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Chapter 71 The Foundation of a Strong Family_1

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Faced with such an enigmatic Lady Ji, Wang Shouzhe quickly changed the subject as he drank his "BiYu Hook Green" to suppress his shock. "Let's talk about rewards. You've made such a major contribution this time, so naturally, you've amassed a substantial amount of valor points. What would you like to exchange them for? If we don't have it in our family treasury, I can have someone get it for you."

"Can I exchange for anything?" Lady Ji's eyes sparked with interest as her alluring gaze locked on Wang Shouzhe.

"Well..." Wang Shouzhe was about to say that anything in the family stock could be exchanged. However, her gaze was unsettling, almost predatory, causing him to swiftly backtrack, "Not everything can be exchanged, of course."

"Oh, that's dull, then." Lady Ji withdrew her gaze regretfully. "Currently, I have enough cultivation resources so having a lot of valor points with nothing to spend them on is pointless. I suggest, Master Shouzhe, expand the exchange list, don't restrict it to only cultivation materials. This will provide the family members with more motivation to contribute."

A drop of cold sweat trickled down Wang Shouzhe's forehead. Her logic was utterly outrageous. Did she expect him, the family master, to add himself to the exchange list for the sake of family development?

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Meanwhile, Wang Shouzhe was constantly receiving guest after guest in his tiny horse carriage.

However, the main residence of the Celestial Huangfu Family was swallowed by despair and gloom.

The household in usual high spirits was now too afraid to even whisper. They, too, felt the depressive atmosphere enveloping their entire family.

In a secret chamber...

From initially high-spirited to angrily leaving, the Old Ancestor Hua Ye's face was looking extraordinarily unpleasant. His red hair danced as if on fire, even without a breeze, creating a faint layer of flames.

A strong and intense aura of pressure filled the secret chamber, as if he was venting his frustrated emotions.

"Changning's Xu Family, Ping'an's Wang Family, you are going too far," Old Ancestor Hua Ye's voice was filled with repressed anger, "I won't let this matter rest."

Huangfu Jinhuan, the head of Huangfu Family, too wore a face filled with despair and indignation, his eyes gleaming with intense hatred. It was as if he could hardly wait to rally his family soldiers and completely annihilate Changning's Xu Family, and if possible, crush the Ping'an Wang Family again.

However, he was also very aware that it was not the opportune time to take action.

As the head of the family, the burden on Huangfu Jinhuan was significant. He forced down his raging anger and comforted, "Ancestor, it's not the right time to retaliate. After such a major event, everyone is watching us closely."

"Furthermore, the disciples from the Purple Abode Academic Palace who are aiding in disaster relief under our oversight in Changning are apparently getting along quite well with the Wang Family of Ping'an. I ask for your patience, Ancestor. The disaster relief efforts are nearing completion and they will leave soon."

Despite his fiery temper, Old Ancestor Hua Ye was still a seasoned figure who lived over two centuries. After venting and being placated, the vengeful and murderous look in his eyes gradually subsided. In a frosty tone, he asked, "I just didn't expect that a bunch of insignificant insects would dare to bare their fangs at me. Jinhuan, how is the investigation on the cement production base going?"

"It's going very smoothly. Our people have successfully infiltrated their peripheral sectors and have gathered quite some insights," Huangfu Jinhuan said, his spirits rejuvenated by this topic, "However, their defences are stringent, and they are very cautious."

"It's a venture that can make our family soar. It's only normal for them to be defending it closely," Old Ancestor Hua Ye's eyes were full of greed, "You must be careful and take your time. Be cautious not to startle your prey with reckless haste. Once we monopolise the cement formula, it will be a godsend and our family's true chance of rising in power."

Although textile production was a massive industry, it was crowded with big players. If they wanted to rise in this industry, they would inevitably face severe competition.

However, the cement industry was different. It was a commodity that the entire Longzuo County, or even the whole of Da Qian, needed, making it much more powerful than the textile industry.

"Rest assured, Ancestor." Hope burned in Huangfu Jinhuan's eyes, "The incident at Golden Sand Beach was an unfortunate incident where we were unintentionally targeted. However, the cement matter is a deliberate action on our part against an unsuspecting target."

"Good, very good." Old Ancestor Hua Ye's eyes burned brilliantly, "As long as we dominate the cement industry, even treasures that can prolong life can be obtained. At that time, I will fully support you to break through to the Heavenly Human Realm."

"Thank you, Ancestor." Warmth surged in Huangfu Jinhuan's heart.

"Continue to maintain and improve relations with Lady Ji. Try to establish connections with the Ji family through her. Although the Ji family of Longzuo is not the prestigious Purple Abode family it once was, it is far from something we can compare to," Old Ancestor Hua Ye instructed.

"Yes, Ancestor."

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The next day!

On the Golden Sand Beach of Jinsha Town.

The dry autumn season was the most advantageous time to operate the water-powered silk-reeling machine and water-powered weaving machine.

Driven by the large waterwheel, the silk-reeling machine hummed into action, implementing a semi-automatic silk-reeling process through its, not too complex, structure.

Only a few skilled workers were needed to operate each silk-reeling machine. Yet, this machine's productivity was at least equivalent to dozens of manual silk-reeling workers using foot-operated silk-reeling machines.

Wang Shouzhe, Xu Anbang from Changning, Xu Anze from Jinsha, and even the old ancestor of the North Star were all present, each observing the operation of the water-powered silk-reeling machine with amazement.

"This is an ingenious work of art." The Old Ancestor North Star of Xu family expressed his admiration, "Master Shouzhe, your out-of-the-box thinking is truly extraordinary. To create such a miraculous device, you're like a reincarnated sage."

"Elder Beichen overpraises." Wang Shouzhe slightly bows and chuckles, "I only gave some suggestions and made few improvements seeing how laborious it was to work on the silk reel. Most of the actual work was done by my elder brother, Wang Shouxin, and my fourth aunt, Xu Zhirou. They and the craftsmen have poured their heart and soul into it, perfecting it by tinkering bit by bit."

Wang Shouzhe wasn't being modest. Most of his work consisted of providing direction or offering his "remarkable" "insight" when a technical difficulty arose.

If he were to solely concentrate on developing a specific product, he could certainly achieve results. But for a family head to spend all his time on research and development, when would he get any other work done?

Born into a prominent family, his big brother Wang Shouxin was a pragmatic person. His character was more stubborn than Wang Shouzhe. After receiving his task, he dedicated many years to it, resulting in such success.

Worthy of mention is Wang Shouzhe's fourth aunt, Xu Zhirou, a very patient and ingenious lady. After Wang Shouzhe's mother died when he was a child, she took care of the siblings.

Back then, she made many little toys to cheer Wang Shouzhe up.

When the Wang family embarked on the fast track of development, the family's various industries were short of talents everywhere. Fourth Aunt Xu Zhirou voluntarily stepped forward to manage the sericulture at Silkworm Manor, shouldering some responsibilities for the family.

Of course, there was also a wish to gain more merit points for her son Wang Shounuo.

After all, she came from the Jingsha Xu family.

Besides some small-scale gold mining and a part of fertile farmland, the Jingsha Xu family mostly planted mulberry trees on the land they had reclaimed, creating large and small silkworm manors.

Having been immersed in this since young, Xu Zhirou was no stranger to sericulture, so Wang Shouzhe approved her request.

The mechanism of the water-powered silk reeling machine later showed she had very strong capabilities and talent. Her practical skills were also very strong, and many small structures were constantly designed and improved by her.

The small water-powered silk reeling machine and water-powered weaving machine may look simple, but they actually contain the crystallization of years of hard work from the related clansmen of the Wang family.

This kind of result also makes Wang Shouzhe feel comfortable and proud. The Ping'an Wang family is not supported by him alone, nor is it a case of a king leading a group of bronzes to score. Rather, every family member is working hard, contributing to the growth and strength of the family.

As Wang Shouzhe and the family heads and elders were discussing this matter, Xu Zhirou, after carefully inspecting the water-powered silk reeling machine, came over and reported, "Shouzhe, the installation this time is very qualified and the operation is very smooth. The only issue is considering the hydraulic configuration during the flood and drought periods."

"Thank you for your hard work, Fourth Aunt," said Wang Shouzhe, bowing in response.

This workshop was supervised and constructed by Xu Zhirou. All water-powered equipment was also installed bit by bit by her and the craftsmen.

"You've worked hard, Second Sister," the head of the Jingsha Xu family, Xu Anze, quickly came forward to care for Xu Zhirou, showing great concern.

Actually, he was quite distressed for his second sister. After marrying into the Ping'an Wang Family and giving birth to Wang Shounuo, Wang Luotong and Wang Luo Jing, her husband Wang Dingbang passed away at the young age of thirty-seven.

After that, she has been raising the children all by herself, and the situation in the Wang family wasn't good at that time, so life was exceptionally hard. The Jingsha Xu family, as the maternal family, has helped her a lot within its power.

This is also why, this time in building the workshop on the Golden Sand Beach, Xu Zhirou volunteered to take on the entire project — to serve the family, but also to give back to her mother's clan for their care towards her and the family.

"Sister Zhirou," Longning's Xu Anbang also leaned in to care, "Thanks to you in these days. Some time ago, our Xu family unexpectedly obtained some Beauty Maintenance Pills. I thought they might be useful to Sister Zhirou, so I brought them." Then, he blatantly gave them to her.

The head of the Jingsha Xu family, Xu Anze, was bug-eyed. Although he and Xu Anbang were both of the An generation, the two families had separated a hundred years ago. Hearing Xu Anbang call her 'Sister Zhirou' repeatedly made him somewhat jealous.

His eyes rolled and he too hurriedly pulled out a bottle of Dan medicine: "Second Sister, this bottle of Cultivation Pill is for Luo Jing. She is currently studying in the Academic Palace, and I, as her uncle, should express my goodwill." Without waiting for Xu Zhirou to refuse, he directly stuffed it into her hand.

The Cultivation Pill is a second-class Dan medicine. It is priced at twenty to thirty Qian gold apiece. Handing over a bottle of several pills to the Jingsha Xu family is not a small sum.

"This..." Xu Zhirou, holding the bottles of Beauty Maintenance Pills and Cultivation Pills in her hand, was somewhat at a loss, looking to Wang Shouzhe for help.

In an unexpected turn of events,

Before Wang Shouzhe said a word, Elder Beichen from Changning laughed and waved his hand: "Zhirou is undoubtedly a rare talent from our Xu family. She has dedicated herself to the development project of the three clans, but you two family heads are being too stingy. Xu Ningwei, don't you agree?"

Xu Ningwei is Elder Ningwei of the Jingsha Xu family and the second generation elder of the Jingsha Xu Clan. Facing Elder Beichen, he naturally appeared a bit smaller, and he eagerly bowed and said, "Elder is right."

With the elder speaking out, the two family heads naturally raised their stakes, constantly trying to please Xu Zhirou.

This made Wang Shouzhe chuckle. His fourth aunt, it seemed, had really made it.

However, it could be seen from this incident how strong an alliance formed by families connected by marriage could be. After all, everyone has blood relationships, which naturally make it easier to gain each other's trust.

Wang Shouzhe was also secretly proud. The glory of a family cannot depend solely on one person. Everyone needs to work hard to make the family stronger.

Chapter 72: Harvest! The In-Laws Alliance is Overjoyed_1

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After all the Family Heads had visited and explored the silk weaving workshop, the Xu Clan of Jingsha hosted the celebration banquet within the main residence.

This time, due to the cooperation between the Wang family and Changning's Xu Family, the Xu Clan of Jingsha had gained a significant advantage.

As long as the workshop could be smoothly operated, a great development awaited in the future!

Therefore, Clan Leader Xu Anze spared no expense, hosting a higher-grade Spirit Food banquet to welcome all the Family Heads and Old Ancestors.

After a round of toasts and merriment.

Wang Shouzhe suggested taking this opportunity to distribute the spoils of war. Instantly, all the Old Ancestors and Family Heads perked up, one by one they all looked lively, showing a rather expectant expression.

No wonder, this battle was grand, and the war spoils obtained were equally valuable.

Liu Ruolan had previously undertaken the task of organizing the spoils of war, and then proceeded with the unified distribution.

Although they were all in-laws families, and somewhat implicitly look up to the Ping'an Wang Family, matters related to the distribution of interests, after all, were not trivial.

During the conversation, Liu Ruolan, who sat next to Wang Shouzhe, passed him a detailed list of war spoils.

Wang Shouzhe took it and announced, "This time, the war on the Jinsha beach yielded the following spoils: A Middle Grade Demonic Artifact 'Yin Sha Asura Flag', valued at eighty thousand Qian Gold in the black market."

"A Middle Grade Spiritual Artifact 'Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler', valued between ninety thousand and a hundred and twenty thousand Qian Gold in the black market."

"A Middle Grade Storage Ring, estimated at a hundred and twenty thousand."

"Corpse coffin and Yin Sha Corpse Puppet remains, estimated at fifty thousand."

"A Low Grade Demonic Artifact 'Bone Whip', a little damaged, estimated at twenty-three thousand."

"Low Grade Demonic Artifact 'Ghost Claw', a pair, estimated at twenty-five thousand."

"Low Grade Spiritual Artifact 'Unnamed Sword', estimated at twenty-eight thousand."

"A Low Grade Storage Ring, estimated at thirty thousand."

"All kinds of gold cheque Qian Gold and other cash, totaling thirty-one thousand."

"Dan medicine, consumables, Spirit Stones and other estimates total twenty thousand."

"The value of all materials totals approximately between four hundred seventy-seven thousand to five hundred thousand."

As Wang Shouzhe mentioned each item, the Old Ancestors of each household showed expressions of joy, especially when they heard that the total value was around five hundred thousand, their eyes lit up in fright.

Even the Old Ancestors could not maintain their composure in the face of such huge profits.

Material wealth moves people's hearts.

In this world, wealth equals resources. With resources, a family can grow and enter a virtuous cycle.

It can also ensure that the children with potential in the family won't be buried in obscurity.

Therefore, even if the relationships between families are good, economic interests also have to be clearly distinguished, one is one, and two is two.

Wang Shouzhe could unite all families because he was willing to make money with everyone, but also because he could be fair and just in the distribution of benefits.

"Next, we calculate the merit points according to the contributions." Wang Shouzhe took out another list, "In this battle, my Wang family, as the lead, has planned and deployed and has done a lot of work, earning 12 points first. Wang Dingzu and Wang Zongwei's conspiracy to gamble has earned 7 points. Old Ancestor Longyan's fighting has earned 10 points.

Liu Ruolan and Spirit Tortoise have commanded and earned 7 points, totaling 53 points."

"Changning's Xu family assisted in planning and scheming, earning 5 points first, Old Ancestor Beichen earned 10 points for fighting, Old Ancestor Ningcheng earned 5 points for standing by without fighting, totaling 20 points."

"The Xu Clan of Jinsha assisted in planning and scheming, earning 2 points first, Old Ancestor Ningwei earned 6 points for fighting, totaling 8 points."

"Shanyin's Liu Clan's Old Ancestor Yuanbai fought, earning 8 points, earned 5 points for assistance, totaling 13 points."

"Chen Clan of Donggang's Old Ancestor Chen Ruhong fought, earning 8 points, earned 5 points for assistance, totaling 13 points."

"Gongsun Clan of Shanyang's Old Ancestor Ao fight, earning 8 points, earned 5 points for assistance, totaling 13 points."

"Lu Clan of Yingxiu, Old Ancestor Mingsheng fought, earning 6 points, earned 4 points for assistance, totaling 10 points."

"Three Camps Patrol Zhou Zhenwu's army fought, earning 10 points, and earned 5 points for assistance, totaling 15 points."

"Above is the contribution of each family unit in this action. Does anyone have any opinions?" After Wang Shouzhe finished, he looked around seriously, "If there are opinions, you need to put them forward on the spot. You can clarify it on stage, and don't discuss it privately if you are not convinced."

"Ahem!" Xu Anbang cleared his throat, "The merit point allocation done by Shouzhe is naturally fair. However, in the calculation of merit points for the Ping'an Wang family, I think it's still less. On the overall planning, you have been operating for a long time, spending a lot of manpower and material resources, at least 20 points.

Dingzu's merit for destroying the gambling house should also be 10 points. Ruolan and Spirit Tortoise's power and merit are not insignificant, they should also get 10 points."

"That's right." Old Ancestor Chen Ruhong said, "Shouzhe, you shouldn't be too harsh on your own family because you are leading the distribution. I, Chen Ruhong, merely came to assist with a single soldier, I have 13 points. You have contributed so much, your points are unreasonable."

The other Old Ancestors also expressed their opinions one after another.

"It doesn't matter, then I'll add 2 more points, our Ping'an Wang Family will take 55 points." Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "After all, this is fundamentally revenge for our Wang family. It's only right that we make a bigger contribution."

Despite the others urging him, Wang Shouzhe didn't agree and gave a final word, "So, the total points are 155 points. For ease of calculation, each point is settled at about 3150 Qian Gold in revenue. Now to talk about the distribution of spoils, my Wang family wants that 'Yin Sha Asura Flag', because the black market price can only sell for eighty thousand, we are willing to give up 26 points.

Does anyone else want it?"

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This price is slightly higher than half the points for the Yin Sha Asura flag, but considering everyone belongs to the In-Laws Alliance, Wang Shouzhe is not keen on exploiting this advantage.

The reason he wanted the Yin Sha Asura flag was that this middle-grade demonic artifact was very suitable for Old Ancestor Longyan. Not only could it assist her in cultivating Yin Sha strength, but it could also serve as a battlefield control artifact, significantly benefiting the overall strength of the Wang Family.

Since Wang Shouzhe desired this demonic artifact and none of the other families could use such an artifact, it was natural that no one would compete for this item.

After Wang Shouzhe has asked three times, and with no one bidding, the Yin Sha Asura flag became Wang Family's property.

With this middle-grade spirit-level demonic artifact, a major weapon has been added to Old Ancestor Longyan's arsenal. As such, Old Ancestor Longyan's combat power now stands at the top-tier within the Spirit Platform Realm.

"Middle-grade Spiritual Artifact 'Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler,' does anyone need it? The starting price is 28 points," Wang Shouzhe proceeded to deal with the next artifact. "Each increase in price must not be less than 1 point."

As soon as his words fell, several old ancestors' eyes lit up, breathing heavily.

The 'Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler' was initially a spiritual artifact of the former Ma Huangfu's family and also Huangfu Jinyuan's well-known spiritual artifact.

Unlike the Yin Sha Asura flag, which is basically unusable by everyone, this Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler is very suitable as a battle-type spiritual artifact for each family.

Moreover, this was the rare middle-grade Spiritual Artifact.

You should know that lower-grade spiritual artifacts are relatively easy to buy on the market, while anything higher than the middle-grade is basically priceless - it is always something you stumble upon but can't seek.

Even if you go to auction to search, you rely on fate; you may come across one if you are lucky, but you also have to see whether there is a powerful family competing. It's common to miss the chance.

Only some old eighth-grade prominent families, or 7th-rank aristocratic families, accumulate some stock of middle-grade spiritual artifacts under hundreds of thousands of years of foundation. Or like the old ancestor Zhou Xuan who was able to hoard a handful of middle-grade spiritual artifacts by exploring outside the territory.

"Everyone, act within your means and don't hurt the harmony," seeing them getting a little bit ahead of themselves, Wang Shouzhe immediately advised. At the same time, he said, "In addition, my Wang family withdraw from this competition."

For Wang Shouzhe, although the Dragon and Tiger Demon Subduing Ruler is good, after having secured the Yin Sha Asura flag at the base price, it would seem like bullying if he was to compete further.

Moreover, whether it is Wang Shouzhe's "Guardian Heart Spirit Shield," Liu Ruolan's "Autumn Water Sword," or Wang Licui's "Big Hammer," all are top-grade spiritual artifacts.

Once Luo Qiu and Luo Jing practice for a while and reach the peak of the Qi Refinement realm, they can challenge the trial field and could obtain two additional top-grade spiritual artifacts each.

Why would he need to compete with his in-law families over these?

Additionally, under the circumstances of such close cooperation, enhancing their strength is indirectly increasing the strength of the Wang Family.

A few old ancestors looked at each other and instantly understood why Wang Shouzhe was giving in, and they couldn't help but admire once more.

Truly, Wang Shouzhe is as deserving of his reputation.

Just by the fact alone that he could remain calm in front of a middle-grade spiritual artifact, his magnanimity and demeanor instantly eclipsed them.

Having Wang Shouzhe as their backer, they naturally couldn't act too greedily.

The Liu Family's Old Ancestor, Yuanbai, coughed twice and said, "Everyone, such high-quality middle-grade spiritual artifacts can serve as family treasures. We should all bid according to our capabilities. My Liu Family bids 30 points."

Liu Family had only 13 points this time, and the deficit must be covered by Qian Gold. Each point requires a supplement of 3150 Qian Gold.

The price was suddenly raised quite a bit by him.

"Brother Yuanbai is right, the artifact is rare, and we all need to compete." Old Ancestor Ao of Shanyang's Gongsun Clan said, "Our Gongsun Clan bids 32 points. Gongsun Meng of my clan has made some progress with his Geng Gold War Body, and this artifact suits him the best."

"This..."

Old Ancestor Beichen of the Xu Family frowned. He wanted the artifact too. However, the Xu Family already had the "Town Dragon Monument," and, in order to amass resources for impacting the Heavenly Human Realm and for co-investing with the Wang Family, they were very poor.

The dignified old-fashioned eighth-grade prominent family still owes Wang Family a lot of debt. What's more, as soon as he succeeds in advancing to the Heavenly Human Realm, future spending will be even greater...

Well, it's better to save some money.

Old Ancestor Beichen sighed, "Our Changning Xu Family quits the competition."

Old Ancestor Ruhong of the Chen clan initially wanted to compete but, seeing that Shanyang and Shanyin were competing against each other, he frowned and also declared to quit the competition.

He had 13 points, which could exchange for more than 40,000 Qian Gold.

Rather than compete with them, it would be better to build up the family's foundation and construct a few more trading ships.

Jinsha's Xu Family and Lu Family of Yingxiu, these two ninth-rank aristocratic families with insufficient foundation, knowing that they can't compete with the eighth-grade prominent families, stepped down as well to avoid causing unnecessary conflicts.

So, only Old Ancestor Yuanbai and Old Ancestor Ao were left competing.

Each point was 3150 Qian Gold, and the two old ancestors were constantly considering and bidding.

From 33 points to 34 points, then to Old Ancestor Ao shouting 36 points, Old Ancestor Yuanbai sighed, "Fine, fine. Old Ao you're such a stubborn person, the Liu Family quits the competition."

Liu Yuanbai was actually considering Wang Shouzhe's face in this regard.

After all, he knew that Wang Shouzhe had put a lot of effort into building this alliance. He didn't want to have a falling out with the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang over this matter.

"Congratulations, Old Ancestor Ao." Wang Shouzhe also breathed a sigh of relief and congratulated with a smile, "Getting this middle-grade spiritual artifact for 36 points is a decent deal."

He knew that if this artifact was put up for auction, it would not be difficult to get a high price of twelve or thirteen thousand points through good operation. Thirty-six points are just over eleven thousand, not a loss.

"Hahaha, thank you for the concession, Brother Yuanbai." Gongsun Ao's face also relaxed a lot, "If it weren't for the fact that Meng'er's War Body is best suited for this artifact, I wouldn't be so shameless in competing."

Gongsun Meng is only in his nineties now, is still young, has considerable potential, and his Geng Gold War Body is extremely formidable. Now that the Gongsun clan has become affluent, they have gradually treated him as a Heavenly Human Seed for cultivation.

After getting this artifact, Gongsun Meng will be like a tiger with wings added, his combat power will immediately surge significantly.

"Shouzhe, our family has been developing too rapidly recently, and we don't have much surplus gold." Gongsun Ao was not afraid of losing face, he directly bowed his hands towards Wang Shouzhe and said, "We will need to borrow 50,000 Qian Gold from the Wang family, which we will repay in full, with interest, within five years using Qian Gold."

"Of course," Wang Shouzhe says with a smile. "Then let's proceed as we usually do."

The In-Laws Alliance is very united now, and it's quite common for them to lend each other money. Wang Shouzhe has also set a rule - the annual interest is generally calculated at 5%.

This is what it means to have clear dealings even with one's brothers.

The dealings between siblings within the same family, however much it is, should be clearly accounted for. The financial interactions between prominent families must be carried out cleanly and transparently.

Otherwise, this In-Laws Alliance would be on the verge of a breakup.

Chapter 73 - The leader of Jin! The strongest of the Eighth Grade Prominent Family_1

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Subsequently, the low-grade demonic artifacts, the corpse coffin and the already destroyed Yinsha poisonous corpse, due to lack of interest shown by any family, eventually entered the stage of being unsold.

Wang Shouzhe proposed: "For these war spoils, I will first ask the Academic Palace if they want to buy them back. If they don't, they will be sold to the black market of the Hundred Islands Guard."

Once they fall into the black market system, they will inevitably be bought by those who like to stir up trouble in hiding, and might eventually circle around and return to the Yinsha Sect's territory.

However, these items are valuable, the alliance led by Wang Shouzhe can't hold onto them without selling, right? This has to do with the interests of every clan.

As for the Academic Palace, its status itself is lofty, just their earnings from the insecticide tax alone are astronomical. It won't be a problem for them to buy those demonic artifacts to prevent them from falling enemy hands.

Moreover, there is that low-grade spiritual artifact "Unnamed Sword", not because its name is the "Unnamed Sword", but because its actual name is unknown. Whoever wins it at auction can give it a name.

Finally, this sword ended up in the hands of the old ancestor Yuanbai from the Liu family. He got it for a low price of 10 points, making a fair profit.

Wang Shouzhe guessed that the old ancestor Yuanbai bought this sword most likely for his nephew Liu Yuanhui. After all, Liu Yuanhui only stepped into the spiritual platform realm not long ago, so this low-grade spiritual sword is most suited for him.

With this, Liu Yuanhui's combat power will increase significantly, as will his ability to stay alive.

In the end, there were only two storage rings left.

After hesitating for a while, Ruhong, the old ancestor of Chen Family, directly took a low-grade storage ring for 10 points.

This is also the first storage ring of the Chen Clan of Donggang.

Though practical, the storage ring does not enhance combat power, so many lower-grade families prefer to struggle with carrying items rather than buying storage rings. After all, these rings are not cheap. Even if they had the money, they would definitely prioritize buying low-grade spiritual artifacts to increase their strength.

Then, there came a mid-grade storage ring.

People looked at each other, but no family came forward to bid.

The Xu Family of Changning stared longingly at it, but that was all they could do.

Storage rings involve space law, are a type of special spiritual artifact with strict requirements for materials and refining technology, are rare in quantity, and therefore their value has always remained high.

With that kind of money, instead of using it to buy this mid-grade storage ring, it would be better to buy a mid-grade spiritual artifact, significantly increasing the family's combat power and foundation.

"In that case, I'll bid 38 points." Seeing that no one made a bid, Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "Consider it a small oversight on my part."

Others naturally had no objections.

With general approval, Wang Shouzhe obtained the ownership of this mid-grade storage ring.

Unlike others, Wang Shouzhe has high demands for storage rings.

After all, he plans to venture out into the frontier in the future. The more supplies he can carry, the better, and the more hidden weapons, the better.

In addition, he also has a top-grade spirit shield, a middle-grade spirit sword, and bloodthirsty vines, so he naturally chooses to supplement his carrying capacity first.

The extra storage ring can be used by the old ancestor Longyan. After all, she has already reached the advanced stage of the spiritual platform realm, and she needs to have some status when she goes out.

But as a result, the Wang family spent a total of 64 points, and owed the war booty pool 9 points, totaling a debt of over 28,000 Qian Gold.

Then, it was time to pay back what was owed, and distribute what was due.

As for Zhou Zhenwu's share of the money, it would naturally be delivered to him.

Those who did not get any treasure from the spoils of war, such as the Xu Clan of Jinsha and the Lu Clan of Yingxiu, their points would be directly exchanged for Qian Gold.

With Qian Gold, they could naturally purchase the resources they needed.

This distribution of spoils made all the families feel very fair and satisfied, and their goodwill towards Wang Shouzhe increased once again.

What they didn't know was, Wang Shouzhe's approach was nothing more than the principle of distributing spoils of war in a gold group when he played games and needed to form teams in his previous life.

Using it in this mysterious magical world, the fit was high.

After distributing the spoils of war, naturally, there was another round of eating and drinking.

In the end, everyone left happily.

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After the night banquet of Changning's Huangfu Clan, the former Ma Huangfu was sealed on charges of "colluding with the enemy and committing treason". Its downfall overnight quickly spread, causing a sensation throughout Changning Guard.

The merchants, tenant farmers, craftsmen, etc., who depended on the former Ma Huangfu, were all in fear, full of confusion about the future.

Most of the unaffected people were interested, secretly guessing who the former Ma Huangfu had offended that all of their secrets were exposed.

Of course, most of them were cursing at the former Ma Huangfu for colluding with the enemy and committing treason, comparing them to pigs and dogs.

However, all the major clans of Changning Guard fell into an eerie calm.

Only under the surface of the water, there were subtle undercurrents still surging.

Most things in this world are like this. By the time ordinary people come to know the news, many rounds of games have often passed, and everything has settled.

As for the hardships behind the scenes, apart from the parties directly involved, few outsiders know about it.

In a short period of time, after undergoing the processes of arrest, seizure, and interrogation, the case of the former Ma Huangfu was quickly determined, case closed.

All the involved clan members, heads of households, and leaders of the Huangfu Clan would be exiled to the barbaric region to develop, and the future is basically a matter of life and death.

Chapter 73 - The leader of Jin! The strongest of the Eighth Grade Prominent Family_2

And for ordinary members of the clan who had not been involved in the case, such as the elderly, weak, women, and children, would all be scattered and sent to survive in remote areas.

There, away from their native land, life was not as easy as in Changning.

Moreover, they would also be subject to the strict jurisdiction of the local city guard mansion. They often could not regain their status for hundreds of years.

Da Qian has been established for more than seven thousand years, and the prominent family that colluded with foreign evil sects to stir up trouble domestically, such as the former Ma Huangfu family, was not the first nor the last; there were precedents to follow. Everything had to be handled according to old practices.

Apart from this, there was also the disposal of the confiscated property of the former Ma Huangfu family. Da Qian also had a complete process for handling such matters.

Usually, all real properties would be auctioned off by the city guard mansion. Thirty percent of the sale price would be returned to the innocent clan members as resettlement fees to be used for their survival in the new location. The remaining seventy percent would be kept in the city guard mansion's treasury.

It could be used to fund the construction of public facilities, maintenance of city walls, disaster relief, and so forth after an application had been filed and approved by the higher authority.

Of course, only local clans of Changning were eligible to participate in the auction.

Cities outsider clans, not to mention lacking eligibility to participate. Even if they were eligible, they would be uniformly opposed by local forces.

On the day of the auction hosted by the city guard mansion, the entrance was crowded.

To ensure fairness, the auction was held in the square in front of the city guard mansion. In this way, not only could various prominent families come to view it, but also the common people and independent cultivators could join in the fun.

However, there's no seat for the ones who came to watch the excitement.

Only representations from major families were given seat access.

And this kind of scene that is hard to see once in a hundred years, most families would come to join in the fun even if they had no intention of bidding.

Some ninth rank families arrived early, under the arrangement of the city guard mansion officials, they have taken their seats in their designated spots.

Followed by some eighth rank families.

Changning currently only has seven eighth rank families left: The Shanyin Liu Family, Shanyang Gongsun Clan, Chen Clan of Donggang, Ningxi Dang Clan, Wangxia Lei Family, Ping'an Wang Family, and the Changning Xu Family.

Initially, the widely recognized strongest eighth rank family was the Changning Xu family.

The Changning Xu Family is said to have altogether six cultivators at the Spirit Platform Realm and one of them is the head of household at Spirit Platform Realm.

But now, on the surface, it still seems that the Changning Xu Family is the strongest.

But within the Wang Family's internal In-law Alliance, they all privately felt that Ping'an Wang Family has gradually taken the lead.

The old ancestors and family heads in the alliance all knew that the present cultivators of Wang Family at the Spirit Platform Realm, besides Old Ancestor Longyan, also included the couple Wang Shouzhe, their eldest daughter Wang Licui, Commander Wang Dingzu of the Defense Second Battalion, Old Ancestor Xiaohan, and a level three Yuan Water Spirit Tortoise.

Just these obvious ones, they have seven cultivators at Spirit Platform Realm as combat power. Plus, considering the character of Wang Shouzhe, it wouldn't be surprising if he had other cultivators at the Spirit Platform Realm hidden somewhere.

Moreover, people who know the inside story would know that the couple Wang Shouzhe was abnormal.

Especially Liu Ruolan, during the Qi Refinement Realm, she could kill a Spirit Platform Realm puppet demon with a single shift. Now she has become a Spirit Platform Realm cultivator, which is even more unfathomable.

It is said that after she reached the Spirit Platform Realm, no one has seen her take out her Autumn Water Sword to this day.

Last time during the battle at the Golden Sand Beach, she simply made a casual move, and it blasted Huangfu Kang Ping down together with his bird.

A few close friendly old ancestors have privately discussed it, yet they aren't sure about her real strength.

In short, Ruhong, who is now at the advanced stage of the Spirit Platform Realm, had always thought he was not far behind the core disciples of the Academic Palace, but he also said he doesn't feel confident about winning if he has to face Liu Ruolan, who is at the early stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. He believed that at most, it would be a 4-6 chance.

And it's Liu Ruolan who has the sixty percent chance...

The head of the Wang Family, deep and unfathomable!

What's more, the youngsters of the Wang Family are also very outstanding, and they have high chances of advancing to the Spirit Platform Realm in the future. Even those from the "Ding" generation like Wang Define the Sea, and those from the "Shou" generation, are all making efforts to grow and show strong intentions to collectively impact the Spirit Platform Stage.

It is estimated that not long after, the Wang Clan will enter a surge period of cultivators advancing to the Spirit Platform Realm.

This is also the important reason why the In-law Alliance is gradually taking the lead by the Ping'an Wang Family. After all, even without addressing scheming and tactics, the potential that the Ping'an Wang Family has shown after Wang Shouzhe's years of careful management, is just too horrifying.

In the square.

Representatives of Grade Eight Prominent Families all started to arrive.

Finally, Wang Shouzhe and Xu Anbang appeared arm in arm, naturally drawing much attention.

As per usual, the officials had arranged for the Xu family of Changning to take the main seat.

However, Xu Anbang did not take the seat, but instead turned to Wang Shouzhe beside him:
"Shouzhe, you should take the seat of head of Grade Eight"

"You're joking, Uncle Wu," Wang Shouzhe declined immediately, "You are my senior and belong to an established Grade Eight clan. You certainly should hold the main seat."

"You overestimate me, you overestimate me," Xu Anbang said seriously, "The one with talent should preside. In the past, you kept a low profile to avoid attracting the attention of certain families. But now, there's no need for that. It's time to enhance your prestige. This way, you'll be able to raise even more capital to resist certain clans."

"Moreover, our family's Old Ancestor, Beichen, has already closed himself off in the ancestral hall to try to impact the realm of heaven and humankind. If successful, our Xu family of Changning will undoubtedly move up to Grade Seven. If not, what right do we have to sit above you?"

Wang Shouzhe gave it some thought and found it to be precisely so. He was no longer conflicted and, with neither arrogance nor self-abasement, he cupped his hands and said, "Then I accept your kindness, Uncle Wu."

Subsequent to a discussion between Xu Anbang and the welcoming official, the official's smile showed a slight oddity, but nevertheless, as requested, switched the seats. He then turned to Wang Shouzhe with an amiable smile, "Master Shouzhe, please take the main seat in the Grade Eight section."

"Thank you."

Wang Shouzhe returned a graceful bow, then under the watchful eyes of everyone, he sat in the main seat of Grade Eight.

This arrangement of seating was not unexpected among the family clans related by marriage. After all, they were gradually accustoming to Wang Shouzhe becoming their leader.

To the other Grade Eight, Grade Nine and lower families, however, it's a whole different story.

Shock was written all over their faces. Had the Ping'an Wang Family developed to this extent?

Even the ancient and prestigious Xu family willingly gave up their seat to them?

If they didn't genuinely feel inferior, they wouldn't voluntarily give up their seating position. Instances of families with similar power fighting over seating were common, but they had never seen a stronger family giving up their seating position.

In an instant, whispers spread throughout the Rank Nine families as their views on the Wang family began to change.

The main seat of Grade Eight meant they stood next to the two Celestial Families. Even when the Old Ancestor Zhou Xuan was alive, they had never received such honor.

As Wang Shouzhe swept his gaze over these Grade Eight or Nine families, most of their heads displayed a smile with a hint of flattery in their eyes.

Next.

The heads of the two Celestial Families, Huangfu Jinghuan and Lei Yangyu, appeared almost simultaneously as if it had been planned beforehand.

In terms of overall strength, the Huangfu Celestial Clan was actually slightly stronger than the Lei Clan. However, the Lei Clan had never accepted the Huangfu Clan's superiority and always strove to be the first, or at least not to fall behind.

Their seats were placed higher, one to the left and one to the right, to prevent them from arguing over who holds the higher status.

The arrival of the Celestial Clan naturally created a unique aura, causing many heads to unconsciously stand up as a show of respect.

"Master Shouzhe." As soon as Lei Yangyu saw Wang Shouzhe, he greeted him warmly with a smile, "It's been half a month since we last meet. Ah, Lei has missed you dearly."

Seeing this, Wang Shouzhe rose to his feet, cupped his hands in return and said, "I am also excited to see Master Yangyu."

When they were close enough, Lei Yangyu pulled Wang Shouzhe aside and whispered, "Brother Shouzhe, I support you. Make sure to not let that old Huangfu cheap during the auction. A lot of businesses in Qianma Town revolve around Spirit Pasture Grass and Spirit Fodder, which are the upstream industries of the Huangfu's ranch.

If you control this, it's the equivalent of clasp the Huangfu Caterpillar by its neck."

Of course, Wang Shouzhe understood this. He also knew that Lei's intentions might not be all good, but at least his actions could be used to his advantage.

He too consort Lei's ear and whispered a few words in response.

Upon hearing this, Lei Yangyu squinted his eyes and nodded understandingly. "Brother Shouzhe, I must say, you don't let others take advantage of you. Alright, I'll follow your plan."

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Huangfu Jinhuan saw this scene from afar, and couldn't help but look a bit gloomy.

He snorted coldly in disdain, sat straight on his seat with his hands behind his back, half-closing his eyes, as if devising some strategy.

Suddenly.

Lei Yangyu's hearty laugh came: "Brother Jinhuan, you look quite well~"

"Humph!" Huangfu Jinhuan opened his eyes, wearing a gloomy expression, "Lei Yangyu, what are you trying to say?"

"Sorry, just curious." Lei Yangyu chuckled, "Given all the trouble that's arisen in your side family, did you come today intending to acquire the assets of the former Ma Huangfu's Family?"

Huangfu Jinhuan's eyelids twitched a couple of times and he replied coldly, "Lei Yangyu, what has the Huangfu Family's business got to do with you? You think I should just stand by and watch the side family's assets fall into other people's hands?"

"Ha, ha, ha~" Lei Yangyu broke into a loud laugh, "I've just heard a big joke. The Celestial Huangfu Family got the former Ma Huangfu's Family implicated, not only letting them bear the blame but also silencing anyone who could threaten their safety. Now, they plan on swallowing up their assets. What a strategy, what a perfect strategy indeed!"

Lei Yangyu's voice was loud enough for all the onlookers to hear. Everyone in the crowd couldn't help but reveal an interested expression, discussing the matter in whispers.

Throughout history, people have always enjoyed juicy gossip with great relish.

The Grade Eight and Nine Prominent Families, the Family Heads, all had complex expressions.

As prominent families, their sources of information were far beyond those of independent cultivators and civilians.

Everyone knew that the Celestial Huangfu Family and the former Ma Huangfu's Family were inseparable. The latter even regarded the former as their leader.

The former Ma Huangfu Clan's collusion with the Yinsha Sect to betray the country, how could the Celestial Huangfu Family not know anything?

Moreover, the news about the banquet that night was out. After the plot was exposed, the venerable Old Ancestor Hua Ye even killed the most crucial witness, Huangfu Deyun.

Even a fool could tell it was a cover-up.

It's just that the Celestial Huangfu Family was careful enough to not leave any solid evidence. But to all other families, the Celestial Huangfu Family was definitely involved in the matter with the Yinsha Sect.

It could very well be that the Celestial Huangfu Family colluded with the Yinsha Sect, and the former Ma Huangfu's Family was just scapegoated.

People have discussed this privately, just not publicly.

Everyone was disgusted and chilled by the deeds of the Huangfu's Family. They, at least in their hearts, thought of keeping a distance from the Huangfu family, to avoid any involvement.

Because you never know when the Celestial Huangfu Family might betray you for some reason.

Now that Lei Yangyu exposed this matter, it naturally stirred up many feelings among the people. Some felt sorry for the former Ma Huangfu's Family, while some felt a hint of shared sorrow.

But despite being aware of the situation, the Grade Eight and Nine prominent families, bound by decorum and taboo, maintained their silence, sipping tea or eating snacks as if they hadn't heard Lei Yangyu's words.

But the common people and independent cultivators had no such qualms.

A bunch of self-styled insiders emerged from the crowd and began recounting the events vividly.

How the Celestial Huangfu Family conspired secretly with the Yinsha Sect to betray the country, then cleanly shifted the blame to the former Ma Huangfu's Family once the plot came to light... a series of events were narrated in full detail as if they had been witness to it all.

The former Ma Huangfu's Family was just a scapegoat; the real mastermind, the Celestial Huangfu Family, not only evaded punishment but also planned to seize the assets of the former Ma Huangfu's Family.

Upon hearing this, the crowd was outraged.

Of course, some were just there for the juicy gossip and found the news thrilling, so they joined in the spreading.

In any event, rumors spread like wildfire.

As for evidence, the Da Qian Officials needed evidence. Average people indulging in the gossip didn't need evidence. They were just thrilled by the rumors, so who needs evidence?

For a while, Lei Yangyu's words caused a huge commotion, while practically causing an uproar in almost half of the square.

Huangfu Jinhuan sat in the host's position, his face uglier than ever. Under the scrutiny and stares of so many people, he was extremely uncomfortable, as if in a furnace.

This was a ruthless move, striking Huangfu Family's Achilles heel. Huangfu Jinhuan couldn't fail to notice Wang Shouzhe whispering to Lei Yangyu earlier; how could he not deduce that Wang Shouzhe was advising Lei Yangyu?

At that moment, Huangfu Jinhuan's gaze fell upon Wang Shouzhe like a sharp blade.

Wang Shouzhe, too, looked back from a distance, giving Huangfu Jinhuan a polite nod and a grin.

As if telling him: Yes, it was me who advised him, what can you do about it?

Huangfu Jinhuan was so outraged that he almost coughed up blood, a hint of hatred flashed in his grim eyes.

Fortunately, at this moment, City Lord Xiahou Hongde arrived, accompanied by his trusted aides.

He walked with an imposing stride, an authoritative look on his face as his tiger-like eyes scanned the surroundings. The scene quieted down instantly.

Even the common people and independent cultivators who were actively discussing fell silent.

"Everyone is here, let's start the auction."

In fact, Xiahou Hongde was in a good mood. Even though the former Ma Huangfu's Family had caused such a scandal, he as the City Lord, had not only personally overseen the case but also eliminated a group of evil Yinsha Sect members. It could be considered a great achievement.

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He always dealt with matters quickly and decisively, detesting bureaucracy.

Immediately, an accompanying official stepped forward, carrying a square purplewood tray. On it was stacked a hefty mound of paper - deeds for houses and properties, along with contracts for household servants and slaves.

The official stepped forward and declared loudly, "The auction of Qianma Town's properties officially begins. The first item is a residential compound covering three hundred acres, with an estimated value of forty thousand Qian Gold."

"The second item is Tianhong Pasture, including eight hundred farming households, thirty thousand acres of pasture, over five thousand bovine livestock, thirty thousand sheep, a thousand horses, eighty acres of inferior-grade Spirit Fields, and ten Spirit Horned Yaks. The total estimated value is one hundred and seventy thousand Qian Gold."

"The third item is Qianma Farmstead, incorporating five hundred tenant farming households, twenty thousand acres of bean fields, seventy acres of inferior-grade Spirit Fields. Livestock is not included in the count. The total estimated value is eighty thousand Qian Gold."

"The fourth item is Xingwang Pasture, comprising five hundred farming households, forty thousand acres of pasture, a hundred acres of inferior-grade Spirit Fields. Livestock is not included in the count. The total estimated value is ninety thousand Qian Gold."

Subsequently, there are some small estates producing food crops, Changning Guard City's residences, shops, and so on; they are long-term fixed assets.

The primary assets of the Qianma Huangfu Family are these four large farms, with a total estimated value of over three hundred thousand.

If one were to purchase all the assets of the Qianma Huangfu Family, including the main residence, it would possibly cost at least over five hundred thousand Qian Gold.

This is just their fixed assets; some liquid funds, easily transported property resources, or antiques and famous paintings, were probably all confiscated.

As they are a Grade Eight Prominent Family, their foundation is indeed very robust.

At the same time, Wang Shouzhe identifies something unusual from the report; the output from the three massive ranches and farms in Qianma is mostly supplies for pastures and farms. However, the number of cattle and sheep bred by the Qianma Huangfu Family is not particularly high.

It's very evident that most of the output from the ranches has been supplied to the Celestial Huangfu Family.

This kind of simple industry chain is common among prominent families. Ping'an Wang Family's Silkworm Manor has been providing raw silk materials for Changning's Xu family. It's entirely normal for Qianma Huangfu Family to take on the job of feed cultivation; it's not exploitative in any way.

However, if these feed production bases fell into the hands of outsiders, or enemies, it would cause the Celestial Huangfu Family severe discomfort. For a while, they would struggle to find replacements.

Wang Shouzhe had long mastered this information and, naturally, came prepared today to wrestle with the Celestial Huangfu Family.

"The auction officially begins," the official declared aloud, "The first item to be auctioned is..."

"Wait!"

Wang Shouzhe raised his hand, cutting him off directly, "Sir, I have a suggestion."

The official looked somewhat taken aback, seemingly displeased. However, after seeing that it was Wang Shouzhe, the head of the premier Grade Eight family, who interrupted him, he beamed,

"Turns out it's the Family Head of the Ping'an Wang family. May I ask what suggestions Master Shouzhe might have?"

If it were a Clan Leader from a Rank 9 Prominent Family, he would have scolded them. Even if replaced by an ordinary Grade Eight Prominent Family, he wouldn't be so friendly.

Not only did the Ping'an Wang Family become the premier Grade Eight family, but their momentum was also unmatched. They were bold enough to confront even the Celestial Families. This was someone he couldn't afford to offend.

"Everyone's time is precious; auctioning off items one by one is somewhat a waste of time." Wang Shouzhe suggested politely, "Why not auction it all off in one go, with the highest bidder winning."

Auction it all off?

The official was taken aback, Qianma Huangfu Clan was a prestigious Grade Eight family, the total value of the clan estate was enormous. Even if it had been discounted, the combined total value would be at least five hundred and forty thousand!

This was an astronomical amount of money.

Five hundred and forty thousand!

Even if buying a Rank Six "Ascension Pill," there would be plenty left over.

As one might know, the "Ascension Pill" is the treasure pill used by advanced-stage Spirit Platform Realm Cultivators to aid their breakthrough to the Heavenly Human Realm. It's not just rare but also extremely expensive.

Many Spirit Platform Realm Cultivators dream of obtaining an Ascension Pill in their lifetime. But in reality, the vast majority of Spirit Platform Realm cultivators on this world will never even have the chance to smell one before they die.

As one can see,

Five hundred thousand Qian Gold is an immense amount. Most Celestial Families wouldn't be able to produce so much cash in one go.

"This..." The official could not decide on his own, so he turned to City Lord Xiahou Hongde, "City Lord, what do you think?"

Xiahou Hongde was also looking sideways, eyeing Wang Shouzhe from a distance. This young man's ability and ambition far exceeded his expectations.

Did he actually intend to gulp down all fixed assets of the Qianma Huangfu Family in one go?

"City Lord Xiahou." Huangfu Jinhuan immediately stood up and said, "This violates the rules. It would be more fair to auction off items one by one as originally planned."

This disaster happened too suddenly. Even if he desired to acquire all assets of the Qianma Huangfu Family, he wouldn't be able to afford it immediately. He had painstakingly made arrangements to borrow against various loans in order to hastily raise four hundred thousand Qian Gold, prepared to secure at least two of three significantly important pastures.

If they auction it all in one go, the money he prepared would be far from sufficient.

"Rules?" Wang Shouzhe responded with a light chuckle, "Master Jinhuan, you jest. Which law or regulation in the Daqian law states that when auctioning off a criminal's family property, each item must be auctioned off individually?"

"Indeed, Family Head Shouzhe is right, everyone's time is indeed precious." Lei Yangyu from the Lei Family chimed in, "What 'each item must be auctioned off individually'? Why don't you auction off every single head of cattle next? If you can't afford to bid, then don't. Just stand aside and watch the show."

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"Lei Yangyu!" Huangfu Jinhuan roared, "We are both heads of prominent celestial families. Do you really want to be against me?"

"Aiyo, you're really a tyrant. You are making Lei scared." Lei Yangyu mockingly laughed, "Can it be that Changning is your Huangfu Clan's world? Does our Celestial Lei Family not even have the right to speak reasonably?"

Lei Yangyu is obviously not afraid of causing trouble. Moreover, now is the time when the Huangfu Clan is in trouble. If not now, when is the best time to kick them while they're down?

The heads of the two prominent Celestial families clashed fiercely.

Consequently, the spectators were thrilled and excited.

"Everyone, shut up." Xiahou Hongde felt a headache coming on. It was obvious that Wang Shouzhe had prepared ahead. He wanted to take the Huangfu Clan by surprise. Did he really intend to possess the properties of the former Ma Huangfu's Family, or was he just driving up the price to make Huangfu Jinhuan uncomfortable?

What was this boy planning? Was he really ready to fall out with the Huangfu Clan?

However, Xiahou Hongde owed Wang Shouzhe a favor. In a fair and legal situation, he naturally had to lean a bit towards him.

Immediately, Xiahou Hongde said rather "impatiently": "Da Qian has no rules on how to auction, and I, the City Lord, still have significant matters to attend to, so let's auction everything in one go."

After saying this, a ludicrous thought came to Xiahou Hongde's mind. Wang Shouzhe had done him a big favor a few days ago. Could it be that he had calculated this auction a long time ago?

With such thoughts in mind, this boy's scheming was rather profound. No wonder the Celestial Huangfu Family had suffered such a setback in his hands. It seemed likely that they would suffer another hit today.

Xiahou Hongde had finally spoken.

The matter was naturally settled.

"The auction officially begins now. All the properties of the former Ma Huangfu's Family will be auctioned in one go, starting at 540,000 Qian Gold," the official announced.

"540,000," Wang Shouzhe raised his hand.

"You..." Huangfu Jinhuan was almost spitting blood and shot a murderous look at Wang Shouzhe, "Wang Shouzhe, are you really going to challenge my Huangfu Clan?"

"Haha, Master Yangyu is correct," Wang Shouzhe replied casually, "it seems that your Huangfu Clan really thinks the world of Changning belongs to your family. It's just normal auction bidding. Are you threatening me because you can't afford to bid? Shouzhe is scared."

He and Lei Yangyu had the same idea, to take advantage of the fact that the Huangfu family was in trouble and to throw a few stones into the water whenever given the chance. Although they couldn't kill them, they could make the Celestial Huangfu Family's reputation plummet.

As the bystanders ridiculed heavily and burst into laughter, a look of contempt and mockery appeared in the eyes of the other eight and nine-ranked noble family heads present.

The once prestigious Huangfu Clan turned out to be so incapable. Not only was it about to lose its financial resources, but it was also unable to win an auction against an Eighth Grade prominent family.

The wind seemed to be changing direction in Changning.

Everyone looked at Wang Shouzhe as if they were looking at a rising star.

The auction official was obviously a man who could read people's hearts. From the way the City Lord agreed with Wang Shouzhe's suggestion, it was apparent that the City Lord was on the side of the Wang family.

The official's face changed slightly and said: "Master Huangfu, this is a serious auction. If you want to bid, do so. If not, give up. Let me warn you not to randomly raise the price. If you can't pay within three days, our the guards at the City Guard Mansion won't take it lightly."

"550,000!" Huangfu Jinhuan shouted a price with a cold face, which was 150,000 more. He could manage to gather this within three days.

"Petty," Wang Shouzhe shook his head, "600,000."

"You..." Huangfu Jinhuan angrily said, "Wang Shouzhe, do you really want those ranches? Your Wang family doesn't raise livestock, what's the use of getting those ranches?"

"I don't care, I am just here to join in the fun," Wang Shouzhe said with a grin, "Just casually bidding a few times. If Master Huangfu offers a high price, I'll withdraw, contributing to the public fund of Changning. If Master can't afford it, I'll take it as an investment and sell it slowly after a few years of operation. It won't be a loss. Master can continue..."

"Continue, continue you soul."

Huangfu Jinhuan was about to curse, angry about the sum of 600,000. How many celestial families could afford such a sum at once?

"Alright, alright, alright!"

Huangfu Jinhuan's face turned red and then white, "Wang Shouzhe, you are ruthless. We'll see."

"City Lord." Wang Shouzhe bowed to Xiahou Hongde, "I report the Huangfu Clan, they are threatening me. If something happens to me, it's definitely the Huangfu Clan's doing. Due to the threat I face, I would like to request a patrol team from the City Lord to protect me."

"Huangfu Jinhuan, you had better not provoke me," Xiahou Hongde had been extremely dissatisfied with the Huangfu Clan recently. If it were not for Wang Shouzhe's killing the people of the Yin Sha Sect, something big might have happened before his reassignment.

"City Lord Xiahou, I am simply upset because I lost the bid," Huangfu Jinhuan bowed and said, "My Huangfu Clan is a law-abiding family, and we will never violate the Daqian Law."

"And you, Master Shouzhe," Xiahou Hongde stared at him, "The patrol team from my City Guard Mansion is responsible for protecting the city and its people, they can't act as your personal bodyguards."

He paused for a while, then frowned, and pulled out a weapon, "This is a Piercing Cloud Cannon, a rescue signal in the army. As long as you are not more than a hundred miles away from the City Guard Mansion, we will receive your distress signal. It can only be used once, do not misuse it."

This was indeed unexpected.

Wang Shouzhe only intended to smear Huangfu Jinhuan a bit. In fact, he knew the Huangfu Clan was planning something big. They wouldn't send Old Ancestor Huaye to directly assassinate him.

However, after taking possession of the fixed assets of the former Ma Huangfu's Family and getting the Piercing Cloud Cannon, a rescue item, he was naturally even happier.

It was just a pity that Huangfu Jinhuan could not even dream of how much use those ranches would be if they fell into Wang Shouzhe's hands. If he knew, even if he had to cut off his arms and legs, he would have to bid.

Chapter 75 Apart from Being Rich and Handsome, What Else Do You Have_1

...

Elsewhere.

Finally, the auction was over and back at the main residence of the Huangfu clan, Huangfu Jinhuan couldn't hold back his anger any longer.

"Outrageous!! Outrageous! Well done Lei Yangyu! Well done Wang Shouzhe! If I do not avenge this humiliation, I, Huangfu Jinhuan, would rather die!!"

Furious, he kicked over a stone table in the courtyard. Still angry, he directed a punch at a stone cauldron used for training nearby.

"Bang!!"

The stone cauldron blew up into countless fragments.

The fragments scattered all around, but Huangfu Jinhuan didn't care. He was protected by mysterious energy, and the scattered debris would be repulsed even before it could touch him.

Having shattered the stone cauldron, he was still not appeased and wanted to take it out on other objects in the courtyard.

"Oh dear~ Family Head, Family Head, please calm down, calm down."

The startled butler hurried into the courtyard to try and restrain Huangfu Jinhuan.

However, Huangfu Jinhuan would not listen to him.

With a random flick, he pushed away the old butler and upended a decorative tree.

The butler's face was wrinkled like a bitter gourd.

This stone cauldron, this stone table, were all custom-made, even the decorative tree was centuries-old. All together, they were worth hundreds of Qian Gold - now all wasted.

The family funds had been reallocated, and there wasn't much money left in the account.

However, he dared not complain, nor provoke the Family Head at this time, nor let Huangfu Jinhuan vent his anger. He had to suppress his fear and advise: "Family Head, anger won't solve the problem. You have to calm down to make those who kicked you when you were down pay, don't you agree?"

"You're right, they must pay."

Hearing this, Huangfu Jinhuan, whose mind was almost filled with rage, finally cooled down a bit.

He crossed his arms behind his back and laughed coldly: "Pulling out hundreds of thousands of Qian Gold at a time just to annoy me, I want to see how he ends it. Is it that easy to run a livestock breeding business?"

"Right, right, right!" The old butler was nodding vigorously, "You're absolutely right."

"The breeding industry is very technologically demanding. It's taken my Huangfu Clan hundreds of years to develop our farms to their current scale." As Huangfu Jinhuan spoke, he grew more confident, his eyes becoming increasingly sharp, "These outsiders abruptly venturing into the breeding industry, I don't know how much money they will lose."

When the time comes, they won't even have a place to cry."

"Yes, yes, yes! You are absolutely right!"

...

Time flew by..

After the auction of the properties of the Ma Huangfu Clan, half a month went by in a blink of an eye, and the various uproar and discussions gradually settled.

The reputation and prestige of the Celestial Huangfu Family fell sharply in this event. They are no longer the celestial family they used to be, admired by everyone.

In contrast, the Ping'an Wang Family seized this opportunity to greatly increase their reputation. They became hot property in Changning Garrison overnight. Even the average members of the Ping'an Wang family became sought after.

There are three Danfangs in Changning Garrison.

These three Danfangs belong to three different forces, one of which is run by the Changning Xu Family.

The more a prominent family develops upward, the more people they will have, and the demand for low-tier Dan medicine will gradually increase. If all Dan medicines have to be purchased from outsiders, it can be stifled and the cost would be unbearable.

The "Little Pei Yuan Dan" alone costs ten Qian Gold each. When the amount increases, it's still a huge expense.

Any family that intends to grow will usually train its own Alchemist.

Even if it's just a mature Level One Pill Master, over time, they can save the family a lot of money.

The seventh elder of Ping'an Wang Family, Wang Shouye, is their first Alchemist.

He was arranged at a young age to study at the Danfang run by the Changning Xu Family under an Alchemist. Nine years have passed since then. With his hard work and family support, he has made good progress in the way of Alchemy and is now a fairly mature Level One Pill Master.

One day.

As usual, Wang Shouye went to pay his respects to his master, Xu NingChao. On this occasion, he discussed several questions that had been bothering him. Once his doubts were cleared, he went to his exclusive Dan Furnace Room in the backyard of Danfang.

This Dan Furnace Room is a standard Level One Dan Furnace Room. From its architectural design to the fuel used in the Dan Furnace, it can only be used to make Level One Dan Medicine.

The furnace in the room is burning brightly.

Seeing Wang Shouye come in, two boys who were fanning the furnace quickly stood up and saluted: "Seventh Master."

They are the boys in charge of the furnace.

There are four of them who work in Wang Shouye's exclusive Dan Furnace Room.

They are all 14 to 15 years old and have been carefully selected from the side branches, house servants, head of household, tenant farmers, and other systems of the Wang family. They are all smart and has a certain potential for cultivation.

They have been assisting Wang Shouye since the age of 12. After a few years of study, after learning the basic knowledge of Alchemy and the process, they can start learning Alchemy.

Wang Shouye started in the same way.

Once their skills become mature, the Ping'an Wang Family will have its own Alchemy team.

The Changning Xu Family and the Ping'an Wang Family, [who have a marriage connection], plus the considerable benefits promised by the Wang Family secretly, were able to achieve such an arrangement. Otherwise, no Danfang would train Alchemists for other clans.

Chapter 75 Apart from Being Rich and Handsome, What Else Do You Have_2

"You may stand."

Wang Shouye waved off the formality, reminding them, "Keep an eye on the heat for this furnace of Little Pei Yuan Dan. My master said that if the success rate for this furnace reaches seventy percent again, I can move on to second-level Dan medicine."

Little Pei Yuan Dan is the most widely used Level One dan medicine and indispensable to any clan.

Once formulated, there's no lack of market for it. Over the years, what Wang Shouye has distilled the most is Little Pei Yuan Dan.

Most of the raw materials are supplied by the Ping'an Wang family, which has cost Wang Shouye over twenty thousand Qian Gold.

Yes, he is at a loss.

The training of an alchemist is always very costly. An alchemist, through countless failures and accumulating experience, can achieve rapid growth.

Because many people distill Little Pei Yuan Dan, the price has never exceeded ten Qian Gold. The cost of distilling a furnace of Little Pei Yuan Dan reaches up to sixty Qian Gold. Only when one can distill up to six pills per furnace can he break even. That, in essence, makes for a competent Level One Alchemist.

As of now, Wang Shouye's average yield for a furnace of Little Pei Yuan Dan is 6.3 pills, usually fluctuating between six and seven pills. Occasionally, he would make some mistakes and yield fewer than six pills.

If he can consistently produce seven pills from each furnace, he will maintain long-term profitability. The twenty thousand Qian Gold lost by the Wang family could gradually be recovered.

"Really?!"

Hearing that they could attempt to distill second-level dan medicine, the pill-furnace servant who was on duty was instantly incredulous, his eyes wide with disbelief.

"Of course it's true." Wang Shouye glared at them, "Do you think I would deceive you?"

"That's wonderful!!"

The furnace servants immediately became excited.

They knew that their young master had been studying the various theoretical knowledge of second-level dan medicine for some time. Once he becomes a true second-level alchemist, his societal status would naturally follow an upward trend.

Their status as furnace servants would also rise with the tide.

In an instant, they all became motivated and controlled the heat more diligently and attentively.

Wang Shouye, naturally, had an extremely adept hand at alchemy.

After more than two hours, the pill furnace was opened amidst steam and heat.

"One, two, three, four..." The furnace servants immediately leaned in to count, audibly calling out the numbers.

Wang Shouye's heart suddenly rose.

"Six ... seven!" The furnace servants were ecstatic. "Master Seven, there are seven Little Pei Yuan Dan!"

"Phew, that's great~"

Wang Shouye let out a sigh of relief, feeling equally excited.

This is his third consecutive furnace from which he has managed to get seven pills, which means he has earned ten Qian Gold from this furnace. This also signifies a significant improvement in his recent skill level!

Wang Shouye couldn't help but beam with joy.

In fact, he has been under a lot of pressure over the years.

The cost of fifty years worth of Purple Leaf Dioscorea and auxiliary materials isn't low, but his fourth brother's supply has never been interrupted. When he first started, he made a complete loss out of every furnace, only gradually increasing from one or two pills per furnace to six or seven now after more than nine years.

The hardships and pressures during this time are truly difficult for outsiders to comprehend.

The news that Wang Shouye had successfully managed to distill seven Little Pei Yuan Dan once again quickly spread throughout the Danfang.

This indicates that he has now become a fully fledged Level One Alchemist who can reliably turn a profit, rather than narrowly being able to distill Level One Dan medicine.

An alchemist at this level of proficiency would be able to find a firm foothold in any Danfang and hold a certain societal status.

Meanwhile...

Inside the storefront of the Xu Family Danfang, two seated Level One Alchemists exchanged glances after hearing the news.

They were both in their fifties and had toiled for over thirty years to become profitable Level One Alchemists.

Yet, Wang Shouye had managed the feat in a mere nine years.

Indeed, comparisons are odious.

Alchemist A, sighed, "This Wang Shouye... Apart from coming from a good family, having money, and good looks, how is he better than us?"

"Back in the day, we were all tested to have a knack for alchemy." Alchemist B also didn't mince words. "But starting from the role of furnace servants after becoming apprentices, wasn't each step arduous? Getting a rare opportunity to distill a furnace of dan was cause for gratitude. Wang Shouye simply relies on his wealthy family, distilling one furnace after another with no regard for costs.

It's all forced growth."

"If I had that lineage, I assure you, I would have progressed faster."

Just as the two middle-aged alchemists were going on with their acidic and endless complaints...

In the alchemy workshop...

Two groups of young girls suddenly appeared.

Leading one group was a radiant young woman of about eighteen or nineteen wearing a sky-blue silk dress, her grace and beauty quite striking.

At the front of the other group was a youthful and beautiful girl, clad in a red Fire Spirit Silkworm Silk Outfit, giving off a bit of a feisty vibe.

The two of them were each surrounded by four or five girls of a similar age—clearly, they were not ordinary folks.

Seeing the girl in the blue dress, the girl in the red outfit gave a sneering glance. "Huangfu Qianqian, you've got some nerve to come support our Wang Shouye. Aren't you aware of the mess between your Huangfu Clan and our Wang family?"

Chapter 75 Apart from Being Rich and Handsome, What Else Do You Have_3

"Lei Yanyun, Shouye does not belong to you, and you are not from the Wang family." Huangfu Qianqian glared with eyes filled with rage, "It's inevitable for disputes to arise among prominent families, yet it doesn't threaten the holy relationship between Shouye and me."

Considering the conversation between these two young ladies, their backgrounds are indeed significant. One is a girl from the Huangfu Clan, while the other is the young mistress of the Lei family.

Before, Wang Shouye's supporters were notably not just these two. However, others, having lesser family backgrounds, had already been pushed aside by them. Between themselves, they were of the same social status, neither willing to concede to the other.

Here it comes again!

Seeing this scene, the Middle-aged Alchemists A and B shook their heads in private.

These young girls nowadays, don't have any sense of shame at all.

Back when they were young, girls were so reserved and shy; they never chased after boys. Even when they pursued girls, those girls rarely gave them a glance.

Alas! The world is deteriorating, people nowadays are not as they once were.

Huangfu Qianqian and Lei Yanyun both showed strong hostility in their eyes.

Then, each commanded their followers to display their prepared banners.

The banners bore the words:

"Congratulations to Shouye for becoming the youngest outstanding Alchemist at Level One in Changning City."

"We wish Shouye to become the youngest Alchemist at Level Two in Changning City."

Then the young ladies locked eyes once again, giving each other hostile stares.

Wang Shouye, who had received word, rushed out to offer his thanks to the two young ladies. He repeatedly emphasized that he was just a beginner in alchemy, humble to accept the word 'outstanding', and undeserving of the misplaced affections from the two ladies.

"Shouye, I heard you're starting to make Level Two Cultivation Pills." Huangfu Qianqian said, "I don't really have any significant support to offer, you can use these few hundred-year-old Purple Leaf Dioscorea as practice."

"Shouye, don't accept anything from her." Lei Yanyun warned, "The celestial Huangfu family is firm and scheming, who knows, one day they might betray you. Shouye, why don't you come to our Lei's Danfang? My grandfather admires you a lot, and he has guaranteed to guide you sincerely."

"Lei Yanyun, you are being absurd." Huangfu Qianqian was infuriated, "I see that you're the one with ill intentions, are you trying to persuade Shouye to marry into your family?"

"I didn't say I want Shouye to marry into our family. I just want to help Shouye."

"You do not bear goodwill, you are certainly plotting against him slowly. But I am different, I am even willing to elope with Shouye if he wishes me to."

Each retorted in turns, stirring the Middle-aged Alchemists A and B to look at each other before shaking their heads with a somber expression, as if lamenting the decline of moral standards.

However, they dare not criticize Wang Shouye any longer.

One of the bald Alchemists in the Danfang was caught in a rough situation by those young ladies.

Wang Shouye was filled with bitterness. All he wanted was to learn alchemy peacefully, why did things have to be so difficult? These young ladies were really troublesome.

Just when he was feeling helpless,

A slightly husky yet charming voice rang out: "Hehehe~~ Shouye, it's rather lively here." A beautiful figure appeared outside Xu's Danfang while speaking.

Her arrival was like a gust of wind, sweeping across the front of the Xu's Danfang.

Her appearance entranced the Middle-aged Alchemists A and B, along with some of the bystanders, who gawked in admiration.

The woman was clad in scarlet armor and a black banner. Tall and graceful, exuding a robust aura, her Profound Martial female attire was not made from Spirit silkworm silk, but rather crafted from the skin of a Level Three fire attribute beast.

The red armor was not new and bore numerous claw marks and signs of being torn by some fierce creature. However, she had obviously taken great care of the armor, repairing all damages meticulously, and maintaining it so well that it even shone with a subtle sheen of glossiness.

Her waist was girded with a longsword. The frosted leather sheath was old but clean, and the handle of the sword had been worn smooth from prolonged handling. It was evident that this sword was not just a prop, but a real weapon.

As the black banner fluttered, an old scar could be seen on her fair and slender neck, giving her an air of bold ruggedness beneath her majestic demeanor.

"Is that..."

Upon seeing the lady's affectionate manner towards Shouye, both Huangfu Qianqian and Lei Yanyun shot a hostile look filled with seriousness and severity.

The woman, agile and alluring, was like a female cheetah returning from a hunt, exuding an indescribable mature charm.

Compared with the girls from prominent families who grew up under the protective umbrella of Changning city, her disposition was drastically different.

Upon seeing the woman, Wang Shouye's eyes lit up. However, before he could speak, the woman took hold of his arm, preventing him from talking. She then dragged him inside, cooing

affectionately, "Shouye, I came here this time specifically to see you. Come on, let's go to your room to talk."

Watching Wang Shouye get forcibly taken away,

The two young ladies from noble families looked at each other, full of indignation but also a sense of looming threat. Compared to this woman's mature and enchanting charm, the normally beautiful ladies instantly felt like immature little girls.

Compared to those other girls they managed to scare away earlier, she was in another league.

Once their gazes met, they understood each other's intentions. They would cooperate like in the past, first getting rid of the external threat before resolving internal conflicts. They steeled themselves and followed inside.

Meanwhile, the Middle-aged Alchemists A and B found their eyes popping out in surprise.

Such moral degradation, such moral degradation.

But why was there no girl behaving this shamelessly towards them?

What was so special about that Wang Shouye?

Was it because of his good family background?

His good looks?

The wealth that he had?

Humph, what was so impressive about that!

The Middle-aged Alchemists A and B became increasingly resentful and heartbroken the more they thought about it. Why was the disparity amongst people so vast?

Chapter 76: I Just Want to Quietly Alchemize_1

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The robust woman who escorted Wang Shouye away, adorned in red armor and a black banner, was unmistakably not a stranger, but Wang Shouye's fourth elder sister, Wang Luotong.

Wang Luotong, now in her late twenties, appeared to be only around twenty-four or twenty-five.

Her demeanor had become ever more calm and captivating, like a tantalizing peach wielding a deadly allure. However, the faint murderous aura inadvertently given off by her was akin to the dangerous breath of a wild monster.

The current her was utterly different from that of a delicate and somewhat wronged young girl who once stood before Wang Shouzhe.

"Fourth Sister."

As soon as he returned to his room, Wang Shouye immediately respectfully saluted Wang Luotong with a bow. He then brought out his treasured Spiritual Tea and began to brew for his sister.

Despite him being of the direct lineage of the Wang family, his treatment within Danfang was no different from other pill masters of the same level. His room was standard.

However, the decor of his room was carefully arranged. With just a few plain decorations and scrolls, a warm atmosphere had been created, showing that considerable thought had been put into it.

This, from another perspective, reflected Wang Shouye's character: patient, meticulous, enduring, filled with clever thinking in the details.

This was why he was handpicked by Wang Shouzhe from among many Wang family disciples to learn Alchemy.

After brewing the tea as smoothly as flowing water, Wang Shouye, holding the teacup with both hands, presented it to Wang Luotong, "Fourth Sister, isn't it time to prepare for the autumn and winter hunt? What brought you here today?"

The Autumn-Winter Hunt was a traditional hunting festival for the Profound Martial lineage.

On one hand, it procured Spirit Food for the clan. On the other hand, it was a valuable chance to train the new generation, reminding them not to forget the hard work and achievements of their ancestors who established the lineage.

Nowadays, many families from the Profound Martial clans, especially those from flourishing regions, have turned the Autumn-Winter Hunt merely into a holiday, rarely venturing into the outlying areas for real exploration and Fierce Beast hunting. In contrast, the Wang family always maintained this tradition.

Wang Luotong had always been a faithful enthusiast of the Autumn-Winter Hunt. She actively participated and carefully prepared every year, consistently performing well.

So, Wang Shouye was puzzled as to why she came to see him at this time.

"I am preoccupied with important matters this year. I'm afraid I can't participate in the Autumn-Winter Hunt," Wang Luotong said casually, sipping her Spiritual Tea while taking the opportunity to tease her seventh brother. "Those two young women from earlier, they were rather pleasing to the eye. Why not take them both and produce more children for our family?"

Wang Shouye's face turned red instantly as he broke into an awkward laughter, pleading helplessly, "Fourth Sister, don't tease me. I just want to refine some pills and earn some money to help repay the family's debts. Their constant disturbances at Danfang have caused my colleagues to complain about me. I'm already troubled enough."

"Oh, sweetie, don't be so hard on yourself," Wang Luotong smiled, trying to comfort him. "Every family has to make significant investments in the beginning while cultivating an excellent Alchemist. Your task isn't the same as those who are contract-bound to Danfang. You are to master the refinement of Level Two Dan medicine as soon as possible and perhaps even Level Three, Level Four in the future.

Once you refine a Level Five 'Heavenly Spirit Pill', our family will prosper."

"Level Five Heavenly Spirit Pill!" Wang Shouye's face sank as he replied, bitterly laughing, "Fourth Sister, you've only added to my pressures. My master, the Old Ancestor Ning Chao, spent a lifetime

learning alchemy and just barely managed to produce Level Three Dan medicine, merely scraping a profit. Level Five Dan medicine, that's impossible. Continuing to lose money...I can't bear the thought."

"Don't rush, don't rush." With a hint of laughter twinkling in her eyes, Wang Luotong tasted the Spiritual Tea, "At twenty, you are beginning to refine Level Two Dan medicine, suggesting your losses will only increase. After you lose around seventy or eighty thousand Qian Gold, you'll probably start refining Level Three Dan medicine."

After losing a few hundred thousand more Qian Gold, you'll be able to refine Level Four Dan medicine. The family will always be your steadfast backing!"

"%\$\$*&..."

Wang Shouye rolled his eyes, bemoaning the heavens; was his name Wang Shouye, or should it better be Wang Squanderer? The more his Fourth Sister sought to comfort him, the more pressure he felt mounting in his heart.

"Fourth Sister, my Level One Little Pei Yuan Dan are now profitable," said Wang Shouye weakly. "Each batch will earn me ten Qian Gold, and as my proficiency increases, each batch will earn twenty or thirty Qian Gold. I was intending to rely on the production of Little Pei Yuan Dan to offset the family's expenses."

"For a profit of ten Qian Gold, you would have to waste two days." Wang Luotong shook her head. "In this case, you have to work hard for one to two months to have a chance to refine a Level Two Dan medicine once, consuming tens of years just to become a competent Level Two Alchemist."

The intention of your Fourth Brother is that you attempt to begin refining Level Three Dan medicine within ten years."

Each batch of Level Two Dan medicine can consume up to two to three hundred Qian Gold. If it fails, it provokes complete waste.

In particularly, a high chance of complete loss exists in the beginning.

Only as the skill level and proficiency increase could one begin producing a pill or two of Level Two Dan medicine, which gradually decelerates the rate of loss.

However, if one becomes a mature Level Two Alchemist, the opening of a Dan medicine furnace can at least earn tens of Qian Gold. On a lucky day, it can even yield one to two hundred Qian Gold.

At that time, if Wang Shouye focuses on refining Level Two Dan medicine, he will become a money machine, and it will take only seven or eight years to offset all previous losses.

Chapter 76: I Just Want to Quietly Alchemize_2

At that time, Wang Shouye was only about forty years old.

But quite obviously, this was not the achievement that Wang Shouzhe wanted. He didn't need Wang Shouye to make money, he just needed him to spend money to accelerate his growth and to become a level three, or even level four, Alchemist.

"I guess I'll just refine some level one Dan medicine occasionally to keep up the feel." Wang Shouye, knowing his fourth brother's big ambitions, helplessly spoke, "Fortunately, refining more advanced Dan medicine will also enhance my understanding of the lower-level ones."

"Don't relax in your cultivation either. Train the furnace kids properly and let them watch over the fire in their daily work." Wang Luotong advised, "Your fourth brother treats you like a Celestial-type cultivator. It's not easy to cultivate an alchemist, so it's natural to let him live as long as possible."

With that, the pressure on Wang Shouye increased even more.

However, he understood his fourth brother's ambitions. He was cultivating him as an alchemist regardless of cost, with a target of at least a level four alchemist, and possibly even a level five alchemist. Therefore, he must walk the path of a Celestial being.

Otherwise, if he became a qualified level four alchemist but hadn't yet contributed to the family before he died of old age, wouldn't that become a big joke?

"I will definitely work hard and will not fail to meet the expectations of the fourth brother." Wang Shouye said with a serious expression. Then, he shifted the conversation to Wang Luotong, "Sister Luotong, what about you? Over the years, haven't you had someone you like?"

"No." Wang Luotong simply said. Then, she cast a glance at Wang Shouye and joked, "I can't help it. The men in our family are just too excellent. Whether your fourth brother or you Shouye, you are already at the middle segment of Qi Refinement Level Seven at the age of twenty, a mature level one alchemist, and you look so handsome and elegant."

"In the whole of Changning, even among the legitimate children of those prominent families, who can compare with you? How can Fourth Sister settle for less? Alas, having such outstanding brothers is also a heavy burden."

"Er..." Wang Shouye shook his head helplessly, "So Sister Luotong, you mean to say you don't plan to get married?"

"We'll see." Wang Luotong laughed openly, "Anyway, I'm aiming for the Spirit Platform Realm, or else I won't be content for the rest of my life. In the worst case, I'll just recruit a handsome Independent Cultivator. That way, I can also contribute to our family lineage."

"Indeed, Sister Luotong, you are so outstanding that ordinary heirs probably won't catch your eye. But I believe that the right person will appear in your life." Wang Shouye shifted the topic, "Let's not talk about this. Sister, do you have important business here in Changning? Do you need any assistance from me?"

"Your fourth brother sent me to Qianma Town to take over the fixed assets of the Huangfu Clan. I just stopped by Changning on my way so I thought I'd cheer you up." Wang Luotong laughed, "Don't worry, this time the Old Ancestor Xiaohan will be there, and I, Shou Yong, and Zongwei will be assisting."

Assisting.

That was obviously modest!

In reality, the Old Ancestor Xiaohan, as the elder, would not personally take care of everything. The true management would depend on the younger generation like Wang Luotong, Wang Shou Yong, and Wang Zongwei.

As for the younger generation, Wang Shouzhe doesn't hesitate to cultivate them if they show the willingness to grow. His demands are high and he wants them to get ample experience and be able to stand on their own.

It's a necessary evil, isn't it?

The family is growing too fast, and there aren't many members, so Wang Shouzhe has high expectations of the younger generation.

With high standards and strict requirements, the results are gratifying. The current young generation of the Wang family has already proven their worth and can stand on their own.

This time, it's the test of abilities for Wang Luotong, Wang Shou Yong, and Wang Zongwei.

Just as they were talking.

All of a sudden, there were two girls' voices from outside the house: "Is Shouye here?"

"Again..."

Wang Shouye slapped his forehead, quite speechless.

He just wanted to refine a piece of Dan medicine peacefully. Why was this so hard?

Helplessly, he walked out of the door, gave a bow to the two girls, and prepared to perfunctorily explain something to keep them away.

Suddenly.

A bunch of richly-dressed young people "swarmed" in from outside the door.

The one leading them was a man in his twenties.

He was dressed in a Profound Martial uniform, wore a jade crown, and had a ceremonious sword hanging from his waist, his demeanor stern.

When he saw Wang Shouye, Lei Yanyun, and Huangfu Qianqian standing together, his face suddenly darkened.

"Brother, why are you here?" Lei Yanyun's face changed.

The man she called "brother" had a cold face: "Lei Yanyun, do you realize that I am your brother? You, as a direct bloodline lady of Lei Family from the Celestial ones in Anyuan, have been shamelessly throwing away your dignity here."

"Brother, how have I been disgraceful?" Lei Yanyun's face turned pale, and she retorted pitifully: "What's wrong with me having a man I love? Even our father has not reproached me. "

Wang Shouye recognized this richly-dressed man. He was no other than Lei Bowu, the second son of Lei family, one of the most reputable young masters in Changning.

And Wang Shouye had never had any dealings with him before.

"Lei Yanyun, what nonsense are you talking about?" Hearing Lei Yanyun dared to counter him, Lei Bowu was instantly enraged, "Lei Family raised you, not to let you act willfully. Don't you know? The Celestial family, Zhang Clan in Anyuan, has proposed a marriage alliance with our family."

Chapter 76: I Just Want to Quietly Alchemize_3

"TianRen Zhang of Anyuan!?"

Lei Yanyun's delicate body trembled.

Guard City Anyuan was a fortress to the north of Changning.

Once upon a time, when Changning was just a wild foreign land, Anyuan was the frontier of Da Qian, hence the origin of its name.

Compared to Changning, Anyuan had a much longer history, and TianRen Zhang was a time-honored family with profound foundations.

Her and Lei Bowu's great-grandmother was a lady of direct lineage from the Zhang family in Anyuan. Unless something surprising happened, their father would most likely agree to this proposal.

Her eyes flickered and suddenly showed a touch of determination: "It's just a proposal. My father hasn't agreed yet. I'm going to find my father now. Whether it's TianRen Zhang or TianRen who, I don't want to marry."

Upon saying this, her face showed anxiety and she was about to leave.

"How dare you! Stop right there." Lei Bowu shouted angrily, "You like young master Wang Shouye, right? Forget that the Wang family of Ping'an is just an eighth-grade prominent family. This boy is not even of the direct lineage, how can he be worthy of you?"

"I won't allow you to speak of Shou Ye like that!" Lei Yanyun stomped her foot in anger, "Shou Ye is much more excellent than you imagine."

"Excellent?" Lei Bowu sneered, "Since you say he is excellent, then I will give him a try."

Saying this, he looked at Wang Shouye with an unpleasant expression and pulled out his long sword with a clang and pointed at him.

"Pretty boy, draw your sword, let me see how capable you are."

Wang Shouye was left speechless.

All he wanted to do was to refine a pill quietly, why was it so difficult?

He was about to refuse.

But unexpectedly.

Lei Yanyun rushed forward and stood in front of him, stretching out her arms like a protective hen: "Brother, you are six or seven years older than Shou Ye, and you are already at peak level seven of the Qi Refining Realm. You're just bullying people!"

"Oh! Didn't you call him excellent?" Lei Bowu scoffed, "So, he doesn't even have the courage to fight with me? He's just a showy but useless guy, fooling innocent girls like you."

Saying this, he pointed his lance at Wang Shouye again: "Wang Shouye, you better roll back to Ping'an town soon, otherwise, I'll beat you every time I see you. What? You're not convinced? If you're not convinced, go back and talk to your big brother, Wang Shouzhe..."

"Shut up!"

Wang Shouye was furious.

Lei Bowu can say himself, but his brother, that's another story!

He pushed Lei Yanyun away from him, the expression on his face became serious, and his eyes lit up with a threatening look: "Lei Bowu, are you qualified to call my brother by his name directly? You want to fight? I will accompany you!"

Having said that, he reached out to draw his sword.

But before his hand could touch the hilt of the sword, it was grabbed by a slender jade hand.

At the same time, a lazy and slightly charming voice sounded in his ear: "Shouye, you are an alchemist, there's no need to fight with this reckless profligate."

Sister Luo?

Wang Shouye was stunned for a moment and saw Wang Luotong, walking leisurely from behind him.

She was dressed in red armor and black banner, looking vigorous and a little fierce and wild, her aura was much stronger than Wang Shouye's.

She looked up and down at Lei Bowu, sneered: "You're not even close to being a gentleman, yet you dare to challenge my brother? We're about the same age. If you really want to be beaten, I'd love to oblige."

Lei Bowu's face darkened slightly: "Who are you?"

"Ping'an Wang Family, fourth daughter of the 'Luo' generation, Wang Luotong." With a casual grab, Wang Luotong held the sword handle, sword and scabbard crossing in front of her, her voice languid, "Please advise."

Her posture seemed somewhat casual, but her body was tense and relaxed. This was the ability she had cultivated from years of hunting fierce beasts, like a leopard ready to pounce, ready to deliver a fatal blow to her opponent at any time.

"Very well! Good, a daughter from the Wang family, even dares to challenge the heir of a celestial family." Lei Bowu laughed with anger, his eyes suddenly turning sharp.

Although he was a profligate son, after all, he was the second son of the celestial Lei Family, and the pride in his bones could not tolerate any trampling.

He flicked his longsword, pointing it at Wang Luotong: "Changning Lei Family, the seventh son of the 'Bo' generation, Lei Bowu, please advise!"

Chapter 77: The Foundation! The Rise of the Wang Family_1

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The two of them were using professional language for a duelling challenge.

One party issued the challenge, and the other party responded, meaning they agreed to duel.

Once a duel was confirmed, unless one side surrendered, any injuries or death were accepted, and even the Da Qian law would not hold anyone accountable.

By this time, there were already many spectators.

In addition to the alchemists and furnace apprentices in Xu Family's Danfang, customers who had placed orders for Dan medicine in Danfang also gathered around to join in the excitement.

They were spectators and witnesses.

Wang Shouye, and young boys and girls who had come along with Lei Bowu, Lei Yanyun, and Huangfu Qianqian also consciously made some room, so that they didn't affect the two of them.

Anyway, we'll leave the chatting for now.

As soon as they entered the duelling state, Wang Luotong's slightly lazy eyes suddenly became sharp, and they targeted Lei Bowu as if she were a female leopard stalking her prey.

An inexplicable shiver travelled down Lei Bowu's spine, instilling a primal fear in him.

Unable to control himself, he attacked first, aiming his sword at Wang Luotong.

Although he was a pampered son, afterall he was a disciple of the Celestial Lei Family, and the education and training he received from an early age was different from ordinary people.

This sword of his...

It was the first move "Spring Thunder Appears Suddenly" from the top-grade swordsmanship of the Celestial Lei Family – "Celestial Thunder Sword Technique".

This move was renowned for its speed and explosive power, just like thunder in the spring, unpredictable. His basics were quite solid, and the form of his moves had the essence of a quick bolt of lightning.

"Young Master Bo Wu is so mighty!"

Seeing this, the followers all cheered in unison.

"Heh~That's all."

Wang Luotong just chuckled softly, and her delicate body moved in a way that made her look as light as willow catkins in the wind.

This was the Wang Clan's unique movement technique - the "Willow Catkin Body Method".

Her Willow Catkin Body Method had reached the level of masterstroke. Her figure was elusive, and she even left a string of afterimages.

No matter how fast Lei Bowu's sword light was, it couldn't even catch up with her shadow.

Although Wang Luotong was a girl, she had been extremely stubborn since childhood, and her grandpa's slight favoritism towards boys over girls had made her somewhat disdainful of her own feminine status.

Upon getting the opportunity, she strived harder than anyone else.

Whenever a fierce beast appeared in Ping'an jurisdiction, she was always the first one on the scene.

She didn't want to give up on any opportunity that allowed her to keep getting stronger.

It can be said that among the younger generation of the "Shou" generation, aside from Wang Shouxin, Wang Shouyi, and Wang Shouzhe, no one was her match.

Even her own brother Wang Shounuo might not be her equal.

"This..."

Lei Bowu's complexion started to shift when his several attacks were effortlessly dodged by her. He quickly intensified his attacks, launching one move after another at Wang Luotong.

Hidden in the Celestial Thunder Sword Technique was a roar of thunder, accompanied by flashes of lightning, it was greatly ostentatious.

But such a flashy sword move couldn't even touch the corner of Wang Luotong's clothes.

This made Wang Luotong sneer in her heart.

Pretty but ineffective.

It turns out that a certain legitimate disciple of the Celestial Lei Family was only this capable.

She put away her battle sword, reached for the whip around her waist and untied it.

"Thwack!" "Thwack!" "Thwack!"

Whip shadows layered on one another, flying up and down in a tumultuous fashion, much like black snakes dancing. The whip lashed through the air, creating crisp "thwack thwack" sounds.

Compared to the Wang Clan's Xuan Yuan Sword Technique, Wang Luotong favored whip tactics more.

However, the family only had one rudimentary whip technique, which didn't even have a name, and all the moves were basic. But even though the moves were simple, after repeated polishing, their killing power was not to be underestimated.

Especially with the influx of the profound Mysterious Energy in the soft whip.

The basic lines of whip use like "Lash", "Entangle", "Stab", "Dance", etc, felt alive in her hand, they were like expanding and contracting snake's body, and resembled a Jiaolong moving around, which dazzled the viewer.

Wang Luotong's basic skills were extremely solid, and her cultivation base was profound, her abilities were not weak compared to Lei Bowu of similar age.

Within ten breaths, Lei Bowu was completely suppressed and placed in a disadvantageous position.

"Thwack!"

The lash of the whip hit his shoulder like a snake's bite, following the crisp sound of ripping fabric, his fine clothes were torn, and his arm's muscle instantly bore a whip mark.

"Ah!!"

Under extreme pain, Lei Bowu screamed miserably and almost dropped the sword in his hand.

An unbearable numbness, accompanied by a sharp pain, spread from his arm all over his body.

Shocked and angry, he blurted out: "You, you, you even poisoned your whip! So despicable!"

"Dumbass~ It's just a bit of chili sauce."

Wang Luotong sneered contemptuously.

The whip shadow whistled, striking directly at his chest.

"Thwack!" Another crisp sound followed as Lei Bowu's chest tore open. His skin cracked open, flesh underneath bursting. The sword in his hand "clanged" as it fell on the ground, and he toppled over onto the ground in pain, evidently already losing his ability to fight.

However, Wang Luotong showed no signs of stopping.

The shadow of the whip seemed endless, still lashing towards Lei Bowu like a violent storm.

Her voice also echoed through the gaps between the whipping winds: "Weren't you so braggart? Didn't you want to hit my brother? Surrender, otherwise I'll whip you to death."

"Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!"

Whip after whip, without end, lashed at Lei Bowu's body.

Even though Wang Luotong had already drawn back her Mysterious Energy, her technique was extremely shrewd. Every lash hit a different spot, and the force paused the moment it hit flesh. Thus, every strike was excruciating for him, but didn't actually cause any serious damage to his muscles or organs.

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She was a mature woman, well aware of limits.

After all, no matter how detestable Lei Bowu was, he was still the legitimate second son of the Celestial TianRen family. A normal sparring, even if it injured him, no one could find fault with. But if I were to cripple him, it would bring disaster upon the Ping'an Wang Family.

The current principal enemy of the Ping'an Wang Family was the Celestial Huangfu Clan. They could not afford to make a foe of the Lei Family.

Unexpectedly...

Lei Bowu proved to be quite stubborn. Even amid his agonizing screams, he refused to surrender and instead howled, "Whip me to death! If you dare, then whip me to death! This young master... won't surrender... Ouch, Ouch!"

"Whack, whack, whack!"

The flurry of whip strikes were unrelenting like a storm, quickly making the young master of the Lei Family taste the sting of being "whipped to death".

He was in so much pain that he curled up on the ground, soon losing strength to spout any more threats, only knowing to cry out in agony.

"We surrender! We surrender for the young master!"

The followers of Lei Bowu grew frantic and cried out urgently.

"Sister, stop it! I'll surrender on behalf of my brother." Lei Yanyun was extremely anxious as she rushed forward to restrain Wang Luotong, "Sister, please spare my brother this time."

Even though she had just had a violent conflict with Lei Bowu, he was ultimately her brother. How could she bear to watch him be beaten to death right in front of her eyes?

"You called me sister?"

Wang Luotong looked at her with a slight squint in her eyes and a cryptic smile on her face.

Lei Yanyun's face flushed instantly as she said shyly, "I thought you were... my apologies, sister, please forgive me."

"Hehehe." Wang Luotong laughed as she lightly pinched her tender, pretty face, "Alright, since my younger sister is begging for mercy on his behalf, as his older sister, I will agree to spare him."

Having said that, she gave a flick of her wrist and the whip instantly coiled up like a spirit snake and was hung back at her waist.

Seeing that Lei Bowu was still wailing on the ground, she chuckled coldly, "He's truly all bluster, no brains. Remember, it was Wang Luotong who beat you. If you have any objections, bring it to me! If you dare to bully my younger brother because you think you can pick on the weak, I will block the entrance to your Lei Family's residence and see whether you can afford such a disgrace."

In the world of influential families, there are all kinds of rules. Among peers, when sparring with someone who is about the same age and you lose, even though it's embarrassing, everyone must accept it.

If Wang Luotong really dared to stand outside the door and challenge Lei Bowu every day, and if Lei Bowu didn't dare to respond, then it would indeed be a major disgrace for the Lei Family.

However, how could Lei Bowu muster the strength to reply to her now?

He was writhing like a worm in pain on the ground, only able to focus his gaze on Wang Luotong, unable even to speak a full sentence.

She disdainfully withdrew her gaze, then turned her beaming gaze towards Wang Shouye, "Alright, your fourth sister has other matters to attend to and won't disturb your 'alchemy' any longer."

After that, she winked at Lei Yanyun and jokingly said, "Young sister, I suggest that you rush back home and sweet-talk your father, don't miss any opportunities."

Having said that, she sprang lightly on her toes and drifted away with the wind like willow catkins, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

Just as the saying goes, came like a whirlwind and leave like a breeze, truly with a dash and with stylish charm.

Wang Shouye didn't even get a chance to bid her farewell, he could only bow towards her departing figure.

In the crowd of onlookers, a pair of middle-aged alchemists, Alchemist A and B, shook their heads at the spectacle. This Wang Shouye's sister was really quite spirited and lively~

However, while the two of them were rather apprehensive, their gaze still followed her as she gracefully took her leave.

"Young master, young master, are you alright?"

At this point, Lei Bowu's followers finally reacted, hastily rushing over and helping Lei Bowu up.

"Ouch~ Gentle, gentle! You worthless fools, be gentle with this young master!" Lei Bowu continued to cry out in pain.

"Young master, what should we do? Should we round up our brothers and go to the Ping'an Wang Family to get even?"

"Get even? Do you even have a brain?!" Lei Bowu was almost driven mad by the stupidity of his followers, "She won a fair duel against me. If I were to gather people for a group attack on her afterwards, would the face of the Celestial TianRen family be worth anything?"

"Moreover, the Ping'an Wang Family is a first-class eighth-grade clan, do you really think they were brought up on a diet of vegetarian food and prayer?"

"Ouch~ Ouch~ It hurts so much, damned chili sauce! Quick, help me get up. I've never seen a woman like this in my life, she's a force to be reckoned with!"

"Young Master, don't speak nonsense..."

"What does it have to do with you? Ah ah ah~ that's comfortable! Woman, I won't let you go!"

Seeing Lei Bowu and his group shouting and leaving, Wang Shouye was speechless.

Is this Lei Bowu really out of his mind? Even after being beaten like that, he still wants to provoke Fourth Sister. How could he be so reckless?

Then, he looked speechlessly at the two girls who came closer.

"Shouye, the Lei Family is too despicable, they are just using their power to bully others." Huangfu Qianqian coquettishly said, "And Lei Yanyun is certainly marrying into the TianRen Zhang Family. I'm different. If you're willing, I could elope with you."

"Huangfu Qianqian, my brother is my brother, it has nothing to do with me!" Lei Yanyun shouted angrily, "I can beg my father and my ancestors. If they don't agree, I can elope with Shouye."

"The outside enemy is gone", the two girls started to quarrel again.

Listening to them talking about eloping one after another, Wang Shouye had a headache.

The hard work his fourth brother put into training him to be an alchemist wasn't to elope with you.

Girls are really troublesome~

Alchemy is more fun!

...

Geographically speaking, Ping'an Town and Changning Commandery are across the river from each other. The river in between is the Peace River.

The Peace River is wide, but the current is swift. In the hundred-plus-li river section that flows through Ping'an Town, the narrowest part is the "Broken Dragon Gorge", only a hundred feet wide. But the most dangerous part is the "Fallen Eagle Gorge".

A branch of the Liuping Mountain separates Ping'an Town from the outside world like a screen, but it also slants across the Peace River. The year-long impact of the Peace River has formed the famous Fallen Eagle Gorge.

On the other side of the Fallen Eagle Gorge, the remaining mountains cut a large piece of land into two, with the Gongsun Clan of Shanyang in the south and the Liu Family of Shanyin in the north.

The two look at each other across the mountain, looking like polar opposites.

On the Ping'an Town side of Fallen Eagle Gorge, the cliff is steep and filled with layers of sharp rocks, making it incredibly treacherous. It seems like only an eagle could climb it.

On the right bank of the Fallen Eagle Gorge, there is a large Chaotic Stone Beach, which is said to have been left by the Peace River after it destroyed a cliff.

Once, this Chaotic Stone Beach was the boundary that marked the hunting grounds between Wang and Zhao Clans of Ping'an Town. But as the Zhao Clan fell from power, the hundred-plus-li long section of the Peace River had been claimed in entirety by the Wang family.

Thus, this boundary marker has lost its meaning.

However, the once seemingly useless Chaotic Stone Beach is changing. Next to the Chaotic Stone Beach and the cliff of the Fallen Eagle Gorge, there is a small bay shaped like a cashew nut.

This bay is backed by cliffs and is sheltered from the wind and waves. It can provide temporary shelter for fishing boats. However, this small harbor is too shallow and full of stones underneath, so medium and large ships can't get in.

No one knows when it happened.

The entrance to the bay looks like it used to be, but inside, a tremendous change had taken place.

The stones underneath the bay have been gradually cleared away, and some stubborn rugged riverbeds have also been excavated and reorganized. If outsiders were to come in, they would probably be shocked.

Is this still the shallow water harbor from before? It's clearly become a small deep-water port!

At this moment.

A small fishing boat quickly entered the harbor and docked at the port.

The person who disembarked from that boat turned out to be Wang Shouzhe, the family head of the Wang Family of Ping'an, who has recently become famous in Changning!

No outsider would ever dream that the overseas best-selling products "Cement", "Foreign Glass" and so on, that are popular in Changning now, are actually from this hidden small deep-water port.

This is the core area of the Wang Family that Wang Shouzhe has been operating for many years.

It is the true "foundation" of the Wang Family.

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In the small deep-water port, a young man in his twenties had been waiting, leading a group of people. Although his appearance wasn't extraordinary, his demeanor exuded a sense of calm and competence.

Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe come ashore, he immediately led his group to greet him, bowing to Wang Shouzhe and saying, "Wang Gui pays his respects to the Family Head."

There was a hint of excitement in his voice.

That's right.

This young man is Wang Gui, who grew up alongside Wang Shouzhe.

After Wang Shouzhe got married, it wasn't suitable for Wang Gui to continue staying in the courtyard. Consequently, Wang Shouzhe sent him out to establish a secret production base and organize investment and production.

His loyalty coming from growing up together, coupled with being part of the Wang family's sideline lineage, was unquestionable. Even when he was out doing his duties, no one dared to underestimate him.

Now, he was the Great Steward here, indirectly managing things for Wang Shouzhe.

"No need for formalities."

Wang Shouzhe was quite pleased to see Wang Gui.

He quickly scanned Wang Gui and noticed a significant improvement in his energy compared to their last meeting, a clear sign that he had made significant progress in practicing the Wang Family's Xuan Yuan Technique.

A faint smile crossed his face as he praised, "It seems that you've been diligent in your cultivation, even breaking through to the seventh level of the Qi Refinement Realm. However, you must press on, aiming to advance to the Spirit Platform Realm as soon as possible. That way, you can amass more resources for your children's future."

"Yes, Family Head."

At the mention of children, Wang Gui also showed a gratified smile.

Years ago, Wang Gui had his eyes set on Wang Mei.

However, as Wang Mei's strength and status rose, and her temperament proving to be something he could not tame, he gradually gave up.

Eventually, Wang Shouzhe played matchmaker, marrying Wang Gui to a woman from the sidelines of the Lu Clan of Yingxiu who possessed the capability for cultivation.

Over the past six or seven years, they had two children. The older one is now attending clan school, while the younger one is still nursing. His wife is still caring for them at home.

"Family Head, please come inside."

After exchanging pleasantries, Wang Gui led Wang Shouzhe to the interior.

Keeping his head down and half a step behind Wang Shouzhe, he answered some of the questions Wang Shouzhe asked from time to time.

It was clear that he was taking his role as the head steward of this secret base seriously, answering every question precisely and demonstrating a thorough understanding of his domain.

Even though the last time Wang Shouzhe visited this base was about eight or nine months ago, before attending the Purple Abode school, he still maintained a firm grasp on the happenings in this base, thanks to his excellent command.

Walking through the long corridor, they reached an open area.

It was a gorge.

This gorge was natural, but had been significantly expanded through excavation by the Wang family. Its scale has increased, taking on an industrial appearance.

Several caverns had been hollowed into the mountains on either side to store water-sensitive raw materials and finished products. Some were even prepared as dwellings.

On the open ground, numerous large warehouses were built against the mountains, storing mountains of raw materials.

The most critical feature was several large kilns erected in the gorge.

The kilns burnt coal.

In this world, coal was not valuable due to its limited applications besides kilns and furnaces.

In winter, commoners used charcoal for heating, while prominent families used top-quality smokeless charcoal.

However, if coal was used to heat the water in a boiler system, distributing the warm water through a network of pipes and radiators to create central heating, the effect would be much more efficient than burning charcoal.

Wang Shouzhe had ordered the artisans to design a small boiler heating system as a prototype, to test its functionality in his own house.

The winter climate was always damp and chilly, which wasn't comfortable at all.

Although cultivators at the Spirit Platform Realm far surpassed normal humans in terms of physical condition and tolerance for cold and heat, why not take measures to make oneself more comfortable whenever possible?

Leaving that aside for the moment.

Now, this secret base was operating around the clock, primarily producing "cement". The cement kilns were working non-stop, year-round, in shifts, never stopping.

Speaking of which, the production of cement actually had a simple process.

It just needed limestone, iron slag, and clay to be ground into powder, mixed in a certain ratio, and then subjected to high-temperature combustion in the coal kiln. The result, after one more round of grinding, would be cement.

This was called the "two-grinding one-calcination" process.

Additionally, raw materials such as limestone, iron slag, clay, coal, and gypsum were extremely cheap, easily obtainable.

After processing, the market price of cement could reach half that of grain, which indicated a ridiculously high profit margin.

The process in the base was even simpler. The limestone and iron slag were delivered already ground into powder. All that remained were the steps of calcination and subsequent processing.

The disappointing factor was the production yield.

Despite the combined efforts of the Lu Family, Liu Family, Gongsun Clan, and Wang Family, the total annual production of the entire cement system could only reach 100,000 tons.

100,000 tons might sound like a lot, but compared to Earth, the production was far behind.

Wang Shouzhe vaguely remembered that, before he traveled to this world, the per capita annual cement consumption in China was around one and a half tons. The gap was immense.

There was nothing to be done about it.

The current cement production process was behind in various aspects, especially in the excavation and grinding of raw materials. Most of the methods were primitive, still using animal-powered grinding mills.

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However, even with that, the annual turnover of the In-Laws Alliance in cement alone has already exceeded two hundred thousand Qian Gold.

Moreover, all the raw materials were their own, produced within their territory, things that usually couldn't even be sold, hence the cost was extremely low.

In recent years, after the cement, known as "foreign grey," gained popularity, its market demand increased and it became a commodity in short supply.

Nowadays, the entire In-Laws Alliance is planning to increase production to meet the demand, and plan to implement hydraulic power grinding mills in the actual production process within the next two years.

It is anticipated that within a decade, the production will increase five times and the annual turnover will reach a million Qian Gold.

Putting aside the cement business.

Foreign Glass products are also a major product of this production base.

Most of the glass products, including small cups, bottles, plates, and jars, are in reality much simpler to produce than ordinary porcelain. However, the price of glassware was multiple times higher than ordinary porcelain.

The raw materials for glass products are also very simple, just quartz sand.

Labelled as exquisite foreign imports, these glass products have gradually become popular among the prominent families, making the Wang family and the In-Laws Alliance tremendously rich in just a few years. The profit was even higher than that from selling cement.

Were it not for Wang Shouzhe's need to keep expanding the cement capacity to lay the groundwork for future territorial developments and city construction plans, he would have considered stopping cement production and focusing solely on glass production.

Unfortunately, he understood that technological advancements were a gradual process. For the sake of the future, not only did cement production need to continue, but research and development must also proceed.

As for the specific research and development process, along with the development of the production process, Wang Shouzhe did not have the energy or time to participate, what he could offer were merely some directional guidance and stimulation.

Fortunately, there is no shortage of clever and industrious artisans in this world, making his various plans to become reality.

Of course, the production base and the research and development base are separate.

This is only the production base, the Wang family's real research and development base was not here.

Later on.

Wang Shouzhe, in a manner as if inspecting, "took a quick look around" the production base, stating that he would stay at the production base for a few days to guide the upcoming work and so on.

Soon, this news had "spread" throughout the entire production base.

...

Deep within this production base, there was a hidden secret chamber.

The secret chamber was not that large but it was adequately equipped, one could live inside for half a month without any issue. Especially for cultivators of the Profound Martial realm.

At this moment.

The old man sitting cross-legged on the Luohantai within the secret chamber was of a tall stature.

It was clear that he was not young anymore, his face was heavily wrinkled, showing a sense of vicissitude, but the aura exuding from him was still as solid as a mountain, stabilising and majestic.

Especially his eyes, they were as deep as a quiet pond.

Even in his plain robes, they could not conceal the fact that he was of a noble identity.

Wang Shouzhe sat cross-legged across from him, apologising as he made him a pot of tea, "Old Ancestor Zhubo, I have wronged you for the past half a year."

Indeed, this extraordinary old man was the Celestial Being and Old Ancestor of Longzuo Wang family - Wang Zhubo, Old Ancestor Zhubo.

He had been living in seclusion in this production base for almost half a year.

"You've made preparations very thoughtful for me. I have level three spirit meat to eat daily, you've also completely provided for the Dan medicines for my cultivation," Old Ancestor Zhubo laughed heartily. "My cultivation has improved notably in recent days, how am I wronged? I can take it as cultivation in seclusion."

"Furthermore, Zhou Xuan was my cousin. Back then, he and his created family were victimised so horribly. Now I have a chance for revenge and I've been longing for it. The Huangfu Clan is as cunning as a fox; even more preparation isn't too much. All for this purpose."

"The Huangfu Clan is indeed very cautious." Wang Shouzhe said while drinking his Spirit Tea. "Even though it was them who had involvement with Yin Sha Sect, they managed to make their accounts appear seamless and their main branch remains unharmed, laying the blame on their side branches."

The Huangfu Clan has been standing tall in Changning prefecture for five hundred years, which is not merely by chance."

"In order to hunt such a fox, you must calculate carefully. Fortunately, the many years of arrangements are finally about to bear fruit."

Old Ancestor Zhubo seemed intrigued, "Are you suggesting that they are about to lose their patience?"

"We crippled the former Ma Huangfu's Family and killed a few undercover agents from Yin Sha Sect, like cutting off two arms of the Celestial Huangfu Family." Wang Shouzhe calmly provided his analysis. "As well as buying up all the fixed assets of the former Ma Huangfu's Family, we've effectively strangled the neck of Huangfu Ranch."

In addition, our open and secret support to Old Ancestor Beichen to impact the Heavenly Human Realm is also a major threat to them."

"All these actions have already infuriated the Huangfu Clan. The reason they haven't taken action so far was that they were just biding their time, waiting for the perfect opportunity. Just yesterday, Senior Brother Fang Youan and others from the Purple Abode Academy successfully completed their disaster relief mission and have returned to the Academy.

The City Lord Xiahou Hongde also took the Academy's flying carriage to the Prefecture Mansion of Longzuo County for a work report. The return trip will take at least ten days, or as long as a month."

"This is the best opportunity for the Huangfu Clan to take action. If they miss this opportunity, they will never find such an excellent chance again." Wang Shouzhe said calmly. "And my personal presence in the secret production base for several days is the final, juicy bait that I am throwing out."

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"What if they don't take the bait?" asked the old ancestor Zhou Bo.

"If they don't take the bait in this situation, they will have to wait at least three years to make a move once city lord Xiahou returns from his duty. After all, the Piercing Cloud Cannon that Xiahou gave me wasn't given for nothing." Wang Shouzhe laughed, "The longer they delay, the stronger the Wang Family's In-laws Alliance will become.

If they continue to delay, perhaps Old Ancestor Beichen will have already successfully advanced to the Heavenly Human Realm. They can't afford to delay~~"

"Shouzhe, you really have them calculated to a T." Old Ancestor Zhou Bo admired, "If Zhou Xuan had had your brains back then, he wouldn't have ended up the way he did."

"Ah~ I didn't have a choice, I was forced into it." Wang Shouzhe also sighed, "As the saying goes, once bitten by a snake, one is afraid of well ropes for ten years. The Huangfu Clan is like a venomous snake, lurking in the darkness, ready to strike at any moment. How could the Wang Family be at ease? Instead of going to all lengths to guard against them, it's better to take the initiative."

Wang Shouzhe too was filled with emotions. If the burden he carried on his shoulders wasn't as heavy, he wouldn't want to be constantly worrying. Wouldn't it be better to cultivate in peace, and spend time playing with his children?

Unfortunately, the tree wants tranquility but the wind does not cease.

In any world, peace doesn't come simply because you wish for it. If you want to truly become strong, you can only take the initiative to control your own fate.

...

That night.

The Main Residence of Huangfu's Family in Changning.

In the study room, the exquisite palace lamp embedded with Spirit Stones emitted bright white light, illuminating the entire room as if it were day.

Huangfu Jinhuan sat at a large ancient wooden desk, reading a secret letter.

The letter was sealed with black wax, a special seal that prevents forgery was stamped on it. A simplified line of the shape of a fish, which seemed to be some sort of special code, was drawn at the signature place.

Huangfu Jinhuan seemed careless when he opened the letter.

However, after only a few glances, his eyes lit up. He became more and more excited as he read on, and after a while, he slapped the letter on the table in excitement and stood up.

"Good~ good~ good! This is a heaven-sent opportunity!"

These days had been extremely frustrating for him.

The Yinsha Sect's hidden forces operating in secrecy, and all the side branches of the Huangfu Clan had been eliminated, even the fixed assets of the previous Ma Huangfu's Family fell into the hands of the Wang Family.

The prestige of the eminent celestial Huangfu Family in Changning took a nosedive. Their former partners have all taken a cautious stance towards them, keeping a respectful distance. Even those ninth-rank small families, who used to visit frequently, have all disappeared without a trace.

The once bustling main house has become deserted.

All these seemed to be signaling the once-glorious celestial family is gradually declining.

But who else could know that the Huangfu family is not without the power to fight back. He was just waiting, waiting for a good opportunity to strike back.

Now, the opportunity has come.

Unable to contain his excitement, Huangfu Jinhuan ran to see old ancestor Hua Ye to report this good news. His carefully laid trap had finally come to fruition.

...

Several days later.

On a windy night of a moonless sky.

At the bottom of Fallen Eagle Gorge, the river was flowing rapidly. The waves constantly slapped against the hillside, making a "pat-pat-pat" sound. The harsh wind blew over the top of the hill, it was impeded by trees and rocks, and the sound of the wind became a low, choking howl like a ghost crying.

Amid this eerie atmosphere, three masked figures appeared atop the cliff - a spot said to be only accessible to eagles - out of nowhere.

The man at the very front stood with his hands behind his back.

His face was covered, but the signature red hair exposed his identity without a doubt. Even a blind man would recognize him as Old Ancestor Hua Ye of the Celestial Huangfu Family.

His decision to wear a mask showed his casual and dismissive attitude. Or perhaps, it showed the confidence of a guaranteed victory within him. The act of wearing a mask was merely a formality.

"Jinning, Jinyu." Old Ancestor Hua Ye looked down at the production base in the valley, his voice filled with a hint of fervor and contempt, "According to the intelligence, this secret production base of the Wang family's In-law Alliance always has a Spirit Platform Realm Cultivator from the Alliance stationed here. The current person in charge is Chen Junyao from the Chen Clan of Donggang."

Elder Junyao is the second Old Ancestor of the Chen Clan of Donggang. He is relatively young and has not even reached the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. In the eyes of ordinary people, he is already a formidable Old Ancestor.

However, in the eyes of the Celestial aristocratic families, a mere initial stage Spirit Platform cultivator is truly not considered much.

No wonder Old Ancestor Hua Ye exudes a hint of disdain when he mentions him.

He continued, "In addition to this, Wang Shouzhe secretly came to be in charge. This is a golden opportunity. You first take control of Wang Shouzhe, then capture some of the key production managers, and you will be able to temporarily control this production base and extract the secrets of cement and foreign glass production at the fastest speed."

"Yes, Old Ancestor."

The two other masked elders seriously replied.

Both of them had white hair, and their voices carried a hint of the twilight years, as if they were even older than Old Ancestor Hua Ye.

These two elders, one was called Huangfu Jinning and the other was called Huangfu Jinyu, both of them were Old Ancestors of the Jin-generation from the Celestial Huangfu Family.

Celestial aristocratic families are not the same as those of the eighth or ninth rank.

The foundation of an old seventh-rank aristocratic family is extremely terrifying and unfathomable.

These two Jin-generation Old Ancestors, along with those who had separated to establish their own clans in Qianma Town, like Huangfu Jinyuan, were of the same generation.

They were once the pillar materials of the Celestial Huangfu Family, and Huangfu Jinning even served as the Family Head for several decades.

However, they are now old, with only ten to twenty years of lifespan left, and no hope of impacting the Heavenly Human Realm, so they have retreated to the second line and become the family elders.

Under normal circumstances, they would spend the rest of their years in the family until their lifespan was exhausted.

This is the normal transition and replacement in a Celestial aristocratic family.

After all, cultivators of the Heavenly Human Realm have a lifespan of nearly four hundred years. Under normal circumstances, Celestial aristocratic families replace their Old Ancestors every two hundred or so years.

Apart from a few lucky ones from the direct line, the vast majority of people do not have the qualification to become heaven-human seeds and do not even have the opportunity to impact the Heavenly Human Realm.

Even those like Huangfu Jinyuan, who has better aptitude, had no choice but to go the way of separation, worked hard for a lifetime, and still didn't have the opportunity to impact the Heavenly Human Realm in the end.

On the contrary, the Old Ancestor Beichen of the Xu Family of Changning has a great fortune and has accumulated opportunities to impact the Heavenly Human realm.

"Jinning, Jinyu." Old Ancestor Hua Ye looked up at the starry sky and sighed, "I know that you may feel that you have been wronged in your lives. If the Huangfu family was approved by the Purple Abode, you might have a shot at ascension to become Celestials."

If they had been cultivated as Heavenly-Human seeds from a young age, Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu would have at least a thirty percent chance of entering the Heavenly Human Realm.

The late founder of the Ma Huangfu's Family in Qianma, Huangfu Jinyuan, had a probability of sixty to seventy percent, which was not much inferior to Old Ancestor Hua Ye in his youth. But how can it be so in the face of the great trend?

"But the path to the Purple Abode Realm isn't the same as ordinary paths. Now there is an excellent opportunity in front of our Huangfu family, and you must seize this chance for our descendants."

"Old Ancestor, we understand." Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu's expressions were firm, and there was a gleam in their eyes, "For the future of the Huangfu family, we will do our best and not let down the heavy trust of the Old Ancestor."

"Go on then~" Old Ancestor Hua Ye waved his hand lightly, his tone relaxed and confident, "Unintended plans can't compete with intentional ones, especially with me sitting here in control."

"This will surely succeed."

Just as his words fell.

"Boom!"

Beneath the Fallen Eagle Gorge, a surge of water hit the cliff, splashing water flowers seven or eight feet high.

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Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu were shaken to their core and immediately bowed their fists in agreement.

"Yes, Old Ancestor."

As their words settled, the two jumped down from the Fallen Eagle Gorge, bypassing Old Ancestor Hua Ye.

The cliff was steep, intimidating enough to chill the heart of any ordinary person, yet the two were unphased. Their bodies plummeted down no more than a few feet before an invisible burst of energy caught them, slowing their descent dramatically.

This was the power of a Spirit Platform Realm Cultivator in the Advanced Stage.

Having indulged in the path of Profound Martial for over a hundred and seventy years, their control over Mysterious Energy had reached the masterstroke level. Even though they couldn't fly like the cultivators in the Heavenly Human Realm, a short glide was easy.

Looking down in the darkness, the two seemed to float like feathers, silently descending into the base camp without a trace.

As soon as they landed,

Huangfu Jinning took out a Jade Bone Whistle and blew it gently.

The whistle trembled, but it didn't make a sound.

This Bone Whistle could generate a high-frequency sound, undetectable to the human ear. Only those who possessed the same bone fragment would be able to detect the frequency vibrations. This whistle, specially designed for secret communication among watchdogs, was small yet invaluable.

Before long,

A man sneaked out of the darkness.

He was elegantly dressed, giving an impression of some sort of rank. However, his current demeanor was wretched and shifty. He bowed to Huangfu Jinning and said, "I'm Hidden Fish, pleased to meet you Elders."

With that, he produced an ancient jade artifact shaped like a fish from his bosom for the two of them to examine.

"There's no need for formalities." Huangfu Jinning waved his hand dismissively after checking, his voice deep and sombre, "are you aware of this mission?"

"I am," the middle-aged man answered respectfully. "I've received secret instructions to assist the two Elders to the quarry's residence. Don't worry, Elders, I have already arranged the route."

"Lead the way."

A hint of delighted flashed in the eyes of Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu.

Under the guidance of the middle-aged man, the trio made their way stealthily without alerting anyone. Before long, they arrived at a residence located mid-valley.

"Elders, the quarry is inside."

Stopping, the middle-aged man bowed and informed the two standing behind him.

This residence had been built for several years, specifically for Wang Shouzhe's use, so he could have a space to himself while defending the secret base.

Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu exchanged glances, relying on their high level of cultivation, they boldly leaped into the courtyard.

Under the hazy moonlight, the courtyard was filled with green trees, giving the illusion of entering a lush forest where even breathing became pleasant.

"Humph! This Wang Shouzhe sure knows how to enjoy life, even a temporary residence is so luxurious." The Elder Huangfu both sneered and nodded simultaneously, "Let's begin!"

The layout of the courtyard was simple, distinct in hierarchy. With a clear target, they brandished their weapons and went straight for the main house.

However, just as they were about to burst into Wang Shouzhe's room like hungry wolves,

Suddenly,

Thick vines wriggled out, coiling around the two men's legs like lightning.

In an instant, countless shadows stirred in the darkness.

Those hidden vines in the courtyard writhed like pythons, giant, massive tendrils surged towards Elder Huangfu Jinning and Elder Huangfu Jinyu.

"Not good!"

The faces of the two Elders shifted drastically as a surge of Mysterious Energy erupted from within their bodies, it sent a wave of Qi rolling outwards, intending to blast off those vines.

However, those vines proved to be incredibly sturdy, merely cracking a little under the eruption of the Mysterious Energy.

This move stirred more vines that rushed over from all directions, entangling tighter and growing in number.

In a moment, even the sky above the courtyard was woven with intertwining vines. There were no escapes to be found from any direction.

"What kind of vine is this, its sturdiness is extraordinary?" The two Elders were dreadfully embarrassed, they immediately drew their Spirit Swords.

"Swish, swish, swish~"

Their profound Mysterious Energy transformed into a sharp sword aura.

Where the sword aura passed, unlike they had expected, there was no scene of severed vine limbs flying around. Rather, a single swipe could only cut off two or three vines.

Yet, as soon as these two or three vines were severed, the remaining ones surged forward even more furiously.

Despite their constant attempts to cut off the vines, they still found it hard to break free.

As time passed, the Elders' faces grew increasingly ugly, a sense of unrest began to show in their eyes.

Under the shroud of night, each vine was as thick as an arm, their surfaces emitting a metallic sheen that reminded one of metal chains.

This was the Iron Python Vine cultivated carefully by Wang Shouzhe.

During its growth, the vine needed to absorb a massive amount of iron slag.

The root system of these vines was so well developed that they could even penetrate dozens of feet into the ground. Especially their outer skin which looked like iron fibers, impervious to ordinary blades.

Even the cultivators of the Spirit Platform Realm could not easily eradicate them.

Its major drawback is that unlike the vines from the Witch Series, it cannot be used as a portable battle plant. It must be planted in position and once done, it cannot be moved.

Moreover, it has an extremely slow growth cycle, taking several years to mature.

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As a result, once they're fully grown, forming a vine formation, they would be much more powerful than the Witch Series. Even cultivators in the advanced stage of the Spiritual Platform realm, once entangled by the Vine Array, would find it difficult to escape.

Of course.

That difficulty would only be brief as it would be almost impossible to directly trap and kill them. Given some time, those advanced Spiritual Platform realm cultivators could eventually break free.

This Iron Python Vine Formation has been cultivated by Wang Shouzhe for many years, waiting for a day like today.

"Both of you have impressive cultivation bases. According to the information I've gathered, you must be Elder Huangfu Jinning and Elder Huangfu Jinyu of the Huangfu Clan from Changning, am I right?"

From within the swathes of whirling vines, Wang Shouzhe slowly stepped forward.

His expression was very calm, walking leisurely as if in a tranquil garden, though surrounded by a jungle of pythons, exuding an air of ease.

Where he stood, the surrounding vines automatically moved aside, many even prostrating themselves on the ground, as if in submission.

This scene only amplified the strength of his aura.

"Wang Shouzhe!!"

The two elders, Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu, were taken aback and their faces simultaneously changed color.

By this point, how could they not see the truth?

They'd been tricked!

It was clear they had fallen into a carefully designed trap!

At once, while resisting the vines, they both glared at the man in the elegant robe— Hidden Fish!

"Traitor!"

"How dare you betray the Huangfu Clan?!"

Both elders were enraged and verbally attacked in unison.

However, the middle-aged man seemed oblivious to their accusations. Instead, he took several steps back, calmly saluted Master Shouzhe and said, "Reporting to Master Shouzhe, I've followed your instructions and lured these two big fish here."

"Well done." Wang Shouzhe nodded slightly, "In that case, we will proceed according to our previous agreement. I will give you a handsome reward, and arrange for you and your family to relocate to a nearby county for a peaceful life. You must have heard, I keep my promises, always follow through on my words."

Upon hearing this, the middle-aged man couldn't contain his excitement, deeply saluted Wang Shouzhe and said, "Thank you, Master Shouzhe."

Afterward, he saluted the two elders of the Huangfu Clan and said, "My apologies, esteemed elders. My identity was accidentally exposed and my wife and children have been taken hostage. I had no choice but to betray the Huangfu Clan to ensure their safety."

"Very good!"

The two elders of the Huangfu Clan jeered while fuelled with anger, "Wang Shouzhe, you have really outdone yourself! However, you think you can capture us with mere vines? You underrate us too much!"

After saying that, they both went all out, frantically cutting the vines and attempting to break free.

"Indeed, elders at the advanced stage of the Spiritual Platform realm are impressive. The prestigious clan of celestial beings truly has profound resources with myriad experts." Wang Shouzhe was still unhurried and said with a calm expression, "Out of respect for the two of you, I have prepared a gift."

Afterwards, he said to someone inside a nearby pavilion, "Old ancestor, please do the honors of dealing with these two enemies."

As the last word echoed in the air,

A woman flew out of the room.

Decked out in a white Profound Martial uniform, her hair as icy and pure as snow, with a veil covering her face, it was the first ancestor of the Ping'an Wang Family, Wang Longyan, the old ancestor Longyan.

Upon her emergence, the ambient temperature around them noticeably dropped.

"Wang Longyan!"

Both elders of the Huangfu Clan involuntarily changed expression.

This woman was famously read about in Changning years ago. If not for that incident 60 years back, she might have reached the summit of the Spiritual Platform realm by now.

Despite that, in recent years, her fame has once again been growing rapidly. Not long back, she personally killed Mr. Yin of the Yinsha Sect and is currently in her prime.

Even under normal circumstances, neither of them was confident about defeating Wang Longyan one-on-one. Now, being entangled by the vines which greatly weakened their fighting abilities, they couldn't help changing color.

Wang Longyan's icy gaze swept across the faces of the two men. Subsequently, she let out a cold snort, flicked her wrist and threw out an item.

"Shoo!"

A creepy flag imbued with evil Qi was suspended in the air. Responding to the wind, it expanded and resounded with the gusts.

One chilling Qi after another emanated from the flag, swirling like the cold wind, infesting a significant area surrounding them within the blink of an eye.

"Yin Sha Asura Flag!"

The two elders of the Huangfu Clan had horrified expressions.

Both of them have years of experience and had seen a lot in their lifetime. They had close dealings with the Yinsha Sect, and therefore they instantly recognized the item.

While only a replica of that famous divine spiritual treasure, it was still a very rare middle-grade spiritual artifact, which packs a punch.

Even in the prestigious Celestial Huangfu Family, middle-grade spiritual artifacts are only found in threes. These two elders, both in the twilight of their lives, had no qualifications to wield these weapons.

What made the Yin Sha Asura Flag terrifying was that it could create chilling evil Qi, enveloping a range of several meters, artificially creating an environment suitable for the disciples of the Yinsha Sect to fight in, but detrimental to common Profound Martial cultivators.

This made it even trickier to deal with than ordinary middle-grade spiritual artifacts.

"Let me show you the potency of the Yin Sha's evil toxins."

Hatred flashed in Wang Longyan's eyes as she exerted control over the Yin Sha Asura Flag, with a simple pinch.

If the Celestial Huangfu Family hadn't conspired against them in the past, causing the deaths of her grandfather, Old Ancestor Zhou Xuan, her nephew Qiongyuan and many family members, the Ping'an Wang Family would never have met such a downfall.

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If it weren't for this Celestial Huangfu family, she wouldn't have been tormented by the Yin Sha's energy for a full fifty years.

Now, it was time for her to take her revenge.

"Whoosh~"

The momentum of the Yin Sha Asura Flag surged, spurred higher by the Old Ancestor Longyan, even the patterns on the flag seemed to come alive.

The Yin Sha's energy in the air suddenly thickened, as if a shadow knife swaying in the air, it shrouded the two elders of the Huangfu clan, starting to erode them continually.

Both of them were shocked in their hearts, hurriedly channeling their Mysterious Energy, creating a thin shield on the surface of their bodies, trying desperately to resist the erosion of the Yin Sha's energy.

At the same time, they also had to constantly cut off the endless Iron Python Vines.

If there were only one of these things, they would have a chance to escape, but at this moment, they could only do their best to withstand.

Human power is ultimately limited.

Even though their Mysterious Energy was rather dense, consuming it continuously will eventually exhaust them, not escape from being entangled by vines, and being invaded by the Yin Sha's energy, finally corroded, decayed, and died.

Even though they don't have much lifespan left, it doesn't mean they can face death calmly, let alone the consumption of life in this way!

They showed a look of horror, and suddenly looked at each other, as if determined, they issued a stern roar at the same time.

This moment was silent, as soon as the roar arose, it resonated through the sky.

Before the roar died out, a firelight already whistled from the sky, and in the blink of an eye, it turned into a human figure appearing in the sky.

This figure had an impressive momentum, a head of red hair fluttering, with firelight surrounding his body, if it wasn't the Old Ancestor Hua Ye, then who else could it be?

"Jinning, Jinyu!"

Seeing the scene in the courtyard, Old Ancestor Hua Ye was both shocked and furious.

He had thought there might be some setup in this base, the action of the duo might not go too smoothly, but he hadn't expected that with the strength of the two, they would still get into such a predicament!

Immediately, he raised a hand and slapped it out.

In the blink of an eye.

The red Mysterious Energy transformed into a giant palm that covered the sky, whistling down from the air.

Even in mid-air, the giant palm ignited a raging fire, the glare almost illuminating the entire small courtyard. The overwhelming momentum pressed down from the sky, causing palpitations even without contact with the vine.

Seeing this, Old Ancestor Longyan immediately spurred the Yin Sha Asura Flag madly, the dense Yin Sha's energy surged in an attempt to block the Flaming Giant Palm.

However, this fire seemed to have a restrictive effect on the Yin Sha's energy.

The dense Yin Sha's energy touched the flame on the giant palm and was burned into billowing black smoke with "hissing" sounds.

As the Flaming Giant Palm passed, the surrounding Yin Sha's energy instantly emptied.

Even the Iron Python Vine, which was still being driven by Wang Shouzhe to roll up wildly, had burnt a lot.

In the blink of an eye, a gap was cleared in the small courtyard sky. The pressure on Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu, who were entangled, was also significantly reduced.

Seeing this, the spirits of the two elders were boosted.

"Hahaha~ Wang Shouzhe, Wang Longyan, the Old Ancestor Hua Ye is here, let's see how you can be arrogant now!"

As the two's confidence surged, they gathered their last strength and prepared to break through.

Suddenly.

At this moment.

A deep and ancient voice suddenly came from the small courtyard: "Old Ancestor Hua Ye, since you are here, stay here."

As the words fell.

A dominant aura suddenly rose from the small courtyard.

Old Ancestor Hua Ye's eyes hardened, and a figure slowly appeared from the direction of the main house.

Tonight, the night was as dark as ink, and there was no light from the stars or moon.

Yet this figure was emitting a sharp gold light, making his already significant sense of security seem even more unshakeable, like a copper Buddha statue, evoking reverence.

This was the external manifestation formed by the force of a power player.

Only those whose strength has reached the Heavenly Human Realm and have specifically cultivated the War Body, the Profound Martial Cultivators, would display such an aura. As the Mysterious Energy within their bodies contained intense Metallic Elemental-Aura, the light thus showed a sharp golden hue.

This elder turned out to be the Celestial Elder of the Wang family of Longzuo, who had been lurking at this base for a long time, Old Ancestor Zhoubo.

Upon his appearance, Old Ancestor Zhoubo slapped at Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu.

Just as the two were struggling to break free, they were sent back in an instant.

The rescue mission got obstructed, Old Ancestor Hua Ye shockingly watched Old Ancestor Zhoubo: "You, You, You, could you be Wang Zhubo of the Longzuo Wang Family? How is this possible?! Almost for half a year, our spies in the Longzuo county have been watching the Longzuo Wang family. Weren't you always operating in Longzuo?"

Chapter 80 Evolution! Bloodthirsty Vines_1

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How could the Huangfu Clan target the Ping'an Wang Family without paying attention to the information from the Wang Family of Longzuo County?

If they didn't have certain information knowing that Wang Zhubo had always been in Longzuo County and was quite active, they wouldn't have excluded Wang Zhubo from their plan when they acted.

Unexpectedly, Wang Zhubo, who had always been active in Longzuo County Town, suddenly appeared here!

If it weren't for the fact that the strength of the Heavenly Human Realm cannot be faked, Old Ancestor Hua Ye almost thought he was seeing things.

"Sorry, the Zhubo Old Ancestor active in Longzuo County Town was an imposter I arranged. For the better part of the year, Zhubo Old Ancestor has been guest here with me," Wang Shouzhe said out loud in the courtyard, "I didn't mean to disappoint Old Ancestor Hua Ye, sorry, sorry~ My goal was to lure you into a trap."

"You!!"

Old Ancestor Hua Ye was so infuriated that blood surged to his head and he almost spat out blood.

Without waiting for Old Ancestor Hua Ye to speak,

Wang Shouzhe turned to the two elders of the Huangfu Clan, his smile faded, and his tone suddenly became cold: "Elders Jinning and Jinyu, since you have already brought Old Ancestor Hua Ye here, your roles end here."

Elders Huangfu Jinning and Huangfu Jinyu both felt an immediate chill over their bodies.

They suddenly understood.

It turns out that just now Wang Shouzhe had only trapped them without immediately moving against them, not just because of them two, but for the purpose of attracting Old Ancestor Hua Ye.

It's pathetic that they sought help from Old Ancestor Hua Ye when they were facing a desperate situation, but they didn't expect that everything was part of the opponent's calculation.

Such a bold move, such a vicious plan!

However, understanding it now is useless.

As Wang Shouzhe's voice fell,

An old man emerged from the small house in the courtyard.

He had a slender figure and although his face was aged, it still looked rosy and his eyes were still sharp, which sharply contrasted with the Huangfu Clan's two elders who appeared to be on their last leg.

It was apparent that his blood and life force were still abundant, and a powerful vitality radiated from his body.

This old man was none other than the Old Ancestor Beichen, the number one Old Ancestor of the Xu Family of Changning.

"Xu Beichen." Despair emerged in the eyes of the two elders of the Huangfu Clan as they exclaimed, "Aren't you isolating yourself to make a breakthrough into the Heavenly Human Realm?"

Old Ancestor Beichen laughed and said, "While making a breakthrough into the Heavenly Human Realm is important, dealing with future troubles can't be underestimated either. So what if my promotion is delayed because of this?"

After saying that, his smile faded, and a firm determination to kill flashed in his eyes.

At the same time, he raised his hand, and a Town Dragon Monument shone impressively in his palm.

"Wang Shouzhe, Xu Beichen, you dare!" Old Ancestor Hua Ye was so angry that he roared out in outrage as soon as he saw the situation.

The sound was booming and caused the valley to shudder faintly.

Elders Jinning and Jinyu were both of his bloodline descendants, especially Huangfu Jinning, who was his direct heir and had held the position of Family Head for decades.

Even a tiger would not eat its cub; how could he stand by and watch them die?

Without delay, Old Ancestor Hua Ye flew down, trying to prevent all of this.

But would Old Ancestor Zhubo let him have his way?

Before Old Ancestor Hua Ye could make a move, he blocked Old Ancestor Hua Ye and said in a deep voice, "Huangfu Hua Ye, don't forget who your opponent is."

"Wang Zhubo, get out of my way!!"

Old Ancestor Hua Ye, enraged, made his strike. A fist enveloped in thick flames blazed towards Old Ancestor Zhubo.

The surrounding air could not bear it and made continuous explosive noises. The power of this punch was even stronger than before.

"Come on!"

Old Ancestor Zhubo's eyes shone, but he was unexpectedly delighted instead of being shocked.

Immediately, he moved the vast Mysterious Energy around him; his body was enveloped in a golden aura, and like a Golden Arhat, he took on Old Ancestor Hua Ye's punch head on.

His mission for today was very clear, to drag Old Ancestor Hua Ye down.

"Boom, boom, boom~~!"

Huge amounts of energy collided and clashed and the two old ancestors in the Heavenly Human Realm began a fierce battle in mid-air.

With powerful wind gusts and the harmonious resonance of flames and Metallic Elemental-Aura, the valley echoed with booming thunderous sounds.

Even though Old Ancestor Zhubo was still only at Level Two of the Heavenly Human Realm, which was one step below Old Ancestor Hua Ye in terms of cultivation, he believed that he could hold off Old Ancestor Hua Ye for at least two quarters of an hour if it was just dragging him down.

Just when Old Ancestor Hua Ye was being held by Old Ancestor Zhubo.

In Wang Shouzhe's small courtyard.

Old Ancestor Beichen glanced at Wang Longyan and said casually: "Old Ancestor Longyan, let's each choose one, do you want Huangfu Jinning or Huangfu Jinyu?"

Her demeanor was like picking out merchandise.

Wang Longyan's brows under the veil raised slightly, she pointed her beautiful eyes at Huangfu Jinning: "He is from the direct line of the Huangfu Clan, I'll choose him."

As soon as the words fell,

Wang Longyan, with the Dragon Smoke Sword in her hand, swept up a frosty storm and stormed towards Huangfu Jinning.

Since she chose Huangfu Jinning, Old Ancestor Beichen naturally could only pick Huangfu Jinyu.

"Although both are of the 'Jin' generation. However, compared to Huangfu Jinyuan, you are far behind." After glancing at Huangfu Jinyu, he looked somewhat displeased.

Despite dying in disgrace, Huangfu Jinyuan still held a degree of respect in Old Ancestor Beichen's heart.

As for the others of the 'Jin' generation, they were not even worth his consideration.

The last word, "far", came out,

The Town Dragon Monument held by Old Ancestor Beichen hummed, making a sound as heavy as evening drums and morning bells.

The Town Dragon Monument grew larger and larger, and in the blink of an eye, it conjured up a solid monument-shaped shadow, moving with a force as heavy as a small mountain towards Huangfu Jinyu.

Huangfu Jinyu gritted his teeth, wielding his Spirit Sword to resist desperately.

Although both he and Huangfu Jinning had been worn down a wave, they hadn't yet reached the point of losing their fighting capabilities. For the time being, neither Old Ancestor Longyan nor Old Ancestor Beichen could claim victory over their opponents.

The two sides clashed fiercely, instantly splitting the battlefield into three parts.

At the same time,

Chen Junyao, the current stationed Elder of the rotation period, hurried over and landed gracefully by Wang Shouzhe, reporting respectfully: "Family Head Shouzhe, as per your earlier instruction, I have evacuated all the relevant people to the hidden rooms in the mountains as soon as the battle began."

He glanced across the battlegrounds, hesitated slightly, and asked, "Do I need to step forward to help?"

"Elder Jun Yao, we appreciate your intention," Wang Shouzhe respectfully returned the courtesy, "Currently, everything is under control. You just need to stand by."

Chen Jun Yao frowned slightly, feeling somewhat helpless.

The two elders from the Huangfu Clan who had come were cultivators at the advanced stage of the Spirit Platform Realm, whereas he, Chen Jun Yao, had not even reached the middle stage. He guessed that Master Shouzhe was probably dismissing him due to his lack of strength, fearing he might be in danger.

This made Chen Jun Yao quite melancholic.

Times really do change fast. He, as an ordinary elder of the Spirit Platform Realm, could barely get involved in the battles anymore. Luckily, he was only eighty or ninety years old, still quite young, and had the chance to make more progress.

Wang Shouzhe also had some sentiments.

He recalls that more than a decade ago, he and the Elder Longyan had gone to deal with affairs at the Hundred Islands Guard on the merchant ship "Jun Yao."

The merchant ship, named after Elder Jun Yao, was used to deter petty and lowly people.

However, unexpectedly.

The Ping'an Wang Family has grown to such an extent, that they don't even need to rely on elders of the Spirit Platform Realm like Elder Jun Yao in battles anymore.

After this feeling of nostalgia passed, Wang Shouzhe quickly collected his thoughts and focused his attention on the battlefields of the Spirit Platform Realm.

He hadn't utilized Elder Jun Yao because he had long planned to take action himself.

When the Huangfu Clan once plotted against the Ping'an Wang Family, it could have been seen as a casual move for them, as effortless as crushing an ant that might pose a threat in the future.

However, that seemingly casual move caused a catastrophe that almost led to the annihilation of the Ping'an Wang Clan, and many clansmen lost their lives as a result.

Given the chance for revenge, he, of course, wanted to do it himself.

Thus, he waited for the right moment.

A heavy and condensed pale blue 'mysterious energy' spread out from his feet like a swimming dragon, constantly stretching forward.

This energy was brimming with vigor and vitality, extremely nimble as if it had eyes, and fell automatically onto those charred and broken Iron Python Vines.

The energy infiltrated the roots.

In an instant, a miraculous thing happened.

The scorched Iron Python Vines that had lost their vitality, unbelievably regained their life force!

The charred skin cracked and peeled off, and fresh vine skin grew underneath. The broken stems also sprouted new buds. In just a moment, they were thriving again like living creatures and rushed towards the two elders of the Huangfu Clan.

"How is this possible!"

The Huangfu elders, Jinning and Jinyu, were both shocked.

They were already struggling enough to handle their respective opponents. If the Iron Python Vines joined the fray, they wouldn't stand a chance.

From the moment Wang Shouzhe casually made his move, the two elders of the Huangfu Clan fell into a hard battle. They were caught off guard, and their defeat was imminent.

Chen Jun Yao, who was watching from the side, couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

No wonder Master Shouzhe didn't need his help. It turns out that just one person, Master Shouzhe, was enough to easily support two of his allies.

They were both at the early stage of the Spirit Platform Realm. How could there be such a big gap?

Just as he was thinking this.

Suddenly.

Huangfu Jinyu was caught off guard and was entangled by an Iron Python Vine.

He swiftly sliced off the vine in a panic, but his movements were consequently slowed down and was directly hit by the phantom image of the Town Dragon Monument coming towards him.

"Boom!"

His body shook as he spurt out blood, flying backward several meters before finally falling to the ground.

"Cough~cough~cough~"

He struggled to get up but did not notice that a vine with a completely different color from the Iron Python Vines was quietly approaching him within the surrounding thicket.

It was emitting a reddish color, looking ferocious and bloodthirsty.

Quietly, it tightly wrapped around Huangfu Jinyu's calf.

Spiky bristles like a leech's mouth parts quietly punctured his veins. A refreshing feeling numbed his senses, so he didn't feel any pain at all.

Only when his blood was being sucked out through the hollow spikes did Huangfu Jinyu sense something was off.

Seeing what went down on his calf, his eyes widened in horror. He was terrified, "What kind of creature is this?!"

Without thinking, he swung his sword and cut off the spike.

Blood sprayed out instantly.

Unexpectedly, this action seemed to anger the "creature."

It rose up in fury, revealing its horrifying true form.

It was a sturdy vine like a crimson python, its body covered with needle-like bristles—it was evil, cold, and gave off a terrifying aura that made one's heart palpitate.

In just an instant, it wrapped around Huangfu Jinyu's body like a mad python.

At the same time, hundreds of bloodsucking spikes plunged into his body. With one surge and one contraction, its originally somewhat withered stem swelled up at a visibly rapid pace as it filled with blood.

"Ah!"

Huangfu Jinyu screamed in extreme terror.

However, his entire body was numb at this moment, just like being under the effect of a massive dose of anesthesia. He was entirely powerless and had no way to struggle even if he wanted to.

In just a few moments, he became emaciated, his eyes bulged, presenting an awful sight of someone who had been sucked dry of his blood.

"This..."

Even Old Ancestor Beichen, who was watching this scene, felt chills running down his spine. Fear washed over him, and he couldn't help but shift back a little in secret.

Yes, this crimson python-like creature was the "Bloodthirsty Vine" that Wang Shouzhe had tamed.

After draining Huangfu Jinyu's blood, its body swelled up, its stem seemed to be flowing with bloodlights, and looked plump and shiny. It crawled back lazily to Wang Shouzhe and lay down, as if it was drunk.

But at the same time, an awe-inspiring potent aura was spreading from it.

At this moment, it was actually entering the state of evolution!