

Protect OCL VL3 21

Chapter 21: Daddy and Old Ancestor are here_1

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Elder Shang hurriedly took out a jade talisman, his heart filled with immense pain as he shattered it.

This jade talisman was a defense charm he had accumulated painstakingly over time, intending to use it to save his life in critical moments. He never expected that he would have to use it in such a situation.

Alas, circumstances being what they were, he had no room for hesitation. The power of the upcoming strike was immense, and if he were to be gravely injured by it, it would be a grave humiliation indeed.

As the jade talisman broke, a gold-colored spirit shield instantly appeared above his head. The golden light flowed around, forming a barrier as sturdy as an ironclad wall, tightly protecting him.

As the illusory shadow of the mountain and river pressed down heavily, glimmers of spirit light appeared on the surface of the golden spirit shield, trembling under what appeared to be a tremendous pressure.

If it were a normal battle, with the support of this spirit shield, Elder Shang could have used this opportunity to escape the battlefield.

However, the Divine Soul Spirit Treasure hovering above was a bit crafty.

The immense illusory shadow of the mountain and river it had incited seemed to fuse with the surrounding space. No matter in which direction he attempted to break through, he faced the same severe pressure. It was as if, at this moment, the entire world turned against him.

Half a moment later, the golden spirit shield finally failed to hold up and shattered abruptly.

The somewhat dimmed illusory shadow of the mountain and river abruptly sank, pressing down directly on him again.

Elder Shang hastily wielded the Primordial Water Sword to block the strike, but he was still shocked, and blood spurted out from his mouth.

Such successive high-energy explosions inevitably attracted the attention of many on the island.

A growing crowd gathered to watch. Several Celestial-Realm Elders stationed here even arrived upon hearing the news.

Meanwhile...

Inside the main hall where the big shots were having a meeting,

Despite the presence of a formation blocking probing and most noises, the masters conducting the meeting inside the main hall still felt the intense energy fluctuations distinctly.

Such energy fluctuations... could they have reached the late Celestial Realm?

Master Primordial Water's eyebrows raised, "Come."

"Greeting, Master."

One of the early realm core disciples, Fu Haibo, entered. Although he was not a direct disciple, he was one of the more outstanding younger disciples under Master Primordial Water's teaching and usually stayed by his side.

"Haibo, send my order: whoever is sparring, they must stop immediately," said Master Primordial Water, "Once my affairs here are settled, bring them to me."

"Yes, Master." Fu Haibo took the order and left.

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The masters themselves are not immortals, so how could they have anticipated that it was just a young girl at the Spiritual Platform Realm clashing with a Celestial Realm Elder?

More and more people gathered at the site of the two's spar.

After Wang Liyao catalyzed the Mountain and River Stamp, her face had become pale.

The Mountain and River Stamp, having exhausted its own energy, reverted to its white jade seal form and flew back into her eyebrows.

Clearly, driving the mighty Mountain and River Stamp was draining for Wang Liyao.

Those watching could tell, this "Divine Soul Spiritual Tool" was extremely powerful, but not a conventional combat method.

After all, if an ordinary Spiritual Platform Realm cultivator could operate it freely, wouldn't that make him unbeatable?

However, the crowd was thrilled to see a Spiritual Platform Realm cultivator defy a Celestial Realm with this. This was indeed a rare sight, not likely to occur once in a hundred years.

Witnessing this event excited everyone present.

The Spirit Tortoise 'Ninth Miss' was particularly animated, wailing "wow", if not trapped in the prohibition, she might have rushed to hug her master's thigh and flirt.

Her master was so amazing, really worthy of what the old ancestor said about the arrival of chance.

With more and more onlookers, three stationed elders came one after another to watch. After asking the disciples about the developments, their faces became very solemn.

The young girl who had an ordinary look that one could hardly remember her face was probably more than just any Sky Pride, she was a Great Sky Pride who might emerge once in hundreds of years in the Purple Abode Academic Palace!

Only those who awaken their spiritual bodies at the Spiritual Platform Realm are eligible to be called Great Heavenly Prides.

These ultra-talented individuals are doted on by masters. It is said that for such Great Heavenly Prides, advancing to the Celestial Realm is as natural as eating and drinking, and they don't even need to take an Ascension Pill.

Even the advanced stage of the Purple Abode Realm, a lifetime dream for numerous core disciples, is not an insurmountable obstacle for the Great Heavenly Prides. Only if they want to progress further to reach the Divine Power Territory do they face some chance of failure.

That is to say, unless they fall prematurely, the lowest achievement for any Great Sky Pride in this life would be a Purple Abode Master. If they are lucky, they might even become a Divine Power Territory big shot, with a faint chance of reaching a higher level in the future.

Unlike them, the core disciples, or direct disciples who are not of Sky Pride level, have very low future potential to step into the Purple Abode.

Among the young generation of the Purple Abode Academic Palace, there is a Great Sky Pride, and that is Green Fern, a disciple of Master Changchun.

However, because of Green Fern's special origins and Master Changchun's command to keep her identity a secret, only the masters in the Academic Palace knew she was of Great Sky Pride status. It was not public knowledge.

"Who... who are you? What's your family name? Wang? Were you born in the Southern Desert's Wang family? Or are you a member of the Great Qian Wang Clan?" Elder Shang asked in rage, "Don't think your strong bloodline talent allows you to do as you please.

The Academic Palace has its rules, which even the Great Qian Imperial Household can't violate at will!"

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"Elder Shang, you truly disappoint me, as does your Primordial Water lineage."

Wang Liyao shook her head and sighed.

"The Academic Palace is known for accepting disciples from humble backgrounds, not judging heroes by their lineage, and is respected and admired. Once one joins the Academic Palace, they are considered disciples of the Palace; considered brothers internally and they share honor or disgrace, lending support to each other in times of crisis. However, that seems to have changed with you."

"What does my supposed guilt have to do with my background?"

"If I, Wang Liyao, come from a high-tier family, would you think twice before crossing me? If I come from a humble background, would that give you the liberty to oppress me without discerning right from wrong?"

"Since you showed up, did you ever properly investigate the matter? You've judged me based on Shang Lexian's one-sided account and think you can suppress me just because I don't have anyone to back me up?"

Her remarks left Elder Shang's expression shifting between surprise and disapproval.

The other elders exchanged embarrassed glances as well.

The Academic Palace of today had become increasingly mercenary, far removed from its original ideals when it was first established.

"Girl, I don't care about your family background or whether you are a Great Heavenly Proud. You've vexed me, and I'm caught in an undesirable situation. Nevertheless, I have to insist that I suspect you of stealing the secret scriptures of the Academic Palace. If you do not willingly surrender and come with me to the Law Enforcement Hall, I will suppress you."

At this point, he had no other option but to stick to his guns.

If it turns out she indeed stole from the palace, it would please everyone and he would be hailed as a hero. If it turns out to be a misunderstanding, he can hold his head high and answer even to a Master from the Primordial Water line, with the Academic Palace to back him up."

"I've lived for three hundred years, and while my ability may not match those of Sky Prides, I am well versed in emergency tactics. It's not a skill those Sky Prides can compare."

What's more, if he were to back down now and couldn't even suppress a girl at the Spiritual Platform stage, he'd lose face and authority, and he'd hardly carry on within the ranks of the Tian Lake lineage of the Primordial Water."

As soon as he finished speaking,

Elder Shang took out a round magical treasure and held it in his palm.

He stood upright and said, "Wang Liyao, I'm giving you one last chance. If you admit to stealing the scriptures from the Primordial Water line, I will plead for your leniency."

Even at this time, Elder Shang attempted to outsmart Wang Liyao.

"I haven't stolen anything, you have no right to judge me, and I don't need someone like you to plead for me," Wang Liyao coldly retorted.

She has always been resolute from a young age and other than her mother, she never lets anyone force her into admitting guilt, particularly when she did no wrong.

"Very well, since you are so stubborn, then I have no choice but to enforce the rules," Elder Shang had waited for this response.

Right away,

he flicked his wrist, and the round magical treasure whizzed up into the air, quickly growing until it was more than ten feet in diameter.

The treasure, named "Qiankun Ring," was a replica of the divine tool "Qiankun Circle". While weaker than the original, it possesses great power to bind and suppress people.

Under Elder Shang's control, the Qiankun Ring spun in the air and then fiercely pressed down towards Wang Liyao!

The heavy binding energy took form of radiant rays emitting a terrifying suppression, aiming at Wang Liyao.

Wang Liyao was too frail to dodge.

Seeing this, her face became gloomy, and she casted the Guardian Heart Spirit Shield, drawing ample primordial water energy into it.

A robust umbrella-shaped energy shield immediately emerged around her.

The next moment,

a "ka-boom" resounded, the powerful binding energy fell onto the shield.

Wang Liyao's body shuddered, as if struck by thunder.

The huge pressure broke the floor tiles beneath, and she kneeled onto the ground, her legs deeply plunged into it.

Sweat dripped down her cheeks as her face became pale.

"Wang Liyao, as long as you admit your mistake, I will withdraw the magical treasure. Given your immense talent and bloodline, the Academic Palace will surely give you a lenient punishment," Elder Shang, while increasing pressure, tried persuasively, "Why bother making yourself suffer?"

"I made no mistake, why should I admit to something wrong? It's you who is wrong!" Despite her struggles, Wang Liyao defiantly retorted.

Who does he think he is? Forcing her to admit guilt, he must be dreaming!

"Very well." Elder Shang was getting frustrated, "Then don't blame me for directly restraining and taking you to the Law Enforcement Hall."

With that said, he made a symbol with his hand, intending to enhance the binding and suppressive force of the Qiankun Ring.

"Sigh~"

Seeing this, Wang Liyao felt helpless, but still sighed.

Well, it seems she had to use that item now.

She thought she wouldn't need to use it. After all, never underestimate the strength of an ordinary Tianren Realm Cultivator of the Academic Palace. Even if they were not Sky Pride like her Uncle Fang Youan, they were strong with plentiful surprises. Unlike the Realm Cultivators from ordinary 7th-rank Aristocratic Families...

Seeing Wang Liyao hesitating, it is apparent she has a formidable trick up her sleeve.

All of the sudden,

Just at that moment.

A "buzzing" sound echoed in the air, as a robust sword chime streaked across the sky.

A purple sword light swiftly moved from far away to near, cutting through the air.

The sword light felt as sharp as icy piercing cold, yet powerful like a thunderous force. Its terrifying aura caused fear among everyone.

Accompanying this was an irate feminine voice booming from the sky, "Shang, you're really bold, daring to bully my family!"

"Purple Lightning Sword! It's our Old Ancestor, Old Ancestor Longyan is here~~"

Wang Liyao's eyes lit up, she felt an intense sense of relief, as if she was leaning on a strong pillar.

Her anxiety disappeared, and in an instant, her body swayed, falling backward!

But she didn't fall to the ground, instead, she fell into a familiar and secure embrace, accompanied by a familiar male voice in her ear, "You little girl, why are you still so stubborn?"

"Daddy~ It's daddy!~" Wang Liyao burst into tears, her lips perked up, showing a pitiable look of a little girl, "Wuwu~ I, I don't want to join the Primordial Water lineage."

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At the same time as the father and daughter were talking, the Purple Thunder Sword, dragging a long trail of purple electricity, came whistling over, and slammed hard into the Qiankun Ring.

"Boom!"

A thunderous blast suddenly screeched out.

The violent energy wave erupted with blinding electric brilliance, like a burst of firework trees and silver flowers instantly blossoming.

Under the impact of the dreadful force, the Qiankun Ring got directly hit away by the sword.

Meanwhile, Elder Shang, who was mentally connected with the Qiankun Ring, felt a jolt all over him, and a counteracting force surged from the shock to his divine soul.

In an instant, his slightly aged face turned pale, his body trembled violently, and almost toppled from the sky.

"Wang Longyan?"

The name was very familiar, Elder Shang was shocked, his heart flashed with astonishment and disappeared immediately.

However, the situation didn't allow him much thought because the purple electric sword light, after hitting the Qiankun Ring away, only swirled in the air for a moment before it fiercely rushed toward him again.

Elder Shang dodged again and again in haste.

At the same time, he kept activating the Primordial Water Sword to confront it.

What shocked him utterly was that this woman named Wang Longyan was truly too fierce, each of her moves entailed a powerful force. Moreover, she was extremely angry, every move seemed to aim for his life!

Unable to completely defend himself, Elder Shang was completely suppressed, running while fighting, utterly disheveled.

In the meantime, Wang Shouzhe only gave a quick glance at the battle and then, while holding his precious daughter Wang Liyao in his arms, with affectionate gentleness, patted her head saying, "Alright, alright, alright, since our Yao Yao says she won't join, then we won't join. Let's leave this matter aside for now.

Since that old man has bullied you like this, I'll help vent some of your anger for you."

As Wang Shouzhe's words fell.

A blood-colored vine shot out from his sleeve, turning into a thin blood-shadow and went toward Elder Shang to kill.

The vine grew at the blink of an eye, almost instantly, it turned into a "giant python" covered with blood-sucking barbs. The blood-colored aura of terror spread out, like a fierce beast ready to devour its human prey.

Compared to many years ago at the Blood Nest Base, its size and aura were unrecognizable, although it had not yet transformed into a Level Five, it seemed not too far away from doing so.

This Bloodthirsty Vine had been with Wang Shouzhe for a long time. Not only had it devoured the flesh wounds of Spirit Platform Realm Cultivators, but even the Tianren Realm Cultivators had been consumed.

Over these years, although it had been dormant and had not seen much battle, how could Wang Shouzhe mistreat it?

All the time, he had been feeding it with various fierce beasts. Moreover, Wang Shouzhe's plant growing skills were also quite effective on it, so the growth of the Bloodthirsty Vine was not surprising.

The Bloodthirsty Vine dashed like a fleeting light, and it quickly caught up with Elder Shang.

It took advantage of the opportunity when Elder Shang was completely suppressed by Ancestor Longyan and wrapped around his legs, the blood thorns instantly plunged into the blood vessels, injecting an intense paralyzing poison.

This was the Bloodthirsty Vine's battle routine, debilitate the prey with paralyzing poison in the first place to make it lose resistance, then to enjoy the essence blood of the prey.

"Ah!"

Elder Shang shrieked terribly, although his substantial Primordial Water energy burst out, he still couldn't shake off the Bloodthirsty Vine.

The barbs that had pierced into his body had tough and sharp reverse thorns that caused more pain the more he struggled.

Moreover, the pits and bumps on the vine surface were similarly structured like an octopus's suction cups, once it wrapped around its prey, it would firmly suck on the target, preventing them from escaping.

Regardless to say, the Bloodthirsty Vine was a fierce plant born for killing, possessing many animal characteristics.

Of course, as powerful as the Bloodthirsty Vine may be, it also had several weaknesses. For example, it was difficult for it to confront puppet-type units. Letting it fight with the guardian puppet "Wang Shouwei" was simply asking for trouble.

Moreover, it was particularly fire-averse, making it relatively weak against fire cultivating experts.

But putting aside its various weaknesses, the Bloodthirsty Vine was indeed very fierce. Coupled with Ancestor Longyan's fierce attacks, it quickly wrapped around Elder Shang, turning him into a ball of hemp.

After a massive injection of the paralyzing poison, even the strong body of a Tianren Realm cultivator began to falter and quickly lost resistance.

All these processes happened within an extremely short period.

The several Tianren Realm elders of the Primordial Water party who were watching the fight didn't even have time to consider whether to help or not before the fight ended. If it were not for Wang Shouzhe using his divine sense to command the Bloodthirsty Vine not to devour the essence blood of the target.

Perhaps the Bloodthirsty Vine might have already started to "feast."

"Wang Longyan?" One of the elders had reacted by then, speaking in a somewhat heavy voice, "I have heard of her name, she was a core disciple of Mysterious Ice Palace before, and later somehow she became a rogue disciple."

"Indeed from the Mysterious Ice Palace." Another elder looked a bit embarrassed, "Although Elder Shang's behavior is somewhat indecent, should we allow people from the Mysterious Ice Palace to act recklessly in our Primordial Water Heavenly Lake?"

Quite a few of the young disciples sighed in relief for Wang Liyao's escape.

Especially Ninth Miss Yunshui Spirit Tortoise, she also calmed down, staring curiously with her eyes at the "clan member" of her master.

The female clan member was so fierce and strong, who was the male clan member? He was so daring, he dared to hold my ninth miss's dear master.

As a Yunshui Spirit Tortoise, Ninth Miss was hatched from an egg and still had some concept about her mother, but as for her father...what was that?

At this moment.

Ancestor Longyan was already suspended in the air not far from Elder Shang, the Purple Thunder Sword was hovering lively beside her, as if it could launch an attack at any moment.

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In her veiled eyes, a cold and murderous intent flashed. "Shang, how dare you bully the young ones of my clan. Today, you will pay the price for this, to ease the hatred in my heart, you will lie in bed for several years to reflect on your actions."

As she finished speaking, the Purple Thunder Sword suddenly shone brighter. Streams of purple electric light crisscrossed, seeming to paint the whole sky a shade of purplish blue.

Elder Shang looked horrified.

The other elders of the Primordial Water sect also changed their expressions.

Suddenly!

In the high sky, a domineering aura of Primordial Water spread out, like a fog obscuring the sky. A majestic voice boomed angrily: "Junior members of the Mysterious Ice Palace, stop immediately."

An oppressive aura, formed by the energy, rushed towards Wang Longyan like a tangible force.

However, this pressure had just formed, when another equally aggressive aura came roaring in, dispersely it outright.

Amidst the rumbling noise.

The mysterious and extraordinary aura of Mysterious Ice surged, matching up against the Primordial Water instinct.

Simultaneously, a cold and angry voice echoed: "Primordial Water, our respect for you as the head of the courtyard is out of respect for the old courtyard head. And you dare to attack my disciple?"

The indirect confrontation between the two Masters frightened many people below, many faces expressing anxiety, unsure of what to do.

The appearance of the Masters was a testament to how serious the situation had become. Upon dispelling the Isolation Array Method of the main hall, they discovered that Sky Lake Island was in complete chaos.

Master Primordial Water, unaware of the causes and consequences, naturally assumed it was the disciples of the Mysterious Ice Palace causing trouble.

But Master Binglan, immediately recognized her precious disciple Wang Longyan and naturally wouldn't let Master Primordial Water have a chance to act against her.

As a Master, she understood Longyan's temperament the best. She knew she had a bad temper but was not one to cause trouble without reason.

"Master Primordial Water, Master Binglan, both of you, please calm down and let's clarify the situation first."

At this moment, the voice of a sturdy elderly man sounded.

At the same time, a vigorous and endless aura of Euphoria Wood surged into the sky, forming a thick barrier to separate the two.

The owner of this aura was, of course, the oldest among the Masters, Master Changchun.

He quickly recognized Wang Longyan and Wang Shouzhe, and of course, wouldn't just stand by and watch.

After stopping Master Primordial Water and Master Binglan, he turned to the shore: "Shouzhe, can you release the elder of the Primordial Water sect first? If there is indeed a problem, your master will surely stand up for you."

Master Changchun had some understanding of Wang Shouzhe's temperament. This self-proclaimed outsider he'd taken in wouldn't usually stir up trouble. Seeing the mess he had created, there must surely be a reason.

"Yes, Master." Wang Shouzhe had always been deeply respectful towards others. Master Changchun had been very supportive, and he certainly wouldn't reject his advice.

With a wave of his hand, despite the Bloodthirsty Vines' reluctance, it obediently ceased its entanglement of Elder Shang.

"Shouzhe? You are Wang Shouzhe..." Master Primordial Water was taken aback. Although they had not met, they had corresponded many times by letter, discussing the matter of his daughter Wang Liyao becoming a disciple.

"Greetings to Master Primordial Water," Wang Shouzhe solemnly greeted Primordial Water. After all, he was a Master, and had to pay him the respect he deserved.

Master Primordial Water's expression softened, and he kindly said, "We've corresponded by letter many times, but have not officially met."

Accepting a Heavenly Proud as a disciple was a matter of great importance to Primordial Water. During his three hundred year reign as the head of the Primordial Water sect, he's only had two Heavenly Proud disciples, one of whom passed away at a young age.

Therefore, Primordial Water cared a lot about this matter and often exchanged letters with Mr. and Mrs. Wang Shouzhe about Wang Liyao's cultivation issues. Originally, he was looking forward to Wang Liyao's visit... and even pre-announced that he was going to accept another direct disciple!

Wait a moment, a bad premonition suddenly appeared. If this was Wang Shouzhe, then the girl next to him, whining bitterly, pouting, could she be...

His heart suddenly shuddered. An ominous feeling rose in his mind: "Shouzhe, your daughter..."

"Liyao, aren't you going to greet the Master?" Wang Shouzhe prompted.

Despite feeling aggrieved, Wang Liyao paid her respects accordingly, saying: "Liyao greets the Master."

Seeing this, Master Primordial Water's heart sank. He wondered if earlier...

His face immediately hardened as he sternly asked Elder Shang, "Jiping, what exactly happened?"

As expected of a mid-stage Heavenly Human Realm cultivator, Shang Jiping regained a lot of energy soon after being released from the Bloodthirsty Vines. He quickly informed, "Reporting to Master, this is what happened..."

He hurriedly explained the situation, although he clearly concealed some of the preconditions, and packaged the actual reason, making it seem as if he was acting selflessly and wholeheartedly for the Academic Palace.

The more Primordial Water listened, the darker his face became. So, in just the short while earlier, such a major incident had occurred. No wonder, Liyao looked so aggrieved.

Wait! If Liyao's performance was so strong, according to Shang Jiping's words, isn't she the Great Heavenly Proud now? For a moment, Master Primordial Water had mixed feelings of concern and joy.

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Happy that his apprentice has become a Great Heavenly Proud apprentice, yet worried because the apprentice had offended others before she even officially began her training.

This must be handled carefully at this moment.

He immediately shouted in rebuke, "Shang Jiping, even if you have doubts about the origins of the child's cultivation technique, you should not be so callous? Can't you at least ask nicely?"

"Master, I was wrong." Shang Jiping bowed his head in apology.

Immediately, the Master of Primordial Water adopted a kinder expression looking at Wang Liyao. "Liyao, this was all a misunderstanding caused by a misunderstanding. Regarding Elder Shang, I will certainly severely criticize him. Tell me how you want him to compensate you, the Master will decide for you."

Unexpectedly...

Wang Liyao pouted her lips and turned her head away, not wanting to speak, let alone explain or debate with the Master of Primordial Water.

The Master of Primordial Water thought she was being childish. Despite him, a respected Master, apologizing, she was still upset? A hint of annoyance crossed his mind. However, he was patient because after all, she was a Great Heavenly Proud apprentice, an extraordinary disciple he could hardly come across in his lifetime.

Suddenly!

Lu Xianghui darted out from the crowd and knelt down before the Master of Primordial Water. Despite being terrified, he spoke loudly, "Master, the situation is not as Elder Shang said. The truth is..."

Then he went into detail about what had happened, without siding with Wang Liyao or Shang Lexian and Elder Shang.

"My junior sister, no, Miss Liyao, only intervened to prevent the disciples from being bullied. I hope the Master understands," Lu Xianghui bowed continuously, "if the Master does not believe me, there are many disciples present who can testify."

The faces of Wang Shouzhe and Wang Longyan became increasingly grim. Elder Shang was pushing them too far! To cover up for his own clan, he constantly tried to suppress Liyao. What if Liyao wasn't able to persist until they arrived?

The Master of Primordial Water also looked increasingly displeased. If what this ordinary disciple said was true, wouldn't his lineage have committed a grave wrongdoing, seriously offending his future Great Heavenly Proud apprentice?

As he was about to speak...

Wang Shouzhe beat him to it, " Master, I suggest we just let this matter rest, there's no need to investigate who was wrong."

The Master of Primordial Water looked relieved, "Thank you, Shouzhe for your magnanimity. But don't worry. I will solve this issue for Liyao."

"No, what I mean is, the previous agreement of my daughter paying respects to you, let's cancel that." Wang Shouzhe said, "Prior to this, my daughter came to your lineage to take a look, but she didn't expect to experience such an unpleasant event. I'm afraid it has left a shadow in her heart. She stated already that she does not want to join your lineage anymore.

Therefore, whether or not this matter is investigated doesn't matter anymore."

"What..." The Master of Primordial Water was a bit overwhelmed. "Shouzhe, a previously agreed matter cannot be changed just because of a whim, especially after Liyao has already practiced our lineage's cultivation technique! Let's discuss this again."

"Master!"

Although Wang Shouzhe's expression looked respectful, his tone had become firm. "Although there was an agreement before, it's concerning that the atmosphere of your lineage is so pervasive. A glimpse of an object is enough to understand its whole. Bullying disciples is certainly not the first incident.

For the sake of such a learning environment, I, as a father, will not allow my child to be pushed into a 'pit of fire'."

Pit of fire?

The Master of Primordial Water almost choked. Having lived for more than six hundred years, he naturally understood the real meaning behind Wang Shouzhe's words. Although he verbally said he didn't care, he actually did.

His underlying intentions were clearly expressed. In case the resolution doesn't satisfy them...

Regardless, Elder Shang was his former core disciple, and has also carried many burdens for the lineage of the Primordial Water on normal days. At the moment, he found it hard to make a harsh decision.

While the Master of Primordial Water hesitated, Wang Shouzhe shook his head and sighed, "It's clear that the Master is kind-hearted based on this encounter. The rotten atmosphere of this lineage is most likely due to your kind personality and dislike of intervention."

"Master of Primordial Water, I hope you'll forgive my boldness, I acknowledge that my position is humble, but as a clan leader, I understand the importance of rules! The current atmosphere of your lineage is closely related to your moderate and free-spirited character. "

"My Liyao may not suit your lineage's style." By this time, Wang Shouzhe was convinced that the lineage of Primordial Water was not suitable for Liyao, nor did it match her personality, and he directly rejected the offer, "As for Liyao learning the cultivation technique of your lineage, it's impossible to make her forget it. So, I'll take Liyao to the Lingyun Sacred Land to take a look.

After all, the Academic Palace of Purple Abode is a branch of the Holy Land's inheritance... It doesn't mean that Liyao is breaking the rules."

The Master of Primordial Water almost choked, astounded. What? The Heavenly Proud disciple he had been looking forward to for years, was going to slip away just like that? Even with his gentle and non-competitive character, he was starting to harbour huge grudges against Elder Shang.

"Thank you, Daddy." Wang Liyao's eyes were agitated, and she looked at her father gratefully. Her father was so supportive of her, even though she was stubborn and did not want to enter the Academic Palace, that he wasn't afraid of offending the Master.

"If you refuse to go, Daddy won't force you." Wang Shouzhe fondly smoothed her hair, "You just need to accompany Daddy to the capital of the Great Qian Land, and then sign up at the Lingyun Sacred Land. Daddy believes that with your talent, Lingyun Sacred Land will definitely accept you!"

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Indeed, Lingyun Sacred Land would certainly take her in!

Master of Primordial Water was heartbroken, a prized Sky Pride disciple had suddenly flown away... He really wanted to strangle that little brat, Shang Jiping!

"Shouzhe, why go to Lingyun Sacred Land? You'll be a stranger in a strange land, won't you scare the child?" Master Binglan from the Mysterious Ice Palace said, "Let the child Li Yao join my Mysterious Ice lineage instead. I, Binglan, guarantee not to treat her unfairly."

Shouzhe?

Wang Shouzhe was taken aback, it was the first time he had heard Master Binglan refer to him in such a "warm and friendly" manner. Clearly, Master Binglan had recognized the Great Sky Pride bloodline talent of Li Yao, and took this opportunity to make a move.

"I think, the lineage of Changchun would be quite suitable." Master Changchun also couldn't help but say, "We, the lineage of Changchun do not have many relatives, but we do have money and Dan medicine which can help Li Yao grow rapidly. As for the cultivation technique, it's still good to cultivate the Mysterious Water True Verses. If needed, I can create a cultivation formation for her."

Even a senior like Master Changchun was not immune to the allure of mentoring a Great Sky Pride disciple.

"Changchun, you should stop contending for Li Yao, she doesn't suit your Changchun Valley." Lady Huandie giggled, "She might as well join my Valley of Ten Thousand Butterflies, where there are many girls for her to play with."

Then, even Master Xuanyao showed his intentions to win her over, although he knew the chances were slim, but shouldn't he at least try?

What if the lady of the Great Sky Pride simply loves Sword Intent? His Kaishan Sword Intent was indeed unsurpassed...

With one master after another throwing their lot in and vying for Wang Li Yao's favor.

The face of the Master of Primordial Water became increasingly embarrassed and livid. His intended disciple not only went from Sky Pride to Great Sky Pride but had also slipped right out of his hands...

He really wanted to strangle Shang Lexian and Shang Jiping. If he had another chance, he would unequivocally declare his position early, stand firmly by Li Yao's side, and deal severely with any related parties!

A Great Sky Pride disciple, there's only one in the entire Purple Abode Academic Palace...

Suddenly!

At this very moment.

From the serene Primordial Water Heavenly Lake, a shocking wave erupted, and a huge turtle with a majestic body resembling a mountain slowly surfaced.

"The Purple Abode Old Turtle?"

The expression of all the masters immediately changed, becoming very serious and respectful.

On the back of the Level Seven Primordial Water Spirit Tortoise, which was like a small mountain, stood a skinny little man. Even though he wasn't showing any vibe, it made people feel a sense of awe-stricken reverence.

"The Great Sky Pride person of my Primordial Water lineage, none of you can take her away." The elder's voice arrived before he did.

"Principal!" Several masters hurriedly bowed respectfully.

"Master." The Master of Primordial Water was overjoyed. This matter had alarmed his master hitherto in seclusion. Since his master had stepped in, this matter was settled!

Hahaha, Li Yao would still be my disciple, Master of Primordial Water.

Don't worry Li Yao, your master will definitely teach you well and help you make your mark in history.

"I was watching the previous scene from start to finish," the principal's voice echoed in the air, "Primordial Water, you were absolutely wrong. On the other hand, my disciple Li Yao, far from making a mistake, has adhered to justice and uncompromisingly stood against evil forces, which makes me very proud."

"Master is right... Wait!" The Master of Primordial Water initially agreed, but then immediately realized something wrong. What did the master say? 'My disciple Li Yao'? Did the master misspeak?

"Master, Li Yao is my disciple," The Master of Primordial Water protested softly.

"No, Li Yao is my disciple," The principal's voice was exceptionally serious, somewhat stern, "Primordial Water, you must not mess with the generation hierarchy, from now on you have to call her Sister Liyao!"

"Sister... Liyao?" Master of Primordial Water staggered, nearly falling out of the sky, his mind a whirlwind. Was fate this fickle? The good and stable Li Yao, his disciple, had suddenly inexplicably become Sister Li Yao?

Shang Lexian, Shang Jiping! I will not let you off!

Chapter 23: Li Yao Becomes a Disciple! Divine Skills of the Enlightened One_1

...

"This...this..." The momentous events left Wang Shouzhe and his daughter staring at each other in disbelief.

They had originally planned to visit the Lingyun Holy Ground.

Unexpectedly, several masters appeared out of nowhere, shamelessly and openly declared their intention to accept Li Yao as an apprentice, tempting her with a variety of terms and conditions.

Soon after, even the incredibly mysterious leader of the Divine Power Territory, the Headmaster himself, insisted that he would accept no one but Li Yao as a disciple.

"Father~ What do we do now?" Wang Liyao blinked her clear, moist eyes and asked in a small, quivering voice, "With even the Headmaster getting involved, we surely can't offend them."

"Well..." Wang Shouzhe said softly, "Let's see how it goes first. If it really gets that bad, I will ask for help from the Great Qian Wang Clan, for our Wang family's ancestral line is from there. In consideration of our Sky Pride, the Great Qian Wang Clan should also be pleased to assist us and will not let outsiders bully our Wang family."

"Thank you, father, for forgiving my willfulness. Let's listen to what the Headmaster had to say first," responded the father-daughter duo, whose voices were low but heard by many of the grand elders as well as the Headmaster of Divine Abilities Realm, whose ears were finely tuned.

Their tone had clearly relaxed, and they were now looking to find a solution rather than persist in going to the Lingyun Holy Ground. It would be a significant loss to lose the Sky Pride that had been selected by the Purple Abode Academic Palace due to internal reasons with the palace, which resulted in them having to sign up for the Lingyun Holy Ground.

Master Shui of Primordial Water was especially alert, a plan forming in his mind. His master's appearance was an opportunity to redeem Li Yao. He had to handle the situation well, make a good impression, and make Li Yao realize that he, her "master," was firmly on her side.

Firstly, he had to properly deal with his Core Disciple, Shang Lexian and then severely punish Shang Jiping, sending him to reflect in the outer battlefield.

"Ahem ahem, let me say a few words, first of all..." Master Shui coughed twice, then made to speak.

Suddenly!

The Headmaster, riding on the Purple Abode Old Turtle, beat him to it: "First of all, indeed, it is my fault for constantly being in seclusion, leaving Master Shui to step in as Acting Headmaster. This matter, though Master Shui is at fault, ultimately it is my faulty judgment that led him to this... It's my fault for misplacing trust."

Misplacing trust?

Master Shui was trembling, his mind humming. He still clearly remembered the earnest teachings of his Master when he was in seclusion: "Master Shui, I have taken countless disciples in my life and I have produced several Purple Abode Realm disciples.

Unfortunately, none of your senior brothers could break through their shackles to achieve divine skills, thus I had to watch them exhaust their lifespans or perish."

"Master Shui, you are my last disciple. You are kind-natured and pure-hearted, not fond of competing with others, and are the best candidate to replace me in managing the Academic Palace. With you in charge, I can seclude myself without worries."

The words of his master from those days were still ringing in his ears, pushing him day and night. However, he never thought that today, in order to snatch Li Yao as his disciple, his master's regret would surface, even to the point of admitting faulty judgment?

However, the master is to be respected; if the master says he is wrong, then he is wrong.

"Master, indeed this is my fault." Master Shui quickly admitted, smiling tightly. He then hurried to make amends, "From now on, I will certainly revamp the education in our Academic Palace! Starting from Shang..."

"Exactly, Shang Jiping bullied my disciple Li Yao, we cannot simply let it slide." The Headmaster said with stern righteousness, "As punishment, he will serve as Li Yao's servant for a hundred years, let it be a small punishment but a serious warning."

A darkness washed over Elder Shang Jiping's vision, and he nearly fainted. He was already three hundred years old! But the lifespans of humans in the Heavenly Human Realm rarely exceeded four hundred, serving as a servant for a hundred years would mean serving Wang Li Yao for life.

"Shang Jiping, do you have an objection?" The Headmaster's voice 'kindly' intimated, "If you have, feel free to voice it, I will certainly consider it."

"I, I have no objections. I am profoundly grateful that the Headmaster has given me an opportunity to correct my mistakes and make amends," Shang Jiping replied, sweating and trembling. The Headmaster was not one to be trifled with, unlike Master Shui who had a gentle temper. If he offended the Headmaster, there would definitely be severe consequences.

"In that case, Jiping, you will attend to Liyao from now on." The Headmaster's voice was friendlier now, "If anything were to happen to my disciple Liyao, you and you alone will be held accountable."

"Yes, Headmaster," Shang Jiping replied earnestly, but he started thinking it through in his heart.

If he thought about it, this wasn't such a bad outcome after all - Liyao's master was the Sky Pride herself. Her current talents were terrifying enough in the early stages of the Spirit Platform Realm, let alone if she reached the Heavenly Human Realm. How could he be her match then?

More fearsome was the rumor that the Sky Pride cultivates at an extraordinary speed. At just nineteen, she was already at level two of the Spirit Platform Realm. In twenty to thirty years, she might have reached the Heavenly Human Realm!

If the Shang family could gain some benefits from this, then it might not be such a bad ending after all. Upon this realization, Shang Jiping found some comfort in his heart.

Master Shui, who was standing by, was dumbfounded. He had originally only wanted to punish Shang Jiping a bit; he did not expect his master to be a step ahead of him and to be much more severe!

To snatch up a coveted disciple, his master really went all out. Master Shui could only sigh - his master, as always, had thick skin.

Wang Li Yao blinked, completely dumbfounded. This...this prospective Master, no, this yet-to-be acknowledged Master, who was so protective, had now designated a middle-stage Heavenly Human Realm Elder as her servant?

Chapter 23: Li Yao Becomes a Disciple! Divine Skills of the Enlightened One_2

This... Seems a little embarrassing, doesn't it?

"I was once in the same position as you, Li Yao, you do not have to feel overwhelmed," said the Dean, with eyes squinted in amusement. "Each Great Heavenly Proud is a gem of the human race, a future pillar of our society, not just a minor character. You're not the first Great Heavenly Proud, nor will you be the last. Most of the Great Heavenly Prouds throughout history have taken some followers.

If you are powerful enough, there may even be Heavenly Prouds willing to follow you. Eventually, you will gradually adapt to this identity. I experienced the same thing when I was in your position."

"Dean, were you also a Great Heavenly Proud in your early days?" Wang Li Yao asked in astonishment, as if hearing it for the first time.

"You should call me 'Master'," the Dean's voice was extremely kind and amicable. "It's rare for an ordinary Heavenly Proud to eventually grow into a cultivator of the Divine Power Territory. Therefore, most of the Divine Power cultivators in human history have been Great Heavenly Prouds. And each one of them has left a mark in history."

Wang Li Yao was hearing such a story for the first time. Initially, she had thought that reaching the Purple Abode Realm was already incredibly formidable, but to her surprise, there was also the mighty Divine Power Territory above that!

Moreover, nearly all of the Great Heavenly Prouds are considered prerequisites for advancing into the Divine Power Territory! For a moment, she felt her blood boil, as if she could see herself in the future, towering above everyone else like a pillar of the human race.

However, it seems there are quite a few Great Heavenly Prouds in her family.

Both Old Ancestor Longyan and her mother are Great Heavenly Prouds...

Not only did Wang Liyao get excited, but even Wang Shouzhe felt his blood heat up. The Divine Power Territory, reputedly, those who reach it would have the power to live for two thousand years! If effectively living as a deity on Earth.

Even if it was to extend his lifespan, Wang Shouzhe determined to awaken his spiritual body when he was in the Spirit Platform Realm. Although this was extremely challenging, trying to awaken the Fifth Level of Bloodline when reaching the Heavenly Human Realm would be like climbing to heaven!

His wife was a Great Heavenly Proud, and his daughter was a Great Heavenly Proud. Shouldn't he be able to keep them from watching him gray and die at just eight hundred years old?

While father and daughter were both feeling their blood boiling, the Dean spoke again: "As for that brat Shang Lexian, he's used to being arrogant and domineering. In that case, he should go out and practice with the Senior Brothers to temper his character."

To a foreign realm?

He's in the mid-stage of the Spirit Platform Realm, he's not even sixty yet, he's still a child! How...how could he be allowed to venture out? Immediately, he nearly collapsed to the ground, his

voice filled with sobs, "Dean, please spare me, I realize my mistake. I...I am willing to serve as Li Yao's junior sister, no, no, Aunt Li Yao's servant."

"Heh~" the dean said coldly, "Your previous performance, I saw clearly. Giving you a chance to temper yourself is already a reward. As for following Li Yao... with your current strength, what can you do?"

"Dean, I agree on Lexian's behalf." Shang Jiping quickly said, "This child truly lacks discipline. The Dean's decision is very wise."

Jokingly, the Dean was a mighty being in the realm of Divine Power, and in the entire Longzuo County, he could be said to be an irresistible force. How could the Shang Family afford to offend him?

Seeing that Shang Jiping was sensible, the Dean did not bother with Shang Lexian, who was almost scared to death. Instead, he looked kindly at Wang Liyao, "Liyao, do you think my handling of this situation is appropriate?"

"Dean, this..." Wang Liyao hesitated, "Actually, I was angry with Elder Shang and Brother Lexian before. But then I thought, it's the culture of the Primordial Water lineage..."

"Well said!" The Dean praised, "We are indeed dealing with a culture issue. Liyao, didn't you want to go to Lingyun Holy Ground to study because you were dissatisfied with the culture of the Primordial Water lineage? Instead of that, why not stay in my Primordial Water lineage. When you reach the Heavenly Human Realm, you will take over as Dean, which will only be a matter of twenty or thirty years.

By then, you can reform the culture of the Primordial Water lineage."

"What?"

At these words, Wang Liyao was obviously in shock. But the most shocked of all was the Primordial Water Master, his handsome middle-aged face showed disbelief. Not only did his Master aim to steal his disciple, but he also planned to put the future Primordial Water lineage in Liyao's hands!

Uh...

Master, didn't you promise that I'm your only favorite disciple?

"This..." Wang Liyao immediately shook her head, "Dean, this, this isn't appropriate. If I really do stay in the Primordial Water lineage, I would rather take the Primordial Water Master as my teacher, after all, we had a previous agreement."

For a moment, the Primordial Water Master felt somewhat comforted. Liyao was indeed a sensible girl.

"The Primordial Water Master will not work," the Dean stated, "He is already over six hundred years old and he's just barely trained into the mid-stage of the Purple Abode realm. He's essentially hopeless for reaching the Divine Power Territory, and even with the Lifespan Extension Pill, he can only live two hundred more years.

I, on the other hand, am only fourteen hundred years old, in my prime, still at a fighting age. I could easily live for another six hundred years by just taking care of my health! That's more than enough to protect my disciple Liyao, and help her achieve the Divine Power Territory. Later, you could even take over the entire Purple Abode Academic Palace."

For a moment, the Primordial Water Master felt like crying. Master, do you have to be so realistic? When Liyao was not around, you always said that now there are only the two of us left, relying on each other for survival.

But since Liyao's appearance, your explicit dislike and hinting were so blatant.

"Father, what do you think?" To be honest, Wang Liyao was quite moved by this suggestion. After all, the Dean still had six hundred years of longevity. If she became his disciple, the family would have the backing of a cultivator of Shen-tong realm for the next six hundred years.

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"It seems that the headmaster is quite sincere," Wang Shouzhe winked at her, "But in the end, it's up to you to decide."

Wang Liyao nodded solemnly, and after some thought, she bowed to the headmaster from a distance, "In that case, Liyao is honored to meet Master."

"Good, good, good, having a disciple like this makes me, Tianhe the Enlightened One, feel very gratified. Finally, my clothes and bowl found its heir," the headmaster Tianhe, the Enlightened One, laughed heartily.

A cold sweat dripped from Master Yuanshui. Wasn't he the heir just now?

...

Meanwhile, when the Academic Palace was busy with various matters.

At Changning Guard, the Qian's second residence.

Though late into the night, the study room remained brightly lit.

As the Qian family was wealthy and extravagant, naturally they would not use candlelight to illuminate their study. Hanging from the beams of this study room were several Fluorescent Stone Spirit Lamps produced by the "Tiangong Workshop".

They were beautifully carved, emitting bright, soft, and steady light, devoid of the flickering and smoke of candles, brighter than the Luminous Pearls, becoming the preferred lighting choice for many prestigious families.

Under the lamplight, Qian Xuean was busy going through a pile of account books, jotting down data from time to time.

In a few days, the bi-annual family meeting would be held, and as the family's store manager in the Changning Guard region, he was expected to report his contributions to the family over the past half-year at the meeting to secure more resources. He had to prepare thoroughly.

While he was busy, a page knocked and entered, respectfully holding a wooden tray towards him, "Store Manager, letters have arrived from Third Master, Madam, and Young Master. As per your instructions, they have been brought to you immediately."

"Put it down."

Without lifting his head, Qian Xuean gestured the page to leave with a careless wave of his hand.

After swiftly recording another data point, he set down his pen and began to open the letters.

Though he was a store manager in Changning Guard, his father, mother, wife, and child were all at the Qian family's main residence, and they could only exchange letters every ten days or half a month.

This was because the business branches of the Qian family were spread throughout Longzuo County, enabling the frequent flow of merchant convoys between Changning Guard and the county town, making sending and receiving letters very convenient. Otherwise, let alone ten days or half a month, even a month might not allow for a letter.

The family letters had a specific encryption process, and he quickly decrypted the letter and began reading.

The first two letters from his wife and son contained mundane family matters, prompting a normal expression from him. But when he read the last letter from his father, his gaze immediately hardened, "Qian Xuerui? He's actually coming to Changning Guard?"

Qian Xuerui was the twenty-third child of the "Learning" generation of the Qian family, and he was now twenty-three years old.

As per the rules of the Qian family, those over the age of twenty in the family needed to gain business experience outside. Qian Xuerui was already twenty-three, and choosing a place for his experience was only logical; there was nothing unusual about it.

But the problem was that Qian Xuerui had chosen Changning Guard.

In terms of strength, experience, and ability, he, Qian Xuean, naturally didn't fear a youngster in his twenties. But Qian Xuerui was of the direct line and was the smallest son of the current family head, being pampered since his childhood.

The hierarchy within the prominent family was clear-cut, and the status of the direct and collateral branches were distinctly different.

It wasn't to say that members of the collateral branch couldn't rise to the top. He, Qian Xuean, was from the collateral branch and was still able to exercise control over a region due to his abilities, and his current power and status were not low at all. However, as a member of the direct line, Qian Xuerui naturally had more advantages and rights than him.

When he arrives at Changning Guard, who will the people under him listen to?

At the family side, considering his contributions over the years, they will not directly kick him away. But not all the people under him are loyal to him, and there will surely be those who want to curry favor with Qian Xuerui at his expense.

It seemed that he needed to start preparing soon.

Setting the letters aside, Qian Xuean immediately called his two loyal shopkeepers, planning to strategise before Qian Xuerui's arrival.

However, just as they started their secret discussions, a circus announced, "Store Manager, news just came from the ferry. Young Master Qian, the twenty-third, has already docked. You are requested to welcome him."

"What?!"

Qian Xuean jumped up, startled and astonished.

He had just received the news, and Qian Xuerui's boat had already arrived?

Wait... something's not right!

He smacked the table hard, fuming: "Someone in the caravan is definitely messing with us!"

Otherwise, the timing wouldn't be so perfect. But regardless, now that Qian Xuerui was here, he had no other choice.

It seems that this Qian Xuerui is not as simple as he appears. Looks like he's going to have to tread carefully and circle around this person for a while~

...

After another seven or eight days.

Wang Shouzhe's matters with the Academic Palace had been sorted out and various gains had been made on this trip, although it was not convenient to go into details. Despite some twists and turns, overall it was quite rewarding. Among all these gains, what satisfied Wang Shouzhe the most was copying the Sky Human Chapter of the Mysterious Yuan Jue from the Wang family of Longzuo.

While Mysterious Yuan Jue was a middle-grade cultivation technique, it also had cultivation methods for the Heavenly Human Realm and various mysterious techniques. The most distinct feature of this technique was that the mysterious energy cultivated became more profound and thick as one progressed.

Its second feature was that this technique was neutral and fairly simple to turn into any series, making it the perfect cultivation method for the children of the family.

Don't be fooled by the fact that what Wang Shouzhe and others practiced was a top-grade cultivation method. It would be impossible for every family child to become a non-mainstream student of the Purple Abode Academic Palace, right?

Thus, the fact that the Longzuo Wang family was willing to give away the Sky Human Chapter of the Mysterious Yuan Jue resolved a major problem for the Wang family.

South of Longzuo County, less than a thousand miles away, is New City Guard.

New City Guard was the earliest Guard City established after Longzuo County was developed. Even the Longzuo County City, which stands today, was built a bit later than it. That's why this Guard City is named "New City".

New City Guard is one of the few Guard Cities in Longzuo where the mountains occupy the majority.

It's connected to the East Mountain Range in the south, bordered with the Langyowei Guard on the east, and only has a small plain area near the direction of the county city. When Longzuo County

was first developed, this place was used as an outpost base for conquering the East Mountain Range.

However, after thousands of years of development, New City Guard has drastically changed.

The rolling but not towering mountains, the diverse climate brings a wealth of products and also a unique dietary structure, which gradually formed an industry chain. Today, New City Guard is still widely acknowledged as a "paradise of gourmet food".

In Longzuo County, if you're looking for delicious food, coming to New City Guard is definitely the right choice.

The Yuwen Clan is the most powerful prominent family in this New City Guard.

As a family that had just recently fallen from the echelon of the Purple Abode prominent families to a Rank Six Prominent Family, the Yuwen Clan had a strong foundation. The most representative aspect of this was their main residence.

The main residence of the Yuwen Clan is located less than two hundred miles from the New City Guard, in the mountains. The residence covers an area of tens of miles, includes a not-too-small mountain range, several forests, and a small lake.

There are hundreds of mansions of various sizes in this area. Just based on scale, it doesn't lag behind a certain peak or a certain lineage of the Purple Abode Academic Palace.

The many direct descendants of the Yuwen family live here.

Wang Shouzhe's carriage slowly entered New City Guard. He had passed through this place several times but never truly stayed for a while.

This time, he came along the way naturally for the mission that Lady Bilian had requested, "Help the Six-tailed Firefox to be promoted". Even though this task seemed out of the ordinary to Wang Shouzhe.

But who could refuse Lady Bilian's handsome reward? Therefore, even Wang Shouzhe had to bend over for money.

Chapter 24 - Comparing Charm with Shouzhe! Mingyu Willingly Admits Defeat_1

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The Yuwen Clan has been deeply rooted in New City Guard for countless years, and this area has been managed as solidly as an iron bucket. Not long after Wang Shouzhe's carriage entered the territory of New City Guard, the Yuwen Clan received the news and promptly sent people to greet him.

"Head of the Shouzhe family. Hahaha~ Welcome, welcome." The one who came to meet him was a Heavenly Human Realm elder from the Yuwen Clan. He was wearing a pale blue robe and looked quite young. He was also very polite to Wang Shouzhe. "I am Yuwen Hanmo, here to greet you on behalf of the Mistress. You must have had a tiring journey, Master Shouzhe."

The Yuwen Clan has a history of more than a thousand years, and it has just recently fallen from Fifth Grade to Grade Six in less than a hundred years. The powerhouses of the Heavenly Human Realm in the clan, both in quantity and quality, are far from ordinary Sixth Grade Prominent Families.

However, even so, sending a Heavenly Human realm elder specially to receive Wang Shouzhe has already demonstrated the Yuwen Clan's high regard towards him. Not to mention, this Heavenly Human Realm elder is so young, he must have promising potential, and his position within the Yuwen Clan should not be too low either.

"Elder Hanmo, you are too kind~"

Wang Shouzhe didn't dare to be too uncourteous and immediately reciprocated the greeting.

After introductions, Yuwen Hanmo led Wang Shouzhe towards the main residence of the Yuwen Clan.

Out of respect for the other party being a Heavenly Human Realm powerhouse, Wang Shouzhe didn't continue in his carriage but got on a horse. Flanked by his household guards, he rode and chatted with Hanmo, getting a feel for the current situation of the Yuwen Clan.

As the saying goes, "Ten miles out, and the climate differs greatly."

The climates of New City Guard and Changning Guard are quite different due to the entire East Mountain Range separating them. The scenery and atmosphere in the mountains also greatly differ from Changning Guard's. There are even many animal and plant species in the area that cannot be found in Changning Guard. This was all very novel to Wang Shouzhe, who was an outsider.

Along the way, Wang Shouzhe and Yuwen Hanmo conversed happily. Hanmo introduced him to many local customs and rare delicacies, triggering Wang Shouzhe's appetite. Once the Spirit Fox issue is resolved, he would definitely like to try some of these local specialities to see if they are truly as tasty as touted.

Amidst all the laughter and conversation, time quickly passed.

Four hours later, they reached the domain of the Yuwen Clan's main residence.

From afar, Wang Shouzhe could see the gigantic archway at the entrance of the main residence and the three magnificent gilded characters hanging on the archway - "Yuwen Clan".

The handwriting was clearly that of a past Purple Mansion Master. Even from such a distance, one could still feel the commanding authority emanating from the strokes of the characters.

Wang Shouzhe couldn't help but admire.

Indeed, they were once a Purple Mansion prominent family. Even now, when they had fallen to Grade Six, their imposing presence was unmatched by standard Heavenly Human prominent families.

Although the Changning Wang Clan is currently quite a prominent force, it was nothing compared to the grandeur of the Yuwen Clan. It was like comparing an ant to a tree, absolutely not on the same level.

As these thoughts whirled in his mind, the group had already dismounted in front of the Yuwen Clan's entrance.

The stable boys at the entrance quickly took the reins from the two and led the horses and household guards away to get settled.

An administrative clan member who had been waiting by the entrance saw them arriving, promptly approached, and paid his respects, "Master Shouzhe, Elder Hanmo, the Mistress has been waiting for a long time in the main hall. Please follow me."

With that, he turned and respectfully led the way.

Wang Shouzhe followed him, soon arriving in front of an unassuming yet solemn-looking building.

He looked up and saw a plaque: "Zhichun Hall."

"This is the hall primarily used for entertaining guests in our clan. It is only used when the most distinguished guests arrive," explained the clan member who was leading the way. He then gestured, "Master Shouzhe, Elder Hanmo, please come in."

Wang Shouzhe expressed his thanks, then proceeded to step inside with Elder Hanmo.

The interior of Zhichun Hall may seem subtle at first glance, but it was far from simple. Just a sweep of the hall caused Wang Shouzhe to inwardly admire.

The depth of the Yuwen Clan was indeed beyond his imagination - even the clothing worn by their servants and maids was made of Spirit silkworm silk.

Furthermore, many of the pieces of furniture in the main hall were made out of Spirit Wood.

One must know, Spirit Wood furniture is famously luxurious. Even though the profits of the Changning Wang Clan exceed one million annually, he hadn't had the heart to purchase a single piece of Spirit Wood furniture for his own family.

It's not that he really couldn't afford it, but that the cost-effectiveness was too low, making it not worth it. With that money, he would rather buy an extra Bone Marrow Cleansing Pill to enhance the potential of his clan's younger generation, rather than buying a piece of Spirit Wood furniture for show.

Of course, it's not to say that Spirit Wood furniture has absolutely no utility.

It does have some, and quite significant ones at that.

Spirit Woods need at least hundreds to thousands of years to grow mature, and once they do, they can be engraved with inscriptions, giving them functionalities similar to a Spiritual Artifact.

Any piece of Spirit Wood furniture has the effect of gathering Spiritual Energy and accelerating the speed of cultivation. If used by a child, constant usage can have effects such as warming and nourishing the meridians and firming the foundation and cultivating the essence.

However, these effects aren't instantaneous, and pale in comparison to the directness and decisiveness of Dan medicine. Its advantage lies in its mildness, so much so that even babies could withstand it. Added to its durability, it can be passed down for thousands of years.

Moreover, due to the slow growth of Spirit Wood, Spirit Wood furniture is indeed very expensive. Ordinary bottom-tier prominent families barely make enough money to support themselves, let alone splurge on Spirit Wood furniture?

Chapter 24 - Comparing Charm with Shouzhe! Mingyu Willingly Admits Defeat_2

With only the prominent families of the Purple Abode that possess traditions over a thousand years old, are able to over the passage of epochs, gradually accumulate Spirit Wood household furnishings.

The "Zhichun Hall" of the Yuwen Clan, seemingly ordinary and unremarkable, but in reality, it fully reveals the profound heritage of the clan itself.

It makes one wonder, when the Changning Wang Clan would achieve such grandeur and elegance...

While pondering, Wang Shouzhe crossed the threshold, and on looking up, he noticed the Lady Bilian dressed in a pale purple chiffon dress.

Hearing of Wang Shouzhe's imminent visit, Lady Bilian had been waiting inside since early morning.

Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe's arrival, she immediately greeted him with a beaming smile, "For a minor matter of our Yuwen Clan, we had to trouble Master Shouzhe to personally make a trip here. We can't thank you enough."

"Lady Bilian is too kind. It is just a small favor, moreover, I'm being adequately compensated."

After exchanging pleasantries, the visitors and host took their places, and round after round of Spiritual Tea was served. Wang Shouzhe and Lady Bilian then got down to business.

...

Meanwhile,

Yuwen's Mansion, back garden.

The main residence of the Yuwen clan was situated atop a vast Spirit Vein, its surroundings abundant in spiritual energy, with towering ancient trees, countless unique Spirit Plants, and a thriving vitality. Merely residing within such an environment could prolong one's lifespan and cure them of all illnesses.

Besides the unique plants and flowers, the clan selected the zones with the most abundant spiritual energies to lay out Spirit Plant Medicinal Gardens, maintained by dedicated Spirit Plant farmers.

And right at the core of the Spirit Vein within the back garden, a cluster of Fire Bodhi Trees were cultivated.

Although these Bodhi trees were merely a few hundreds of years old, they had already started manifesting spiritual resonance, subtly reviving the characteristics of Fire Spirit Wood.

It could only be said that Yuwen Clan, once a Prominent Family of the Purple Abode, truly possessed profound heritage, far surpassing that of newly emerging prominent families like the Changning Wang Clan.

In this cluster of Fire Bodhi trees, there sits a gorgeous crimson pagoda.

This small pagoda was constructed entirely from Fire Spirit Wood and Fire Crystal Jade Bricks, an undoubtedly grand affair. The surrounding temperature was exceedingly high, giving an impression of being within a "furnace."

The sign hanging on this small pagoda lively bore the three characters of "Tianhu Pavilion."

Beyond several dozen feet from the pavilion, a line of servants' quarters was set up. All the people living there took turns serving the Six-tailed Firefox, and each one of them was a Spirit Platform Realm cultivator. During usual days, every two years, two Spirit Platform Realm servants took turns serving.

However, at this critical juncture of the Six-tailed Firefox progressing to becoming a Seven-tail, all six male and female household heads were present. From this, one could see not only the grandeur of the Yuwen Clan but also the importance and anticipation they held for the Six-tailed Firefox.

The moment the Six-tailed Firefox successfully advances to Seven-tails, the Yuwen Clan would possess the strength to return to the Purple Abode.

Besides the house heads, there were several well-attired, young elites outside the Tianhu Pavilion. Each one appeared graceful and spirited. Judging by their attire and uniforms, they should be young disciples from the Purple Abode Academic Palace.

An elegant youth in his thirties frowned slightly, "Senior Brother Mingyu has been inside for a while, why haven't we heard anything yet?"

This elegant youth was Yuwen Jianye, who joined the Purple Abode Academic Palace along with Wang Luoqiu and Wang Luo Jing.

More than ten years have passed, he has shed his naivety, maturing into a steady Spirit Platform Realm cultivator, demonstrating great promise. If he pushes a bit harder, he has a good chance of becoming a core disciple.

Next to him stood Chi Junjie, a core disciple from Leisure Peak. Although he was in his forties or fifties, he still had the appearance of a composed young man. Long ago, Lady Bilian roped him in to feed the Six-tailed Firefox Spirit Food.

However, the always fickle Six-tailed Firefox grew dissatisfied with Chi Junjie's looks and charm after just over two years.

Luckily, during those two plus years, Chi Junjie made a fair bit of money. Afterwards, he was showered with Lady Bilian's covert favor and support, which propelled his Cultivation base onto an express track.

This disciple from an Eighth Grade Prominent Family finally found a place as a core disciple under Master Xuan Yao.

At the same time, Wang Shouxin of the Longzuo Wang Clan also became a core disciple.

Chi Junjie, who enjoyed Lady Bilian's favor, often invited friends from the Academic Palace to deal with the Six-tailed Firefox's increasingly picky appetite. Now, Chi Junjie teamed up with Yuwen Jianye to invite Wang Zongsheng of the Mysterious Ice Palace's lineage and Ji Mingyu over.

"Junior Brother Jianye, don't be impatient, Senior Brother Mingyu is among the best of the core disciples. Also hailing from a Rank Six Prominent Family, his talent, temperament, and appearance are all top-notch.

Now that he's been in there for a while and hasn't been thrown out by the Six-tailed Firefox yet, it seems like his chances should be pretty good." Chi Junjie was wearing the core disciple uniform of the Leisure Peak, with a Spirit Instrument Level Sword hanging at his waist—a picture of elegance and nobility.

"That Six-tailed Firefox is too haughty, after a mere glance, it tossed me out, it truly lacks vision. A man of my caliber is a true specimen of masculinity." The twenty-six or twenty-seven-year-old Wang Zongsheng spoke awkwardly.

He had matured considerably and his build had become even more imposing, his body filled with bulging muscles, like a robust giant bear.

He had always enjoyed cultivating strength, even after being included as a member of the Mysterious Ice Palace's lineage, his objective didn't change. Fortunately, the Purple Abode Academic Palace had a variety of cultivation techniques; thus, he could still find a technique suitable for him.

Yuwen Jianye, and Chi Junjie cast peculiar glances at him.

Chapter 24 - Comparing Charm with Shouzhe! Mingyu Willingly Admits Defeat_3

This youngster has practiced the Body Cultivation Technique, the "Nine Transformation Body Tempering Technique", and transformed himself into a distant ancient human bear. And he's still hoping that the Six-tailed Firefox will like him?

Previously, when Ji Mingyu was invited, Wang Zongsheng insisted on trying himself. He kept saying that maybe the handsome son of the Six-tailed Firefox had seen too many and his tastes had changed, and maybe he, Wang Zongsheng, might appeal to the firefox.

Sadly, his cunning plan to make some quick money failed, and he was promptly thrown out by the Six-tailed Firefox.

"Zongsheng," Yuwen Jianye patted his shoulder and said, "You should switch to practicing swordsmanship while you're young, else you might end up a bachelor before you know it."

"What's so great about having a wife?" Wang Zongsheng snorted in disdain. "It's too troublesome. Just look at all my sisters-in-law, they all have such temperaments and are hard to cater to. Instead of wasting time on them, I'd rather practice more."

"If your Fourth Uncle hears this, I'm sure you'll be scolded," Chi Junjie joked, "Your Changning Wang Clan is in a high-speed development period, and what the clan lacks most are descendants."

"Don't worry about that, all my sisters-in-law are very fertile," Wang Zongsheng answered casually. "Take my Four Uncle's wife, for instance. They already have four children. According to Luo Jing, despite their age, they are still very romantic, and their cultivation base is high, so they'll probably have a few more."

For some long-established families, having four children is nothing as long as the family has abundant cultivation resources. According to rumors, some in the Rank Six and Fifth Grade families who love children will even take common wives or concubines, and end up with dozens of children.

However, within any influential family, the status of offspring from concubines is relatively low unless they are exceptionally talented and can make a mark for themselves.

While everyone was gossiping leisurely.

A scream suddenly echoed from the Tianhu Pavilion.

Immediately afterwards, a familiar figure flew out from within, landing harshly on the ground, and even rolled several times.

This person was none other than Ji Mingyu.

"What a cheeky Six-tailed Firefox, she sure has a temper. She started attacking as soon as I said something!" He dusted himself off, his face turning red with anger.

"Senior Brother Mingyu." Several people surrounded him, expressing their concern, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, I'm fine." Ji Mingyu waved off their concern with embarrassment. "My plan just fell short, and in the end, I provoked the Six-tailed Firefox. Junior Brother Jianye, no offense, but your Firefox is spoiled. If even I, Ji Mingyu, can't handle her, then who can make her happy in the whole Purple Abode Academy?"

Saying this, he inwardly regretted his loss. He had just lost his chance at the reward of twenty thousand Qian Gold. At most, he'd only receive a few thousand Qian Gold for his effort. He felt a bit unjust.

"Ah, it's such a pity that Senior Brother Yu An has been in closed-door cultivation for several years," said Yuwen Jianye with a sigh. "Otherwise, he could have tried his luck."

Upon the mention of Senior Brother Yu An, Ji Mingyu didn't have any disputes, and simply said: "Senior Brother Yu An's vision is very high. A few tens of thousands of Qian Gold wouldn't be enough to move him. Furthermore, he's been closing off the world for cultivation, let's not involve him."

Suddenly.

A female head of household from the Yuwen Clan said, "Young Master Jianye, I heard from Lady Bilian that she invested a lot of effort in inviting a contemporary star to our residence, who should be arriving soon."

"A contemporary star?" Ji Mingyu frowned, "Could it be a disciple of our Purple Abode Academy? That's impossible. No one in the Purple Abode Academy has better looks than me or is more talented than me. So who could it be?"

The head of household softly said, "I don't know who it is, specifically. But if Madam says it's an elite, then it's an elite."

"Alright, then we'll wait at the Yuwen Clan for a few days," Ji Mingyu spoke with disbelief in his voice. "I, Ji Mingyu, want to see who this amazing person is. Who can actually be more handsome than me?"

The moment his words fell.

a cheerful laughter came from outside, "Senior Brother Mingyu indeed has an exceptional demeanor and a striking appearance, I, Wang Shouzhe, am absolutely no match for you. But, I am here on the Madam's request to try my luck."

Following the voice, Wang Shouzhe and Lady Bilian walked in side by side.

"Junior Brother Shouzhe, it's you!?" Ji Mingyu's eyes widened, and it took him a few moments to regain his composure. Then, with a sigh, he said, "Alright, alright. If it's you, I, Ji Mingyu, can accept being bested."

Chapter 25: Destiny! It has linked us together_1

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At the same time, Wang Zongsheng and Yuwen Jianye hastily came forward to pay their respects, "Greetings to Fourth Uncle/Master Shouzhe."

Wang Shouzhe lightly gestured in return and after exchanging a few pleasantries with Yuwen Jianye, his gaze landed on Wang Zongsheng, "Well, look at you, it hasn't been too long but you've become rather robust. Judging by the look of it, your 'Nine Transformation Body Tempering Technique' has improved too. If it is purely a competition of strength, I'm afraid even I wouldn't match you."

"Thank you for the compliment, Fourth Uncle," Wang Zongsheng clumsily scratched his head, "Since Fourth Uncle is taking action, then the issue of the Six-tailed Firefox is resolved."

In Wang Zongsheng's mind, there was nothing his Fourth Uncle, Wang Shouzhe, couldn't handle. With him taking action, there was naturally no reason for failure.

"Zongsheng, you're over-praising me," Ji Mingyu felt a slight dissatisfaction and said, "Junior Brother Shouzhe is indeed remarkable, but the Six-tailed Firefox has always been notoriously finicky, which is quite worrying."

"Actually, I don't have much certainty either," Wang Shouzhe calmly said, "I can only try. Whether it succeeds or not, it will be considered repaying Lady Bilian's favor."

Having said that, Wang Shouzhe confidently stepped into Tianhu Pavilion.

The closer to Tianhu Pavilion, the more head-on the fire element energy was felt, just like being in a volcanic cave with waves of heat rolling in.

On entering it, the temperature soared even higher. Despite Wang Shouzhe's robust constitution, he could feel his skin burning and his vision blurring. He circulated his mysterious energy and immediately blocked the heat, instantly feeling refreshed.

He took a brief look around. Tianhu Pavilion was exquisitely luxurious, with all the furniture and lighting fixtures made from Fire Spirit Wood, various Fire Crystal Jade Bricks, and some Fire Spirit Stones.

"What a lavish display," Even a wealthy man like Wang Shouzhe could not help but exclaim. The Yuwen Clan was truly a well-established prominent family. The Hundred Flavors Pavilion had businesses spread throughout Longzuo County and was indeed highly profitable.

Just this Tianhu Pavilion and its various facilities alone were estimated to be worth no less than several million Qian Gold, all to serve this single Six-tailed Firefox. However, as long as this Six-tailed Firefox can evolve into a Seven-tailed Firefox, everything would be worth it.

"Squeak~" A crisp cry of a fox rang out.

Wang Shouzhe looked over and saw a not very large red fox lying in a nest built of Fire Spirit Stones. Six flaming tails high in the air waved gently like a burning bonfire, bright and scorching.

This was the Six-tailed Firefox. It lazily lounged with precious spirit food and Dan medicine spread out in front of it.

"Here comes another inappropriate one, I've told them many times I favor handsome boys..." Six-tails Firefox casually glanced at Wang Shouzhe and then, suddenly, its eyes widened.

This young man was rather handsome...but being handsome wasn't enough, he also needed to have a refined demeanor.

Hmm? This young man was quite refined indeed. He stood tall, dignified, and imposing. However, good demeanor alone was still not enough, he also needed to have a good scent.

"Squeak!" The Six-tailed Firefox's nostrils fluttered a few times, and immediately, it became excited, darted towards Wang Shouzhe like a surge of fire. It fluttered its nostrils continuously. The scent was so good, it smelled just like the E-wood spirit energy it liked.

No, no, no. The E-wood spirit energy definitely didn't smell this good.

The Six-tailed Firefox continually circled around Wang Shouzhe, its thoughts floating non-stop. What kind of smell was this? It was so fragrant. It energized her so much.

"Squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak." The Six-tailed Firefox's spiritual intelligence was already quite advanced, but it hadn't evolved to the seven-tailed stage yet, the invisible transverse bone in its throat hadn't been processed, so it still couldn't speak human language.

Nevertheless, with its gestures and squeaks, Wang Shouzhe easily understood what it intended. It wanted Wang Shouzhe to hug and cuddle it.

It should be mentioned that although the Six-tailed Firefox enjoyed being fed by handsome men, it had never desired this kind of close intimate contact. However, the scent on this man was too tempting. It reminded her of the scent she smelled in her mother's womb.

Wang Shouzhe found this Six-tailed Firefox to be extremely adorable, like a cute pet, and he was quite fond of her. He said, "I don't mind giving you a hug. But first, finish those spirit foods and the Dan medicines for evolution. They've been hard for the Yuwen Clan to gather."

"Squeak!" Although the Six-tailed Firefox was somewhat impatient and eager to be hugged, it obediently ate the spirit foods and Dan medicines. Actually, it was not that she didn't want to evolve, but the long-standing habit had turned her into a bit of a spoiled brat.

The Six-tailed Firefox quickly polished off the spirit foods and Dan medicines, then sprang into Wang Shouzhe's arms as if reporting her achievement.

Wang Shouzhe originally intended to pet her, but unexpectedly, a burst of intense fiery energy emerged from her. Simultaneously, a huge number of dark clouds surged over the Yuwen Clan's backyard, rolling like turbulent waves.

Particularly centered on Tianhu Pavilion, a vortex of clouds and sea of Qi energy had formed.

"The Six-tailed Firefox is about to evolve." The face of Lady Bilian brightened, but before she could rejoice, a violent gale enveloped the entire Tianhu Pavilion.

They were standing on the edge of the gale force energy and were blown away, unable to stand steady. And as time passed, the winds were only getting stronger.

"The heavenly tribulation of a seventh level spirit beast is too powerful. The wind and fog from the sea of clouds on the periphery are not something we, in the Spiritual Platform Realm, can withstand," Lady Bilian quickly cautioned, "Everyone retreat."

Chapter 25: Destiny! It has linked us together_2

"What about my Fourth Uncle?" Wang Zongsheng asked anxiously, his forehead glistening with sweat, "He's trapped in the Sea of Clouds and the gale. Does not your Yuwen Clan have Heavenly Human Realm Cultivators? Hurry and send someone to save my Fourth Uncle."

"It's too late, the Heavenly Tribulation Whirlpool has already formed, one can't get in or out." Lady Bilian replied with a slightly serious expression. "The Heavenly Tribulation during the promotion of a level six spirit beast to level seven is comparable to the power of the Purple Abode Realm. However, you don't need to worry too much."

The place where Wang Shouzhe is located is the center of the Heavenly Tribulation Whirlpool. There should be calm, making it a relatively safe place. As long as he does not act rashly, there should be no issues."

Ji Mingyu, also born from a Grade Six Prominent Family, understood a bit about the situation and quickly pulled the somewhat agitated Wang Zongsheng aside. "Lady Bilian is not lying. With the Six-tailed Firefox resisting the Heavenly Tribulation, the center of the whirlpool is actually the safest place. Come on, move away from here, it is not safe."

Even before she finished speaking, a gust of wind swept past, tearing surrounding wooden houses into shreds.

Ji Mingyu dragged Wang Zongsheng away, at the same time shouting out a warning: "Junior Brother Shouzhe, stay hidden, do not take any action, and most importantly, do not interfere with the Heavenly Tribulation!"

At this point, with the wind howling, it was unclear whether Wang Shouzhe could hear them. People could only mutter silently, hoping that Wang Shouzhe was astute enough to stay out of harm's way.

...

Facing the sudden rise of the terrifying Heavenly Tribulation, Wang Shouzhe was also speechless, questioning how long the Six-tailed Firefox had been holding back.

Once the breakthrough in aura occurred, the Heavenly Tribulation arrived swiftly and fiercely, catching him off guard and trapping him in the center of the whirlpool of the Heavenly Tribulation Sea of Clouds.

However, Wang Shouzhe, as the head of a family and having a far-reaching ambition, had already learned through the Academic Palace about the common sense of each realm's breakthrough. The Heavenly Tribulation for a level six fierce/spirit beast breaking through to level seven is called the Transcendent Spiritual Tribulation.

Once it succeeds in breaking through to level seven, its spiritual intelligence would fully open up, being able to read, speak human language, and possess an extremely high IQ.

At that time, their intelligence would be no different than humans, and in some cases, even higher than most ordinary people. In the Savage Land beyond the domain, it would become a Great Yao who can command respect.

Faced with this situation, Wang Shouzhe also quickly judged the state of affairs. That was, to maintain a low profile, and not provoke the Heavenly Tribulation. Otherwise, once disturbed, the Heavenly Tribulation would take him as an enemy and he would be unable to withstand that.

The Tribulation Clouds permeated the sky, the thunder rumbled and brewed.

The Six-tailed Firefox chattered for a bit, seeming to warn Wang Shouzhe not to move recklessly, or it would harm both self and others. It then took a leap, flew into the sky and took on the Heavenly Tribulation.

"Boom!"

The first heavenly lightning struck, and after the Six-tailed Firefox took the blow, it merely shook a little, seemingly unharmed.

That was soon followed by the second and third lightning strikes.

Inside the Tianhu Pavilion.

Wang Shouzhe, in his heart, was also silently tallying. According to the rules of the Heavenly Dao tribulation count, it should withstand six lightning strikes. On this point, humans and spirit beasts are similar.

While advancing from the Spiritual Platform realm to the Heavenly Human Realm, one must withstand three strikes of heavenly lightning, and six strikes when advancing to the Purple Abode. However, fierce beasts fare worse than humans, the power of the heavenly lightning seemingly more significant. The number of fierce beasts that fall in the Heavenly Tribulation far exceeds that of humans.

Thinking back, when Linglong's Old Ancestor Longyan advanced to the Heavenly Human Realm, getting through the Heavenly Tribulation seemed way too easy.

The fourth one!

"Boom!"

After withstanding the fourth lightning strike under the thunder and lightning, the Six-tailed Firefox swayed violently and almost fell.

Wang Shouzhe inwardly exclaimed. The firefox found it challenging to withstand just the fourth strike. How would it endure the more potent fifth and sixth strikes? Under normal circumstances, he, Wang Shouzhe, wouldn't care at all about these things.

But once the Heavenly Tribulation forms, be it withstandable or not, it would do its job and carry out exactly the six strikes. If the firefox couldn't handle it, wouldn't he be the unlucky one...

At this moment, the Six-tailed Firefox, seemingly aware that it was going to struggle to get through the tribulation, opened its mouth as it faced the fifth lightning strike, and spit out an Inner Core, resembling a red fireball. The fiery aura around it surged as it appeared to make a desperate attempt.

"Boom!"

The intensity of the fifth bolt of heavenly lightning was even more ferocious than what Wang Shouzhe had imagined.

"Crack!" The six-tailed firefox was scorched black by the heavenly lightning, and its inner core was riddled with cracks. From the sky, the enormous six-tailed firefox fell, its body shrinking as it descended.

"Boom!" It reverted to its original small and exquisite form, and was hurled back into the Tianhu Pavilion with a forceful thud.

In the sky, the sixth and most powerful heavenly thunder was brewing, seemingly ready to shatter the Tianhu Pavilion in one fell swoop.

"Uh... alright then." Wang Shouzhe was speechless. Today's task, which initially seemed incredibly simple – coax a spirit beast to eat – had suddenly evolved into an epic mission.

The six-tailed firefox looked at Wang Shouzhe. Its bright eyes seemed to be filled with regret, as if it were expressing its guilt for dragging him into this. However, immediately after, its eyes

brightened with joy. It seemed to be saying it's not a complete regret if there's such an attractive young lad to accompany it in the ordeal.

Regret, my foot!?

With a helpless expression, Wang Shouzhe rushed over to the firefox's side, picked up the scorched six-tailed firefox, and then his body's mysterious energy started surging radically, pouring into the firefox.

Under Wang Shouzhe's powerful healing energy, the six-tailed firefox's injuries were visibly mending at an astonishing rate. Its eyes, as bright as fire crystals, were filled with surprise and confusion.

However, Wang Shouzhe's actions were clearly interfering with the operations of Heavenly Dao.

The tribulation clouds in the sky grew more turbulent. The thunder that was brewing in the sky was shining brilliantly and seemed to be growing even stronger.

"Little firefox, our fates are now thoroughly intertwined." Wang Shouzhe treated it with all his might, "You must withstand the sixth heavenly thunder. Otherwise, we'll be finished together. You must hang in there, for the both of us.~~"

"Chirp! Chirp!" The six-tailed firefox chirped joyously twice, then shyly burrowed itself into Wang Shouzhe's chest, softly squeaking as if trying to convey something.

This left Wang Shouzhe completely flabbergasted. What's going on? I'm telling you to brace yourself for the heavenly thunder, and you're acting coy? Is now the time to act cute?

However, luckily, the healing ability of Wang Shouzhe's own unexplained bloodline was extremely potent and terrifying. Within a short span of time, the firefox's injuries seemed to have recovered by half.

But right at that moment.

The sixth heavenly thunder that had been brewing for a long time finally crashed down with an intensity far greater than the fifth one.

The six-tailed firefox immediately leapt out of Wang Shouzhe's arms and soared towards the open sky against the gusty winds with fierce howls. Even the tribulation clouds seemed to have been scattered somewhat due to its outcry.

Wang Shouzhe shouted his encouragement, "That's right, keep that up! You have to believe in yourself, you can survive this. Don't joke around, if you don't make it, we'll die together!"

"Chirpy!"

The six-tailed firefox revealed a body several meters in size. Its red fur ignited, and like an extraordinary fierce beast stepping across the void, it fearlessly faced the heavenly thunder.

"Boom!" The sixth heavenly thunder struck it as scheduled.

However, at the same time, a smaller branch of heaven's thunder forked out from the sixth heavenly thunder and aimed precisely at Wang Shouzhe, as if the Heavenly Dao had recognized Wang Shouzhe, the "sinner" who was interfering with its operations.

"What the hell! Is it really necessary for such vindictiveness?"

Wang Shouzhe hadn't sworn out loud in a while, but he felt a tingling sensation throughout his body. He felt a numbing chill. The power of this level of heavenly thunder, especially the later ones, was far stronger than the full force attack of an ordinary Purple Abode Realm Cultivator.

The Purple Abode Sword Symbol used by Wang Shouzhe at that time was far weaker than the last few heavenly thunders. Especially the sixth heavenly thunder, even a small branch of it was tremendously powerful, causing Wang Shouzhe to instinctively feel a looming disaster.

Right now, the six-tailed firefox was unable to help, and everything depended on him.

All these thoughts flashed through his mind in an instant, and Wang Shouzhe immediately started to prepare various maneuvers.

Chapter 26: Bloodline Upgrade! The Fox's Recompense _1

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He swiped at his storage ring, and suddenly a man appeared before him. This man had a robust and square countenance, exuding a sense of solidity and reliability, as dependable as a mountain.

This man was none other than the defense-type puppet, "Wang Shouwei"! While he wasn't skilled in offense, his defense was unparalleled among ordinary cultivators of the Spirit Platform Realm.

The moment he appeared, his form transformed, with his giant hands morphing into a massive shield to protect Wang Shouzhe.

Simultaneously,

Wang Shouzhe crushed a jade talisman. As the talisman shattered, a thick golden energy formed a shield, enclosing both Wang Shouzhe and Wang Shouwei within. This talisman was called the "Vajra Shield"—a disposable item that could withstand a full-force hit from a cultivator in the Mid-Late Stage of the Heavenly Human Realm at most.

If it were an ordinary early stage Heavenly Human Realm cultivator, breaking this shield would be no easy task.

Such a Vajra Shield talisman, Wang Shouzhe had reserved several for himself. Each one had the value equivalent to a spiritual artifact. A typical 7th-rank Aristocratic Family could hardly afford such an expense.

Besides, Wang Shouzhe quickly swallowed a Grade Four Healing Pill, put a leaf of the Longevity Tree in his mouth, and a piece of quaint bark appeared in his palm. Under the stimulation of his mysterious energy, it transformed into the "Ancient Tree Armor" and was worn by Wang Shouzhe in a blink of an eye.

The "Ancient Tree Armor" was one of the secret techniques in the "Longevity Youth True Verses". It served as both armor and active plant, becoming stronger over time through continuous nourishment by the cultivator's mysterious energy.

However, the healing and growth abilities produced by Wang Shouzhe's obscure bloodline were far more formidable compared to normal wood energy. Hence, the Ancient Tree Armor he'd been nurturing over the long term had greatly superior defensive and recovery capabilities compared to those of the Changchun Valley disciples.

Even the Changchun Valley disciples, who have already been called indestructible as turtles, were no match for the defensive strength of Wang Shouzhe wearing his "Ancient Tree Armor".

This was why he had passed his top-grade spiritual artifact, the Guardian Heart Spirit Shield, onto his daughter, Wang Liyao.

Even if he was attacked by a common Heavenly Human Realm cultivator under such heavy defenses, it would not be easy to kill him. However, this only applied to the more ordinary Heavenly Human Realm cultivators. If it were someone like the Old Ancestor Longyan, a Great Heavenly Proud with a powerful magical treasure, they could easily smash him with a few heavy moves.

Things happened in a blur.

All of Wang Shouzhe's preparations were completed in an extremely short time. As the "branch" of the Heavenly Tribulation crashed down, it first broke through the outermost Vajra Shield.

Subsequently, the protective shield formed by Wang Shouwei was blasted into pieces.

But the power of the Heavenly Tribulation "branch" was limited to that, and the residual electric light dissipated completely after crackling a bit on the Ancient Tree Armor, not even causing the feeling of slight numbness.

"Uh..." Wang Shouzhe was slightly taken aback. Was it that he had overestimated his defenses, or had the Heavenly Dao underestimated him, Wang Shouzhe? But the latter made sense, under the judgment of the Heavenly Dao rules, he was but a small Level Five Spirit Platform Realm cultivator.

The overall potency of that branch of the Heavenly Tribulation was equivalent to a full-force hit from a cultivator at the Advanced Stage of the Heavenly Human Realm. Otherwise, the Vajra Shield and Wang Shouwei's defense wouldn't have been so thoroughly destroyed.

Under normal circumstances, it was seldom heard of a Spirit Platform Realm cultivator being able to block a Heavenly Tribulation like this. The ones who could defend excellently against it without any harm were even rarer.

While the Heavenly Dao's rules punished him for recklessly intervening in its workings, the rules always presented a glimmer of hope for survival.

"Alright then!" Wang Shouzhe concluded: it wasn't that the Heavenly Dao's rules had underestimated him, but that he had overprotected himself! He had wasted a Grade Four Healing Pill and a leaf from the Longevity Tree.

It was only then that Wang Shouzhe had the chance to look at the Six-Tailed Firefox. Obviously, it had been knocked down by the Heavenly Tribulation, lying in the Tianhu Pavilion like a pitiful little fox.

It had survived this Heavenly Tribulation, but look far worse than before. Its body was charred black, its beautiful fur was completely gone. It was nowhere near as cute or beautiful as before.

This made it apparent that if it weren't for Wang Shouzhe healing it earlier, it wouldn't have been able to get through today's tribulation.

Wang Shouzhe thought for a moment, took the leaf of the Longevity Tree out of his mouth, and gave it to the creature. Once activated, the healing power of the leaf could not be stopped. To avoid waste, he let it use its healing power.

Looking towards the sky.

Within the churning sea of clouds, the energy of the thunder and lightning was quickly dispersing. Raindrops were falling from the thick clouds, with over ninety percent of the liquid falling onto the Six-Tailed Firefox.

Only about ten percent of it, as if automatically locked-in, fell onto Wang Shouzhe.

The rain after the Heavenly Tribulation is the norm.

Even when a Spirit Platform Realm cultivator ascends to the Heavenly Human Realm, there'll be rain falling after passing the Heavenly Tribulation to help them wash their marrow, hair, and advance in their bloodline constitution.

However, Wang Shouzhe hadn't expected that after he aided the Six-Tailed Firefox and was punished by the Heavenly Tribulation, he would also receive corresponding rain. He was delighted and allowed the rain to soak his body, sat down cross-legged immediately, and began to digest the benefits it brought.

Meanwhile, after receiving the vast majority of the rain, the Six-Tailed Firefox began to recover rapidly. Its flaming fur grew back, its charred body restored its former look, and even seemed to be better than before.

Seeing this, Wang Shouzhe took comfort, entered a meditative state. He awoke after some time, feeling more alert with sharper senses, and even his already powerful divine sense made a significant leap forward.

Chapter 26: Bloodline Upgrade! The Fox's Recompense _2

From the Level Five of the Spirit Platform Realm, he made a big leap into the mid-level Six of the Spirit Platform Realm, resulting in a significant improvement in his strength. However, the change must be more than just a simple cultivation base improvement.

After a brief examination of himself, Wang Shouzhe found a significant improvement in his bloodline constitution, which delighted him greatly. To tell the truth, the improvement of the cultivation realm is nothing special, at most just a few more years of cultivation or a few less.

However, the improvement of the bloodline is what Wang Shouzhe cares most about. Originally, he had the Heavenly Arrogance Bloodline of the third level of the Spirit Platform Realm. Later, he relied on the Blood Gu King to enhance his bloodline to mid level of threefold.

But later, no matter how many resources he collected to improve his bloodline, the effect was minimal. The progression of the bloodline was just too hard, especially since he had already reached the mid-level of the third tier.

However, after this heavenly tribulation, the baptism brought about by the heavenly rain greatly improved his bloodline. Although he did not use the Spirit Testing Platform to test the detailed data, Wang Shouzhe deduced that he should now be around the peak of the third level, infinitely close to the Spiritual body!

It's a pity that he just fell short.

Though he felt disappointment, Wang Shouzhe gleefully accepted the reality, learning to be content is the way to happiness. Having taken such a big step in his bloodline, it would be much easier to step into the Fourth-tier Spiritual Body from the peak of the third level.

The combination of this cultivation base increase and bloodline change has brought Wang Shouzhe great benefits.

After clearing his mind, Wang Shouzhe looked again at the Six-tailed Firefox. It seemed to have fully recovered by now, the color of its body became even more fiery and its fur was as smooth as red silk.

More importantly, behind its petite and exquisite figure, seven lush tails rose high like a fan, like seven burning flames.

"Miss Firefox," Wang Shouzhe was happy for it and said, "Congratulations on successfully crossing the tribulation and becoming a Level Seven Spirit Beast." His heart also marveled that the Yuwen Clan was now likely to return to its former glory.

Level Seven Spirit Beasts are not common, even the Academic Palace of the Purple Abode has very few of them.

Back in the day, it was because of a beast swarm led by a level five fierce beast that the Ping'an Wang family suffered an irreparable disaster. But Level Seven, how terrifying an existence is that?

"Cheep cheep~" After just two sounds, the Seven-tailed Firefox regained its senses. Now, it was a Level Seven Spirit Beast, with opened spiritual intelligence and formless bones infused.

It immediately changed from "cheep-cheep" noises to clear and pleasant girly voice: "Dear husband, thank you for helping me at the crucial moment, allowing me to survive the terrifying transcendent spiritual tribulation."

"No problem, I should...Wait." Wang Shouzhe replied halfway, then felt a chill, "What...what did you call me?"

"Dear husband?" The Seven-Tailed Firefox still looked like a cute and naive fox, but its expression and eyes were much more anthropomorphic, blinking clear eyes like fire crystal, innocently asked,

"I have been in the Yuwen Clan for a very long time and I heard that married couples call each other that.. Did I get it wrong?"

At first, her accent sounded a bit strange and uncomfortable. But now, with her high spiritual intelligence, she was in sharp control. After a few sentences, her voice was as charming as a young girl's.

Between couples, there is nothing wrong with calling each other that way." Wang Shouzhe expressed with a drop of cold sweat, "But there's a distance between you and me, right?" No, he should never get to that point, after all, he does not have the interest in marrying a beast.

"What?" The Seven-Tailed Firefox suddenly looked wronged, "Are you planning to abandon me? You confessed to me, and I accepted..."

Confession?

Wang Shouzhe felt chills run down his spine, unable to recall when he had ever confessed his love to a pet-like fox.

"You said, little fox, our fates are completely tied together." The red fur on the seven-tailed Firefox started to stand up, suggesting her mood was on the verge of exploding, "Although your confession was sudden, I accepted it. And you just fed me the leaves you'd eaten, I didn't reject you..."

At this moment, Wang Shouzhe was a bit flustered. He cautiously asked, "If I say, this was a misunderstanding? Will you kill me?"

"No." The seven-tailed Firefox fluttered her charming fox eyes and said, "Actually, I'm not a newly born little fox either. If it's a misunderstanding, and you don't want to marry me, that's ok. Feelings need to be cultivated gradually." Although there was some disappointment in her tone, she did not seem to be angry.

"Okay, let's cultivate it gradually." Wang Shouzhe breathed a sigh of relief. The matured Seven-Tailed Firefox, after awakening spiritual intelligence, didn't force him to marry, which was a good thing.

As for cultivating feelings gradually, hehe~~ just with this point alone, Wang Shouzhe could delay until the end of time. He really doesn't have the hobby of marrying a spirit beast fox.

If something like this happened, wouldn't he be killed by his wife?

"Can I call you brother?" The Seven-tailed Firefox hopped over and climbed into Wang Shouzhe's arms, just like she did before. She seemed to really enjoy the feeling of being in his arms.

"Of course." Wang Shouzhe perked up and said, "Let's settle on this, you'll be my little sister from now on." He secretly wiped the sweat from his brow, for the seven-tail fox like Grand Aunt who is a level seven spirit beast, as long as she doesn't think about marrying him, he doesn't mind even if she wants to be his grandmother, let alone being his sworn sister.

Chapter 26: Bloodline Upgrade! The Fox's Recompense _3

Speaking of which, he was really taking advantage here. Now that they had a certain connection, he could ask for her help with a clear conscience. This was certainly better than relying on the Academic Palace's backing, as they could not readily interfere with worldly disputes.

"Alright, in order to thank you for saving me during the Heavenly Tribulation," the Seven-tailed Fire Fox nuzzled against Wang Shouzhe, "I am willing to cultivate together with you."

Together?

Together, what?

Wang Shouzhe nearly tossed the fox out, glancing around nervously as though guilty. This is forbidden content!!! How could this be so nonchalantly discussed?!!

What made him sweat even more was that she was currently just a fox, not even a humanoid creature. How could Wang Shouzhe possibly degenerate to this level?

"No! Absolutely not!" Wang Shouzhe responded with righteous indignation, "To avoid incurring the harsh punishment of the Heavenly Dao Laws, at the very least, you must ascend to Level Nine and transform before we can discuss this."

To reach Level Nine and transform was to stand equal to a Magic Realm big shot. Given the Seven-tailed Fire Fox's current status, reaching Level Eight was still possible, but the transformation tribulation was extremely challenging.

Moreover, Spirit Beasts matured at a slower rate than humans. Even if she could cultivate to the peak of Level Eight, it would take ages. By that time, Wang Shouzhe would either have ascended to the Magic Realm or become one of the Wang family's ancestors!

Luckily, although she was highly intelligent and aware, she was still too naive and quickly agreed, "Then it's a deal. But during this time, you should not cultivate with any other Spirit Beast."

Wang Shouzhe felt a flash of irritation. He, the respected Wang Family Head, wouldn't have such elusive thoughts, would he?

Just at that moment.

Lady Bilian and the others rushed in. Seeing Wang Shouzhe and the fox unscathed, everyone breathed a sigh of relief, their faces alight with excitement.

"Fourth Uncle, it's great to see you unharmed." Wang Zongsheng bear-hugged Wang Shouzhe, his eyes welling up. "If not for the power of the Tribulation Cloud Gale, I would have rushed in to save you. What would our Wang family do if you died?"

"Stop it and get off my clothes with your snotty nose; this suit is quite expensive." Upon exerting mysterious energy, Wang Shouzhe pushed him away, "When did your Fourth Uncle ever face an easy death?" He said this, but felt secretly moved inside. The Wang family, having endured many difficulties together, was much more united than other families.

"Congratulations to the Old Ancestor Fox on the successful promotion to Level Seven." Lady Bilian and the few heads of the Yuwen Clan's families congratulated the Seven-tailed Fire Fox, "Old Ancestor Fox, please come with us. We will refurbish the Tianhu Pavilion before you move in again."

Lady Bilian was filled with zest. The fact that the Old Ancestor Fox ascended to Level Seven under her watch, albeit her contribution was not too significant, still meant that the Fox could protect the Yuwen Clan for one to two thousand years.

Some Spirit Beasts were like that — they enjoyed extended longevity compared to humans. Among them, the lifespan of the Fire Fox species was not the longest. If a Spirit Tortoise ascended to Level Seven, it would be even more terrifying as they might live for seven to eight thousand years or even more.

Of course, the Fire Fox had its own advantages. Its combat power was substantial. Whether it was the Illusion Technique or the fire-based abilities, it enjoyed an edge over Purple Abode Realm cultivators of the same level.

This was unlike the Level Seven Water Spirit Tortoise, which was better suited for defense rather than expansion.

"There's no need to go to such lengths." The Seven-tailed Fire Fox, lounging in Wang Shouzhe's arms, spoke lazily and impatiently, "You can take your time repairing the Tianhu Pavilion. I can just stay with my brother for a while."

"We will follow the Old Ancestor Fox's..." Lady Bilian suddenly exclaimed, as if struck by lightning, "Bro~brother~~~? Are you referring to Old Ancestor Fox's brother as..."

"It is my unworthy self, Madam." Wang Shouzhe greeted with a bow. "We just swore an oath to become siblings, and it's normal for a sister to go home for a while. Don't worry too much."

Worry about your soul!

Lady Bilian was both anxious and angry. Her hair stood on end. "Wang Shouzhe, how dare you become siblings with our Old Ancestor Fox? You've crossed the line."

Wang Shouzhe watched Lady Bilian rage, sighing inside. If I were truly shameless, we would be a couple, not siblings. Then, your Yuwen Clan wouldn't even be able to get a single fox hair...

Alas, Wang Shouzhe couldn't toughen up his skin enough.

Chapter 27 Reaping a Rich Harvest and Young Outstanding Clan Member_1

...

"Shut up, don't you dare insult my brother!" The Seven-tailed Fire Fox hopped forward in fierce loyalty. "Without Brother Shouzhe, I would have died during my Heavenly Tribulation. Indeed, I had a spirit contract with your Yuwen Clan's Old Ancestor, received tributes from the Yuwen Clan, and offered protection to the Yuwen Clan.

But that doesn't mean my private life should be regulated by Yuwen Clan too."

Upon seeing her anger, Lady Bilian immediately cowered, smiling placatingly: "Venerable Firefox, that's not what I meant. You're just so pure and straightforward, I'm just worried someone might take advantage of you."

As she spoke, she subtly glanced at Wang Shouzhe.

Since meeting this guy, nothing good has happened. Every time there's a loss, it's always him. And now, he almost made off with the Venerable Firefox.

"Bilian, I've been alive for so many years, I've seen more people than the grains of rice you've eaten. Who could trick me?" The Seven-tailed Fire Fox flicked its fluffy tail, looking the picture of wisdom and maturity. "Shouzhe is the best person I've met in my life."

A speechless Lady Bilian stared at them.

Wang Shouzhe certainly had a knack for manipulation.

However, since things had come this far, she had no other choice. Thankfully, there's a spirit contract between the Yuwen Clan and the Venerable Firefox; otherwise, she'd truly fear he would take her away.

"If Venerable Firefox wants to visit the Wang family, that's entirely up to you, us juniors would never dare to stop you." Lady Bilian, aware of the Firefox's temper, had no choice but to coax her with a smile. "However, having recently reached a breakthrough, you need time to consolidate your cultivation.

And, your breakthrough to Level Seven is a huge celebration, as per tradition, our clan should prepare a banquet and invite all the prominent families. You should make an appearance."

In every prominent family, a breakthrough by an Old Ancestor requires observing certain protocols.

On one hand, it's definitely a cause for celebration. On the other hand, it's also a way to broadcast this information, deterring potential opponents.

The current situation of the Yuwen Clan is best described as surrounded by wolves. Once the Firefox evolved from Six Tails to Seven Tails, they'd naturally want to spread the word, warning other families coveting the riches of the Yuwen Clan to assess themselves, thus saving the Yuwen Clan a lot of trouble.

Hearing this, the anger of the Seven-tailed Firefox somewhat subsided, and she grudgingly agreed: "Alright~ I'll stay at the Yuwen Clan for a while, then I'll go and play with Brother Shouzhe once my cultivation is consolidated."

"Excellent~ Thank you, Venerable Firefox."

Only then did Lady Bilian breathe a sigh of relief, quietly wiping away the cold sweat from her forehead.

Thank goodness this Firefox grand-aunt, although willful and explosive, is clear-headed when it comes to important matters. Otherwise, she wouldn't know how to persuade her.

At this point, Ji Mingyu, Yuwen JianYe, and others came in from outside the Tianhu Pavilion. They caused a stir and made much noise but we'll leave it at that for now.

By this time, one could say Wang Shouzhe had successfully completed his task for this trip.

Lady Bilian hence had someone bring two trays. One tray held a stack of gold banknotes, as thick as a thumb, while the other held a small jade box.

She indicated her servant to present the gold banknotes to Wang Shouzhe, "Master Shouzhe, this is the promised hundred thousand Qian Gold. Also, thanks to Master Shouzhe for helping Venerable Firefox successfully rank up, the Yuwen Clan should express our gratitude."

She then opened the jade box from the other tray, explaining: "Stored in this Na Ling Jade Box are some unique, rare plant seeds that the Yuwen Clan has unintentionally collected over the years. Some are from foreign regions, Lin County, foreign nations, and others found in ancient sites, each with a detailed description."

Knowing that Master Shouzhe is Master ChangChun's distinguished disciple, perhaps you'll find a use for them."

Though she didn't appreciate Wang Shouzhe's actions with the Firefox, she knew she must foster good relations with him, not antagonizing him. After all, not only has the Wang family tremendous potential, but they also have a powerful backing and excellent ties with the Academic Palace, they're not just any family you could cross.

A spark flickered in Wang Shouzhe's eyes.

Even though the Wang family business has been booming for years, yielding substantial profits, hundred thousand Qian Gold is still a vast sum of money. Not forgetting the continuous need for money within the family, resulting in no significant savings.

Coming to the Yuwen Clan, he'd easily earned so much, naturally leaving him in high spirits.

And these seeds were an unexpected joy.

You see, for Profound Martial cultivators like him who primarily practice Wood Type cultivation techniques, unique plant seeds often signify more diverse tactical strategies.

Over the years, he's been careful to collect special plants and cultivate them, resulting in combat tools such as the "Witch Series" and Iron Python Vine.

The varieties of plants the Wang family could find, however, were limited.

He's nearly cleaned out the plants that the Academic Palace could divulge, and now, Master ChangChun practically hides whenever he sees him, fearing he's after the plants the Academic Palace must not reveal.

Speaking of which, it's been quite some time since Wang Shouzhe had collected any new plants.

The seeds Lady Bilian had brought, were just what he had been looking for.

The Yuwen Clan, after all, was a grand prominent family with a heritage of a thousand years. The plants they deliberately collected must have their unique characteristics. If he finds just one type useful amongst these seeds, it would boost his combat prowess.

Chapter 27 Reaping a Rich Harvest and Young Outstanding Clan Member_2

It must be said that Lady Bilian, the strong woman who took control of the Yuwen Clan during its decline and single-handedly propped up the family, has shown her astute intelligence through just this thank-you gift.

Though sometimes, this woman's thoughts are rather mysterious and strange, leaving Wang Shouzhe often unable to fathom what she really thinks. But after all, this woman operated on a grand scale!

"The lady is thoughtful~"

Wang Shouzhe thanked Lady Bilian for her kindness, then happily accepted the Na Ling Jade Box and the gold tickets. How could he not be happy? This "simple" task had brought him many benefits. Not only had he gained these treasures, his bloodline had also elevated to the third level peak, and he had also gained the "friendship" of the Seven-tailed Fire Fox to become a powerful ally in the future.

For Wang Shouzhe, the simpler the task, the better.

After settling the rewards, Wang Shouzhe stayed at the Yuwen Clan for a few days. He enjoyed all the delicious food in the New City with the accompaniment of the clan members. He then set off home, feeling somewhat eager to return. After all, as the Family Head, it was always a little uneasy being away from the clan for too long.

...

Almost at the same time.

Changning Mansion, Ping'an Town.

The rugged remnants of the Six Flat Mountains, like a giant sleeping dragon, stretched across the south of Ping'an Town, piercing through the Peace River, separating the entire Ping'an Town from the rolling mountains south of the Peace River.

At this time, it was almost summer outside the mountains, but within the mountains, the spring was still in full bloom. Various mountain flowers were in full bloom, adding a hint of color to the sprawling mountain ranges. Overlooking from above, it was like a colorful canvas laid out, beautiful to behold.

However, beneath this canvas, it was not entirely safe but hid numerous unknown crises.

At this moment, in the complex terrain of the remnants of Six Flat Mountain, a team of more than ten people was exploring and advancing through the mountains.

Regular porter beasts like horses and cows had no use in the complex mountain environment. Therefore, in this team, the beasts responsible for carrying personal belongings were a kind of goat-like creature called the Panhorn Porter Goat.

They are good at climbing rugged rock cliffs and can walk on rugged mountain roads as if on flat ground. They are good partners that the barbarian tribes have tamed over the long years, capable of helping humans carry light supplies in the mountains.

The surrounding areas of the Changning Wang Clan were mostly hills and mountains, and the outskirts were the long and steep remnants of the Six Flat Mountains. Therefore, through their own pasture channels, the Changning Wang Clan managed to obtain a batch of the Panhorn Porter Goats, specifically for exploration and patrol of the surrounding mountains.

The Six Flat Mountain remnants were towering and steep, with countless gullies and canyons. Even though the Wang family had been stationed in Ping'an Town for one to two hundred years, they were still unable to penetrate deep into the complex mountain range.

But this was a task that needed to be done.

If they couldn't map out all the surrounding mountains and eliminate some of the residual fierce beasts or other hidden dangers, it would be like invisible landmines. Who knows when it might suddenly erupt.

Especially after the Beast Disaster years ago, many fierce beasts fled deep into the surrounding mountains. Over the past six or seven decades, there have been occasional sightings of Level One or

Level Two fierce beasts around Ping'an Town, even causing serious incidents of biting and killing people and livestock.

As a result, the now powerful Wang Clan decided ten years ago to allocate a portion of their resources to "clean up" the "snakes and insects" in their "yard", survey detailed maps of the mountains, and identify various special locations.

The so-called special locations include small or micro-spirit veins, mineral deposits, special medicinal herbs, heaven and earth treasures, or some barely cultivatable but very laborious valley areas, and so on.

In the past ten years.

The Wang Clan has been constantly "clearing the fog" in the surrounding mountain ranges. Overall, about 30% of the work has been completed. They have also discovered some special locations from time to time, which have been marked on the map. When the time and opportunity are right, they will be incorporated into the Clan's development plan.

Since the Changning Wang Clan implemented a family contribution point system, and this contribution system has been improved and perfected over time, these low-risk, high-contribution exploration tasks have been well received by the younger generation of the Clan.

With enough luck, discovering precious mineral deposits or small spirit veins can earn a lot of contribution points.

The only minor regret for the young members is that only those over the age of sixteen, or those who have reached the Spirit Platform Realm but have not yet turned sixteen, are allowed to take on the "clear the peripheral environment fog task" after receiving relevant education and assessment.

What the young generation of the Wang Clan does not know is that this limitation was firmly proposed by the Family Head Wang Shouzhe. The reason is simple, to prevent someone like his elder niece Wang Licui from randomly eating anything she caught. It's all well and good that she eats random things, but it becomes a problem when she brings them back and feeds them to the children.

Although that event turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the children, wrong is wrong. Just because good came out of a blunder one time, doesn't mean a blunder is not a blunder.

The Wang Clan of Changning was already small in number and it took great effort for the young generation to flourish a bit. Wang Shouzhe was counting on them to work hard for the rise of the Wang Clan, reproduce more descendants, and increase the clan population.

Chapter 27 Reaping a Rich Harvest and Young Outstanding Clan Member_3

If one is lost without reason, won't that result in hundreds or even thousands less family members in a thousand years' time?

Therefore, this exploration team is led by the younger generation of the Wang family, accompanied by a group of household heads.

"Zongyao." A young man, dressed in black and carrying a sword, with a handsome face, spoke with a hint of exhaustion, "We have been exploring for several days. Are you sure that there are traces of a Peak Level Two Red-scaled Horned Python in this area?"

"Eighth Uncle." The young man named Zongyao respectfully answered, "Last time when I lost my way with several household heads, I accidentally found a snake skin in this unexplored area. After identification, it turned out to be the shed skin of a Red-scaled Horned Python. Based on the known information, its level is estimated to be around Peak Level Two."

These two handsome and energetic young men were Wang Zongyao, fourth in line of the eighth generation, and Wang Shouming, the eighth in line of the seventh generation of the Wang family in Changning.

If going by age, Wang Zongyao was already twenty years old, a year older than Wang Shouming.

The once naive children, who used to cause mischief at the Clan School, have now grown into the outstanding youngsters of the Wang family, contributing to the development of the Changning Wang Clan.

"Zongyao, I don't mean to question your inference." Wang Shouming said with slight worry, "We have invested heavily in this mission to explore this area, hiring a group of household heads including Brother Tiger. In addition, we have rented ten 'Horned Sheeple' and a Middle Grade storage ring from the family's Treasure Pavilion. All the supplies can only support us for ten days.

If we do not get any returns, we will suffer a big loss."

"Brother, I know you are eager to get the 'Snake Gallbladder' from the Red-scaled Horned Python." A seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl, dressed dashing, said, "However, Zongyao has always been mature and steady. I can't guarantee that his deductions are always completely right, but eight or nine out of ten times they are. You don't have to worry too much."

The habitat of the Red-scaled Horned Python is mostly in places with Earth Fire or Fire Spirit Veins. If we do find a Fire Spirit Vein, all our previous investments will return a hundred fold."

This beautiful and spirited girl was Wang Luoqing, ninth in rank of the Wang family's Luo generation. Like Wang Shouming, she was the second child and daughter of Level Six, Define the Sea.

Nowadays, the younger generation of the Wang family, due to their abundance of resources and education from a young age, enjoy advantages that weren't available to Wang Luotong and Wang Shounuo's generation.

Even those of the direct line did not have the same resources, which were far greater than the Spiritual Platform kind available to the heirs of ordinary Rank 9 prominent families.

As a result, the development of the younger generation within the family has been quite successful. Wang Zongyao, at just twenty years old, had already reached Level Eight of the Vital Energy Refining Realm, with his Mysterious Energy having a firm foundation from practicing the Mysterious Energy Formula.

Although Wang Shouming was only at the Peak Level Seven of the Vital Energy Refining realm, he was a bit slower due to his early success in matching with the Fire-based Top-Grade Cultivation Technique "Red Dragon True Verses" and had shifted to practicing the "Red Dragon True Verses".

Yet speaking purely in terms of combat power, Wang Shouming, who practiced the Red Dragon True Verses, was several points stronger and more dominant.

Even Wang Luoqing, a daughter, had managed to match and practice the Middle-Grade earth-based Cultivation Technique called "Earth Mysterious Formula" which could direct her cultivation to the Heavenly Human Realm. This technique was not strong in its early stages but was increasingly profound as her cultivation progressed.

It endowed her with astonishing defensive power and the Mysterious Technique to change the terrain.

In fact, if they were not pursuing the Path of the Purple Abode, some techniques that were compatible with one's own attributes would have been more suitable. It was not possible for everyone in the Wang family to follow the Path of the Purple Abode because they lacked the qualifications and the ability to afford the consumption.

Given all these favorable conditions, can they really be compared to those available to young Wang Shouzhe?

Except for Wang Luoqing, there was also a miss from the Lillian generation of Wang family in the team, who was Wang Lillian, the fourth in rank of the Lillian generation.

She is now eighteen years old. Although her cultivation base is not among the top in the younger generation of the Wang family, she is already at the Peak Level Six of the Vital Energy Refining Realm at such a young age, comparable to Wang Shouzhe when he had just crossed over.

She also participated in the discussion, "The family arranges these 'Exploring the Mist' tasks, mainly to train us. When we go out, we always have to first assume that there will be no gain, so that we won't be disappointed."

"Compared to this mission, I am more worried about Sister Liyao. It's been two or three months since she went to the Academic Palace, and she must have started her studies. Sister Liyao has always been very stubborn. She used to make a lot of trouble in the Clan School to help us win. I hope she's doing well at the Academic Palace and not bullied by some scoundrels."

These young people of the Wang family were all around seventeen or eighteen years old and had grown up together with Wang Liyao in the Clan School. They had got into trouble together and been punished together, and their feelings for each other were deep.

On the other hand, Luo Qiu and Luo Jing, and Wang Licui were much older and they'd left for the Academic Palace early on, so the relationship between them was somewhat unfamiliar.

When it came to Luo Qiu and Luo Jing, these young people had more reverence and admiration.

When Wang Liyao was mentioned, the young people discussed eagerly. However, most of them believed that Liyao wouldn't suffer in the Academic Palace. Let alone her personal strength, she had already reached a level that their peers could not even look up to and clearly understand.

Not to mention that the Wang family was not completely helpless in the Academic Palace, and not so easy to bully.

Chapter 27 Reaping a Rich Harvest and Young Outstanding Clan Member_4

"Calculate the time," said Wang Shouming, "Fourth Brother should be arriving from the Academic Palace soon since he was sending Li Yao there. Let's keep our spirits up, and hopefully, we can find a Fire Spirit Vein this time to make Fourth Brother happy."

With the mention of Wang Shouzhe, the young people's faces gleamed with admiration and excitement. Fourth Brother/Fourth Uncle was a legendary figure in the Wang family. He led the declining family to where it is today, one step at a time.

Although only the Old Ancestor, Longyan, is a Celestial being in the family at present, even with just the recent promotion, any 7th Rank power in any of the Southern Six Guards in Longzuo County would hesitate to underestimate the Changning Wang Clan.

The youth of the Wang family, their spirits somewhat invigorated, threw themselves back into the arduous and mundane process of exploration. The mountain roads, unexplored for many years, were rugged and dangerous, with mountains overlapping or ancient trees obstructing the way. Even for their high cultivation base, they had to be extremely careful.

Several days passed.

This mountain region was especially desolate and terrifying, they lost three antler-carrying goats in succession, along with some supplies. Had they not rented a Storage Ring before setting out, they would have already run out of supplies and would have had to withdraw and accept the loss.

Suddenly!

Wang Shouming, who had been practising the Fire series cultivation technique, the Red Dragon True Verses, exclaimed with a glint of excitement, "I smell a hint of warmth. The temperature in this area, in that direction, is rising."

When the regional temperature changes, there are only a few situations. It could either be a place where the Earth Fire is leaking, a Fire Spirit Vein, or even more extreme, a place where a Fire series Heaven and Earth Treasure has landed. Of course, the worst case scenario would be that a high rank Fierce Beast has joined the territory.

However, this region is near a human settlement, under normal circumstances, even Level Five beasts have considerable wisdom and would prefer to stay far away from humans unless forced by special circumstances.

"Sister." Wang Shouming said to Wang Luoqing, "It's your turn."

"Okay!" Wang Luoqing took out a pearl emitting an earth-colored glow. The earth-based cultivation technique, Earth Mysterious Formula, was utilized, and the earth-colored pearl fell to the ground, gathering mud and rocks towards it like a flowing stream.

Wang Luoqing continued to pour her Mysterious Energy into the orb, causing her to break a sweat. When she finished, the mud and rocks magically transformed into a small three-foot-tall earth puppet. Despite its dull and seemingly low-intelligence appearance, this unexpected ability from the small earth puppet drew envious looks from Wang Shouming, Wang Zongyao, and Wang Lillian.

Luoqing's little spirit treasure was named "Earth Spirit Bead".

This was not exchanged with contribution points that she earned by herself, but a gift from her direct elder brother, Wang Shouye. Wang Shouye, who had received the legacy of Alchemy, accrued many family contribution points every year.

When he saw this fine earth-based little spirit treasure in the family treasure vault, he exchanged it and gifted it to his sister, Wang Luoqing. Although the "Earth Spirit Bead" can only summon an earth puppet equivalent to the peak of the Qi Refinement stage, it still requires more than fifty thousand valor points.

Apart from the elders, only someone as extravagant as Wang Shouye could afford to exchange it.

It's said that this "Earth Spirit Bead" was sent by Wang Licui, who hadn't been home for a while, to the Academic Palace. Then it was sent back by Wang Zongsheng, a member of the Academic Palace. Who knows where Wang Licui got this thing?

This little spirit treasure has an exceptional function. Some cultivators of earth-based Mysterious Techniques can activate it to transform into an earth puppet. Although its combat prowess and intelligence are lacking, it is most suitable for carrying heavy loads or exploring dangerous areas.

Of course, Wang Luoqing's current cultivation base is quite low, and the summoned earth puppet is quite weak, only suitable for probing the path ahead.

After a short rest, Wang Luoqing started instructing the small earth puppet to move forward. The small puppet made a surprising amount of noise, its clanging steps drawing attention.

After about a hundred feet, she could hardly sense the Earth Spirit Bead, so she commanded it to stop.

They left two household guards to watch over the antler-carrying goats and baggage, and everyone carefully followed the direction of the earth puppet. However, they stopped more than ten feet behind the earth puppet and waited for it to continue probing the way.

In this repetitive and cautious manner, half a day's time passed swiftly.

The group had entered a blazing and scorching area where only a few hardy weeds survived, as many common plants had become extinct.

"This..." Wang Shouming observed the physical features of the area and discovered some solidified lava rocks. He sighed slightly, disappointed, "It seems that it is not a Fire Spirit Vein but an area where Earth Fire seeps out. Hopefully, we can find some valuable Heaven and Earth Treasures."

"Be careful! The earth puppet was destroyed."

Wang Luoqing's pretty face changed slightly, "It moved so fast, it doesn't seem like it's Level Two..."

Not Level Two? Could it be a Level Three?

The young men of the Wang family immediately became serious and vigilant. Although Wang Shouming was not the oldest, he has the highest seniority and took command, "Brother Hu, you form a battle formation with the guards first."

The one called Brother Hu was a hereditary house guard of the Wang family, the son of Wang Zhong—Wang Hu, one of the carefully nurtured house guards of the family. Wang Hu, who is

already thirty years old, has reached the peak of Level Eight Qi Refinement. He drew his saber and shield and said with a calm and steadfast gaze, "Prepare for battle!"

A group of young and lively house guards, with Wang Hu at the center, formed a battle formation. The front row held the shields, and the back row held the strong bows.

At the same time, the Wang family members also retrieved their bows, each concentrating their energies to prepare for the upcoming tough battle.

Just as they were fully prepared, all of a sudden, a burst of red "flame" rushed towards them at an incredibly quick speed, carrying an awful stench.

"It's a Level Three Red-scaled Horned Python!"

"Everyone, be careful."

Chapter 28 Harvest! And Wang Family Traditions

...

As soon as the words fell, the Red-scaled Horned Python appeared before them.

What a creature, measured to be approximately forty-five feet long, with the thickest part probably being as thick as a wooden bucket. Its enormous snake head was menacing, topped with a long, singular red horn.

The scales of the snake all seemed to be red, like flames in a burning inferno. Its body emitted a tremendously high heat, charring the wild grass on the ground to a crisp, leaving a winding snake path behind.

A Level Three Fierce Beast!

For the impoverished Wang family, it was a formidable enemy that might cost lives if not handled appropriately.

However, as the Wang family continued to grow stronger, a Level Three Beast no longer posed a significant threat. Its annual autumn and winter hunts expanded their territory outward.

The younger members of the Wang family were no strangers to these Level Three Beasts if they had no special tasks and would join the elders every year in these hunts.

Moreover, their Spirit Food often contained the meat from such Level Three Beasts.

Therefore, although they were cautious around Level Three Beasts, they did not exhibit fear as they would against mortal enemies.

"Fire arrows." At the same time that Wang Shouming gave the command, he notched a strong arrow and let it fly. His arrow, fueled with Fire Type Mysterious Energy, glowed red and left a long trail of fire.

The other disciples of the Wang family, as well as the heads of households, coordinated their arrows to fire too.

"Zing! Zing! Zing!" The arrows tore through the air, producing piercing screeches.

The Changning Wang Clan, when it came to training its clan disciples, had always been all-conquering. Even Wang Shouzhe, the Clan Leader himself, would practice archery thoroughly. Therefore, could the younger generations dare to slack off?

Unlike the disciples at the Academic Palace, the family's disciples emphasized coordinated teamwork and group combat instead of individual fights. The advantage of the bow and arrow was extremely obvious in team combat, especially during hunting, patrolling, and defense.

Profound Martial cultivators were far stronger than ordinary people. Upon reaching Level Five or Six in the Vital Energy Refining Realm, they would need a five-stone bow. When their Mysterious Energy was funneled into the arrows, they could even penetrate smaller chunks of rock.

As for Wang Shouming, Wang Zongyao, and Wang Hu, they used the Eight-Stone Strong Bows crafted from thousand-year-old iron-wood cores and third-level Fierce Beast tendons which could easily penetrate the toughest of iron armors.

This was why the "Shotgun," developed under the command of Wang Shouzhe, could only be equipped by non-Profound Martial clan soldiers. A slightly advanced Profound Martial cultivator could outmatch the "Shotgun" with just a strong bow.

Therefore, even a Level Three Fierce Beast with a thick hide and strong Mysterious Energy protecting its body was not impermeable to weapons!

After the first barrage of arrows...

The Red-scaled Horned Python, writhing in pain, let out a furious hiss.

"Bang!"

Its tail smacked violently onto a shield wall formed by three of the household heads, forcing them to take several steps back, blood seeping from the corners of their mouths.

The shield, internally lined with iron-wood and externally covered with a Level Three Beast's hide, had somewhat deformed under the impact.

However, the household heads still held their defensive posture fast and steadfast, their eyes reflecting determination but no fear.

They were all among the first batch of household heads nurtured by the Wang family, chosen from the civilians, tenant farmers, and children of the side families in Ping'an Town.

Their ages were generally in their twenties, and their cultivation bases had reached the fifth or sixth levels of the Vital Energy Refining Realm. It goes to show how good their treatment was with the Wang family, as the resources and training they received since they were children had surpassed most direct descendants of Rank 9 Prominent Families.

Because the "Clear the Fog" mission brought uncertain danger, Wang Shouming, heavily influenced by his conservative-minded Clan Leader, had prepared extremely well for this journey. He had hired a whole team of household heads, spending quite a number of Valor Points.

Aside from the most powerful, Wang Hu, the rest were at least at Level Five in the Vital Energy Refining Realm! This proved the strength of their overall forces.

Just after the first encounter, the Red-scaled Horned Python had already suffered a few significant losses.

However, things were far from over.

Wang Shouming and the other men immediately threw out some seeds around the Red-scaled Horned Python. These seeds were part of the "Witch No.29," developed by Wang Shouzhe and part of the Witch Series.

The continuous evolution of the Witch Series also represented Wang Shouzhe's relentless pursuit of progress in its development. The younger members of the family absolutely loved the Witch Series and would not hesitate to spend their Valor Points to exchange for quite a few of these.

Its greatest function was control! Once the enemy was controlled, it would be like a fish on a cutting board, ready to be slaughtered at will.

The seeds of the Witch Series contained a portion of Wang Shouzhe's Mysterious Energy. Once activated, they could grow wildly, entwining around the enemy like the Witch's Long Hair.

Although the red-scaled Horned Python was a "noble" Level Three Fierce Beast, it was not known for its strength. With the Witch's Long Hair constantly entangling it, its movement was hindered.

The Wang family members, on the other hand, continued to retreat, with three household heads holding their shields to protect the group. The overall formation was simple yet effective, an easy formation gradually developed through the Wang family's long history of autumn and winter hunting outside their territory.

Although Fierce Beasts were formidable, the spiritual intelligence of Level Three and Four Beasts was limited and predictable to an extent. It was only when they reached Level Five that their spiritual intelligence underwent a qualitative change, and only when they reached Level Seven could they speak human language and showcase extraordinary wisdom.

"Hiss~"

The Red-scaled Horned Python, furious and anxious, spewed out a ball of red venomous flame, its trump card. Whenever it clashed with other Fierce Beasts in the wild, it would often char its opponents till their skin blistered and their flesh exploded under the effect of the venomous flame attack.

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Unfortunately for it, humans were its adversary.

The Wang family and the head of household, were familiar with the typical fierce beasts. Under the Leather Shield Wall, all the flaming poisonous attacks were blocked. Simultaneously, more intense arrow rain was directed towards the beast.

"Thud, thud, thud!"

The arrows imbued with Mysterious Energy, fiercely penetrated the Red-scaled Horned Python's body.

After multiple rounds of this.

The Red-scaled Horned Python's injuries kept on worsening. Instinctively feeling fear, it turned around and slithered away quickly. Within a few moments, it disappeared into the craggy rocks.

"After it, don't let it get away." Wang Shouming said excitedly. If they went hunting with their elders, the Family Contribution Points they would receive in the end would be very low.

However, if these juniors split the value of a Level Three fierce beast amounting to thousands, it would be a considerable gain.

Therefore, everybody including the head of household, was very excited.

Tracking it, they found the terrain hotter and more rugged, the ground increasingly displaying a red hue, with fewer and fewer signs of it being found.

But no one gave up. Even if it took several days, they had to get it out of its hiding place. The Red-scaled Horned Python couldn't just disappear for no reason; it must have returned to its den, which was surely nearby.

After everyone searched for several hours.

"Auntie Jiugugu, look at this."

Suddenly, Wang Lillian found a smear of blood mixed with viscous fluid in a crevice and promptly called over Wang Luoqing to see it.

The Red-scaled Horned Python was seriously injured and though it instinctively covered up some traces, it could not completely hide its tracks.

"Indeed, it's the blood trail of a Level Three Red-scaled Horned Python."

Upon Wang Luoqing's confirmation, she hastily called over Wang Shouming, Wang Zongyao, and all the heads of household.

The blood trace was discovered in a crack in the rock. The location of the crack was unusual, appearing to go inwards and downwards, and yet it was blocked by a slanted rock. The Red-scaled Horned Python could crawl in, but it would pose some problems for a person.

Of course, it was not impossible, but they would have to crawl.

"That's clever, no wonder we could not trace it earlier. It simply found a great hiding place. Who could've found it?" Wang Shouming exclaimed, then looked at Wang Luoqing, "Sister, send your earth puppet in to check~"

"Mm."

Wang Luoqing nodded, took out the "Earth Spirit Bead" she had picked up, and once again condensed a mini version of the Earth Puppet. She directed the puppet to crawl into the rock crevice.

Seeing her reluctant to speak, Wang Zongming couldn't hold back and hurriedly asked, "Sister, what's the situation down there?"

"Brother, there's an underground cave. Not far from here is the Terrestrial Fire Flame Cave. The traces of the Level Three Red-scaled Horned Python go down through the Magma Passage." Wang Luoqing came back to her senses and replied with a hint of surprise on her face.

"Magma Cave?"

Hearing this, everyone's eyes brightened.

They had previously deduced this was a fire domain area, but actually pinning down the exact location of the ground fire was not easy.

You need to know, the terrain of the Remnant of Six Flat Mountain is quite complex, with various Poisonous Pools and Ice Caves. Although the Fire Domain does not hold as much value as the Fire Spirit Vein.

However, if the location of the ground fire is suitable, it could have some special uses, such as high-level alchemy and artifact refining, which can be best done through ground fire and can exceed the temperatures of ordinary Alchemy Furnace.

Furthermore, in an unexplored ground fire environment, there might be a chance of finding some Heaven and Earth Treasure. If good stuff is found, that would mean a large number of Family Contribution Points.

Although everyone was excited at heart.

The caution and carefulness distinctive to the Wang family was brought to full play. Everyone suppressed their excitement and having pried open the crevice, navigated carefully, with the mini earth puppet leading the way.

They adjusted the team formation according to the terrain of the magma cave, preferring a slower pace and taking no risk. Of course, they were not naturally like this but have been scolded into being so by their elders.

It took them half a day.

The group had only gone about a hundred feet down. The surroundings were getting hotter. In some rock crevices, one could faintly see the scorching magma. Fortunately, all of them were Profound Martial cultivators and were much more heat resistant than ordinary people. They could still hold out under extreme heat.

Suddenly, after prying open a narrow crevice, their surroundings brightened suddenly.

They had entered a more open space.

Several "Magma Streams" converged towards the center, forming a "Magma Pond". The magma gently rolled, making bubbling sounds.

The long sought after Red-scaled Horned Python, was already curled up in a corner, its color almost blending seamlessly with the environment. As soon as it saw the group, it became startled and angry, raising its head and hissing, warning them to back off.

Ordinarily, this Red-scaled Horned Python worth thousands of Qian Gold, would have attracted all their attention.

However, Wang Shouming and his team merely glanced at the Red-scaled Horned Python before shifting their attention elsewhere. All due to the "Magma Pond" where a fire element light was constantly surging.

Some precious fire element medicine grew wildly around the pond, thoroughly stunning to the onlookers and leaving them breathless.

The only phrase that floated through everyone's mind was, "We're rich!"

Not only was there ground fire here, there was also a natural Fire Spirit Vein, and numerous spirit medicines were growing along it.

"Brother, this open magma cave space, and the 'magma pond' don't seem to be natural." The more observant Wang Luoqing looked around and said, "Everyone take a look, the cliff here clearly has signs of being excavated. Those magma streams seem to have been purposely dug out and directed here."

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"Based on the structure and distribution of the spirit veins, it's clear that the magma pond is a spirit cave."

Everyone looked attentively, and indeed it was. Although the signs of excavation had faded due to the passage of time, careful observation still revealed traces of human activity.

Before the Wang family began to develop the Peaceful Corner, this was unequivocally a foreign habitat. Who could have developed a fire spirit vein here and turned it into a spirit cave?

"Could we possibly unearth an ancient relic here?" Wang Zongyao said with excitement, "If that's the case, we're really about to make a fortune."

This piece of land can be traced back to the Divine Martial Dynasty.

Nobody knows what came before the Divine Martial Dynasty, but it's common knowledge that the dynasty has been extinct for a hundred thousand years. During these hundred thousand years, countless events have transpired.

The Great Qian Land was only established seven or eight thousand years ago, having only experienced two emperors.

While human civilization has its deficiencies, its flame has never been extinguished.

"Let's not discuss this issue right now," Wang Shouming also said, suppressing his excitement. "First, let's deal with the Red-scaled Horned Python and then search slowly. I've long coveted its fire-attribute snake gallbladder."

He cultivated the "Red Dragon True Verses". The essence of fire within the Red-scaled Horned Python would be much beneficial to him. Initially, the python was considered a Peak Level Two beast, but if it had advanced to Level Three, that would be even better.

Following this.

Everyone from the Wang family carefully encircled the injured Red-scaled Horned Python. The process wasn't particularly exciting, and the tactics were extremely conservative. But it was because of their cautious approach that they gradually wore down the injured and even more fierce python.

Only one person was burned by the red poisonous flame, sustaining a burn injury and poison. Everyone brought ointment for treating fire poison and healing pills before they came, so there wasn't much of a problem.

Beyond that, it was a complete victory.

Then under the command of Wang Shouming, those who needed treatment received treatment, those who needed to butcher the spoils did so. The others carefully gathered the fire element medicine and began to search the Fire Melt Cave bit by bit, not letting any suspicious locations go overlooked.

This was the difference between humans and fierce beasts. The Red-scaled Horned Python had occupied this place, considering it nothing more than a comfort nest abundant with fire spirit energy. But humans would explore every suspicious area bit by bit.

"There's a device here," Wang Zongyao found something like a device.

But no one would be foolish enough to activate the device directly. What if a crisis emerged when the device was activated?

Everyone first won all the spoils bit by bit out of the melt cave, and called for the goats and the household heads, setting up camp outside. With this Red-scaled Horned Python, there was no worry about food deficit, they just needed to find a water source.

At the same time, two household heads were dispatched to report the situation to the family.

Thus, another seven or eight days passed.

A mature and steady man, with a princely face and two small whiskers, led the way. The Wang family's youngsters all went up to greet him: "Greetings Fifth Brother/Fifth Uncle."

This person was Wang Shou Yong, the fifth of the Wang family's Shou generation. He had witnessed and experienced the Wang family's rise from poverty and decline to its current glory, from the time he was a young boy, through his youth, to now, a mature and steady man in his late thirties.

With a large amount of support from the family resources, Wang Shou Yong had already entered the Spirit Platform Realm several years ago. Although his bloodline wasn't extraordinary, he had reached the middle segment of the Second Layer.

He was capable enough to compete for a place among the Core Disciples at the Academic Palace.

This was the true foundation of the Wang family today, beyond just the flashiness and strength of Heavenly Proud and Greater Heavenly Proud.

Every core family member was dutifully working towards the development of the family. If Wang Luoqiu and the like were pioneers and vanguard of the family, then people like Wang Shouyong were the family's cornerstone.

"You've done well." Although Wang Shou Yong's face was stern, he showed a trace of approval, "When you encounter potential ancient ruins, you did not rush, but waited for the family's reinforcement. After Fourth Brother returns, I will report faithfully and reward you."

Chapter 29 - Heavenly Craftsman! Artifact Refining Inheritance_1

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With these words, the faces of several young people lit up with joy.

Because Wang Shou Yong's personality was somewhat old-fashioned and meticulous in his work, it was not easy to gain his approval. Moreover, if this matter gained the approval and praise of his fourth elder brother, it would be even more praiseworthy.

"Fifth brother," Wang Shouming saluted, "Go to the camp and rest awhile, then I'll explain this matter in detail."

Although he was a year younger than Zongyao, but he also belonged to the "Shou" generation, and didn't feel the pressure of communicating with Wang Shou Yong as Zongyao did.

Saying this, he led Wang Shou Yong to the camp.

Because of the intense heat around, they had built a simple camp in a relatively cool place, complete with wooden fences, tents, and some carved stone water tanks.

"Fifth brother, this valley is hot and lacks water sources, the nearest water source is ten miles away. If we want to stay here for a long time, the difficulty is far beyond ordinary.

Currently, we have only set up a temporary camp." Wang Shouming explained while walking, "This place's fire spirit veins and Earth Fire have been carefully investigated, whether it's the location, environment, or the degree of fire, it's quite suitable for the construction of a Land Fire Dan Furnace and a Land Fire Furnace. The problem is the location is too remote, and the environment is too poor."

"Eighth brother, our family's foundation can't be built overnight. These problems can be solved one by one. This treasure land is hard to find even in a hundred years." Wang Shou Yong stroked his mustache, "It's still worth it even if it takes fifty to one hundred years to develop.

You must know that everything our Changning Wang Clan possesses today, is accumulated bit by bit by our ancestors over hundreds of years."

While they chatted, everyone entered the temporary tent.

Although the tent was pitched in a relatively cool place, the temperature inside was still quite high. Fortunately, everybody was a cultivator of the Profound Martial with strong endurance to the cold and heat, especially Wang Shou Yong with his Spirit Platform Realm cultivation base, they considered the heat as ordinary, and remained calm and composed.

Wang Lillian and Luo Qing, the two girls, were busy boiling water and making tea as hospitality.

The Changning Wang Clan was strict with family rules, and order between the elders and juniors was fundamental. Whenever they were, they would not lose their etiquette and rules. There were both spiritual tea and ordinary tea in their luggage.

After taking a few sips of tea, Wang Lillian brought out a stack of albums and said, "Fifth Uncle, these are maps and records drawn in this 'Clear the fog' mission. And while waiting for reinforcements, we have also resurveyed and mapped the surrounding ten-mile range, finding that the terrain is like a collapsed valley, so we named it 'Qinglian Fire Valley'."

According to the rules laid down by Wang Shouzhe, the clan's people had the right to name some valuable special landforms they explored, and it would be recorded in the 'Wang's Ancestral Inheritance Chronicles'.

In this way, future generations of the clan could remember the achievements of their ancestors.

Just like "Zhuwei Lake" next to the main residence of the Wang Clan, which made later generations almost never forget that there was once an old ancestor named "Wang Zhuwei".

"Qinglian Fire Valley" obviously took a word from Luo Qing and Wang Lillian's names and named it after them. Clearly, this was Wang Shouming and Wang Zongyao's idea.

They gave this honor to their sister.

"This name is not bad, the 'Qing' character can represent the heat of this valley, and the 'Lian' character. The 'Magma Pond' does have a fire spirit vein to reinforce it, where you can actually cultivate the fire spirit plant - the fire lotus. These two words complement each other." said Wang Shou Yong appreciatively.

His mood was also good, as these young men and women had added to the clan's heritage.

For the clan, it was great to acquire some Heaven and Earth Treasure at once, but if a treasure land could continuously produce resources for hundreds or thousands of years, then it would be even better.

Later.

Wang Shou Yong led the young people to explore the ground fire magma chamber again, carefully observing the hidden mechanism there.

"This mechanism uses techniques similar to those of artifact refining," he said, frowning, "And, this does not seem like the artifact refining techniques of Da Qian. Of course, it is even less like the technology of the Divine Martial Dynasty Era."

In the era of the Divine Martial Dynasty, human civilization was highly developed, and any aspect of technology was much more advanced than Da Qian's. Even setting up mechanisms, Wang Shouming and other young people would probably not be able to detect them.

Moreover, the excavation of this melt hole was relatively rough and hasty, which did not conform to the style of the collective "obsessive-compulsive disorder" patients in the Divine Martial Dynasty.

However, even with Wang Shou Yong's strength, he did not dare to open the mechanism rashly.

Since they could build a ground Fire Spirit Cave here, their strength must far surpass that of Wang Shou Yong.

Luckily, he was only the vanguard of the clan's arrival, and more clan's heads of household would catch up. Old Ancestor Longyan and Fourth Aunt would also come to aid.

With the conclusion of the Academic Palace incident, the Old Ancestor was the first to return to the clan. After all, she was a personage at the level of an old ancestor. Her perennial presence at the clan could give people the strongest sense of security. It didn't matter if she was in seclusion all day. As long as she was there, it was like a Sea Stabilizing Needle.

Chapter 29 - Heavenly Craftsman! Artifact Refining Inheritance_2

Thus, several days have passed again.

The "main force" of the family, rushed to the Qinglian Fire Valley. The one in charge of the overall situation was Liu Ruolan, the major lady of the Wang family, with ancestor Longyan holding the fort in the center. Except for Wang Shouzhe's absence, it was almost the highest level of personnel configuration of the family.

At this point, all the clansmen were greatly reassured. Even if danger arose in the ancient ruins, the family would be able to calmly respond.

Even so, Liu Ruolan did not recklessly plunge in. Instead, she first led the clansmen and the household heads to chisel and widen the magma passage, carefully inspecting the unstable structure of the passage, and building reinforcements on site.

All of the family's hundred Disc-horned Carrying Sheep were mobilized, transporting various supplies back and forth.

Only after the magma passage of hundreds of feet had become spacious and extremely stable, did Liu Ruolan dispatch a puppet specifically used for mining to activate the mechanism next to the molten pool in the grotto.

As for the younger generations and the household heads, they hid in a safe high ground hundreds of feet away and watched all this from afar.

"Crack!"

"Rumble!"

Giant muffled sounds continuously emanated from beneath their feet.

The ground was faintly trembling.

Even from so far away, everyone could still feel that overwhelming sense of awe, as if some colossal object, sealed in dust for a long time, was slowly starting to wake up from its slumber.

Everyone couldn't help but feel a bit jittery.

Sure enough, such a powerful mechanism was filled with danger.

The strange noises lasted for the time it takes to burn half a stick of incense, before the land finally slowly calmed down. The result was that nothing like a monster was activated, and no other anomalies occurred.

The pOafish puppet responsible for activating the mechanism remained clueless and intact, making it very clear that the mechanism just opened some chamber, and was not a damaging mechanism.

But this does not mean that the Wang family's efforts during this time were in vain. Just because there was no danger in opening the ancient ruins this time, does not mean that there will not be danger every time.

Even one serious accident would be a disaster for the Wang family.

Subsequently, ancestor Longyan personally led the exploration of the ancient ruins, with Liu Ruolan standing by outside the passage at all times.

It wasn't even two hours before ancestor Longyan safely returned.

Inside the tent.

Ancestor Longyan had a meeting with everyone to announce the situation. Those present, in addition to Wang Shou Yong and Liu Ruolan, included a group of young people who had discovered the Earth's fire spirit cave.

"The mechanism opened an ancient chamber, and through the text information found in the chamber, we discovered that the master of the ruins was a Master Refiner called 'Heavenly Craftsman'."

"Based on the message he left behind, he claimed to hail from a continent called Tianshu State, home to several nations competing for supremacy. These nations, aside from being predominately proficient in Profound Martial arts, are all specialized in the art of artifact refining."

"The Heavenly Craftsman originates from a country named 'Da Zhou State'. He was an independent master refiner. The cultivation technique he practiced, the 'Smelting Heaven Scripture', sounds formidable, but in reality, it is just a middle-grade fire type cultivation technique.

The 'Sky Human Chapter' within it could only sustain him until the advanced stage of the Heavenly Human Realm before he hit a dead-end."

"The Heavenly Craftsman was remarkably talented. Unwilling to be under the whims of any artifact-refining sect, he used all his wits, spent decades preparing, and clandestinely stole the inheritance secret technique, the 'Celestial Fire True Verses - Purple Abode Chapter', of a sect called the 'Tianhuo Sect', as well as a few chapters from the secret tome 'Wanbao Complete Book'."

"Still, despite all of the Heavenly Craftsman's calculations, the Tianhuo Sect did discover the truth and immediately sent a team of experts to hunt him down. The Heavenly Craftsman, however, had already prepared an escape route and fled from the Tianshu State using a hidden ancient teleportation array.

He hadn't expected that the other end of the ancient teleportation array would be a savage land overrun with fierce beasts. The land hadn't even yet been reclaimed and was overrun by fierce beasts, including level seven Great Yao, roaming the world."

Elder Longyan patiently explained, "The Heavenly Craftsman wandered around in terror constantly, ultimately unable to escape from the savage land. After several injuries, he ultimately gave up, settled down in Qinglian Fire Valley, built a secret cave, and attempted to break through to the Purple Abode Realm before seeking the human world again.

Regrettably, due to factors such as age, injuries, and the lack of resources, he was not able to ascend to the Purple Abode Realm and quietly passed away in Qinglian Fire Valley."

"Prior to his death, he had a lot of regret for stealing the Tianhuo Sect's secret techniques, even involving his trusted Daoists from the Tianhuo Sect, eventually closing the secret cave and left a last word, hoping that one day someone fated would come across his legacy and if they ever had a chance to ascend to the Purple Abode Realm, they would do him the favor of returning to the Tianhuo Sect in the Da Zhou State of the Tianshu State."

"If the descendants of his Daoist friends still live, do what you can to aid them. That was the precursor Heavenly Craftsman's only last wish."

The youngsters in the Wang family were left with their heads in a whirl, their mouths dry. This ancient relic was even related to such a fantastically twisting tale. Moreover, there was a whole other world named Tianshu State outside....

That's no wonder. They were raised in Ping'an Town since childhood, and their area activities were mostly limited to Changning area. In most cases, they wouldn't go beyond eight hundred miles when they hunted in the autumn and winter."

For the juniors of the family, taking a trip to distant cities like the Donghaei Guard, Hundred Islands Guard, etc., was already like travelling far from home. As for the bustling Longzuo County Town, even in their dreams, they yearn to go there, hoping that when they are a bit more mature, they can find an opportunity to visit the county town."

In their view, the entire Longzuo County was incredibly vast. As for the world beyond the sea, they occasionally heard some descriptions from books, but they were all just nebulous legends, such as tales about how the overseas lands are filled with Qian gold, with Spirit Veins scattered all around."

"Tianshu State...I have come across some secret information about it occasionally in my school days," Elder Longyan said with a very serious expression, "but relevant materials are extremely scarce. Even the Academic Palace of the Purple Abode Realm has little knowledge about Tianshu State."

But from some of the Heavenly Craftsman's records, it seems that Tianshu State is quite impressive and developed. Some artifact refining products have deeply penetrated the ordinary population. Spiritual artifacts are quite widespread among cultivators of the Spiritual Platform Realm, and only top-grade spiritual artifacts are chased."

"Our Da Qian Land's path to refining is not systematic in the end," Liu Ruolan agreed, "Even the price of low-grade spiritual artifacts is very expensive, with many Rank 9 prominent families owning at most one."

The Wang family had long tried to hire several artifact refiners, but to call them artifact refiners would be more accurate to say they are refiners' apprentices. They merely follow Wang Shouzhe's instructions to create various strange parts."

Even so, the Wang family had to pay a considerable price to get them to stay. Currently, they have sent clan members and cadets from side branches of the Wang family into the artifact refining system to learn as much knowledge as possible."

As for refiners capable of creating spiritual artifacts, those are elite members of Da Qian Land's artifact refinement circle. When elder Zhou Xuan was forging the Zhou Xuan Sword and the Dragon Smoke Sword, he had to take sufficient materials and run to the county town to succeed."

As you can imagine, the path to artifact refining in Da Qian Land is much less developed than that of alchemy. At least Elder Longyan hadn't heard of any well-known refiner in the Purple Abode Realm in Longzuo County, at most, there were just a few Heavenly Human Realm refiners."

"Great Ancestor." Wang Shouming's gaze was fervent, "My body is skilled in the Red Dragon True Verses and excels in fire type mysterious energy."

I wonder if I could take up the Heavenly Craftsman's artifact-refining inheritance?" He was envious of his brother Wang Shouye's status as an alchemist, not only having a superior position in the family but also attracting attention and respect everywhere he goes."

"The artifact refining inheritance is not gained by merely having fire type mysterious energy," Elder Longyan stated, "The Red Dragon True Verses, which I have reviewed many times, advocates for a forceful and aggressive, indomitable approach. Refining, however, requires patience and control, along with countless tedious learning practices."

"Of course, I'm not saying that you definitely won't be able to do it. Each of you four individuals has the opportunity to give it a shot. As for whether or not to go to Tianshu State in the future, that will depend on how Wang family develops. Once our refiners reach the Purple Abode Realm, it would not be out of the realm of possibility to take such a trip."

Elder Longyan was in a good mood and continued to speak: "The predecessor Heavenly Craftsman, in addition to leaving behind his insights from his entire life, also left behind a broken Heavenly Human Realm puppet. It's just that he was down on his luck at the time and lacked the materials to repair the puppet.

If our Wang family can produce a refiner and repair the Heavenly Human puppet, it will, once again, enhance the foundation of our family."

Chapter 30: Storm is Coming! Wealth Moves Hearts_1

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The world is vast.

Yet no matter how vast the world is, it does not have much to do with the Changning Wang Clan, as they are currently only a 7th-rank Aristocratic Family.

Such an opportunity is a godsend for the Wang family, giving them a chance to fill the void in Artifact Refining.

Alongside the "Magma Pond," there is an open secret chamber with a pile of discarded Artifact Refining parts, each one surrounding the Artifact Refining Platform in the center.

The Artifact Refining Platform is an essential tool for an Artifact Refiner, similar to an Alchemist's Tripod Furnace; it is capable of drawing earth fire aided by the ley lines and channeling it into itself, making the melting of materials and the firing of infant spiritual artifacts and Magical Treasures extremely convenient.

Standing next to the Artifact Refining Platform is a golden puppet that is more than a meter tall and looks majestic. It presents an overall dark red tone, and its structure has been damaged in many places due to numerous battles.

Behind the Artifact Refining Platform is the cultivation platform left by the Heavenly Craftsman. The key positions are made out of heat-resistant red metal that can draw Fire Spiritual Energy from the Fire Spirit Vein below for cultivating Profound Martial techniques of the Fire Attribute.

In addition, the materials left by the Heavenly Craftsman include "Heavenly Craftsman's Refining Device Understanding," "Heavenly Craftsman Teaches You How To Learn Artifact Refining From Scratch," "Nameless Miscellaneous Records (Heavenly Craftsman's Posthumous Manuscript)", "Smelting Heaven Scripture" (including Qi Refining Chapter, Spirit Platform chapter, Sky Human Chapter), "Celestial Fire True Verses (Purple Abode Chapter)", and "Wanbao Complete Book"(consisting of three sections that include thirty-five Spiritual Artifacts, five Magical Treasures, three kinds of Puppets, two kinds of special Spiritual Treasures, one type of Divine Artifact, and a collection of artifact refining formulas and experience of refining elementary cultivation platforms for Gold, Fire, and Water attributes).

It's noteworthy that the "Wanbao Complete Book" is a classic book on Artifact Refining collected by the Tianhuo Sect. Each entry has been carefully selected before being preserved, and they all possess certain advantages and unique features compared to their counterparts.

Furthermore, the Heavenly Craftsman left behind a "Heavenly Craftsman Box."

It is a type of spatial treasure similar to a storage ring, but its storage capacity greatly surpasses that of an ordinary storage ring. It can hold all the items in this room, with plenty of space left.

The only problem is that once the Heavenly Craftsman Box is refined, it becomes challenging to move.

This is not to say that it is impossible to move it, but it is extremely difficult. If you try to move the Heavenly Craftsman Box frivolously, it may cause turbulence within, scattering all the items at best and destroying all the stored goods at worst.

Moreover, you cannot take it with you inside a storage ring, as it would cause a collision of folded spaces, leading to perturbation in the storage space that may even destroy the storage ring.

Simply put, it is like a large, multifunctional personal storage cabinet with excellent performance that is handy when you use it but very inconvenient if you want to take it with you on the run.

Therefore, most Heavenly Craftsman Boxes are left in place once their folded spaces are opened.

In addition to these, the Heavenly Craftsman also left a top-grade Storage Ring, the force of the Divine Consciousness inside, which belonged to the Heavenly Craftsman, has been worn away by time. Apart from the various cultivation technique chapters stored in it, it is empty.

Together, these are all the inheritance left by the Heavenly Craftsman.

Among them, although the "Smelting Heaven Scripture" is only a middle-grade Fire Attribute Cultivation Technique, it is a prerequisite to inherit everything from the Heavenly Craftsman.

After all, all the Artifact Refining understandings of the Heavenly Craftsman in his lifetime originated from the "Smelting Heaven Scripture." It wasn't until later in his life, for the purpose of forcefully breaking through to the Purple Abode Realm, that he got the "Celestial Fire True Verses (Purple Abode Chapter)." However, this latter book only contains the Purple Abode Chapter, which cannot be cultivated independently.

Therefore, the "Smelting Heaven Scripture" was placed inside an Artifact Refining box. The box has a slot for inserting an ordinary Spirit Stone. Once activated, it can be used to test the compatibility degree between a Profound Martial Cultivator and the "Smelting Heaven Scripture."

If it cannot match, naturally, it will not be able to inherit the "Smelting Heaven Scripture."

Wang Shouming, Wang Lillian, Wang Zongyao, and Wang Luoqing are the discoverers of the relics. Naturally, when testing for compatibility, they are the ones to be tested first.

Subsequently, the four of them took the test one by one.

As expected, just like what Old Ancestor Longyan predicted, although Wang Shouming has cultivated the "Red Dragon True Verses" and is also a Profound Martial Cultivator with Fire Attribute, his compatibility with the "Smelting Heaven Scripture" is mediocre, making him unable to unlock the box of the "Smelting Heaven Scripture."

This result made Wang Shouming slightly disappointed.

However, Wang Shou Yong comforted him by saying, "Eighth Brother, the 'Red Dragon True Verses' that you have cultivated are originally a top-grade Cultivation Technique with considerable potential. As long as you cultivate steadily, there will be a place where your martial skills can shine."

"Fifth Brother, I understand," Wang Shouming nodded, "Each of us in the family has our own roles to play. If I focus on fighting, I can help the family develop uninhabited areas in the Savage Land in the future."

Next, Wang Lillian, Wang Luoqing, and Wang Zongyao all took the test.

However, the results were unexpected; the three of them all failed to match.

This left everyone dumbfounded.

Is the threshold for a mid-level Cultivation Technique this high?

But after their initial shock and some inference, the crowd understood.

It should not be that the threshold of the "Smelting Heaven Scripture" itself is high, but rather that the Heavenly Craftsman deliberately set a high threshold. After that, many young members of the Wang family took turns to test but were all unable to pass it.

After that, even Wang Shou Yong gave it a try, but he still failed to meet the Heavenly Craftsman's inheritance conditions.

As a result, they could only let their household heads try.

One failed, two failed, three failed...

A few days later, just as everyone was about to give up hope, an eleven-year-old promising household head named Wang Ping unexpectedly passed the test. He opened the Heavenly Craftsman's box and obtained the "Smelting Heaven Scripture."

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Everyone was temporarily bewildered.

However, given that this was ultimately a good thing, the crowd soon ceased their puzzlement and began to contemplate the reasons. Shortly after, all of Wang Ping's information was presented to Liu Ruolan, Old Ancestor Longyan, and others.

When this child was eight years old, he underwent the Spirit Testing Platform of the Wang family and his initial talents were rated as Low Grade Class C, neither good nor bad amongst the potential head of households. His cultivation speed was neither fast nor slow, and he had just reached the mid-Level One of the Vital Energy Refining Realm.

His academic performance in the Clan School was barely average.

As for his appearance, he was not particularly handsome and looked somewhat naive. Yet it was this ordinary child who had passed the test...

The child's only advantage was that from his great-grandfather onwards, they had always been tenant farmers of the Wang family, with a clear and unblemished background.

In fact, this advantage was not really an advantage.

In the Wang family's current upbringing system, a clear background was the primary element.

Those who could become head of household were mostly relatives of the Wang family, house servants, tenant farmers, or came from the common folk under their rule, with at least three generations traceable...

Wang Ping's inexplicable passing aroused feelings of dissatisfaction among Wang Shouming and others.

Could it be that this inconspicuous seedling of a head of household was superior to them? Besides, this little guy looked somewhat naive and did not display any signs of intelligence or talent.

The "poor" head of household sapling, Wang Ping, had no idea what had happened and was brought forth.

This was his first time meeting the "high and mighty" Lady of the Wang family, Liu Ruolan, and the legendary Old Ancestor Longyan. He was so nervous that he was trembling, his legs kept shaking and he dared not say a word, hanging his head low.

Moreover, the young masters and misses of the family looked at him with displeasure, as if they were quite dissatisfied with him.

"Wang Ping, do not be afraid." Liu Ruolan said gently, "Since you have entered the Wang family's record of heads of household, you are a member of the Wang family, not an outsider.

"Yes, madam."

Sensing Liu Ruolan's amiable expression, Wang Ping relaxed a bit.

The Wang family's heads of households were cultivated from a young age. They not only practiced cultivation techniques, but also received strict cultural education in the Clan School, and they were treated equally to the direct line, even the main line, making their abilities relatively well-rounded.

Although Wang Ping was young, once he relaxed, he was composed and meticulous in his actions, showing some of the demeanor of his elder heads of households.

"Since you were able to open that Refining Tool Jade Box, you must have some unique qualities. Think carefully whether there is something about you that is different from others". Liu Ruolan casually asked, "If you can't remember, that's okay. You don't need to force yourself."

Wang Ping pondered for a while but still looked puzzled: "Madam, the most glorious moment I had was passing the household test. This made our neighbours very envious. Other than that, there's nothing else."

The moment his words fell.

Suddenly, a "buzzing" sword chime resonated in the air and a sword light darted towards him like lightning. Its speed was so fast that even advanced Vital Energy Refining Realm cultivators find it hard to catch.

But Wang Ping's eyes widened as he instinctively stepped back half a step, his face turned pale in an instant.

The magical treasure emanating a purple electric glow skimmed half a foot in front of him, then quickly flew back, re-entering the scabbard at Wang Longyan's waist.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye.

"Old Ancestor, what is this..." Wang Shouming was startled and hurriedly spoke to soothe the situation, "Although we are dissatisfied with Wang Ping, he hasn't done anything wrong. Please calm your anger, Old Ancestor."

The other youngsters also quickly pleaded for mercy.

Although Wang Ping did indeed appear dull, causing them dissatisfaction, it was not his fault. They had been educated by the Wang family's values since childhood and their worldviews were quite upright. They did not want to simply watch as Wang Ping suffered...

"Don't be in a hurry, you guys." Liu Ruolan said with a smile, "Would our Old Ancestor be someone who doesn't bother to distinguish right from wrong? It was just a test. Now I understand, Wang Ping may seem ordinary, but his instinctive reaction is extremely quick, and he has already condensed a trace of Divine Sense.

No wonder he, who is ordinary in every other aspect, could pass the test of the elder Heavenly Craftsman."

A trace of Divine Sense?

Wang Shouming and others were taken aback.

This kid, Wang Ping, was only eleven years old, at the first level of the Vital Energy Refining Realm... and he already has a bit of Divine Sense?

Divine Sense is also called Spiritual Sense, although they have different names, their meanings are the same.

Profound Martial cultivators at the Vital Energy Refining Realm strengthen their bodies and meridians by refining Qi and blood, thereby amplifying their strength and producing more high-quality Mysterious Energy.

In this process, although the constitution of the Profound Martial cultivator strengthens, and a trace of Divine Sense gradually condenses, the Vital Energy Refining Realm is not a realm specifically for strengthening Divine Sense, which is why most Vital Energy Refining Realm cultivators have weak Divine Sense.

Only by breaking through to the Spirit Platform Realm and opening the Spiritual Platform does one's Divine Sense emerge drastically.

At this point, Profound Martial cultivators can command Spiritual Artifacts in battle. If you don't have Divine Sense to gradually contract with the Spiritual Artifacts, even some sharper Spiritual Artifacts can only be used as more lethal weapons.

The fact that he has a trace of Divine Sense at Level One of the Vital Energy Refining Realm suggests that Wang Ping's potential in Divine Sense should be high. Artifact Refining often requires higher Divine Sense to sense changes in temperature and to control the shape of objects, among other things.

It's not that those with weak Divine Sense can't refine artifacts, but clearly, as the Heavenly Craftsman seeks "disciples of higher generations", he set a higher threshold.

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"In that case, Wang Ping, you still need to continue your studies, but also need to carve out some time to study the 'Smelting Heaven Scripture' and receive the Artifact Refining legacy." Liu Ruolan decisively stated, "Moreover, Zongyao, you are cultivating the Wang family's 'Xuanyuan Scripture'. There would be no problem if you spend some time studying the 'Smelting Heaven Scripture'.

The Heavenly Craftsman's predecessor also did not stipulate that only one person can receive his legacy. Given your age and mature temperament, you too can receive the Artifact Refining legacy. From now on, Wang Ping will learn alongside with you."

"As for strengthening your Divine Senses, let's discuss it when you return the fourth or fifth time and see if we can find a solution."

Wang Zongyao was somewhat surprised and elated.

However, he was not a child anymore and was still able to control his excitement. He bowed respectfully and thanked her, "Thank you, Fourth Aunt, for your guidance."

Old Ancestor Longyan also silently nodded in agreement.

She had always protected her family and didn't want to rely purely on a promising young head of household to continue the 'Smelting Heaven Scripture'. Now, it seemed that the Heavenly Craftsman's peculiarities were just a series of conditions he had set on the Artifact Box.

Just based on potential alone, she believed that Zongyao would far surpass Wang Ping.

Moreover, the family's Artifact Refining legacy was not something that could be accomplished overnight. Only after it has been passed down for generations, would the Wang family's foundation in Artifact Refining become more and more profound.

With that, the matter was settled for now.

As the "Qinglian Fire Valley" has now been included in the Wang family's territory, the subsequent development plan naturally came up next. The tasks of creating paths through the mountains, building living areas, forging zones, establishing guard posts, arranging patrol and defense forces... and so on, will gradually be arranged.

In a matter of decades, the Qinglian Fire Valley will become a treasure land of the Wang family.

...

Almost simultaneously.

Changning Fortress, Qian Family's external residence.

Just after dinner time, the sky was still adorned with a smear of the setting sun. The blood-red sunset lit up half the sky.

Although it was not completely dark yet, the Fluorescent Stone Spirit Lamp in the hall had already been lit. The light purple curtain made of Spirit silkworm silk hung on both sides of the room, illuminating a layer of shimmering light, making it appear both elegant and opulent.

In one corner, a Pixiu-shaped red copper incense burner was emitting wisps of smoke, making the environment seem tranquil and peaceful.

However,

The atmosphere in the room was in stark contrast to the word "peaceful".

More than a dozen middle-aged men clad in silk robes were sitting or standing, huddled in small groups, murmuring to each other. These individuals were different in height and size but all had round faces that looked pleasant. Yet their eyebrows were knitted, and there was an inexplicable sense of anxiety in the air.

The head of this group was none other than Qian Xuean, the Store Manager serving the Qian Family's business in Changning.

"Store Manager, what's happening now?" A middle-aged man dressed in black silk robe stood by Qian Xuean's side, whispered questioningly, "I received orders for a meeting, but the seal on the envelope wasn't yours, it was the esteemed family's. Why would the main family bypass you and send us orders directly? What on earth is Qian Xuerui up to?"

Being one of Qian Xuean's trusted, he was equally bewildered by this sudden call for a meeting.

"Be patient." Qian Xuean waved his hand to calm him down, "Just go with the flow for now. Whatever tricks he has up his sleeve, we will deal with it accordingly."

The truth was, he was also unsure.

During these days, he was working hard to placate and win over people, tying his subordinates to his fate while also keeping an eye on Qian Xuerui.

But after settling down, Qian Xuerui just ate, drank, and strolled around, like he was here for a vacation, leaving him puzzled as to what he was really up to.

While they were talking,

The doorman suddenly announced, "Young Master Xuerui has arrived."

The moment his words fell, the room fell into complete silence.

Normally, only the direct descendants from prestigious families above the Purple Abode, and those with considerable aptitude, are aptly referred to as "Young Master".

And in the Qian Family of the Purple Abode, there was only one person who could be referred to as "Young Master Xuerui".

Everyone unconsciously turned towards the door.

In the fading twilight, a figure escorted by several servants slowly approached.

It was a young man with a tall and upright figure.

He had the characteristic round face of the Qian family, thick eyebrows, and thick lips with an honest appearance. His slightly squinted eyes revealed an innate shrewdness, and yet, they were half-concealed by his drooping eyelids, making him hard to read.

The blood-red sunset cast a dark glow on him, even his indigo silk robe seemed to have been dyed with the light, revealing a faint purple hue.

The shopkeepers subconsciously became serious, their eyes flickering, as they attempted to sneak glances at Qian Xuean.

"Young Master Xuerui."

Qian Xuean suppressed his emotions, calmly stepped forward to greet him, invited him in, and offered his seat at the head of the room, while ordering fresh tea.

"Young Master Xuerui, please take a seat."

As a member of a prominent family, he had received strict etiquette training since childhood. Regardless of what he was thinking inside, he preserved the courtesy on the face until the very end, making it impossible to find a hint of fault in his manners.

However, Qian Xuerui did not take up his offer, but simply waved his hand with a smile: "Store Manager is my elder brother. It would be improper for me to sit at.

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Qian Xuerui didn't sit down, so naturally, no one else found it appropriate to sit either. They could only stand and listen to him.

The atmosphere in the main hall suddenly became awkward, and even Qian Xuean's expression faltered briefly.

He had expected that Qian Xuerui had ill intentions, but he did not anticipate that he wouldn't even bother with any pretense. His words appeared polite, but they were a public blow to Qian Xuean's dignity, a clear indication that he had no intention of saving his face.

Qian Xuean's face turned dark, realizing that Qian Xuerui was not going to be diplomatic anymore, and decided to confront him directly instead.

Sure enough, with a serious face, Qian Xuerui continued speaking, "I've been in the Southern Six Guards for a while now. During this time, I've come to understand a bit about the situation here, and I'm quite disappointed~"

With a cold expression, Qian Xuean said, "Master Xuerui, if you have something to say, just say it."

Qian Xuerui sneered, "Qian Family has been in partnership with the Marriage Alliance Group of the Changning Wang Clan for more than twenty years. In terms of power, connections, and distribution channels, the Qian Family maintained an absolute advantage. However, the Wang family and others have taken most of the profits, which has allowed the Wang clan to rise from Rank 9 to 7th Rank.

Brother, don't you have something to explain?"

The moment these words came out, silence enveloped the room. The shopkeepers all lowered their heads and didn't even dare to breathe loudly.

Suppressing his anger, Qian Xuean retorted, "Master Xuerui, you jest. The rise of the Changning Wang Clan to the 7th Rank is not thanks to me. Moreover, this generation of the Changning Wang clan is filled with talented individuals, highly valued in the Academic Palace. In fact, our Qian Family's partnership with the Changning Wang Clan has benefitted us more."

Qian Xuerui seemed to have anticipated this response and laughed lightly, "The relationship between the Changning Wang Clan and the Academic Palace might be close, but isn't our Qian Family's relationship with the Academic Palace just as strong, if not better? After all, the Qian Family has collaborated with the Academic Palace for over a thousand years.

As for who benefits more, heh, without collaboration with the Qian Family, does the insignificant Changning Wang Clan even dream of selling its goods in every corner of Longzuo?"

"The rise of the Changning Wang Clan is all thanks to the protection of our Qian Family."

After a brief pause, his demeanor turned solemn, and his voice dropped, "Moreover, the family is currently prospering and looking to cultivate our second Purple Abode Master, so our need for resources is greater than ever. Don't you know this? At a time like this, instead of seeking more benefits for the family, you're protecting others. Have you lost all reason?"

"You!"

The accusation left Qian Xuean fuming, his face turning grim. This ignorant youngster dared to spout such nonsense here.

He wanted to argue, but Qian Xuerui elevated the issue to the level of the family. No matter how many reasons he had, none could stand against the phrase 'for the sake of the family'.

Rather than arguing, he decided to drop the matter, flung his sleeves, and coldly said, "Whether I'm wrong or not is beside the point. I want to ask you, Xuerui, in what capacity are you questioning me? Even if you are of the direct line, you have neither power nor position. What qualifies you to judge me, to question me?"

Qian Xuerui seemed to have anticipated this, and he pulled an object from his storage ring, revealing it to everyone, "Elder Brother Xuean, do you know what this is?"

The light from the Fluorescent Stone Spirit Lamp was bright and gentle, clearly reflecting the object in his hand. It was a token made of thousand-year-old spiritual oak wood, engraved around the edges, with the word "Order" in the middle.

"The Patriarch's Order?!"

The people present were shocked, quickly lowering their heads and bowing deeply towards the symbol.

Qian Xuean's face instantly turned pale.

The "Patriarch's Order" is a unique token of the Qian Family's Patriarch and holding it means being able to perform some of the duties of the Patriarch.

Theoretically, with the Patriarch's Order in hand, one can make decisions on their own. Unless there's a compelling reason, even the Elder Council wouldn't dare to disrespect the Patriarch.

Seeing everyone's reactions, Qian Xuerui was satisfied. He nodded slightly, "Before coming here, the Patriarch gave me this and instructed me to act as I see fit. So, with the accusation of neglecting the family's interest, I hereby remove Qian Xuean from his position as Store Manager. Does anyone have objections?"

The people present were all junior shopkeepers, without any courage to oppose the Patriarch's Order.

Immediately, they all bowed down and said, "We will abide by Master Xuerui's decision."

Seeing this, Qian Xuean knew that it was too late to fight back now, and doing so would be useless.

Since Master Xuerui has gone so far as to pull out the 'Patriarch's Order', how dare I object?" He glared at Qian Xuerui through a forced smile, "Since I'm no longer the Store Manager, I won't be a hindrance any longer to Master Xuerui. I'll take my leave."

After saying so, he bowed to Qian Xuerui, turned around, and left the room.

Before he left, he felt a mixture of sadness, rage, and regret. He and Wang Shouzhe had been close for many years and he knew that Shouzhe was a man of great integrity. But if angered, he was not one to back down.

What on earth was the usually rational patriarch thinking, allowing this impudent young Qian Xuerui to create chaos and steal his peach?

What a foolish move!

Now, the Qian family is in big trouble. Qian Xuerui, you've really caused a mess this time.

But it is what it is. With the direction the Qian Family is heading, riding on the success of the Wang family, their pure profits had greatly increased. Sooner or later, someone was going to covet this fat piece of meat.

If it's not Qian Xuerui today, it might be someone even more ruthless tomorrow.

Only when Shouzhe gives you a good beating will you all realize who is the one reaping the benefits. By then, you will truly appreciate my capabilities, Qian Xuean.

With this realization, Qian Xuean felt a strange sense of calm.