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Chapter 61: Poisonous Viper Woman! Lady Ji_1

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Wealth Casino.

One of the three largest gold-consuming dens in Changning.

It is said that at the beginning of the pioneer days in Changning, Wealth Casino was already standing on this piece of land.

After gaining wealth, many of these pioneers tended to gamble away their fortunes in the casino, mostly ending in tragedy.

The mogul behind the Wealth Casino was very obscure. Some claimed it was the Celestial Huangfu Family, some said the Celestial Lei Family, and others believed it was the first lord of the city secretly controlling everything.

However, none would admit it.

After all, getting rich through the casino could be perceived as a stain on the reputation of prominent families.

In short, the background of Wealth Casino was mysterious and profound. So far, nobody has ever been able to owe money to the casino and not pay it back.

At the entrance of the casino, Wang Zongwei's carriage slowly pulled to a halt.

This was a building of considerable size with three levels. Its intricate carvings and vividly colored paintings gave it a rich and splendid appearance. The towering red-lacquered gate was exceptionally grand, making it look more like a tavern than a gambling hall at first glance.

Only the banner hanging under the gate, embroidered with the character for "gamble" and swaying gently in the early autumn wind, revealed its identity as a gambling house.

At the casino entrance, several stout men dressed in casino attire stood with their hands behind their backs, deterring miscreants. These were Profound Martial cultivators employed by the casino to maintain order. Their cultivation base was around the Qi Refinement Realm's fifth or sixth level, which was fairly impressive.

Before Wang Zongwei got off the carriage, a middle-aged man with a beaming smile welcomed him from inside the casino.

Behind him were a few relatively powerful followers.

The man had a small mustache and a friendly face. He was Ding Youde, the Second Shopkeeper of the Wealth Casino.

By just listening to his name and looking at his face, one might think that he was a respectable gentleman. However, those who knew him, or had been conned by him, knew what a ruthless man Ding Youde truly was.

"Young Master Zongwei." Ding Youde greeted with a smiling face, personally helping Wang Zongwei down from the carriage. "You've been absent for a week or so. Don't tell me you've grown dissatisfied with my hospitality?"

"Not at all," said Wang Zongwei.

At this point, Wang Zongwei was in his early thirties, with a small beard, embodying the demeanor of a mature man of success.

He smiled, "I've won too much recently. I was afraid you might dislike me and not want to see me anymore."

Ding Youde was taken aback, then burst out laughing, "Young Master Zongwei, you have quite the sense of humor. We run a casino where winning and losing are a matter of luck. Why would we stop welcoming a valued guest just because he won a little money?"

"Recently, you've been in great stride and incredibly lucky, so it's expected that you'll win. Even if you were to win us into bankruptcy, it would still be due to your own skill."

"Just joking, Brother Youde. Don't take it seriously." Wang Zongwei laughed lightly, then walked into the Wealth Casino along with Ding Youde.

The Wealth Casino was as lively as ever. The lobby was crowded with male and female gamblers around various gambling tables.

Regardless of the time, there were always gamblers. Some people were addicted to the excitement of effortless gains.

"Young Master Zongwei, do you want to warm up in the lobby, or do you want me to arrange a private room for you?" Ding Youde asked warmly.

"Luck is a limited resource; why should I waste it in such a small place?" Wang Zongwei surveyed the lobby with his hands behind his back, completely uninterested.

The bets in the lobby were relatively small. On many tables, copper coins were still used to settle the bets. Even on the more high-stake tables, at most they would win or lose a few tens of Qian Gold in a day.

He used to gamble on the outside when he just turned twenty.

"Exactly." Ding Youde flattered him with a flattering smile, "What kind of person is Young Master Zongwei? How could he play with these country folks?"

After saying that, he led Wang Zongwei directly to a private room on the second floor.

The second floor was more refined than the first, with thick carpets covering the entire floor, side tables made from golden phoebe wood lining the hallway, and exquisite calligraphy and paintings hanging on the walls. It was certainly upscale compared to the first floor.

On both sides of the hall were a series of private rooms.

These private rooms were obviously soundproof. Standing in the hallway, one could faintly hear some vague shouting and laughter coming from the rooms, but the contents of the conversations were indistinguishable.

The private rooms were also ranked. There were "Human" grade rooms that started at a hundred Qian Gold, and "Heavenly" grade rooms that started at a thousand Qian Gold, catering to the requirements of customers of different levels.

In the past few months, Wang Zongwei had always been playing in the "Human" grade rooms and won one or two thousand Qian Gold continuously.

"Let's play in the 'Earth' grade room this time." Wang Zongwei said, "I have won a lot of money from your casino recently. If my luck is not good today, I'm going to lose it all."

Although he said this, a glint of greed flitted through his eyes.

Clearly, he was very confident in his recent good luck.

"Young Master Zongwei, you really are generous."

Ding Youde couldn't want him to gamble more, naturally, he and his followers began praising him.

While chatting, the group walked into the "Earth" grade private room.

The decoration inside the room was even more luxurious than the hallway. Not only was the craft of the carpet more complex and exquisite, but the antiques and calligraphy used for the ornaments were also of a higher grade. Just decorating this room with these antique calligraphies and paintings must have cost around one or two thousand Qian Gold.

On a tall table against the wall was a red copper incense burner emitting a thick, sweet fragrance that filled the room with a layer of smoke, creating an intriguing and mystical ambiance that would cause adrenaline levels to rise.

Chapter 61: Vicious and Venomous Lady! Lady Ji_2

Every gambler in the "Earth" suite had beautiful attendants serving them - even the croupiers at the tables were stunning beauties, trained to be not only efficient and skillful but also a feast for the eyes.

Today was still early, hence aside from the female attendants and the croupiers, there were no other people in the "Earth" suite. It wasn't surprising as wins and losses in the "Earth" suite could easily amount to hundreds or thousands of Qian Gold and high rollers did not visit daily.

Wang Zongwei's eyes lit up at the sight of the beautiful attendants and croupiers. His expression was one of a man besotted by beauty.

"Is Young Master Zongwei satisfied?"

In Ding Youde's smile, a fleeting hint of contempt passed unnoticed.

"Excellent! Let's exchange for five hundred Qian Gold chips first."

Wang Zongwei excitedly took out a stack of gold bills.

Two beautiful attendants helped him to the gambling table, considerately exchanged his money for chips, and served him a pot of Spiritual Tea.

With chips in hand, Wang Zongwei eagerly joined the game, his eyes full of anticipation.

"The two of you, make sure Young Master Zongwei is well looked after." Ding Youde instructed before taking his leave with a cheerful goodbye, "I won't distract you from winning."

He knew that gamblers didn't appreciate distractions once they got into the zone.

Sure enough, Wang Zongwei waved him off without even lifting his eyelids.

After leaving the "Earth" suite, Ding Youde signaled his attendants to remain at the door and headed straight for the third floor.

Third floor.

In a heavily guarded room, a middle-aged man dressed in expensive attire, who looked to be in his forties or fifties, was lying on a Taishi Chair smoking. He appeared a bit yellowish in complexion, looking somewhat drained.

Two ravishing beauties attended to him dutifully.

"Manager Huang." Ding Youde reported carefully, "That Wang Zongwei has returned to the gambling house. Clearly, he enjoyed his winnings from the other day when we let him win. However, he entered the 'Earth' suite this time, probably hoping to win big. How should we deal with him?"

Manager Huang, with half-closed eyes, seemed indifferent as he said, "The time seems ripe. Since he's walked right into our trap, it's time to close the net."

"Yes, Manager."

Ding Youde nodded with a cruel hint in his eyes.

Wang Zongwei, do you really believe you are incredibly lucky?

Ding Youde sneered secretly.

I've been buttering you up for nearly three months. It's about time for you to return the favor - with interest!

Meanwhile.

In the "Earth" suite, Wang Zongwei was on a roll, winning hundreds of Qian Gold chips in a short time.

The two beautiful attendants showered him with compliments, "Young Master Zongwei is indeed lucky! Seems like he's on a winning streak."

"Ha, ha, ha~ I have indeed been lucky recently," Wang Zongwei roared with laughter, rewarding each of the two attendants with a Qian Gold chip.

"Thank you, Young Master Zongwei!" With a seductive look in their eyes, the attendants pressed their bodies onto his.

As if to validate Wang Zongwei's words, in a short span, he won another hundred more Qian Gold.

Under the flatteringly sweet words from the attendants, he was feeling euphoric and readily accepted their suggestion to increase his wagers while he was on a roll.

But before he knew it, the two hundred chips of Qian Gold he had won was all gone.

Wang Zongwei seemed frantic.

After losing several rounds, he increased his bets, hoping to win back his lost chips.

But the more he tried, the more things seemed to go against him.

Less than an hour later, he had even lost all five hundred of his own exchange chips.

"Young Master Zongwei, your luck isn't so great today," one attendant advised, "Why not call it quits and come back another day?"

"It was just a temporary setback," the other cooed persuasively, "Young Master Zongwei is supremely lucky. He'll surely win it all back soon."

"Exchange another thousand Qian Gold chips!"

Wang Zongwei was breathing a bit rapidly. Having already lost five hundred Qian Gold today, he seemed unwilling to give up yet.

The two attendants looked at Wang Zongwei in awe, "Young Master Zongwei is indeed generous. Even the heirs of Rank 8 or 9 prominent families do not show such boldness."

After getting a thousand Qian Gold chips, Wang Zongwei appeared much more cautious. He carefully calculated his bets and gradually began to win some back.

However, as the attendants intensified their flattery, Wang Zongwei became carried away again, betting big.

Amidst more losses than wins, his thousand Qian Gold didn't last long and was soon all lost.

"Get me two thousand Qian Gold chips." Wang Zongwei slammed the table, apparently furious.

Half an hour later.

"Get me another two thousand Qian Gold!" His deep roar echoed again.

In this endless cycle, his eyes turned bloodshot, his silk gown was torn revealing his chest, his hair disheveled, and he was drenched in sweat.

He downed a mouthful of Spiritual Tea, fuming: "Get me another two thousand!"

But this time, the two obedient attendants did not respond immediately but backed away, bowing.

"You..."

Wang Zongwei turned around furiously to yell.

However, his words died abruptly.

Because, he realized that Ding Youde and his men were already standing behind him in the "Earth" suite.

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His smile was somewhat sinister, "Young Master Zongwei, it's about enough for today. Perhaps we could resume another day."

Wang Zongwei suddenly came to, seemingly sensing the change in atmosphere. He immediately regained some clarity, "Brother Youde, you're right. Today's not my lucky day. It's not suitable to continue playing. I will take my leave now."

As he spoke, Wang Zongwei bowed his head and walked towards the exit.

"Hold on."

Ding Youde laughed coldly, his hands behind his back.

As his words fell, several muscular bodyguards blocked the doorway, trapping Wang Zongwei in the VIP room marked with the character 'earth'.

"Brother Youde, what is the meaning of this?" Wang Zongwei turned a little pale.

"Young Master Zongwei, our gambling house has rules," Ding Youde responded with a cold, insincere smile, "Why don't you settle the money you owe before leaving?"

"Owe money? How much do I owe?" Wang Zongwei's face grew even more difficult to look at, sensing something was wrong.

Ding Youde casually pulled out a stack of IOUs: "Young Master Zongwei, you've exchanged a total of eight thousand six hundred Qian Gold today, of which five hundred was paid. The remaining amount is eight thousand one hundred Qian Gold. Please settle the bill."

"More than eight thousand Qian Gold?!"

Wang Zongwei was shocked, angry, and unbelieving.

He had only played for less than four hours, how could he have lost so much?

"Young Master Zongwei, why don't you take a good look." Ding Youde sneered, "Every bill here is clearly written. If you don't recognize them, my men can 'help' you remember."

Wang Zongwei hurriedly leaned over, inspecting the IOUs.

Indeed, each one was authentic.

He had unknowingly accumulated such a significant debt.

He was drenched in sweat, bowing to Ding Youde, "Brother Youde, every bill is correct. But, I was in a rush when I came out today and didn't bring enough money, perhaps..."

Before he could finish, Ding Youde cut him off with a wave of his hand.

His smile was dark, "No matter, no matter. Just put your signature down, and then my men and I will go to the Ping'an Wang Family to collect the money from Wang Shouzhe."

"Ask my Fourth Uncle for payment?!" Wang Zongwei trembled and was filled with a mixture of shock and anger, "Brother Youde, this is too much! Are you pushing me into a corner? Rest assured, I will pay back this sum of money as soon as possible."

"Bah!" Ding Youde scoffed, "On your Wang Zongwei's meager salary, when could you ever repay such a sum? It seems you don't understand your situation, Young Master. Men, let the young master sober up a bit!"

"Brother Youde! Don't be rash! Ahhh~::~"

The VIP room soon echoed with a series of horrific screams.

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The twilight gradually fell.

Outside of Changning Guard City, there's a luxurious yet low-key manor.

This manor, under the name of a wealthy distant businessman, was actually the secret palace of the Celestial Huangfu Family Clan Leader, Huangfu Jinhuan, and many secret meetings took place here.

In essence, this seemingly ordinary manor often saw shifts in the patterns of Changning Guard City's power.

Although the sky grew increasingly dark, the manor remained brightly lit.

Exquisite lanterns hung from all the corridors, brightening the courtyard to the extent of daylight. Green trees and red flowers, luxuriantly dense.

At this moment, three people were sitting together in secret conversation deep within the lobby in the manor.

The three, two men and a woman, were dressed in brocade robes, exuding a remarkable presence.

The red copper incense burner in the corner filled the air with fragrant smoke, making the finely furnished room seem like an Immortal Palace. This aura accentuated the three figures' celestial demeanor.

Normally, Huangfu Jinhuan, being the actual owner of the estate, would have the highest seat. Yet, the one sitting on the main seat was a voluptuous woman in her thirties, exuding an entrancing charm.

Her captivating peach blossom eyes naturally embodied sensuality, even her careless pose carried a lazy elegance. Her demeanor was of a celestial princess, giving off an air of superiority as if everyone naturally ought to obey her commands.

Her robe made of splendid spirit silkworm brocade, complex embroidery, and the massive Sea Spirit Pearl embedded on her slippers, conveyed her extraordinary status.

Behind her, on either side stood two seemingly insignificant old men.

They appeared humble, with restrained aura, only truly powerful individuals could feel the tremendous power hidden within them.

Yes, these two old men were Realm Cultivators.

To some Grade Eight or Nine Profound Martial Prominent families, every Realm Cultivator is a revered ancestor, a pillar of the family.

Yet they stood behind this woman, heads bowed, like two dutiful aged servants.

This further accentuated the extraordinary status of the woman.

She lounged casually on the main seat, as if it was her natural place.

Even the renowned Huangfu Jinhuan sat on the secondary seat, his usually dignified face wearing a flattering expression.

As for the other middle-aged man, he was Huangfu Deyun, the former clan leader of Ma Huangfu's Family.

This clan leader of a Grade Eight Prominent Family, was a significant figure throughout Changning Guard City. Yet, he found himself in the last seat here.

Having a seat at all was an achievement.

Didn't you see that those two Realm Cultivators standing behind the woman could only stand like old servants?

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Therefore, Huangfu Deyun didn't sit comfortably, but half-sat on the chair, his upper body leaning forward, appearing extremely respectful.

That's right, this femme fatale, whose demeanor is noble and extraordinary, is none other than Lady Ji!

Lady Ji's seductive face showed some displeasure: "Master Deyun, you previously promised to eliminate our competitors promptly and gain complete control over the raw silk and silk industry. And promised to expand the raw silk production base to all of Changning County and several

neighboring counties within the next twenty years, becoming one of the supply bases for my Ji Family."

"But now, you're struggling against a small Grade Eight Prominent Family, the Changning Xu Family. Do I deserve an explanation?"

Faced with such oppressive aura from Lady Ji, Huangfu Deyun showed a bit of fear, wiping the sweat from his forehead, he said, "Lady Ji, I have no idea what got into the Changning Xu Family. They are fighting over raw silk materials like madmen. But be assured, they will soon run out of stamina."

"Run out of stamina? Ha!" Lady Ji chuckled coldly, "I heard that the Ping'an Wang Family is supporting the Changning Xu Family."

"Although the Ping'an Wang Family is also a Grade Eight Prominent Family, I heard they run their territory very well and are financially strong."

Huangfu Deyun was speechless. He turned to Huangfu Jinhuan with a somewhat pleading look.

"Ahem!" Huangfu Jinhuan straightened his face, "Lady Ji, don't worry. The Ping'an Wang Family is only secretly supporting the Changning Xu Family because of marital ties. As long as we increase our determination to fight them, the Changning Xu Family will eventually break. We promise not to delay the interests of the Ji Family in Longzuo."

"Hmph! I hope so." Lady Ji's face eased slightly, "The two Master Huangfus, our Ji family chose to collaborate with you because we believe that you have absolute control in Changning County. If you really can't solve it, hehe, don't blame us for turning away."

With that said, Lady Ji stood up and left.

And the two old servants at the Spirit Platform Realm followed her footsteps without even raising their eyelids.

Huangfu Jinhuan and Huangfu Deyun rose to their feet to see her off: "Lady Ji, rest assured. We will solve this problem soon."

Lady Ji did not look back; she receded into the distance, out of their sight.

After she left.

Huangfu Deyun finally showed a touch of displeasure: "Uncle Jinhuan, what should we do if the Pingan Wang Family is determined to support the Changning Xu Family?"

"Hmph." Huangfu Jinhuan's gaze flickered, and he scoffed, "The opportunity to cooperate with the Ji Family and become one of their main suppliers of silk is a rare opportunity for our Huangfu Clan. Whoever stands in our way, I, Huangfu Jinhuan, will never let them go."

The Changning Huangfu Family is a family that can normally perform the cycle of celestial human transformation.

But undoubtedly.

To meet the needs of a celestial human transformation, most of the resources will be prioritized for the celestial-type seeds."

Although he, Huangfu Jinhuan, is the clan leader, he is not the next celestial seed. Only when there are more resources overflowing and the family strives for Rank Six after satisfying the celestial-human cycle, can he possibly get the resources to cultivate in the Heaven-human State.

the Longzuo Ji Family.

It is a well-known old-brand Six-Rank Prominent Family in the whole Longzuo County.

This family has unfathomable strength, with lots of Celestial beings, a huge number of people in the Spiritual Platform Realm, and they are just half a step away from the Fifth Grade Purple Abode.

This time they are cooperating externally, fighting for the silk industry, clearly preparing for the ascension to a Fifth Grade Family.

As long as they firmly hold onto the Ji Family's leg, they can transform Changning County and several surrounding counties into a base for the silk and silk industry.

The Huangfu Clan will then be qualified for the Sixth Grade, and he, Huangfu Jinhuan, will also have the capital to impact the realm of heaven and humankind.

Thinking of this, a fervent look loomed in Huangfu Jinhuan's eyes. As long as he had enough resources, he too could take a shot at the Heaven-human Realm. Even if there's only a 20-30% chance, it would be worth it.

"Uncle Jinghuan." Huangfu Deyun frowned, "After thinking about it, I feel there's something odd. We got Ji Family's advanced technology, so we dared to increase our purchase capital. Even now, despite having the Ji Family's advanced technology, we will face considerable losses with this round."

"So why are the Ping'an Wang Family and Changning Xu Family being so bold? We're facing major losses; they must be incurring huge losses."

"So why do they stubbornly compete with us for raw silk resources despite such losses?"

Huangfu Jinhuan said solemnly, "Indeed, there's something fishy about this. At first, I thought the Changning Xu family was just struggling for survival, but now the situation might not be that simple. Fortunately, I have already laid a trap, and it's about time to retrieve the net."

As they were talking.

Huangfu Jinhuan's personal guard came to report and whispered a few words into his ear.

Huangfu Jinhuan's face turned serious, and he commanded, "Bring in the person from Manager Huang quickly."

After a short while.

A young and capable man walked in and paid respects to Huangfu Jinhuan. He pulled out a thick confidential letter and handed it over. With utter respect, he said, "Our store manager said, he fulfilled the task successfully."

"Good, good, good." Huangfu Jinhuan stroked his beard and laughed, "I'd like to see exactly what tricks the Ping'an Wang Family and Changning Xu Family are playing."

He took the thick confidential letter, opened it, and the smile on his face gradually froze, gradually becoming even more somber!

"Bang!"

A good quality rosewood table shattered under his palm.

"Good, good, good!"

"Xu and Wang Family, you're just looking for death!"

Chapter 62: End up with an extra wife! It's tough being a Young Clan Leader_1

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"Uncle Jinhuan, what on earth has happened?" Huangfu Deyun was a bit alarmed, feeling that something was amiss.

The recent changes were truly too many and often took people by surprise.

"Hmph, see for yourself!"

Huangfu Jinhuan's face was unusually ugly as he handed the secret letter to Huangfu Deyun.

After carefully reading it, Huangfu Deyun's face instantly changed: "No wonder the Ping'an Wang Family dared to ally with the Xu Clan of Changning against us. It turns out that they've made a huge breakthrough in silk reeling and weaving technologies."

"Even though the price of raw silk, under their struggle, has risen to more than three times its original cost, they were still able to profit due to their technological breakthrough. No wonder, no wonder they still dare to compete with us! Damn~~~"

He was in a panic all of a sudden.

This gamble on the cooperation with the Ji Family, although masterminded by the Celestial Huangfu Family, was eagerly anticipated by his Ma Huangfu's Family, as they had invested almost all their wealth into it.

If it failed, the Ma Huangfu's Family would undoubtedly be critically wounded. The fortune accumulated over hundreds of years of hard work would be lost overnight.

And that wasn't even the worst part.

The worst was that the two families, who had allied against each other, had also roped in the Xu Clan of Jingsha.

There used to be a tributary in Jinsha Town, and the gold-laden sand in the rivers around there attracted many Prominent Families and Independent Cultivators to pan for gold in the town.

The place was extremely chaotic, with countless conflicts. But hundreds of years later, the golden sands of Jinsha Town were depleted. Coupled with infertile lands, most of which were unfit for cultivation, the place eventually became deserted.

Only the Xu Clan of Jingsha remained in that area, slowly managing their family. By now, they had steadily established a foothold by their own abilities.

"If what's written in the secret letter is true," said Huangfu Deyun, his face solemn and gloomy, "the Ping'an Wang Family's new technology can actually use water wheels as a power source for processing cocoons into raw silk.

Jinsha Town, a poor place with networked waterways due to the Jinsha River, experiencing turbulent flows, and containing a lot of wastelands, turns out to be the most suitable place for building silk reeling and weaving workshops."

Huangfu Jinhuan sneered continuously: "That Wang Shouzhe of the Ping'an Wang Family is indeed an extraordinary talent. I initially planned to arrange and deal with them slowly after those from the Purple Abode Academic Palace leave. But I didn't expect them to dare to take the initiative in opposing us. Since they've chosen this path, they can't blame us for being ruthless."

A glint of murderous intent flashed in Huangfu Jinhuan's eyes.

"Someone, invite 'Mr. Yin' here."

"Yes, Family Head." An attendant immediately obeyed the command.

"Mr. Yin?!" Huangfu Deyun was surprised. His gaze was somewhat worried, "Uncle Jinhuan, the direct disciple of Purple Abode Academic Palace is currently in Changning, presiding over disaster relief. If you ask Mr. Yin to act now, will he..."

"The more it is at this time, the less likely we are to be suspected. Besides, given the current situation, do we still have a choice?" Huangfu Jinhuan's gaze was grim, "If this matter can't be settled, Lady Ji is not someone who is easy to deal with. She has little patience, and we can't withstand the wrath of the Ji Family in Longzuo."

Huangfu Deyun's gaze shifted, seemingly wanting to say something but hesitating.

"Deyun, rest assured," Huangfu Jinhuan began to reassure him, "Although the matter of the Xu and Wang Families has disgusted us, if you think from another perspective, as long as it is handled properly, the two families have actually paved the way for us."

"Think about it, if we could gain more advanced silk reeling and weaving technologies, as well as the batch of raw silk materials they've stockpiled at a huge cost, we could take advantage of the cooperation with the Ji Family to grow and strengthen ourselves."

In the future, not to mention being a Grade Six Prominent Family, even a Fifth Grade Purple Abode Prominent Family could aim for a higher rank."

With this, a fanatical look filled Huangfu Jinhuan's eyes.

He was not content to be a Spirit Platform Realm Cultivator for his whole life. He also wanted to reach the Heavenly Human Realm, to see the unique view there.

If he had another opportunity to glimpse the Purple Abode, then he would be content with his life.

Similarly, these words stirred up not a little shock in Huangfu Deyun.

Which family didn't want to climb to a higher position, seeking greater status, power, and influence!

If the Huangfu Family of Changning had the chance to become a Rank Six Prominent Family, then the Ma Huangfu's Family would be eligible to be a 7th-rank Aristocratic Family and all family members would ride along the coattails of the family's rise to prosperity.

In a short while-

An attendant led a man in a black robe into the room.

The man in the black robe looked ordinary, with his face, concealed by a hood, slightly pale, as if it hadn't seen sunlight in a long while.

However, if one looked closely, they would find that his eyes were almost devoid of fluctuations, like the calm water in a deep pit that had stood for thousands of years – eerily silent.

As soon as this man came in, both Huangfu Jinhuan and Huangfu Deyun immediately stood up and bowed to him, "Mr. Yin, we meet again."

Mr. Yin glanced at them dismissively. His voice was calm and ice-cold, "Huangfu Jinhuan, how did the investigation into the matter I entrusted to you some days ago go?"

Huangfu Jinhuan hastily replied, "Mr. Yin, as you know, Fang Youan, the Direct Disciple of the Purple Abode Academic Palace, is currently presiding over relief efforts in our territory of Changning. I didn't dare to investigate some matters openly. But, there have been some leads in the case. If you just give me more time, I will definitely find out who stole your son's treasure."

Chapter 62: End up with an extra wife! It's tough being a Young Clan Leader_2

"Hmph~"

Mr. Yin sneered coldly, his smile not reaching his eyes: "Huangfu Jinhuan, it's been almost three months, yet you have found nothing. If our young master has to personally come to Changning when you haven't found anything, neither of us will benefit!"

"Mr. Yin, rest assured." Huangfu Jinhuan said seriously, "I will prioritize the matter of the young master. However, there is a matter that I hope you could help with."

As he spoke, Huangfu Jinhuan explained the tasks he needed Mr. Yin to perform.

Mr. Yin coldly retorted: "Huangfu Jinhuan, you just said that there's a direct disciple from the Purple Abode's Academic Palace in charge of disaster relief in Changning. You want us to do your dirty work and commit such a serious crime. Are you overestimating me, or underestimating the direct disciple from the Purple Abode's Academic Palace?!"

"Mr. Yin, do not worry." Huangfu Jinhuan confidently said, "Since I have decided to ask you to take action, I will naturally prepare everything. Our old ancestor has made some progress in cultivating the 'Red Dragon True Verses' lately and has just come out of his retreat. Now is a good opportunity to play the good host and give a little gratitude to the people of the Purple Abode's Academic Palace."

"This time, we will not only invite people from the Purple Abode's Academic Palace but also host all the family heads of the eighth-grade prominent families, including the Xu family of Changning, the Ping'an Wang family, and the former Ma Huangfu's family. This way, you can take action."

"In short, we strike unexpectedly, attack when they are unprepared. With Mr. Yin and your subordinates' abilities, plus the assistance of the two Spirit Platform Realm old ancestors from the former Ma Huangfu family, how could we fail?"

Based on his speculation, in the workshop of the Jinsha Xu family, at most, there would be two or three Spirit Platform Realm cultivators. Even considering the worst case scenario, they could ensure they won't fail with the combine forces of so many Spirit Platform Realm cultivators.

Fearing that Mr. Yin would not be convinced, Huangfu Jinhuan added: "I will arrange an escape route for you and your comrades, ensuring that Fang Youan won't trace anything back to you."

Mr. Yin's eyes narrowed, not readily agreeing, but instead he asked, "This job sounds easy. But why should we commit murder for you, and take the blame afterward?"

Huangfu Jinhuan laughed: "Mr. Yin, you're mistaken. We're partners and should watch out for each other. As long as Mr. Yin completes the task, we, the Huangfu family, will spare no effort to help with the master's affairs."

Upon hearing this, a glint of sharpness passed through Mr. Yin's otherwise calm eyes.

After a lengthy pause, he reluctantly agreed, "Huangfu Jinhuan, don't forget what you promised today. I'm sure you're aware of our young master's temperament."

Having said that, Mr. Yin slightly cupped his hands towards Huangfu Jinhuan as a sign of respect before turning around to leave, leaving behind a single statement.

"Inform me when you're ready."

After he left,

Huangfu Deyun looked worried, "Uncle Jinhuan, we have always been entangled with them, which is quite risky. If our plan is exposed, I'm afraid we won't have a place in all of Da Qian."

"Deyun, don't worry." Huangfu Jinhuan coldly responded, "I have already considered this matter. At the end of the day, we are too weak. If we can reach the fifth rank, no, the sixth, it would be easier to sever our ties with them. Right now, we still need their strength to get things done."

Pausing for a moment, Huangfu Jinhuan instructed, "Deyun, this matter is of grave importance, and must be led by our two elders of the former Ma Huangfu family. We need everyone to know that the serious crime was committed by the passing disciples of the Yinsha Sect and it has nothing to do with us."

"Once we succeed, it will be the day of our families' mutual rise."

Huangfu Deyun solemnly agreed, "Yes, uncle Jinhuan."

...

A few days later, a significant event occurred in Changning.

One of the seventh-rank aristocratic families in Changning, the old ancestor of Changning's Huangfu family, Old Ancestor Hua Ye, had come out of his retreat.

He, who had always been low-key, announced that his cultivation of the 'Red Dragon True Verses' had reached a minor accomplishment.

To celebrate this, Old Ancestor Hua Ye decided to host a banquet in the main residence of Changning's Huangfu family for all the eight-grade prominent families in Changning, as well as those from the Purple Abode's Academic Palace who were currently overseeing disaster relief.

The 'Red Dragon True Verses' are the Huangfu family's ancient and divine cultivation technique. It is said to lead directly to the Purple Abode Realm. Now that he has made some advancements, it seems he has overcome the early stages of the Heavenly Human Realm and could soon be a mid-stage Heavenly Human.

Considering that Old Ancestor Hua Ye is only in his late two hundreds, if he can smoothly enter the mid-stages of the Heavenly Human Realm, he may have a chance of glimpsing the Purple Abode in this lifetime.

Undoubtedly, he is now at the forefront of the top martial arts masters in Changning.

This is undoubtedly great news for the Huangfu family and the former Ma Huangfu's faction. However, for the families who are opposed to them, it's an additional burden, increasing their pressure.

Faced with such a distinguished invitation, even with Fang Youan's pride, he wouldn't lightly offend people's good intentions.

He promptly replied, saying that he and his fellow disciples would accept the invitation.

The Changning Xu family and the Ping'an Wang family also received invitations.

On this day,

The southern region of Changning was extremely bustling, and even some independent cultivators rushed to join the excitement. Because, just pronouncing a few words of congratulations at the door of the Huangfu family, they could receive a reward of two or three Qian gold.

The poverty-stricken independent cultivators wouldn't miss such good fortune. Naturally, they praised old ancestor Hua Ye's generosity.

Chapter 62: End up with an extra wife! It's tough being a Young Clan Leader_3

In Wang Shouzhe's words, this scene could be described as: the Old Ancestor Hua Ye was adept at grabbing the spotlight.

Now, with an invitation from the Old Ancestor Hua Ye, who had recently risen to become the top master of Changning Weicheng, Wang Shouzhe naturally wouldn't decline publicly and offend him.

According to tradition, he had prepared ample gifts and leisurely travelled in his carriage to the south of Changning Guard City.

The main residence of the Huangfu Clan was located in the south of Changning Guard City. There were numerous businesses and branches of their connections around, all of which belonged to the Huangfu Clan.

A family with a history of five hundred years had developed a truly frightening number of direct lines and branch cousins. Some of the outstanding members among them have now become the mainstay of various industries in the Huangfu family, providing a steady stream of financial and manpower support for the Huangfu Clan's development.

But enough of that for now.

Wang Shouzhe's carriage, under the protection of his household guards, had just arrived to the south of the city when it was halted.

The one who had halted the carriage was not a stranger, but the head of the household of the Changning Xu family.

The head of household had an impressive aura and strength, reflecting the power and foundation of an old Grade Eight Prominent Family.

He politely clasped his hands in salute, saying, "Family Head Wang, our Family Head Xu has invited you to join him in a carriage."

"Since Uncle Wu invites me, I won't refuse," responded Wang Shouzhe.

Wang Shouzhe was not surprised, and he smiled, issuing some instructions to his guards before openly climbing into the carriage of the Xu family's head, Xu Anbang, with no intention of concealing his actions.

Such a scene would naturally be noticed by significantly interested parties.

However, as of now, Changning Xu family and Ping'an Wang family had been getting closer and cooperating with each other is no longer a secret, so it's not surprising to many people.

However, Wang Shouzhe had just settled into Xu Anbang's carriage and before he even had time to exchange pleasantries with the other party, the carriage was stopped again.

He lifted the curtain to see that the one who had stopped the carriage was an old man who looked like a plain and unimpressive servant. However, the aura and power that was leaking from the old man could not be hidden from the eyes of a Profound Martial cultivator who was in the Spirit Platform Realm.

Without a doubt, this was a strong individual in the Spiritual Platform Realm.

The old man saluted Wang Shouzhe, "Master Shouzhe, my mistress wishes to meet with you."

Wang Shouzhe's mouth twitched.

Even with the makeup and disguise, could he not recognize his own Grand Elder Xiaohan?

Needless to say, the so-called "Mistress" in the carriage behind him was none other than Wang Mei, who was disguised as "Lady Ji".

This was not part of his plan, and he didn't know what she was up to.

As he was considering how to decline, he saw the curtain on the opposite side being lifted, and a graceful and charming woman stepped out of the carriage and elegantly walked up to him and Xu Anbang, looking at them with a smile.

"Master Shouzhe, Master Xu, could you do me this favor?"

Regardless of whether it was out of courtesy or other reasons, neither Wang Shouzhe nor Xu Anbang could refuse. They politely invited her onto the carriage.

The three of them together in one carriage, heading towards the main residence of the Huangfu clan.

Such a scene quickly reached the ears of Huangfu Jinhuan, who was preparing a banquet.

Upon hearing the news, he couldn't help but chuckle, "That woman surnamed Ji really has no patience and couldn't wait to act. With this move, she not only puts pressure on us but also smartly hedges her bets on both sides. A commendable calculation."

Huangfu Deyun was somewhat worried, "Uncle Jinhuan, could she really be cooperating with the Changning Xu family and the Ping'an Wang family?"

"Hmph, it doesn't matter." Huangfu Jinhuan sneered coldly. "After tonight, she'll know who the real master of Changning Weicheng is!"

...

At this moment, in Xu Anbang's carriage, the air was filled with the scent of tea, but the atmosphere was somewhat awkward.

Even though the space within the carriage was already quite spacious, because of Lady Ji's presence, Wang Shouzhe and Xu Anbang had to squeeze on one side, facing her.

Lady Ji watched Wang Shouzhe with deep, melancholic eyes, as if she was holding back unspeakable grievances.

However, Wang Shouzhe was not making eye contact and completely ignored her grievances.

What a joke! Even if she had grievances, he couldn't afford to sit next to her. Otherwise, this day next year would probably be the anniversary of his death.

"Shouzhe, what is this..."

Xu Anbang glanced at the enchanting Lady Ji, then back at Wang Shouzhe. With flickering eyes and an unsettled heart, he asked.

Did he know about something huge?

"Ahem..."

Wang Shouzhe immediately coughed twice, explaining to Xu Anbang, "Uncle Wu, Lady Ji here is my business partner. You mustn't misunderstand."

"No, I've not misunderstood," said Xu Anbang, appearing completely enlightened, and nodded repeatedly. "I know, she's your business partner, and definitely not anyone else."

After a pause, Xu Anbang, looking very supportive, said, "Don't worry, Shouzhe, I will keep this to myself."

"Alright." Seeing him believe so, Wang Shouzhe knew he wouldn't be able to clear up this misunderstanding. No longer bothering to explain, he glanced at Lady Ji and said, "Lady Ji, aren't you afraid that Huangfu Jinhuan would be suspicious for you ditching his carriage to join ours?"

"Master Shouzhe, you joke," Lady Ji covered her mouth laughingly, her eyes twinkling and full of charm. "The Huangfu Clan of Changning are but my business partners. I am not their subordinate, so who needs their permission to ride another's carriage?"

"Moreover, it's exactly the suspicion that I want to create. The more suspicious he is, the more chaotic his mind will be. And chaos often leads to mistakes."

Chapter 62: End up with an extra wife! It's tough being a Young Clan Leader_4

She really was a seductress, with just a casual smile revealing her devilishly charming character. Evidently, she had spent much time studying in this area. According to Wang Shouzhe's knowledge, she had collected quite a number of charm techniques!

"You make a good point."

Wang Shouzhe nodded, too lazy to argue anymore.

She was clearly doing this out of selfish interests, but without leaving any flaws. Arguing any further would be pointless.

He pivoted the conversation: "Uncle Wu, is there a reason you invited me onto this carriage?"

"Well, there isn't really anything urgent." Xu Anbang stroked his beard, "Just that as things come to a head, I can't help but feel a bit unsettled. Moreover, I never expected this storm would be caused by you."

"On this matter, I once again apologize earnestly to Uncle Wu." Wang Shouzhe's expression became solemn and he bowed, "The current situation does have my contributions. But Uncle Wu, you should know, with the Huangfu Clan's arrogance, 'one mountain does not house two tigers' was inevitable."

"If the Changning Xu Family wants to challenge the 7th-rank Aristocratic Family, they would inevitably face retaliation. Unless Uncle Wu wishes for the Changning Xu Family to stay permanently in the Eighth Grade Prominent Family rank, a head-on confrontation with the Changning Huangfu Clan is inevitable."

"Shouzhe, I admit, you make a good point." Xu Anbang slightly nodded in agreement. Then, his tone changed, "But, you pulling our Xu family into this, to be the vanguard, is something I cannot accept. Today, you can calculate against us, how can I trust you won't do the same in the future? If this mistrust persists, our two families will only grow further apart."

Wang Shouzhe, hearing the hidden meanings in his words, asked with a smile, "So, what is Uncle Wu suggesting?"

Xu Anbang feigned contemplation before answering, "To regain trust is actually very simple. Just follow the traditional ways of conducting affairs among Prominent Families. After all, it's been a long time since there has been a marriage between the direct lines of our two families, hasn't it?"

"Marriage between the direct lines?"

Wang Shouzhe's brows furrowed slightly.

Speaking of this, the Ping'an Wang family still held some grudges, especially the elders of the generation with the courtesy name 'Xiao'. They still felt resentment when that incident from the past was mentioned.

Seeing Wang Shouzhe's furrowed brows, Xu Anbang immediately understood what he was worried about.

"Shouzhe, I've heard about the matter regarding Aunt Zhenmei." His face hardened, "Because of that incident, my father felt regret his entire life. He always said he hadn't taken proper care of Aunt Zhenmei. He passed away over a decade ago, living his whole life in melancholy without reaching the Spirit Platform Realm due to this incident."

Upon saying this, he could not help but sigh.

Yes, this was the incident causing the grievances between the Ping'an Wang Family and the Changning Xu Family that has lasted for several decades.

The center of this incident was indeed a great aunt named "Wang Zhenmei".

She was the fifth-generation legitimate daughter of the Ping'an Wang Family. At the time, the Ping'an Wang family was facing a disaster. Therefore, Old Ancestor Longyan made the decision to marry Great Aunt Wang Zhenmei to Changning Xu's first son of the legitimate line, Xu Guorui.

This was done to consolidate the bloodline relationship between the Ping'an Wang Family and the Changning Xu Family, and to hope that, during the most difficult time for the Wang family, the Changning Xu family would stand as the Wang family's strong backup.

However, things did not go as planned.

Not long after the Great Aunt Wang Zhenmei was married, she became pregnant with the legitimate heir but died during childbirth.

At that time, the elders of the Xiao generation even rushed to the Changning Xu family and caused a big commotion.

Old Ancestor Longyan, filled with grief, dragged his sick body to personally investigate the matter. After finding out that Wang Zhenmei had indeed died from an accident, then dropped the matter.

Even so, the ill feelings between the two sides became difficult to eliminate.

Especially the Ping'an Wang family, they remained aggrieved by this matter. Henceforth, the two families only intermarried through the direct vessels, without involving the legitimate lines.

And now the current Changning Xu family head, Xu Anbang, is indeed the legitimate eldest son of Xu Guorui, who remarried after the incident.

If it weren't like this, the direct lineage of the Changning Xu Family should have a strong Wang family bloodline by now.

Wang Shouzhe hesitated slightly, saying, "Uncle Five, I can decide on other matters. However, I'm afraid we need the word of Old Ancestor Longyan on this issue. Besides, it seems your family does not have a direct lineage suitable for my Miaomiao, right?"

"Don't misunderstand, Shouzhe." Xu Anbang shook his head, "I am not interested in Miaomiao."

Upon hearing this, Wang Shouzhe's face instantly turned cold: "Uncle Five, don't tell me you're interested in my Liyao?"

Wang Liyao was the apple of his eye. Who dared to covet her?

If Xu Anbang dared to nod, let alone that Uncle Five was only in name, even if he was his biological uncle, he would still beat him up!

Confronting his gaze, Xu Anbang uncontrollably shivered.

Although he was a Spirit Platform Realm cultivator, he still felt a chill creeping up his spine at this moment. He quickly clarified: "Don't misunderstand, Shouzhe. Before his death, my father once held my hand and said that we owe the Ping'an Wang Family a direct-line daughter."

Upon hearing this, Wang Shouzhe was stunned, and his face slightly softened. But then he seemed confused again: "Uncle Five, I'm already married."

Xu Anbang covertly heaved a sigh of relief, then seriously explained: "You probably don't know yet, that naughty son of mine just had a daughter, who is only two years old now. Although she is not the eldest direct-line daughter, she is our family's direct-line granddaughter and everyone's darling. If you, Shouzhe, do not mind, I want to betroth her to your son, An'an."

"Marry An'an?"

Wang Shouzhe's eyebrows relaxed instantly, and he fell into deep thought.

Now, the Changning Xu Family and the Ping'an Wang Family are like grasshoppers on the same string, no, comrades! Frankly speaking, without a direct-line marriage alliance, the connection between the two families is indeed too fragile.

Mutual suspicion and the reluctant cooperation under it are not good for both families in the long run.

A direct-line marriage alliance seems truly inevitable.

"Alright, I agree to this proposal." Wang Shouzhe was also straightforward and made his decision promptly. "Once we get through this situation, I will propose formally to the Xu family."

The Changning Xu Family is an old 8th-rank Aristocratic Family with a very profound foundation. If all goes according to plan, the likelihood of it becoming a 7th-rank Aristocratic Family is extremely high in the future.

The direct-line granddaughter from a Celestial Family wouldn't be a bad match for Wang Zong'an either.

"That's great, very good." Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe's acceptance, Xu Anbang was evidently very relieved. "Since this is the case, I will forget about you drawing my Xu Family into the water this time, and I won't bring it up again in the future."

To be honest, he was also quite uneasy deep down.

Wang Shouzhe was indeed too mysterious and formidable. Without the direct-line marriage tie, he was indeed afraid that one day he would be sold off by him without even realizing it.

"Hehehe~" Standing aside, Lady Ji also covered her mouth and laughed, "Congratulations Master Shouzhe, you've got an additional daughter-in-law."

Having gained a daughter-in-law out of the blue, Wang Shouzhe's mood also brightened considerably.

Meanwhile, poor Wang Zong'an was still at the Wang family ancestral home, engrossed in his homework, completely unaware that his father had already arranged a wife for him on his trip out.

Poor Wang Zong'an, he was only five years old and didn't understand anything yet~

Guess he would be totally dumbfounded when he finds out about this.

Ah~ Being the Young Clan Leader is not easy~

Chapter 63: The Xu Clan of Jingsha! I also want to rise_1

...

The Changning Huangfu Family, a lineage that has lasted for five hundred years.

From the very beginning of Changning's establishment, the Changning Huangfu Family migrated from the Southern Desert County. During the early development period, they achieved considerable merits and made many contributions.

Of course, it was a branch of the renowned Southern Desert Huangfu Family that migrated here, not the original clan.

The Southern Desert County Huangfu Family, took animal herding in the great grasslands as their main industry.

As such..

This branch of the Changning Huangfu Family also possesses impressive livestock-rearing technology.

Which is, in fact, quite normal.

The relationships among many families in this world are complicated and intertwined.

Very few families that started from scratch as independent cultivators not only have a small population but also usually have a low rank.

Sometimes, even minor families that seem insignificant may have roots traced back to a Prominent Purple Abode Family when one starts to investigate.

The Great Qian Land has existed for so long that it has already surpassed seven thousand years of history.

The migration of family branches tells an extremely complex and epic story.

Today.

The Changning Huangfu Family has arranged a night banquet. It is now near dusk, and the sky is getting dark. However, the lights on either side of the street are already lit, brightening the surroundings like daylight.

This is a way for the Huangfu Family to display their wealth, as even the burning of these lights consumes a substantial amount of financial resources.

The main residence of the Huangfu Family is an imposing structure, unapproachable by ordinary people without permission.

The residential compound's wall rivals city walls, like a city within a city.

Tall courtyard walls made of bluestone, five hundred years of changes and weathering have left mottled traces on the bricks. Through each piece of brick, it seems that one can vaguely glimpse the trials and tribulations of the Changning Huangfu Family over the past five hundred years.

High watchtowers stand at the four corners of the courtyard wall, from where hang exquisitely made bronze bells.

These bronze bells have eight corners, don't ring when the wind blows, and they also have exquisite patterns carved onto their surfaces, which makes them look very special.

The Southern Desert Huangfu Family initially established themselves on the great grassland with their excellent beast taming skills. Their clan treasure, the Octagonal Dragon Soul Bell, is famous throughout Da Qian.

These bronze bells are replicas of the Octagonal Dragon Soul Bell, symbolizing the Changning Huangfu's continual remembering of their ancestor's blessings.

Inside the main house, the lighting is crystal clear. Countless servants and managers are busy making the final preparations, checking and confirming all the details repeatedly.

Under their bustling movements, even the historical buildings seem brimming with life and vitality.

Contrary to what you might expect, there's no constant stream of carriages at the entrance of the main residence, instead, it's pretty serene.

After all, this time the Huangfu family has only invited Grade Eight Prominent Families along with some influential figures from Changning.

Such as the Lord of the First Capital City. Shopkeeper Qian from the Qian Family's business, or leaders of some large business organizations, and so forth.

Only a handful of people, maybe about ten or so, were seen worthy of an invitation.

"Lady Ji, Brother Anbang, Brother Shouzhe," Huangfu Jinghuan, in formal attire, personally greets each guest. Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe, Xu Anbang, and Lady Ji coming down from the carriage, not a hint of displeasure can be seen on his face.

He greets them with a smile, showing utmost courtesy.

Wang Shouzhe and Xu Anbang, of course, politely exchanged pleasantries with Huangfu Jinghuan as well, acting as though they were old friends engaging warmly with one another.

As invited guests, they also present their respective families' gifts according to their status and rank.

As if no grudges existed between them prior to this and that there was no record of each other in a life and death struggle in the market.

This is just the superficial harmony maintained among the prominent families in the Great Qian Land.

Regardless of private disputes over certain issues, in which both sides compete and fight relentlessly.

As long as their conflict doesn't surface, there is a certain level of decorum to be maintained in public.

This is different from the situation between the Wang family and Liu or Zhao Clans in the past. Back then, their conflict was all out in the open with no room left for manoeuvre.

The location of the night banquet organised by the Huangfu family is in the main hall of the front courtyard.

With warm greetings and subtle inquiries taking place all around.

The guests have started to arrive, one after the other.

Among them, the city master Xiahou Hongde and the direct Purple Abode disciple, Fang Youan. They are personally greeted and served by the elder patriarch of the Huangfu Clan — Old Ancestor Hua Ye.

This is a rule that applies everywhere. Different cultivation bases and ranks lead to different statuses. It's therefore part of the courtesy and etiquette due to them that Old Ancestor Hua Ye personally greets and receives them.

As for the core disciples of the Purple Abode Academy, they also sit at the VIP seat, along with Fang Youan.

After all, they are all core disciples, and there's an incredibly high chance they may become a Tianren Realm Cultivator and represent the Purple Abode Academy in the future.

The representatives of families with the Eighth Grade status, including Wang Shouzhe were seated in the second most prominent position, with Huangfu Jinghuan personally accompanying them.

This is Wang Shouzhe's first time meeting Old Ancestor Hua Ye.

Old Ancestor Hua Ye's hair appears a fiery red because of his high-grade cultivation of the "Red Dragon True Verses". He seems to be in excellent spirits, naturally exuding a domineering aura.

No wonder.

Old Ancestor Hua Ye is the third generation Tianren old ancestor of the Celestial Huangfu Family and his qualifications were once at the Middle Sub-Grade level. He is said to have attained the Tianren realm when he was around a hundred and forty years old.

He may not be as superior as the direct Tianren prodigies in the Academy like Fang You An but when compared to the core disciples, he's one of the top-tier ones.

It was because of his rapid ascension back then that the Celestial Huangfu family had a near sixty-year peak period where they had two members in the Tianren realm.

Chapter 63: The Xu Clan of Jingsha! I also want to rise_2

During that period, the Huangfu Clan pressured the Celestial Lei Family to the point where they struggled to keep their heads up.

Unfortunately, good times don't last.

Seventy years ago, when the Old Ancestor, a celestial being of the Huangfu Clan, passed away peacefully in his sleep at the age of over 370, the momentum of the Huangfu Clan slowed down.

Various reasons shaped the character and demeanour of Old Ancestor Hua Ye.

After a lifetime of rarely suffering losses, Hua Ye exuded a deep sense of confidence in his speech and behavior. Even when faced with Sky Pride Yu An, he was always calm and composed.

"Brother Yu An," Old Ancestor Hua Ye lamented, "I have the utmost admiration for your master, Master Binglan. Not only does she possess extraordinary abilities, she is also one of the pillars supporting Longzuo County and even the entire Great Qian Land, exhibiting impeccable virtue. I have heard she even has the potential to make further progress."

Yu An responded gracefully, "Huangfu Elder overpraises her. Master often says, 'there is a long way to go' and 'compared to the vast Heavenly Dao, she is but an infant still learning to walk' and such."

The City Lord Xiahou Hongde laughed heartily, "Brother Yu An, you're being too modest. If the famed Master Binglan is only considered a toddler learning to walk, then the rest of us cannot even babble yet."

Yu An smiled politely but did not retort.

While those words reflected the modesty of Master Binglan, he was aware that as a chosen disciple of the Academic Palace, his aspirations for the future and the responsibilities he bore were different from these local powerhouses.

Nevertheless, he would not underestimate any of the local elites.

Having originated from a prominent family himself, he understood that Great Qian Land was constituted by a plethora of such families.

Every prominent family served as a foundation of Great Qian Land and a cradle of outstanding talents.

Moreover, both Old Ancestor Hua Ye and City Lord Xiahou Hongde had come a long way to achieve their current status, and their accomplishments were anything but simple.

Subsequently, the night banquet began.

The Huangfu family, with over a hundred household heads and over a thousand servants, meticulously screened numerous maids.

They served one after another high-end Spirit Food and various precious Spiritual Wines, which livened up the atmosphere immediately.

...

Meanwhile, a remote town in Changning called Jinsha Town existed.

It is a barren land where the total population has never exceeded ten thousand in the past decades.

A small, Rank 9 Prominent Family, the Xu Clan of Jingsha, regarded this town as their stronghold.

Besides the difficult tillage and sericulture for the Changning Xu Clan, the main industry was gold panning, yielding a small amount of gold year after year.

Compared to its heyday, the current gold yield of Jinsha Town was very low, only sufficient to support the local civilians' and the Jinsha Xu Family's livelihood, hence development was extremely difficult.

This implies that the Jinsha Xu Family was not a powerful clan.

However, they have an extremely close relationship with the Ping'an Wang Family.

In recent years, their lineal marriages have been quite frequent. For example, the mother of Wang Luo Jing and Wang Shounuo, Xu Zhirou, a gentle and intelligent woman, comes from the Jinsha Xu Family. When Wang Shouzhe and Wang Luoyi were young, she took care of them for a long time.

The wife of Wang ShouYi, Wang's second brother, is a lineal woman from the Jinsha Xu Family. She gave birth to the Little Sky Pride Wang Zongsheng, who is currently studying at the Purple Abode, and the younger Wang Zongyao and Wang Lillian.

And Wang Shouzhe's elder sisters, Wang Luomei and Wang Luohu, have both married into the Jinsha Xu Clan. They each have given birth to numerous nephews and nieces for Wang Shouzhe in the Jinsha Xu Clan.

Such a situation is like two impoverished, insignificant families huddling together for warmth, yet they have a close relationship and frequent interactions.

Fortunately, the Jinsha Xu Family's living conditions have significantly improved in recent years.

The sands, once useless due to their extremely low gold content and littered along the riverbanks and in the riverbed, have suddenly become useful.

With the mass use of Changning's cement, the price of river sand is soaring. In particular, the Ping'an Wang family needed a great amount of river sand whether for constructing cement roads, building cemented river embankments or other infrastructure projects.

The provision of river sand to the Ping'an Wang family alone brought considerably more comfort to the life of the Xu family of Jinsha. On top of that, they also supplied high-quality river sand to areas such as Donghaei.

Jinsha Town seemed to have truly become a 'Gold Sand' Town overnight.

As the economy gradually improved and an influx of hired workers came in, the total population of Jinsha Town had reached thirteen thousand. It was rumored that they were even accepting refugees recently.

At present,

The Xu family of Jinsha had another golden opportunity for development.

As numerous waterways traverse through Jinsha Town, with its beaches being wide and full of pebbles, convenient locations suitable for the construction of hydraulic workshops could be seen everywhere.

The silk technology in Longzuo County, from sericulture, silking, to eventually weaving plain silk, had already developed into a complete set of proficient procedures.

However, these processes which involve both silking and weaving require a lot of manpower and time.

Over the years, Wang Shouzhe and his elder brother Wang Shouxin had been relentlessly researching and improving silking and weaving technologies.

If you were to ask Wang Shouzhe to produce a complete blueprint, he wouldn't be able to do so even if his life depended on it. He barely understood some of the principles.

However, a great number of scattered knowledge from his previous life and a very clear direction combined with the wisdom of many people, they were finally able to assemble a rudimentary water-powered silk reeling machine and a water-powered loom.

It's not challenging to invent or create something basic; the difficult part is the direction and ideas. As long as you explore and keep improving along the way, you're ultimately able to form something.

(When it comes to invention, Le Ao has more to say than other authors. After all, Le Ao himself has his own patents that are profitable...)

The structure of the so-called water-powered devices appears very simple; it's just a mini-version of the Water Dragon Array.

Before this, reeling silk was done using foot-pedalled machines. One person per machine could reel three hammers of raw silk at the same time.

However, the water-powered silk reeling machine, can simultaneously drive hundreds of spindles, achieving the separation of people and the hammer. Only about ten silk reelers are needed to operate one water-powered silk reeling machine.

Compared to foot-operated silk reeling machines, not only was their per capita production increased tenfold, but the raw silk produced was also smoother and finer.

At the same time, the operating principle of the water-powered loom is similar. But they made further improvements on the structure of weaving, Wang Shouzhe didn't know how different this machine was from the vague Jenny loom in his memory?

Undoubtedly, its production efficiency was far greater than the existing foot-operated looms.

As long as there is sufficient water resource, it could be in operation day and night with minimal manual assistance.

Disregarding the construction and manufacturing costs,

once put into operation, the manufacturing efficiency of water-powered looms will be terrifying.

The per capita benefit is roughly forty times that of foot pedal looms.

Moreover, both the silk reeling and weaving machines were not entirely made of wood. Wang Shouxin ordered the blacksmiths to create numerous machine structures.

Especially for some critical core parts, they even used Artifact Refiners!!

This ensured the stability of these two types of machines, as long as they were maintained properly, they could be used for a long time.

Bearing numerous advantages in mind,

the clan leader of the Xu family of Jinsha, Xu Anze, was so excited that he couldn't sleep lately.

He spent day and night at the construction site, knowing that as soon as they start operation, it would mark the rise of Xu's family of Jinsha. Given twenty to thirty years, they might even have the potential to rise to the Grade Eight Prominent Family.

Even though they were only the base unit for primary processing among the tripartite cooperation, he believed that the Xu Family of Changning and the Wang Family of Ping'an, wouldn't treat them unfairly.

After all, one was a direct line, and the other was a closely related in-law family.

Moreover, Wang Shouzhe, the family head of the Wang's, was very generous to his allies.

However, Xu Anze knew better, that to rise up, they still had one major barrier to overcome.

Night fell!

A few grey shadows appeared on the land belonging to the Xu Family of Jinsha. They stood on an elevated position, looking far away at the cement workshops under construction, with a trace of coldness and murderous intent gleaming in their eyes.

Chapter 64: Town Dragon Monument! Dragon and Tiger Demon Subducing Ruler_1

...

Golden Sand Beach was originally a famous gold panning site in the vicinity. With the decline of the gold panning industry, the Chaotic Stone Beach here had been abandoned for quite some time.

It was surrounded by water on three sides and backed by mountains on one, making it a perfect location for a workshop once the terrain was leveled.

In the dim night, a cement workshop, half-built, laid flat on Chaotic Stone Beach, appearing like a monstrous beast.

On the high ground.

There were few outsiders, just five.

Two were dressed in black night-walking outfits with their faces covered, obviously not the kind to casually reveal their identities.

The other three were emitting a creepy and strange aura without restraint, having discarded their concealment.

Each of them seemed to be from the unorthodox path, making people involuntarily shiver with cold.

The leading old man was full of Yinsha energy, dense as a substance, resembling a monstrous demon eager to select people to devour.

This man cast a cold glance at the masked individuals and said indifferently, "Old man Huangfu, it's merely the destruction of a small workshop. We have five Spiritual Platform Realm cultivators gathered here, and both you and I are in the advanced stages of Spiritual Platform Realm. Even if we encounter a normal Heavenly Human Realm, we can handle it. Why then are you hiding in such a manner?"

"Mr. Yin." The masked old man surnamed Huangfu spoke calmly, "Both of us have families and businesses, have children and grandchildren, we naturally should be careful. If our actions today were exposed, our entire clan would be implicated."

"Hmph~"

Mr. Yin let out a cold snort, seemingly somewhat disdainful.

"Speaking of, we have been undercover for quite some time." A ghastly smile appeared on his face as cold as a zombie's, "After being stifled for too long, it's time to see blood."

Having said this, he vaulted up, instantly soaring down from the high ground like a bird, gliding with the wind.

In just over ten breaths, he took advantage of the high-altitude advantage to glide diagonally downwards more than a hundred feet, landing in front of the workshop.

His two subordinates, as well as the two masked individuals, immediately followed him up.

Spiritual Platform Realm cultivators could achieve brief aerial flights; gliding from high ground downwards was naturally effortless.

All of them, five Spiritual Platform Realm cultivators, when they stood in front of the workshop, held a powerful aura, and were filled with confidence.

"Everyone, our intelligence has determined that all the raw silk cocoons are within the workshop." Old man Huangfu said, "Our goal is to kill everyone here. The ships and people who receive us will transport all the raw silk cocoon materials, as well as the new type of reeling equipment and weaving tools."

They were confident.

As long as they could get their hands on these new tools, they could easily reproduce them within two years.

At this comment.

The eyes of the two masked men flashed with excitement.

This would be a turning point in their destiny!

However, suddenly.

Before they even had a chance to break in, a young man's voice came from inside, "Commander, my intelligence is not wrong, right? Indeed, there are people from Yinsha Sect active in our Changning Guard."

As he spoke, a group of people was coming out of the cement workshop.

The man at the forefront was dressed as a military officer. He was tall and majestic, wearing a black suit of armor, and his military temperament was unquestionable.

Behind him were a young man and a woman. The young man looked heroic while the woman was tough and unyielding.

This young couple was none other than Wang Shoulian and his fiancée Zhou Qingning.

A while back, with the consent of Wang Shouzhe and the mediation of Liu Ruolan, they had successfully arranged this marriage.

However, Zhou Zhenwu, being the commander of the Changning Guard's Third Patrol Battalion, was a bit concerned. He felt that the current city lord, Xiahou Hongde, only had three years left in his term. It would be better to wait for Xiahou Hongde to leave, and when the new city lord came, they could stage this act while he was still finding his footing.

This way, there was less likely to be a problem.

For this reason, their relationship was still kept a secret.

Aside from Wang Shoulian and the other two, there were also two men in splendid clothes.

One of them was the Family Head of the Jinsha Xu Family, Xu Anze. However, he was only in his forties, with his strength at the ninth level of the Qi Refinement Stage so it was not his place to stage a grand scene today.

The actual representative of the Xu Family of Jinsha was the man in front of him.

He was the old ancestor of the Jinsha Xu family, Xu Ningwei, Old Ancestor Ningwei.

Old Ancestor Ningwei looked majestic and refined, but his face already bore signs of old age.

The Jinsha Xu Family was inherently weak, and Old Ancestor Ningwei, who was over a hundred years old, was only in the early stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm.

Luckily, when the founding ancestor who had divided from the Changning Xu Family obtained a Spiritual Artifact, the "Spiritual Yoad Shield", as the family's spiritual artifact, it granted Old Ancestor Ningwei a somewhat decent fighting power among many cultivators at the early stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm.

Moreover, the Spiritual Yoad Shield had outstanding defensive power, enabling him to save his life even against an opponent in the mid-stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm.

This was typically the case for rank-nine prominent families; naturally, they could not compare with a grade-eight prominent family in terms of solid foundation.

However, after embracing the golden thigh of the Ping'an Wang Family, the future development potential of the Jinsha Xu Family was bound to rise steadily.

As these five people appeared.

Mr. Yin and the other four were momentarily startled, feeling a vaguely bad premonition in their hearts.

The other party had even invited the patrol camp to guard over here, clearly they had been calculated.

However, before they had a chance to respond, the eyes of Commander Zhou Zhenwu of Changning Guard's Third Patrol Battalion were already fixed on them.

"Unbelievable that people from Yinsha Sect dare to stir up trouble in our Changning Guard. They truly know no fear of death." His gaze fell on Mr. Yin as he sneered, "Men, surround them!"

Chapter 64: Town Dragon Monument! Dragon and Tiger Demon Subducing Ruler_2

As he gave the order.

A group of patrol soldiers that had been lying in wait inside the cement workshop rushed out.

At the same time, on the seemingly deserted Golden Sand Beach, some coverings were overturned. The patrol soldiers who had long been ambushed there, all rushed out.

A total of more than a hundred patrol soldiers, divided into two waves, remotely surrounded the five intruders.

They were all ordinary soldiers belonging to the First Capital City, and individually, their strength was not very strong. Most of them were only in the fifth or sixth level of the Qi Refinement Realm, akin to elite house guards.

Only some personnel at the rank of team leader had reached the seventh or eighth level of the Qi Refinement Realm. Even the two deputy commanders were just at the ninth level of the Qi Refinement Realm.

But don't underestimate this group of soldiers.

They were all fully armored and armed.

In the front row were sword and shield soldiers, behind were spearmen, and in the last row were elite bowmen, each of whom had a precious sword and a bow in hand. These men were all well-trained and proficient in tactical formations, making them extremely difficult to deal with.

Even an ordinary Realm Cultivator who would get caught up in their battle formation would have a difficult time escaping from being defeated and killed.

The eyes of the five who were surrounded were filled with solemnity and severity.

Especially the two ancestors of the Ma Huangfu Clan who had covered their faces, they involuntarily stepped back two steps; it was clear that fear had crept into their hearts.

The Patrol Regiment, belonging to the First Capital City, was officially under the control of the Da Qian Imperial Household, regardless of its combat effectiveness.

As the saying goes, common people should not fight with the officials. Once they resist arrest and confront them, they will be deemed guilty, even if they are not. Even worse, it might implicate their entire family.

Seemingly noticing the reluctance from the two former Ma Huangfu Clan members, Mr. Yin's eyes flashed. He sneered, "We have two in the late stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm, two in the middle stage, and one in the early stage. The other side only has two in the early stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm. If we fight, there will certainly be casualties, but in the end, we will be the victors."

As he spoke, he casted a threatening glance at Zhou Zhenwu, his voice already carried a killing intent, "Zhou Zhenwu, are you really going to arrest us at the expense of your men's lives?"

"That's right, why don't we leave and pretend today's events never happened?" Upon hearing this, Old Man Huangfu worked up his courage and issued a threat.

However, just then.

A woman's cold scoff suddenly rang out, like a thunderbolt which caused a slight pain in the ears of those who heard it.

"Hmph~! Cowards who hide their identities. Do you think that no one would recognize you if you cover your faces? Huangfu Jinyuan!"

As the voice fell, a woman in a white dress, wearing a veil on her face, floated down from the mountain behind the Golden Sand Beach.

Cold gleamed in her eyes as if carved from ice. Her whole being emitted an aura of coldness and peerless beauty, as if she were a celestial maiden. Her distinctive white hair was particularly conspicuous under the night sky.

"Wang Longyan!"

Huangfu Jinyuan recognized her immediately, his pupils slightly contracted.

This woman is the oldest of the Ping'an Wang Clan. She has been famous since her childhood, especially in recent years. Rumors suggested that Wang Longyan had already advanced to the later stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm. Now that she appeared, her energy was indeed much deeper than it appeared, and it seemed that she was not inferior to him, Huangfu Jinyuan.

The moment the Old Ancestor Longyan appeared, her gaze was fixed on the three people of Yinsha Sect. A chilly resentment rose, and the killing intent was bursting.

"Yinsha Sect! As expected, you're related to your Huangfu Clan!"

"Wang Longyan, you shouldn't slander us!"

Huangfu Jinyuan simply removed his face mask, revealing an old face filled with anger, that seemed to be at the end of its lifespan.

Knowing that he couldn't cover things up today, he tried to disassociate this from his clan, gritted his teeth and said angrily, "This is just some private matters I'm dealing with friends from Yinsha sect, it does not involve my former Ma Huangfu Clan or the Celestial Huangfu Family at all!"

"Hmph~"

The voice of another elder echoed from the sky.

His voice was old, but deep like a bell: "Whether the family is involved with the Yinsha Sect, we will know once we capture and interrogate you."

As his voice fell, an old man in a gray robe floated down from the sky.

He had his hands behind his back, and even though his face showed signs of old age, his spirit was still shining. Especially the spark and sharpness in his eyes, they showed no signs of aging.

The years flowing in his body haven't taken away his sharpness, but added a more profound foundation and broader mind, showing his dominance in every action.

His gaze swept over the five men, finally resting on Huangfu Jinyuan. His eyes showed a bit of regret, "Huangfu Jinyuan, you and I were once from the same generation. You were once considered a proud son of heaven, but I didn't expect you to have fallen so far."

"Xu Beichen!" Huangfu Jinyuan's face changed dramatically, "I never expected you to get involved!"

Indeed, this Xu Beichen was the eldest and most senior ancestor of the Changning Xu Clan, Old Ancestor Beichen.

He had been preparing for a breakthrough into the Heavenly Human Realm.

Now that he was here, the last glimmer of hope in the hearts of Huangfu Jinyuan and the others faded.

The whole circumstance had been calculated by the other party.

The hydroelectric workshop might even have been a bait that they cast.

They fell for it!

Huangfu Jinyuan and Mr. Yin, the two in the late stage of Spiritual Platform Realm, looked at each other, and saw the same decision in each other's eyes.

Chapter 64: Town Dragon Monument! Dragon and Tiger Demon Subducing Ruler_3

Burst through!

Now, the only chance of survival is to break through, everyone for themselves.

"Yin Seventeen, Yin Twenty-six." Mr. Yin's voice was cold and chilly, "We break out separately, regroup at the rendezvous point."

As soon as he finished speaking, the three of them began to sprint in different directions.

Meanwhile.

Huangfu Jinyuan whispered to the clansman beside him, "Charge with me. In a crucial moment, don't worry about me, just run if you can. Remember, cooperating with the Yinsha Sect is a personal action, nothing to do with our family."

After the word 'family', a fiery energy exploded from Huangfu Jinyuan's seemingly frail body.

In an instant, he was engulfed in flames.

With intense fires enveloping him, he took each step as if the whole Golden Sand Beach was trembling beneath him. At that moment, he seemed like a Flame Sovereign walking among men, radiating an aura of terrifying power.

He had already exposed himself, and now was the time to create a path of escape for the younger generation!

The resolution and reaction speed of the five people were startlingly fast.

However, everything that had happened that day was part of a deadly trap Wang Shouzhe had been planning for a long time. Would he allow them to escape so easily?

Take Yin Twenty-six for instance. On the surface, he appeared to be in the early stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. But, one would realize this man was not ordinary once he started moving.

His speed was incredibly fast, not inferior to those in the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. He sprinted violently, appearing and disappearing in the blink of an eye, leaving a trail of smoke behind him. A pair of sharp ghost claws were attached to his hands.

He dared not jump into the sky. A Spirit Platform Realm cultivator couldn't fly very far, and it was difficult for them to change directions in mid-air. Thus, they would be an easy target for archers in the official army.

At that moment, a squad of soldiers was blocking his front. Eight sword and shield carriers formed a defensive semi-circle, their enormous shields embedded in the ground. Behind them, spearmen stood ready with their long spears.

The archers were ready to fire at any moment, showing no fear despite their opponent being in the Spirit Platform Realm.

Yin Twenty-six rushed into the encirclement at an incredibly fast speed. With a crunch, his ghost claw sent a sword and shield carrier, along with his shield, flying.

However, he struggled too. His forward momentum came to a halt, and the four or five spearmen promptly seized the opportunity to thrust their long spears at him.

Yin Twenty-six waved his claws in defense while retreating.

Before he could stabilize himself, the remaining sword and shield carriers lunged at him with their shields, blocking his way out.

At the same moment.

"Ting, ting, ting!"

The continual sound of bowstrings echoed in the air. A volley of arrows rained down on Yin Twenty-six like a storm.

He danced with his pair of ghost claws as if creating an impenetrable wind, it seemed as if his entire body was engulfed within.

"Clang, clang, clang!"

In a series of metallic collisions, every arrow was blocked. Not a single one managed to harm him.

Such was the strength of a Spirit Platform Cultivator.

However, after being suppressed by a series of attacks, Yin Twenty-six's breakout still declared failure. He could only retreat and be trapped again in the encirclement.

This was the horror of military formation. Given a single opponent among these twenty-odd soldiers, Yin Twenty-six could easily kill any of them.

...

However, a squad of well-trained and well-equipped patrol soldiers could force him to retreat!

Of course, that did not mean that this squad of soldiers was stronger than Yin Twenty-six.

If this squad were to face Yin Twenty-six alone in the wilderness, it was highly likely that they would be completely wiped out.

Certainly, it would be difficult to say what price Yin Twenty-six would have to pay at that time.

But right now, they were on a direct battlefield.

Moreover, the main force of the army was already in an advantageous encircling position, wiping out Yin Twenty-six's advantage of speed and unpredictability.

As long as he could not break through, and the soldiers continued to wear him down, ultimately Yin Twenty-six would die.

The battle involving Yin Twenty-six was just one corner of the overall battlefield.

While he was trying to break through the formation, drastic changes were also taking place elsewhere.

Huangfu Jinyuan truly lived up to his reputation as a powerful cultivator at the advanced stage of the Spirit Platform realm. Almost incarnating into a Flame Eminent, his punches and kicks tore through the defenses, scattering an entire patrol unit with the onslaught of his fire.

Meanwhile, a clan member by his side suddenly gave a sharp whistle, the clear sound echoing up into the sky.

Suddenly.

A crisp bird cry echoed, and a massive shadow, spanning several feet wide, swooped down from the dark, gloomy sky.

It was incredibly fast, seemingly reaching the ground in just the blink of an eye.

It was then that everyone managed to get a clear view.

It turned out to be a gigantic bird with wings spanning several feet when fully spread. Resembling neither a hawk nor an eagle, its body was a striking shade of blood red. Its tail was a stunning flame tail, akin to burning red-blooded flames.

"Red Blood Pigeon."

It was a vulturous bird renowned for its exceptional flight prowess. Judging from its large size and its conspicuous spiritual nature, it was undoubtedly a Level Three Spirit Beast that had been nurtured for a long time.

"Huangfu Jinyuan, are you trying to escape?"

The Old Ancestor of the Xu Family of Changning, Bei Chen, was a man of his own. He stepped into the void and reached the storage ring in his hand. Suddenly, a black obelisk-like monument appeared in the palm of his hand.

The monument was black as ink, carved with numerous silver runes that were mysterious and profound.

Upon the appearance of the black monument, an overwhelming and unstoppable divine majesty rolled off of it.

Bei Chen manipulated a series of hand signs, and the mysterious runes emitted dazzling lights,

"Om!"

With the black monument shuddering violently, a sound like the tolling of bells and drumming of gongs echoed in the air. Immediately after, a colossal silver energy shadow emerged from the black monument, pressing down on the two individuals with exceptional might.

"Town Dragon Monument!"

Huangfu Jinyuan's face changed, and he urgently yelled, "Kangping, you leave first. Don't worry about me."

This "Town Dragon Monument" was undoubtedly not the Clan Suppression Treasure worshipped in the ancestral hall of the Xu Family of Changning.

It was merely a replica. Even as a replica, it was a spiritual artifact created with great effort by the ancestors of the Xu family, and its quality had reached the level of a middle-grade spiritual artifact.

Its power was still extraordinary.

Once suppressed by its energy shadow, it would be like carrying a heavy mountain, making it incredibly hard to move.

True to their reputation as an established eighth-grade Prominent Family, their resources were far richer compared to the average eighth-grade Prominent Family.

However, Huangfu Jinyuan was not to be underestimated either. He was the founder of the former Ma Huangfu's Family. Although he had aged and his cultivation base of mysterious energy showed signs of stagnation and even regression, he was still a powerful cultivator at the advanced stage of the Spirit Platform Realm.

Huangfu Jinyuan wasn't without resources himself. The former Ma Huangfu's Family was also an eighth-grade Prominent Family, and even if it couldn't match up to the Xu Family of Changning, it still had the resources typical of an eighth-grade Prominent Family.

With a wave of his hand, a ruler appeared in his hand.

The ruler was smooth and yellow, as if made of jade, elaborately carved with numerous runes. Moreover, a dragon and a tiger were carved on both sides of the ruler, emitting a faint golden glow.

As Huangfu Jinyuan poured his mysterious energy into it, the ruler vibrated with a hum and conjured a reddish-golden ruler about a foot long. In the illusionary image of the ruler, the shadows of a dragon and a tiger seemed to be roaring.

"Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler!"

This was a Divine Spiritual Treasure that was well-known in the whole Great Qian Land; its power could shake the earth and crumble rivers.

Without a doubt, though, it was a replica spiritual artifact as well.

However, even as a replica, it still possessed significant power. Especially in the hands of a powerful advanced stage Spirit Platform Realm cultivator like Huangfu Jinyuan, it was extremely powerful and fierce!

The ruler's illusion clashed with the energy shadow of the Town Dragon Monument, causing shockwaves that turned the stones on the Jinsha Beach into dust and scattering it all over the place. The patrol soldiers couldn't even try to approach them.

But nobody noticed.

Under the hazy night sky, a gigantic turtle floated slowly downstream from the upper reaches of Jinsha River.

A woman with a sword hanging from her waist stood gracefully on the turtle's back.

Her pale blue ice silkworm silk dress fluttered gently in the night breeze, giving her an otherworldly aura.

Most notably, a light blue bead whirled slowly and spiritedly around her, sometimes nuzzling against her. Their interaction was exceptionally "intimate".

Chapter 65: I, Ruolan, greet you on behalf of my husband_1

...

The newly appeared woman was none other than Liu Ruolan, the principal wife of the Wang family.

Her clear eyes scanned the entire Golden Sand Beach with a solemn expression and a hint of gravity in her gaze.

Today's match, a grand plan conceived by her husband, Wang Shouzhe, had significant implications for the changes in the overall strategic layout of Changning, and the fateful turns and transformations among the various prominent families.

Even though everything has been going according to plan so far, this matter is of great importance. There is no room for errors, so lots of arrangements are necessary.

Currently, on the Chaotic Stone Beach, Huangfu Jinyuan, the founding ancestor of Ma Huangfu's Family and wielder of the "Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler," was able to counter the "Town Dragon Monument" wielded by the North Star Ancestor of the Xu family in Changning.

His body engulfed in red flames, he didn't take a step back even under the enormous pressure of the Town Dragon Monument, which caused veins to protrude all over his body.

"Kang Ping, if you are not going to leave now, when will you?!"

Seeing his grandson standing still, he clenched his teeth and reprimanded in a low voice.

"Grandfather!"

Huangfu Kang Ping's eyes turned red, full of grief.

He wished he could stay behind himself, but he knew that this was not the time for sentiments.

Today's incident had clearly fallen into the trap of the opposition, with the situation turning against them.

If he, the second-old ancestor of the family, were to perish here, the entire Ma Huangfu's Family would suffer a severe setback, finding it difficult to recover.

Suppressing the sorrow in his heart, Huangfu Kang Ping quickly climbed onto the Red Blood Pigeon, patting its head: "You old fellow, everything depends on you today."

He had shown remarkable talent in beast taming at a young age.

Therefore, his grandfather, Huangfu Jinyuan, personally sought the favor of Old Ancestor Hua Ye, at the expense of enormous resources and utilizing Hua Ye's prestige, to get a Red Blood Pigeon egg from the Huangfu family in Southern Desert. He later hatched and gave it to him to take care of.

Now, more than a hundred years later, the young Huangfu Kangping has grown into an old ancestor in the mid-stage of the Spiritual Platform realm, and the immature Red Blood Pigeon has also grown into a Level Three Spirit Beast.

The resources and efforts it took are countless. But, for a Grade Eight Prominent Family, owning a Level Three Spirit Beast also adds to the profound foundation of the family.

After all, the lifespan of Spirit Beasts is extraordinarily long, and they can protect the family for hundreds of years.

Now, at this critical moment, this Level Three Red Blood Pigeon has been put to use.

"Caw~"

The Red Blood Pigeon let out a roar, its wings spanning several meters wide, and in one stroke, it soared into the sky, carrying Huangfu Kang Ping towards the distance.

This is the difference between prominent families and sects like the Yinsha Sect. When the three members of Yinsha Sect broke out to escape, they were on their own, depending only on their abilities and luck.

However, the two ancestors of Ma Huangfu's Family, a closely related grandfather and grandson pair, could cooperate at a crucial moment. Huangfu Jinyuan could sacrifice himself to block the formidable enemy for Huangfu Kang Ping, assisting him in escaping.

Fearing the archers of the patrol camp, Huangfu Kang Ping didn't dare to fly high. He almost skated across the river surface as he flew away.

With the Red Blood Pigeon's swift flight speed, he reached more than ten meters away in the blink of an eye.

In the misty night, Jinsha River was serene. Apart from the "buzzing" sound of the water hitting the beach, everything was tranquil.

Huangfu Kang Ping breathed a sigh of relief.

Seeing this, a sense of relief crossed the eyes of Huangfu Jinyuan, who was desperately resisting North Star Ancestor.

He did not have much lifetime left and being able to protect his more promising grandson was equivalent to leaving some vital energy to Ma Huangfu's Family. As long as the Celestial Huangfu Family, their main family, didn't fall, they would still be a Grade Eight Prominent Family.

However, just as they had let their guard down.

Suddenly.

Something unexpected happened!

A huge vortex suddenly appeared on the surface of Jinsha River. The vortex was over ten meters wide, almost covering a third of the width of Jinsha River!

Looking down from the sky, it was as if a giant eye had suddenly appeared on the river surface.

What made Huangfu Kang Ping feel even chillier was that in the center of that giant eye, there was a huge Spirit Water Tortoise.

A woman in blue was standing on the back of the Spirit Tortoise.

Her toes were only lightly touching the tortoise's shell, making her appear as if she was treading on emptiness. She seemed ethereal, giving her a celestial demeanor.

At the moment, she was looking up at Huangfu Kangping in the sky!

In the darkness, her face, as bright as the moon, expressed no emotions, only her eyes reflected a hint of coldness.

"Tide rises."

Her lips parted slightly, gently uttering these two words.

As her words fell, a rush of water-blue Mysterious Energy, with her at the center, swept outwards. Instantly, waves began to surge on the river surface.

"Woo~"

The Spirit Water Pearl seemed to sense something and began to spin rapidly.

Bluish light emerged from the pearl, continuously pouring into Liu Ruolan, turning the Mysterious Energy emanating from her body from light blue to dark blue.

In a flash, the surging waves turned into towering sea waves. The massive curtain of water rose to the sky, its might so gigantic that it virtually obscured the entire night sky!

Things happened in a split second.

"Go!"

Huangfu Kang Ping's face turned pale. He immediately commanded the Red Blood Pigeon to fly straight up into the sky.

But it was too late.

The Red Blood Pigeon had barely risen three feet when the giant wave, like a landslide, fiercely hit the Red Blood Pigeon.

"Boom~!"

The force of the wave knocked both Huangfu Kang Ping and the Red Blood Pigeon out of the sky and plunged them into Jinsha River.

Chapter 65: I, Ruolan, greet you on behalf of my husband_2

"Kangping!"

Witnessing this scene, Huangfu Jinyuan was filled with rage. He roared and tried to rush to Kangping's aid, heedless of the danger.

But before he could act, he was restrained by the Xu Family's Old Ancestor Beichen.

Furious and desperate, he roared, "Xu Beichen, get out of my way!"

"Huangfu Jinyuan," Beichen commanded, utilizing the power of the Town Dragon Monument to hold him in place. "Your alliance with the Yinsha Sect, and your theft of other clan's properties, are atrocities. If you think you can escape unscathed today, you are utterly delusional!"

"Xu Beichen! I'll fight you to the death!" Huangfu Jinyuan bellowed in rage, spitting a mouthful of blood onto the Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler. Empowered by his blood, the ruler's shadow expanded, a faint echo of a dragon's roar and a tiger's howl ringing out.

The power of the Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler surged dramatically!

Old Ancestor Beichen's expression hardened. The power of the Town Dragon Monument surged as well, locking down Huangfu Jinyuan and offering him no chance to move.

Meanwhile, in the Jinsha River, Huangfu Kangping had managed to leap out of the water first. His black armor was soaked and he appeared disheveled, but he had managed to escape. The Red Blood Pigeon, a bird species, was struggling desperately in the water but was unable to escape on its own.

"Old buddy!" Kangping was frantic. He surged forward through the water, reaching out to grab the Red Blood Pigeon, trying to lift it out of the water.

But then-

Within the rushing water, a large shadow more than a meter in diameter had silently snuck up to them.

The moment Huangfu Kangping reached out, the shadow lunged like a swift snake, snapping around the neck of the Red Blood Pigeon.

Simultaneously, it rapidly dove downward. In the blink of an eye, it dragged the Red Blood Pigeon down into the depths of the river.

The shadow was none other than the Spirit Tortoise, which had been coveting the Red Blood Pigeon for a long time.

A Level Three Spirit Bird was a delicacy; the ever-hungry tortoise wouldn't let such a chance slip away.

"Old buddy!!!" Huangfu Kangping was heartbroken.

The Red Blood Pigeon had been by his side for a hundred years. Their relationship was just like that of close family members.

Without thinking, he tried to dive into the water to rescue the Red Blood Pigeon.

But suddenly, a cold feminine voice with a hint of laziness rang in his ear.

"Huangfu Kangping, I advise you to refrain from acting on impulse."

Suspended in the air above the water, Huangfu Kangping turned around and saw an extraordinary woman standing on the water's surface at a short distance. A water-blue spiritual pearl circled slowly around her.

Under the moonlight, she exhaled a clear, spiritual aura, moving elegantly. Her eyebrows and eyes were relaxed and carefree, like a noblewoman out for a jaunt in the mountains.

"Who are you?!"

Huangfu Kangping's pupils contracted. He was filled with fear, recognizing the woman. She was the one who had used a powerful attack to knock him and the Red Blood Pigeon out of the sky.

"The arrogant members of the Ma Huangfu Family, relying on the support of Huangfu Clan of Changning, fail to gather sufficient intelligence on their opponents." Liu Ruolan gave him a glance, not seeming to consider him as an important enemy. She said calmly, "I am Liu Ruolan, representing my husband Wang Shouzhe, sending our regards to the head of your family."

Liu Ruolan.

Huangfu Kangping had vaguely heard of this name. But he never expected such a formidable force would be hidden within an unremarkable Wang family's wife!

Run, run, run!

All the hairs on Huangfu Kangping's body stood on end as he turned to flee.

At this moment, he had only one thought in his mind: cross over the river and fight for survival. He had to survive not just for himself, but also to keep the last hope alive for the previous Ma Huangfu Family.

Liu Ruolan, standing on the water, simply watched him run away without attempting to stop him. Instead, she turned her attention towards the battlefield on Golden Sand Beach.

Just as Huangfu Kangping was stepping on the water attempting to cross the river, an elderly man appeared in his path, blocking his way.

Under the dim moonlight, the old man had a head full of white hair and a serene look in his eyes. Despite his simple stance, he projected an unshakeable presence, giving the impression of profound depths. His vitality was flourishing, indicating that he was in his prime years.

"Huangfu Kangping," his voice rang out firmly. "You and I are of similar age, it is fitting for me to deal with you."

"Liu Qingbai!" Huangfu Kangping's footsteps halted. His face abruptly turned pale. "Even you have come! Have you considered the consequences if Old Ancestor Hua Ye retaliates for what you're doing?!"

Liu Qingbai just smiled, "Old brother Kangping, you have a sense of humor. The Ma Huangfu Family's alliance with the Yinsha Sect is a capital offense. Even if I kill you, your Old Ancestor Hua Ye, cannot find fault with me."

"Besides, your two Huangfu Families have left no room for others to live. Do we have any choice other than a fight to the death?"

Liu Qingbai, also known as Old Ancestor Qingbai, was a prominent figure in the Liu Family of Shanyin, second in power only to Liu Xuanfu. He was reputable throughout Changning.

Although not very old, just above a hundred and twenty years, he had reached the Peak Mid Stage of the Spiritual Platform Realm and had a promising future of ascending to the level of a Celestial being.

Moreover, he was blood-related to the Ping'an Wang Family. He was the son of Zhuwei, who herself was the beloved daughter of Old Ancestor Zhou Xuan of the Wang Family, making Qingbai the direct grandson of Zhou Xuan and the younger brother of Old Ancestor Xuanfu, Liu Xuanfu!

Chapter 65: I, Ruolan, greet you on behalf of my husband_3

This was a battle of great importance, and moreover, it was his direct granddaughter, Liu Ruolan, who personally presided over and directed it. How could he not come to boost the morale?

"Very good! Very good! Very good!" Huangfu Kangping roared in anger, "Since we have fallen into your trap today, us, the Huangfu Clan acknowledges it. But, to think that you, Liu Qingbai, alone can take me down, it's a sheer delusion!!!"

With that, he drew his saber from his waist and charged directly.

His sword moved like a dragon, and the sword rain poured like a waterfall.

Backed by the prosperous Tianren Family of Changning, the forward Ma Huangfu Clan was not lacking any cultivation techniques.

Although the "Xuanqing Jue" that he cultivated was not as powerful and domineering as the renowned "Red Dragon True Verses", which can be cultivated all the way to the Purple Abode Realm, it was still an authentic technique that enables cultivation up to the Heavenly Human Realm.

Moreover, the "Xuanqing Jue" was more inclusive and long-lasting in vital energy, similar to the Wang Clan's Xuan Yuan Jue.

The swordsmanship he demonstrated was a renowned mid-grade swordsmanship called "Spring Rain Sword Technique" in Changning. When demonstrated, it was like a spring breeze brushing against the face. It was graceful and gentle, intoxicating, and in an instant, the sword intents would turn into countless droplets of rain, making it impossible to guard against, eventually delivering a fatal blow!

In order to break out, Huangfu Kangping simply skipped the initial stages of the Spring Rain Sword Technique, turning his sword intent directly into a storm of thunder, enveloping Liu Qingbai.

Countless sharp sword lights poured down, it looked as though the divine might was descending from heaven.

Liu Qingbai's eyes flashed slightly, seeing the challenge, he praised, "Worthy of being the future hope of the forward Ma Huangfu Clan, even though his focus is divided into beast taming, his swordsmanship is still so masterful."

With that, he too, unsheathed his Spirit Sword and met the challenge.

What he carried out was the Liu Family's unique skill—"Primordial Water Sword Technique". The Primordial Water Sword Technique focused on the concepts of primordial water, sometimes gentle and entangled, sometimes domineering and unrestrained, also a very powerful and difficult to deal with mid-grade swordsmanship.

The two tangled together, sword lights crisscrossed, the mysterious energy surged, and for a time, the battle was extremely intense.

Considering the cultivation base of these two, it was likely that the outcome could not be determined in a short while.

No matter whether it was the battle between Huangfu Jinyuan and the Old Ancestor of Beichen, or the intense battle between Liu Qingbai and Huangfu Kangping of the Liu Clan, both were just two corners of the battlefield. On the other side, the three men of the Yinsha Sect were also trying to break out.

Yin Twenty-six's first breakout attempt was not successful. After being surrounded by a group of soldiers, he repeatedly made deadly moves that significantly injured several soldiers.

Commander Zhou Zhenwu of the Three Camps Patrol, seeing the situation, lamented the casualties sustained by his brothers and immediately joined the fight, wielding his war saber.

He came from a military household, and the technique he practiced was suited for killing enemies on the battlefield. His fighting style was also the typical military style, open and direct, without any fanciness.

However, every move he made exuded an overbearing, ruthless, resolute, and tragic aura.

As for all the other soldiers, he had already ordered them to retreat. As long as they surrounded the enemy, they were not required to kill. He was very good to his brothers—this time, he led them to gain merits, not to die.

"Brother Zhenwu, allow me to lend you a hand."

At the same time, the voice of another old man rang out.

With the end of his sentence, an old man with a scholarly aura, holding a red fan, joined the battlefield.

This old man was none other than Lu Mingsheng of the Lu Clan of Yingxiu, the Old Ancestor Mingsheng.

Although Old Ancestor Mingsheng was not a top Spirit Platform elder, with his ancestral "Fan of Fire Departure", he could even put up a fight against an ordinary mid-stage cultivator in the Spirit Platform Realm.

With a swing of his "Fan of Fire Departure", a fiery crow would be conjured up, "flapping" as it flies up, spitting out flames towards Yin Twenty-six.

Coming to help Zhou Zhenwu at this time is to pick an easy fight, and also to get on the good side of the commander of the Patrol Camps.

Zhou Zhenwu laughed heartily when he saw this, "Thank you for your help, Old Ancestor Mingsheng!"

While talking, he swung his war saber and sped up his attack.

With the joint efforts of the two, Yin Twenty-six could only flee in a pathetic state. However, being trapped in the battle array, his desire to break out seemed futile.

Given the current situation, Yin Twenty-six's defeat was just a matter of time.

Besides, there was another one, Yin Seventeen, a strong cultivator in the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm, who was also targeted during his breakout attempt.

The one who made his move was Gongsun Clan's Old Ancestor Gongsun Ao of Shanyang, the first of the ancestors.

The Gongsun family names their family members sequentially with the elements of gold, wood, water, fire, and earth. This Gongsun Ao was clearly a couple of generations senior to Old Ancestor Mang.

The current old man Ao had already exceeded 140 years old, and his cultivation has reached the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. He seemed to have lost hope of reaching the Heavenly Human Realm in his lifetime!

But he was content to see the rise of the Shanyang Gongsun Clan in his lifetime.

This time, his personal involvement was his attempt to make a considerable contribution to the In-laws Alliance on behalf of the Shanyang Gongsun Clan, as a way of repaying Wang Shouzhe's persistent favoritism towards the Shanyang Gongsun Clan.

He even brought with him an ancestral Spirit Artifact.

It was a Spirit Weapon of the type of a demon-subduing pestle, especially suitable for cultivators of the War Body type, possessing ferocious and powerful might.

His opponent, Yin Seventeen, was obviously not an easy target. He was wrapped in a thick aura of Yin Sha. The artifact that he used was a bone whip of a fierce beast. At the top end of the bone whip, a menacing skull was embedded.

With each swing of the bone whip, the skull would howl mournfully, continuously spewing Yin Sha poison.

This person was extremely difficult to deal with.

In order to prevent any accidents, Old Ancestor Ning Wei of the Jinsha Xu Clan stepped forward to assist. Together with Gongsun Ao, he dealt with Yin Seventeen. His earth-based defensive Spirit Artifact—"Spiritual Yoad Shield," was a greatly defensive Spirit Artifact.

Chapter 65: I, Ruolan, greet you on behalf of my husband_4

This way, one of them focused on defense and the other on offense, their cooperation was remarkably seamless and intimate.

Of course.

Among the five invaders, the most difficult to deal with was Mr. Yin.

The one who managed to block Mr. Yin's escape turned out to be Wang Longyan, the Old Ancestor of the Wang family.

The Dragon Smoke Sword emitted a soul-stirring sound. Under the control of Old Ancestor Longyan's spiritual sense, it slashed at Mr. Yin like a wisp of smoke.

In her life, her hatred for the Yinsha Sect exceeds that for the Huangfu Clan.

The poisonous Yin Sha has tortured her for a full fifty years.

"Humph! A cultivator who has just stepped into the advanced stage of the Spirit Platform Realm dares to obstruct me?"

Mr. Yin moved as if in slow motion, yet in reality, he was moving swiftly like he was traversing through space. He easily dodged the attack of the Dragon Smoke Sword by merely clasping his hands behind him.

Out of everyone present, the only one who could potentially stand toe-to-toe with him was perhaps Xu Beichen, the Old Ancestor of the Xu family from Changning. Yet, Mr. Yin was so confident that even if Xu Beichen tried to stop him, he could escape.

Since Xu Beichen wasn't here to stop him, how could he be stopped by Wang Longyan, who had just entered the advanced stage, and a group of low-ranked patrol soldiers?

That group of patrol soldiers could handle opponents at the initial stage of the Spirit Platform Realm.

But what sort of person is Mr. Yin?

With just half a step, he could potentially enter the Heavenly Human Realm.

If it wasn't for the need to acquire resources to ascend to the Heavenly Human Realm, why would he choose to serve under "the young master" and do his bidding?

Facing Wang Longyan, who was preventing his breakthrough, and a group of low-ranked patrol soldiers, his withered face remained calm. With a flick of his storage ring, a flag banner appeared in his hand.

The flag banner was barely a feet long, but after Mr. Yin infused it with his Yin Sha Mysterious Energy, the banner came alive.

It soared into the air and instantly expanded as it encountered the wind. In the blink of an eye, it transformed into a giant banner, six feet wide and over ten feet long. Under the hazy moonlight, it fluttered and unleashed a wave of Yin Sha Energy, which swept across the surroundings like a storm.

"Yin Sha Asura Banner!"

Wang Longyan's face changed slightly, and she immediately yelled, "All soldiers retreat! Do not let the Yin Sha Energy blow onto you."

As a core disciple from the Purple Abode Academic Palace, this wasn't her first battle against the disciples of the Yin Sha Sect. She knew quite a bit about one of the palace's main enemies - the Yinsha Sect.

The Yin Sha Asura Banner was a widely known Divine Spiritual Treasure of the Yin Sha Sect.

The moment this spiritual treasure emerged, the entire battlefield would be engulfed by the Yin Sha storm. Weaker beings that found themselves within it would soon perish, their souls completely destroyed by the storm, dying in utter pain.

This was a terrifying spiritual treasure that could sway the situation on the battlefield.

The one Mr. Yin had was obviously not the original divine spiritual treasure. However, even so, it was not to be underestimated.

A pair of sword and shield soldiers at the front line were blown by the Yin Sha storm as they retreated too slowly. They instantly fell to the ground, writhing in pain and screaming non-stop.

"Humph!"

Wang Longyan flew into action, saving the two soldiers. With her palm on their backs, she released her Mysterious Energy, drawing out the Yin Sha Energy that had just invaded their bodies and absorbed it into herself.

The two soldiers were saved and they were deeply grateful to Wang Longyan.

This scene surprised Mr. Yin, "How is it possible? You, you can actually absorb Yin Sha Energy?"

"Buzz!"

With a wave of Wang Longyan's hand, the Sword Spirit of Dragon Smoke Sword fell into her hand like a fish. Simultaneously, she flipped her left hand and a shield the size of a palm floated up, radiating a bright blue energy spirit shield.

The spirit shield was quite peculiar, it was as if several turtle scales were pieced together, forming a floating multi-faceted shape that rotated.

Turtle Scale Shield!

It was a spiritual artifact that Master Binglan had personally gifted to Wang Longyan, because she knew she was good at attacking but lacked defense and this treasure was to compensate for that.

However, while this spiritual artifact had strong defensive capabilities, it also drains Mysterious Energy heavily.

She said nothing more and launched herself towards Mr. Yin using a movement technique. If she couldn't deal with him from a distance, then let him taste the power of close combat!

Wang Longyan took a swipe with her sword.

In an instant, the air within several feet radius around her froze instantly, as if the Yin Sha Energy within the range had been frozen, condensing frost with the water vapor, fluttering with the night wind.

"Mysterious Ice Swordsmanship!"

"Are you a core disciple of the academic palace or a direct disciple?"

At this instant, Mr. Yin finally lost his composure, his withered face abruptly changed color.

Chapter 66: Yin Sha Poisonous Corpse! Hong Gate Banquet_1

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No wonder Mr. Yin was so shocked.

The Academy System of Da Qian has cultivated generation after generation of exceptional talents, and the Yinsha Sect has been entangled with the Academy for thousands of years now. The elite disciples from both sides have had numerous encounters and battles.

Therefore, he was deeply aware of the fact that the core and direct disciples of the Academy were not easy to provoke.

And the core and direct disciples from the Mysterious Ice Palace lineage were the most challenging among them!

"Humph! Less talk, more action! Prepare to die!"

Wang Longyan's face was frosty, and a cold murderous intent burst from the depths of her eyes.

The Dragon Smoke Sword whistled out, accompanied by an icy storm. Within the domain of the Mysterious Ice, which extended over several dozen feet, everything seemed to be frozen. Cultivators of inferior strength would instantly become stiff, or even frozen to death.

Even those with considerable strength would be significantly affected within the Mysterious Ice domain, at least experiencing a considerable reduction in their speed.

However, Mr. Yin seemed unaffected by this Mysterious Ice domain.

With a mere shudder of his body, he sidestepped the strike of the sword with ease.

His movement technique was elusive and unpredictable. It was unknown how he achieved it, but with a flash and a flicker, he was suddenly behind Wang Longyan.

Under the moonlight, his gaunt face appeared even more sinister.

Indeed, a Spiritual Platform Realm advanced stage expert who had lived for over a hundred years possesses far superior mental strength than a common human. By this point, he had regained his calmness and composure, and a wicked smile flashed across his zombie-like face, "Hmph, arrogant! What of an Academy disciple? I've killed them before."

As his declaration fell.

A hand appeared suddenly from the wide sleeve of his robe.

It was a sinewy hand, dark green like a corpse's. The finger pointed like a sword, directed at Wang Longyan.

The dense Yin Sha Mysterious Energy surged to his fingertips, instantly transforming into a burst of energy that shot out!

"Hiss~!"

The highly concentrated ghastly green energy tore through the air, causing sharp whistling sounds to echo in the atmosphere.

"Yin Sha Mysterious Finger!"

One of the trademark Profound Martial Fighting Techniques of the Yinsha Sect had not only formidable penetration power, but once the Yin Sha energy infiltrated one's body, it would relentlessly erode your organs, causing unbearable pain.

In the past, Wang Longyan's torment from the Yin Sha energy was courtesy of this "Yin Sha Mysterious Finger".

At this moment,

With Wang Longyan's swing missing, she couldn't turn around in time, nor switch moves in time. She could only accelerate the operation of the Mysterious Energy and block this intake with the Turtle Scale Treasure Shield.

"Boom!"

The shimmering blue Spiritual Shield released by the Turtle Scale Treasure Shield violently shook, rapidly tremored like ripples in the water, eliminating the Yin Sha Finger into non-existence.

Taking advantage of this brief moment, her figure shimmered and burst forward. Her Dragon Smoke Sword once again manifested as countless ice lights, enveloping Mr. Yin!

At this juncture.

Both parties experienced the other's tenacity.

They engaged in a rapid exchange of attacks, both sides seemingly evenly matched, with no clear winner in sight.

The most distasteful thing for Mr. Yin was, Wang Longyan ranked high in both offense and defense. His proud "Yin Sha Asura Flag" didn't affect her.

Even more astonishing was, she did not dodge the Yin Sha energy while maneuvering. Instead, she operated the Mysterious Energy, sucking the Yin Sha energy into her body.

The Yin Sha storm created by the "Yin Sha Asura Flag" did not hinder her at all. On the contrary, it served as her source of nourishment to replenish the Mysterious Energy.

Under the cover of the Yin Sha storm, she became increasingly valiant in the battle, her attacks sharper and more ferocious.

"So that's it! So that's it!" Mr. Yin was astonished and enraged. "You actually cultivated our Yinsha Sect's Hua Yin Method!"

He simply couldn't believe it.

The Academy and Yinsha Sect have always been at odds; this woman's audacity was indeed tremendous. Didn't she fear retribution from the Masters of the Academy?

Wang Longyan couldn't be bothered to answer him directly and simply responded in a manner intended to weaken his fighting spirit, "Your Yin Sha Asura Flag isn't bad. It can serve as my supplement."

While verbally sparring, the two continued to battle incessantly.

No, no. Something's wrong!

Mr. Yin was utterly perplexed. Even if it were other core disciples or direct disciples of the Yinsha Sect, they couldn't achieve what this woman was doing.

Though their reactions to the Yin Sha storm would be lesser, they could not immediately absorb the Yin Sha energy.

Little did he know Wang Longyan was tormented by the Yin Sha poison for fifty years, constantly battling it. In this process, her body involuntarily evolved and transformed.

After she cultivated the method to absorb the power of Yin Sha, she discovered that her body's adaptation to the Yin Sha energy surprisingly surpassed that of the Mysterious Ice energy. Thus, this scene was taking place.

What made Mr. Yin helpless was that he couldn't withdraw the "Yin Sha Asura Flag."

If he did, the soldiers would surround and attack. As long as they slightly delayed him, he would be done for.

Under numerous unfavorable conditions, Mr. Yin's earlier calm demeanor vanished without a trace, growing increasingly anxious.

If he couldn't break through, death was the only path.

Bound by this resolution, a shred of stubbornness appeared on Mr. Yin's face.

His hand brushed against his Storage Ring.

The next moment.

A black stone coffin over a foot long and around three feet wide "clanged" as it hit the ground, smashing a pit in the sandy and stony ground.

Under the moonlight, the material of the stone coffin seemed to be connected to the abyss, devouring all ambient light. Creepy blood-red runes covered the entire surface of the coffin, making it look like it was dripping blood.

Sinister and cold energy seeped out of the gaps in the stone coffin, and over time, the air in the entire Chaotic Stone Beach seemed to become a few degrees colder.

Chapter 66: Yin Sha Poisonous Corpse! Hong Gate Banquet_2

"This is..."

Wang Longyan's complexion changed slightly.

The troublesome Yinsha Sect, their endless strange techniques were indeed problematic.

Some powerful members of the Yinsha Sect can refine "Yinsha Poison Corpses". That is a very evil and terrifying weapon of war.

If her guess was correct, this black stone coffin should be the "Corpse Coffin" that her dear senior brother had mentioned to her.

As for what's inside the "Corpse Coffin", it's probably the "Yinsha Poison Corpse"!

The patrolling soldiers responsible for the encirclement changed their expressions when they saw this scene, becoming extremely nervous.

As expected.

The moment the "Corpse Coffin" fell to the ground, Mr. Yin bit his tongue, and the essence blood sprayed on the dark coffin lid.

For this artifact, he had specially ordered a middle grade Spiritual Artifact to serve as a storage ring. But now, in order to save his life, he had to abandon what needed to be abandoned.

The dark stone slab was extremely strange, the essence blood landed on it and got absorbed instantly.

The next moment.

It began shaking violently. A series of knocking sounds came from under the coffin lid, as if a fierce creature was about to break out of it.

The patrolling soldiers responsible for the encirclement unconsciously retreated backward.

"Boom~!"

The thick coffin lid of the Corpse Coffin was suddenly flung open.

A dark cyan corpse hand stretched out from the coffin, grabbed the edge of the coffin, and exerted a sudden force.

The next moment.

An ugly Yinsha Poison Corpse swayed and crawled out of the Corpse Coffin.

It was several times bigger than a human, with a grotesque and terrifying look under the moonlight, like a monstrosity.

But upon closer inspection, one would discover that its body was covered with a metallic sheen, just like metal. This was because its body, specially refined through certain techniques, had a hardness and defensive power comparable to metal.

Apart from this, a strong black poisonous gas continuously diffused from its body.

This was the deadly Yinsha Poison Gas, a combination of Yinsha Qi and intense poison. Its strange and powerful nature was far more potent than Yinsha Qi.

"Go!"

At Mr. Yin's harsh shout, the Yinsha Poison Corpse leapt out of the Corpse Coffin, hurling itself at Wang Longyan with a quickness not matching its massive size.

"Thump! Thump! Thump~!"

The ground continuously shook.

It charged like an ancient giant elephant, although chaotic and without tactics, it brought along a terrible force that seemed impossible to stop.

Wang Longyan's expression became grave. She brandished her Dragon Smoke Sword and continuously retreated, casting Profound Ice Sword Energy onto the Yinsha Poison Corpse.

The chilling sword aura caused deep wounds on the poison corpse, exposing the bone beneath. Yet, the Yinsha Poison Corpse seemed to feel no pain at all, and no matter how Wang Longyan attacked, she couldn't stop its charge.

For a moment, Wang Longyan was actually dragged into a standstill.

"Hahaha~ You can play with my Yinsha Corpse Puppet! I won't keep you company~"

Mr. Yin laughed grotesquely and then began to break away, controlling the "Yinsha Asura Flag".

Strong Yinsha winds continuously howled from the flag, let alone the ordinary patrolling soldiers, even Realm Cultivators who entered the vortex of Yinsha winds would lose a layer of skin or even get affected permanently.

With the threatening power of Yinsha, the patrolling soldiers had to keep retreating.

It seemed that Mr. Yin was about to break out of the encirclement.

Suddenly.

A deep voice sounded from the night sky: "Ancestor Longyan, leave this Yinsha Poison Corpse to me. You continue to deal with the Yinsha Sect evildoer."

As the voice fell, an old man in a green robe floated down from the northern high ground and with a sweep of his spear, he blocked the Yinsha Poison Corpse for the Ancestor Longyan.

This elder had a dignified bearing and a stern demeanor.

It was as if he and the spear in his hand had merged into one. Each move, each stance, all carried a who-dare-cross-me kind of dominance.

Under his offensive, the reckless attack of the Yinsha Poison Corpse was actually halted.

This elder was no other than Ruhong Old Ancestor, a well-known figure of the Chen Clan of Donggang.

As it turned out, Liu Ruolan had noticed the change in the situation here. She controlled the Jinsha River to signal a secret code, and Ruhong Old Ancestor rushed over to reinforce them immediately.

Seeing him, a slight joy flashed in the icy eyes of Wang Longyan, but Mr. Yin's expression became stunned.

"Another expert?!"

How is that possible?! How many experts had they deployed outside? One after another, seemingly endless?!

Regretfully, Mr. Yin didn't know his opponent well enough.

If he had the chance to meet the two old ancestors from Liu Clan and Zhao Clan after his death, they would surely tell him not to underestimate Wang Shouzhe.

While Mr. Yin was astonished, Wang Longyan, who had just gotten free, was already standing in his way, blocking his escape route with a cold look on her face.

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Meanwhile.

In the main hall of Huangfu Clan's main residence.

The atmosphere was one of peace, with the heads of various factions chatting and laughing over cups of fine wines.

To liven up the atmosphere, the Huangfu Clan had even arranged for a team of beautiful singing girls to provide entertainment. As musicians played enchanting music, the dancing girls swayed gracefully, adding plenty of charm to the occasion.

The expenses incurred every year by the Huangfu Clan to maintain this team of singing girls were no small sum.

However, this was a reflection of the prestige of a celestial family. Most celestial families kept a group of musicians and singing girls, and there were even competitions among them.

This goes to show, the power and wealth of a celestial family were indeed incomparable to an ordinary Profound Martial family.

Chapter 66: Yin Sha Poisonous Corpse! Hong Gate Banquet_3

At least as far as Wang Shouzhe knew, he had never seen an Eighth Grade Prominent Family exclusively nurturing singing girls.

To watch song and dance performances, one had to go to "specialised" places.

However, as the entertainment industry on Earth had developed to the pinnacle, Wang Shouzhe, who had once "fallen into its trap", no longer had any enthusiasm for these passionless dances.

What was arousing the interest of the other Family Heads of the prominent families, one by one, was something else.

Especially Gongsun Yan, who had just assumed the position of Family Head not long ago, he seemed to be utterly engrossed.

What Wang Shouzhe was more concerned about was "Lady Ji", who was arranged at the head seat. This identity, although thoroughly investigated, was very compatible with the current plan.

With Wang Mei's ability, of course, she was very familiar with Lady Ji's life and habits.

But still, there was the rightful successor of the Ji Family, Ji Mingyu, sitting at the chief seat.

At this moment, Family Head Huangfu Jinhuan had also come over to propose a toast. If it were discovered that Ji Mingyu couldn't recognize Lady Ji at all, there would be some trouble.

Originally, Wang Shouzhe was slightly worried about Wang Mei.

Unexpectedly, Wang Mei, playing the role of Lady Ji, took the initiative to strike up a conversation with Ji Mingyu. Her eyes were filled with a slight grievance and coquettishness, "Brother Mingyu, I have been sitting here for half a day, and you have completely ignored me?"

The address of 'Brother Mingyu' made Ji Mingyu feel quite uncomfortable. His gaze was filled with surprise as he looked at Lady Ji and asked tentatively, "May I ask, who is this miss, no, madam?"

Her attire was clearly that of a mature married woman, like a ripe peach.

The conversation between the two attracted everyone's attention. Especially Huangfu Jinhuan, his brows twitched, Ji Mingyu actually didn't recognize Lady Ji?

"Brother Mingyu, indeed, you no longer recognize me." Lady Ji's eyes flickered, filled with grievances, "I am Youwei, your Ninth Uncle's younger sister. When we were young, I used to play with you all the time."

"Youwei?" After a moment of being taken aback, Ji Mingyu smacked his forehead in realization, his eyes full of surprise, "I remember now, you are the second girl from Ninth Uncle's family."

Lady Ji's face blushed, she rolled her eyes, and said with a coquettish anger, "Brother Mingyu, it's not necessary to mention my nickname in public, right?"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry." Ji Mingyu quickly stood up to apologize, "It's been more than 20 years since I last saw you, Sister Youwei, so I spoke out of turn in my haste. I hope you won't hold it against me."

Ji Mingyu had left to study in the Academic Palace at the age of 18. Despite returning home for a visit every few years, he could not possibly meet everyone.

The Ji Family was not small, with a large number of members.

"Brother Mingyu, as the Sky Pride of the Academic Palace, it is natural that you have not been paying attention to your younger sister. However, Brother Mingyu, you have always been my idol." Lady Ji raised her cup with a charming smile, "I toast you, may you step onto the Heavenly Human Realm soon."

With a slight sense of guilt in his heart, Ji Mingyu raised his glass in response. After draining his glass, he asked curiously, "By the way, I remember that you, Youwei, seemed to have married into the Zhou Family. Why did you appear in Changning?"

As soon as the Zhou Family was mentioned, Lady Ji's face turned somewhat unsightly. She poured a cup of Spiritual Wine and drank it all in one go, looking as if she was eager to speak but checking herself, appearing somewhat indignant.

"Brother Mingyu, you are a distinguished scholar of the Academic Palace, it is perfectly understandable that you don't pay much attention to family affairs." Huangfu Jinhuan, who was on the side proposing a toast, also said indignantly, "The Zhou boy is not a good person at all. Not only has he been flirting and philandering after marriage, but he has also brought some other women home."

In her anger, Lady Ji forced the Zhou man to issue a letter of divorce and returned to her parent's home."

"Bang!"

Ji Mingyu's face darkened at this, and the wine glass in his hand was crushed. His icy voice seethed, "Very well, that Zhou boy really dares to insult my sister. Before I return to the Academic Palace this time, I will teach him a good lesson."

"Brother Mingyu, thank you for your concern. But I will avenge this grudge myself." A flash of hatred and ruthlessness passed through Lady Ji's eyes, "Aren't they most adept at weaving and tailoring? I have already persuaded the family to beat them in these two industries, to make him and the entire Zhou Family regret."

"Good, indeed worthy of being my sister and a member of our Ji Family." Ji Mingyu was pleased, "Some people need to be taught a lesson."

Through this round of "getting acquainted" and ingratiating themselves with each other, Ji Mingyu and Lady Ji instantly warmed up to each other, one addressing the other as 'Brother Mingyu', and the other as 'Sister Youwei'.

Hearing all this, Wang Shouzhe, who was sitting not far away, felt goosebumps erupting all over his body.

But Huangfu Jinhuan became even more excited. He had naturally researched Lady Ji's background and identity thoroughly before, and there really was a Lady Ji, Ji Youwei, in the Ji Family.

And she had indeed married into the Celestial Zhou Family and was indeed divorced and returned.

Previously, they believed her because of the halo of the Ji Family, she really had brought out the silk and weaving technology that supposedly came from the Celestial Zhou Family, and because she was very generous, with two Spiritual Platform Realm guards by her side.

They didn't have the resources, the time or the energy to delve too deep. However, the technology wouldn't lie, it was indeed advanced, and it could improve manual efficiency by two to three times.

Now hearing Ji Mingyu's "personal certification", Huangfu Jinhuan's eyes grew brighter, chuckling inwardly, "Xu Anbang, Wang Shouzhe. After tonight, you will know the gap between you and us, the Huangfu Clan."

Lady Ji, you will also experience who really is the local magnate!

With this thought, Huangfu Jinhuan glanced at Xu Anbang and Wang Shouzhe, smiled and said, "Lady Ji is our guest of honor at Huangfu Clan, and has always been our collaborator. You, with your high status, often do not understand the malicious intentions of some minor clans. You must be more careful."

Upon hearing this, Wang Shouzhe chuckled inwardly, so, finally, it's here.

No matter how beautifully Huangfu Jinhuan dressed it up tonight, it couldn't conceal the fact that it was a scheme.

Chapter 67: Reversal! Counterattack_1

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"Hmph!"

The head of the Changning Xu Family, Xu Anbang, grunted with dissatisfaction, "Master Huangfu, you're mistaken. In business, it is naturally to each one's own abilities. Moreover, our Changning Xu family and Ping'an Wang family are both steeped in integrity. Don't defame us with your baseless accusations."

"Uncle Wu said it extremely well." Wang Shouzhe said lightly, "We often teach our children that one should first uphold virtue to establish themselves. If one's virtue is lacking, how can one stand? Especially for us smaller clans. If we lack virtues and abilities, we wouldn't be able to survive, no?"

"Pfft~"

Huangfu Jinhuang's eyes flickered a couple of times, but he did not argue further.

After tonight, the Changning Xu Family and the Ping'an Wang Family will seem like autumnal grasshoppers, with not many days left. Just let them have their moment~

...

As the main residence of Changning's Huangfu family was filled with music and dance, the battle near the workshop on Golden Sand Beach had reached its fiery climax.

The Three Camps Patrol had surrounded Golden Sand Beach, making it impossible for anyone to escape, with several Spirit Platform Realm experts fighting fiercely within it. If nothing unexpected occurs, this would turn into a battle of annihilation.

Most importantly, the fight between Wang Longyan and Mr. Yin stood at center stage.

Mr. Yin's combat power manifested itself not in direct brutal combat, but using cunning tricks.

As he was pushed to reveal all his cards, and seeing each one of them countered, he became like a tiger stripped of its claws. Even with a slightly higher cultivation base than Wang Longyan, he was increasingly unable to withstand her domineering, incessant onslaught.

Without his bizarre movement techniques and a plethora of stratagems, he would have been killed long ago.

Seeing that escape was hopeless, his eyes flickered with a ruthless glint, and he suddenly spoke: "As we stand, we bear no grudges against each other. Why must you persist so doggedly? I know a secret, one that can help you reach the Heavenly Human Realm."

At this point, this was his last card to play.

He was convinced that for any advanced-stage Spirit Platform Realm cultivator, the allure to advance to the Heavenly Human Realm would be an immense temptation. At the very least, she would be a little interested in the secret he held in his hand.

If there were even a hint of hesitation from the other, he would be able to convince her.

Unexpectedly!

Even faced with such temptation, Wang Longyan couldn't be bothered to spare him a second glance, her hatred intensifying instead.

She rapidly activated the Mysterious Ice Sword Technique, and the frost generated by Dragon Smoke Sword abruptly rose significantly. The Sword Energy became colder, and its edge sharper.

The layered Sword Energy completely suppressed Mr. Yin.

Clearly, she had no intention of hearing what Mr. Yin had to say and was determined to kill him.

"You!" Mr. Yin's heart seized, and his face turned extremely ugly, "You must be mad! What advantage does killing me bring you? I can swear on the Styx oath, to share this secret with you, and even swear to assist in your ascension to the Heavenly Human Realm. You should know that although the Yin Sha Sect opposes your Purple Abode Academic Palace, it would never casually break a Styx oath."

The Styx oath is extremely important to the Yin Sha Sect. They rarely break their promises, once they make this kind of vow unless it threatens their very existence.

The fact that he had put forth the Styx oath indicated his desperation.

"I'll admit, your proposal is tempting, and I am indeed aware of the Styx oath of your Yin Sha Sect... Unfortunately..."

The body of Longyan's ancestor floated in mid-air, her slender hand tightly clutching the Dragon Smoke Sword, her face ice-cold, while her eyes were as unyielding as a mountain of ice.

Suddenly.

With a flick of her wrist, she launched a mighty sword strike.

At the same time, her resounding voice echoed down from the sky, "If I let go of past grievances and cooperate with your wicked Yin Sha Sect, how can I face my ancestors? My elders in the Academic Palace? The younger generation of my clan?"

Wang Longyan knew very well that "virtue" is the foundation of a clan!

If one only cares for immediate gains and abandons their moral bottom line, what difference would there be between them and the greedy and selfish Huangfu Clan? A clan with such a shaky foundation may be able to thrive for a while, but it would never last long.

As her words fell, the frost suddenly formed a chilling storm that once again enveloped Mr. Yin.

The Sword Energy from the Dragon Smoke Sword was ubiquitous, and each was deadly!

"Damn it, this damned woman!"

She's a tigress who won't let go!

Mr. Yin roared internally in agony.

Despite his numerous methods, he was in a sorry state, with injuries all over his body. His body was nearly frostbitten, and his actions were slowing down.

If the fight continued, there would only be one outcome - death.

"Enough is enough~"

Mr. Yin's zombie-like face twitched violently, as if he had made a certain decision.

Now, he had no choice but to resort to that one last trick.

Immediately, he began to operate the secret technique, reversing his vital energy.

In an instant, the essence blood in his body began to boil and burn. From his seven orifices and pores, threads of blood seeped out, making him look extremely horrifying.

Blood is the foundation of life, while essence blood is the very foundation of a cultivator.

Any act of using essence blood will more or less harm one's cultivation, and even affect lifespan. Burning essence blood like this could allow one to escape, but it would definitely cause a significant injury to his vital energy.

"I will remember what you gave me today." His eyes filled with cold hatred, he shot a glance at Wang Longyan and suddenly turned into a blood rainbow, swiftly rushing toward the sky, "One day..."

Before he could fly seven to eight zhang away, and before he could finish his sentence, Wang Longyan had already taken action.

As if she had anticipated this, she effortlessly flicked her wrist, and Dragon Smoke Sword started rotating rapidly, whistling as it flew forward.

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The heaven-wide icy storm abruptly converged on the Dragon Smoke Sword, like a launched icicle bomb, piercing that glimmer of bloody light directly in its path.

Swift as lightning, its edge was unparalleled.

Embedding itself in Mr. Yin's chest, his ears heard a "swish," followed by a heart-wrenching agony.

His boastful words abruptly stopped midway. When he looked down, his gloomy eyes instantly filled with panic and incredulity.

How is this possible?

What came into his vision was a bloody hole the size of a bowl in his chest.

His gaze gradually dispersed, and his body flew a certain distance due to inertia before it finally lost all its strength and collapsed heavily on the Golden Sand Beach.

As expected of an Advanced Stage cultivator at the Spirit Platform Realm; just a step away from the Heavenly Human Realm, his life was incredibly tenacious.

Even at this moment, his eyes still hadn't closed. His gaze retained a look of disbelief, as he continued to stare at Wang Longyan.

Wang Longyan's pupils remained as calm as always. With a casual wave of her jade hand, the Dragon Smoke Sword she had hurled earlier drifted back smoke-like into her hand.

She once again swung her sword casually.

Mr. Yin's wide-eyed head flew off. It rolled a few times on the ground, presenting a scene of unwillingness to die.

"You're too confident. You shouldn't have wasted time making threats. This delayed your speed," Wang Longyan's frosty eyes opened only after he had died. "Moreover, considering that the Yinsha Sect's blood escape technique is so well-known, how could I not prepare for you?"

Having a unique thinker (eccentric figure) like Wang Shouzhe as her younger generation, she naturally understood the principle of villains' downfall often resulting from excessive chatter.

In fact, Wang Longyan knew very well that once a disciple of the Yinsha Sect was forced to use the blood escape, life and death were essentially left up to luck.

Even if Mr. Yin managed to escape, there was more than a seventy to eighty percent chance that he would die directly under the blood escape technique.

Yet even so, Wang Longyan didn't want to provide him a chance to survive. So, she threw out the killing move she had been brewing for a while when he was boasting.

If poor Mr. Yin could live again, it's sure he would not talk so much.

Upon witnessing the nosy enemy commander, Mr. Yin, being killed in battle, a cheer suddenly erupted from the soldiers of the Three Camps Patrol, and our members were all greatly boosted in spirit.

Old Ancestor Ruhong took the lead and accomplished a feat.

Like a rainbow piercing the sun, the Water Dragon Spear impaled the Yin Sha Poison Corpse's head, as its massive body roared and collapsed.

The Yin Sha Poison Corpse's strength was remarkable, comparable to the combat power of an advanced stage cultivator at the Spirit Platform Realm.

Nevertheless, without anyone directing it, its low spiritual intelligence was simply not enough to support combat. It was just a large training target, very different from the demon puppets in the Shenwu Army Training Ground in terms of intelligence. It was incomparable.

With Wang Longyan and Old Ancestor Ruhong freeing up their hands, the other battlefields also quickly received reinforcements.

Soon, the other two disciples from the Yinsha Sect, Yin Twenty-six, and Yin Seventeen, were suppressed and killed on the spot, without even a chance to use the blood escape technique.

After all the outsiders had been killed, everyone then surrounded Huangfu Jinyuan.

At this point, Old Ancestor Beichen also stopped, looking at Huangfu Jinyuan regretfully: "Jinyuan, we are contemporaries. We were competitors when we were young. Speaking of talent, you were even slightly better than me. You were so spirited back then. I praised you when you left the family for a better future. But I didn't expect you to end up like this."

"Xu Beichen, what do you know?" Huangfu Jinyuan's face was as grey as death, completely despondent. "You are the direct descendant of the Changning Xu Family, having all the family resources for yourself. When I was young, I was just an ordinary direct-disciple of the Celestial Huangfu Family. What choices did I have?"

Even after separating from the family, how could I not depend on the main family for my livelihood?"

"Old Brother Jinyuan, surrender. As long as you confess your crimes and expose the real mastermind behind the scenes, we can plead for you." Old Ancestor Beichen advised, "Things have reached this point, why are you still blindly loyal?"

"Heh-heh-heh~ it's all just a matter of the victors and the defeated."

Huangfu Jinyuan began to laugh, seeming to age several more years instantly.

He slowly straightened his body. His eyes were filled with determination: "The collusion with the Yinsha Sect and plots against our home territories were all decided by me alone, and are not related to others. Even Huangfu Kangping was merely threatened by me. Xu Beichen, we got to know each other when we were young, which is a kind of fate. Allow you to grant me a quick death."

"You..." Old Ancestor Beichen, failing to persuade him, reluctantly said, "Old brother Jinyuan, since you've made up your mind, all I can give you is a quick death."

Having said that, he turned his palm over.

The Town Dragon Monument suddenly grew tangible and pressed down.

"Boom!"

This time, Huangfu Jinyuan offered no resistance and was crushed to death under the Town Dragon Monument.

A founding ancestor of a generation thus perished.

After killing Huangfu Jinyuan, Old Ancestor Beichen's eyes also showed a deep regret, sighing: "In fact, Huangfu Jinyuan was an outstanding man of his generation, with exceptional talents and will. Unfortunately, he was born into the wrong family. Even though he wanted to shake off the control of the Celestial Huangfu Family, he was helpless and ended up sinking deeper.

If he had been in my position, he might already have reached the Heavenly Human Realm by now."

Old Ancestor Ruhong, Wang Longyan, and the others were silent.

Although they were enemies, they couldn't help but feel some sympathy for Huangfu Jinyuan.

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But an enemy is inevitably an enemy.

All of us have families and businesses, children, and grandchildren. As Huangfu Jinyuan said, winners would be the king and losers the bandit.

As for Huangfu Kang Ping, after witnessing Huangfu Jinyuan's fall, he also howled, wanting to fight to the end.

However, he was weak and ultimately had both his hands and legs broken and was captured alive.

At this moment, the battle on Golden Sand Beach had finally come to an end.

As an official figure, the commander of the Three Camps Patrol, Zhou Zhenwu, said solemnly, "Although the battle is over, there is still much work to do afterward. Whether the Celestial Huangfu Family was involved, no one can be certain, but it doesn't seem that the former Ma Huangfu's Family can extricate themselves from this. I need to report everything truthfully to the city lord.

The final decision on how to handle this would still have to depend on the city lord's opinion."

Having said that, he gave everyone a bow, "Gentlemen, I must take my leave now to deal with the follow-up."

...

Almost at the same time.

Wealth Casino.

The night was deep, the casino finally closed its doors, ending a day's business.

On the third floor, in a heavily guarded room, Manager Huang reclined leisurely in a Taishi chair, enjoying himself while puffing clouds of smoke under the service of two enchanting maids, a look of immense satisfaction on his face.

"Manager Huang." Ding Youde rolled a tobacco leaf for him with a sycophantic face, being careful to light it for him, "Your insightfulness is like that of a deity. As expected, that lad, Wang Zongwei, didn't have the courage to report anything, he's been obedient these past few days."

Manager Huang took a calm puff from his tobacco leaf, half-lidded, his face nonchalant.

He had done things like this more than once, so he naturally wouldn't get as easily excited as Ding Youde.

Indulging himself, he took a deep breath, savouring the taste of the tobacco leaf. After a while, he said, "You did a good job this time. If you follow me closely in the future, you won't lack benefits."

Having said that, he waved his hand.

Upon his signal, one of the enchanting maids came over with a tray, on which were neatly stacked two bundles of Qian gold. If a hundred Qian gold could be bundled into one, then two bundles would be a whopping two hundred Qian gold pieces.

Ding Youde, overjoyed, quickly received it respectfully, nodding and bowing unceasingly, and began to flatter.

Even though he handled a lot of money every day, it was the casino's money. There wasn't actually much that he could pocket. These two hundred Qian gold pieces already represented a huge sum for him.

Just as the two were speaking, suddenly, the casino's main door was kicked open, and a group of soldiers from the Patrol Camp stormed in like wolves and tigers.

"What's going on?"

Manager Huang sensed something was wrong. He brought people downstairs to check. Seeing the situation, his face immediately changed.

"Soldiers, let's talk this through. Isn't there some sort of misunderstanding?" Ding Youde, catching a glint in his eye, also hurried forward to try and curry favor with the soldiers.

However, those soldiers acted as if they hadn't seen him at all, ignoring him and barricading the front and back doors of the casino, blocking the exit for all people.

Amidst the chaos, a series of salutations rang out from outside the door.

"Commander."

"We greet the commander!"

Manager Huang and Ding Youde's attention was immediately drawn away.

A very faint sound of footsteps rang, and then, a lofty figure slowly appeared outside the door.

He looked to be middle-aged, dressed in the standard officer's armour of the Patrol Camp, quite serious looking, full of grandeur.

The light from the palace lamp at the doorway fell on his face, illuminating his distinct profile.

"Wang Dingzu!" Manager Huang's eyes narrowed, and he instantly understood, "You came here for Wang Zongwei?"

Indeed, this military officer outside the door was none other than the only tribe member of the Ping'an Wang who currently worked within the official system, the third of the "Ding" generation, Wang Dingzu.

Over two years ago, Wang Dingzu had successfully reached the Spirit Platform Realm.

Afterward, Wang Shouzhe went to great lengths, making several moves.

Wang Dingzu himself also made a great effort, leading teams to wipe out several gangs of Independent Cultivators active within the Changning Guard jurisdiction, successfully obtaining a promotion and becoming the commander of the Second Patrol Battalion of Changning Guard.

Wang Dingzu shot Manager Huang a look but did not respond to him. Instead, he directly gave an order.

"Search!"

"You dare?!" Manager Huang was furious, murderous intent flashing in his triangular eyes, "Acting so recklessly, aren't you afraid of offending the City Lord?!"

The Wealth Casino was co-owned by the City Guard Mansion. Every year a hefty tribute had to be paid to the city lord. He did not believe that Wang Dingzu would dare to risk offending the city lord by seizing the Wealth Casino!

The soldiers of the Patrol Battalion clearly understood this point too and were somewhat hesitant for a moment.

Wang Dingzu gave Manager Huang a look, his cold voice echoed throughout the room, "I've received reliable intelligence that the Wealth Casino has colluded with the enemy and betrayed our country, having a connection with the Yinsha Sect. According to the Great Drying Law, individuals or organizations that collude with the Yinsha Sect must be dealt with as soon as they are discovered.

If there is any delay, they will be treated as treasonous. Now that the city lord is not in the mansion, I have no choice but to take matters into my own hands and seize those who have betrayed the nation first before reporting to the city lord."

"What?!"

The soldiers of the Patrol Battalion were shocked.

Before they had come, Wang Dingzu, fearing information would leak, only told them the assembly place. Even the matter of seizing the Wealth Casino was only known by a select few confidantes.

At this moment, they were also just learning the truth of the matter for the first time.

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Manager Huang had turned as pale as a sheet.

Even within the Huangfu Clan, the affairs of the Yinsha Sect were classified, known to a select few. As for the matters related to the gambling den, it was all directly handled by him and not even his maid knew about it.

Except...

Seemingly out of nowhere, his heart began to pound, and he turned to look behind, but he no longer saw the figure of Ding Youde.

"Those who understand the times are the true elites. Manager Huang, sorry~"

Ding Youde, who didn't know when, had already stolen to the side of Wang Dingzu, bowing and scraping respectfully, flattering him without end.

"Ding Youde, you dare?!" Manager Huang trembled all over with anger, "Don't forget, your mother and son are still in our hands!"

The matter of Yinsha Sect was of great importance. If he didn't have Ding Youde's weak spot in his hands, how could he dare to let him handle it?

However, no matter how cautious Manager Huang was, he would never have expected that a few months ago, Wang Shouzhe had already investigated Ding Youde's background and secretly protected his mother and son.

With this, wasn't Ding Youde forced to comply?

Although Manager Huang had cultivation at the Spirit Platform Realm, he couldn't pose a threat in the face of hundreds of surrounded Patrol troops, let alone that Wang Dingzu's cultivation was not weaker than his.

Wang Dingzu disregarded the entanglement between Ding Youde and Manager Huang, swept a cold look over the troops: "Why are you still standing there? Search!"

"Yes, Sir!"

The patrolling soldiers responded in unison, pouring into various rooms in the gambling house, starting their professional search.

Seeing this, Ding Youde hurriedly tried to curry favor with Wang Dingzu, "Sir, I know which room Huang Huai'an hid the books in. I'll take you there."

Hearing this, Manager Huang fumed until his vision darkened, and he spat out a mouthful of blood. This damned traitor really sold him out all the way.

...

Time was flying by~

This evening banquet held by Boss Huaye had passed several hours unnoticed.

The closer it got to the end, the more restless Huangfu Jinghuan appeared to be, continuously looking outside as if waiting for something.

Finally, he leaned over to Boss Huaye and whispered a few words into his ear.

Boss Huaye frowned and pondered for a moment before getting up and saying, "I thank you all for coming to the banquet. I have lived for nearly three hundred years. In this life, I hope that we, the prominent families of Changning Guard's, must unite and create a promising future.

Our Huangfu Clan, being a Heavenly Human Family, will certainly do our best as the front runner in cooperation with other prominent families to seek development together."

"The Ancestor is right." Huangfu Deyun and others voiced their agreement in unison.

Meanwhile, Fang Youan and Lord City Master Xiahou Hongde exchanged a look, both comprehending Boss Huaye's intentions. They both stood up and exchanged polite remarks with Boss Huaye.

Whether it was Fang Youan or Xiahou Hongde, neither were locals of Changning Guard's, there was no point contradicting Boss Huaye on this matter.

On the other hand, Wang Shouzhe and Xu Anbang exchanged significant looks.

Boss Huaye's statement seems too extravagant. Forget the fact that he hasn't reached the Mid-Stage of the Heavenly Human Realm yet. Even if he had, who would recognize him as the front runner? Such a demeanor, where do the Lei Clan and other families stand?

As expected.

Lei Yangyu, the patriarch of the Lei Clan who had graced the event, furrowed his brows. Despite his low profile, he didn't intend to escalate his conflict with the Huangfu Clan.

However, just as the banquet was about to end, Boss Huaye nebulously put the Huangfu Clan on such a high pedestal. If no one rebuts it now, everyone would think that Changning Guard's is ruled by the Heavenly Human Huangfu Family, completely disregarding Lei Clan's position.

Immediately, Lei Yangyu from the Lei Clan stood up and cheerfully said, "Boss Huaye, Changning Guard's has been established for 500 years, and the families always mind their own business. Today, do you mean to share the ranch business of your Clan to all of us?"

Boss Huaye's eyes narrowed, revealing a hint of unhappiness, but he ultimately kept in mind that Lei Yangyu was a junior.

At this moment, Huangfu Jinghuan stepped forward and said, "Lei brother's words are presumptuous, the Ancestor means it isn't right for our Changning Guard's to remain disunited like before. If the Lei Clan is willing to step up and take on this responsibility, we surely welcome it."

Lei Yangyu sneered, shook his head, and said, "No thanks. Our Lei Clan has always been focused on taking care of our own clan. We wouldn't want to be bossed around. If your clan really wants to lead the others, promote to Rank Six Prominent Family first."

Without waiting for a response, Lei Yangyu bowed and said, "Gentlemen, an important matter awaits me. I will take my leave first."

His statement incited many others to rise and bid farewell.

This scene provoked a sharp look in Huangfu Jinghuan's eyes.

But at this moment, something unexpected happens.

A commotion of house servant's noise came from outside. This was Huangfu Clan, how dare they barge in at will?

Along with some fierce shouts, "Everyone, move aside! Or, you will be arrested for colluding with the treacherous Yinsha Sect to rebel against Da Qian."

Huangfu Jinghuan's face changed, and he shouted in anger, "Who dares to make a riot outside?"

No sooner did his words drop, than a troop of soldiers in full armor crashed in, encircling the Hall.

Then, a stern-looking general entered.

As soon as he entered, he loudly declared, "The Changning Guard's Third Patrol Battalion is here to arrest those who collude with the Yinsha Sect and rebel against Da Qian, the previous Ma

Huangfu's Family and others involved. Anyone who dares to harbor them, or obstructs our execution of duty, will be prosecuted as accomplices."

Zhou Zhenwu!

This man was Zhou Zhenwu, who had rushed back from Jinsha with his army at the fastest speed.

Today's achievement is so great, how could he miss it?

Chapter 68: The End! Zhantian Cuts Off the Celestial Being's Arm

...

Such an abrupt change.

Both members of the Huangfu Clan were taken aback and their complexions changed drastically.

Especially the old ancestor Hua Ye, who was hosting today's evening banquet only to unexpectedly have the guards of the patrol camp barging into the main residence of the Huangfu Clan, repeatedly accusing the former Ma Huangfu clan of "conspiring to betray the country with the Yinsha Sect".

What a tremendous humiliation this was?!

His heart surged with anger, and he glared fiercely at City Lord Xiahou Hongde: "Lord City Lord, what is the meaning of this? I, Huangfu Huaye, believed I have done nothing to offend you. During your tenure as the City Lord of Changning, our Huangfu family has also done our best to assist you."

Xiahou Hongde's face also turned solemn at once.

It was quite obvious that today's events were beyond his expectations.

He immediately scolded with a serious face: "Zhou Zhenwu, what are you doing?"

"So, the City Lord is also present, that's even better." Zhou Zhenwu seemed to notice Xiahou Hongde for the first time, and then saluted him in military fashion, "During the execution of my

duties, I discovered that the former Ma Huangfu Clan conspired with the Yinsha Sect, colluding with them inside and out, and plotting against Da Qian.

From the intelligence information, I learned that the Clan Leader of the former Ma Huangfu Family, Huangfu Deyun, is here, so I led my comrades to capture him."

"Absurd!" Old ancestor Hua Ye could no longer restrain himself, and rebuked coldly, "What kind of place do you think the main house of my Huangfu Clan is?"

Zhou Zhenwu stared back at Old Ancestor Hua Ye, with a smile that didn't reach his eyes, "As a commander of the patrol camp, I have the duty to capture enemies and maintain peace. Is there a place I can't go? Or should I just stand by and watch your Huangfu family harboring rebels?"

As Old Ancestor Hua Ye was about to erupt with anger, Huangfu Jinhuan hurried forward to mediate: "Commander Zhou, that's not what our old ancestor meant. Our Huangfu family is a prestigious 7th-rank aristocratic family appointed by the court to co-manage the local affairs.

If you barge in here openly declaring our harboring of traitors, once this news gets out and becomes a rumor, it will tarnish our reputation. I'm afraid you won't be able to bear the responsibility for that."

"Master Huangfu." Zhou Zhenwu said with an expressionless face, "Since I led my soldiers here to arrest someone, naturally, I have sufficient evidence. Fortunately, Lord City Lord is also here, I might as well report to him."

Having said that, Zhou Zhenwu saluted Xiahou Hongde again, and clarified the critical points of the whole incident.

Finally, he declared loudly: "The entire incident was witnessed by hundreds of brothers from the Three Camps Patrol. The evidence of their collusion is irrefutable. Since the Lord City Lord is here, I beg you to order the arrest of the traitor Huangfu Deyun and the others involved from the former Ma Huangfu Clan."

With Zhou Zhenwu's explanation, everyone's complexion changed, all casting strange and fearful looks towards the former Ma Huangfu's Clan's people.

It's inevitable for families to have conflicts, frictions, and clashes due to interests or other factors. But to conspire with the Yinsha Sect to annihilate other family's existences, how terrifying is that?

Even though Zhou Zhenwu mentioned only the former Ma Huangfu Clan from start to finish, and did not tie anything to the Changning Huangfu Clan. But everyone knows that the former Ma Huangfu Clan has always looked up to the main family.

Huangfu Jinhuan and Huangfu Deyun exchanged glances, both seeing shock and fury in each other's eyes.

That closely guarded plan was not only exposed by the other party, but they also laid down a grand scheme capturing all of their people.

Especially upon hearing that his family's old ancestor, Huangfu Jinyuan, had already been killed in the battle, Huangfu Deyun's face turned white instantly, and his heart felt a wrenching pain.

If he was not concerned about his surroundings, he might have already broken down in tears.

The Master of the Celestial Lei Family, Lei Yangyu, was originally going to leave. But astonishingly, there was still such a big drama. And Huangfu Clan actually conspired with the Yinsha Sect, this is really over the top.

He simply stayed and spoke with sarcasm: "So this is how the Huangfu Clan acts as the leader, it truly broadens my horizons."

The family head of Changning Xu Family, Xu Anbang, was incensed: "Huangfu Deyun, you've gone too far! We just didn't want to cooperate with you, but you plotted to harm us with the Yinsha Sect. Fortunately, Commander Zhou received the tip off, saving our clan. This matter absolutely cannot easily be let go of, please, City Lord, be our judge!"

After saying that, Xu Anbang bowed to Xiahou Hongde with "great agitation," as though he had suffered a great blow.

Xiahou Hongde also had a grim face.

He could never imagine that within his jurisdiction, there was a local family colluding with the Yinsha Sect and even exposed it in front of a direct disciple of Zifu Xue Palace.

This is undoubtedly a slap in his face, how could he not be angry?

Besides, he was about to retire and they stirred up such an incident. Isn't this an intention of not allowing him a peaceful retirement?

If he doesn't handle today's incident properly, his reputation in the officialdom will definitely get worse. By then, forget about any promotions, he might even be demoted.

Just as he was about to speak.

Huangfu Jinhuan suddenly stepped forward and cupped his hands saying: "City Lord, please wait. Even though Commander Zhou presents his case convincingly. But I believe that was only the private actions of Huangfu Jinyuan and Huangfu Kangping, it has nothing to do with the former Ma Huangfu Clan."

As he spoke, Huangfu Jinhuan hinted at Huangfu Deyun with his gaze that since the other party already had ample evidence, at this moment they can only abandon the pawn to save the king.

Huangfu Deyun, in great sorrow, could only step forward and say: "Upon hearing this news, I, Huangfu Deyun was also extremely shocked. Never have I ever imagined...never could I have imagined that two elders from the family would dare to commit such a monstrous crime! But I can guarantee, this matter has nothing to do with our former Ma Huangfu Clan.

It must have been a decision made privately by these two elders."

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"Ridiculous!" Xu Anbang's eyes spat fire, and he said angrily, "Huangfu Deyun, both your family's first and second ancestors have been involved, yet you dare say the previous Ma Huangfu's Family knew nothing about it. Do you think we are fools?!"

"Xu Anbang, as the saying goes, 'Catch the adulterers in bed, and catch the thieves with the loot.'" Huangfu Jinhuan coldly chuckled and added, "What General Zhou said only implicates Huangfu Jinyuan and Huangfu Kangping as having colluded with the Yinsha Sect. What evidence do you have that implicates the entire previous Ma Huangfu's family?"

"Are you suggesting that if one or two individuals in a family commit a crime, the entire family should be implicated?"

"Brother Xu~" Huangfu Deyun was pitifully pleading, "I truly did not know about this. My family's two ancestors... sigh, they were truly confused."

"Knowledge or ignorance, just arrest them and interrogate them thoroughly." Xu Anbang laughed in anger, "Both of your family's ancestors were involved, how can you possibly be unrelated?"

The two sides were stuck in a deadlock, casting their gazes towards the City Lord, Xiahou Hongde.

At this moment, Xiahou Hongde also had a splitting headache.

Today's events had occurred too abruptly, and he was not prepared at all.

He looked dissatisfiedly at Zhou Zhenwu. If he had received a tip, why didn't he report it to him?

But since this matter was an internal affair of the City Guard Mansion, he was unable to lose his temper there and expose their shortcomings.

He took a deep breath, and said sternly: "Commander Zhou, do you have evidence that this was a collective act of the former Ma Huangfu's Family? Or has Huangfu Kangping confessed to anything?"

"City Lord, although Huangfu Kangping has confessed, he did not admit that the previous Ma Huangfu's Family was the mastermind." Zhou Zhenwu told the truth, "As for how to deal with this, please issue your orders, City Lord."

Xiahou Hongde had attained the Heavenly Human Realm and was ruling over a region, so naturally, he was not a fool. He knew that this issue had now escalated to be a family feud.

Although Huangfu Kangping did not confess, the entire previous Ma Huangfu's Family probably couldn't escape the blame. There was even a possibility that the Celestial Huangfu's Family could be implicated.

Every decision he was making right now could shape the course of this conflict.

Therefore, he said solemnly: "The former Ma Huangfu's Family is a Grade Eight Prominent Family conferred by the imperial court. Everything should be based on evidence. Since Huangfu Kangping hasn't confessed, can we, the City Guard Mansion, arrest people at will?"

This wasn't Xiahou Hongde shirking responsibility, but once something involved a family feud, it would become extraordinarily complex.

Whether the Huangfus, the Xus, or the Wang family, all had their own foundation and connections. Offending any one of them would be a loss-making proposition.

He could only act based on evidence to manage without bias, and avoid leaving any troubles behind. After all, he only had three years left in his term.

"I obey the City Lord's order."

Although Zhou Zhenwu wanted to gain more Merit Points, if the City Lord was not supporting him, he could only act according to the evidence.

Although Huangfu Jinhuan's face was still ugly, he breathed an inner sigh of relief.

Although the plot this time had failed and the losses were heavy, it was more important to avoid implicating the entire previous Ma Huangfu's Family and even the Celestial Huangfu's Family than settling grievances. After all, there would be plenty of opportunities to settle scores in the future.

Some neutral families and units saw through the strangeness of the situation, understanding that this was a competition between the Changning Xu's and the Huangfu's, which naturally also involved other families such as the Ping'an Wang's.

Although it seemed like the Xu's and Wang's had the upper hand, if they couldn't completely destroy the previous Ma Huangfu's Family, it could become a potential threat in the future.

Those families friendly with the Huangfu's breathed a sigh of relief.

Despite suffering heavy losses, the previous Ma Huangfu's Family had maintained some vitality. As long as they could steady themselves, they could start planning their counterattack.

Qian Xuean, the manager of Changning from the Qian Family's Business, was close to Wang Shouzhe. He couldn't help worrying for his friend Wang Shouzhe, afraid that his failure to kill a snake might provoke it to harm him instead.

The people present had diverse thoughts, and the atmosphere in the hall was tense. However, Wang Shouzhe remained calm, appearing nonchalant.

Just at this moment.

A wave of uproar came from outside.

The shouts of house servants and head of households rang out from a distance, "Has the patrol gone mad? They just arrived, and now they're here again!"

Again, a rigorous male voice rang out, "Step aside, or I will arrest everyone present for obstructing law enforcement and colluding with traitors."

In the midst of this, a middle-aged officer with a steady appearance led a team in from the outside.

The newcomer was Wang Dingzu, along with his Defense Second Battalion.

This move really pissed off the people of the Huangfu's.

Old Ancestor Hua Ye was so angry that he was shaking all over, and angrily said, "First it was the Three Camps Patrol, and now the Defense Second Battalion! Xiahou Hongde! Do you take the Huangfu's for a pushover?!"

With this, even Xiahou Hongde was struggling to keep his face, and he sternly rebuked, " Wang Dingzu! As a patrol commander, do you really want to get involved in a family feud? Do you know what taboo this violates?"

"Reporting to the City Lord," said Wang Dingzu calmly, giving a salute, "I'm fulfilling my official duty. I don't understand what the City Lord is implying?"

"Good! I want to see what official duty you are performing!" Xiahou Hongde laughed in rage, "If I find out that you have misused your position to oppress other families, don't blame me for being ruthless!"

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"Yes, My Lord City Guard."

Wang Dingzu responded with composure.

Then with a wave of his hand, several soldiers escorted Ding Youde into the room.

Wang Dingzu declared, "This man, Ding Youde, is the Second Shopkeeper of Wealth Casino. He is my informer who has accused Wealth Casino, Beautiful Manor, and the former Ma Huangfu's Family of hiding minions of the Yinsha Sect!"

In his life, Ding Youde has never seen such a large gathering of prominent people.

He immediately knelt down, trembling, "I am Ding Youde and I have been working in Wealth Casino for twenty years."

Although he was not a significant figure, he was somewhat notorious in Changning, known for his ruthless debt collection and cruel tactics. Many of those present had heard of him, or even knew him.

"Indeed it's Ding Youde."

Whispers of confirmation about Ding Youde's identity helped validate his presence.

"My Lord City Guard, in addition to Ding Youde, Huang Huai'an, the Store Manager of Wealth Casino, has also been arrested," Wang Dingzu reported solemnly, "Upon initial interrogation, Huang Huai'an fully admitted to his crimes and implicated the Great Steward of Splendid Mountain Villa and Huangfu Deyun of the former Ma Huangfu's Family."

With that, he handed a signed and sealed confession to Xiahou Hongde, "Please review it, My Lord City Guard."

Xiahou Hongde took a look.

Indeed, the confession was complete and legally valid.

Instantly, his face changed, and he looked at Huangfu Deyun with an unhappy expression.

Previously, due to the lack of evidence, he had stopped Zhou Zhenwu from arresting anyone. Unexpectedly, less than half an hour had passed, and Wang Dingzu had already thrown evidence right in their faces.

Huangfu Jinhuan quickly stepped forward to protest, "My Lord City Guard, Wang Dingzu is a member of the Wang Family. He should not be allowed to intervene in this case, neither legally nor morally."

"Lord City Guard," Wang Dingzu retorted coldly, "I was merely acting upon a tip-off about potential treachery involving Wealth Casino, Splendid Mountain Villa, and Ma Huangfu's Family. I am simply carrying out an investigation according to law and performing my duty. What does this have to do with the Wang Family?"

Huangfu Jinhuan's face fell as he struggled to retaliate, "The people from Wealth Casino are nothing but rabble. It's rather hasty for General Wang to want to make arrests based solely on their words, isn't it? If it's so easy, I could find a hundred beggars to say that the Wang family is in league with the Yinsha Sect. Would you also want to arrest Wang Shouzhe?"

"There is no evidence connected to the Celestial Huangfu Family in this case. Why is the Huangfu Clan making such a fuss?" Wang Dingzu commented calmly, "I wouldn't have come to make arrests just based on hearsay. Bring me the physical evidence."

With a wave of his hand, two soldiers brought in a big box of account books.

Wang Dingzu reported methodically, "These are the account books that Wealth Casino and Splendid Mountain Villa failed to destroy. Although their bookkeeping is covert, some transactions are suspicious. Upon investigation, they all point to purchases of Yinsha Sect disciples' cultivation

materials on Hundred Island Guard Black Market, eventually ending up at the Splendid Mountain Villa.

All the accounts can be matched. Master Huangfu, if you want to review the detailed evidence, please apply according to the Great Drying Law at the City Guard Mansion."

"In addition, we have sealed off Splendid Mountain Villa where traces of Yinsha Sect's living and cultivation can be found," Wang Dingzu continued calmly, "The evidence on the surface alone is enough to make the arrest. Once we interrogate thoroughly, we will be able to reveal the ins and outs of the whole thing."

All the evidence, both testimonial and material, were ready.

With an authoritative expression, City Guard Xiahou Hongde turned to Huangfu Deyun: "Master Huangfu Deyun, the evidence in General Wang's hands is abundant. I would advise you to go with him."

"Rest assured, Lord City Guard" Wang Dingzu stated, "As long as we arrest Huangfu Deyun and his associates, I assure you that I will investigate this matter thoroughly and not let a single criminal escape."

Upon hearing these words, not only did Huangfu Deyun's face turn pale, but Huangfu Jinhuan and the old Ancestor Hua Ye also changed color simultaneously.

If Huangfu Deyun were to break under the strain of the investigation...

Xu Anbang, the head of the Changning Xu Family, sneered with disdain, "Huangfu Deyun, I thought you were someone important. Who would have thought that you really were in cahoots with the Yinsha Sect?"

He then bowed slightly and said, "My Lord City Guard, in my view, a Grade Eight Prominent Family like Huangfu's has limited power. How could they have such deep ties with the Yinsha Sect? I ask you, My Lord City Guard, to thoroughly investigate this matter for the long-term peace of Changning and give us back a peaceful world!"

The head of the Celestial Lei Family, Lei Yangyu, also seized the moment to strike, "The former Ma Huangfu's Family has always looked up to the Celestial Huangfu Family. If they claim that the Celestial Huangfu Family had no idea about this, I am the first to disbelieve."

"You're randomly accusing and slandering our Celestial Huangfu Family," Huangfu Jinhuan exclaimed angrily, growing more flustered.

If City Lord Xiahou Hongde was determined to investigate this matter, even if the Celestial Huangfu Family had hidden their tracks deep enough, they would be exposed.

At that moment, the Old Ancestor Hua Ye's face gradually kindled with anger. In a fit of rage, he laughed, "Good, good, good. Our Huangfu Family has always been dedicated to protecting Da Qian, but I didn't expect that a collateral family would harbor such degenerates. I was wrong, I failed to manage them properly."

With that said!

An overwhelming aura emanated from him. With a flicker, he was in front of Huangfu Deyun. He raised his hand imbued with swirling flames and struck towards Huangfu Deyun's head, "On behalf of our Huangfu family's ancestors, I will purge you, you disgrace."

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"Boom!"

Amidst a shower of sparks, Huangfu Deyun was struck dead with a single slap. His body was even set ablaze, turning into a pile of ashes.

It's true that Huangfu Deyun may not have expected the blow from Old Ancestor Hua Ye, nor dared to resist due to instinctual fear. However, it showcased the unfathomable strength of Old Ancestor Hua Ye.

A cultivator of the early stage of the Spirit Platform Realm, was obliterated by a single slap!

The other two heavenly realm cultivators at the scene watched everything with wide eyes but did not intervene. After all, the former Ma Huangfu Family was a branch of the Huangfu Family of Changning. In some sense, it could be considered an internal matter.

However, this incident would likely lead to strong suspicions of covering up a murder.

The scene fell into silence.

Some remained calm and composed. Others wore expressions of fear.

Only Xu Anbang, the head of Xu Family, let out a sigh, as if to add insult to injury, "Brother Deyun died too fast. It now may be difficult to track down the puppet master. Old Ancestor Hua Ye was too impulsive. Has he not severed the clues?"

Lei Yangyu, the head of Lei Family, mocked, "Brother Xu, you're mistaken. That a traitor working with the evil Yinsha has emerged from our own family bloodline, it is already difficult for Old Ancestor Hua Ye to kill him out of righteousness. This clearly shows that the puppet master has absolutely no connection to the Heavenly Huangfu Clan."

"You insolent brats!" Hua Ye's Old Ancestor's face darkened, filled with anger, "You dare speak without respect! Even if your own ancestors were in front of me, they wouldn't dare be so audacious..."

Old Ancestor Hua Ye might be old, but he had led a smooth and successful life with no one daring to oppose him. His temper was not one to be trifled with.

Huangfu Jinhuan also recovered from his shock, breaking into a cold sweat, hurriedly advised, "Old Ancestor, please calm your anger, we failed to lead our branch families well, idle chatter is normal. Please do not take offense at their words."

The meaning behind his words was that they should put the public murder behind them and let everything settle before going through with the investigation, else they might fall into the traps of their enemies.

"Hmph!" After today's tumultuous events, Old Ancestor Hua Ye's face was covered, he bowed slightly towards Xiahou Hongde and Fang Youan, "I apologize for subjecting you to such an awkward situation. I'm feeling unwell, so I shall take my leave."

With that, Old Ancestor Hua Ye, feeling too ashamed to remain at the scene, left.

Once he left, the dust seemed to settle.

Xiahou Hongde's stance was consistent, everything proceeded according to law and evidence; though Huangfu Deyun was dead, with ample evidence, some key figures in the former Ma Huangfu Family would inevitably be implicated.

He immediately ordered, "Zhou Zhenwu, Wang Dingzu, hear my order. I assign the two of you in charge of this case. Ensure that procedures are upheld and law is adhered to. Arrest and interrogate those who should be."

"Understood, City Lord."

Zhou Zhenwu and Wang Dingzu acknowledged the orders and went to carry out their task.

With Xiahou Hongde's final word, there was no chance of survival for the former Ma Huangfu Family.

All the banquet attendees, having lost their festive moods, started leaving.

The once lively main residence of the Huangfu Family suddenly became desolate.

The emptiness bore a mournful feeling, as if everyone had vanished.

...

On the wide road.

A carriage moved slowly, carrying Wang Shouzhe and Xu Anbang.

Once they were in this private carriage, Xu Anbang shed his disguise and excitement seeped through his veins, "Shouzhe, we scored a full victory this time. We took down the villains of the Yinsha Sect and the former Ma Huangfu Family. After all this, the reputation of Huangfu Family of Changning is ruined. Who would dare trust them again? The Huangfu Family has become barren.

Haha, did you see the look on Huangfu Jinhuan's face at the end? It was quite a spectacle."

"Fifth Uncle, have a sip of spiritual tea to calm down first." Wang Shouzhe leisurely brewed a pot of spiritual tea, pouring a cup for his uncle. "Even though the minions have been eradicated, we can't underestimate the Heavenly Huangfu Family."

Wang Shouzhe was excited about their successful plan but having experienced storms in his life, he remained cool-headed.

"Afraid of them?" Xu Anbang took a sip of spiritual tea, full of spirit, "When our several Grade Eight Families unite, our combined strength is greater than theirs. Moreover, our family's Old Ancestor Beichen is only a half-step away from the Heavenly Realm."

For hundreds of years, the Xu Family of Changning has been suppressed by the Huangfu Clan, always being the perennial third-in-command of Changning's guards. Now, the Xu Family finally has the chance to break free from the influence of the Huangfu Clan. How could Xu Anbang not be excited?

Today's victory was indeed resounding, but it was part of a grand strategy that Wang Shouzhe had been plotting for years. Thus, the interim triumph was only expected. However, dealing with the now-incensed Huangfu Clan of Changning would likely be no easy task.

"Wait, isn't this Spiritual Tea mine?" Xu Anbang had been drinking the tea and finding it more and more agreeable. Upon closer inspection, it seemed like this was his carriage!

This prompted a mix of laughter and tears from him. That Shouzhe, he really knew how to play the host in others' homes. He had been momentarily inattentive and mistook this to be Shouzhe's carriage.

Just then...

From outside the carriage, an amiable voice belonging to Lei Yangyu of the Celestial Lei Family rang out, "Brother Anbang, Brother Shouzhe, may I join you in the carriage for a chat?"

Lei Yangyu was one of the only two clan leaders among Changning's Celestial Families. His position was in no way inferior to Huangfu Jinhuan's, and he was a highly influential figure in Changning.

Such a distinguished individual...

Naturally, Xu Anbang and Wang Shouzhe couldn't afford any discourtesy. They hurriedly descended from the carriage to invite him in and, with polite greetings, served him some Spiritual Tea.

As the trio exchanged pleasantries, their relationship grew noticeably warmer after three rounds of tea.

It was then Lei Yangyu smiled at Xu Anbang. "Congratulations, Brother Anbang. Add the previous Huangfu's enormous efforts to sabotage and seize your workshop's technology, we can see your technology must be top-tier in Longzuo County. Well, I must say, you've kept it well-hidden all this time, only revealing your hand at the crucial moment. Your family's rise is surely imminent."

"Brother Yangyu, we were merely fortunate," Xu Anbang hurriedly replied in modesty. "Had the Huangfu Clan not been so oppressively relentless, why would our Xu Family resort to such measures?"

There was an agreement between the Xu and Wang families to proclaim externally that silk-reeling technology was independently developed by the Xu Family, slyly shouldering the unnecessary controversy on behalf of the Ping'an Wang Family.

Regarding Lei Yangyu, Xu Anbang didn't deny they had premeditated tonight's battle.

After all, every major family was astute. Any discerning observer would have realized that today constituted a public, high-stakes duel between the families of the Huangfu and Xu clans.

In the end, Xu simply outwitted their competition.

Denying it outright would only leave an impression of insincerity.

"In the end, the previous Huangfu and Yinsha Sect's collusion simply invited their own defeat," Lei Yangyu laughed coldly. "Their dishonest practices were bound to lead to their destruction. Our Lei Family is different. We may be accused of being overbearing, but we resolve our inconsistencies internally and would never liaise with sinister cults."

"It's a real pity for Huangfu Jinyuan, the previous Huangfu's founding ancestor and former rising prodigy. Ultimately, he couldn't break free from his family's control and ended up in this regrettable state," he added.

Wang Shouzhe and the others sighed, expressing their disappointment for Huangfu Jinyuan.

However, as Wang Shouzhe saw it, this was to be expected. Not to mention the intricate relationships between proprietary and branch lineages of the Profound Martial families - even many contemporary Earth families experienced unrestricted influence and manipulation.

Both physiological and psychological imprints often remained with a person throughout their life.

Suddenly!

From outside the carriage, an authoritative, seemingly furious voice rang out, "Is Family Head Shouzhe there? I am Xiahou Hongde, and I've come to discuss a few things."

Unsurprisingly, City Lord Hongde was in a foul mood.

Throughout the entirety of today's events, he had essentially been used as a pawn.

Moreover, he hadn't been given a chance to resist or even object, instead subjected to a seamless manipulation!

Both Lei Yangyu of the Lei Family and Xu Anbang of the Xu Family looked at Wang Shouzhe with slight apprehension at hearing City Lord Xiahou Hongde's tone, which suggested he was seeking trouble.

Being as composed as ever, Wang Shouzhe reassured them with an unstressed, non-arrogant tone, "If City Lord Xiahou calls for me, how would I dare not answer?"

Chapter 69: Wang Shouzhe Becoming an Important Figure_1

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Soon afterwards, Wang Shouzhe and two others dismounted their carriage. After they made a gesture of courtesy, Lei Yangyu left immediately on some pretext. Even Xu Anbang found a random excuse to leave the carriage.

Lei Yangyu glanced at him sideways: Brother Anbang, isn't this your carriage?

Xu Anbang shrugged helplessly.

What else could he do?

Sigh~ It's not easy being a family head these days~

Not to mention their legal entanglements at hand, on the other side, Wang Shouzhe led Xiahou Hongde onto the carriage.

Inside this carriage, the two sat face to face.

Facing Xiahou Hongde's slightly sharp gaze, Wang Shouzhe remained calm and relaxed, as if the Lord of the City opposite was not here to make trouble.

He elegantly brewed a pot of Spiritual Tea and served him with a cup: "This is 'Biyu Hook Green', a treasure collected by the Xu family of Changning. It has a clear, bitter taste and a lingering flavor, making it perfect for enjoying in this refreshing autumn season."

This tea leaves resemble tiny green jade hooks, which complement the Sheep Fat Jade Porcelain Tea Bowl perfectly.

Xiahou Hongde remained silent and still, maintaining his stern demeanor. He picked up the tea cup and took a sip, slightly frowning: "It's a bit too bland."

"I'm afraid I overlooked that," Wang Shouzhe laughed lightly, "City Lord Xiahou, as a military hero himself, is used to an imposing spirit of overriding the world with force, naturally, he would not enjoy the light taste of this Spiritual Tea."

"Overriding the world with force?! What an imposing spirit!" Xiahou Hongde's eyes sparkled, revealing a look of admiration, "Is this the act of a fellow of the Purple Abode? But even a Master of Purple Abode wouldn't be able to move a mountain, would they? Maybe those Purple Abode fellows who focus on War Body cultivation could move a smaller mountain?"

...

Wang Shouzhe's eyelid twitched. He barely kept his composure.

I'm talking about the ambiance with you and you're discussing possible practical operations? Are these even related?!

But he understood.

The descendants of military families, due to their upbringing, have different philosophies from those of the local Profound Martial families, and especially unconventional perspectives.

Their internal culture prioritizes hot-blooded valor and military ethics.

No wonder that phrase resonated with the other party.

Wang Shouzhe then swept across his Storage Ring and pulled out a bottle of wine. He poured him a glass of high-quality glass: "City Lord Xiahou, have a taste of my homemade 'Fire Crystal Burn'."

Fire Crystal Burn?

Xiahou Hongde stared at the crystal clear glass. The wine looked red like fire, and its pungent smell quickly filled the carriage.

He frowned: "It seems to be Spiritual Wine 'Red Flame Rosy Clouds', which is brewed from Red Crystal Rice. It just has a stronger fiery color and the wine is clearer."

The Red Flame Rosy Clouds is a kind of Spiritual Wine well-liked by military officers. It's sold at the renowned Hundred Flavors Pavilion.

As for why the officials welcome it? Of course, it's because the average Profound Martial soldiers cannot afford to drink the "Red Flame Rosy Clouds".

"This 'Fire Crystal Burn' of mine is indeed brewed from Red Crystal Rice," Wang Shouzhe explained with a smile, "However, the method and technique are quite different. How about City Lord Xiahou have a taste?"

In fact, at tonight's feast, the Huangfu Clan also brought out some good wine for hospitality, and Xiahou Hongde had quite a share. With his level of cultivation, it's not easy for him to get drunk.

He really didn't think that Wang Shouzhe could have better wine than the treasures owned by the Huangfu Clan.

However, if Wang Shouzhe could take it out so formally, this wine should have something unique. And indeed, the aroma of the wine was quite strong.

Out of slight curiosity, Xiahou Hongde picked up the wine glass and drank half of it in one breath.

"Hiss!"

The wine smoothly went down his food pipe into his stomach. Wherever it passed, it first brought a sense of coolness and comfort, and then, as if a fire was burning in his stomach. Even a master like Xiahou Hongde suddenly felt his blood speed up, and an uncontrollable flash of red appeared on his face.

His eyes widened in surprise.

It wasn't until ten or so breaths later that he relaxed, breathed out a sigh of relief and praised with bright eyes: "What a 'Fire Crystal Burn'! Indeed, it is good wine, quite powerful! Compared with this, Red Flame Rosy Clouds can only be given to those gentle girls."

He was full of praises for the Fire Crystal Burn, so much so that he forgot how much he used to like Red Flame Rosy Clouds. He was clutching the glass, staring intently at the Fire Crystal Burn, as if he had found a new love.

No wonder he had such a reaction, this Fire Crystal Burn was not brewed in an ordinary way. It was a strong distilled liquor brewed by Wang Shouzhe's attempt.

Coupled with the fiery energy contained in Red Crystal Rice itself, it naturally resulted in a palate of high alcohol coolness and a burning sensation in the throat.

The famous "Red Flame Rosy Clouds" is just the equivalent of a rice wine with a few dozen degrees, while "Fire Crystal Burn" is a high-strength liquor with sixty or seventy degrees, which can be ignited directly by fire.

They are absolutely not comparable.

"You little fella, you really know how to cater to people's desires. You've got some good skills." After Xiahou Hongde had half a glass of Fire Crystal Burn, he started to feel a little exalted. He talked with less restraint and more of his true color, "No wonder, the downtrodden Ping'an Wang family, in your hands, has achieved such a dramatic change in just ten years."

Speaking of this, Xiahou Hongde was somewhat sentimental.

He had been stationed as the City Lord of Changning for seventeen years.

In the first seven years, he hardly remembered the so-called Ping'an Wang family. In his opinion, they were just a decaying small family barely surviving in some remote corner of Ping'an Town, appearing to be on the verge of collapse anytime soon.

But to his surprise, one day, this rundown family rose abruptly. Suddenly, the other two families in the same Ping'an Town vanished...

If it ended there, it wouldn't have been a big deal to Xiahou Hongde. But unexpectedly, the family continued to prosper, not only becoming a Grade Eight Prominent Family but also growing step by step to the point it is today, possessing the qualifications and abilities to influence the situation in Changning.

This time, he had deliberately stirred up a storm in secret, involving many powerful families in Changning. He indirectly went head-to-head with the Huangfu Clan, causing the esteemed Celestial Huangfu Family to suffer a great loss.

"Marquis Xiahou is too kind," Wang Shouzhe chuckled, respectfully filling his wine glass. "As the family head of the Wang family, all I wanted to do was to do my best so that the family could live a better life. It was not about whether I was competent or not."

"But that doesn't mean I will forgive you so easily."

After showing his appreciation, Xiahou Hongde's expression turned stern in an instance. His profound energy cascaded from his body to envelop the whole carriage.

The vast pressure bore down on Wang Shouzhe like a mountain.

"You've been meddling behind the scenes and caused such a big commotion in Changning without mentioning it. Furthermore, you dared to manipulate me, turning me into your puppet, even the Defense Second Battalion and Three Camps Patrol ended up as your tools, indirectly drawn into the family feud. Wang Shouzhe, tell me, how should I deal with you?"

He was also somewhat infuriated out of humiliation, unknowingly, he had been manipulated by this young man! He wanted to ask him, where do you think I stand? Or perhaps, should we change roles?

Another Spirit Platform Realm person might already have been sweating bullets facing the imposing pressure from a Heavenly Human Realm.

However, amidst the pressure, Wang Shouzhe remained as steady as a rock. He resembled a boat amidst a storm, seemingly in jeopardy but it wasn't overturned no matter how huge the waves crashed.

He smirked unflusteredly, "Marquis Xiahou is joking. I believe the Marquis, having served in Changning for close to twenty years, would undoubtedly understand our sentiments and is familiar with the Wang family's past."

"The Ping'an Wang family only wanted to quietly farm, develop the economy, earn more resources and provide a better future for the next generation. However, as the saying goes, the tree may prefer calm but the wind will not subside. The Ping'an Wang family just did not wish to repeat past mistakes. If there have been any offenses made during this, we hope the Marquis could be lenient."

Wang Shouzhe did not deny what he had done, even though he was behind the scenes controlling the matter. But who amongst the higher-ups in Changning would take this lying down?

"Forget it, forget it." Seeing his appeal for mercy, Xiahou Hongde's anger dissipated quite a bit and he drank down the Fire Crystal Burn in his glass.

He was in truth left with no recourse against Wang Shouzhe as well.

This young man had done things so impeccably that even though he had manipulated the Defense Battalion and Xiahou Hongde, in reality, there was evidence to prove the opponent had colluded with the Yinsha Sect, undeniably.

"In the incident with the former Ma Huangfu Clan, they indeed brought it upon themselves," Xiahou Hongde waved his hand, licked his lips with a lingering taste of the Fire Crystal Burn, and said, "How about this, one hundred jins, no, two hundred jins of Fire Crystal Burn and I'd forgive you."

Wang Shouzhe couldn't help but chuckle secretly.

Marquis Xiahou, the price of your forgiveness is quite cheap, I must say~

Even though Fire Crystal Burn was brewed using Red Crystal Rice and the consumption in doing so was not negligible, the cost of two hundred jins worth of liquor was merely a few hundred Qian Gold at most, which was nothing compared to the worth of a powerhouse in the Heavenly Human Realm.

However, he did not answer directly, instead, he took out a flat seabowl made of Sheep Fat Jade Porcelain, filled more than half of it with Fire Crystal Burn and said, "The way Marquis Xiahou consumed Fire Crystal Burn earlier was not the authentic method. Allow me to instruct you on the true way to enjoy it."

Xiahou Hongde's attention was instantly drawn.

He stared at the seabowl, wondering what tricks this young man Wang Shouzhe could pull off?

Wang Shouzhe then took out a piece of Fire Spirit Stone, activated his profound energy to ignite it and the Fire Spirit Stone immediately started burning.

Then, Wang Shouzhe cast the burning Fire Spirit Stone into the seabowl.

In an instant, the Fire Crystal Burn in the flat seabowl suddenly started burning without warning, the fire blazed brightly, forming a brilliant blue flame at the mouth of the seabowl.

"What, what!"

Xiahou Hongde was astonished by the fact that Fire Crystal Burn could actually burn, hence the intensity.

Xiahou Hongde didn't realize that spirits with alcohol levels above fifty degrees could catch fire and spirits with sixty to seventy degrees when burnt, the flame color would be extremely beautiful.

"Marquis, please drink this swiftly while it's hot," Wang Shouzhe made a gesture of invitation.

Xiahou Hongde hesitated slightly. He had lived for so many years, yet he had never drunk spirits that were burning. It was too much.

However, compelled by his inquisitive nature and relying on his Heavenly Human Realm cultivation, he hardened his heart, held up the seabowl, tilted his head back, and swallowed the Fire Crystal Burn and the Fire Spirit Stone in one shot.

Seeing this, Wang Shouzhe twitched at the corner of his mouth.

The intense flavor of burning fire momentarily "ignited" Xiahou Hongde, sliding down his esophagus and into his stomach. He felt as if he was surrounded by a blazing inferno, his entire face flushed. His pores opened instantly and there was a faint steam arising from his body.

This kind of formidable stimulation was something he had never experienced in his two hundred odd years of life.

After a long while, he came to his senses, slapped his thigh excitedly, "Good, great wine! This is what Fire Crystal Burn is! The authentic way to drink Fire Crystal Burn. Great taste~! The only issue is that it requires pairing it with a Fire Spirit Stone every time, it's kind of hard to afford~"

"This..." Wang Shouzhe wiped the sweat off his forehead and said cautiously, "Marquis, did you also swallow the Fire Spirit Stone?"

"Yes I did. It felt great," Xiahou Hongde smacked his lips, relishing the aftertaste, then frowned and said, "It's still burning in my stomach. I had to use my profound energy to encapsulate it.... what's the next step? Do I digest it?"

"This, this..."

Wang Shouzhe was speechless, befitting of a monster in the Heavenly Human Realm.

He coughed lightly, being very cautious as he explained, "Marquis, you should find a secluded place and spit it out later. That was used for lighting the fire..."

Sigh~ Just wanting to give a treat of a drink, ended up losing a Fire Spirit Stone.

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...

"This..."

With eyes as large as copper bells and burning like fire, Xiahou Hongde stared at Wang Shouzhe.

You little rascal, why didn't you mention such an important thing earlier? He'd wrongly assumed that consuming the Fire Spirit Stone was a necessary step of drinking the Fire Crystal Burn!

Apparently, it was just to help ignite the fire or perhaps add a bit of ceremony to the proceedings.

Suddenly, Xiahou Hongde felt the burning sensation in his stomach growing more intense.

Coating the Fire Spirit Stone with Mysterious Energy was no easy feat. And the "Fire Crystal Burn" was no simple concoction. After drinking half a bowl, he felt a burning sensation all over, his blood rushing faster and faster.

He was revelling in double the joy.

He hesitated over whether to get off the carriage and force out that damn Fire Spirit Stone.

"However, it's unquestionable that Lord Xiahou is a cultivator of the Heavenly Human Realm." Wang Shouzhe spoke as he bowed to Xiahou Hongde, showing admiration and lavishly praising him. "Despite having a burning Fire Spirit Stone in your stomach, you can calmly handle it — a true testament to your extraordinary prowess."

Remember, a Fire Spirit Stone, once activated, can burn without oxygen and release burning hot waves. Normal people simply can't tolerate such intensity.

Upon this speech...

Her thoughts of getting off the carriage and vomiting were immediately dispelled.

"That's just a little trick. When you, Master Shouzhe, ascend to the Heavenly Human Realm, you will naturally be able to do the same."

Suppressing the severe discomfort as if his internal organs were being roasted in a furnace, he managed to maintain a profound and unfazed demeanor.

He picked up the previously despised Spiritual Tea and leisurely savored it, portraying the demeanor of an elevated being who could remain unaffected even in the face of imminent catastrophe: "Where were we? Ah, right. If you give me 300 jin of Fire Crystal Burn, this City Lord will forgive you this time."

The Fire Crystal Burn is indeed a treasure!

After only one drink, he was captivated. Despite swallowing the Fire Spirit Stone and experiencing some discomfort in his stomach, he found it perfectly suitable for their kind-of "earth-shattering,

brehtaking" robust warriors. It reminded him of the old days of battling alongside his brothers on the battlefield when he was in the Spirit Platform Realm.

Without realizing it, he raised the stakes by an additional hundred jin.

"A mere 300 jin of Fire Crystal Burn is a small matter. Besides, how long can one drink a little Fire Crystal Burn?" Wang Shouzhe calmly refilled his tea, speaking leisurely, "Lord Xiahou is about 200 years old, at the prime of his life. Even if you only drink a hundred jin a year, the rest of your life will require at least fifty to sixty thousand jin."

Fifty to sixty thousand jin?

Xiahou Hongde paused, unable to do the math in his head.

Oh, right, this kid factored in his lifespan in the Purple Abode Realm!

This young fellow sure knew how to talk.

I like it.

However, he has made a fair point. Even if he only drinks one hundred jin a year, he'd still need to consume tens of thousands of jin in his remaining lifetime, wouldn't he?

Immediately, he asked hesitantly, "Master Shouzhe, how much does this wine cost per jin?"

Even the Red Cloud Liquor, which he now found monotonous, cost several Qian Gold per jin. As for something like Fire Crystal Burn, this "world's best liquor", it's unlikely to be less than ten Qian Gold, right?

With his stipend, he could afford it.

But Xiahou Hongde wasn't a solitary man supporting only himself, he had a whole family to look after. And his descendants, scattered in various camps, always needed some financial support.

Moreover, Heavenly Human Realm cultivators have their own expenses. Daily cultivation consumes resources, which accumulates over time into astronomical figures. For ambitious cultivators aspiring to progress in the Heavenly Human Realm, it's quite normal to consume tens of thousands of Qian Gold each year on cultivation.

That's exactly why some families that are poor financial managers or lack financial resources not only can't afford to upgrade to the Heavenly Human Realm but also can be pulled down by just one Heavenly Human Realm cultivator if they fail to open a new stream of income in time.

Of course, if a family produced a Heavenly Human cultivator, their status would be different.

Under the protection of the elderly Heavenly Human Ancestor, they could quickly expand their business and income. Or, at worst, the elderly Heavenly Human Ancestor could go to the outer domains and hunt something to keep them going.

However, going to the outer domains to hunt was always risky. If anything goes wrong, one could easily perish there. Therefore, it's not a long-term solution.

Back to the topic at hand.

Wang Shouzhe calmly said, "If sold to the public, I've set the initial price at ten Qian Gold per jin."

As expected!

Xiahou Hongde's gaze became slightly concentrated, a thousand Qian Gold for Heavenly Human Realm cultivators is not an astronomical figure. But if it's a long-term annual expense, it becomes a hefty burden.

"How about this, I will give Lord Xiahou an annual allocation of three thousand jin at a price of seven Qian Gold per jin." Wang Shouzhe, who preferred to drink spiritual tea, poured himself another cup and spoke. "After all, my Wang family doesn't rely solely on selling liquor for a living."

Seven Qian Gold per jin? Three thousand jin as an annual quota! And that's every year!

Xiahou Hongde was momentarily stunned.

If he could sell it for a profit, wouldn't he earn more than twenty thousand Qian Gold out of thin air?

He fell into silence, a strange look in his eyes as he looked at Wang Shouzhe.

The moment this boy opened his mouth, it was a business deal worth tens of thousands of Qian Gold every year, and he acted as if it were just a trifle. No wonder... he had united so many prominent families in such a short time, even the prominent Xu family of Changning seemed to be following his lead.

This boy was a God of Wealth! Who wouldn't like the God of Wealth?

"Master Shouzhe, you are trying to bribe me." Xiahou Hongde said seriously, "What is your aim?"

As a City Lord, he had seen a lot of the world.

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He dared to take a share of the profits from the Wealth Casino because it was a hidden income that all city lords had turned a blind eye to for generations. It would be a waste not to take it.

But if Wang Shouzhe wants to use money to crush him and get him involved in the family feud, wouldn't that be a disadvantage? After all, it's a loss that can't be offset.

"City Lord Xiahou is overthinking." Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "If I wanted to use you in the family feud, wouldn't I initiate it after the fact? I'm just interested in your military and martial arts connections. I'm just selling some wine to diversify the family's income sources. This is purely business cooperation and has nothing to do with anything else."

"Of course, if it's reasonable, legal and within your duties, I would be grateful if you would give us some help. It's a way of mutual assistance."

"Alright." Unable to resist the temptation, Xiahou Hongde agreed with a smile, "I can only promise you to provide some convenience within my term that is in accordance with Daqian Law. Meanwhile, I will also hint at the Huangfu Clan not to mess around during my term."

"In that case, thank you, City Lord Xiahou."

Wang Shouzhe bowed to him, and the smile on his face became more sincere.

He did believe that Xiahou Hongde would hint at warning the Huangfu Clan, as this also pertained to Changning's peace during his term.

However, it's useless. Xiahou Hongde had overestimated his deterrence in the eyes of the Huangfu Clan and underestimated the tremendous pressure they faced for survival and promotion.

The development of the situation was destined to disappoint Xiahou Hongde~

After the benefit collaboration, Xiahou Hongde's attitude towards Wang Shouzhe changed considerably.

After a few more words, Xiahou Hongde took leave with several bottles of Fire Crystal Burn gifted by Wang Shouzhe.

After getting off the carriage, his nonchalant demeanor disappeared without a trace, his face flushed with embarrassment and discomfort.

Finding a corner, he didn't care about anything else and flew towards the City Guard Mansion.

Because that damned Fire Spirit Stone had unknowingly slipped into his stomach and entered an indescribable, longest organ of the human body.

...

Meanwhile, Wang Shouzhe had just seen off City Lord Xiahou and already had another guest.

It was Fang Youan, the Direct Disciple of Purple Abode Academic Palace.

He still had the calm and gentle demeanor of a Prominent Family's son, even his way of tasting spiritual tea was particularly graceful.

He teasingly said, "Junior Brother Shouzhe, you're too popular. Now I have to line up to see you."

"Haha, Senior Brother Youan is joking." Wang Shouzhe sat across from him, his expression slightly apologetic, "I know why Senior Brother Youan is here. I am indeed at fault today. I stirred up some trouble while you're in Changning, using the prestige of the Academic Palace to deter the Old Ancestor Hua Ye, making him temporarily dare not to act rashly."

Although Fang Youan and other disciples of the Academic Palace did not speak or take a stand in this matter, it doesn't mean that they weren't part of Wang Shouzhe's calculations.

In fact, if they weren't present, the Celestial Huangfu Family and Old Ancestor Hua Ye might have been able to cover things up given their influence in Changning, and Xiahou Hongde might not have decided to rectify the situation so swiftly and decisively.

After all, the Academic Palace does have significant influence officially. Xiahou Hongde was also afraid that any hesitation on his part would affect his forthcoming promotion and reputation.

Therefore, the presence of Fang Youan and other disciples of the Academic Palace was, in fact, the most crucial factor for the perfect execution of this plan.

"No harm done. It's your skill that you were able to navigate the situation." Fang Youan smiled lightly, "After all, the opposition did have some connection to the Yinsha Sect. Since you've dealt with them, you could be said to have made a contribution to Daqian."

"Thank you for your understanding, Senior Brother Youan," said Wang Shouzhe with a smile. "You've come at an opportune time. Here, try some of my homemade 'Iceberg Burning.'"

Saying so, he raised his hand and took out a jug of spiritual wine.

"..."

Fang Youan was slightly curious.

'Iceberg Burning' is also a high-grade liquor. However, Wang Shouzhe's 'Iceberg Burning' was made from Baiyu ZhiLan Spirit Rice and Ice Dew Grass, making it as clear and translucent as ice and exuding a slight chilliness.

As soon as the liquor was poured into the specially thickened glass, wisps of white mist coiled and rose, giving it a fairy-like appearance.

"This wine, when paired with an ice-spirit stone, is even better."

As he spoke, Wang Shouzhe took out an Ice Spirit Stone, activated it with mysterious energy, and dropped it into the cup.

In an instant, the white mist turned into frost, and a beautiful layer of frost formed on the rim of the cup.

"Interesting, I'll try it."

Fang Youan picked up the double-layered glass and was about to drink.

Wang Shouzhe recalled a previous caution and quickly advised, "Senior Brother Yu An, do not drink the Spirit Stone along with it."

Fang Youan gave Wang Shouzhe a strange look, "Junior Brother Shouzhe, why do you need to remind me? Do you think I am a fool who would swallow a spirit stone?"

"Ah ... ha, ha~ I guess I spoke too much." Wang Shouzhe forced a laugh and raised his hand, "Senior Brother Yu An, go ahead."

Fang Youan sniffed and then gracefully took a sip.

The next moment, his calm expression shifted slightly, then shifted again, and then once more. His eyes became somewhat blurred, as if he had fallen into a certain emotional memory.

After a good ten breaths, his eyes regained their clarity and he said with a hint of emotion, "I now understand why this drink is called 'Iceberg Burning'. The initial taste is like ice wine, and it gives a

refreshing feeling all over the body, but right after that, it feels like your internal organs are being roasted by fire. Great drink. But..."

"Senior Brother Yu An, do you find it lacking in some way?" Wang Shouzhe asked humbly.

"There's nothing lacking, just the name... it could be changed." Fang Youan half-closed his eyes, "The drink at first sight appears to be like a gentle and innocent girl, and the first sip is wondrously indescribable. But when you actually drink it, you realize she turns out to be as furious as fire, torturing you until you're in excruciating pain.

But when you come back to your senses, you realize you've fallen in love with this inexplicably wonderful taste. How about renaming it to - 'Ice Lady'."

"..."

Wang Shouzhe was speechless; it seems that Senior Brother Yu An's life experiences were quite diverse~

I wonder which senior sister managed to wrap him around her finger.

But the Ice Lady huh——

Sure! As long as you're happy. After all, who are we to argue with a Tianren Realm Cultivator? Might is right.

Wang Shouzhe decided to use Senior Brother Yu An's description for the packaging of the drink in future, and he would make sure to credit the source.

Wouldn't you want to try a drink that even the Direct Disciple of Xue Palace approves?

Afterwards, Wang Shouzhe persuaded Fang Youan to help sell the drink in the same old way.

Don't look at him as a Direct Disciple of the Xue palace, but even such disciples are people who also need resources to strive for the Purple Abode, right?

It's a win-win situation~

...

After Fang Youan left, the carriage "borrowed" by Wang Shouzhe welcomed a queuing customer again.

It was Lady Ji disguised by Wang Mei.

In the recent action of eliminating the vassals of Huangfu Clan, she made a great contribution. Moreover, her identity would still be useful in the upcoming strategic arrangements.

Especially after Ji Mingyu unintentionally certified it, her identity representing Lady Ji was now "indisputable".

"Wang Mei." Wang Shouzhe served her with another "Biyu Hook Green" and said, "You have worked hard this time and still need to endure for a while longer."

"Master Shouzhe, please call me 'Lady Ji'." Lady Ji coquettishly said, with a trace of long-standing resentment in her eyes, "Don't mess up my name."

"Hiss~"

Wang Shouzhe was helpless. Wang Mei was good in all other aspects, but once she stepped into her role, it was quite exhausting for him.

"Um..." Wang Shouzhe coughed, "Aren't you afraid that the Huangfu Clan will get furious if they find out you came to see me late at night?"

"Afraid of what?" Lady Ji's eyes turned, her voice unspeakably charming, "The more I provoke them, the more they fear me running away, and the more they understand the value of cherishing. It's the same with men..."

Uh...

What you said makes sense, but I'm afraid my wife may not understand.

Wang Shouzhe was silently resigned.