the point of vomiting blood. These two people, either of them had better strength than him. Now not only did they join forces, they were also entangling with him!!!

They really fucking picked on him.

But he didn't have any solution because he did not have control.

Subsequently, several more houseguards from the Chen Clan appeared. Wang Hu and Wang Bao also came to assist after hearing the commotion.

"All houseguards, defend the ship's side." As Wang Zongchang continued to struggle with the young man, he commanded, "Take out all the net equipment on the ship. Today, we capture a living Yin Sha practitioner."

He was very happy in his heart. If he could capture a living Yin Sha practitioner and take it back, he would surely be praised and commended by Fourth Uncle. This was simply Merit Points falling from the sky.

"This man is now a caged beast. We can't give him a chance to escape. Also, be careful not to get hurt. It's very difficult to treat the poison of Yin Sha."

Under Wang Zongchang's tactical command, that young man was continuously consumed, and not a single person on our side was injured.

This was also thanks to Wang Shouzhe's daily coaching. Under his instruction, many of the younger generation of family members were very conservative. Under favorable circumstances, they would use the most secure tactics.

"Almost done, prepare to reel in."

A moment later, the crimson youth was nearly exhausted.

However, at this time, Wang Zongchang did not want to take any risks. Suddenly, he took out a handful of green seeds from his bosom.

The seeds looked strange, each about the size of a large walnut, with a faint green glow moving on their surface.

Wang Zongchang looked somewhat distressed, but in order to be cautious, and to prioritize the safety in capturing Yin Sha, he still crushed the waxy shells of those seeds and tossed them out.

Boom! Boom!

The seeds bounced twice on the deck. After the outer wax shell was cracked, they seemed to be activated all at once. A green light bloomed, and then, at a visible speed, the large walnut-like seeds quickly sprouted and rooted.

Their roots, like sharp claws, pierced into the deck. The long tender green vines grew wildly, becoming longer and thicker, and the color quickly turning into a dark brown.

As though possessing spiritual intelligence, they entangled the crimson youth.

"So many Witch No.5s? Second Young Master has many Valor Points."

Wang Hu and Wang Bao, the two housekeepers, had faces full of envy. In the family resources exchange list, Witch No.5 was a popular battle tool. Each Witch No.5 seed was personally cultivated and planted by the head of household.

There was no need for wood-type bloodline or mysterious energy, nor to promote growth.

As long as the outer wax shell was crushed, the stored energy inside would be quickly activated, automatically catalyzing the sprout of tough vines. Once entangled, even the advanced stage practitioners in the Qi Refining Realm would have a hard time breaking free.

Keeping a few for emergencies, can be a very good life-saving card.

The only downside was the high Valor Points needed for exchange, where ten points were needed for one.

It's not that Wang Shouzhe took advantage of his clansmen, in fact, it was quite strenuous for him to grow and manufacture these Witch No.5 vine seeds that stored his mysterious energy.

Placing it on the exchange list was also to give the clansmen and housekeepers more life-saving cards.

The higher exchange price will make them cautious in their use, rather than playing them as a regular battle routine.

Even if Wang Shouzhe had ample energy, he could not withstand such consumption.

On the battlefield,

Seven or eight Witch No. 5 vines had entangled the crimson youth. Meanwhile, ready with their nets, the housekeepers also threw out their nets.

Five or six nets were cast, eventually turning the crimson youth into a zongzi-like mess.

The eyes of the crimson youth were completely red, he roared like a wild beast, just like a madman. But no matter how much he struggled, he could not escape the entanglement of Witch No.5 and the effect of the net.

But Wang Zongchang was still very careful, vigilantly approached and swung his sword, severing his tendons of hand and foot.

It was not Wang Zongchang being cruel.

It was his caution in dealing with a Yin Sha criminal who had already killed several people.

But at this moment,

Sudden change occurred,

The crimson youth's body began to convulse and twist, his heart thumping as if something were about to burst.

"Oh no!"

Wang Zongchang sensed danger and quickly retreated.

Suddenly!

"Bang!"

The youth's chest burst open, smashing the nets and vines together into pieces.

A blood-red worm, only the size of a little finger, shot at Wang Zongchang like lightning. Wang Zongchang hastily swung his sword in defense, but it was in vain.

The blood-red worm, like a sharp arrow, plunged into his body with a "pop" sound, and burrowed towards his spine vigorously.

"Ah!"

Wang Zongchang screamed in extreme pain, but at this moment, he still had his senses and roared, "Quickly, tie me up.

He had witnessed the madness and violence of the crimson youth.

Perhaps, it was this blood-red worm that caused the trouble.

"Quick, quickly!" he felt his blood boiling, and a terrible uncontrollable power began to pervade.

Chen Fanghua and his men rushed up immediately, taking advantage of Wang Zongchang still having his senses, they bound him up, tightly wrapping him with layers and layers of rope.

"Quickly, speed up the ship and get it into port," Chen Fanghua, a seasoned elite, immediately ordered, "Raise the distress flag and let the clansmen at the port inform Old Ancestor Ruhong to come and rescue."

Wang Zongchang was one of the young generation of the Wang family, and a child highly valued and nurtured by the Wang Clan Leader. If something major happened to him on the Chen family's boat, what would that mean?

Chapter 56: Bridal Clothes Blood Gu! A Story of Both Misfortune and Fortune _1

...

Ping'an Town, Zhuwei Lake.

The vast water area, pure and boundless like sea of mist.

From time to time, a large fish would leap out of the water, splashing waves.

Suddenly.

A "ship" in the distance was quickly sailing on the water, making two long water marks. The fish were frightened and scattered in all directions, like a chaotic dance of fish.

Upon closer inspection, it was not a ship, but a huge turtle. It was the Wang family's guardian spirit beast - the Primordial Water Spirit Tortoise.

It stuck out its long enormous turtle head, its limbs moving like oars, traveling at a high speed.

On the thick turtle shell, a boy and girl were sitting.

The girl looked about eight or nine years old, beautifully carved, with expressive eyes, resembling a little princess.

The boy was about four or five years old, quietly sitting on the turtle, clutching a large school bag in his arms, with a hint of worry in his eyes despite his young age.

After some hesitation, he said, "Sister, you have angered the teacher again today. The teacher said he would only teach you if father brings you to clan school himself. What should we do?"

"Don't worry, I have already made arrangements." The girl said calmly, "Before the school was over, I gave the teacher's beloved grandson a good beating. He will reason with the teacher when he goes back."

The boy broke out in cold sweat, is this your plan, sister?

He weakly said, "Sister, if you keep fighting with the teacher, I'm afraid he will eventually complain to father."

"Let them complain. It just depends on whether his dear grandson can withstand my beatings." The girl hummed nonchalantly, "Now the clan school has reformed. Who let the old teacher cling to some outdated ideas of valuing males over females? He is just taking advantage of having taught our father. Anyway, if he doesn't change his mind, I will fight him to the end."

The boy looked helpless. Sister, if you keep fighting with the old teacher like this, you are dragging me down with you. Now his homework is always double the dose. This life is too hard.

He really wanted to tell his sister, when will this tit-for-tat action end? Can't you bow your head to the teacher and make peace?

The boy and girl are naturally the children of Wang Shouzhe and Liu Ruolan, Wang Liyao and Wang Zong'an.

"An'an, what are you afraid of?" Wang Liyao put her arms around her chest, "As long as you are righteous, you should never bow to evil forces. As a boy, and as the young clan leader of the family, you must not be too weak."

Wang Zong'an muttered to himself, it's not right to be weak, but can't you solve problems with violence like you do, sister?

The siblings chatted.

The Primordial Water Spirit Tortoise had transported them to the dock at the backyard of the Wang's ancestral house. Wang Liyao patted it on its head, and had a friendly exchange with it, "Thank you, Spirit Tortoise, I'll bring you something tasty tomorrow morning."

The Primordial Water Spirit Tortoise was also very affectionate towards Wang Liyao. It rubbed against her before reluctantly leaving.

No wonder, Wang Liyao's water element bloodline is very strong. Although it does not reach the level of a water spirit, it is very rare. Both the girl and the tortoise feel very close to each other.

"Yao Yao, An'an." Qiao'er came forward to help them with their schoolbags. She looked a bit solemn, "Miss has asked me to pick you two up."

"Hmm?"

Mother didn't come to pick them up this time.

Wang Liyao, a little worried, asked, "Aunt Qiao'er, did something happen?"

As Qiao'er led them home, she explained, "Young Master Zong Chang had an accident. The Family Head and Miss are treating him."

Second brother had an accident?

Wang Liyao and Wang Zong'an were suddenly worried.

Brother Zong Chang had been very good to them since they were young. They didn't want anything to happen to him.

...

Meanwhile.

Inside the side hall of Wang Shouzhe's courtyard.

Liu Ruolan was entertaining Old Ancestor Ruhong, she gratefully said, "Thank you, Old Ancestor Ruhong, for your help in suppressing Zong Chang's Blood Gu and for bringing him back yourself."

Old Ancestor Ruhong repeatedly waved his hand, "Ruolan, you are too polite. The Chen Clan of Donggang and the Ping'an Wang Family are in-laws and allies, and it is our duty to help each other."

Old Ancestor Ruhong would not dare to underestimate Liu Ruolan. He saw her perform in the test field in the foreign domain.

Once this great wife of the Wang family explodes, even he feels a vague tremor. Her future prospects are probably unimaginable.

The current greatest strategic plan of the Chen Clan of Donggang is to tightly hold onto the big leg of the Ping'an Wang family.

Meanwhile, inside the room of the side hall.

Wang Zong Chang was tied to a bed. His face was twisted, his eyes radiating a bloody and violent aura. His heart was beating rapidly. Between the throbbing of his veins, his blood vessels felt like they might burst at any time.

Wang Shouzhe's blue Mysterious Energy was moving within him, soothing his continuously damaged blood vessels. His eyebrows furrowed, there was something resembling a Blood Gu hidden in Wang Zong Chang's spine.

Previously, Old Ancestor Ruhong had tried his best to suppress it, but he could not expel it.

And once the suppression was lost, it would become active again. He did not know what it was emitting, causing Wang Zong Chang's bloodline to boil uncontrollably.

If not for Wang Shouzhe's blue Mysterious Energy having a strong healing power, Wang Zong Chang might have already died from his body exploding.

All Wang Shouzhe could do was to help him maintain his life.

When Wang Liyao and Wang Zong'an came back, they became extremely obedient and silently gave their blessings to Wang Zong Chang.

Chapter 56: Bridal Clothes Blood Gu! A Story of Both Misfortune and Fortune _2

Half a day had passed again.

Fang Youan, who was still presiding over disaster relief in Changning Weicheng, was called back by Wang Shouzhe's envoy. Upon arrival, he briefly checked Wang Zongchang, and listened to the head of household recounting the events.

His face turned extremely solemn, he said gravely, "Let's not discuss why the Hundred Islands Guards were involved in the evil Yin Sha incident. The Blood Gu should be the infamous Bridal Clothes Blood Gu."

"Bridal Clothes Blood Gu?"

Wang Shouzhe continued to use the cyan Mysterious Energy to maintain Wang Zongchang's life. At the same time, he stuffed a leaf of the Longevity Tree into his mouth. The leaf had intense healing abilities, lessening Wang Shouzhe's burden.

"The Bridal Clothes Blood Gu was a forbidden technique developed by a radical group within the Divine Martial Dynasty to enhance bloodline growth," said Fang Youan solemnly. "They implanted the Blood Gu into young fierce beasts. As the beasts quickly grew up, the Bridal Clothes Blood Gu would constantly devour their bloodline essence. When the beast reached adulthood, it would be time for it to die."

"They then extracted the Bridal Clothes Blood Gu and implanted it into the human's spine. Using the blood-forming ability of the bone marrow, they continuously injected the essence of the beast's bloodline into the human body, achieving the purpose of transplanting the beast's bloodline to a human."

As Fang Youan explained, Wang Shouzhe also gasped in surprise. The Divine Martial Dynasty, which perished a hundred thousand years ago, seemed to possess incredibly advanced technology—this was clearly gene transplant technology.

"Actually, I understand the reason humans want to become stronger. That organization wanted to make every human into a Sky Pride," said Fang Youan. "But the Bridal Clothes Blood Gu is too cruel and it defies the Heavenly Dao. Over two hundred years ago, our Academic Palace also got a Bridal Clothes Blood Gu. Several people died as a result—it's not a power that just anyone can handle."

He then said some more about the Bridal Clothes Blood Gu.

After listening, Wang Shouzhe understood that the use of this Bridal Clothes Blood Gu was extremely dangerous—if one couldn't handle it, death was certain! But, if one could survive, Wang Zongchang's bloodline would undergo a transformation.

Subsequently, Wang Shouzhe put all his focus and energy on Wang Zongchang.

The time ticked away relentlessly.

After several days, under Wang Shouzhe's continuous treatment, he himself was almost exhausted. Fortunately, after these several days, Wang Zongchang's complexion gradually returned to its original color, indicating that he was going to pull through.

Only then did Wang Shouzhe truly breathe a sigh of relief, and he began to eat, drink, meditate, and recover his loss. However, he still stayed with Wang Zongchang for twelve hours a day to prevent any accidents.

Three or four days later.

Wang Zongchang woke up. Although he had been dazed during the whole process, he had a rough idea of what had happened. Struggling to get up, he thanked Wang Shouzhe, "Zongchang thanks Fourth Uncle for saving my life."

"No problem, we are family, we should protect each other," Seeing Wang Zongchang's vitality and that he was not at all weak, Wang Shouzhe did a little check and found that his physique had undergone a significant transformation.

He finally relaxed. This time, Zongchang had turned a disaster into a blessing.

However, this transformation of bloodline wouldn't be evident overnight. So, Wang Shouzhe decided to let him go back and rest for a few days to gradually discover the changes in his bloodline.

The appearance of the evil Yin Sha had raised Wang Shouzhe's guard. Even if they were dead, there would still be noticeable traces left behind.

An order was issued for the intelligence department to investigate the matter thoroughly.

At this time, Liu Ruolan understandably brought in some delicacies she had cooked herself, "Zongchang has suffered these past days. Your fourth aunt made you some Spirit Food to help your recovery."

"This..." Wang Zongchang, who had just barely escaped from the Bridal Clothes Blood Gu, turned pale, yet he dared not oppose his fourth aunt's kindness, he could only thank her with a wry smile, "Thank you, Fourth Aunt, for your care."

"Poor child, look how pale you are from hunger. Eat up first, and I'll make you another pot."

Then, Wang Shouzhe looked at him sympathetically.

...

A few days later.

East of Changning Weicheng, a group of well-arranged buildings sat.

The lofty walls and strict guards there showed it was the territory of a powerful family.

A few gilded characters were written on the door lintel.

"Changning Xu Family"

All of Changning Weicheng knew that the Changning Xu Family was an old Grade Eight Prominent Family.

Two hundred years ago, the Xu Family of Changning had already attained the status of a Grade Eight Prominent Family.

Moreover, they have been based in Changning Guard City for over three hundred years; with each generation further solidifying their assets and influence, making them vastly different compared to the newly-minted Grade Eight Prominent Families, some of whom aren't even a hundred years old.

However this renowned Grade Eight Family, hasn't been having the best of days recently.

With the Ma Huangfu's Family seizing an opportunity a few years ago and joining the textile industry, the Xu Family of Changning has been continuously losing ground, losing many original material supplier families in a short period.

The reason is simple: the Ma Huangfu's Family has the backing of the Celestial Huangfu Family — they might not play dirty, but they are far from merciful in business competition.

As for the Xu Family of Changning, in order to try to reach the status of a Celestial Family, their funds have been stretched to their limits. This incident has delivered a huge blow to their lifeline.

At this moment.

A horse carriage slowly parked at the main entrance of the Xu Family's residence in Changning.

Inside the carriage.

There was a middle-aged couple with a two or three-year-old child in their arms.

The woman, due to excellent maintenance, still retained her charm and beauty, exuding the appearance of a mature, beautiful woman.

The man, with a square face, had an air of grandeur and stability about him.

This couple is none other than Wang Shouxin and his wife from the Xu Family, the seventh generation of the Wang Family.

Wang Shouxin is the eldest in his generation; he is now fifty-two years old, older than Wang Dingzu and Wang Dinghai from the generation of 'Define the Sea'.

"Wang Shouxin, is my outfit proper?"

His wife from the Xu Family had obviously gone through great lengths with her appearance today, even wearing an elegant water-blue ice silkworm silk dress. The pearl hairpin on her head was adorned with a rarely seen ice-blue pearl pendant, and the bracelet on her wrist was an invaluable ice-blue treasure bracelet.

She looked like a noblewoman under forty.

"It looks alright." Wang Shouxin, holding their son, responded nonchalantly, his tone noticeably perfunctory.

"Wang Shouxin!"

The Xu Family's matriarch raised her brows, her temper flaring, "Is it because you're under the influence of your Fourth Uncle, becoming prosperous and feeling hopeful about reaching the Spirit Platform Realm, you're starting to dislike me and think about taking in additional wives?"

"Xu Chunyun! Don't be unreasonable." Wang Shouxin frowned, "When did I say I wanted to take in additional wives?"

"In any case, I don't care. I, Xu Chunyun, gave you two sons and two daughters, and even grandchildren now after marrying into the Wang Family." Xu Chunyun raised an eyebrow, "Even Fourth Uncle always praises me as a great contributor to the Wang Family. If you dare think of taking in additional wives, I will cry in front of Fourth Uncle's face."

"Enough, stop making a fuss." Wang Shouxin's tone softened, "The incident with Zongchang has left me feeling somewhat anxious. Haven't I accompanied you back to your maiden home?"

"Your Fourth Uncle said our Zongchang's mishap has turned into a blessing." Xu Chunyun said, "Also, if it hadn't been for Fourth Uncle's order for you to accompany me back, how many years would it have been since you last accompanied me home?"

Upon speaking of this matter.

Wang Shouxin's face turned somewhat helpless, "Chunyun, I wouldn't mind accompanying you back, but isn't it your siblings and sisters-in-law who always presume we are there to take advantage? Watching us like hawks."

"There you go again with your squabbles." Xu Chunyun glared at him, "Tell me, how do I look in this dress?"

"Beautiful."

"Hmm, at least you know how to speak. Today you will accompany me and help me regain our dignity." Xu Chunyun surreptitiously pinched his thigh, "You can have your way with me afterwards."

"Uh...we are old husband and wife, and our grandson Shinin is still here."

"Oh really! Wang Shouxin, you dog, I see you indeed have thoughts of taking in additional wives."

Chapter 57: Great Satisfaction! Sister-in-law's Splendid Family Visit_1

...

Xu Anming, a common member of the Changning Xu family's direct line of descent.

He, now eighty years old, had withdrawn from the family business years ago, becoming a respected elder of the clan. His days were filled with the simple pleasure of doting on his grandchildren or tending to his garden.

In his early years, his cultivation reached the high eighth level of the Vital Energy Refining Realm. However, as his age advanced, his vigorous vitality gradually faded.

Without taking large quantities of Spirit Food or Dan Medicine to maintain it, his current cultivation level barely keeps him at Level Eight of the Vital Energy Refining Realm.

During his life, Xu Anming may not have achieved significant success, yet he possessed his own form of pride.

He had fathered three sons and two daughters, and had fifteen grandchildren and bonus grandchildren. Now, he even had four great-grandchildren.

His life, one could say, was complete and fulfilled.

As a clan elder, Xu Anming lived in Lixiang Garden, towards the west of the main residence. The residence was close to the main hall and was fairly large; amongst the many gates and courtyards within the Changning Xu Family's main residence, it was considered quite respectable.

At the peak of Spring, lush vegetation flourished within Lixiang Garden.

Thanks to the careful maintenance of the house servants, flowers of various kinds bloomed in an interspersed arrangement, vying for attention, making the whole garden pleasing to the eye and full of life.

Very early in the morning, the main paths within the garden had been meticulously cleaned several times by the servants. The used water was swept into specially dug drainage channels, ensuring no risk of water accumulation that could upset the Old Master, even in the rainy season.

Xu Anming was up early, donned in a brand new long robe, sitting in the main hall. His solemn face faintly displayed an anticipation as though waiting for someone.

His children and grandchildren, who normally lived nearby, had gathered in Lixiang Garden for the day, forming a picture of harmonious family unity reminiscent of a minor clan within a major family.

"Xu Zhenxing, go out and see if your sister has arrived yet," Xu Anming, the Old Master, frowned slightly, seemingly restless.

Among his three sons and two daughters, the one he cherished the most was his second daughter, Xu Chunyun. This was due to the marriage arranged by the Family Head, which saw her married off to Wang Shouxin, a direct descendent of the Ping'an Wang Family.

The status of the Ping'an Wang Family at that time could have been described with a single word - "poor."

Would his precious daughter be able to lead a comfortable life after marrying into such a family?

Xu Zhenxing, the eldest son of the Old Master, was already in his fifties. Over the years, he had taken over his father's responsibilities, managing some major businesses in the Changning Xu family's weaving factory. He had become quite an influential figure.

Hearing these words, he bowed to his father, replying, "Yes, father."

Before he could step out, Xu Zhenye, the second son, smiled and said, "I'll accompany brother to go check. It has been three years since I last saw sister. Plus, I heard that brother-in-law Shouxin is also coming over this time."

So saying, the two brothers left together, with no hint of displeasure in their conduct or demeanor.

In fact, before they left, they even instructed their wives to tend to their father properly and prepare accordingly.

At the main gate of the Changning Xu Family Residence.

Under the slanting sunlight, an exquisitely splendid wooden archway stood tall, austere and majestic.

The plaque hung on the archway bore the words "Changning Xu Family" and the distinctive stamp of a Grade Eight Prominent Family glittered brilliantly.

Outside the archway was a wide, cobblestone path.

The higher the grade of a prominent family, the wider the path. For example, a Rank 9 Prominent Family would have a ten-feet wide path, a Grade Eight Family could have a twenty-feet wide path. This was a mark of dignity granted to prominent families by the Daqian Court.

At this moment, a beautifully decorated carriage, bearing the Ping'an Wang Family crest, came to a slow stop along the long cobblestone path under the escort of the family head and house servants.

The gatekeeper, upon seeing this, immediately approached to offer his warmest welcome, complimenting them profusely.

The Wang family's coachman placed the footrest and respectfully helped the riders disembark.

Only then did Wang Shouxin and his wife, holding a child not yet three years old, descend from the carriage, surrounded by the respectful entourage.

Wang Shouxin was now over fifty years old. Although he didn't look old, his demeanor was still reserved and stable, giving him a certain air of authority even amidst the crowd of household heads and servants.

However, his normally immaculate brocade robe seemed somewhat disheveled and the tiger-shaped jade buckle on his belt was skewed, as though hastily fastened.

His gaze seemed evasive and uneasy when it met the coachman's. His eyes revealed a complex expression when he looked at his wife, Xu Chunyun.

This wife of his, who had always been bold and reckless, had turned out to be so willful.

Xu Chunyun's eyes sparkled with a hint of spring, and she looked somewhat pleased with herself, even her mature face appeared to glow with unusual radiance.

The Wang family's coachman had droopy eyelids, looking rather drowsy as if he've just woken up.

What happened just now? He didn't see it, he didn't hear it, he didn't know anything.

As the Wang family's hereditary coachman, he had always been very professional. Being deaf and dumb was the least of it, occasionally, even his eyesight could conveniently fail him.

And so, when Xu Chunyun secretly handed him a piece of Qian Gold, she whispered a warning, "Old Wang, you're aware that I have a temper. There must be no rumours about this."

"What was that, Madam Xu?" feigned Old Wang, pretending to be hard of hearing. Yet, that Qian Gold piece had been neatly tucked away by him.

Chapter 57: Great Satisfaction! Sister-in-law's Splendid Family Visit_2

At this very moment.

From the main residence of the Changning Xu Family, two robust middle-aged men dressed in brocade robes stepped out.

Although both were in their fifties or sixties, they did not look old thanks to their long-term cultivation. And due to their upbringing, they had been in high positions for a long time, holding power, always exhibiting an air of composure and dignity.

The leading brother, Xu Zhenxing, spotted his sister and brother-in-law and immediately greeted them with a smile, "Chunyun, Shouxin, you've already reached the door of our home. What's keeping you?"

Xu Chunyun, unhurried and composed, bowed and said, "Chunyun greets her two elder brothers."

Wang Shouxin also stepped forward, cupping his hand in greeting, "Shouxin greets his two elder brothers."

His manner was neither overbearing nor humble, respecting every bit of the etiquette.

"Shouxin, there's no need to be so formal."

Xu Zhenxing and Xu Zhenye quickly stepped forward, supporting him from his left and right.

Their faces were filled with smiles, with an extremely warm attitude.

"We brothers haven't seen each other for many years. The entrance isn't the place for a chat, please follow us inside quickly," they said.

"Elder brothers, please don't be hasty." Xu Chunyun added, "There are still some things in the carriage, all local specialties Shouxin brought for father."

Xu Zhenxing was slightly taken aback, then laughed and patted his head, "Look at your brother, I'm just too excited to see you both."

With that, he waved his hand, prompting several house servants to come out from the main mansion to help unload the gifts.

And what a sight they were.

A whole bag of Bai Yu (White Jade) Spirit Rice weighing hundreds of pounds, a whole jar of Spiritual Wine brewed from Red Crystal Rice, a front leg of an Iron-backed Wild Pig weighing about fifty to sixty pounds, a large jar of Salted Spirit Fish Meat, ten pounds of ordinary tea leaves, and a bit of Spiritual Tea.

In addition, there was a list of gifts that consisted of large quantities of ordinary rice, fruits, vegetables, and poultry like chickens, ducks, fish, and geese.

Since there were too many items and the carriage could not fit them all, another carriage was supposed to bring the remaining gifts later.

Xu Zhenxing and Xu Zhenye, who held significant positions in the Changning Xu Family and usually maintained a broad view of things, were quite astonished by these arrangements.

Returning to her maternal home, Chunyun had prepared exceedingly lavish gifts. If someone didn't know any better, they would think this was a marriage proposal.

The two brothers looked at each other, their voices significantly lowered.

"This... Chunyun, Shouxin, isn't this too much?" they asked.

"Elder brothers," Xu Chunyun's eyes were brimming with pride, "Our Shouxin said that father's vitality has not been as robust as before in recent years. He needs to eat more Spirit Food to nourish his body so that he can extend his life and live beyond a hundred."

Upon hearing these words, both brothers' faces grew slightly awkward, a flush creeping onto their cheeks.

The Changning Xu Family was a well-established Eighth Grade Prominent Family. As a family elder, Xu Anming, their Old Master, received quite a healthy amount of tribute every year.

The reason why his vitality had sharply declined in recent years was naturally because he had been giving his own portion of tribute to his grandchildren.

Many family elders in other clans did the same; after all, their time was coming to an end, while their descendants were still young and had greater potential.

However, Xu Chunyun's words surely struck a chord of discomfort within her brothers.

Fortunately, they were well aware of Xu Chunyun's temperament and quickly laughed it off, smoothly transitioning to the following topic.

Due to its extensive history, the population of the Changning Xu Family was naturally much larger than that of the Ping'an Wang Family's. The main entrance was a hive of activity with constant comings and goings.

Upon witnessing this scene, anyone who inquired quickly learned that Xu Chunyun, who had married into the Ping'an Wang Family years ago, had come to visit her parents.

The news of the gifts spread quickly, causing quite a stir within the family.

"She really didn't hold back on the gifts for this visit," some remarked.

"Old Master Xu Anming really has a good daughter. It seems he can look forward to reaping the rewards of having a good son-in-law in the future."

"I've always said Uncle Anming was blessed. Look, hasn't it come true?"

Many people envied Old Master Xu Anming; in particular, other family elders close to his age were green with jealousy.

When time came to choose a bride for the marital alliance with the Ping'an Wang Family, they too had daughters on the list of candidates, but they had gone to great lengths to refuse that possibility. Who could have imagined, only a few decades had passed and the tides had turned?

In the midst of this buzz, Wang Shouxin and Xu Chunyun, along with the Xu brothers, Zhenxing and Zhenye, with gifts in tow, grandly made their way into Lixiang Garden, where old father Xu Anming resided.

In the main hall.

Xu Anming hadn't seen his daughter for many years, overwhelmed with emotion, he teared up, clutching his daughter's hand and inquiring about her well-being.

For him, no matter how old his daughter was, she would always be his baby girl.

Besides their third son who was away on business, and the eldest daughter married into the Wangxia Lei Family, this reunion included almost all the family members.

Of course, the younger generation was not present, as they usually disliked these relatives' gatherings.

Wang Shouxin also stepped forward to pay his respects, "Greetings to the father-in-law."

"Shouxin, ah~"

Xu Anming wiped away his tears and quickly helped Wang Shouxin to his feet.

His expression was somewhat complicated. At the time when his daughter was to marry Wang Shouxin, he was utterly against it. Considering the conditions of the Ping'an Wang Family at the time, how could his daughter have a good life?

Fortunately, despite their poverty, the Wang Family did not treat his daughter unfairly. Plus, he knew Wang Shouxin adored Xu Chunyun, which comforted him quite a bit.

However, to his surprise, the Ping'an Wang Family's fortunes had taken a turn for the better in recent years.

This Shouxin had also become prosperous. Ten years ago, he was not even at the seventh layer of Qi Refinement stage, but now, he emanated a radiant presence, and his mysterious energy was profound and unfathomable.

Chapter 57: Holding One's Head High and Breathing Proudly! Elder Sister-in-Law Visits Her Family in Fine Clothes_3

Could it be that the Ping'an Wang Family is also preparing for Wang Shouxin to make an attempt at the Spirit Platform Realm?

Not only was Xu Anming, the old master, riddled with doubts, but even brothers Xu Zhenxing and Xu Zhenye maintained a calm exterior while their hearts churned with waves of emotion.

All along, they had never thought highly of Wang Shouxin, yet unexpectedly, Wang Shouxin's potential proved to be so abundant that he now seemed to be surpassing them.

Xu Chunyun's three sisters-in-law had evidently also made a special effort to look their best today, yet compared to Xu Chunyun, they somehow faded in comparison.

Just look at her outfit, the latest model of aqua blue long dress made from Ice Spirit Silkworm silk, her entire body adorned with Aqua Blue Ice Type Jewelry. Her complexion was also pale with a hint of rosy, her vitality flourishing, obviously living a life of pampered luxury befitting that of a noble lady.

If not for prior knowledge, one might think it was a legitimate daughter of the Changning Xu Family who had come back to visit her relatives~

With smiles plastered on their full faces, they engaged Xu Chunyun in idle chatter about family matters, yet their eyes covertly glanced towards their own husbands.

Just look at our sister's attire, then look at ours, isn't it embarrassing? Could it be that the prestigious Changning Xu Family is so far inferior to the Ping'an Wang family?

Bitterness filled the hearts of brothers Xu Zhenxing and Xu Zhenye.

Well, now there's trouble.

If you were to purchase a full set of that attire Chunyun's sister is wearing, it would not come cheap, costing at least a few thousand Qian Gold. With spare money like that, of course, one would prioritize providing for their children's cultivation needs. How could they be so wasteful?

The two brothers quickly diverted their attention and picked up the only two or three years old Wang Shin.

This child was the son of Wang Zongwei and the first member of the ninth generation of the "Shin" generation in the Ping'an Wang family.

As a result, the conversation naturally shifted to the younger generation.

"Zongwei was a bit unruly when he was younger," said Xu Zhenxing as the elder uncle, "But in recent years, he has managed to settle down and work steadily. Right, I remember his wife is from the direct vessel of the Gongsun Clan, isn't she?"

Upon the mention of her eldest son, a touch of pride appeared on Xu Chunyun's face: "Zongwei was a bit frivolous in his youth. Fortunate that his Fourth Uncle personally took him in hand and set him on the right path."

"Now the boy is making a name for himself in the Eastern Sea Fort, taking charge of quite a bit. His wife was personally matched by Madam Gongsun. That child is smart and capable, just right for taming that little rascal."

"Auntie, you really have good fortune," the second sister-in-law, Party Clan, smiled, "but our Younian is not too shabby either. He's not even thirty yet and has already reached the peak of Level Seven in the Vital Energy Refining Realm, even getting praise from the family's old ancestor a few times."

Once her son, Xu Younian, was mentioned, Party Clan's eyes inevitably revealed a trace of pride.

Eldest sister-in-law of Lei Clan, on the other hand, had a somewhat unnatural look in her eyes. Apparently, her side of the family couldn't bring out a child to match up to Xu Younian.

"I didn't expect Younian to be doing so well~" Xu Chunyun said with a delighted laugh, as if casually mentioning, "Speaking of which, our Zongchang has also been very busy these years and hasn't come back to visit everyone."

As soon as these words were spoken, the face of second brother Xu Zhenye immediately turned awkward.

He turned to Party Clan with a stern face and said, "You, as a woman of the household, are too ill-informed. Our Zongchang is only twenty-two, but he's already a well-known young expert, far more promising than Younian~"

Older brother Xu Zhenxing hesitated for a moment before asking, "Sister, I heard that Lici went for exams at the Purple Abode Academic Palace, do you know if she passed?"

An exam at the Purple Abode Academic Palace?

The crowd, unaware of this matter, suddenly paid close attention.

Having the qualifications to take the exam at the Purple Abode Academic Palace was already considered a mark of talent; passing it meant that even as an Ordinary Disciple, one's future as a Spiritual Platform Realm cultivator was assured.

As for her daughter Wang Licui, Xu Chunyun was not overly attentive, and Wang Licui's true cultivation base was kept a secret, even her own mother was not very clear about it.

Xu Chunyun thought for a moment and said, "These are all arranged by Uncle Shouxin. Lici stayed in the Academic Palace after the exam, so she must have passed."

Upon hearing this, the Xu family members were immediately thrilled, visibly sharing in the glory.

In private, they might be envious or jealous, but if Wang Licui could become a Spiritual Platform Realm cultivator, then they, as her uncles and aunts, would rise to heaven on the coattails of her success.

Talking about it would not only bring them face but also substantial benefits!

Perhaps in the future, Licui would be the mainstay of their entire family~

"Very well~" Xu Anming was also moved to tears, overwhelmed with relief, "Licui's admission to the Academic Palace assures her future in the Spiritual Platform Realm. I never expected to have a Spiritual Platform Realm member among my grandchildren!"

Wang Shouxin watched silently.

Xu Chunyun wasn't too concerned about her daughter's affairs, and with the daughter deliberately concealing information, the mother naturally was unclear about the truth—but he knew it very clearly.

His daughter, Wang Licui, was not a future Spiritual Platform Realm cultivator, but one who had already achieved it.

Moreover, he heard from Shouxin that Licui had taken a remarkable master, suggesting a very promising future for her.

Wang Shouxin thought to himself that Licui must have taken a Celestial being as her master, no wonder Shouxin insisted on keeping it a secret. If word of it got out, it would likely cause quite a stir.

Watching Xu Chunyun displaying a victorious smile, as if she couldn't wait for the whole world to know of her children's excellence, he felt a pang of embarrassment.

Let it be, let her continue to be in the dark then~

It's just a pity that even Wang Shouxin himself was kept in the dark. Wang Licui's master wasn't just a Celestial being but the esteemed Vice Dean of Purple Abode, a high-ranking figure among the masters.

While everyone was lavishing unending praise on Wang Licui,

Suddenly, an authoritative and cheerful voice came from outside: "Third Brother, I heard Chunyun and Shouxin have arrived. Why didn't you tell me about this?"

That voice...

xu Chunyun, her brother-in-law, and their father were all stunned in place.

Could that be the voice of Family Head Xu Anbang?

Since when did their Changning Xu Family start notifying the Family Head when a direct vessel junior came back for a visit?

If that was the case for everyone, wouldn't the Family Head be overwhelmed to death?

Chapter 58: Shou Zhe Makes a Plan! Stirring up the Storm_1

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However, now that the family head had arrived, Xu Anming's family didn't have time to think too much. They hurriedly came forward and invited Xu Anbang into their home.

Compared to Xu Anming's ordinary direct-vessel small family, Xu Anbang, who had already reached the early peak of the Spirit Platform Realm, was obviously a big-shot in Changning prefecture. Whether it was about information or other sources of news, Xu Anbang held an absolute advantage.

Xu Anbang was very cordial, treating Xu Anming's family with utmost respect. He greeted and asked about their well-being, and especially showed a great deal of care to Xu Chunyun, treating her as if she was the principal daughter of the Xu family of Changning who was married off.

Xu Chunyun was somewhat flattered by this.

In her whole life, she had never had a one-on-one conversation with family head Xu Anbang.

Eventually, Xu Anbang shifted his attention to Wang Shouxin. His attitude was gentle and intimate: "Shouxin, you are our Xu Family's son-in-law, we are all one family, try to visit more often and enhance our family's bond."

After bidding them farewell, Xu Anbang no longer disturbed their small family reunion, only advising Wang Shouxin to stay in the Xu family of Changning for more days.

Then, he left.

As soon as Xu Anbang was gone, the members of Xu Anming's small family immediately became lively again.

His three sisters-in-law were even more cordial towards Wang Shouxin and his wife. They even arranged for a house servant to inform the younger generation to come back, saying that they had to properly pay respects to their aunt and uncle.

Afterwards, another lively event took place, which deserves our attention for the moment.

In the evening.

Inside the private study of Changning Xu's family head Xu Anbang, Wang Shouxin sat opposite him, drinking Spiritual Tea.

A middle-aged couple was also present.

The woman was about forty years old. She was pretty and possessed a dignified and beautiful demeanor.

The man was also well-featured, calm and unruffled, with a serene expression. He was obviously an important figure in the Xu family of Changning.

The woman's name was Wang Liuqin. She was the eldest between "Liu"-generation sisters of the Ping'an Wang family's sixth generation. She was, in fact, the fifth aunt of Wang Shouzhe and Wang Shouxin.

And the man's name was Xu Anfeng, who was the thirteenth child of the 'An'-generation from the Xu family of Changning.

Wang Liuqin and Wang Shouxin, both being the direct vessels of the marriage alliance between Ping'an Wang family and Changning Xu family, served as the bond of blood and relations between the two families.

As the eldest of his generation, Wang Shouxin has always been under a lot of pressure and bearing responsibilities, always cautious and never reckless.

For that reason, many people thought that Wang Shouxin was naturally clumsy.

But Wang Shouzhe knew that his older brother Wang Shouxin was very intelligent and had excellent patience.

He had been working in Xingmao Silkworm Manor under their father Wang Dingchuan since he was eighteen, now he was fifty-three and had long been capable of standing on his own two feet. Under his management, the manor had been steadily developing over the years, and had become one of the pillar industries of the Wang family.

How could such a character be simple?

Xu family head Xu Anbang was reading a letter.

After finishing, his brows relaxed, and he chuckled, "I understand the intent of Master Shouzhe. He has entrusted you with full authority to collaborate with our two families."

As he spoke, Xu Anbang looked at Wang Shouxin with increased interest.

It could be seen from the letter that Wang Shouzhe placed great trust and reliance on Wang Shouxin, and was even considering pushing Wang Shouxin into Spirit Platform Realm.

If this plot succeeds, Wang Shouxin would become a significant figure within the Wang family in the next hundred years.

"Head Xu." Wang Shouxin's expression turned serious, "My younger brother once mentioned that the Xu family of Changning and our Ping'an Wang family have been relatives for over a hundred years, and our bloodlines have long since merged. Moreover, during our Ping'an Wang family's most difficult times, the Xu family of Changning took great care of us.

Just the premium purchase of our produce at Silkworm Manor was enough for us to be deeply grateful to the Xu family."

Wang Shouzhe was a man who valued gratitude.

Although the two families had their quarrels in the past, and their relationships have been lukewarm, the Xu family of Changning ultimately remembered their past bonds and took care of the Wang family during their time of need.

He needed to acknowledge this care.

Besides being a little snobbish and overly conservative, there was nothing wrong with the Xu family of Changning.

"Shouxin, you should just call me Fifth Uncle~ Calling me family head makes it seem too distant."
A hint of satisfaction flashed in Xu Anbang's eyes.

Although the previous acts of kindness towards the Ping'an Wang family were out of respect for their past relationship, without expecting any repayment...

A family that remembers your good deeds is naturally more suitable for deepening relations and cooperation than an ungrateful family.

After confirming the basis for cooperation, Xu Dingbang began to speak with a serious expression:
"Frankly, our Xu family of Changning is in some trouble."

"That's really within expectations." Wang Shouxin said calmly while sipping on the Spiritual Tea, "Changning prefecture is only so big, already housing two Celestial families, it is quite crowded. Neither the Celestial Huangfu Family nor the Celestial Lei Family would be pleased to see another Celestial family rise."

The only difference is whether they have the audacity to overtly target and attack you.

"Our Xu family of Changning also has its own weaknesses. We have been working meticulously in the textile industry for nearly two hundred years, but our foundations are too weak. This has given the Huangfu Clan an opportunity to target you. As my younger brother would say, we've been too complacent and failed to anticipate potential dangers."

"This..."

Although Xu Anbang felt a little disgruntled, he knew that Wang Shouxin was speaking the truth.

Chapter 58: Shou Zhe Makes a Plan! Stirring up the Storm_2

His face was solemn and ugly: "The former Ma Huangfu's Family have somehow acquired a new weaving technology, with the cost of reeling silk and weaving silk is only a half of ours."

"Now they are buying all raw cocoons in the surrounding area at a price 50% higher, forcing us to raise the purchase price of the raw cocoons to meet the production and supply needs of raw silk and silk. As a result, we are not only not making any profit but continuously losing money."

"If it were normal times, our Changning Xu Family could afford the loss. However, right now, the old ancestor of our Changning Xu Family is raising resources to impact the Heavenly Human Realm, and we still lack at least one hundred thousand Qian Gold.

We had hoped to borrow some money based on the income from silk in the next ten years, but we did not expect to be targeted by the former Ma Huangfu's Family."

Xu Anbang expressed his concern: "You should also know that our old ancestor is already one hundred and sixty-five years old now. The longer we delay, the lower the chances of successfully impacting the Heavenly Human Realm."

"Uncle Five, have you ever thought about selling a large part of your assets?" Wang Shouxin suggested lightly.

"Shouxin, you may not be aware," Wang Liuqin spoke up for the first time, "The family has already mortgaged some assets. If we mortgage more, it would be damaging the family's vital energy. If the old ancestor fails in his attempt, there is a high chance that the Changning Xu Family will fall from prosperity."

A declining trend in a family could potentially lead to a vicious cycle and a continuous downturn.

Wang Liuqin's concern was reasonable.

For a Celestial family, effectuating a change in generations was not an easy task.

A failure could cause a significant loss of vital energy. If it fails twice, it is a question whether the Tianren Family could survive at all.

For a prominent family of eighth grade to challenge the Tianren Family is even more difficult; it would require sheer luck and maybe even a buildup of one to two hundred years.

A hundred and fifty years ago, the Changning Xu Family attempted to impact the Heavenly human realm but unfortunately, the old ancestor failed and died in the Heavenly Tribulation.

The Changning Xu Family has been slightly declining ever since that attempt.

If they sold assets to attempt impacting the Heavenly Human Realm again and failed, it would be a question whether the Changning Xu family could maintain its status as an Eighth Grade Prominent Family in the following decades.

While it is difficult for a prominent family to rise, falling is unsettlingly swift.

"The old ancestor believes he has at most a 50% chance of succeeding in impacting the Heavenly Human Realm this time." Xu Anbang said somewhat helplessly, "Even the old ancestor himself is reluctant to risk it all. In case of failure, how could he face our ancestors?"

This point was indeed reasonable. With a history of more than three hundred years, where would the entire family be placed if they risk everything blindly?

The attempt to shift to the Heavenly Human Family is undoubtedly important, but it is even more crucial that the family maintains its prosperity and continues to thrive.

Xu Anbang took a deep breath, and with slight embarrassment, he still said: "Shouxin, Uncle Five knows that the Ping'an Wang Family is doing well now, with a lot of cash in the family's balance. Uncle Five is thick-faced and wants to ask, can the Ping'an Wang Family lend us one hundred thousand Qian Gold to give the old ancestor a chance to impact the Heavenly Human Realm?"

Wang Shouxin frowned, "The biggest problem faced by the Changning Xu Family now is that the pillar industry has been targeted. The ability to repay in the future is in question. If it were not for this, I believe the Changning Xu Family would not have asked us."

"Yes." Xu Anbang looked somewhat deflated, "The Huangfu Clan is attacking us at this time, also shaking the old ancestor's determination to impact the Heavenly Human Realm this time."

"They even sent a middleman to give us a hint, saying that as long as the old ancestor gives up this opportunity to impact the Heavenly Human Realm, they do not want to break with us and would withdraw from the weaving industry."

The promotion to the Tianren Family is the common desire of every Eighth Grade Prominent Family.

However, the Changning Xu Family is now facing a difficult situation.

"Uncle Five, forgive me for being blunt." Wang Shouxin said with a solemn face, "Once you make a concession, it's hard to take back. Perhaps the Huangfu Clan will fulfill its promise to withdraw from the weaving industry for a short time. But who can guarantee, thirty years later, fifty years later, they won't attack again?"

Is the Changning Xu Family resigned to being suppressed like this generation after generation?"

Xu Anbang realized that Master Shouzhe of the Ping'an Wang Family probably had a plan in mind.

He immediately said: "Shouxin, let's stop beating around the bush. What is Master Shouzhe's opinion?"

"We can lend the one hundred thousand Qian Gold." Wang Shouxin said, "But in the future, the Ping'an Wang Family will permanently hold forty percent shares in the weaving industry of Changning Xu Family."

Xu Anbang's face drastically changed: "Shouxin, aren't you being too much? For a mere one hundred thousand Qian Gold, you want to take forty percent of the Xu's shares, doesn't this smell of taking advantage of our hardship?"

Seeing the atmosphere was not right, Wang Liuqin quickly stood up to mediate, "Family Head, please calm down. I believe that Shouzhe and Shouxin are not opportunists, there must be hidden reasons."

Only then did Xu Anbang's face soften a bit, although he still looked a little unhappy.

He stared coldly at Wang Shouxin, waiting to hear what this young man had to say.

""Actually, Uncle, there's something you don't know," Wang Shouxin leered slightly at the tea residue, casually dropping a bombshell, "Over the years, our Ping'an Wang family has also been researching silk spinning technology and weaving technology."

If it weren't for our respect for the ancestral tie with Changning's Xu family, I'm afraid their weaving industry would have been out of the race without any intervention from the Huangfu clan."

What?!

A shock forced Xu Anbang's teacup to nearly fall from his hands.

Wang Liuqin and her husband were also startled.

However hard they racked their brains, they couldn't anticipate this situation. But verifying such a claim was effortless. Wang Shouxin had no reason to deceive them.

Yet, Wang Shouxin appeared to have anticipated their reaction and remained calm and composed.

Being in charge of the affairs of Silkworm Manor, he developed new technologies under guidance from his younger brother. Alongside the managers of Silkworm Manor, they explored and contemplated little by little, thus, no one had more right to speak than him in this case.

He elaborated on some of the human or water-powered spinning devices and weaving efficiency equipment developed by the Ping'an Wang family, saying afterward: "Uncle, once our two families cooperate, our advanced technology could draw in Huangfu clan and render them intractable."

Xu Anbang's expression grew increasingly intriguing.

As a qualified patriarch, he was well aware of the pillar of their family's enterprise; the textile industry.

If what Wang Shouxin said was true, wouldn't it be more than merely restraining Huangfu Clan?

In the future, they could expand production capacity on a large scale and continuously merge and develop. With that, even if they surrendered forty percent of the shares, or even fifty or sixty percent, it would be a great deal for Changning Xu family.

However, after the excitement, he grew silent again: "Master Shouzhe is truly capable of revitalizing the Wang family. But this move probably requires us to confront the Huangfu clan head on, or at least tie up a portion of their energy and financial resources, doesn't it?"

"Naturally. Otherwise, why would our Ping'an Wang family lend out a hundred thousand Qian Gold and only occupy forty percent?" Wang Shouxin calmly stated, "Moreover, Uncle, there's no need to fear Huangfu Clan. My younger brother Shouzhe has a plan that can trap Huangfu Clan into an untenable situation."

Xu Anbang's eyes lit up, almost ready to agree on the spot.

Nevertheless, he eventually said: "This matter is of great importance, I must discuss with the Old Ancestor. Anfeng, Liuqin, see Shouxin off for some rest."

"Yes, patriarch"

Wang Liuqin and Xu Anfeng responded in unison.

Subsequently, Wang Shouxin also stood up to bid farewell.

He had achieved his goal for today. Given such a tempting proposition, and the hidden resentment towards the Huangfu Clan, the Changning Xu family would surely opt for cooperation.

Afterwards, Wang Shouxin exchanged pleasantries with his Fifth Aunt and Fifth Uncle before retreating to his chamber in the Lixiang Garden as the night grew quiet.

This was specially arranged for his temporary stay with Xu Chunyun.

But as soon as he stepped through the door, his legs went weak and he almost fled.

Xu Chunyun had had a few drinks and her rosy cheeks further accentuated her allure under the red candlelight.

She beckoned him with her bewitching eyes. "Husband, come here."

I'm not going over. Are you trying to eat me alive?

Wang Shouxin swung his head back and forth.

"Wang Shouxin, you dog! Come to me!"

"Chunyun, don't be impulsive. Let's talk this over."

"No, I'm happy today. I've never felt so proud in my life. It's great! I did say that as long as you make me proud, you can do whatever you want."

"You...don't mess around, help..."

Chapter 59: Xun Wind Bloodline and My Domineering Sister_1

...

Wang family's Main Residence.

A martial arts field.

Today is a rare sunny day recently. The green brick floor of the martial arts field is not as wet as before. The surrounding big trees that are specially planted are also particularly lively, making the entire martial arts field seem to have a few more energetic vibes.

Inside the martial arts field, two youths are sparring.

One of them is relatively inexperienced. He's wearing a firm and profound martial outfit, with a broad-blade battle sword in his hands. His every move is all-out, as if he's smashing a mountain with all his might.

The edge of the blade whistles, the sword light is like a tide, and the sword blaze is like rain.

The other one is slightly older, casually dressed in a brocade robe, relaxed and comfortable.

Just by the wave of his wrist, the sword blush is as brilliant as stars, seeming natural and free but exceptionally neat. Casually and easily, he breaks all the moves of the inexperienced youth, showing an air of "no matter how fierce the storm is, I am calm and unmoved."

The pair of youths sparring are none other than the second elder of the Zong generation, Wang Zongchang, who has just woke up due to a bizarre fortune, and Wang Shouzhe, the family head of the Ping'an Wang family.

The uncle and nephew both practice Wang's Mysterious Element Sword, but due to their different personalities, their fighting styles are quite different.

Wang Zongchang prefers an all-out style, while Wang Shouzhe's sword technique is more delicate and intricate, and every move and stance definitely doesn't waste any Mysterious Energy.

"Fourth Uncle, try this move!"

After a long futile battle, Wang Zongchang somersaulted away over ten feet, and then tightly gripped the broad-blade battle sword in both hands, assuming a ready stance.

Suddenly.

He moved.

The surging Mysterious Energy suddenly exploded around him as the center. His Qi surged around his physique, and his body charged at Wang Shouzhe like a sharp arrow.

Interestingly, it seemed as though an invisible aura was holding him up, giving his entire body a faint feeling of floating. The misty aura around his body was like a breeze that made him faster than usual and made his movements more agile.

He swung a sword from bottom to top.

His sword intention was like a dragon rising from the abyss, swift and domineering.

"Good job!"

Wang Shouzhe praised upon seeing this.

His nephew not only trains hard and has a solid foundation, but he also has a flexible mind. He has just awakened his bloodline talent and integrated it into combat.

He calmly pointed a sword out.

The sword blushed plainly, without any aura at all.

But this sword accurately hit the weakest point of Wang Zongchang's move.

"Clang!"

A sound like a dragon's roar clashed.

Wang Zongchang's gorgeous sword intention was suddenly dismantled like an avalanche.

He staggered backward a few steps, almost losing grip on his sword, and his internal Qi and blood were churning.

He smiled bitterly: "Fourth Uncle, I won't fight anymore. This is too frustrating. It's a move I thought up with difficulty."

"Fourth Uncle is just helping you test it. Any new set of moves inevitably has many flaws when first created. Only through actual combat, slowly refining, and patching flaws can it become stronger." Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "Come on~ Fourth Uncle is just getting started."

The two engaged in another bout immediately after.

Half a day later.

Wang Zongchang was so tired that he almost collapsed on the ground, his eyes rolled back and he kept shouting "I can't fight anymore", "I can't fight anymore".

Wang Shouzhe, however, still seemed to want more: "Ever since your Fifth Aunt went to the academy, I haven't had such a fun fight in a long time."

"Zongchang you have to keep up, and spar with Fourth Uncle more when you're free. Let's do this, we'll spar once every three days. In Fourth Uncle's opinion, there's still a lot of potential in your Xun Wind Bloodline that can be tapped."

Yes, after Wang Zongchang was drilled into by the Bridal Clothes Blood Gu, he eventually completed the metamorphosis of his bloodline, turned misfortune into blessing, and awakened the Xun Wind Bloodline.

Moreover, the level of bloodline awakening is not low.

Although he hasn't tested it with the Spirit Sensing Formation yet, Wang Shouzhe can roughly infer from his performance. Zongchang's current talent should be around "Mid-Rank 'A' Level".

This is already quite amazing.

Before Wang Luoqiu and Wang Luo Jing took the "Primary Bloodline Improvement Fluid", their talents were at this level.

After he grows a little, participates in trials, and receives prizes, he is very likely to become another Sky Pride in the future.

This will be the second male Sky Pride of the Ping'an Wang Family.

It made Wang Shouzhe slightly sigh, finally relieving the dominance of the Yin power bit by bit.

Wang Zongchang almost passed out, it seemed that Fourth Uncle had made him the substitute for Fifth Aunt.

How is he going to survive these future days?

He isn't as perverted as Fifth Aunt, being full of vitality and fighting desire no matter how much he gets abused.

"We've been fighting for half a day, I'm a bit hungry. I'm sure your Fourth Aunt has prepared a lot of good food. Let's go, accompany me for a meal."

Wang Shouzhe suggested again with a laugh.

Wang Zongchang's face turned pale at once: "Fourth Uncle, I, I'm not hungry..."

"No, you are hungry."

Wang Shouzhe still smiled, but his tone was not to be refused.

This time Wang Zongchang didn't almost faint, he genuinely passed out.

Just got abused by Fourth Uncle, about to get abused by Fourth Aunt, he can't live this life anymore!

...

Afternoon!

Wang Shouzhe was lying in his Taishi Chair, taking a short nap.

The surroundings are full of dense green plants, blocking the intense sun, making the yard cool. And various exotic flowers and plants, attracting bees, butterflies, and other insects to busy around.

Chapter 59: Xun Wind Bloodline and My Domineering Sister_2

By now, the Wang family had grown, with many members capable of holding their own. Oftentimes, he only needed to manage federal affairs and let go of minor ones.

His wife's Cloud Mist Spirit Tea, especially suited for sipping on a hot summer day, sweetly quenched the thirst and calmed the spirit.

Half a day stolen from life.

Life was still satisfying.

Suddenly!

Qiao'er, in a fluster, ran over: "Family Head, there's trouble."

"What's the rush?" Wang Shouzhe slightly frowned, calm and composed, "Calm your mind first. No problem is unsolvable."

"This..." Qiao'er took a breath and calmed down, "Miss Li Yao set Elder Master Wang's beard on fire at the clan school. She gathered a bunch of students around, blocking the old master in the teacher's office, saying if she didn't teach him a lesson today, she'd reverse her family name. The teachers at the school couldn't handle it, please go over and take a look..."

"I... If she reverses her surname... wait a minute!"

Then Wang Shouzhe reacted, jumped up suddenly, and rushed over.

But he only got halfway before he double-backed, pulled Qiao'er into a corner, and whispered, "Don't let your lady know about this."

Qiao'er quickly nodded, her face flushed, thinking that the Family Head had pulled her into a corner with such a fierce air... Was he going to take advantage of her?

Then Wang Shouzhe ran out again.

Even when facing this situation, Wang Shouzhe felt a bit uneasy, and also found it somewhat absurd.

He never thought that in his life, he'd have to experience being summoned by the school. His precious daughter... she really did give him no peace of mind.

Wang Shouzhe arrived at the dock in the backyard.

He jumped onto a small boat. This boat looked odd, with no oars or sides. Not much of a boat, it resembled a water skateboard—extremely light.

Mysterious energy surged through his feet, propelling the tiny, pointed boat forward, swift as an arrow.

As a Spirit Platform Realm Cultivator, he could float and fly short distances, covering several dozen feet with ease. But flying across Zhuwei Lake would be a pipe dream.

Alternatively, he could skim across the water like a dragonfly, flitting elegantly over the surface. That wasn't impossible either.

However, having to skim across the tens of acres of lake would be nothing but masochistic.

Thus, he created this little boat based on a water skateboard. Powered by mysterious energy, it wasn't only extremely quick and energy-saving but also stylish. It was a fun toy.

Hands clasped behind his back, he leaned slightly like a swordsman riding a flying sword. With a single tilt, he splashed a wave of water.

Unfortunately, only Spirit Platform Realm cultivators could handle this boat. Average Cultivators at the Qi Refinement Level would run out of energy after a few strokes.

Soon, he saw a large group of buildings on the opposite bank.

There were Zhuwei Manor Phases One, Two, and Three, which Wang Shouzhe had heavily developed.

Transforming the marshland and building on the reclaimed area was a significant project that supplied Wang Shouzhe with substantial funds.

In some sense, this place was the very spot where the Wang family started accumulating wealth.

Present-day Zhuwei Manor was far from the barren marshlands of the past.

With an abundant number of houses, farmlands, and people, a small market had sprouted up. Subsequently, Wang Shouzhe increased investment, developed numerous shops, and formed a commercial center that was more and more bustling.

Laughter of attendees filled the air. Many wealthy individuals from other towns and even Changning Guard had made significant purchases here, expecting long-term investment returns.

Later on.

Wang Shouzhe went ahead to build the new Wang Family School here.

The new Wang Family School was vast. Even with the currently developed sections alone, it could accommodate thousands of teachers and students.

The early Wang Family School only taught and fostered education in the Wang family line and competent offsprings in the collateral lines.

But now, as long as they were residents of Ping'an Town, be they tenant farmers, commoners, artisans, or ordinary members of the Profound Martial Or Xuanwu family, they could all apply to study at the Wang Family School, as long as they met preliminary conditions.

Soon, Wang Shouzhe arrived on the opposite lakeshore.

Over there, a long embankment and scenic strip had been built for tourists to enjoy and observe the lake. There was also a small pier where a few boats were docked, ready to take visitors for a scenic tour of the lake.

Wang Shouzhe's small boat created a splash, stylishly docking at the pier and attracting the attention of many bystanders.

Next to the pier.

A gargantuan tortoise also raised its massive head, blinking and staring at Wang Shouzhe. It was contemplating why its master, with whom it shares a bloodline pact, had hurriedly arrived?

Yes, this enormous and highly spiritual tortoise was none other than the Wang family's guardian spirit beast; the Primordial Water Spirit Tortoise.

Currently, it serves as a beautiful spectacle and mascot of Zhuwei Lake, enhancing the prestige and property values of the residence.

Of course, its primary duty now is to ferry Miss Wang Liyao and Young Master Wang Zong'an to and from school every day.

Wang Shouzhe had stipulated that all members of the Wang family should study at the Clan School, except for special reasons.

This includes his own children.

Wang Shouzhe believed that interacting with peers and systematic learning at the Clan School would provide children with a complete life experience, and help create a healthier and more positive mentality.

At that moment.

Wang Shouzhe didn't have time to attend to the Primordial Water Spirit Tortoise. He jumped onto the pier and quickly headed towards the Clan school.

The Wang family's Clan School in Ping'an was built beside water.

Theoretically, it could be considered a part of Ping'an College.

But Wang Shouzhe had insisted on keeping the name 'Wang Family Clan School' because children nurtured from the Clan School would act as the talent pool for the entire Ping'an Town, and eventually become its bedrock and pillar.

The Wang family of Ping'an aren't a charitable organization. Every student admitted to the Clan School must have a guarantor and sign a contract with their parents.

The ultimate goal of everything Wang Shouzhe has done is to make the Wang family and Ping'an Town stronger.

The planned Wang family's Clan school covered over a hundred acres of land, of which only about a fifth had been used so far.

However, there were already over five hundred students of varying ages which represented the talent reserve for the Wang family's future.

Talents are not just about top-tier combat prowess but rather reflect every aspect of the Wang family.

In Wang Shouzhe's future plans for the Wang family, there's a constant demand for talent.

Wang Shouzhe quickly arrived inside the Clan School, which he had taken a lot of effort to build.

A female teacher had been waiting at the gate of the Clan School. As soon as she saw Wang Shouzhe, she rushed over and urgently said, "Headmaster, thank God you're here. Please quickly go and try to persuade Miss Liyao. She says if Elder Master does not come out and apologize, she'll burn down the entire Clan School."

Wang Shouzhe felt dizzy, Wang Liyao, oh Wang Liyao, do you know how hard your father worked to build up the wealth and establish the Clan School? What provoked you into wanting to burn it down?

Wasn't this sabotaging him?

He quickly followed the teacher.

The female teacher was in her thirties, attractive and quite elegant, with a rare fusion of intellect and beauty. She belonged to a rare group of well-educated and open-minded women teachers. That was why Wang Shouzhe had hired her at a high salary.

After all, considering the growing Clan School and an increasing number of girl students, it became necessary to have more female teachers.

Before long, Wang Shouzhe arrived at the scene.

In front of the newly built teaching building that he had heavily invested in, students of all ages, mostly girls, had gathered. They surrounded a nine-year-old girl who was adorably pretty.

The little girl had a stern expression on her face, and when she stood there, she exuded an extraordinary aura of both dominance and authority.

Next to her, a five or six-year-old boy looked like he was about to cry with fear. Sister, can we not make things so big, please?

If Mother finds out about this, we're sure to get a thrashing.

The problem was that every time his sister caused trouble, he would get dragged into it, and then their mother would beat him even harder!

Having a sister like this, he was really being pushed around!

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...

Just as Wang Zong'an was trembling with fear, Wang Shouzhe arrived at the scene.

"Wang Liyao!" Wang Shouzhe reprimanded angrily, "What are you doing standing on the platform? You...."

However, he was unable to complete his scolding.

Because when Wang Liyao saw her father, the solemnity and authority that had resided on her pretty little face instantly vanished without a trace, her mouth puckered up, and her eyes welled up with tears.

Then she threw herself into Wang Shouzhe's arms, whimpering tearfully, "Daddy, you're finally here, woo...."

Seeing his beloved daughter in such a pitiful state, Wang Shouzhe's heart instantly softened, his anger thoroughly forgotten.

He quickly steadied his beloved daughter in his arms, gently stroking her hair with a heart full of distress: "You silly child, standing on such a high platform, weren't you afraid of falling?"

"Daddy, the old Teacher was truly unfair." Wang Liyao pouted, her eyes swimming with tears, making her pretty little cheeks puff up in anger.

A sweat drop trickled down Wang Shouzhe's forehead.

From his perspective, it seemed more like you were the one bullying the old teacher.

Then Wang Shouzhe turned to his son and scolded, "Wang Zong'an, what were you doing on the side doing nothing? You should've consoled your sister."

Wang Zong'an's eyes widened in surprise.

This...this is also my fault? I'm only five, you know?

Besides, I've tried to advise her many times, but does she ever listen to me?

"Dare to glare back?" Wang Shouzhe said solemnly, "As the Young Clan Leader of the Ping'an Wang family, failing to control the situation is your mistake. We'll deal with you later when we get home."

Alright then!

Wang Zong'an wore an expression of complete desolation.

It seemed a spanking was unavoidable this time. But he was accustomed to this: every time his sister caused trouble, he inevitably got involved.

Being the eldest legitimate son of the Wang family was truly tough~

Afterwards, Wang Shouzhe turned his gaze to the unruly group of students. When his eyes swept over them, they all started to shiver.

However, this time Wang Shouzhe didn't have the will to hold them accountable and instead said, "Disperse, go back to your duties."

What Wang Shouzhe hadn't expected, though, was that the group of children, despite their fear, didn't obediently disperse as ordered. Instead, they looked expectantly at Wang Liyao.

Wang Liyao, who was hiding and sobbing in Wang Shouzhe's arms, then waved her hand and spoke, "Didn't you hear what my daddy said? Disperse."

When she finished speaking, the crowd of students, large and small, finally scattered and went back to their duties.

This caused another bead of sweat to drip down Wang Shouzhe's forehead.

How was it that in this Clan School, his authority was less effective than his daughter's?

Then he noticed a few familiar figures amongst the group of children, who were sneakily avoiding his gaze, trying to slip away.

"Wang Luolan! Wang Shouming! Wang Luoqing! Wang Zongyao! Wang Lillian!"

Every time Wang Shouzhe called out a name, someone in the crowd would tremble, then walk back in a disciplined manner.

From the oldest, Wang Luolan, to the youngest, Wang Luoqing, they all stood in a line before Wang Shouzhe, their heads downcast, not daring to look at him.

"Wang Luolan." Wang Shouzhe glared, "How old are you? Yet still joining in the ruckus with your younger cousins!"

"Fourth Brother." Wang Luolan gave a nervous laugh, and weakly replied, "It's all because of the old Teacher, he was just too oppressive. I was just showing support for Yao Yao, didn't do anything else bad."

The once little girl Wang Luolan, who used to be in Wang Shouzhe's arms, had at this point grown into a fourteen or fifteen-year-old young lady of striking beauty.

"Humph!"

Wang Shouzhe grunted, still somewhat annoyed: "I know the Teacher well. He might be a bit old-fashioned but he's still one of our Wang family elders. If there is a problem, can't we sort it out properly? It seems to me that you are simply idle. Just the thing, your Fourth Sister is struggling with a lot of work.

Go there and organize a group of refugees to dredge the river, and don't stop until you've done a minimum of thirty miles."

"Yes, Fourth Brother."

Although Wang Luolan felt wronged, she obediently followed her orders and departed.

Similar chores were nothing new to her.

One good thing about the Wang children is that while they are required to study and engage in cultivation, they also need to participate in family affairs.

Not only Wang Luolan, but also Wang Luomiao, and even the once-present Wang Luoqiu and Wang Luo Jing, have all been involved in family matters while pursuing their studies.

This will give them great exercise and rapid growth. None of the Misses of the Wang family are completely spoiled little ladies.

Next, Wang Shouzhe turned his gaze to Wang Shouming and Wang Zongyao.

These two boys, eight and nine years old, were the continuation of the Wang family bloodline, the foundation of the family's future.

Especially Wang Shouming, the youngest of the Shou generation, who was the second son of Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai and took over from Wang Shouye as the youngest of the seventh generation males.

He was trembling under Wang Shouzhe's gaze, saying frankly, "Fourth Brother, I was wrong."

"Fourth Uncle, I was wrong as well." Wang Zongyao was also utterly terrified, his heart trembling, "Please don't tell my father."

He was the Second Uncle Wang Shouyi's second son. Although Second Uncle was gentle, he was very strict when it came to his children. If this fell into Second Uncle's ears, Zongyao would surely be severely punished.

"Both of you have started warming and nourishing your meridians, entering the preliminary stage of cultivation, your strength is no longer that of an ordinary person." Wang Shouzhe said, "So go to the refugee camp, take on the responsibility of providing meals for the refugees and consoling them. It will also let you understand how tough life can be."

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Upon hearing this, they didn't panic, but were pleased. They bowed to Wang Shouzhe and said, "Thank you, Fourth Uncle/Fourth Brother." Doing this work not only spares them from being reported to the family head, but also earns them some Merit Points.

Finally, Wang Shouzhe's gaze landed on Wang Lillian and Wang Luoqing.

Both girls looked at Wang Shouzhe with a bit of fear, ready to accept whatever he had to say.

Wang Luoqing was the ninth of the Luo-generation; unless something unusual happened, she was likely to be the youngest of her generation.

Of course, it wasn't impossible for Sixth Uncle Wang Dinghai to become youthful again and give Wang Shouzhe another little sister.

Now that the family is in better financial situation, there was less economic pressure, and the birth rate has risen considerably compared to the past.

"Fourth Brother," six-year-old Wang Luoqing said in her childish voice, staring at Wang Shouzhe with wide eyes, "Yao Yao sister says the teacher is too mean."

"That's your niece Yao Yao, you can't get your generations mixed up." Wang Shouzhe fondly patted her head, "Besides, how could the teacher be mean to you?"

This young girl, youngest in age, yet high in ranking, even thirty-year-old Wang Zongwei had to respectfully call her Auntie Jiugugu.

"Fourth Uncle," Wang Lillian also complained, "I agree with what Yao Yao sister said, too. The teacher shouldn't look down on the women scholars in the clan school."

Wang Lillian, eldest daughter of Wang Shouyi, was only seven this year. Although she was a year older than Wang Luoqing, they were both just little girls.

Seeing these young girls, Wang Shouzhe couldn't bear to scold them. He pinched her cheek and said, "For now, you should focus on your studies. If there's any problem, tell your Fourth Uncle. I'll solve it for you."

"Fourth Brother, we were wrong. We're willing to be punished," Wang Luoqing took responsibility, "We're also willing to help at the refugee camp."

"Alright. Once I'm done with this, none of you will escape, including you, Wang Li Yao. Do you understand?" Wang Shouzhe said sternly.

"I understand, Daddy." Wang Liyao wasn't afraid of the punishment, "I also heard from Auntie Seven and Auntie Four that more and more refugees are arriving in Ping'an Town and there's a lot of work to be done."

"That's my good girl~"

Wang Shouzhe praised her and then let her go. Together, they followed the female teacher into his office.

The office was occupied by a man in his seventies who appeared quite miserable. His once majestic white beard had been burned off in large patches and his face was blackened and grey, looking quite ragged.

He leaned on his walking stick, trembling slightly, as if still in shock.

"Shouzhe, is this how you discipline your child? Look at your daughter Wang Li Yao, causing trouble in the clan school every day."

Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe, the old man finally found a vent for his anger and launched an verbal attack.

"Old Master Wang, calm down, calm down. Let me ask about the situation first."

Wang Shouzhe respected this old predecessor, who had served the Wang family dutifully most of his life, and hasten to appease him.

This old man was Wang Yangjie, a brilliant scholar from a branch of the Wang family. He had traveled the world, gaining much knowledge and even served as a civilian official in Changning City Defense Office.

In the beginning, it was the Old Ancestor Luo Yan who had invited him back to teach in the clan school. He had educated many, including Wang Shouzhe's predecessor, dedicating his life to the service of others.

Therefore, in the new clan school, he became the vice principal.

As for the principal, it was Wang Shouzhe in name. But he was usually too busy with other affairs to manage the school.

The authority of Wang Shouzhe, the Family Head, was very effective. Upon hearing him, the Old Master indeed calmed down.

Then, Wang Shouzhe shifted his gaze to his beloved daughter.

Now at eight years old, she was past the age of innocence.

She crossed her arms, pouting. "Daddy, haven't you always said boys and girls are the same? But the Teacher favors boys."

"When a boy misbehaves, he just scolds them mildly. But if a girl from the clan school messes up, the Teacher would always threaten to send her away. He also always says that there shouldn't be female scholars in the academy and easily scolds them. I was angry, that's why I stood up against him."

Wang Shouzhe knew about this.

Old Master Wang Yangjie did indeed favor sons over daughters. Perhaps there was a reason why Luo Qiu and others didn't like studying back then.

And it seemed that Luo Qiu and Luo Jing often quarreled with Wang Yangjie back then.

"But you cannot just burn the Teacher's beard. If there's a problem, it has to be solved," Wang Shouzhe said seriously, "So what do you think should be done?"

"I think the clan school needs a female vice principal." Wang Liyao had clearly thought about this problem in advance and as soon as Wang Shouzhe asked, she hugged her arms and discussed seriously, "There also need to be clear rules. Everyone who makes a mistake should be punished, boys and girls should be treated the same."

"Hmm, you've made some good points," Wang Shouzhe said, "But, Liyao, your approach is too radical. First, apologize to the Teacher."

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Wang Liyao, having great respect for her father, apologized sincerely despite the resentment in her heart.

Then, Wang Shouzhe also apologized to Wang Yangjie, saying: "Teacher, I apologize on behalf of my daughter."

His attitude was sincere.

Wang Yangjie was flustered and hurriedly returned the gesture, "Master Shouzhe, I too was impulsive, with no intention to trouble Miss Liyao specifically."

The current Wang Shouzhe was not the young boy he once taught.

Now, Wang Shouzhe controlled Ping'an Town, capable of directing the fate of thousands with a single command. How could he accept this apology?

"Despite, there is some truth in what the child said." Wang Shouzhe solemnly said, "The Wang family's position today is due to many women's significant contributions. Whether it's Madame Gongsun Hui or Old Ancestor Longyan, both are exceptional among women. I hope, Teacher, you can adhere to the principle of 'impartiality'."

"Yes, Family Head."

For some reason, a chill crept into Wang Yangjie's heart, and he hastily gave his solemn promise.

"Yao Yao, are you satisfied with this arrangement?" Wang Shouzhe asked seriously.

"I am satisfied. As long as the teacher can exercise impartiality, I am willing to respect him." Wang Liyao also nodded seriously.

"Since that's settled, those who should be punished must be punished." Wang Shouzhe said with a stern face, "It's been said 'a father's fault if his daughter goes uneducated'. It is my negligence that has made you too unrestrained and capricious. This time, both you, An'an and I will be punished."

"Yes, father." Wang Liyao, realizing her error, sincerely accepted the punishment.

But Wang Zong'an was left dumbfounded.

Dragged into this again.

It's challenging being the Young Clan Leader!

...

Changning Xu Family.

As an old Grade Eight Prominent Family with a history of three hundred years, Changning Xu Family held more profound power than what it outwardly showed.

In the deepest part of its main residence, there was an ancient hall called the "Zang Ling Palace", where the Xu family paid tribute to their ancestors.

But this was more than just a memorial hall.

It held a treasure, the foundation of the Changning Xu Family's power and foothold, the "Town Dragon Monument".

With the formation in the Zang Ling Palace, it could unleash devastating power even capable of suppressing a Tianren Realm Cultivator or grind them to death.

Unfortunately, the "Town Dragon Monument" had significant flaws.

One, It's immovable and must be used in conjunction with the grand formation.

Two, It already had faint cracks on the surface, indicating that it couldn't be used many more times.

This is also reasonable; otherwise, how can the Changning Xu Family stand in Changning?

It is through relying on this potent weapon, the "Town Dragon Monument", that they command respect from everyone else.

At this moment.

Under the Town Dragon Monument, an old man in a grey robe was seated cross-legged.

His hair was white, and his skin had lost its youthful gloss. His forehead was creased with many wrinkles, clearly showing signs of age.

However, his aura was profoundly concealed, veiling his true depth.

In front of him stood a middle-aged man in a brocade robe — the head of the Xu family, Xu Anbang.

"Old Ancestor, this is exactly what happened." Xu Anbang said respectfully, "According to my analysis, the Wang family's move might seem to help us, but there's an ulterior motive. They probably want us, the Changning Xu Family, in the frontlines to entangle directly with the Huangfu Clan and attract all its firepower."

Upon hearing this, the respected elder slowly opened his eyes, his expression unreadable, "Anbang, you mean to say..."

Xu Anbang said solemnly: "If we refuse the Ping'an Wang family, we'll forever live under the Huangfu Clan's influence, with our lives hanging by their thread. But if we join forces with the Wang family, there'll be no turning back from the irreparable breach with the Huangfu Clan. The matter is of great significance, and I dare not make the decision. I implore you, Old Ancestor, for guidance."

The old man in the grey robe showed a hint of turbulence in his gaze as he looked at Xu Anbang: "From the moment you entered, I could feel it. Since you already have a thought, why not share it?"

Xu Anbang took a deep breath: "From my observation, Wang Shouzhe of the Ping'an Wang family is not a simple man. His goals, this time around, are probably grand."

He recounted the anomalies he noticed during his last encounter with the Direct Disciple of the Xue Palace, as well as his observations and understandings of Wang Shouzhe.

"Wang Shouzhe is a cautious man who never acts without assurance. His current actions against the Huangfu Clan must also be after thorough consideration. Perhaps he has already devised an entire plan to deal with the Huangfu Clan."

"Interesting, Interesting~"

A smile crossed the elder's aged face.

Back then, Wang family's Old Ancestor, Zhou Xuan, was also a remarkable figure.

It's astonishing that, merely decades after Zhou Xuan's demise, another remarkable figure has risen from the Ping'an Wang family.

"In that case, let's go along with that young man from the Wang family and indulge in recklessness once."

The elder in the grey robe made the final call.

Upon hearing this, Xu Anbang's eyes lit up with a fervent glow, "This is also my thought. Our Changning Xu Family has been suppressed for a long time, it's time to let the Huangfu Clan see that we're not to be trifled with!"

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As the sound of his words fell, the powerful aura of the Spirit Platform Realm surged up from his body, brimming with a will to fight.

Changning's Xu family, being an eight-hundred-year-old grade eight prominent family, naturally had their own confidence and courage.

...

Having dealt with the matter of the clan school, Wang Shouzhe cast aside all other matters.

With his daughter and son in tow, he joined the river embankment construction work under the guise of an ordinary person.

Upon hearing the news, Liu Ruolan rushed over, and upon understanding Wang Shouzhe's intentions, she joined the team.

Both husband and wife understood.

This was the critical period of their children's growth, and they needed to teach by example, letting them endure hardship, understand the difficulties of life, and establish their correct worldview.

If their views were skewed and they couldn't stand straight, even the greatest future achievements would be merely a house of cards, possibly collapsing any day.

Even if it did not collapse, it was highly likely to bring disaster.

Wang Shouzhe had seen and heard of many such cases on Earth in his previous life.

It was not a problem for the children to have their own independent ideas and oppose the teacher's educational principles and prejudices.

However, the means they adopted reflected too little thought, acting simply on impulse, a point that Wang Shouzhe did not agree with.

Moreover, the old teacher was advanced in years and had devoted his whole life to the Wang family. Even if his ideas were indeed outdated and no longer suited to the modern Wang family, he should not be treated in this way.

Therefore.

Wang Shouzhe and his wife Liu Ruolan, concealing their identities, took their children to build the river embankment, allowing them to experience the hardships their ancestors faced when they started with nothing and hewed a living out of Ping'an Town.

Hiding their identities also enabled them to mix more with ordinary children and common folk.

This was to avoid their superiority complex, as if they were born as young masters and ladies.

It goes without saying, during this period, both Wang Shouzhe and Liu Ruolan had many life insights and felt the difficulties of the common people's survival.

They also felt their willingness to follow the Wang family of Ping'an in constructing their homeland and to build a peaceful dwelling for their descendants.

Naturally, this was a real lesson for their children, which was of some benefit to their future life paths.

...

Time rushed by, and in the blink of an eye, late summer gave way to early autumn.

Under the leadership of Fang Youan, the direct disciple of the Purple Abode Academic Palace, the disastrous consequences of the flood were gradually being alleviated.

The victims were resettled, the disaster areas began to slowly rebuild, everything was arranged in an orderly manner, and new life was breathed into the ruins.

However, during this brief period of two to three months, the undercurrents in Changning were surging mightily.

The old Grade Eight prominent Changning Xu Family and the former Ma Huangfu Family completely tore their faces apart and locked horns.

The battle between them was centered on the raw silk material.

In Changning and its surrounding areas, the price of raw silk rose again and again, and in just a short time, it was more than three times its original price.

Even so, some savvy businessmen specifically transported raw silk from distant places to make a fortune.

However, these two families seemed to have no intention of backing down, continuing to snatch the output of various families' silkworm manors at high prices.

In the short span of less than three months, both sides had spent more than two hundred thousand Qian Gold.

Without a doubt, this was a fight where hurting the enemy meant hurting oneself.

This was no longer a simple business move, but an attempt to drive the other party to ruin and thoroughly expel them from the industry.

Even when the City Guard Mansion tried to intervene a few times, both sides showed no signs of backing down. It was like two gamblers, both already seeing red, continuously doubling down, doubling down until one side would finally fall.

The intentions of both sides were clear to any perceptive observer.

Behind the former Ma Huangfu family, there were rumors of the support of the Celestial Huangfu family, and Changning's Xu Family was not fighting alone either, backed by the in-law, the Ping'an Wang family.

Wang Zongwei of the Ping'an Wang family was the go-between for them all.

For several months, he has almost perpetually been in Changning Town.

One day.

The fish stall of the Ping'an Wang family in Changning Town.

A luxurious carriage slowly approached down the street.

Shopkeepers from the surrounding businesses and stall vendors all directed their attention towards the carriage.

"That's the carriage of the Young Master Zongwei, isn't it?" a vendor spoke up, "He's off to the main residence of Changning's Xu family again."

"Goodness, these past two months Young Master Zongwei has been quite impressive. He's the bridge between the Ping'an Wang family and the Changning Xu family. Now that the Changning Xu Family and the former Ma Huangfu Family are so fiercely tangled in the silk industry, it relies entirely on financial aid from the Ping'an Wang family. Young Master Zongwei's status is rising with the tide."

"If the Changning Xu family gets its footing, in the future, Young Master Zongwei will be a hot commodity."

Amid a series of discussions, the carriage continued its journey east.

What people did not know was that...

The carriage was not only carrying Wang Zongwei, but also an enchanting and alluring woman.

She radiated a seductive charm, with each smile and frown alluring enough to captivate a soul.

However, Wang Zongwei sat straight-backed, head lowered, daring not to glance at her more than necessary.

It was as if the woman in front of him was an untouchable femme fatale.

"Hee hee hee." The alluring woman's seductive eyes sparkled as she laughed irresistibly, "Young Master Zongwei, are you afraid that I will devour you? I heard that you have won quite a bit of money in the Wealth Casino recently."

"Uh... " A bead of cold sweat trickled down from Wang Zongwei's forehead. He spoke in a shaky voice, "Miss Mei, please don't tease me. I'm just carrying out orders otherwise, I'd rather die than go to that casino again."

Although she was merely the head of retinue, not all heads were the same. Moreover, she had impressive methods, as if she had eyes everywhere, knowing his every move like the back of her hand.

If he offended her, he would have a hard time.

"Enough, enough, to see you so anxious really is no fun at all." Amid the alluring woman's laughter, her face suddenly turned serious, "But, remember, you shouldn't call me by the wrong name. I am now called - Lady Ji."

"Yes, Lady Ji." Wang Zongwei obediently responded, hesitatingly, "May I know why Lady Ji sought me out this time?"

When it came down to business, the alluring woman's face turned serious, a fanatical light gleamed in her eyes: "I have received a secret order from the family head. The net has already been cast, we can start to put things into motion. This is the secret order document from the head of the family, demanding your full cooperation in this operation."

Upon hearing about the major operation, Wang Zongwei's eyes narrowed, after checking the secret order and confirming its authenticity.

Though a trace of fear crept in his heart, he still solemnly said: "For our ancestors, for the Wang Family, and also for my wife and children."

"I am at Lady Ji's service."

"Hee hee hee!" Lady Ji's laughter was particularly enchanting and captivating, "Young Master Zongwei, don't be so nervous, your part of the task is not at all difficult, but the valor points are very high. It makes people very envious."

Even though her laughter made Wang Zongwei's hair stand on end, his heart still surged with a trace of fanaticism.

Yes, the Valor Points for his part of this mission were quite high.

If he earned enough Valor Points, and borrowed a little more from around, he would be able to exchange them for a Spirit Pill and a drop of Stone Marrow for his child.

With the Stone Marrow and Spirit Pill, his child, Shinin, will have a higher starting point.