

## Protect OCL VL3 91

### Chapter 91: Get in Position! Taishi Ankang is Ready to Lie Down\_2

... Liaoyuan County. Main residence of the Purple Abode Cao Family. As a prominent family that has been around for nearly two thousand years, the size of the Cao family's main residence in Liaoyuan is considered extremely large even among the Grade Five prominent families. Looking down from the air, you would see a sprawling expanse of houses lined up layer upon layer, with black-tiled roofs and soaring courtyard walls; a spectacular view. Compared to the flourishing Wang family, the Cao family seems to have their spirits down, giving off a bleak vibe. Suddenly. A white bird traversing over mountains and rivers, flaps its wings and disappears among the overlapping eaves. Soon, a small bamboo tube made of spiritual bamboo, slightly thicker than a thumb, was delivered to the "Cang Tan Court" where the Family Head, Cao Bangning, resides. This spiritual bamboo tube bore simple inscriptions, was enclosed with a seal, and the opening was carefully sealed with wax. At a glance, this was no ordinary object. At this moment, in the Cang Tan Court, Family Head of the Cao Family, Cao Bangning, was discussing serious matters with his aunt, Cao Youqing. The faces of both of them were very heavy. It was clear that the failure of the actions against the Wang family's merchant fleet in the Qingluo Sea had put them under great pressure. The head of household left after delivering the spiritual bamboo tube. Cao Bangning picks up the spiritual bamboo tube, opens it and says solemnly, "Aunt, the current situation is very bad. The Wang family was prepared for our attack. They used the Sky Mechanism Recording Disk to secretly record and tricked out words from Bangyan." "I had already made connections beforehand and informed Bangyan to insist that those words he said were just the impulsive boasts made on the spot. They were his personal actions and had nothing to do with our Cao family. Thus, we, the Cao family, would have a chance to discreetly exert our power and rescue him." "Now, the courier gull has sent back a message. It should be a receipt." Cao Youqing's face relaxed a little: "Bangning, you handled this matter quite appropriately. We must first clear the Cao Family's name, only then will we have room to maneuver. Don't worry, I will use my connections to help secretly. It's just a pity that Bangyan has to suffer for a few years." "Huh, what's there to feel sorry about? If he hadn't been so careless at work..." Family Head Cao Bangning was mumbling and opening the letter, only to change color drastically when he glanced at it, "How is this possible? Cao Youqing also felt a sudden shock, a sense of foreboding overcame her, "Could there be an unexpected turn of events?" "Bangyan, this spineless idiot!" Cao Bangning was shaking with anger and he slapped the table fiercely. The thousand-year-old Spirit Wood table almost shattered. He blurted out, "He actually couldn't withstand the pressure and confessed." "How is this possible?" Cao Youqing's face also turned ugly, "How can Bangyan be so immature?" "It's all his fault for being spoiled from a young age, he's never been through hard times in his life." Family Head Cao Bangning's face was deathly pale, "Moreover, Prefectural Governor Taishi Ankang of Longzuo County has already written a report and has used the 'Cloud-Piercing Blue Pigeon' for urgent reporting! By now, the report should have already reached the Inspectorate in the National Capital. It could be that even the investigating envoy sent by the court is already on its way." Thinking of these things gave him a massive headache. You should know, there are generally two ways for the Prefecture Mansion to present reports to the court. One, is sending soldiers to ride express horses to the Imperial City, changing horses at every post station along the way. From Longzuo County Town to the Dragon City, it generally takes about half a month. For non-urgent situations, the daily reports submitted by the

Prefecture Mansion to the court follow this procedure. The second, is by courier bird. The court specially trains a Second Class variant Spirit Bird, the "Cloud-Piercing Blue Pigeon" as a courier bird. This type of courier bird is fast, has a great stamina, and has the habit of returning to its nest after recognizing the direction. After training, even if there are tens of thousands of miles apart, it can accurately find directions and return to its nest. All local Prefecture Mansions raise a certain number of these "Cloud-Piercing Blue Pigeons", which are released in case of an emergency, to urgently deliver reports to the Imperial City. With the speed of the "Cloud-Piercing Blue Pigeon", it wouldn't take more than three days to fly from the Governor's Mansion of Longzuo County to Dragon City. Taishi Ankang utilised the "Cloud-Piercing Blue Pigeon", clearly signalling that he does not intend to give the Cao Family time and space to maneuver, and is suspicious of attempting to kill with a single stroke. In addition, the Inspectorate is always efficient. From receipt of the report to selection and dispatch of the investigator, it generally does not take more than two days. And the standard equipment for the investigator who leaves the Imperial City is a flying carriage. At the speed of the flying carriage, it takes at least a dozen days or as quickly as seven or eight days to travel from Dragon City to Liaoyuan County Town. The local officials of Liaoyuan County need the cooperation of the Cao Family to manage the area well, so they would more or less give some respect to the Cao Family, and can come to an agreement when accidents happen. But investigators from the Imperial City won't give any such respect to the Cao Family. Moreover, the crime of colluding with pirates is not a small one. If found guilty, the Cao Family could face severe punishments. Besides, there is also a big problem with Cao Bangyan. He's the Purple Abode seed the family had put great effort into nurturing. He was about to advance to the Purple Abode Realm in just over a hundred years time, preparing to take over the Old Ancestor's position. If he can't be rescued, the family's investments over the years will all be for naught. What's worse, the succession of the Purple Abode might also face issues. The more Cao Bangning thought about all these, the bigger a headache he got. His temples were throbbing in pain. Damn it! What kind of bad luck has he gotten into to run into all these troubles! On the other side, Cao Youqing's face had also turned deathly pale: "The letter says that it was Wang Shouzhe, the head of the Wang family, who fanned the flames secretly. What kind of power does Wang Shouzhe possess that he could induce Taishi Ankang to confront our Cao family?"

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"Has Taishi Ankang gone mad? What good does this do for him?" "Auntie Jiugugu, what's the use of talking about this now? You should think quickly about how to deal with the investigation from the Inspectorate." Cao Bangning was not only pale, but he also couldn't help blaming Cao Youqing in his heart. Auntie Jiugugu had previously assured him, dealing with the Wang Clan was as straightforward as catching prey. She said first they would cut off one arm of the Qian Family, then deal with them slowly. Who would have thought, this wasn't about cutting off someone's arm, it was clearly having their own arm cut off by others! "Auntie Jiugugu, why not ask the person behind you to quell the investigation from the Inspectorate." The family head, Cao Bangning, said helplessly, "Otherwise, our Cao Family is in deep trouble." "He went to the Frost Moon Immortal Dynasty." Cao Youqing's eyelids twitched, "What's more, the Inspectorate is one of the three independent agencies that supervise illegal activities of all government offices and prominent families around the world. Even the Commandery Princes and Princes have no right to interfere! Even if he were here, he would not be able to change the course of the Inspectorate's actions. Bangning, you should think of a way to clean up this mess." Cao Bangning was at a loss for words. His younger brother, Cao Bangyan, was unreliable, as was his heaven-gifted Auntie Jiugugu. As the head of the Cao

Family... this was too hard. ... At the same time. Qing'an Prefecture, the Zuoqiu family's main residence. The two old ancestors of the Zuoqiu family, both from the Purple Abode, were sitting with Xiaoyue, discussing the next course of action. Suddenly, A maid with delicate features walked over holding a tray, and respectfully presented something from it to Xiaoyue. "Auntie Xiaoyue, it's news from the Immortal Yüqing." Xiaoyue looked it over and immediately furrowed her brows. Seeing this, Zuoqiu Deye, the first elder of the Zuoqiu family, frowned, too. "What happened?" "It's the Cao Family." Xiaoyue sighed and, not bothering to explain, directly handed over the paper in her hand. Zuoqiu Deye took a look and became furious. "This useless Cao Family! They can't deal with a 7th-rank aristocratic family? They've been counterattacked and now it's a complete mess. Are these people pigs? Immortal Xiaoyue, is this the ally that Master Ce specified?" It wasn't just Zuoqiu Deye who was out of temper; anyone would have been frustrated if their ally had been brought down to the ground shortly after a fight commenced. "Ahem~" Xiaoyue coughed awkwardly, "Maybe Youqing underestimated the situation." "Underestimated?" Zuoqiu Deye scoffed, "Parvenus! They have power, but no substance. Such allies, we'd better off without them." "You're right, senior Deye," said Xiaoyue hurriedly, "but it's just a minor setback. What our Lord promised you is already prepared, it should be in transit now." Zuoqiu Deye's face eased somewhat, and there was a hint of approval in his eyes for Xiaoyue. "At least there's someone reliable. In that case, let's not concern ourselves with the Cao Family. Our Zuoqiu Family will handle both the Longzuo Qian Family and the Changning Wang Clan." For a moment, the old Zuoqiu Deye, ever on the verge of becoming senile, had a glint of excitement in his eyes. If this plan worked, the overall strength of the Zuoqiu family would take another leap forward, they might even have the opportunity to rise to third-class aristocratic families. Third-class aristocratic families! The Zuoqiu family had been a fourth-rank prominent family for far too long, and he, Zuoqiu Deye, was becoming impatient. ...

## Chapter 92 Offend Shou Zhe! Serious Consequences\_1

... Longzuo County Town. It is the political, economic, and military center of the whole Longzuo County. Any family with some strength will strive for a share of the industry in the county town, selling some local specialties, and also establishing a foothold for the family in the county town. In this way, they can purchase necessary supplies for the family at any time and keep abreast of the latest news. "Changning Wang Clan Trading Co." is the sole proprietorship set up by the "7th-rank Aristocratic Family" Changning Wang family in Longzuo County. The scale is not large, but what it deals with are some exclusive high-end foreign glass products, silk crafts, and the most favorite series of products of the noble ladies in Longzuo, such as the "Ice Skin Jade Flesh Nourishing Cream", "Red Luan Purple Phoenix Pill", "Mirror of Fairies Reflection", "Moisturizing and Silky", "Chaos Butterfly Hundred Flower Fragrance". The "Ice Skin Jade Flesh Nourishing Cream" is made from deep-sea golden clams and spiritual pearls, as well as all kinds of "precious" spiritual grasses and "spirit animal fat". Long-term use can make the skin as moist and delicate as ice and snow. The other products are also for women's service, and they all work well. It is said that the Master Binglan of Purple Abode's Academic Palace and the Commandery Prince's Consort of the Commandery Prince's Residence, and other big figures, all use these treasures. But these products have two major drawbacks. They are expensive and scarce. As a result, these goods often need to be pre-ordered, and often can't be booked even if they are pre-ordered. Therefore, the doorstep of Changning Wang Clan Trading Co. has been trampled through by the noble ladies of the county town. The third of the Shou generation, Wang Shounuo, who is in charge of this place, is surrounded by noble ladies from all families every day. They use all sorts of tactics, just to secure a

steady supply of skincare products. The noble ladies in this world are not like those ancient Chinese noble ladies who never left their homes. When their maids and servants are not enough, they often personally deal with Wang Shounuo. Poor Wang Shounuo had to weather countless entanglements from these fierce ladies each day, yet he still had to maintain his integrity under such circumstances—when his wife was not at his side. This kind of torture can be called hell mode. However, this small trading company now has an annual turnover of 400,000 and a gross profit of over 300,000! No matter how hard it is, Wang Shounuo will persist. Moreover, those noble ladies, both big and small, are one of the best sources of information. All kinds of rumored gossip, Wang Shounuo will compile them into volumes and send them back home through the flying carriage delivery system. One day. As always, Wang Shounuo was diligently guarding the trading company and trying hard to deal with wave after wave of endless noble ladies. Suddenly! He heard news that "Qing Feng Trading Co." opened today, and from now on, everyone only needs thirty Copper Coins to travel to the Hundred Islands Guard by flying carriage. Not only that but the price for mailing letters and goods is much lower than that of "Keep Achieving Trading Co.". "What?" Wang Shounuo jerked up and hurriedly inquired from the noble lady, then rushed to "Qing Feng Trading Co." in a flurry. He knew that the Keep Achieving Trading Co. is now profitable and is one of Wang's pillar industries. The reason why the town of Xin An outside the jurisdiction could develop to such an extent in just over a decade was due in large part to the infusion of profits from the Keep Achieving Trading Co. If a crisis occurs in the Keep Achieving Trading Co., it will undoubtedly stifle the current good situation of the Wang Clan. Half an hour later. In front of the newly opened "Qing Feng Trading Co.", crowds of people are surging, all attracted by the low-price strategy advertised by the merchant. It has been almost twenty years since the flying carriage became a part of the "ordinary people"'s lives, and it is no longer a novelty. The people of Longzuo County Town, situated at the center of the flying carriage transit system, find it is most convenient for mailing goods and letters or going out for leisure. Even some rich people, when they are in a bad mood, would randomly take a flying carriage for a stroll and then return to the high-paced life of the county town full of vigor, bringing back bags of local specialties from various places. And the merchants of the county town, through the flying carriage delivery system, can sell all kinds of quality goods all over the guard stations in Longzuo County and make a fortune as a result. Therefore, the Keep Achieving Trading Co. made a killing and became one of the most profitable industries in Longzuo County, causing a lot of envy. However, the flying carriage system is not that easy to establish. First, it's a problem to find so many flying carriages. Second, the Fifth Grade Qian Clan in Longzuo county is not easily bullied. Third, the Keep Achieving Trading Co., which is under the guardianship of the Purple Abode Academy, has to give a considerable sum of rent to the academy each year. As a result, the Keep Achieving Trading Co. has a monopoly in Longzuo County, and no one can compete with it. However, this monopoly was broken today. Wang Shounuo learned from the excited crowd's discussions that the newly opened "Qing Feng Trading Co." is actually the business of the renowned Rank Four Prominent Family, the Zuoqiu family of Qing'an. Most of the flying carriages they use are leased from "Lingyun Holy Ground". With the endorsement of the Zuoqiu family and the Holy Land, the business reputation of Qing Feng Trading Co. is naturally unquestionable, and the prices they offer are only one-third that of Keep Achieving Co.,—which has won the support of all merchants. Some merchants signed contracts with Qing Feng Trade Co. on the spot. "This is bad." Wang Shounuo felt a chill, sensing the arrival of a crisis. He hurried back to write a letter to Wang Shouzhe. In fact, it's not just Wang Shounuo who informed his family. The head office and various branches of the Keep Achieving Trading Co. in Longzuo County, as well as the Wang Clan, Qian Clan, etc., all quickly relayed this intelligence.

## Chapter 92 Offend Shou Zhe! Serious Consequences\_2

In the blink of an eye, storm clouds brewed overhead. The nearly two-decade-old Keep Achieving Commercial Firm was facing its biggest crisis yet. However, this recent oppression against the Qian and Wang families seemed only to be the tip of the iceberg. Meanwhile, In the northwest of Qing An Prefecture, near the Southern Desert, a trade route that had existed for almost three thousand years, known as the "Qingbei Corridor", stretched out. Due to the mountainous landscape within the Da Qian Realm, the terrain of Qing An Prefecture was relatively flat, making it ideal for large-scale goods transportation. Coupled with its shorter distance, the trading caravans from the three counties of Liaoyuan, Lingbei, and Longzuo would usually take this "Qingbei Corridor" when heading to the National Capital. The Qian family's caravans from Longzuo were no exception. Over the years, the Qian family's caravans had traversed this route countless times, making them exceedingly familiar with it. Qian Zhong was a manager in the Qian family's trading firm. Over the years, he had been in charge of the Qingbei Corridor transportation route. He would make several round trips between the National Capital and Longzuo every year. After all these years of travel, he too was immensely familiar with every aspect of this route. He had a clear understanding of when to set off, what speed to maintain, and how long it would take to find rest stops during their trade trips. His time estimations were always impeccably accurate, never deviating by more than two hours. On this day, as per usual, he carefully timed their departure with the caravan to leave the town in the early afternoon. This way, they would be able to reach the relay station at the National Capital by dusk to rest. The Qian family had been operating their trading firm for many years, with transportation being one of their primary services. Their business encompassed the transport of crude iron from the Southern Desert to iron-deficient Longzuo, part of the grain transport for the Zuoqiu family of Qingan, and shipping Wang Ning Wang family's foreign glass and other commodities to the National Capital. Accordingly, the Qian family's transportation-related production chain had become quite mature. They had warehouses in various counties for hoarding and transferring goods and had significantly advanced in the crucial aspect of transportation tools. The Qian family used specifically purchased northern buffaloes for their long-distance cart transportation. These buffaloes were larger, stronger, and quicker than their southern counterparts. The cart compartments were also specially modified. They were fully enclosed with locks to shield against rain and wind and even had some ability to defend against an unexpected fierce beast attack, greatly increasing the chances of preserving the goods. In the front half of the cart, near the driving area, a small separate room was specifically designed. This small room was separated from the rear compartment, and could only be accessed from the front. It contained two beds, allowing for the rotation of the drivers. Occasionally, it could also accommodate people in case of outdoor stays. The modified goods cart, not only convenient, but its cargo capacity was also 1.5 to 2 times that of regular ox carts. This significantly enhanced the Qian family's trade firm's transport capacity while also reducing losses or damages during transport. Transport capacity and credibility were at the heart of the Qian family's trading firm's foundation. Precisely because of their excellent transportation capabilities and their timeliness and quality assurance reputation developed over the years, did other prominent families trust them with their goods transport. However, today, there was an issue on this normally smooth route. "What's the matter up ahead? Go and ask." Seeing the traffic jam ahead, Qian Zhong sensed that something was amiss and ordered his fellow worker to check it out. The worker immediately climbed down from the ox cart, borrowed a horse from a guard, and hurriedly rode towards the queue's front. Although this convoy was only one of many belonging to the Qian family's business, it was by no means small. It comprised forty-eight ox carts and personal guards, stretching almost

two miles long. Although Qian Zhong possessed the powers of the Spirit Platform Realm, he was unable to see or hear what was happening almost a mile away from his central position, hence leaving him rather puzzled. After a while, the worker galloped back, a look of concern on his face, "Uncle Zhong, the road ahead is blocked by an obstacle with the Qing An Prefecture's soldiers on guard. They claimed they are repairing the road and have temporarily suspended its use."

"Repairing the road?" Qian Zhong was puzzled, "The Qingbei Corridor has been used for so many years that the compacted earth is harder than any official road. Why would it need repairs? Also, I've never heard of Qing An Prefecture repairing this road over the years." For some reason, Qian Zhong had an ominous feeling. "Uncle Zhong, what should we do now?" The worker asked, "Should we rest here while waiting for the road to be repaired?" "No," Qian Zhong shook his head, "Apart from the usual north-south mixed goods, a considerable portion of this shipment consists of foreign glass products that the Tiangong Workshop custom-made for the Wang family. I had made an agreement with the Tiangong Workshop's Shopkeeper earlier, the goods must be delivered within a month at the latest. We can't afford any more delays." The Wang family had completed the custom-made foreign glass products two months ago and handed them over to the Qian family. The Qian family had ample time for transport. If they still missed the delivery time, it would be the Qian family's liability, and they would inevitably have to pay substantial penalties for breach of contract.

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Moreover, the penalty for breach of contract isn't the most troubling part. The biggest issue is that the owner of Tiangong Workshop is from the Gongye Clan, one of the Third-Class Aristocratic Families. The Qian Family can't afford to offend them. If the shopkeeper of the Tiangong Workshop bears a grudge against the Qian Family due to the breach, and secretly defames the Qian Family to the owner, any progress that the Qian Family has painstakingly made in the Daqian Capital could be reverted to zero. The mere thought of this gave Qian Zhong a headache. After considering for a while, he ordered his assistants, "Let everyone rest for a moment. I'll scout the situation ahead and try to persuade the military officers to let us pass." With that said, he took the horse reins from the assistant and rode onward. Soon, he saw the towering rows of roadside obstacles. The Qingbei Corridor follows the direction of the stream. A mile south lies the Suo Chun Jiang, and to the north, a sparse forest occasionally visited by fierce beasts. The roadblocks were made from solid hardwood that could withstand the beasts, very sturdy. At that moment, the row of roadblocks almost completely blocked the road, with only glimpses of uniformed soldiers passing through the gaps. Qian Zhong handed his saber to the head of the household. Then he rode forward and shouted, "May I ask if the soldiers at the front are from the Qing An Prefecture? I am Qian Zhong of the Qian family trading business. Could kindly let me through? I need to speak with your commander." As soon as he finished speaking, a helmeted head protruded from the top of the roadblock, glanced at him, then tossed out an "Wait here" before jumping off the block to notify someone. Soon after, one of the roadblocks was removed and a middle-aged military officer in a commander's uniform emerged. "Hey, if it isn't Shopkeeper Qian?" The commander greeted with a smile as soon as he saw Qian Zhong. "It's been a while since we last met." "Commander Zhao?" Qian Zhong hesitated before quickly stepping forward to greet him. "It's been over a decade. Are you promoted now? Judging by your uniform... You've become a Colonel? Congratulations." Qian Zhong had dealings with Zhao Zhibang when he worked as a shopkeeper in Qingbei Guard. Zhao seemed amiable on the surface, but was cunning and shrewd when handling affairs, a difficult person to negotiate with. "I haven't been at Qingbei Guard in a long time. I am now a Guerrilla Colonel in Qing An Prefecture, in charge of northern defense along with a few other Colonels." As Zhao Zhibang spoke,

he patted the roadblock behind him. "Just today, I was assigned to assist in road construction." After some small talk, Qian Zhong pulled Zhao Zhibang aside and whispered, "Colonel Zhao, I don't know when this road construction will end. I have a shipment for a client who is in a rush. Can you let us pass?" As he spoke, he took out a gold note from his pocket, attempting to slip it into Zhao's. However, the seemingly accommodating Zhao Zhibang didn't accept the gold note. Instead, he firmly refused Qian Zhong's request on the pretense that accidents often happened during road repairs and the blockage was for the safety of the convoy. No matter how persuasive Qian Zhong was, Zhao Zhibang remained unwavering, and firmly kept the convoy of the Qian Family behind the roadblocks. Qian Zhong felt both frustrated and angry, yet utterly helpless. Seeing that Zhao Zhibang was about to leave, he quickly grabbed him. Suppressing his anger, he pleaded desperately, "Colonel, if I have to die, at least let me do so knowing why. Previously in Qing An County Town, they detained my goods for several days. Now they're stopping us from proceeding. What's the reason behind it? I didn't do anything to offend you, did I?" As he spoke, he forced the gold note into Zhao Zhibang's hand, grabbing it tightly to prevent Zhao from giving it back. "Shopkeeper Qian, you've been in this business for many years. How can you not understand such a simple thing?" With an expression of helplessness, Zhao Zhibang glanced at the gold note in his hand. After some contemplation, he finally pocketed it, then whispered in Qian Zhong's ear, "Today's problem was arranged from above. There's no possibility for leniency. You better tell the Family Head to think about who he might have offended recently." With that said, he shook off Qian Zhong's hand and walked back behind the roadblock, gold note in hand. The towering roadblock was once again sealed off. Staring at the dark blockade, Qian Zhong felt a profound sense of gloom. It appears that his premonition was right. There indeed were forces in Qing An Prefecture secretly working against the Qian Family. This situation was far more serious than failing to deliver goods on time. If this situation continues, today it's appealing the contract with the Tiangong Workshop, offending the Tiangong Workshop. God knows how many more will be offended in the future. Can the Qian Family still continue with their business in the long run? One must remember, the transport routes are one of Qian Family's lifeline. The route between Qing An Prefecture and the national capital accounted for nearly 30% of the Qian Family's transport business. If something went wrong, the losses to the Qian Family would be catastrophic. Although the Qian Family is substantial, the managers who handle the specific operations, like him who is at the Spirit Platform Realm level, can't handle the problems if Qing An Prefecture is determined to trouble the Qian Family. Thus, he dare not fight back. He needs to convey this situation to the Family Head promptly, who then needs to figure out a solution quickly. With that thought, he wore a sour face and hurried back to the carriage. Soon, two whitebirds flew out of the carriage window. They flapped their wings and flew high into the sky, heading towards Longzuo County Town. However, this was not an isolated incident. Similar problems emerged in the caravans of the Qian Trading Company at various places.

#### Chapter 92 Offend Shou Zhe! Serious Consequences\_4

... Longzuo County Town. In a high-end private room of the Purple Abode Palace, an establishment owned by the Wang family in Longzuo. Wang Shouzhe, who had hurried back to the county town upon receiving news, was leisurely sipping a pot of premium spiritual tea. It was the "Immortal Tea" gifted to him some time ago by Prefectural Governor Taishi Ankang. The tea, worthy of being a fine product from the Frost Moon Immortal Dynasty, not only offered an enduring and far-reaching flavor but also nourished and revitalized the spirit and the God Sense. At his level, every slight enhancement of God Sense was significant. As the saying goes, it is easy to change from frugality to extravagance. Wang Shouzhe had already entrusted various channels to acquire the

spirit seed of this Immortal Tea. "Master Shouzhe," Qian Xuehan said anxiously, drenched in sweat. "What time is it, and you still have the leisure to brew tea and taste it leisurely. You really need to think of a solution." "Don't rush, don't rush." Wang Shouzhe laughed lightly, delivering a cup of tea. "Master Xuehan, first taste this Immortal Tea. It can calm the mind and cleanse impurity. We can talk about everything slowly over tea." "Gulp, gulp." Qian Xuehan received the teacup, finishing it in two or three gulps, then wiped his sweat and addressed, "Master Shouzhe, the Zuoqiu family is bearing down on us relentlessly. I really don't have the same leisurely mood as you." Having spent plenty of time with Wang Shouzhe, Qian Xuehan had also picked up a smattering of odd and exotic phrases. He was in a terrible mood. The all-out pressure from the Zuoqiu family primarily targeted Qian's various businesses. With every passing day, the Qian family suffered substantial losses. Over a decade ago, Qian Xuehan enjoyed the misfortune of the Cao family from the distant region of Liaoyuan while sitting back and watching. Now that it was the turn of the Qian family to be attacked by the Zuoqiu family, he now truly understood the pressure and helplessness. The gap between the Fifth Grade Prominent Families and the Rank Four Prominent Family was indeed significant. Moreover, the Zuoqiu family were not an ordinary Rank Four family. They possessed six old ancestors in the Purple Abode (one of them was in Qing'an College). In the whole of Qing An Prefecture, their influence was overwhelming. "Master Shouzhe, you have to stand up for us, the Qian family." Qian Xuehan said grievously, "There are now rumors that Zuoqiu Qingyun of the Zuoqiu family was killed by us together. Moreover, the Zuoqiu family has always thought that the Wang family is merely a pawn of ours.... That's why all their aggressive actions are targeted at us, the Qian family. We're being wrongly accused." "Master Shouzhe, you need to take responsibility for us, the Qian Family...." "Calm down." Wang Shouzhe placated Qian Xuehan, "Zuoqiu Qingyun's death is a scandal. The Zuoqiu family would not dare to openly defy the Daqian Law by attacking the Qian family directly. At most, they will resort to some covert tactics." Covert tactics? Qian Xuehan looked deeply into Master Shouzhe's eyes. You may downplay the matter, but do you realize that our Qian family will suffer a huge loss in a year due to those small tactics? And do you know how massive the pressure that I, Qian Xuehan, have to bear as the Family Head? Besides, everyone is fully aware now that Zuoqiu Qingyun was actually killed by your Wang family... but we, the Qian family, are being made scapegoats! What frustrated Qian Xuehan the most was that for the sake of maintaining the long-standing friendship and mutual interests of both sides, they, the Qian family, had to keep carrying the blame. "However, we should solve any problems that arise." Wang Shouzhe calmly said, "But before that, let's go together to pay a visit to the treasured Prefectural Governor." "I'm afraid even the Prefectural Governor will have a hard time handling this matter, right?" Qian Xuehan was full of doubts. In fact, the Qian family had already gone to visit the Prefectural Governor, Taishi Ankang, but had not received a satisfactory answer. However, Qian Xuehan still respected Wang Shouzhe's proposal and, together, they revisited the Prefectural Governor. Inside the Prefecture Mansion. In the midst of his "hundred busy tasks," Taishi Ankang took some time to meet with Wang Shouzhe and Qian Xuehan, treating them well with fine tea and fruit. The Qian family was a Fifth Grade Prominent Family and naturally received special attention. Besides, the Wang family was not something to sneer at, so Taishi Ankang did not display indifference towards them. "Master Xuehan, as I mentioned before," Taishi Ankang said, "Zuoqiu family actually abides by the law in opening a business chamber and conducting regular business activities in our Longzuo County. I, as the Prefectural Governor, really don't think I can do anything about it." "Prefectural Governor sir, our Qian family is, after all, considered part of your own group," Qian Xuehan perseveringly said. "If it were simple business competition, both our Keep Achieving Commercial Firm and Qian Family Business would not be afraid. It's just that Zuoqiu



family's operations are truly disgusting—they are neglecting the flourishing flying carriage market in Qing An Prefecture and instead coming first to our Longzuo County to compete with the Keep Achieving Commercial Firm." "This is clearly bullying, they are guarding the meat in their own pot and not eating it, instead they are sticking their chopsticks into our bowl to steal our meat, where is the logic in this?" Taishi Ankang's face also seemed somewhat upset. After all, in essence, the Zuoqiu family was somewhat bullying, and indeed they didn't have him, the Prefectural Governor of Longzuo County, in their eyes. However, helplessly, he said: "While the Zuoqiu family's actions are indeed vile, there really isn't much we can do to them." He then turned his gaze to Wang Shouzhe and asked, "Does Master Shouzhe have a solution?" No matter how you look at it, whether it's the Qian family, Keep Achieving Commercial Firm, or Wang family... all were considered part of his own group. It was as if his own child was being bullied and there was nothing he could do about it. "Why don't we have the governor himself visit Qing An Prefecture and pay a visit to the Prefect of Anqing and the Cheng Commandery Prince," Wang Shouzhe suggested. "There, you could file a stern protest against them, saying that Zuoqiu family's actions are too greedy. Have them keep an eye on the Zuoqiu family, to balance things out and prevent them from going overboard." Taishi Ankang's face turned dark. He spoke to Wang Shouzhe with slight disappointment: "Master Shouzhe, Prefect Wu Ding Hai of Qing An has always stood in line with the Zuoqiu family. My visit to Qing An Prefecture would just be humiliating myself." "Sir's words are reasonable," Wang Shouzhe acknowledged. "The 'humiliation' I want you to bring back, though, should be known to many, both in the surrounding counties and the national capital." Taishi Ankang's face turned an ashen hue: "Wang Shouzhe, are you suggesting that I, Taishi Ankang, have no sense of shame? How am I to show my face after this?" "Sir, please calm down for a moment," Wang Shouzhe said calmly. "The reason I asked you to act first is that my plan for the Qing'an Prefecture, specifically against the Zuoqiu family, would be...even more disgusting, more excessive, making it more difficult to stomach... than what the Zuoqiu family have planned for us." "To avoid Prefect Wu Ding Hai of Anqing and others from becoming unable to bear it and coming to you for help, and hence putting you in a difficult position... it is better that you approach them first and let them gloat a bit to silence everyone." Taishi Ankang immediately regained his spirits and said in a low voice, "What is the brilliant plan, Shouzhe? Speak quickly and give me some joy." Qian Xuehan on the side was also extremely excited, saying repeatedly, "I knew it, Master Shouzhe must have been prepared..." Wang Shouzhe smiled, and murmured a few words. Fifteen minutes later, Taishi Ankang and Qian Xuehan's expressions were constantly changing, and in the end, they looked at Wang Shouzhe with strange and horrified eyes. How is your plan just more excessive? This is clearly putting Zuoqiu family in a situation of certain death. Even they, as Wang Shouzhe's "own group," had a chilling sensation. A reminder seemed to be ringing in their hearts like a warning bell never to offend Wang Shouzhe. He had been gradually laying his plan, slipping the noose around Zuoqiu family's neck since fifteen years ago. ...

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... "You two shouldn't look at me with such eyes." Wang Shouzhe's eyes look a bit innocent, "Ever since killing the 'lewd demon' Zuoqiu Qingyun, I've speculated that the Zuoqiu family wouldn't be able to swallow this pill so easily and retaliating in secret is highly probable." "Thus, it makes sense for me to plan ahead." Wang Shouzhe spoke leisurely, as if it was all trifling matter. Qian Xuehan and Taishi Ankang exchanged glances. Wang Shouzhe's words seemed reasonable at first. However, this guy was indeed overly cautious and meticulous. The enemy was still in the dark, but he had already started setting up a trap, his dense net of schemes was already in place before they even

started to react... They felt genuinely sorry for the Zuoqiu family, such a prominent Rank Four Prominent Family was likely to suffer a great loss this time round. At the same time, they felt fortunate that Wang Shouzhe, intimidating as he was, was on their side and not their enemy. Having such a reliable ally actually provided a sense of reassurance. ... In the following days, Longzuo and Qing'an counties were silently stirred with hidden strife. Most of the Grade Eight and Nine Prominent Families didn't sense the impending storm and merely felt as if something major was about to happen. However, those of the 7th and 6th grades had a clear view of the drama unfolding. The esteemed Prefectural Governor of Longzuo County was drubbed by his counterpart when he sought to discuss the flying carriage industry in Qing An Prefecture. According to Wu Ding Hai, the Prefectural Governor of Qing'an county, Taishi Ankang was a man who frets over things unnecessarily. It was normal for businesses to vie for supremacy amongst themselves. The Zuoqiu clan's business methods might negatively impact competitors, but it ultimately benefitted the countless population of Longzuo County. Furthermore, with more competition in the commercial service industry, it actually stimulated potential, thus complacency was not an option. The Cheng Commandery Prince of Qing An Prefecture completely ignored Taishi Ankang's visit, excusing it off as not being home, clearly indifferent to preserving face. After all, a Commandery Prince has the duty to protect and guard his territory, and he cannot leave his territory without an official order. Obviously, the Cheng Commandery Prince didn't put much thought into his excuse. Embarrassed, Taishi Ankang returned home in disgrace. The news spread to the National Capital and several surrounding counties, inevitably leading to mockery, painting Taishi Ankang as foolish. Why would anyone willingly loosen their grip on such a large chunk of fat meat? And to go to the extent of going to their doorstep, wasn't that self-humiliation? However, the arrogant actions of Qing'an county sparked a revolt amongst a few Prominent Families and governmental offices. They boycotted the Qing Feng Commercial Firm one after another. However, the Qing Feng Commercial Firm, unfazed by their boycott, continued to slash prices while resorting to the laws of Daqian to oppose the local authorities. If an ordinary business dared to act this way, the local government office would have cracked down on them a long time ago. Unfortunately, the Qing Feng Commercial Firm was an enterprise of a Grade Four Prominent Family, and their flying carriages were leased from Lingyun Holy Ground. As the Qing Feng Commercial Firm's low-price strategy continued to be executed, they began to swallow up and erode the market share of the Keep Achieving Commercial Firm in a whale-like manner. Soon after, the Keep Achieving Commercial Firm also joined the price war. The two major commercial firms began a life-and-death struggle, constantly burning money, burning money, and then burning more money! This indeed benefitted Longzuo County's large and small merchants and the common people. Due to the substantial reduction in transportation costs, it indirectly promoted trading activities. Trade between different regions became more frequent, seeming increasingly prosperous, and the market size was rapidly expanding. Driven by human nature, everyone was happy to see the ongoing price war between the two major commercial firms. They hoped that the two firms would keep fighting, and fight forever. Of course, this was impossible. This was merely the two firms' competition for market share. Once the outcome was clear, and one party was completely squeezed out, the price war would naturally end. It seemed that Wang Shouzhe's arrangement had already begun to take effect in secret. ... Qing'an County. As a well-known "land of fish and rice" in Daqian, the number of fertile fields in Qing'an county is considered the highest in Daqian, and its annual grain yield is also the largest in Daqian. An official from the National Capital's Finance Bureau once calculated that about 30% of the grain consumed by Daqian each year comes from Qing'an county. Even the most fertile Tianfu County among the remaining seven counties could not match the annual output of Qing'an county.

Correspondingly, the planting industry naturally became one of the pillar industries of Qing'an County. During the harvest season, all big and small Prominent Families in Qing'an county were busy harvesting, drying, and threshing. The fields crisscrossing the farmland were bustling with activity. The He Dong Sun Family was no exception. The He Dong Sun Family, located in one of the five counties in the east of Qing'an county, which is the He Dong County, was a relatively strong Grade Eight Prominent Family in the area. The family had more than a hundred thousand acres of fertile land and more than a hundred hectares of fishing grounds. It was a typical example of a Qing'an Prominent Family with its primary produce being fish and rice. On this day, like regular days, the Head of the He Dong Sun Family, Sun Chuan Xue, was sitting in an ox cart inspecting the different estates owned by his family, checking on the harvesting progress and estimating the yield per acre. Suddenly, Another ox cart slowly drove by on the dirt road beside him. A young cultivator lifted the curtain and greeted him, "Brother Ruicai, seeing your beaming smile, it seems this year's harvest has been good." "Indeed." Seeing the person was his younger brother-in-law, Sun Chuan Xue couldn't help but laugh, "I'm not hiding anything from you. This year's harvest from our family's fields is more than 20% higher than previous years. When these grains are sold, we will earn about seventy to eighty thousand. Add to that the profits from the fishing grounds and our family's income this year might break the hundred-thousand mark."

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The visitor was the legitimate son of the Hedong Liu Clan who had marital ties with the He Dong Sun Family, Liu Qinghao, also the younger brother of his wife, Lady Liu. The Hedong Liu Clan, just like the He Dongwei, was an Eighth Grade Prominent Family who had married into the Sun Clan for generations, and their relationship had always been very close. "Wow~ This is really a great harvest~" Liu Qinghao exclaimed in wonder, his heart filled with disbelief, "Even though the weather this year has been favorable, the yield shouldn't have increased by twenty percent, right? Brother-in-law, tell me the truth, did you secretly buy a new farm?" "Hey~ How could you not know how many farms we own in the Hedong Guard? All the cultivable lands have been cultivated, where could I get a new farm?" Sun Chuan Xue smirked, and seeing that no one was around, he pulled Liu Qinghao onto his own bullock cart and whispered to him, "I only told you this secret because our two families have been married for generations and have a close relationship. You better not let it leak. Actually, half of the crops planted in our land this year were not ZuoQiu family's 'Five-flavor Rice' but high-yield grains I bought from other channels." However, upon hearing this, Liu Qinghao was stunned, then scoffed, "Brother-in-law, if you want to trick me, at least come up with a more plausible reason. In our Da Qian, is there any better grain than the 'Five-flavor Rice'?" The Zuoqiu family had made their fortune through farming. The reason the Zuoqiu family was able to rise above many prominent families and eventually become the Grade Four Prominent Family in Qing An Prefecture was due to the high-yield grains they had meticulously cultivated. On the same land, using the same farming methods, their family's grain yield was higher than any other. Moreover, the Zuoqiu family had found a way to ensure that the ripe rice and wheat grains stolen from their land would not sprout under any circumstances, leaving other families unable to steal their crops to grow. The then family head of the Zuoqiu was a capable man who had resisted threats and pressures from other families time and again, gradually enhancing the Zuoqiu family's advantages over time until they eventually ruled over Qing An Prefecture. Now, a considerable portion of the prominent families in Qing An Prefecture were cultivating the Zuoqiu family's high-yield grains. The few left were cultivating their own research grains, which were far inferior to the Zuoqiu family's "Five-flavor Rice" and "Jade Finger Wheat" in terms of production.

The Zuoqiu family made a fortune every year just by selling these two types of grain. Sun Chuan Xue naturally knew this. At first, he too did not believe in this kind of grain, but he could not resist the allure of high yield and bought some seeds to try out with the mentality of giving it a shot. Otherwise, this year's harvest wouldn't just be twenty percent higher, but a full thirty percent increase. However, he also knew that there was no evidence to back up his words and that Liu Qinghao would definitely not believe him if he just said it. So, he simply got off the bullock cart, casually pulled a handful of rice from the field next to him, and handed it over to Liu Qinghao, "Just look for yourself, is this rice different from your 'Five-flavor Rice'?" Liu Qinghao carefully examined the rice husk in his hand, rubbing open the husk and carefully looking at the rice inside, his eyes immediately changed, "This... is indeed different. It seems that the grains are more plump than the Five-flavor Rice, and hmm~ the fragrance of the rice is also stronger." Although the difference was minuscule, as the legitimate heir of a family that had been farming for generations as their main source of income, he was all too familiar with the appearance of their own rice. Even with the slightest subtle difference, he could discern it upon close examination. "How about it, I didn't lie, did I?" Sun Chuan Xue was beaming with pride. "This, this, this... this is unbelievable. I can't believe there is a family that can cultivate a better grain than the Zuoqiu family." Liu Qinghao couldn't help murmuring to himself. It was no wonder he was so surprised. Since the Zuoqiu family had dominated Qing'an Prefecture for so long, the notion that the Zuoqiu family's grain was the highest yielding had long been ingrained in people's hearts. He had never thought that one day, the yield of the Zuoqiu family's grain would be surpassed by other grains. It took him a good while to regain his senses, and he turned around abruptly, grabbing his brother-in-law by the arm, "Brother-in-law, where did you buy this rice seed? Is there a winter wheat seed?" You should know, the grains were the lifeblood of the Liu Clan. If this grain truly had such high yields, the gains from their grains would definitely increase greatly. Fortunately, his younger son had been tested as a Little Sky Pride, and he was worrying about whether his family could afford to cultivate a Tianren Realm powerhouse and whether he should send him to the Academic Palace. If he could grow this high-yield grain, he wouldn't have to worry about that anymore. "Ssh~ calm down," Sun Chuan Xue was nearly in pain from his grasp, and quickly pulled his hand away, "Of course, there are wheat seeds. But they haven't been delivered yet. I only paid a deposit, I haven't received the goods yet. If you want to buy, I'll take you with me when I go to get the wheat seeds." Qing'an Prefecture had always practiced crop rotation with wheat and rice. Now that the rice had been harvested, it was naturally time to sow the winter wheat. Liu Qinghao slapped Sun Chuan Xue's arm hard, his face flushed with excitement, "Good Brother-in-law! You are really my brother-in-law!" "Nonsense, of course, I'm your brother-in-law!" Sun Chuan Xue rubbed his sore arm with pain and couldn't help but roll his eyes at him. This lad, truly worthy of being of the War Body Bloodline, was rather overbearing, and his strength was too strong. Liu Qinghao's mind was filled with his younger son and the Heavenly Human Realm, completely ignoring Sun Chuan Xue's disdain for him. He grabbed Sun Chuan Xue's arm and asked excitedly, "When are you going to buy the wheat seeds, Brother-in-law?"

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Sun Chuan Xue gasped, "Hiss! I'll go now, right now, okay? You'd better let go of me." Liu Qinghao realized he had been overly excited, and quickly let go, looking pleadingly at his brother-in-law. Sun Chuan Xue had no choice but to comfort him, signaled for the ox-cart driver and gave him an address. Before long, the ox-cart leisurely arrived at a manor's entrance. This manor looked no different from the other farms in the area. If Sun Chuan Xue hadn't brought Liu Qinghao here, he

would never imagine that this place was selling high-yield grain seeds. There was no guard at the farm. Once inside, following the earthen path down the middle, they crossed between houses of varying heights, and very soon, the ox-cart brought them to an unremarkable house. Sun Chuan Xue, escorting Liu Qinghao off the cart, walked over and rhythmically knocked on the door: "Knock~knock, knock~knock, knock, knock~" After a moment, a young man dressed as a farmer came to open the door, saying nothing as he looked at Sun Chuan Xue. "Brother, I've come to collect my wheat seeds. In addition, my sister's son would also like to purchase some," Sun Chuan Xue courteously said, gesturing towards him. Although the young man appeared ordinary, Sun Chuan Xue couldn't see through his cultivation base, an indication that he wore something that concealed his cultivation. Therefore, it was always good to be polite. The young man took a look at him, then glanced at Liu Qinghao standing behind him, seeming to discern their identities. Moments later, he nodded: "Follow me." This young man was known as Wang Xiaohu, the youngest son of the head of the Wang family. Initially, his father was part of the Wang family's grand plan to develop new territories. He made a substantial contribution to the family by garnering great wealth. His strength had reached the ninth level of Qi refining realm. If he hadn't been lacking innate talent and unable to afford Heavenly Spirit Pills, he might already be in the Spiritual Platform realm. As the youngest son, he reaped the benefits too. He had consumed an Enlightenment Pill when he was very young, which boosted his talent. Although he was only in his early twenties now, he already had the cultivation base of the sixth level of Qi refining realm, which was stronger than most descendents of Rank 9 prominent families. Because of this, he was quite esteemed among the young heads of households. After finishing this excellent assignment, he'd earn a substantial contribution to the family. Presently, the family had opened up the exchange for Blood Refining Pills to the household heads. If he made an effort, he might be able to exchange for a Blood Refining Pill. With such a pill, his talent would rank high among the household heads and he might even get a chance to break through to the Spiritual Platform realm within his lifetime. Wang Xiaohu led the way. Quickly, the three of them passed through the hall and entered the inner chamber. They descended through a hidden trapdoor into a cellar. The cellar was divided into many compartments. Each door was locked, obscuring its contents. Throughout their journey, the young man didn't say much. It wasn't until they reached one of the compartments that he pulled out a key, opened the door and said, "There are three kinds of wheat seeds - 'No.43', 'No.59', and 'No.27'. Tell me which one you want to buy and how much, then pay half the deposit. Then our people will take the seeds to your farm. Cash on delivery, to keep things clean." While speaking, he glanced at Liu Qinghao. Clearly, his words were meant for him. "This..." Liu Qinghao understood the trading rules but was confused about the difference between the seeds, "What's the difference between these wheat seeds? Could you kindly explain, brother?" Sun Chuan Xue also didn't know before that there would be three different kinds of wheat seeds and looked at the young man for an explanation. The young man was clearly prepared, and slowly explained, "'No.43' is stronger against diseases and pests. Even if there's a massive outbreak of insects, the reduction in yield won't be severe." "'No.59' matures more quickly, about a week faster than the Zuo Qiu family's grain, and one or two days faster compared to our own grain." "As for 'No.27', it is more flood-resistant. Even in the case of a flood, the reduction of yield won't be too significant." After thinking for a moment, he added: "In terms of yield, 'No.43' is slightly lower than 'No.59', and 'No.27' is even more so, about ten percent less. Nonetheless, all are at least thirty to forty percent higher than Zuo Qiu family's grains. You can choose the suitable grains according to your situation." In fact, 'No.27' had been phased out within the Wang family for quite some time. Because the Wang family had been paying attention to the prevention of floods for years, Ping'an Town had not experienced a flood in almost twenty years.

Consequently, 'No. 27', a variety of wheat developed to cope with flood conditions, was not grown by anyone anymore. On the other hand, Qing An Prefecture is abundant in water resources. Unlike the Wang family, the Zuo Qiu family did not focus on infrastructure building and flood prevention, so floods were still a severe problem. Even now, the Suo Chun Jiang still bursts its banks every few years. 'No.27', which was gathering dust, found new use. Sun Chuan Xue and Liu Qinghao felt the traits of high-yield, early maturity, and flood resistance were all important. Deliberating between 'No.59' and 'No.27' took them quite a long time. In the end, they simply decided to buy half of each type. Having cooperated before, the two agreed to the terms and gave the deposit promptly. Then, with high hopes for the future, they left cheerfully to return home.

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The same thing was happening in other defensive areas of Qing An Prefecture too. However, due to the different situations in each county, there was a slight variation in the choice of grains to purchase. In some areas that were prone to pest disasters, "No.43" wheat variety sold better. In places prone to floods, "No.27" wheat variety sold better. Regardless of the region, the "No.59" wheat variety was always the bestseller because it had the highest yield. Unbeknownst to them, nearly half of the prominent families in Qing An Prefecture had replaced the grains they bought for their families with the Wang family's grains. ... The Zuoqiu family's main residence. In a luxurious study, a middle-aged man wearing a jade crown, dressed in a brocade robe, with a calm and domineering aura, was meticulously copying a "Pointing at the Mountains and Rivers Painting". This middle-aged man was Zuoqiu Guanyu, the family head of the Zuoqiu family in Qing'an. The "Pointing at the Mountains and Rivers Painting" he was copying was a rough plan for Qing'an's future, drawn with high spirits by his ancestors when they first set foot in Qing'an to clear and reclaim the land. The painting was a masterpiece that was admired by Emperor Longchang a thousand years later. The Emperor kept it in his imperial study and rewarded the Zuoqiu family generously to commend their merit in claiming Qing An Prefecture. Now, the Zuoqiu family had only a copy of the painting. For various reasons, the Zuoqiu family had a strong attachment to the painting, and each generation of family heads left a copy behind. They all hoped to make exceptional contributions to their family like their ancestors did. Of course, the current family head, Zuoqiu Guanyu, was no exception. However, reality was an obstacle. The development of the Zuoqiu family had long reached a bottleneck, and his ambitions were not realized. But now, the opportunity had finally arrived! As long as he could topple the Keep Achieving Commercial Firm in Longzuo County, he could control the flying carriage transportation markets in both Longzuo and Qing'an. Even more so, with the advantage of scale, he could enter the counties of Southern Desert, Liaoyuan, and Lingbei. By then, the Zuoqiu family's ability to accumulate wealth would ascend a new stair, laying the foundation for advancing to third-class aristocratic families. As Zuoqiu Guanyu copied the "Pointing at the Mountains and Rivers Painting", he was overwhelmed with passion in his heart. Just at this moment. An old man with a long beard came to pay his respects. With a thick ledger in his hand, he came in with a smile: "Congratulations, Family Head, congratulations." "Old An, what's the happy occasion?" Zuoqiu Guanyu seemed to be in a good mood, laughing as he continued to draw. Old An was his confidant and private tutor from when he was young. After he became the family head, Old An was promoted all the way up and was now one of the managers of the Zuoqiu family, responsible for organizing some related accounts. Old An put the ledger to one side, and said respectfully: "Family Head, the accounts of all the major grain-growing estates have been summarized this year. God bless the Zuoqiu family, the Five-flavor Rice has had a great harvest this year, nearly 20% more than in previous years." Twenty percent? Zuoqiu Guanyu paused

his brush and expressed his pleasure: "Old An, this indeed is great news." His mood lifted, and the strokes of his brush became even more spirited and vigorous. The Zuoqiu family's businesses covered various aspects, but agriculture was still their fundamental industry. This is because they held two powerful tools: the Five-flavour Rice and Jade Pointer Wheat varieties. Most of the prominent families in Qing'an Prefecture farmed these two crops because of their high yield and good quality. Once planted, they never worried about sales, and they can earn more money for the family. It was precisely because the Zuoqiu family controlled the agricultural foundation of the entire Qing'an County that it grew stronger day by day, eventually growing into a fourth-grade giant. Given such scale of cereal farming, a 20% increase in yield was certainly good news. "Family Head, after the increase in yield of the Five-flavour Rice, the capacity of the grain warehouses in various places may be somewhat insufficient," Old An respectfully said. "We need to accelerate the sale of Jade Pointer Wheat to free up space in the granary. According to the tradition of previous years, we can slightly reduce the price of Jade Pointer Wheat to promote sales and win the hearts of the families." "Reduce the price of Jade Pointer Wheat?" Zuoqiu Guanyu's brows slightly wrinkled, refusing, "No. Our Qing Feng Commercial Firm is currently engaged in a price war with Keep Achieving Commercial Firm. While the situation is not bad, the expenditure is quite heavy. Although the Qian Family is only a fifth-grade prominent family, they are notorious for their wealth. In the next ten to twenty years, the situation will continue to be a stalemate." "In that case, let's raise the price of Jade Pointer Wheat by 20% this time to make up for our losses in the Qing Feng Commercial Firm." Old An tensed up immediately and hurriedly said, "Family Head, if the prices are raised like this, the families will object. I believe..." "Objections?" Zuoqiu Guanyu put down his brush, scoffed, "Our Zuoqiu family has been providing high-quality grains to all the families in Qing'an Prefecture, feeding them until they are plump and prosperous. Now, our Zuoqiu family is at a critical moment of transformation, yet they're unwilling to share some of the risks?" Old An bowed and said, "Most importantly, we fear the families' reactions will be too strong, and if they refuse to purchase, there will be trouble." "Refuse to buy? That would be great." Zuoqiu Guanyu stood with his hands behind his back, admiring his almost finished "Pointing at the Mountains and Rivers Painting", and laughing heartily, "Have you heard of the Changning Wang Clan? They too produce and sell seeds, one called the Wang No.19 Rice Variety and the Wang No.23 Wheat Variety." "I had people investigate, and these two varieties of grains are just barely considered high-quality, only slightly inferior to our Five-flavour Rice and Jade Pointer Wheat. Using these seeds, the Changning Wang Clan has reaped quite a harvest."

### Chapter 93: Shou Zhe's Cunning Plan to Secure Qing'an

"What does the Family Head mean?" Old An asked with a crease of his brow, in a low voice. "Hmph, if those prominent families refuse to accept the price increase, then we, the Zuoqiu Clan, will sell our Jade Finger Wheat and Five-flavor Rice seeds in Longzuo County, thereby stifling the sale of the Changning Wang Clan's grain." Zuoqiu Guanyu explained his strategy, "Right now, our Zuoqiu Clan is at a critical point of transformation. It's time to change some conservative strategies. Starting from next year, we need to expand the scale and output of our grain farms, we can no longer limit ourselves to the small Qing'an County." "But, Family Head..." Old An expressed with a touch of worry, "Increasing the scale of our grain farm means, firstly, we need to cultivate more premium farmland, and secondly, we need to train more agricultural master scholars. To preserve our technological secrets in the past, all the agricultural master scholars trained within our clan were core members of the Zuoqiu Clan... They are all very loyal..." "The target for selection and training of agricultural master scholars can be extended to loyal peripheral members, and management can

be reinforced," said Zuoqiu Guanyu with confidence. "As for premium farmland, we can buy out the farms owned by the various families at premium rates. All in all, for the advancement of the Zuoqiu Clan, this expansion is inevitable." "As you command, Family Head." A brief flash of concern passed through Old An's eyes. But since the Family Head had made such a decision, he must have gained the approval of the Elder Council. At this point, a steward like him no longer had any control over the matter. The command of the Zuoqiu Clan Head quickly spread throughout Qing'an County, and all the grain warehouses in various places began to faithfully carry out the family head's orders. However, the development of events differed entirely from what Zuoqiu Guanyu anticipated. Although the Wang Clan had been selling their Royal Clan No.19 Variety and Royal Clan No.23 Wheat Variety to the outside world, the wheat varieties they were cultivating were actually much more advanced. This time, the wheat breeds put forth by the Wang Clan were all mature types cultivated over many years. They could adapt to a variety of regional environments, and also catered to the different needs of various clans. And due to the Wang Clan's early planning, many medium and small clans in Qing'an had already tasted the sweetness of the Wang Clan's high-yielding grain and secretly purchased the Wang Clan's wheat varieties. There were still quite a few clans that, although secretly aware of the Wang Clan's high-yielding grain, due to their long-standing cooperation with the Zuoqiu Clan, did not dare to rashly order from the Wang Clan and continued to choose the Zuoqiu Clan's wheat varieties. However, once the Zuoqiu Clan raised the price of their wheat varieties, the clans that were still watching instantly became discontented. The grain from the Zuoqiu Clan was initially not cheap. With this price increase, the profits that their family could make would be drastically compressed. The profit they would take in might only be slightly more than if they bought the common grain being sold by the Sacred Land's Academic Palace. At that moment, quite a few clans angrily canceled their preordered wheat from the Zuoqiu Clan, and secretly purchased the Wang Clan's high-yielding wheat varieties. And with this trend in mind, even those clans that had previously firmly stood with the Zuoqiu Clan couldn't sit still anymore. With all the other clans growing Wang's high-yielding grain and earning big money, their own clan was still growing Zuoqiu's grain. What if they weakened and couldn't sell their grain due to lost competitiveness? Unknowingly, the number of clans purchasing the Wang Clan's wheat varieties began to grow, and soon engulfed the whole of the Qing'an County. ... Over a month later. Zuoqiu Guanyu had completed his emulation of the Pointing at the Mountains and Rivers Painting, brewed a pot of tea, and sat back to admire his artwork with delight. Being one of the family's Celestial beings from the Heavenly Human Realm and also being the Family Head, it was natural for him to have expectations for the future. This painting was a depiction of his ambitions and aspirations. "Family Head, Family Head! Something bad has happened." Old An rushed into the study to report, his face full of panic. "All the grain warehouses around have sent messages. Many clans are refusing to buy our high-priced wheat. Storage can't be emptied, and the Five-flavor Rice seeds can't get into the warehouse." "What?" Zuoqiu Guanyu frowned slightly, "That's not possible, although there should indeed be some clans resisting stubbornly. But now it's almost past the optimum planting period for winter wheat, have those clans gone mad? Have they all switched to common grain?" "It's not like that." Old An said, his face pale, "Previously, when part of the clans refused to buy, I sent someone to investigate. Now, the situation has been clarified. There are several new wheat varieties in the market, like No.27, No.43, and No.59 wheat! Each has its own advantages, but the rumor has it that every variety yields at least 30% more than our Jade Finger Wheat!" "Thirty percent more? At least..." Zuoqiu Guanyu jumped up from his seat, hardly believing what he heard, "How is this possible?" Suddenly, a thought flashed through his mind. He had a sudden pit in his stomach: "Wait, why does the name of the wheat variety sound so familiar?"



A premonition of misfortune began to rise at the back of Zuoqiu Guanyu's head, sending chills down his spine. ...

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... "It's the grain seeds of the Changning Wang Clan!" Zuoqiu Guanyu, as a Tianren realm cultivator, had memory and reaction abilities far beyond ordinary people. With only a slight hesitation, he remembered the "Royal Clan No.19" rice variety and "Royal Clan No.23" wheat variety. These few varieties of wheat, although not labelled with "Royal Clan", looked from the naming rules, most likely belonged to the Changning Wang Clan. Of course, there was also another possibility, that someone was impersonating the Wang Clan's grain. However, judging from the current situation, the probability of the latter was very low. "Very good! Changning Wang Clan, you have big guts!" The fury in Zuoqiu Guanyu's heart flared up instantly. "How dare you compete with my Zuoqiu Clan in terms of grain and try to shake the foundation of my Zuoqiu Clan!" He really wanted to summon the old ancestor immediately to exterminate the Wang Clan. But this thought was immediately rejected. The fierce commercial battle between Qing Feng Commercial Firm and Keep Achieving Commercial Firm had attracted numerous spectators. If Zuoqiu Clan were to use force against Wang Clan, it would probably cause huge trouble. "What's the selling price for the Wang Clan wheat?" Zuoqiu Guanyu's face was gloomy as a pool of water. Old An's face was equally bad, he kept wiping sweat and said, "It's... it's thirty percent lower than our price in previous years." "What?" Zuoqiu Guanyu laughed out of rage. "No wonder our wheat can't be sold... Are they planning to wage a price war with us on grain? Good strategy~ Alright, pass the order, we will also lower our prices, reducing fifty percent on grain sales including the Five-flavor Rice. " Such a price reduction would make the profit margin of Jade Finger Wheat extremely low. But now that Jade Finger Wheat could not be sold and a large amount of Five-Flavor Rice had nowhere to be stored. You must know, the preservation of grain has high requirements for ventilation, insulation, and drying, therefore, it needed to be stored in specialized warehouses. If the preservation was improper, the quality of the grain would drop significantly, or even fail to sprout. By then, the loss would be even greater. Zuoqiu Clan, worthy of being a Rank Four Prominent Family, possessed a wealth of talents within the clan, with many people and strong execution abilities. The order from Zuoqiu Guanyu was quickly carried out. A fifty percent price reduction was indeed very effective. As soon as the news came out, several prominent families who were still watching, immediately made a move and bought a batch. Even some of the prominent families who had already bought the Wang Clan's grain were also eager to try and buy some. After all, this price was too attractive, it would be a waste not to take advantage of the bargain. However, the Wang Clan's offensive followed closely. They rolled out the campaign of "returning customers bring new customers", where returning customers could get a rebate, while new customers could get even greater discounts. Once this campaign was launched. The wheat and rice seeds of Jade Finger Wheat stopped selling again. This time around, even at fifty percent of the price, they could not be sold. Zuoqiu Guanyu realized that the Wang Clan was determined to undermine the foundation of Zuoqiu Clan. If the loss was just for one year, Zuoqiu Clan could have endured it, but year after year, even Zuoqiu clan's deep pockets would gradually be depleted. What's scarier was that once a prominent family's foundation was shaken, without other variables, this family would undoubtedly decline rapidly. Zuoqiu Clan has six Purple Abode old ancestors, hundreds of Tianren realm elders, and countless Spirit Platform realm main forces. When Zuoqiu Clan had a stable source of income, this was undoubtedly a terrifying and intimidating major force. But once there was no foundation, it became an extremely large burden, with annual consumption being an astronomical figure. This

matter was beyond Zuoqiu Guanyu's ability to resolve, so he had no choice but to visit the old ancestor and seek a solution. A month later, the weather got colder. The winter wheat that needed to be planted had all been sowed. The Jade Finger Wheat seeds of the Zuoqiu Clan completely could not be sold, and in the end, they had no other choice but to clear the warehouse to make room for rice seeds. As for those wheat seeds that were moved out of the warehouse, they could not be sold as seeds, so they could only be sold as regular wheat or ground into flour for sale. Since they were old grains, the prices were even lower than during the peak season. Zuoqiu Clan was fully defeated in this round of confrontation, with losses difficult to measure. ... In the Longzuo County Town, inside the garden of the Prefecture Mansion. At this time, chrysanthemums were in full bloom in the garden, with bright hues blending with each other. In terms of color, it was by no means inferior to the blooming period of various flowers in spring and summer. In the pavilion, Taishi Ankang and Wang Shouzhe were drinking with each other. The head of the Qian Family, Qian Xuehan, was accompanying them. Compared to the previous time, this time around Taishi Ankang and Qian Xuehan were relaxed, glowing, indicating their good mood. "Shouzhe's move of draining the firewood from under the pot is both ruthless and spicy, hitting Zuoqiu Clan's weak spot." Taishi Ankang said while sipping tea, "I fear it won't be long before they come to us." "It's nothing more than some petty tricks." Wang Shouzhe appeared indifferent, not thinking he was that great, "As the saying goes, to forge iron, one must be hard oneself. The development of a prominent family should always be founded on self-improvement. These tricks are merely auxiliary." He knew clearly that in this world, strength was ultimately respected. This time, the reason the Wang Clan could undermine the foundation of the Zuoqiu Clan with grain was twofold. On one hand, he had planned ahead, and the Wang Clan's grain was certainly better than Zuoqiu Clan's, punching Zuoqiu Clan unpreparedly. On the other hand, it was because he bound Qian Family and Taishi Ankang to the warship, in addition to that, the Wang Clan also had a Great Heavenly Proud at the Academic Palace. Zuoqiu Clan was afraid to directly use force, they could only compete by business tactics.

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Otherwise, regardless of his multitude of cunning plans, the Zuo Qiu family just needs to send over two powerhouses from the Purple Abode Realm to secretly take him out and the Wang family would be done for. Of course, this is because the Zuo Qiu family hasn't been driven to desperation yet. When it finally comes to the point of a desperate leap, whether they will still exercise such restraint is difficult to say. "Well said, Master Shouzhe is indeed a worthy disciple of Master Changchun." Taishi Ankang burst into laughter, "However, even a small trick, when played to such a degree, is enough to amaze." Qian Xuehan brewed another cup of tea for the two of them and couldn't help but sigh, "Regardless, we have to thank Master Shouzhe for turning the tide this time. His ability to strategize and anticipate the enemy's movement is truly commendable." Wang Shouzhe laughed and shook his head, not saying anything more. In truth, where is the careful strategizing and anticipation of the enemy's movements? It is nothing more than caution, and then caution again. It has not been easy for the Wang family to reach its current state. So many clan members have grown up from infancy to be able to stand on their own under his watchful eye. What he carries on his shoulders is the hope of countless clan members, it's their future. He cannot afford to lose, nor dares to lose. "By the way, on the matter of the Cao family, I heard that the Investigation Envoy has returned to the capital?" After having a sip of tea, Wang Shouzhe suddenly recalled something and turned to Taishi Ankang. "Yes." Taishi Ankang nodded, "The Cao family sacrificed several elders from the Tianren Realm, pushing all the blame onto them and thus extricating themselves. The Investigation Envoy has taken these Tianren Realm elders back to the capital. Once

the verdict is out, I'm afraid they'll be sent off to the outer battlefields." Because there was no direct evidence, the matter of the Cao family colluding with pirates could not be linked to the direct line. The Cao family decisively sacrificed their minor figures, and the Investigation Envoy could only accept this outcome. This can be said to be a common strategy among prominent families. However, as a result, the Cao family, in essence, had an arm cut off. After all, the Tianren Realm powerhouses of the Cao family doesn't amount to more than a dozen in total. They have lost a quarter of them at once, greatly weakening their strength. After explaining this, Taishi Ankang added, "Also, Cao Bangyan has been ransomed back by the Cao family." "?" Wang Shouzhe looked up at him. "I initially had no intention of releasing him, but they offered a ransom of six million to subsidize the damage caused by the pirates in Longzuo County over the years. They were really generous," Taishi Ankang revealed a knowing smile. In the Great Qian Land where royalty and prominent families share power, there's a set of unspoken rules. One such unwritten rule allows families to ransom their direct lines as long as the crime committed isn't an act of rebellion against the kingdom. Of course, the cost is astronomically high. This is somewhat similar to bail or atonement money. Of course, if he commits any major crime again, there won't be a second chance for a ransom. Therefore, Wang Shouzhe wasn't worried about releasing the tiger to the mountain. For this boy, once he goes back home, he would likely not dare to step out for decades. Six million Qian gold is even for the Prefecture Mansion, a huge sum of money. Given that the Cao family was willing to spend a fortune to ransom him, it was only natural for Taishi Ankang to let him go. "Tsk, they really are willing to spend a fortune." Qian Xuehan tsked in astonishment, "If it were me, I would never use such a fortune for the likes of Cao Bangyan." "Don't say that. After all, Cao Bangyan is a Sky Pride." Wang Shouzhe took a sip of tea and said calmly, "Besides, according to the information I've gathered, I predict that the remaining lifespan of the Cao family's Purple Abode Old Ancestor should not exceed two hundred years." "Ah, I see..." Qian Xuehan finally understood. If it was for the Purple Abode succession, then it made sense for the Cao family to spend a fortune to ransom him. You know, whilst Sky Prides are rare, for a Purple Abode Prominent Family like the Cao family, the requirement isn't specifically for Cao Bangyan. The issue is that a young man with Heavenly Chosen Talent could take two hundred years at the quickest, and even three to four hundred and fifty years at the slowest, to grow to the Purple Abode Realm. I suspect the Cao family previously placed all their hope on Cao Bangyan. Now it's too late to start nurturing a successor for the Purple Abode. Cao Youqing, while being a Sacred Land Sky Pride, cannot preside over the family to maintain the class of the family. Even if they were unwilling, the Cao family had no choice but to grit their teeth and shell out the money to ransom Cao Bangyan. "Tsk, tsk. The Cao family really incurred a big loss this round." As a noble family head, Qian Xuehan was very sensitive to the flow of funds in the family. After a moment's thought, he couldn't help but gloat over the Cao family's misfortune, "They had to bribe the Investigation Envoy from the Inspectorate and pay huge amounts for ransom. I estimate that the asset of the Cao family would quickly be depleted. However, it's a good fortune for the Prefectural Governor, who has made a clean profit of six million." Saying this, he glanced at Taishi Ankang. This six million was not part of the tax income and the Prefecture Mansion could handle it independently. Taishi Ankang just laughed. Knowing Wang Shouzhe's nature well, without waiting for Wang Shouzhe to speak, Taishi Ankang proactively said, "Don't worry, since Cao Bangyan was captured by Shouzhe, I naturally won't pocket the six million by myself. I've already reported it above, I keep three million for the Prefecture Mansion to serve as a reserve fund. The other three million, though I couldn't directly give it to the Wang family, I allocated it as a subsidy for the development of Qingluo Sea." "Wei Wenxun has been effectively eliminating the pirates recently. In a few more years, we should be

nearly free of the pirates. You can start developing the Qingluo Sea according to plan. When the time comes, you can freely use this fund as long as the accounts look good."

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Indeed, developing the Qingluo Sea demanded considerable financial investment. With a mix of admiration and gratitude, Wang Shouzhe stood and bowed. "In that case, I owe the Prefectural Governor a debt of gratitude." "No, no, it is my Prefecture Mansion that benefits from your achievements," replied the governor with a wave of his hand and a chuckle. All he did was to provide a little help. The whole operation was not his own initiative, and the money earned was almost effortless. To use Wang Shouzhe's words, it was a clear case of "winning without lifting a finger". Lifted his spirits and endeared Wang Shouzhe to him. The three were engrossed in their conversation when suddenly a civil officer from the Prefectural Mansion, dressed in middle-age garb, walked in from outside the garden. He respectfully reported, "Prefectural Governor, the Old Ancestor of Zuoqiu Zhenghua, Family Head Guanyu, and the Governor of Qing'an Prefecture, Wu Dinghai, are waiting outside for you." My, my, The news brightened Qian Xuehan's eyes, "The Prefectural Governor is truly foresighted. The Zuoqiu family has indeed come." "Ha, ha. They came even quicker than I expected. It seems this time, they are in quite a hurry." The old governor, Taishi Ankang, could not help but laugh. The official was unsure about master Ankang's attitude and hesitated, "So... governor, are you going to meet them?" "No." The governor waved his hand dismissively. "Tell them I am in a meeting and ask them to wait." He couldn't forget the "insult" he once suffered in Qing'an County. Now that an opportunity for revenge presented itself, how could he resist making them wait? As a result, the wait turned out to be for half a day. ... The Governor of Qing'an Prefecture, Wu Dinghai, the Old Ancestor of the Purple Mansion, Zuoqiu Zhenghua, and Zuoqiu Family Head, Guanyu, waited in the reception hall of the governor's mansion for almost three hours without anyone meeting them. By the afternoon, the faces of Wu Dinghai and Zuoqiu Zhenghua had turned iron blue. Even Guanyu, the younger generation, looked deeply unhappy. "This Taishi Ankang is definitely seeking revenge!" Wu Dinghai, infuriated, almost smashed his teacup. "Isn't it just a temporary victory? It wasn't even his own ability. What does he have to brag about?" "Old Ancestor," Guanyu glanced at his own Zhenghua Old Ancestor and carefully suggested, "If this gets out, our Zuoqiu family will become a laughingstock." Zuoqiu Zhenghua contemplated and felt this was not the right way to go about it. With a resounding slam on the table, he stood up, "Let's go. Back home!" He didn't believe that the prestigious Grade Four Zuoqiu family couldn't deal with a Grade Seven Wang family! With that said, he swung his sleeves and stormed out of the mansion. Soon after, the three of them left in a flying carriage. Upon hearing the news, Taishi Ankang simply laughed it off, gave it no heed, and continued his tea and chat with Wang Shouzhe and Qian Xuehan, discussing the development plans for the Qingluo Sea. Meanwhile, as soon as they returned to Qing'an Prefecture, Zuoqiu Zhenghua and his companions immediately started to take action. As a powerful Grade Four Prominent family, the Zuoqiu family had extensive connections and strong influence within Qing'an Prefecture. The number of Celestial beings and Spirit Platform Realm within the family was staggering. When they set their minds to accomplish something, they could utilize an astonishing amount of energy. Soon enough, every checkpoint into Qing'an Prefecture had added guard posts, strictly screening entries, and preventing any possible Wang family's seed from entering. Although it was already winter wheat planting season, in less than half a year, it would be rice seedling cultivation time again. As long as the Zuoqiu family defended tightly, and Wang's rice strains could not appear in Qing'an Prefecture, the prominent families of Qing'an Prefecture would have no choice but to purchase the Zuoqiu family's

Five-flavor Rice strains. To ensure the exclusion of Wang's seeds, the Zuoqiu family's inspection team put in great effort to intercept all seeds, some even wonderfully disguised, preventing anything from passing through their checkpoint. As a result, the Wang Family's rice strain could not be transported to Qing'an Prefecture through normal channels. Upon receiving the news, Wang Shouzhe did not panic. He casually instructed his people to spread the news. At the same time, he had Qian Xuehan send a letter to the person in charge of the Qian family's transportation team to rent warehouses near Qing'an Prefecture. They were to stockpile rice seeds on site. As expected, once the news got out, the many prominent families within Qing'an were frantic. Many of them had pre-ordered rice seeds from the Wang family. Now that the rice seeds couldn't enter Qing'an, not only was their money wasted, but they also faced the dilemma of what to plant this year. It should be known that after cultivating the high-yield wheat of the Wang family for a season, they had fully experienced the benefits of high-yield grain. They directly benefited from such yield. If they were to plant the Zuoqiu family's grain, which falls behind Wang's grains, would they still be willing to do so? Problems don't always lack solutions. In this world, as long as there is enough incentive, even the most difficult problems can find a way to be solved. Shortly after the news spread, many Independent Cultivators sniffed a business opportunity. They tried various ways, even climbing over the mountains and ridges, to bypass the Zuoqiu family's checkpoints and transport the rice seeds into Qing'an Prefecture. The demand for Wang's rice seeds was enormous within Qing'an Prefecture at that moment. The seeds they managed to transport into Qing'an were snapped up in minutes. Such circumstances allowed these Independent Cultivators to make a huge fortune. However, the quantity of the seeds shipped in by the Independent Cultivators was only a small part. A large majority of the prominent families still couldn't buy any seeds.

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Many prominent families began to feel the pressure, even surreptitiously employing wagon teams in an attempt to transport grain from the Qian family's warehouse themselves. As expected, they were impeded by the sentries of the Zuoqiu family. After several unsuccessful attempts, these prominent families immediately became incensed. It is understood that the Zuoqiu family has long held a unique dominating power within Qing'an County. These years, apart from this Grade Four Zuoqiu family, there is not even a single Fifth Grade Purple Abode family within Qing'an County. It is not that the Rank Six families are simply unlucky, incapable of cultivating even a single Sky Pride out of their many family members. Rather, even if a Sky Pride does indeed arise, it would be impossible to nourish it to its full potential. To develop a Sky Pride into one belonging to the Purple Abode Realm requires consumption of resources that can only be described as monumental. The vast majority of resources in Qing'an County have been monopolized by the Zuoqiu family. They alone possess six rankers of the Purple Abode Realm. Thus, resources available to the Rank Six families have become extremely limited. They are fundamentally incapable of fostering a Purple Abode ranker. Throughout the years, who knows how many Rank Six families, left with no other options, have sent their descendants - their potential Sky Prides - to study at the Academic Palace. Yet, to this day, even with two individuals from the palace attaining the Purple Abode Realm, the ranking of these families never improves. It can be said that the dissatisfaction of these Rank Six families concerning Zuoqiu family has been festering for quite some time. In the past, they dared not challenge the Zuoqiu family directly. But now, seeing the Zuoqiu family incurring public wrath, how could they let go of such an opportunity? Thus, Rank Six families began to stir up trouble covertly and fanned the flames of collective hatred against the Zuoqiu family. With the indirect instigation by the Wang and Qian families, dissatisfaction towards the Zuoqiu family amongst the

citizens of Qing'an County rapidly reached its peak. This situation swiftly attracted the attention of the Academic Palace. Two palace disciples from Rank Six families, seeing a rare opportunity, decided to take action. They passed the news on to Return to Dragon City, the national capital. After this, the matter escalated further. Had it not been for the Zuoqiu family's influence within Return to Dragon City, they might have been held accountable immediately. The family had to pull some strings during the Small Morning Meeting just to buy time for Qing'an County. Regardless, Wu Ding Hai, the Prefectural Governor of Qing'an County, and a few old ancestors of Zuoqiu's family began to feel the pressure. By now, the atmosphere within Qing'an County is extremely tense. If they can't solve the problem immediately, Prefectural Governor Wu Ding Hai's tenure might come to an end, and Zuoqiu's family might face condemnation from the government. The Great Qian Land practices a system of governance in which the imperial family shares power with the regional, prominent families. This means that the latter need to take responsibility for maintaining regional stability. Just as during the floods in Longzuo County, when families like the Wang family helped gather refugees. This is seen as a duty. Otherwise, why should the court give these families a portion of the tax revenue? If a large-scale public event were to take place within the Zuoqiu family's dominion, this would be considered a serious dereliction of duty on part of theirs. Minor cases would result in a written inquiry, while serious cases could lead to the stripping of the family's aristocratic rights. It can be said that at this point, the Zuoqiu family's attempt to block the Wang family's grain has thoroughly failed. This failure is another loud slap in the face to the Zuoqiu family, casting a heavy gloom upon them. They had spent so long as a Grade Four prominent family, they had grown accustomed to looking down upon others. They have forgotten that they are not rulers of Qing'an County, but merely a part of it. The other large and small families aren't their livestock to be exploited at their whim. Once they defy the tenets of "human nature" and harm everyone's interests, they are sure to face backlash. Helpless, the Zuoqiu family had to once again seek the help of Wu Ding Hai, and through some of their connections in the capital, communicate once again with the Prefectural Governor of Longzuo County, Taishi Ankang, hoping that he would mediate the issue. At this point, Taishi Ankang had pretty much gotten involved, and the connections that the Zuoqiu family sought were indeed influential. Therefore, under the arrangements of Taishi Ankang and Wu Ding Hai, the heads of the Zuoqiu, Wang, and Qian families sat down to negotiate - naturally, this involved only head-level negotiations, with any family ancestors not participating. This was why Taishi Ankang defended Wang Shouzhe, after all, the Changning Wang clan was only a "Seventh-Rank Aristocratic Family", and the family didn't have an elder of the "Purple Abode" realm. The chosen location for the negotiation was set in the Purple Abode Palace of the Wang Clan in Longzuo. It wasn't until the formal meeting between the two parties that Zuoqiu Guanyu, Wang Shouzhe, and Qian Xuehan met for the first time. By their level, it can be said that they are all already top players in the field. Their past competitions were all carried out behind the scenes, manipulating the situation from afar, but never face-to-face. "I am Zuoqiu Guanyu from Zuo Qiu's family. It is an honor to meet Master Xuehan and Master Shouzhe. Both of you are indeed the elites of Great Qian Land, True Dragons among the people." The first to make his cultured greeting was Zuoqiu Guanyu, the head of Zuoqiu family. Being the head of a Fourth-Rank Aristocratic Family, his demeanor was impeccable. He truly was magnificent and extraordinary. Wang Shouzhe and Qian Xuehan naturally also returned the courtesy in a courteous manner, exchanging pleasantries with Zuoqiu Guanyu as if there had never been any conflict between them. At this level, all the underhand struggles were the norm. But tearing faces in public was pointless, unless there was some specific strategic goal. Otherwise, when meeting each other, it was necessary to put on a show of aristocratic grace. After a series of insincere pleasantries... Once

both parties sat down for tea and a chat, Zuoqiu Guanyu cupped his hands at Wang Shouzhe and said with a bitter smile: "Master Shouzhe, I did not expect you to be the direct disciple of Master Changchun from Longzuo Academy. No wonder you are so skilled in grain cultivation. The wheat and rice strains from your family are really impressive, formidable indeed." With the network of the Zuoqiu family, it would have been a breeze to find out Wang Shouzhe's background if they were willing to look into it. "Not at all," laughed Wang Shouzhe modestly, "I am nowhere near my master. The acquisition of these wheat and rice strains was simply due to some guidance from my Master and some luck on my part." Guided? Accidentally? Zuoqiu Guanyu found that hard to believe. He had collected some secret information, that Master Changchun had explored a relic of the Divine Martial Dynasty over a hundred years ago. Master Changchun never discussed what he had obtained from the relic and handled it discreetly. But after that incident, there was a new baby girl originated from nowhere around him, who was his prestigious Direct Disciple, "Green Fern". Could the adoption of a mere baby girl produce a great talent? This could not help but make people suspect that Master Changchun had additional gains from the relic. Particularly, he might have the ability to cultivate high-quality grain crops. The grains in the Wang family's possession were also likely related to Master Changchun's secrets. Fortunately, Wang Shouzhe had no idea what Zuoqiu Guanyu was thinking, otherwise he might not have been able to hold back an outburst of laughter. It had to be said that the imagination of the Zuoqiu family was too adventurous... They had speculated such an extraordinary origin for the source of the grains, which was a hundred thousand and eight thousand miles away from the facts. Nevertheless, Zuoqiu Guanyu's face turned somber again, as his eyes flashed sharply: "However, Master Shouzhe, it seems somewhat dismissive of our Zuoqiu family for you to sell grains in our Qing'an County." "With your family on the cusp of instability, Lord Guanyu still wants to throw his weight around? Is this because you are accustomed to your high status, or was your brain simply pounded in the head?" Wang Shouzhe's face turned serious, his eyes abruptly turning cold, "Let's talk if you want to, or you can just walk out." "Pfft!" Qian Xuehan almost spit out his tea, his eyes full of admiration as he looked at Wang Shouzhe. He was really bold! He was not even afraid of confronting a fourthly ranked aristocratic family head on! ...

#### Chapter 95 Zuo Qiu Admits Defeat! Shou Zhe Wins Big\_1

... "What?!" Zuoqiu Guanyu felt as if he had been slapped hard, his face turning instantly red with rage simmering and about to overflow, "Wang Shouzhe! How dare you talk to me like that?!" "Hm." Wang Shouzhe glanced at him, not bothering to address him. Taking up the tea cup from the table, he sipped at it unhurriedly. Seeing Zuoqiu Guanyu's face getting steadily more uncomfortable as if he was unable to bear it, Wang Shouzhe finally began to speak, "Master Guanyu, one must understand his status. With the ongoing crises inside and outside the Zuoqiu family, it's you who are seeking my help. I wonder where you get the courage to put on airs before me?" "Even if I simply refuse to negotiate, just being held accountable by the National Capital would be enough for the Zuoqiu family to face the music." "Even if you manage to smooth things over at the National Capital owing to your years of connections, and suppress the turmoil within Qing'an County using martial power. But if the crops can't be sold, how many years can the Zuoqiu family hold out? Large family, big business, it's certainly impressive. But can you afford the annual expense? Or else, you can reduce the number of Celestials exchanges, Purple Abode exchanges. You could also ask the family to cut down on their expenditure, which could sustain you for several more years." "Sadly, no matter how much one saves, it can't change a fate of constant decline." Every word from Wang Shouzhe was like an arrow, each one penetrating through Zuoqiu Guanyu's heart one after another. Being the head of the Zuoqiu family, no one understood the financial situation of Zuoqiu's more

than he did. Just the cost of supporting six Purple Abode Ancestors was a huge expenditure, not to mention the many more Celestial Elders below them, it was burning money every day. As for reducing their upkeep, dare he? Six Purple Abode Ancestors, any one of them could easily take care of him. Even if De Ye Ancestor and Zhenghua Ancestor, these two direct line ancestors, were willing to support him, the remaining four direct line Purple Abode ancestors would not agree. If the inner conflicts of Zuoqiu family arise, the consequences will be even more serious. If they don't sell crops, Zuoqiu family cannot maintain its current stability. "Aren't you afraid that our Zuoqiu family will turn against you?" Zuoqiu Guanyu clenched his fists, murder seeping into his look at Wang Shouzhe, "With the power of Zuoqiu, extinguishing your Wang family would be easy." "Hm." Wang Shouzhe sneered before turning to Taishi Ankang, "Prefectural Governor, since when did our Daqian Law allow high-ranked families to trample upon those of lower rank?" "Master Guanyu, watch your words." Taishi Ankang glanced at Zuoqiu Guanyu as he sternly warned, "My eight thousand Black Armor Guards of Longzuo County don't just eat and do nothing. Besides, since you've been inquiring about the Wang family, you must be familiar with Miss Wang Li Yao, who is a beloved student of Tianhe Enlightened One and an esteemed Great Sky Pride." Just the title of Great Sky Pride is enough to intimidate many Purple Abode Realm Cultivators. Not to mention, she also has an Enlightened One teacher from the Divine Abilities Realm. Doesn't Zuoqiu fear making an enemy of Wang Li Yao? In a hundred-odd years, she would have ascended to the Purple Abode, and after hundreds of years, she will be a Divine Skills Enlightened One. Aren't you afraid that she might seek revenge on Zuoqiu when she becomes a Divine Skills Enlightened One in the future? "Besides, the Changning Wang family is no rootless water hyacinth," Taishi Ankang added, "Many of its family members have entered the service of those in the Purple Abode. The main lineage of Wang is the Great Qian Wang Clan!" A family that can be termed "Great Qian" must be at least a Grade Three or once was a Grade Three family. For instance, though the Zuoqiu family of Qing'an is ranked fourth and almost dominates Qing'an County, it can only be prefaced with Qing'an. Brazenly using "Daqian" would make them a laughing stock and would not be recognized by others. Just like the Wang family can be referred to as "Changning" but can't arbitrarily be termed as "Longzuo". And the Longzuo Wang family, though it was once a fifth-grade family and now it has declined, it still carries the "Longzuo" title. When Taishi Ankang mentioned the "Great Qian Wang Clan," Zuoqiu Guanyu's already severe countenance grew even more severe. Even though the reports suggest that the current Changning Wang has no active communication with the main lineage in Daqian. But, if the matter escalates, it's uncertain if someone might go to Daqian to pull some strings. For example, if Wang Li Yao were to go to the Great Qian Wang Clan, given her status as the Great Sky Pride, she would definitely receive a warm welcome, and who knows, she may even be able to call upon a Divine Skills Old Ancestor. It is this myriad of considerations that has somewhat restrained the Zuoqiu family.... Seeing the deadlock, U-Ding Hai, the prefect of Qing'an, who had not spoken drew, made the peace: "Alright, alright. It's normal for young heads to have some disagreements, let's just let it out. Master Guanyu, as it is your Zuoqiu family who wants to negotiate, let's not put on airs as the Fourth Grade family. Let's give a little where we should, and not be ruled by our tempers." "The governor is right." Although Zuoqiu Guanyu was discontented, as the head of a prominent family, he was willing to give and take. Recognizing the situation, he obliged the governor with a bow of thanks and then, adopting an elegant demeanor, looked at Wang Shouzhe, saying, "Master Shouzhe, I was impulsive. Here is what I propose. After all, it was our Zuoqiu family who initiated this business conflict. We, Zuoqiu, will make the first move, the pricing in Flying Carriage Market will be decided by Keep Achieving Commercial Firm. After all, we should all profit in doing business, why give undue advantage to others?"



## Chapter 95 Zuo Qiu Admits Defeat! Shou Zhe Wins Big\_2

He had previously used his power to oppress others, which, in reality, was also a tactic. If he could truly control the Wang family, wouldn't that be wonderful? Even if he couldn't, he wouldn't lose much. Look, the moment he saw the Wang family's stiff stance, Zuoqiu Guanyu immediately changed his strategy. "Good idea," Wang Shouzhe said with a beaming smile, "Then our Keep Achieving Commercial Firm will also get involved in the flying carriage market in Qing An Prefecture, we can negotiate the prices. As for the grain business, we can do it together. You can sell to our Longzuo, and we can sell to your Qing'an as well." "Since Master Guanyu is so generous, giving the pricing power of the flying carriage market to Keep Achieving Commercial Firm. I, Wang Shouzhe, am naturally not a small-hearted person either," Wang Shouzhe took on a demeanor full of bravado and proclaimed, "The price of the grain will be determined by your Zuoqiu family, and I won't overcharge a single shilling." Zuoqiu Guanyu's expression faltered, and in his mind, ten thousand mud horses galloped wildly past. If our Zuoqiu family's grain could compete with your Wang family's grain at the same price, would I have run all this way to be humiliated by you? Zuoqiu Guanyu fiercely pinched his palm, managing to control his expression and force a smile: "Master Shouzhe, you jest." "You were the one who started joking," Wang Shouzhe said, his smile resembling both laughter and non-laughter. "So according to Master Shouzhe's meaning..." Zuoqiu Guanyu, having sufficiently sensed Wang Shouzhe's formidable strength, cautiously probed, "Is there a solution to this matter?" "Naturally, there is a solution." Wang Shouzhe was too lazy to beat around the bush, "First, your Qing Feng Commercial Firm's flying carriage operations should be completely disbanded, with our Keep Achieving Commercial Firm fully taking over both the flying carriage business and the debts." Zuoqiu Guanyu's mouth twitched. Is he serious? Such an outrageous condition, and it's only the first... "Secondly, grant our Keep Achieving Commercial Firm access to the flying carriage market in Qing An Prefecture." Wang Shouzhe said nonchalantly, "As long as these two conditions are met, it expresses your sincerity, and you can negotiate the grain business with our Wang family." Such two vicious conditions were only prerequisites? Even Prefectural Governor Wu Ding Hai's face had started to look unpleasant: "Master Shouzhe, aren't you being a tad too greedy? Isn't your approach rather unsightly? One must always leave room for maneuvering, so don't be too excessive." Upon hearing this, before Wang Shouzhe could respond, Prefect Taishi Ankang broke into heartily laughter: "Wu Ding Hai, why does your remark sound so familiar to me? A year ago, when I personally went to Qing An Prefecture to discuss with you, wasn't this what I told you? How did you answer me then?" Mimicking Wu Ding Hai's tone, he said, "Taishi, it's all proper business competition, it's a good thing for the people. You're simply worrying too much over nothing." After finishing, he looked at Wu Ding Hai with a smirk: "By your logic, our Master Shouzhe selling grain at a low price to all the prominent families in Qing An Prefecture, wouldn't that also be a great deed that benefits the country and the people?" Wu Ding Hai's face immediately reddened, looking as if it had been slapped, it burned. The way he had given Taishi Ankang a telling-off in the past was now being paid back twofold. And, he couldn't even leave in a huff like him, because if he did, the Zuoqiu family would meet their end sooner or later. Before that happens, they might even do something crazy, and then his, Wu Ding Hai's, days would truly be numbered. Perhaps it was due to the pressure of their impending doom, but the Emperor had become increasingly sensitive over the past few years. If such a massive mistake were made, he would most likely be banished to the frontier battlefields. If his luck wasn't good, he might even immediately become cannon fodder. "Prefect Taishi." Wu Ding Hai knew he was in deep water and had to smile, saying, "Indeed, I was at fault in this matter. I apologize to you." Refreshing! Taishi

Ankang felt as satisfied as eating an ice block on a hot day, from top to toe. Thinking about it, when he looked at Wang Shouzhe again, his eyes contained even more joy and admiration. The Wang Clan of Changning having such a son as the Family Head will surely prosper~~ "Though these two conditions may seem harsh..." Wu Ding Hai tried to smooth things over with a forced smile, "However, all's said and done, it was the Zuoqiu family who listened to my vile advice and provoked this dispute. If there's a reasonable arrangement on the grains side, we at Qing An might not refuse." "Prefect! These conditions..." Zuoqiu Guanyu panicked. However, before he could finish, he was interrupted by Wu Ding Hai's stern rebuke: "Master Guanyu, when will you finally understand? The position of your Zuoqiu family is now like fish on a chopping board, you have no qualifications to negotiate. The most pressing matter right now is to have a good discussion and find a way to resolve the dispute over grains. That is the foundation of your Zuoqiu family." Zuoqiu Guanyu was reeling as if struck by lightning; his face turned alternately red and pale, and it took him a while to come back to his senses. He, of course, knew all this in his heart... but the renown of a rank-four prominent family was too loud, he had gotten used to being towering above others. They were always the ones controlling others' destinies. It was simply impossible for him to accept that his fate was now in the hands of a mere seventh-grade family. After what seemed like an eternity, he finally regained his composure: "Master Shouzhe, our Zuoqiu family can agree to the two conditions. However, we are willing to pay a high price for the cultivation rights of the few grains that you sell in our Qing An Prefecture. A one-time fee of five million Qian Gold for the cultivation and selling rights of five types of grains in Qing An Prefecture." "Otherwise, we, the Zuoqiu family, would rather die than submit. At that time, how the situation will develop will have to be left to fate."

### Chapter 95 Zuo Qiu Admits Defeat! Shou Zhe Wins Big\_3

"By the last sentence, the tone of Zuoqiu Guanyu had also hardened. After all, a Grade Four Prominent Family is always a Grade Four Prominent Family, they have their dignity and pride." Wang Shouzhe noticed it as well, that buying the cultivation and sales rights for the grains in Qing'an Prefecture was indeed the bottom line for the Zuoqiu family. Otherwise, for the Wang family only to withdraw from the Qing'an market, not to mention whether the other prominent families of Qing'an who have tasted sweet success would agree, who knows if the Wang Clan, once becoming powerful, wouldn't strike back? It is true that obtaining the cultivation and sales rights was the bottom line, but the price was not. Wang Shouzhe had already made an estimate of this, and also investigated the financial power of the Zuoqiu clan. "We, the Wang family, can sell the cultivation and sales rights within Qing'an Prefecture to you, the Zuoqiu family," Wang Shouzhe said, sipping his tea. Without letting Zuoqiu Guanyu feel joyful, he continued, "but the Zuoqiu family needs to make an upfront payment of fifty million Qian Gold for monopoly fees, and from then on, pay two million Qian Gold per year for licensing fees." After all, did the Wang family want to start a fight to the death just like the Zuoqiu family? Nowadays, the Wang family is in the process of rising rapidly, with a future that is boundless. Unless necessary, Wang Shouzhe is not willing to go head-to-head with any Noble Family from the Purple Abode. Just giving away some low-grade grains will grant him a significant amount of money, solve the present financial crisis of Lady Wang, and relieve the crisis confronting the Keep Achieving Commercial Firm. Additionally, it can repel the Zuoqiu family, so why wouldn't he do that? After all, what the Wang family is most in need of now is time and money. Given enough time and space for the Wang family to develop, in one or two centuries, the Wang family may not be afraid of directly confronting the Zuoqiu family. As for the money... The Sky Prides, Great Heavenly Prouds, and Little Sky Prides of the Wang

family, the old and young of the family, dissipate a sum of Qian Gold per year that reaches colossal figures. With the birth of new family members, this number is still growing. If it was not so, why would Wang Shouzhe have just finished developing the new town of Xin An and set his sights on the "Qingluo Guard" next? And the future establishment and development of the Qingluo Guard is even more of an "insatiable" gold-consuming beast. At Wang Shouzhe's quote, Zuoqiu Guanyu was frightened and roared in rage: "Master Shouzhe, even extortion should have a bottom line. Do you treat us, the Zuoqiu family, as sheep awaiting slaughter? Ten million! Only ten million, not a shilling more, our Zuoqiu family..." "Master Guanyu, do not be so impulsive. The price is something we can negotiate~ How about this, forty-five million..." For the benefit of each of their own clans, the two Noble Family heads began to haggle over the price as if they were vendors at a vegetable market. This process lasted a good half a month. In the end, after Zuoqiu Guanyu stormed out several times, and after consulting with the Old Ancestor of his family, the two sides finally agreed on the terms of their peace negotiations. Apart from the Zuoqiu family completely leaving the Flying Carriage Market and opening the Anqing County Flying Carriage Market unconditionally, the Zuoqiu family paid twenty million Qian Gold in cash to buy the cultivation rights for the grain and will pay 10% of the total sales price for the grains to the Wang family every year as patent usage fees. This agreement will last for a hundred years. During the period covered by this contract, the Wang family can't actively sell grain inside Qing'an County. With this, the great turmoil caused by the grains came to an end, and the outcome could well be termed as "happy ending". ... Some time passed. In Qing'an County, there was the renowned food manor known as "Quiet Elegance Residence." After seeing Zuoqiu Guanyu away, Xiaoyue returned to the Qingzhu Court, furrowing her brows involuntarily. Although what Zuoqiu Guanyu had said was phrased diplomatically, the meaning was rather clear: the Zuoqiu family had suffered too much loss this time, so they won't take part in the plans against the Qian family and the Wang family. They asked Master Ce to find another capable helper. As for the favor owed for renting the Flying Carriage, the Zuoqiu family would find a way to repay it. Zuoqiu Guanyu having put it this way, Xiaoyue naturally couldn't force him and could only politely see him off after he'd said some niceties. Honestly, she had never thought that things would develop to this stage. The struggle amongst the prominent families has always been about financial and actual strength. A four-rank prominent family with a two-thousand-year history, a family full of strong individuals, whether it be financial or actual strength, they are worth several times that of the Qian family of Longzuo and the Changning Wang family combined. By common sense, they were absolutely not supposed to lose. For the Longzuo Qian family and the Changning Wang family to be able to turn the tables under such circumstances, it almost seems like a "miracle". It is a representative incident that can be written in the "Longzuo County Records". Even if the Qian family and the Wang family had taken advantage of the situation and prepared ahead, this result could still be described as "unbelievable". Moreover, according to the news sent from Luo Yuqing's "Dawn", the one who had taken the lead in this confrontation against the Zuoqiu and Cao families, was surprisingly not the Longzuo Qian family they initially suspected, but the Changning Wang family. To be more precise, it was the head of the Changning Wang family: Wang Shouzhe. From start to finish, the Longzuo Qian family had been executing everything according to Wang Shouzhe's plan, as if firmly convinced that he would snatch victory for the Qian family. Unaware, Xiaoyue again recalled Luo Yuqing's appraisal of Wang Shouzhe: "strategically deep, good at making bold moves and thorough in his caution". At the time, she felt that this appraisal was slightly too high. However, looking at it now, this appraisal seems to have underestimated him. Maybe, she should add "he cannot be measured by common standards" to this evaluation.

## Chapter 95 Zuo Qiu Admits Defeat! Shou Zhe Wins Big\_4

A person like Wang Shouzhe, if a friend, would indeed be a joyous thing. But if he is an enemy, then it can truly be... Xiaoyue rubbed her temple a little, her head was aching slightly. Well, now matter how much thought was put into it, it would be no avail at this point. She had better think about damage control. Frost Moon Immortal Dynasty and Da Qian were separated by a vast Hurricane Ocean, and news transmission was difficult. Her master temporarily could not know about the situation in Da Qian. The master would return from the Frost Moon Immortal Dynasty one day, and she would have to give an account to her master. Thinking about this, she quickly returned to her room. Soon, two messenger birds - one green and one white - flew out of her room window and flapped their wings as they soared up into the sky. ... Liaoyuan County, the Cao Family's main residence. Emerging from Cao Bangyan's courtyard, Cao Youqing felt slightly irked. Unknowingly, it had been almost a year since Bangyan was captured. During this time, the entire Cao family was kept busy dealing with the investigator's investigation, being head over heels without time to care for themselves. Fortunately, the investigator had been sent away and Bangyan was successfully ransomed. This matter could be considered resolved for the time being. However, for her, this matter was far from over. Cao Youqing surveyed her surroundings. Throughout her journey, there were constantly Cao family members passing by. On the surface, everyone was as respectful to her as before, but she knew in her heart that while no one said anything outright, in secret they were surely blaming her. Otherwise, why would they need to avoid her gaze when she looked over? This time, the Cao Family's loss was too tremendous. Six million Qian Gold, even for a prominent Purple Abode family like the Cao family, was an immense sum. To raise these funds, Cao Bangning had to cut down on the resource supply for the family members and even sold several ships. How could the family not resent her? Moreover, the few Elders who were sacrificed as scapegoats this time were mostly the elders in the family. Most of them were over three hundred years old, with many children and grandchildren. They had long been considered as Old Ancestors within their lines. Even though it was for the sake of the family and that they had no choice but to sacrifice themselves, and despite Bangning promising to compensate them, how could they not have any grievances? All these were weighing on Cao Youqing as a form of incomprehensible pressure. The more she thought about it, the more depressed she felt. The more the family members tried to avoid her, the worse her mood became. Her mood only slightly improved when she arrived at the Old Ancestor's Kun Wu Residence. The Old Ancestor of the Cao family was named "Cao Kunhao", who was approaching six hundred years old. In recent years, as his lifespan limit was nearing, his vigor had diminished significantly. He rarely came out for activities and spent most of his time in seclusion in the Kun Wu Residence. However, even when the Old Ancestor was in seclusion, Cao Youqing could come to Kun Wu Residence whenever she wished. As usual, she pushed the door and walked in. The moment Cao Youqing looked up, she saw the Old Ancestor, Kun Hao, sunbathing in the courtyard. Compared to several decades ago, he was now showing signs of aging. His hair was snowy white and his face was filled with wrinkles, making him look like a seventy-or eighty-year-old person in the human world. "Old Ancestor." Seeing this familiar figure, somehow, a sense of grievance welled up inside Cao Youqing's heart. Her figure blurred and she appeared in front of the Old Ancestor's lounge chair, knelt down on the grass, and acted like a spoiled child hugging his arm. She murmured with a sense of wrong: "Old Ancestor, I can't accept it, I really can't accept it~" "Ah~" Old Ancestor Kun Hao sighed and slowly opened his slightly blurred eyes. Although he had not stepped forward, as the only Purple Abode Old Ancestor of the Cao Family, how could he not know what had happened at home during this period? He reached out and pat Cao

Youqing's head, speaking with an indulgent tone: "You child, a loss is a loss. With your current strength, as long as you cultivate diligently, you can achieve Purple Abode in less than a hundred years. The future still holds infinite possibilities. Our Cao Family can no longer withstand such chaos." "Old Ancestor, you've always spoiled me the most since I was young. You know my personality. If I can't get past this hurdle, I'm afraid I will be plagued by inner demons, making it difficult for me to pass the judgment of the Heavenly Dao in the future." A trace of resentment flashed in Cao Youqing's eyes, "All in all, I underestimated Wang Shouzhe. If this man is not eliminated, he will become a disaster in the future. Once he achieves Purple Abode, my Cao Family will surely suffer." "Ah~ Child... Alright, alright, you are somewhat correct. If this man is not eliminated, he is indeed a great hidden danger." Old Ancestor Kun Hao thought of the young family head of the Wang family, his face unconsciously became serious, "But, we must act cautiously in this matter. Unless we have absolute certainty, we must not stir up the grass and startle the serpent." A hint of murderous intent flashed in the depths of his eyes. "Old Ancestor, this time I definitely will not fail." Whenever she thought of Wang Shouzhe, Cao Youqing couldn't help grinding her teeth, her beautiful face filled with resentment and hatred. Even though that Luo Yuqing girl kept snitching on her to the master and was extremely annoying, compared with Wang Shouzhe, she couldn't count as anything. This time, she might have to personally find that stinky girl Luo Yuqing and ask her to help keep an eye on Wang Shouzhe. She refused to believe that Wang Shouzhe wouldn't have a moment of vulnerability! ...

#### Chapter 96: Finally waiting for you, Young Master!

... In the northern part of Qingluo Sea, near the direction of Liaoyuan County, there is a small reef island. This reef island, formerly the stronghold of the pirate gang "Red Dragon Pirates," has been selected as the center of the newly established Qingluo Guard due to its advantageous geographical location and the presence of many surrounding islands. The Qingluo Guard's city is being built on this reef island. At present, the city plan has been finalized and construction has begun. The whole reef island is bustling with activity, full of construction sites and busy people. From time to time, one could see massive stone puppets carrying huge rocks, walking heavily by. From the outline of the foundations, the shape of a city is already faintly visible. Wang Shouzhe and Wei Wenxun walked out of the cabin side by side and saw this bustling scene as they looked up. Behind Wang Shouzhe was a tall, handsome young man, Wang Shouzhe's eldest son. He is Wang Zong'an, the current Young Clan Leader of the Wang family. Wang Zong'an is now thirty-five years old and has had three children. Having spent several years in Longzuo Academy and weathered many years in Keep Achieving Commercial Firm, he has transformed into a mature, capable, and independent elite of the Wang family. Under the subtle guidance of Wang Shouzhe, his personal ability ranks high among his peers within the Wang family. As for his strength, it has already reached the sixth layer of the Spirit Platform Realm, and in a dozen years or so, he will be preparing to break through to the Heavenly Human Realm. In addition, a dozen household heads and attendants followed them. At the turn of summer and autumn, the waves on the sea are much weaker than in spring and summer, making it the best time of year to go to sea. Looking into the distance, the sea stretches out in all directions, with sunlight and cloud shadows lingering together, creating a breathtaking scene. Under the light of the sun and the shadows of clouds, even the dusty construction sites on the island seemed to have a touch of celestial charm, making them somehow pleasing to the eye. One can imagine that before long, a real city will be born here. "Very good," Wang Shouzhe nodded approvingly, expressing his satisfaction with Wei Wenxun's work over the past period of time. "Once the Qingluo Guard is officially established, Commander Wei will surely gain a great deal of

merit points." "Hahaha, that's all thanks to Master Shouzhe for recommending me to the Prefectural Governor. It is because of this that such a great opportunity can fall on Old Wei." Wei Wenxun thanked Wang Shouzhe with a cupped fist salute, "For this, Old Wei owes Master Shouzhe a great favor. In the future, should Master Shouzhe require anything from Old Wei, feel free to ask." Thanks to his successful crackdown on pirates, Wei Wenxun's position in the Prefecture Office has soared. Now, although he still holds the position of Western City Commander, he has also been temporarily added the title of Qingluo Guard City Commander, and his salary has accordingly risen substantially. One must know that the bureaucratic system of Da Qian differs greatly from that on Earth. The most significant difference is the strict requirement for strength. For example, it is a requirement for a city lord to have a strength above the Heavenly Human Realm, and for a prefect, the requirement is to have a strength above the Purple Abode Realm. If one does not possess such strength, no matter how great their merits or achievements are, they are useless because they cannot maintain order among the local prominent families. Now that Wei Wenxun's strength is only at the level of the Heavenly Human Realm, the position of a governor is far out of his reach. Therefore, the greatest benefit for him now is merit points, since merit points and salaries are directly linked. And the size of one's salary directly affects their cultivation speed. If he can cultivate quickly enough to reach the mid-late stage of the Heavenly Human Realm before the age of 300, he may have a chance to secure a good position in the capital given his merit points. Given Wei Wenxun's potential, this is already the best path for him. "Oh, not at all~" Wang Shouzhe waved his hand with a smile, "When we were in Changning Guard, Commander Wei collaborated perfectly with the Wang family. Now that I am recommending Commander Wei as City Commander, I also have my private motives. Please don't feel obliged, Commander Wei." One must know, considering that Qingluo Guard City will be an important transfer station for maritime transport in the future, as well as a bridgehead for overseas expansion, he has put forward many suggestions for the design of the city, especially for the port. Although the large steam ironclad warship is still in the research stage, the Wang family will eventually have its own ironclad warship, and the Qingluo Guard's port must be able to dock those. If the person in charge were not Wei Wenxun, these things would not proceed so smoothly, who knows what complications there would be. "Absolutely necessary," Wei Wenxun insisted, "Regardless of whether Master Shouzhe admits or not, in my heart, I owe Master Shouzhe the favor. Besides, who in the Prefectural Government of Longzuo doesn't know that Old Wei is your man, Master Shouzhe?" Wang Shouzhe was so creeped out that he got goosebumps and couldn't help but give Wei Wenxun a dirty look. What does it mean to be his man? People who don't know might think they had something going on~~~ "By the way~ The Prefectural Governor said that this time the establishment proposal for Qingluo Guard passed smoothly thanks to Master Shouzhe's suggestions and planning." Wei Wenxun suddenly remembered something, "He asked me to reserve a piece of land for the Wang family in the newly established Qingluo Guard. Master Shouzhe, which area would you prefer?" This is the benefit of having one's own network in the government. If it were someone else unfamiliar with setting up Qingluo Guard City, how could there be such a great convenience to let you choose any location you like?

## Chapter 96, Yōu qīng! Finally Waited for You\_2

Wang Shouzhe certainly did not hold back from Wei Wenxun. When he was helping to plan for the Qingluo Guard City, he had already achieved a comprehensive understanding of the water patterns around the Reef Island. After some simple deliberation, he demarcated a piece of land near the port. To avoid making it difficult for Wei Wenxun, the area he chose was not large. In the end, it was Wei Wenxun who couldn't bear to see it and generously doubled the size of the land Wang had

demarcated, effectively incorporating nearly one-third of the sea territory belonging to the Qingluo Guard City. Being fellow bureaucrats, Wei Wenxun had a far more accurate understanding of Taishi Ankang's mindset than Wang Shouzhe did. To be honest, the Qingluo Guard City was secured thanks to Wang Shouzhe's efforts, a feat comparable to pioneering a frontier. If not for the prestige of the court being at stake, and the need for the Prefecture Mansion to take the lead, even if the entire Qingluo Guard City was given to the Wang family based on the standards of opening up a frontier, Taishi Ankang wouldn't have much objection. Now that only a parcel of land is being allocated, Taishi Ankang would naturally have no objections. Considering Wang Shouzhe's abilities in money-making and governing, the future tax revenue from Qingluo Guard City will only increase rather than decrease. Afterwards, Wang Shouzhe and Wei Wenxun followed the procedures, making records in all departments of the Prefecture Mansion. Finally, they affixed Wang Shouzhe's name on the empty land deed issued by the Prefecture Mansion. The official seal given to nobility by the government was stamped on it, officially registering the maritime territory under the name of the Wang Family. After putting down his pen, Wang Shouzhe casually put the land deed into his storage ring, "I will have the personnel from the Keep Achieving Commercial Firm come over for a site survey to check the situation in the airspace. If the windy currents are manageable and the conditions allow, I would let Keep Achieving Commercial Firm set up a base within the city. In the future, the seafood farmed would be shipped out directly from Qingluo Guard City to various places." "That sounds great," Wei Wenxun had been waiting for this sentence and couldn't help but laugh, "Prominent Families within the Qing'an Prefecture seldom eat seafood, hence the seafood farmed is sure to sell well. I wish Family Head Shouzhe a source of abundance and an early ascension to Rank Six Prominent Family." Upon hearing this, Wang Zong'an, who had been silent all this while, twitched the corner of his mouth. The Wang family currently already has three individuals in the Heavenly Human Realm, and there will be even more in the future. As long as his father is willing, the family could ascend to Rank Six at any time. He wondered what Wei Wenxun's expression would be if he knew this. "Cough, cough~Many thanks for the auspicious words, Commandant Wei." Wang Shouzhe coughed once, and then as if nothing happened, continued inspecting the ongoing construction of Qingluo Guard City with Wei Wenxun. The current situation in Qingluo Guard City can be said to be masterminded by him, and he is very satisfied with the current situation. Actually, right from the beginning, when he knew about the situation of Qingluo Sea, he already had his eyes on this maritime territory, but simply did not have an opportunity to act upon it. Even though the Qingluo Sea was rife with pirates, the pirates, numerous as they might be, were all acting on their own, like scattered sand, and their collective strength was not particularly great. Among the piracy gangs, the strongest boss was only in the mid-stage of Heavenly Human Realm. Longzuo County had dispatched three individuals in the early stage of Heavenly Human Realm and wiped out that piracy gang. In terms of real strength, the Jiaolong Gang was much more difficult to deal with. The Qingluo Sea had not been governed all this time ultimately because of the issue of benefits. Before the appearance of aerial cold chain transportation, the preservation and transportation of marine products was a significant issue. Natural marine catches already exceeded demand, so naturally there was no incentive for anyone to engage in aquaculture. The benefits of the sea mainly came from fishing and maritime trade. However, with fierce beasts rampant in the deep sea and Hurricane Ocean standoff, even fishing and maritime trade could only be conducted along the coast. As such, the benefits that can be generated were very limited. Wang Shouzhe had conducted a special investigation and found that when Qingluo Sea was first developed, there were quite a few small and medium-sized nobilities engaged in maritime fishing and trade. But as piracy became more rampant, the ships of the small and medium-sized nobilities were often robbed and

could no longer profit from fishing and maritime trade. Gradually, they gave up on these benefits and turned to other areas of development. Over time, increasingly only powerful and well-protected fleets like that of the Cao family, were able to sail safely across the sea and seize the benefits of fishing and maritime trade. In this context, if it were said that piracy was rampant without the indulgence or even the instigation of the Cao family and other maritime trade nobilities, Wang Shouzhe wouldn't believe it. But now, with the development of aerial cold chain transportation, the preservation and transportation of marine products are no longer a problem. Aquaculture will sooner or later become a pillar industry in coastal areas, just like agriculture. What the Wang family must do is to build the industrial chain for aquaculture before anyone else, become the leading player in this industry, take advantage of this favorable situation to seize pricing and speaking rights, and become the party that sets the rules. Meanwhile. Not far from the port. In a small and narrow natural bay, the sea water was as clear as ice. One could still make out the white and glossy sand and rocks through the depth of a yard. Sundry beautiful small fishes were swimming briskly, from time to time foraging among the sands. Not far away, a palm-sized juvenile roe crab was patiently lying in ambush in the cracks of an antiquated underwater log, waiting for an incautious little fish to approach the crack, so it could pounce on it and feast. Gradually, the group of small fish began to approach the ambush site of the crab.

#### Chapter 96: Young Master! Finally Waited for You\_3

This scene was like a beautiful painting. Suddenly. A twenties-foot-long offshore fishing boat cut through the water waves at a rapid pace, disrupting the tranquility, and disturbing the small fish. The little fish scattered speedily. That poor young prickly crab stood still with its eyes erect, most likely about to starve. On the small fishing boat, one up front and one behind, stood two 'old fishermen'. The older one was clad in a raincoat, bent at the waist, hunched back, and pulled the oars. While the young one, with a bamboo hat on his head and a fishing net in his hand, seemed ready to cast the net at any time. With the development progress of the Qingluo Guard, many local fishermen had already moved their families to the Qingluo Island Group ahead of time. They fished in the nearby waters, and sold their catch to the soldiers, civilian workers or the Wang's development team. Even so, many coastal residents have directly joined the ranks of civilian workers. This small fishing boat, amidst many other small fishing boats, was truly inconspicuous. At the bow of the fishing boat, the young 'old fisherman', eyes flashing a hint of fierceness, stared at the 'Wang Investigative Team' a hundred feet away. His voice clear and touching, exclaimed, "That damned guy finally left his nest after hiding for so long." "Fortunately, Luo Yuqing, that girl, although a tattletale, was competent enough to keep an eye on you for me." Her voice was clear and moving, it was none other than Cao Youqing disguised. She did not know what was smeared on her face, and at first glance, she looked very much like the fishermen around her. It was not until she spoke that she could not be distinguished. Speaking of which, she turned around and said to the fisherman pulling on the rear of the boat: "The time has come, please, Old Ancestor, take action and kill him." As her words fell, the old fisherman suddenly straightened up. "Girl, you better hide. Regardless of whether it succeeds or not, you should not participate so as not to jeopardize your future." As his words fell down, his figure had already become erect and tall, and a presence of an unmatched expert erupted. ... Meanwhile. Wang Shouzhe and his people were still inspecting the site selection for the deep-water port, occasionally giving out some ideas. These ideas were all from Wang Shouzhe's strange obscure knowledge from his past life. If placed on Earth, ninety-nine percent of obscure knowledge would be of no use to him. But in this world, as his status grew higher and higher, and as he became involved in more and more aspects, quite a few of these obscure



knowledge unexpectedly came in handy. "Master Shouzhe is really knowledgeable, knowing even these things." Wei Wenxun couldn't help but exclaimed while letting the scribe in charge of the construction record Wang Shouzhe's words, "Master Shouzhe, apart from giving birth, is there anything else you don't know?" Er... A drop of cold sweat trickled down from Wang Shouzhe. Are these things comparable? While talking. Suddenly. Unexpected crisis! "Buzz~~" An overwhelming aura suddenly erupted like a volcano. In an instant, the sky changed color. The calm sea suddenly set off huge waves, the sky turned dark in a flash, water droplets splashed in the air, wild winds rampaged as if it had instantly turned to the storm season of spring and summer. Amid the raging waves, a figure wearing a bamboo hat and a raincoat, stepping on the waves, suddenly appeared between heaven and earth. This figure was, of course, Old Ancestor Kunhao. His figure looked so frail and small compared to the raging wind and surging waves behind him. However, the power that emanated from his body was vast and powerful, as if he had become one with heaven and earth. Purple Abode Realm cultivators possessed a strong Divine Sense and had reached a certain depth of understanding of the Laws of Heaven and Earth. When they made a move, they could harness the power of heaven and earth. Their strength was incomparable to that of the Heavenly Human Realm cultivators. At this moment, Old Ancestor Kunhao was here to kill Wang Shouzhe and was naturally ruthless when he made his move. He saw his slightly muddy eyes squint slightly, staring at Wang Shouzhe, and slowly raised his palm. Radiant blue light suddenly bloomed from the palm of his hand. In an instant, the invisible power of laws spread out. The Elemental Water Aura in the entire heaven and earth seemed to be controlled by him at this moment, carrying terrifying power towards the direction of Wang Shouzhe. The power was grand and powerful. Its might was as if the Milky Way was pouring down, like a space-time rupture, causing one's mind and spirit to shatter. Everyone was horrified and quickly dodged to the sides. "It's a cultivator in the Purple Abode Realm! Be careful, Master Shouzhe." Wei Wenxun's face changed dramatically. Almost instinctively, he took a step forward to stand in front of Wang Shouzhe. But facing the terrifying might that was crashing down like divine punishment, he felt as insignificant as an ant shaking a tree, and a sense of despair that was difficult to resist. I'm finished. I, Wei Wenxun, shouldn't have taken the initiative. This time, I'm afraid I'll be implicated and killed. Wei Wenxun's heart was cold, filled with regret and despair. Just when he was in despair. There was movement in Wang Shouzhe's arms, and suddenly a cute, furry fox head poked out from his clothes. Its red fur fluttered in the wind, looking extraordinarily clever and cute. Without saying a word, it saw the strong man in the Purple Abode Realm coming with the waves in the sky and leaped out. "Roar~!" With a roar, its small body rapidly expanded. In a blink of an eye, it turned into a huge, fiery red, Seven-Tailed Spirit Fox. Its enormous body served as a sturdy wall, firmly shielding Wang Shouzhe and others behind it. At the same time, a golden light flashed in its fierce fox eyes. The red flame pattern on its forehead spread out suddenly. This was the symbol of the fox fire, Firefox's inherent divine skill. As a Seven-tailed Firefox, it automatically mastered the use of "Fox Fire" when it grew its seventh tail. This could be considered the innate advantage of Fierce Beasts. Compared with human cultivators in the Purple Abode Realm who need to comprehend laws and practice hard to master divine skills, Fierce Beasts instinctively know how to use their own power after advancement. At this moment, it was only a Seven-tailed Firefox. The red pattern on its forehead occupied a small area. When it advanced to the Eight-tails and Fox Fire evolved from a small divine power to a great divine power, this red flame pattern would occupy most of its forehead, with grander momentum. To be precise, this was the first time the Seven-tailed Firefox exerted its full force since it grew the seventh tail. But it wasn't in the least bit stage-frightened. With a roar, it whipped its seven enormous tails, and the red Fox Fire swept out, turning into a sky full of flames, heading towards the sky. The Seven-

tailed Firefox was a Level Seven Fierce Beast, equivalent to a human cultivator in the early middle stage of the Purple Abode Realm. However, Fierce Beasts are naturally born and bred, inherently having strong physical constitution and much thicker bloodline power than humans. At the same level, their combat abilities were a notch stronger than humans. At this moment, when the Seven-tailed Firefox exerted its full strength, the power of its surging flames was absolutely breathtaking, as if it would burn a hole in the sky. "Boom~~~" The roaring flames collided with the Elemental Water Aura in the sky, instantly exploding like fireworks. In the twinkling of an eye, the entire sky seemed to be torn apart by this terrifying force. The dreadful energy was wildly rolling, like a heaven-and-earth catastrophe. Meanwhile, a terrible shock wave also swept across. The hurricane swept in, the waves on the sea surface suddenly grew larger, and all the ships began to sway wildly. Nearby, the shallow-draft civilian ships were directly capsized by the huge waves. Even further away, the labourers who were still working in the construction site just now were so scared that they were shaking and tumbling, fleeing to the distance. Amidst the chaos, only the Seven-tailed Firefox and Wang Shouzhe, who were protected behind it, were completely unaffected. "Old geezer, you dare to bully my brother Shouzhe?" The Seven-tailed Firefox's crimson pupils were filled with rage, and even its charming voice was filled with a fierce tone. ...

#### Chapter 97: The Difficulties of the Young Clan Leader of Zong'an\_1

... "Blocked, it was blocked." Wei Wenxun staggered, nearly unsteady on his feet, but luckily Wang Shouzhe steadied him from behind. The gap between the early Heavenly Human Realm and the Purple Abode Realm was just too big. In the face of the Purple Abode Realm, he felt as helpless and fragile as a child. For a moment, he truly thought he was going to die, and now he felt weak, as if he had narrowly escaped death. Wang Shouzhe patted his shoulder, "Thank you, Commander Wei." His words hinted at familiarity. He seemed calm, as if everything had been within his expectations. The only thing he hadn't expected was that Wei Wenxun would instinctively shield him. After several deep breaths, Wei Wenxun finally recovered a bit, but he was still astonished, "Thank goodness for the Spirit Fox Ancestor. Master Shouzhe, did you foresee this happening?" Wei Wenxun then ordered some soldiers to protect Wang Shouzhe and his people. While these soldiers may have seemed insignificant to a Purple Abode Realm cultivator, they were still a force to be reckoned with. "Hehe~ Hard to say, let's see how things pan out," Wang Shouzhe chuckled without saying more, looking up at the sky. Above, the energy aftermath was rapidly dispersing. The shadowy figure appeared back in everyone's sight. His straw coat was ashes, replaced by a purple robe of magical treasure grade. A mysterious mask hid his face. Only his white hair splayed from both sides revealing his advanced age. With hands behind his back, he stood mid-air, looking down at the Seven-Tailed Spirit Fox, sounding somewhat astonished, "The Spirit Fox Ancestor of the Yuwen Clan?" "Old man, who are you?" barked the Spirit Fox Ancestor, her seven tails flaring up like flames and her teeth bared, "My handsome brother Shouzhe was attacked by you?" "Who I am isn't up to a mere spirit beast like you to know," the masked elder sneered, "You, a recently ascended Level Seven Spirit Beast, think you can stop me? That's foolish delusion!" With that, his aura surged dramatically. Behind him, a large shadow suddenly materialized. It was a giant creature resembling a large fish. Its massive fins, akin to wings, opened while long whiskers fluttered vaguely. As the shadow appeared, a long cry echoed from the void. The sound felt ancient, imbued with long-lost grandeur and melancholy. The undulating sea stilled at the cry, only to suddenly surge up into a massive wave, as if welcoming the arrival of their king. Clearly, this was his Dharma Shadow. The Cao family had awakened a variety of bloodlines, yet the most common was related to elemental water. In particular, the bloodline of their ancestor Cao Kun Hao, had awakened the

Dragon Whale Dharma Phase. This was a giant beast from ancient times. It was said to rival the True Dragon of the seas, a long-ago apex predator of the waters. With the aide of Dharma Shadow, spiritual energy from the depths of the sea was drawn out and became near limitless. Law powers spread wildly. The murky eyes of Ancestor Kun Hao glinted with killing intent as he abruptly struck downward with his palm. In an instant, a brilliant light erupted. His astounding elemental water power transformed into a giant wave that stormed towards the Seven-Tailed Fire Fox. Despite revealing his Dharma Shadow, which could expose his identity, he decided it didn't matter. Wang Shouzhe's existence was a great threat to the Cao family, and his own lifespan was limited. Thus revealing was bearable. This sudden display of power was like the pouring of the celestial river, as if all in heaven and earth would be engulfed. Even the raging sea during a storm would not compare to this power. "Dragon Whale Dharma Phase!" Wei Wenxun gasped, finally recognizing, "A Purple Abode Realm cultivator of the elemental water lineage with the Dragon Whale Dharma Phase. Could it be... Could it be Ancestor Kun Hao from the distant Cao family?!" Anyone who had reached the Purple Abode Realm would not be obscure. Especially Ancestor Kun Hao of the Cao family, he was one of the key figures monitored by the government. Even though Wei Wenxun worked in Longzuo County all this time, he had heard some rumors. The Cao family now held deep grudges against the Wang family. Wang Shouzhe narrowed his eyes, unphased. He had thoroughly investigated the Cao family. If the family head of the Cao family, Cao Bangning, did have some wits about him. And, they got out of this pirate colluding matter thanks to Cao Bangning's continuous mediation and prompt decision to cut off the rotten part to save the whole. However, it seems the family had grown accustomed to their bandit-like domineering attitude in dealing with the pirates. There was no uniform education for the younger generation. The more talented a child was, the more they were spoiled. This is what led to the arrogant brats who couldn't bear the slightest injustice and were short-sighted and vengeful against any slight attack. This was true for Cao Youqing, Cao Bangyan, and even for the ancestor of the Cao family, Ancestor Kun Hao. Now the Cao family had suffered such a big loss and given their temperament, if they held themselves back and didn't react, it would truly be strange.

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"Whether that old ancestor is Kun Hao or Kun Di! Whoever dares to lay a hand on my brother Shouzhe is a great sinner!" The Seven-tailed Fire Fox looked up at the Dragon Whale howling in the sky. For some reason, the brutal color in its golden eyes suddenly surged, and it bared its teeth in a sudden roar, "Roar! Old thing, die!" After that, it took a step on the void with its four feet, the whole fox shot out, charging towards the terrible power that seemed to overturn the sky. A person and a fox were instantly entwined in the air. For a while, the fox fire rushed into the sky, and half of the sky was dyed red by the flames. The surging primal water aura was like boiling, rolling, undulating non-stop, the energy fluctuations spreading in the collision were so strong that they made people palpitate. The sky was full of wind and clouds, even the sea surface was affected, stirring up huge waves. However, the Seven-tailed Fire Fox was inevitably disadvantaged because of its shortcoming in realm, and here on the sea, the elemental water aura is thick and the fire aura is sparse, it quickly fell into a disadvantage. There were several times when it was hit by that terrible power and its shape became unstable, retreating, its huge body slid hundreds of feet in the air before re-stabilizing. "Master Shouzhe, things are not good~~" Wei Wenxun's heart lifted unconsciously, "Cao Kun Hao is an old Purple Abode master, very strong. The Fox Fire Ancestor is ultimately too young and I am afraid it is difficult to resist, I think you should retreat first~" Upon hearing this, Wang Shouzhe didn't speak, but Wang Zong'an laughed: "Uncle Wei, don't worry. My father must

have already planned this." He had witnessed miracles growing up since he was a child. Although his father always loses the fights with his mother, this does not prevent Wang Shouzhe from having a lofty status in Wang Zong'an's heart. Sure enough. Seeing the Fox Fire Ancestor in trouble, Wang Shouzhe immediately turned around and bowed his hand: "In that case, I have to ask the two seniors to take the trouble." As soon as these words fell. Among the household troops, two figures walked out one after another. The two, at first glance, were nothing extraordinary, but as they walked out, a strong momentum rose from them, which did not lose to the Seven-tailed Fire Fox at all. While walking out, the two also casually wiped off their disguises on their faces. "The Prefectural Governor?!" Wei Wenxun suddenly widened his eyes. It turns out that the one walking in front was actually the governor of Longzuo County, Taishi Ankang. And the one beside Taishi Ankang is a somewhat fat, friendly-looking middle-aged man. This middle-aged man is dressed in brocade clothes and has some white spots on his temples, looking just like an ordinary wealthy man. However, being able to travel with Taishi Ankang in such a shape, his identity is actually quite obvious. Wei Wenxun hurriedly greeted the two, and respectfully said: "Prefectural Governor. Ancestor Shaoyuan." It turns out that this man is the old ancestor of the Purple Abode Qian family, the Ancestor Shaoyuan. Ancestor Shaoyuan waved his hand, but his eyes were on the Seven-tailed Fire Fox and Cao Kun Hao fighting in the sky. "When Shouzhe said before, I thought he was exaggerating, but I didn't expect ...." He sighed, "Ancestor Kun Hao was a Sky Pride in his time, unparalleled. I didn't expect it to be a pity at the end." He is more than a hundred years younger than Ancestor Kun Hao. When Ancestor Kun Hao was promoted to the Purple Abode Realm, he had just reached the mid-stage of the Heavenly Human Realm, he had witnessed the glory of Ancestor Kun Hao at the time, and he naturally felt sentimental at this moment. "The struggle between prominent families is a test of the mentality and vision of those in power." Taishi Ankang's expression was much calmer, "Once the Qingluo Guard is established, it will also bring many benefits to the development of Cao's family. If they had a longer-term vision, they would know that it would be better for them to hold their anger for a while and seek the development of their family. Unfortunately, they are used to taking shortcuts and have unwittingly limited their path." When you are in a different position, you naturally see things differently. He had been in the position of governor for hundreds of years, and he personally watched the rise and fall of Ping'an Wang's family, and then gradually rise again and become Changning Wang's family. The several dozen guard cities in Longzuo County, and the infighting between prominent families, ups and downs, are actually not uncommon, it's just that very few families rise as fast as the Wang family. He has seen a lot, and naturally has little sentimentality about the rise and fall of prominent families. Hearing this, Ancestor Shaoyuan sighed again, stepped forward and said to the sky: "Ancestor Kun Hao, why are you torturing yourself? Given that there is still some marital relationship between our two families, why not give in now, I will make sure you can keep your life." His voice was deep and powerful, and with the support of Xuan Qi, it spread quickly in the sky where energy was rampant. "What?" In the sky, Cao Kun Hao, who was fighting fiercely with the Seven-tailed Fire Fox, his pupils shrank, saw the two with his Divine Sense, and immediately recognized them. Qian Shaoyuan? And Taishi Ankang? Almost in an instant, he reacted: "Not good, I fell for their trap!" In an instant, his momentum weakened and he was actually overwhelmed by the Fox Fire Ancestor. However, Cao Kun Hao was also a decisive man, the moment he realized something was wrong, he immediately decided to retreat. The dragon whale phantom behind him let out a long roar, and he fiercely exerted all his energy to repel the Seven-tailed Fire Fox, then the dazzling blue rosy light bloomed, suddenly enveloping his figure, taking him away.

## Chapter 97: The Difficulties of the Young Clan Leader of Zong'an\_3

"Pursue!" Taishi Ankang's eyes became sharp, "Today, we must not let him escape!"

As soon as his words fell, his momentum suddenly soared.

Amid the clashing sounds of metal, a set of profound-colored armor quickly spread over his body, and he ascended into the sky, transforming into a yellow beam of light, chasing in the direction of where the Old Ancestor Kung Hao had fled.

Seeing this, Old Ancestor Qian Shaoyuan's eyes narrowed, raising his hand, he summoned a golden abacus. His entire body was instantly enveloped by a golden light and he dashed into the sky.

"Old man, where do you think you're going?!"

The Seven-tailed Fire Fox was so furious that it snarled and gnashed its teeth, pushing off with its four paws, it transformed into a red beam of light and chased after them.

In the blink of an eye, four beams of light crossed the sky like rainbows and disappear on the distant horizon.

With the departure of several high-level Purple Abode Realm powerhouses.

Many people breathed a sigh of relief, as if they had just survived a disaster. Those weak-willed even fell to the ground, trembling uncontrollably.

Wei Wenxun, who was in charge of the supervision, didn't blame them; after all, even he, a Celestial Realm Cultivator, was trembling as if a great calamity was imminent under this kind of majestic heavenly might.

After all, an Immortal of the Purple Abode Realm is an Immortal. More or less, each of them has realized their own Dao, and each of their moves contains the power of the Heavenly Dao Laws. From this perspective, those in the Purple Abode Realm have long transcended the ordinary. If they were on Earth, they would be revered as the legendary immortals.

"Fortunately, the problem has been resolved." Wei Wenxun's face recovered some of its vitality and he said resentfully, "I didn't expect that Kung Hao of the Cao Family would be so vicious and insane. Fortunately, the wise and insightful Family Head Shouzhe had prepared in advance and invited the old ancestors, Fire Fox, Shaoyuan old ancestor and the Prefectural Governor to come and guard."

As he spoke, his attitude towards Wang Shouzhe was somewhat fawning.

This Master Shouzhe truly was an influential figure now, able to make clouds with one hand and rain with the other. Putting aside the fact that he was ahead of his enemies in planning and strategy, just the fact that he could invite the Prefectural Governor and the Old Ancestor Shaoyuan was a massive boost to his status.

"Resolved?" Wang Shouzhe stood with his hands behind his back, a subtle smile on his face. "I'm afraid that this peace will be short-lived. Immortal Youqing, you've already come, don't you plan to show yourself?"

"Youq...Immortal Youqing...Cao Youqing, the genius of the Sacred Land?" Wei Wenxun's face changed dramatically. "Could it be that she is the one pulling the strings behind all this?"

Just as his words fell.

A figure suddenly rose into the sky from not far away, quickly closing the distance.

As the hidden breath of that person erupted, the mortal clothes of the fisherman broke into dust, and the disguise was instantly stripped away. An ethereal female Profound Martial armor suit of a Sacred Land genius appeared on her body.

This figure was naturally Cao Youqing.

Once one's cultivation reaches the Celestial Realm, both physical strength and power are far beyond human level.

If one is overwhelmingly stronger than one's opponent, it's fine, and one can use powerful Mysterious Energy to protect one's clothes.

However, in a fight with an equal opponent, where every millimeter matters, one doesn't have the extra Mysterious Energy or attention to spare to protect one's clothes.

Therefore, a high-grade Profound Martial battle suit has gradually become a necessity for masters. It not only doesn't require one to be distracted to protect it but also increases one's resistance to a certain extent.

The Profound Martial suit that Cao Youqing was wearing was a Magical Treasure-level battle suit specially provided by the Sacred Land to its internal female Celestial Realm geniuses. The high-end materials used in its crafting were no less than dozens.

It would be respected and treated courteously wherever it went in Da Qian, because it signified her status as a genius and represented that she has the potential to become a Purple Abode Immortal in the future.

However, this trick wouldn't work on Wang Shouzhe.

With cold eyes, he said, "Cao Youqing, it's indeed you who has been scheming in the dark."

"Wang Shouzhe!" Cao Youqing's eyebrows furrowed, her face filled with indignation and resentment. "Why? Why are you always able to anticipate my moves?"

Wang Shouzhe ignored her, instead he turned around and solemnly said to Wang Zong'an, "Zong'an, this is what I often tell you about 'character determines destiny'. Back then, when Cao Youqing publicly attacked Qian Xuehan of the Qian Family, her behavior at that time revealed two things. First, this woman is unscrupulous and audacious.

Second, she is extremely confident in herself and often goes all out in what she does."

"After repelling her initially, I sent people to investigate her background. It turns out that she had been imperious and aggressive since childhood, and she holds a grudge. It wasn't until she was sent to the Lingyun Holy Ground, a place filled with prodigies, that she somewhat retrenched. However, no matter how much she retrenches, she can't hide her nature.

She often conflicts with others in the Holy Ground. She is haughty when she takes advantage, but when she is at disadvantage, she must find a way to take revenge."

Cao Youqing's face turned pale with anger, "What does my personality have to do with you?"

"Father, I understand," Wang Zong'an, with his elegant demeanour, bowed, "Father knew about this woman's narrow-mindedness and that she would inevitably take action against us. Hence, he deliberately set a trap, revealing a flaw, and let her bite the bait. I have learned my lesson."

"What?"

Cao Youqing was stunned. So that's what it was...

No wonder she had been tricked by him time and time again, her temperament was indeed the biggest flaw.

Although she was enraged, she had also learned her lesson. After all, the years of torment in The place of thunder punishment, had somewhat shaved off her ferocity.

Wang Shouzhe patted his son's shoulder and said, "An'er, think it over carefully."

After a bit of pondering, Wang Zong'an had an epiphany, "Father, I really understand now. What father meant was, I should take this as a lesson, be patient, calm and avoid making life-or-death enemies casually. Otherwise, not only will it cause harm to myself, but it would also involve our family.

In this case, the current predicament of the Cao Family from Liaoyuan, might have been caused by Cao Youqing herself."

"This..."

Cao Youqing's body trembled again.

Truth often comes from the mouth of an enemy.

Because of her own impulsiveness, she dragged the Cao Family into the abyss, in order to take revenge, to win back everything she had lost, now, even her Old Ancestor has been involved...



"Fine, I, Cao Youqing..."

"Fool!" Before Cao Youqing could finish speaking, Wang Shouzhe once again patted Wang Zong'an's shoulder, "Although Cao Youqing's personality is problematic, it's mostly the result of her family's influence. The saying goes, 'if the beam is not straight, the building won't stand'. A family with problematic rules and customs is bound to have issues sooner or later.

If not Cao Youqing, it would have been Cao Shaoqing, Cao Laoqing, etc.... As the Young Clan Leader, you have a heavy burden on your shoulders, you must set the example for the clan~"

Wang Zong'an shuddered, embarrassed, "Father's words, I will keep in my heart. If Father has any important tasks, just instruct Zong'an, Zong'an definitely will not disappoint Father."

At the same time, he was secretly thrilled.

His father kept him by his side, patiently guided and advised him. Could it be... that he, Wang Zong'an, was finally... coming? Come on! Let the burden on his shoulders weigh more.

Even Cao Youqing, who was standing aside, was stunned, as if... what Wang Shouzhe had said made some sense.

Could it be that her, Cao Youqing, and her Cao Family were truly wrong?

However, she was a bit envious of Wang Zong'an, having such a wise father always giving advice at the right time. It's a pity her father...

"This is not the case," Wang Shouzhe solemnly said. "The reason I am saying all this to you is to tell you one thing. In the future, when you run into women like this, avoid them as far as possible and do not provoke them. Come to think of it, there isn't any major task for you to do."

"Well, in that case, just try harder to give me a few more grandchildren, that would be your greatest accomplishment."

Wang Zong'an felt as if he were struck by lightning, completely baffled.

Despite being a prodigy himself, could it be that his grandest mission in life is to procreate for the Wang Family?

"Me, Zong'an, do you ever spare a thought for me?"

Chapter 98: Youqing Going Berserk! The Child's Mom Shows Up at the Scene

...

Just as Wang Shouzhe was admonishing his son.

Cao Youqing next to him, seems to be greatly moved as well.

Her face gradually turned solemn, and she bowed to Wang Shouzhe, saying, "I will always remember the wise words of Master Shouzhe today. After your death, I, Cao Youqing, will endeavor to change my character and not give our enemies any advantage."

"Wang Shouzhe, don't think that a mere commander can protect you, you have no idea how powerful a Sky Pride in the Advanced Stage of the Heavenly Human Realm from a Sacred Land truly is! Today, as a recipient of your heartfelt advice, I have no way to repay your kindness, except to promise you a complete corpse."

"Ah, Immortal Youqing, look at you, always so presumptuous, speaking for yourself," Wang Shouzhe 'disappointedly' shook his head, and turned to Wang Zong'an again, "Judging the other party's next move based on their personality can only serve as a reference for decision-making. To truly anticipate the enemy's moves, one must focus more on actual intelligence.

The proverb of 'bold assumption and careful verification' is key to knowing both your enemy and yourself thus achieving a hundred victories in a hundred battles."

"Yes, father, I understand."

Wang Zong'an responded listlessly, thinking to himself: What use is understanding so much if you won't give me a chance to put it into practice?

"Be more spirited," Wang Shouzhe rebuked in a low voice, "Remember everything I'm teaching you now and make sure to thoroughly understand it. Otherwise, how can I confidently entrust you with the protection of Qingluo Guard?"

"Guarding Qingluo Guard?"

It took a moment for Wang Zong'an to respond, and then he was so moved he almost cried.

Finally, finally, he, Young Clan Leader Zong'an, has the opportunity to run his own house and take charge of a region. He, Young Clan Leader Zong'an, is about to rise~~~

His spirits immediately lifted, and he happily bowed to Wang Shouzhe, "Thank you father for entrusting me with such an important task."

"Don't celebrate too soon. After this matter is resolved, you will stay at Qingluo Guard, learn from Master Wei and understand how to set up and manage a region."

"Yes, father."

As the father and son exchanged words, Wei Wenxun also chuckles, "Master Shouzhe, please rest assured. Young Clan Leader is steady and intelligent. In the future, he will definitely become a great asset and your genuine right-hand man."

Listening to Wang Shouzhe planning his son's future, Cao Youqing on the side could no longer bear it.

"Wang Shouzhe, you're proficient at dragging out time," she could barely contain her rage, "However, I've lost my patience, today you....."

Unexpectedly.

Before she could finish speaking, a series of soft laughter rang out, "Hehehe~ Immortal Youqing, oh Immortal Youqing, you truly are so naive."

Upon hearing this, Cao Youqing felt a surge of dread. To her surprise, an enchanting figure appeared on the sea surface near the Reef Island.

She wore a veil over her face, making it impossible to see her face clearly. Only her long flowing white dress, against the endless blue sea and sky, looked extraordinarily pure and ethereal.

She slowly walked over the void, swaying gracefully, so enchanting that it's hard to put into words.

With her arrival, the undulating waves seem to have been swept by some invisible force, becoming much quieter and gentler.

Huh?

Both Wang Zong'an and Wei Wenxun looked somewhat puzzled upon seeing her.

Who is this Immortal? Why haven't they ever seen her before?

However, even though they did not recognize her, Cao Youqing did. She immediately recognized her, colder eyes focused on her, she exclaimed with hostility, "It's you! Tian Yan, what are you doing here?! Could it be....."

"You make it sound like... this Qingluo Sea is your personal property, why can't I be here?"

Tian Yan, the Immortal, nonchalantly glanced at her, but her attention was not on her. Instead, she looked at Wang Shouzhe, paying respect to him, her charming eyes riddled with mixed emotions, "Sir Shouzhe, it's been almost twenty years since we last met. Sir looks even more outstanding than before, with an appearance and demeanor that is more stunning."

Wang Shouzhe slightly bowed, courteously replying, "Your aura, Immortal, is also greatly improved compared to the past. Over the years, I have been greatly obliged to you for providing information from the shadows."

"Tian Yan, the Immortal? This... It turns out that my father has been in contact with Tian Yan, the Immortal all this while?" Wang Zong'an's expression shifted slightly, looking at Wang Shouzhe with both apprehension and admiration.

He had heard of Tian Yan, the Immortal from his cousin Shihai.

Shihai had animatedly depicted to them how Tian Yan, the Immortal, was infatuated with their father and constantly pursued him, wanting to become his concubine.

Their mother had often dragged their father to the Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion to chastise him because of this. This Tian Yan, the Immortal...

"Is this Young Clan Leader Zong'an?"

Just as Wang Zong'an was lost in thought, Tian Yan's gaze fell on him, praising, "As expected of Sir Shouzhe's son, also handsome, dignified and outstanding."

Her gaze was as if a young woman was looking at her excellent stepson, filled with a joyous pride and a hint of "kindness".

Wang Zong'an shuddered under her stare, quickly bowing and greeting, "Zong'an is honoured to meet Tian Yan, the Immortal."

Cao Youqing, watching them engage in idle chat, was nearly exploded with rage.

Looking at Tian Yan, the Immortal with a chilling gaze, she angrily interrupted, "Tian Yan, has your Sky Pillar long been keeping an eye on me? No wonder...no wonder all my actions have been calculated by you."

"But there's one thing I always wondered about. I may not like Luo Yuqing, but I have to admit she is quite capable with her 'Dawn'. How did you infiltrate into 'Dawn', how did you get my whereabouts?"

"Infiltrate 'Dawn'? Tian Yan, the Immortal, chuckled, "Our Sky Pillar and Dawn have been in a reciprocating battle and on guard against each other all along. It's not easy for you to infiltrate the Sky Pillar, just as it's not easy for us to infiltrate Dawn."

"However, it's different for your Cao Family of Liaoyuan, being as porous as a sieve, top-down. It was easier for our Sky Pillar to infiltrate your Cao Family. Getting some key figures of your Cao Family, naturally, we could track your movements, Immortal Youqing, hehehe~ "

Cao Youqing's face turned unsightly, perhaps as never before.

So, the final factor of failure was within the Cao Family itself. As Wang Shouzhe had said, the internal affairs of the Cao Family were indeed problematic...

However, matters had advanced to a point where there was no room for Cao Youqing to retreat.

For her sake, for the sake of the Cao Family, the Old Ancestor had been besieged by three individuals in the Purple Abode Realm. It seemed inevitable that he had fallen into great danger.

Today, she must kill Wang Shouzhe to atone for the offenses committed. Only then would the Young Master Ce step forward to protect the Cao Family. In the future, when she advances to the Purple Abode Realm, she would be able to revive the glory of the Cao Family!

"Wang Shouzhe, you must die today." Cao Youqing's eyes gradually became intense. As her Mysterious Energy surged, streaks of electrical aura constantly converged on her, her tone was stern, "Tian Yan, if you dare intervene, I will kill you as well!"

Having said that, she drew her sword, and her momentum suddenly escalated.

A towering silhouette abruptly emerged behind her; a humanoid with the head of an eagle, clad in ethereal dark robes, its enormous wings seemed to carry the lightning of thunder, radiating wave after wave of unstoppable oppressive power. It was as if the god of thunder had descended into the world.

This figure was none other than the Dharma Shadow she had activated after her bloodline awakened to the Spiritual Body stage.

"Boom!"

With the appearance of the Dharma Shadow, violent electrostatic energy erupted from her, concentrated into a single sword.

The "Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Sword" was a part of the orthodox inheritance of one of the nine veins of the Sacred Land, the Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Branch. Cao Youqing's talent was outstanding, and she was one of the top talents in this branch. Moreover, she had already activated the Sky Thunder Spiritual Body after advancing to the Heavenly Human Realm. How could her strength be underestimated?

At this moment, she was fully exerting every bit of her strength. Purple sparks pulsed about her, brimming with rumbling thunder, it created a sensation as if the Sky Thunder was going to strike down imminently, resembling the might of the Heavenly Dao.

"What powerful Purple Xiao Sky Thunder True Intent!"

Fairy Tian Yan's pupils contracted, she felt like she had underestimated the renowned "Fairy Youqing".

The Lingyun Holy Ground was filled with countless powerful individuals, and numerous Sky Prides. It was much more difficult to stand out there than in a local learning palace. Considering Cao Youqing could earn her fame with her credentials of being a Sky Pride, her strength was anything but simple.

Immediately, she dared not to take the matter lightly, "Master Shouzhe, please retreat. I am going to block her."

Having said that, she darted in front of Wang Shouzhe.

At the same time, her momentum surged, her dark energy pulsated, causing her skirt to flutter whilst exuding an celestial charm.

At some point, a silver ring, detailed and exquisite, had appeared on her slim fingers. It was covered in intricate inscriptions emitting a powerful magical aura.

As she lightly strummed the ring with her fingertips, it seemed like every tap was playing tunes upon the void.

"Clang, clang, clang!"

The void seemed to reverberate under her manipulation, emanating sounds like the vibration of a guqin's strings. Amidst the heavy melodies, the space before her twisted as if an invisible shield was forming.

"Using heaven as a guqin, and the Dao as a melody; what a move, 'Sky Sound Shield'! Tian Yan, you are indeed the survivor of the 'Tianyin Branch'!"

A trace of severity crossed Cao Youqing's eyes, then a purplish glint flickered across her eyes, her haughtiness was utterly undisturbed, "I don't care about your background, before my Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Sword Intent, everything will dissipate into dust!"

"Break!"

At her command, the formidable Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Sword, surged towards Tian Yan and Wang Shouzhe, slashing like divine punishment.

The terrifying Sword Intent seemed capable of shattering the heavens and earth.

"Boom~~!"

In the deafening boom, the formidable Sword Intent violently crashed into the Sky Sound Shield.

Instantaneously, the twisted space that constituted the Sky Sound Shield violently caved in. The shield, which was constructed by an invisible force, developed web-like cracks that rapidly spread across it.

"Master Shouzhe, retreat quickly! I can't hold her off for long!"

Fairy Tian Yan's face was pale, and a bead of cold sweat rolled down her forehead without her realizing.

She didn't expect that Cao Youqing's progression would be so rapid, her strength was even higher than what the earlier information had suggested. Despite being a Sky Pride in the advanced stage of the Heavenly Human Realm, she barely blocked Cao Youqing's sword!



"Elder, do not panic. I am certain my father still has reserves." said Wang Zong'an in a calm and composed manner. From his understanding of his father, the harder times got, the more reserves there would be.

Otherwise, his father would never have brought him over to witness these events.

After all, his father often said that it was the elder's job to hold up the sky for the family's development, while they, the younger generation, need only concentrate on cultivation.

As expected.

As Wang Zong'an's words faded, a figure he was intimately familiar with abruptly appeared.

Her steps were graceful and light. As she walked through the void, each step seemed to tread upon the nodes in space.

With every manoeuvre of her lotus step, ripples echoed through space rhythmically, causing pulsations that quaked the heart!

"Mother, mother..."

In the flash of an instant, Wang Zong'an's heart quivered.

No way? His father's reserve this time was too brutal. He actually brought his mother as the reserve.

Heaven, this was a prelude to a major calamity, wasn't it?

Chapter 99: Fierce Wife Beats Young Qing! Tian Yan Actually.....

...

Under the watchful, anxious gaze of Wang Zong'an, Liu Ruolan already calmly stepped past the Sky Pride Immortal and Wang Shouzhe, entering the skies above.

There, she stood in mid-air, her eyes coolly directing a glance at Cao Youqing before pointing lightly with her slender jade-like hand.

"Hum~~"

An oscillating sound seemed to echo from the void.

A giant humanoid Dharma apparition suddenly appeared behind her.

Compared to before, the silhouette of this Dharma shadow was slightly clearer, her flowy celestial garb fluttering like the legendary Goddess residing beyond the Thirty-Three Heavens. The formidable and vast aura emanating from her was awe-inspiring and frightening.

Under the augmentation of this Dharma shadow, Liu Ruolan herself seemed to transform into a Goddess, her demeanor extraordinary and her beauty unparalleled.

This was the power of the Yuan Water Taoist Body.

Compared to Cao Youqing's Sky Thunder Spiritual Body, even the mere presence of Liu Ruolan's Yuan Water Taoist Body Dharma Shadow overwhelmed Cao Youqing, debilitating the domineering Sword Intent of Sky Thunder.

Simultaneously, an overwhelming surge of Yuan Water Spiritual Energy came roaring like a tsunami. In a blink, it condensed on her slender, onion-like fingertips before imploding inward, again and again.

The vast ocean's Yuan water Spiritual Energy, in that instant, was condensed under a powerful influence into a minuscule ball, no bigger than a soybean, trembling like an ordinary droplet.

With a slight quiver of her fingertip, she gently sent it spiralling towards Cao Youqing's Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Sword Intent.

"Boom!"

The "droplet" came into contact with the Sword Intent causing the vast Yuan water Spiritual Energy to explode, shattering Cao Youqing's Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Sword Intent in an instant, like the bursting of a silver vase.

Even the space was rattling, the explosion hurting the ears and chilling the hearts.

"Huff!"

Like hit by a heavy blow, Cao Youqing spat out fresh blood, her whole body sent flying backward tens of feet in the sky before barely stabilizing.

She looked at Liu Ruolan with fear.

Who is this, how could it be possible?

All this happened in an instant.

Not only was Cao Youqing stunned, but the Sky Pride Immortal too looked on, pupils contracting, filled with disbelief.

Such an extraordinary Cao Youqing, yet defeated by this mysterious woman. How incredibly powerful must this woman be?

"Mother..."

Looking at the figure in the sky that was both domineering and alluring, Wang Zong'an couldn't help but mutter. Worthy of being his mother, still as dominant and strong as ever!

"Mother?"

The Sky Pride Immortal suddenly paused, her gaze going uncertain and hesitant as she looked at Liu Ruolan.

She...is Wang Shouzhe's first wife!

In the sky.

Before Cao Youqing could react, Liu Ruolan made her move again. Each move under her Yuan Water Taoist Body carried the awe-inspiring might of the Yuan Water Heavenly Dao.

Especially on this vast, expansive sea, the power of her Yuan Water Taoist Body was shown to its fullest.

Although Cao Youqing, a Sacred Land Sky Pride reached Level Eight of the Heavenly Human Realm, however, facing Liu Ruolan, she could barely parry her attacks, let alone retaliate.

"This...This...It turns out that the first wife of Wang Shouzhe is so powerful? Having Yuan Water Taoist Body at the Heavenly Human Realm makes her one of the rare Great Heavenly Prides. With a cultivation base just around peak of Level Three of the Heavenly Human Realm, she could still suppress Cao Youqing! It seems, she is not just an ordinary Great Heavenly Pride."

Looking from afar at the two women who were fighting fiercely in the sky, the Sky Pride Immortal couldn't help swallowing her saliva, weakly turning her gaze towards Wang Shouzhe.

No wonder, all her several attempts for the position of Wang Shouzhe's concubine were smoothly evaded by him.

Having such a fierce wife, how dare he keep a concubine?

Suddenly, the eyes of Sky Pride Immortal started to roll, as if plotting something.

"Liu Ruolan! So it's you, the true trump card of the Wang family, the concealed Great Heavenly Pride, no wonder you could give birth to prodigious children such as Wang Liyao," Cao Youqing retorted through her horrific bashing and furious screams.

Still, with a furious yet bitter voice, she scolded, "But, with just you trying to defeat me, that's probably not enough."

"I will let you see the true Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Intent that I, Cao Youqing, have comprehended after spending 15 years in the Place of Thunder Punishment! Even if you are a Great Heavenly Pride, your cultivation base is too weak!"

Along with the scolding of Cao Youqing, her aura surged again, with strands of purple lightning, like purple Jiaolongs spinning around her body.

The intent of the lightning even tore the air apart, invading the water below.

The surface of the water started to float with a layer of fish, shrimp, and crabs~

"What a strong Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Intent," the Sky Pride Immortal quietly remarked, "Although Cao Youqing is a bit impetuous, she is indeed talented and her understanding is quite extraordinary. With her current comprehension of the Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Realm, there wouldn't be much hindrance to her future entry into the Purple Abode Realm. What a pity, what a pity..."

Eh, Wang Shouzhe, Zong'an, aren't you both worried?"

Worried?

Wang Shouzhe, father and son, glanced at each other, both seemingly calm and cool. They simultaneously shook their head - they weren't worried at all.

The one who should be worried was probably Cao Youqing.

At the same time.

Cao Youqing's Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Intent had also reached its climax.

Torrents of volatile Zi Xiao Sky Thunder True Intent finally culminated into a Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Sword, with its destructive aura slashing towards Liu Ruolan.

Chapter 99: Fierce Wife Beats Young Qing! Tian Yan Actually.....

That one sword, made the sky tremble, space seemed to wobble on the brink of shattering, as if it could pulverize even a small hill.

At this time.

"This is getting interesting."

Liu Ruolan seemed to finally take the situation seriously, her eyes changed suddenly, and a bone-chilling cold exuded from her body.

"Clang~"

A clear sound of a sword chime sounded leisurely.

A slender soft sword around Liu Ruolan's waist suddenly unsheathed and fell into her palm in an instant.

The sword was like a slender soft sword cast from flowing water. It was more slender than a regular sword and its blade was more thin. An enigmatic inscription that ebbed and flowed like water slowly moved on its surface, making it look very profound.

The sword was named "Water Resemblance Treasure Sword", a replica of the divine profound treasure "Water Resemblance Authentic Spirit Sword".

After Liu Ruolan's ascension to the Heavenly Human Realm, Wang Shouzhe began to search for suitable magical treasures for her. After several years, he finally got the water-element soft sword, a magical treasure, in an auction.

However, since Liu Ruolan herself was already powerful, ordinary moves were enough to dominate peers, so it was the first time for the sword to be unsheathed since she got it.

As the treasure sword was wielded, Liu Ruolan's momentum sharply increased.

With a flick of her wrist, a sword intent like water burst forth.

The surroundings suddenly fell silent.

It seemed that even time itself had stopped at that moment.

The tumultuous waves on the sea surface and the leaping arcs of electricity seemed to encounter some irresistibly powerful force, abruptly freezing in mid-air.

Even Cao Youqing's Purple Xiao's sword intent of sky thunder, which seemed capable of destroying the world, was frozen in mid-air.

The water-like sword intent cut through the air, and in a blink of an eye, it collided with the Purple Xiao's sky thunder intent.

"Rumble~~!"

A huge explosion suddenly rang out, and an overwhelming force detonated.

The seemingly stagnant spacetime finally returned to normal at this moment.

A terrifying shock wave swept across, making Cao Youqing tremble. The Heavenly Thunder Treasure Sword in his hand almost slipped out. He was knocked backwards by a blast of such terrifying power and smashed hard into the sea.

At the same time, torrents of blood rose from within the sea.

Obviously, under that one sword strike, Cao Youqing had been seriously injured.

The scene was silent.

Wei Wenxun's eyes were staring wide, his head filled with sweat from fright.

All of them were early-stage cultivators of the Heavenly Human Realm, how could the gap be so great? If it had been him, Wei Wenxun, taking that move just now, he feared he would have been pulverized.

Fortunately, he didn't have a hard time with the Wang family when he was the Changning Defender. The Wang family even kept such a terrifying card up their sleeves...

Meanwhile, under Tian Yan Immortal's veil, her mouth was wide open, her eyes round and full of disbelief.

Even Wang Shouzhe and his son looked at each other, their wife/mother seemed to have become even more powerful.

It's so frustrating to compare themselves with others. They're also the great heavenly proud, but they never saw her practicing so hard... yet they, father and son, are left far behind!

Was the [Innate Dao Fetus Spirit seed] of the Divine Martial Dynasty Era really that powerful?

Father and son couldn't help but fall into deep self-doubt.

Afterward.

Cao Youqing's big move was broken. Losing his confidence to fight again and seriously wounded, he emerged from the water and fled by secret technique.

Yet, this vast Qingluo Sea, like Liu Ruolan's water-element Taoist Body's home field, no matter how Cao Youqing escaped, he couldn't escape from her grasp.

Moreover, following Wang Shouzhe's style, how could he possibly leave without more backups?

There were water-reed vines cultivated by Wang Shouzhe lurking under the surrounding sea, no matter where Cao Youqing fled or how he fled. They could always stop him. And this slight delay would be enough for Liu Ruolan to catch up.

Two quarters of an hour later.

Cao Youqing was killed on the seas a dozen miles away. The illustrious heavenly proud of the sacred land fell on the Qingluo Sea.



After a short while.

Liu Ruolan, who had collected the spoils of war, came back gracefully and landed next to Wang Shouzhe.

Wang Shouzhe and his son Wang Zong'an rushed forward, using caring words for his wife/mother, taking extreme care of her.

"You've worked hard, my wife. Are you injured at all? Is there anything uncomfortable? Sigh~ For such ruffians, in the future, let me deal with them myself. There is no need to bother my wife."

"Mother, it's all because of my incompetence and insufficient cultivation base, that even had to make you personally deal with them. Don't worry, I will practice even more diligently and gain the strength to protect you soon."

The father and son were experts in flattering, each better than the other. Their constant words were refreshing the bottom line of humanity.

Suddenly!

Liu Ruolan's cold eyes focused on the Tian Yan Immortal, assessing her from head to toe.

Wang Zong'an had a sinking feeling in his heart, he sensed trouble.

Tian Yan Immortal kept on saying that she wanted to be his father's lover. But she had helped his father and their family during this family crisis. Killing her would be...

At the same time, Wang Zong'an also received a hint from his father's eyes.

Alright then!

At times like this, it's up to me, the Young Clan Leader, to smooth things over.

Wang Zong'an steeled himself, preparing to stand up and say a few good words for Tian Yan Immortal when he saw Tian Yan Immortal had acted faster than him. She dashed forward and appeared before Liu Ruolan.

### Chapter 97: The Difficulties of the Young Clan Leader of Zong'an\_3

"Pursue!" Taishi Ankang's eyes became sharp, "Today, we must not let him escape!" As soon as his words fell, his momentum suddenly soared. Amid the clashing sounds of metal, a set of profound-colored armor quickly spread over his body, and he ascended into the sky, transforming into a yellow beam of light, chasing in the direction of where the Old Ancestor Kung Hao had fled. Seeing this, Old Ancestor Qian Shaoyuan's eyes narrowed, raising his hand, he summoned a golden abacus. His entire body was instantly enveloped by a golden light and he dashed into the sky. "Old man, where do you think you're going?!" The Seven-tailed Fire Fox was so furious that it snarled and gnashed its teeth, pushing off with its four paws, it transformed into a red beam of light and chased after them. In the blink of an eye, four beams of light crossed the sky like rainbows and disappeared on the distant horizon. With the departure of several high-level Purple Abode Realm powerhouses. Many people breathed a sigh of relief, as if they had just survived a disaster. Those weak-willed even fell to the ground, trembling uncontrollably. Wei Wenxun, who was in charge of the supervision, didn't blame them; after all, even he, a Celestial Realm Cultivator, was trembling as if a great calamity was imminent under this kind of majestic heavenly might. After all, an Immortal of the Purple Abode Realm is an Immortal. More or less, each of them has realized their own Dao, and each of their moves contains the power of the Heavenly Dao Laws. From this perspective, those in the Purple Abode Realm have long transcended the ordinary. If they were on Earth, they would be revered as the legendary immortals. "Fortunately, the problem has been resolved." Wei Wenxun's face recovered some of its vitality and he said resentfully, "I didn't expect that Kung Hao of the Cao Family would be so vicious and insane. Fortunately, the wise and insightful Family Head Shouzhe had prepared in advance and invited the old ancestors, Fire Fox, Shaoyuan old ancestor and the Prefectural Governor to come and guard." As he spoke, his attitude towards Wang Shouzhe was somewhat fawning. This Master Shouzhe truly was an influential figure now, able to make clouds with one hand and rain with the other. Putting aside the fact that he was ahead of his enemies in planning and strategy, just the fact that he could invite the Prefectural Governor and the Old Ancestor Shaoyuan was a massive boost to his status. "Resolved?" Wang Shouzhe stood with his hands behind his back, a subtle smile on his face. "I'm afraid that this peace will be short-lived. Immortal Youqing, you've already come, don't you plan to show yourself?" "Youq...Immortal Youqing...Cao Youqing, the genius of the Sacred Land?" Wei Wenxun's face changed dramatically. "Could it be that she is the one pulling the strings behind all this?" Just as his words fell. A figure suddenly rose into the sky from not far away, quickly closing the distance. As the hidden breath of that person erupted, the mortal clothes of the fisherman broke into dust, and the disguise was instantly stripped away. An ethereal female Profound Martial armor suit of a Sacred Land genius appeared on her body. This figure was naturally Cao Youqing. Once one's cultivation reaches the Celestial Realm, both physical strength and power are far beyond human level. If one is overwhelmingly stronger than one's opponent, it's fine, and one can use powerful Mysterious Energy to protect one's clothes. However, in a fight with an equal opponent, where every millimeter matters, one doesn't have the extra Mysterious Energy or attention to spare to protect one's clothes. Therefore, a high-grade Profound Martial battle suit has gradually become a necessity for masters. It not only doesn't require one to be distracted to protect it but also increases one's resistance to a certain extent. The Profound Martial suit that Cao Youqing was wearing was a Magical Treasure-

level battle suit specially provided by the Sacred Land to its internal female Celestial Realm geniuses. The high-end materials used in its crafting were no less than dozens. It would be respected and treated courteously wherever it went in Da Qian, because it signified her status as a genius and represented that she has the potential to become a Purple Abode Immortal in the future. However, this trick wouldn't work on Wang Shouzhe. With cold eyes, he said, "Cao Youqing, it's indeed you who has been scheming in the dark." "Wang Shouzhe!" Cao Youqing's eyebrows furrowed, her face filled with indignation and resentment. "Why? Why are you always able to anticipate my moves?" Wang Shouzhe ignored her, instead he turned around and solemnly said to Wang Zong'an, "Zong'an, this is what I often tell you about 'character determines destiny'. Back then, when Cao Youqing publicly attacked Qian Xuehan of the Qian Family, her behavior at that time revealed two things. First, this woman is unscrupulous and audacious. Second, she is extremely confident in herself and often goes all out in what she does." "After repelling her initially, I sent people to investigate her background. It turns out that she had been imperious and aggressive since childhood, and she holds a grudge. It wasn't until she was sent to the Lingyun Holy Ground, a place filled with prodigies, that she somewhat retrenched. However, no matter how much she retrenches, she can't hide her nature. She often conflicts with others in the Holy Ground. She is haughty when she takes advantage, but when she is at disadvantage, she must find a way to take revenge." Cao Youqing's face turned pale with anger, "What does my personality have to do with you?" "Father, I understand," Wang Zong'an, with his elegant demeanour, bowed, "Father knew about this woman's narrow-mindedness and that she would inevitably take action against us. Hence, he deliberately set a trap, revealing a flaw, and let her bite the bait. I have learned my lesson." "What?" Cao Youqing was stunned. So that's what it was... No wonder she had been tricked by him time and time again, her temperament was indeed the biggest flaw. Although she was enraged, she had also learned her lesson. After all, the years of torment in The place of thunder punishment, had somewhat shaved off her ferocity. Wang Shouzhe patted his son's shoulder and said, "An'er, think it over carefully." After a bit of pondering, Wang Zong'an had an epiphany, "Father, I really understand now. What father meant was, I should take this as a lesson, be patient, calm and avoid making life-or-death enemies casually. Otherwise, not only will it cause harm to myself, but it would also involve our family. In this case, the current predicament of the Cao Family from Liaoyuan, might have been caused by Cao Youqing herself." "This..." Cao Youqing's body trembled again. Truth often comes from the mouth of an enemy. Because of her own impulsiveness, she dragged the Cao Family into the abyss, in order to take revenge, to win back everything she had lost, now, even her Old Ancestor has been involved... "Fine, I, Cao Youqing..." "Fool!" Before Cao Youqing could finish speaking, Wang Shouzhe once again patted Wang Zong'an's shoulder, "Although Cao Youqing's personality is problematic, it's mostly the result of her family's influence. The saying goes, 'if the beam is not straight, the building won't stand'. A family with problematic rules and customs is bound to have issues sooner or later. If not Cao Youqing, it would have been Cao Shaoqing, Cao Laoqing, etc.... As the Young Clan Leader, you have a heavy burden on your shoulders, you must set the example for the clan~" Wang Zong'an shuddered, embarrassed, "Father's words, I will keep in my heart. If Father has any important tasks, just instruct Zong'an, Zong'an definitely will not disappoint Father." At the same time, he was secretly thrilled. His father kept him by his side, patiently guided and advised him. Could it be... that he, Wang Zong'an, was finally... coming? Come on! Let the burden on his shoulders weigh more. Even Cao Youqing, who was standing aside, was stunned, as if... what Wang Shouzhe had said made some sense. Could it be that her, Cao Youqing, and her Cao Family were truly wrong? However, she was a bit envious of Wang Zong'an, having such a wise father always giving advice at the right time. It's a pity her father... "This is not the case," Wang Shouzhe

solemnly said. "The reason I am saying all this to you is to tell you one thing. In the future, when you run into women like this, avoid them as far as possible and do not provoke them. Come to think of it, there isn't any major task for you to do." "Well, in that case, just try harder to give me a few more grandchildren, that would be your greatest accomplishment." Wang Zong'an felt as if he were struck by lightning, completely baffled. Despite being a prodigy himself, could it be that his grandest mission in life is to procreate for the Wang Family? "Me, Zong'an, do you ever spare a thought for me?" ...

## Chapter 98: Youqing Going Berserk! The Child's Mom Shows Up at the Scene

... Just as Wang Shouzhe was admonishing his son. Cao Youqing next to him, seems to be greatly moved as well. Her face gradually turned solemn, and she bowed to Wang Shouzhe, saying, "I will always remember the wise words of Master Shouzhe today. After your death, I, Cao Youqing, will endeavor to change my character and not give our enemies any advantage." "Wang Shouzhe, don't think that a mere commander can protect you, you have no idea how powerful a Sky Pride in the Advanced Stage of the Heavenly Human Realm from a Sacred Land truly is! Today, as a recipient of your heartfelt advice, I have no way to repay your kindness, except to promise you a complete corpse." "Ah, Immortal Youqing, look at you, always so presumptuous, speaking for yourself," Wang Shouzhe 'disappointedly' shook his head, and turned to Wang Zong'an again, "Judging the other party's next move based on their personality can only serve as a reference for decision-making. To truly anticipate the enemy's moves, one must focus more on actual intelligence. The proverb of 'bold assumption and careful verification' is key to knowing both your enemy and yourself thus achieving a hundred victories in a hundred battles." "Yes, father, I understand." Wang Zong'an responded listlessly, thinking to himself: What use is understanding so much if you won't give me a chance to put it into practice? "Be more spirited," Wang Shouzhe rebuked in a low voice, "Remember everything I'm teaching you now and make sure to thoroughly understand it. Otherwise, how can I confidently entrust you with the protection of Qingluo Guard?" "Guarding Qingluo Guard?" It took a moment for Wang Zong'an to respond, and then he was so moved he almost cried. Finally, finally, he, Young Clan Leader Zong'an, has the opportunity to run his own house and take charge of a region. He, Young Clan Leader Zong'an, is about to rise~~~ His spirits immediately lifted, and he happily bowed to Wang Shouzhe, "Thank you father for entrusting me with such an important task." "Don't celebrate too soon. After this matter is resolved, you will stay at Qingluo Guard, learn from Master Wei and understand how to set up and manage a region." "Yes, father." As the father and son exchanged words, Wei Wenxun also chuckles, "Master Shouzhe, please rest assured. Young Clan Leader is steady and intelligent. In the future, he will definitely become a great asset and your genuine right-hand man." Listening to Wang Shouzhe planning his son's future, Cao Youqing on the side could no longer bear it. "Wang Shouzhe, you're proficient at dragging out time," she could barely contain her rage, "However, I've lost my patience, today you....." Unexpectedly. Before she could finish speaking, a series of soft laughter rang out, "Hehehe~ Immortal Youqing, oh Immortal Youqing, you truly are so naive." Upon hearing this, Cao Youqing felt a surge of dread. To her surprise, an enchanting figure appeared on the sea surface near the Reef Island. She wore a veil over her face, making it impossible to see her face clearly. Only her long flowing white dress, against the endless blue sea and sky, looked extraordinarily pure and ethereal. She slowly walked over the void, swaying gracefully, so enchanting that it's hard to put into words. With her arrival, the undulating waves seem to have been swept by some invisible force, becoming much quieter and gentler. Huh? Both Wang Zong'an and Wei Wenxun looked somewhat puzzled upon seeing her. Who is this Immortal? Why haven't they ever seen her before? However,

even though they did not recognize her, Cao Youqing did. She immediately recognized her, colder eyes focused on her, she exclaimed with hostility, "It's you! Tian Yan, what are you doing here?! Could it be....." "You make it sound like... this Qingluo Sea is your personal property, why can't I be here?" Tian Yan, the Immortal, nonchalantly glanced at her, but her attention was not on her. Instead, she looked at Wang Shouzhe, paying respect to him, her charming eyes riddled with mixed emotions, "Sir Shouzhe, it's been almost twenty years since we last met. Sir looks even more outstanding than before, with an appearance and demeanor that is more stunning." Wang Shouzhe slightly bowed, courteously replying, "Your aura, Immortal, is also greatly improved compared to the past. Over the years, I have been greatly obliged to you for providing information from the shadows." "Tian Yan, the Immortal? This... It turns out that my father has been in contact with Tian Yan, the Immortal all this while?" Wang Zong'an's expression shifted slightly, looking at Wang Shouzhe with both apprehension and admiration. He had heard of Tian Yan, the Immortal from his cousin Shihai. Shihai had animatedly depicted to them how Tian Yan, the Immortal, was infatuated with their father and constantly pursued him, wanting to become his concubine. Their mother had often dragged their father to the Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion to chastise him because of this. This Tian Yan, the Immortal... "Is this Young Clan Leader Zong'an?" Just as Wang Zong'an was lost in thought, Tian Yan's gaze fell on him, praising, "As expected of Sir Shouzhe's son, also handsome, dignified and outstanding." Her gaze was as if a young woman was looking at her excellent stepson, filled with a joyous pride and a hint of "kindness". Wang Zong'an shuddered under her stare, quickly bowing and greeting, "Zong'an is honoured to meet Tian Yan, the Immortal." Cao Youqing, watching them engage in idle chat, was nearly exploded with rage. Looking at Tian Yan, the Immortal with a chilling gaze, she angrily interrupted, "Tian Yan, has your Sky Pillar long been keeping an eye on me? No wonder...no wonder all my actions have been calculated by you." "But there's one thing I always wondered about. I may not like Luo Yuqing, but I have to admit she is quite capable with her 'Dawn'. How did you infiltrate into 'Dawn', how did you get my whereabouts?" "Infiltrate 'Dawn'? Tian Yan, the Immortal, chuckled, "Our Sky Pillar and Dawn have been in a reciprocating battle and on guard against each other all along. It's not easy for you to infiltrate the Sky Pillar, just as it's not easy for us to infiltrate Dawn." "However, it's different for your Cao Family of Liaoyuan, being as porous as a sieve, top-down. It was easier for our Sky Pillar to infiltrate your Cao Family. Getting some key figures of your Cao Family, naturally, we could track your movements, Immortal Youqing, hehehe~" Cao Youqing's face turned unsightly, perhaps as never before. So, the final factor of failure was within the Cao Family itself. As Wang Shouzhe had said, the internal affairs of the Cao Family were indeed problematic... However, matters had advanced to a point where there was no room for Cao Youqing to retreat. For her sake, for the sake of the Cao Family, the Old Ancestor had been besieged by three individuals in the Purple Abode Realm. It seemed inevitable that he had fallen into great danger. Today, she must kill Wang Shouzhe to atone for the offenses committed. Only then would the Young Master Ce step forward to protect the Cao Family. In the future, when she advances to the Purple Abode Realm, she would be able to revive the glory of the Cao Family! "Wang Shouzhe, you must die today." Cao Youqing's eyes gradually became intense. As her Mysterious Energy surged, streaks of electrical aura constantly converged on her, her tone was stern, "Tian Yan, if you dare intervene, I will kill you as well!" Having said that, she drew her sword, and her momentum suddenly escalated. A towering silhouette abruptly emerged behind her; a humanoid with the head of an eagle, clad in ethereal dark robes, its enormous wings seemed to carry the lightning of thunder, radiating wave after wave of unstoppable oppressive power. It was as if the god of thunder had descended into the world. This figure was none other than the Dharma Shadow she had activated after her bloodline awakened to the Spiritual

Body stage. "Boom!" With the appearance of the Dharma Shadow, violent electrostatic energy erupted from her, concentrated into a single sword. The "Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Sword" was a part of the orthodox inheritance of one of the nine veins of the Sacred Land, the Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Branch. Cao Youqing's talent was outstanding, and she was one of the top talents in this branch. Moreover, she had already activated the Sky Thunder Spiritual Body after advancing to the Heavenly Human Realm. How could her strength be underestimated? At this moment, she was fully exerting every bit of her strength. Purple sparks pulsed about her, brimming with rumbling thunder, it created a sensation as if the Sky Thunder was going to strike down imminently, resembling the might of the Heavenly Dao. "What powerful Purple Xiao Sky Thunder True Intent!" Fairy Tian Yan's pupils contracted, she felt like she had underestimated the renowned "Fairy Youqing". The Lingyun Holy Ground was filled with countless powerful individuals, and numerous Sky Prides. It was much more difficult to stand out there than in a local learning palace. Considering Cao Youqing could earn her fame with her credentials of being a Sky Pride, her strength was anything but simple. Immediately, she dared not to take the matter lightly, "Master Shouzhe, please retreat. I am going to block her." Having said that, she darted in front of Wang Shouzhe. At the same time, her momentum surged, her dark energy pulsated, causing her skirt to flutter whilst exuding an celestial charm. At some point, a silver ring, detailed and exquisite, had appeared on her slim fingers. It was covered in intricate inscriptions emitting a powerful magical aura. As she lightly strummed the ring with her fingertips, it seemed like every tap was playing tunes upon the void. "Clang, clang, clang!" The void seemed to reverberate under her manipulation, emanating sounds like the vibration of a guqin's strings. Amidst the heavy melodies, the space before her twisted as if an invisible shield was forming. "Using heaven as a guqin, and the Dao as a melody; what a move, 'Sky Sound Shield'! Tian Yan, you are indeed the survivor of the 'Tianyin Branch'!" A trace of severity crossed Cao Youqing's eyes, then a purplish glint flickered across her eyes, her haughtiness was utterly undisturbed, "I don't care about your background, before my Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Sword Intent, everything will dissipate into dust!" "Break!" At her command, the formidable Purple Xiao Sky Thunder Sword, surged towards Tian Yan and Wang Shouzhe, slashing like divine punishment. The terrifying Sword Intent seemed capable of shattering the heavens and earth. "Boom~~!" In the deafening boom, the formidable Sword Intent violently crashed into the Sky Sound Shield. Instantaneously, the twisted space that constituted the Sky Sound Shield violently caved in. The shield, which was constructed by an invisible force, developed web-like cracks that rapidly spread across it. "Master Shouzhe, retreat quickly! I can't hold her off for long!" Fairy Tian Yan's face was pale, and a bead of cold sweat rolled down her forehead without her realizing. She didn't expect that Cao Youqing's progression would be so rapid, her strength was even higher than what the earlier information had suggested. Despite being a Sky Pride in the advanced stage of the Heavenly Human Realm, she barely blocked Cao Youqing's sword! "Elder, do not panic. I am certain my father still has reserves." said Wang Zong'an in a calm and composed manner. From his understanding of his father, the harder times got, the more reserves there would be. Otherwise, his father would never have brought him over to witness these events. After all, his father often said that it was the elder's job to hold up the sky for the family's development, while they, the younger generation, need only concentrate on cultivation. As expected. As Wang Zong'an's words faded, a figure he was intimately familiar with abruptly appeared. Her steps were graceful and light. As she walked through the void, each step seemed to tread upon the nodes in space. With every manoeuvre of her lotus step, ripples echoed through space rhythmically, causing pulsations that quaked the heart! "Mother, mother..." In the flash of an instant, Wang Zong'an's heart quivered. No way? His father's reserve this time was

too brutal. He actually brought his mother as the reserve. Heaven, this was a prelude to a major calamity, wasn't it? ...

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... Under the watchful, anxious gaze of Wang Zong'an, Liu Ruolan already calmly stepped past the Sky Pride Immortal and Wang Shouzhe, entering the skies above. There, she stood in mid-air, her eyes coolly directing a glance at Cao Youqing before pointing lightly with her slender jade-like hand. "Hum~~" An oscillating sound seemed to echo from the void. A giant humanoid Dharma apparition suddenly appeared behind her. Compared to before, the silhouette of this Dharma shadow was slightly clearer, her flowy celestial garb fluttering like the legendary Goddess residing beyond the Thirty-Three Heavens. The formidable and vast aura emanating from her was awe-inspiring and frightening. Under the augmentation of this Dharma shadow, Liu Ruolan herself seemed to transform into a Goddess, her demeanor extraordinary and her beauty unparalleled. This was the power of the Yuan Water Taoist Body. Compared to Cao Youqing's Sky Thunder Spiritual Body, even the mere presence of Liu Ruolan's Yuan Water Taoist Body Dharma Shadow overwhelmed Cao Youqing, debilitating the domineering Sword Intent of Sky Thunder. Simultaneously, an overwhelming surge of Yuan Water Spiritual Energy came roaring like a tsunami. In a blink, it condensed on her slender, onion-like fingertips before imploding inward, again and again. The vast ocean's Yuan water Spiritual Energy, in that instant, was condensed under a powerful influence into a minuscule ball, no bigger than a soybean, trembling like an ordinary droplet. With a slight quiver of her fingertip, she gently sent it spiralling towards Cao Youqing's Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Sword Intent. "Boom!" The "droplet" came into contact with the Sword Intent causing the vast Yuan water Spiritual Energy to explode, shattering Cao Youqing's Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Sword Intent in an instant, like the bursting of a silver vase. Even the space was rattling, the explosion hurting the ears and chilling the hearts. "Huff!" Like hit by a heavy blow, Cao Youqing spat out fresh blood, her whole body sent flying backward tens of feet in the sky before barely stabilizing. She looked at Liu Ruolan with fear. Who is this, how could it be possible? All this happened in an instant. Not only was Cao Youqing stunned, but the Sky Pride Immortal too looked on, pupils contracting, filled with disbelief. Such an extraordinary Cao Youqing, yet defeated by this mysterious woman. How incredibly powerful must this woman be? "Mother..." Looking at the figure in the sky that was both domineering and alluring, Wang Zong'an couldn't help but mutter. Worthy of being his mother, still as dominant and strong as ever! "Mother?" The Sky Pride Immortal suddenly paused, her gaze going uncertain and hesitant as she looked at Liu Ruolan. She...is Wang Shouzhe's first wife! In the sky. Before Cao Youqing could react, Liu Ruolan made her move again. Each move under her Yuan Water Taoist Body carried the awe-inspiring might of the Yuan Water Heavenly Dao. Especially on this vast, expansive sea, the power of her Yuan Water Taoist Body was shown to its fullest. Although Cao Youqing, a Sacred Land Sky Pride reached Level Eight of the Heavenly Human Realm, however, facing Liu Ruolan, she could barely parry her attacks, let alone retaliate. "This...This...It turns out that the first wife of Wang Shouzhe is so powerful? Having Yuan Water Taoist Body at the Heavenly Human Realm makes her one of the rare Great Heavenly Prides. With a cultivation base just around peak of Level Three of the Heavenly Human Realm, she could still suppress Cao Youqing! It seems, she is not just an ordinary Great Heavenly Pride." Looking from afar at the two women who were fighting fiercely in the sky, the Sky Pride Immortal couldn't help swallowing her saliva, weakly turning her gaze towards Wang Shouzhe. No wonder, all her several attempts for the position of Wang Shouzhe's concubine were smoothly evaded by him. Having such a fierce wife, how dare he keep a concubine? Suddenly, the eyes of Sky Pride Immortal started to

roll, as if plotting something. "Liu Ruolan! So it's you, the true trump card of the Wang family, the concealed Great Heavenly Pride, no wonder you could give birth to prodigious children such as Wang Liyao," Cao Youqing retorted through her horrific bashing and furious screams. Still, with a furious yet bitter voice, she scolded, "But, with just you trying to defeat me, that's probably not enough." "I will let you see the true Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Intent that I, Cao Youqing, have comprehended after spending 15 years in the Place of Thunder Punishment! Even if you are a Great Heavenly Pride, your cultivation base is too weak!" Along with the scolding of Cao Youqing, her aura surged again, with strands of purple lightning, like purple Jiaolongs spinning around her body. The intent of the lightning even tore the air apart, invading the water below. The surface of the water started to float with a layer of fish, shrimp, and crabs~ "What a strong Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Intent," the Sky Pride Immortal quietly remarked, "Although Cao Youqing is a bit impetuous, she is indeed talented and her understanding is quite extraordinary. With her current comprehension of the Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Realm, there wouldn't be much hindrance to her future entry into the Purple Abode Realm. What a pity, what a pity... Eh, Wang Shouzhe, Zong'an, aren't you both worried?" Worried? Wang Shouzhe, father and son, glanced at each other, both seemingly calm and cool. They simultaneously shook their head - they weren't worried at all. The one who should be worried was probably Cao Youqing. At the same time. Cao Youqing's Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Intent had also reached its climax. Torrents of volatile Zi Xiao Sky Thunder True Intent finally culminated into a Zi Xiao Sky Thunder Sword, with its destructive aura slashing towards Liu Ruolan.

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That one sword, made the sky tremble, space seemed to wobble on the brink of shattering, as if it could pulverize even a small hill. At this time. "This is getting interesting." Liu Ruolan seemed to finally take the situation seriously, her eyes changed suddenly, and a bone-chilling cold exuded from her body. "Clang~" A clear sound of a sword chime sounded leisurely. A slender soft sword around Liu Ruolan's waist suddenly unsheathed and fell into her palm in an instant. The sword was like a slender soft sword cast from flowing water. It was more slender than a regular sword and its blade was more thin. An enigmatic inscription that ebbed and flowed like water slowly moved on its surface, making it look very profound. The sword was named "Water Resemblance Treasure Sword", a replica of the divine profound treasure "Water Resemblance Authentic Spirit Sword". After Liu Ruolan's ascension to the Heavenly Human Realm, Wang Shouzhe began to search for suitable magical treasures for her. After several years, he finally got the water-element soft sword, a magical treasure, in an auction. However, since Liu Ruolan herself was already powerful, ordinary moves were enough to dominate peers, so it was the first time for the sword to be unsheathed since she got it. As the treasure sword was wielded, Liu Ruolan's momentum sharply increased. With a flick of her wrist, a sword intent like water burst forth. The surroundings suddenly fell silent. It seemed that even time itself had stopped at that moment. The tumultuous waves on the sea surface and the leaping arcs of electricity seemed to encounter some irresistibly powerful force, abruptly freezing in mid-air. Even Cao Youqing's Purple Xiao's sword intent of sky thunder, which seemed capable of destroying the world, was frozen in mid-air. The water-like sword intent cut through the air, and in a blink of an eye, it collided with the Purple Xiao's sky thunder intent. "Rumble~~!" A huge explosion suddenly rang out, and an overwhelming force detonated. The seemingly stagnant spacetime finally returned to normal at this moment. A terrifying shock wave swept across, making Cao Youqing tremble. The Heavenly Thunder Treasure Sword in his hand almost slipped out. He was knocked backwards by a blast of such terrifying power and smashed hard into the sea. At the same time, torrents of blood rose from within the sea. Obviously, under that one sword strike, Cao



Youqing had been seriously injured. The scene was silent. Wei Wenxun's eyes were staring wide, his head filled with sweat from fright. All of them were early-stage cultivators of the Heavenly Human Realm, how could the gap be so great? If it had been him, Wei Wenxun, taking that move just now, he feared he would have been pulverized. Fortunately, he didn't have a hard time with the Wang family when he was the Changning Defender. The Wang family even kept such a terrifying card up their sleeves... Meanwhile, under Tian Yan Immortal's veil, her mouth was wide open, her eyes round and full of disbelief. Even Wang Shouzhe and his son looked at each other, their wife/mother seemed to have become even more powerful. It's so frustrating to compare themselves with others. They're also the great heavenly proud, but they never saw her practicing so hard... yet they, father and son, are left far behind! Was the [Innate Dao Fetus Spirit seed] of the Divine Martial Dynasty Era really that powerful? Father and son couldn't help but fall into deep self-doubt. Afterward, Cao Youqing's big move was broken. Losing his confidence to fight again and seriously wounded, he emerged from the water and fled by secret technique. Yet, this vast Qingluo Sea, like Liu Ruolan's water-element Taoist Body's home field, no matter how Cao Youqing escaped, he couldn't escape from her grasp. Moreover, following Wang Shouzhe's style, how could he possibly leave without more backups? There were water-reed vines cultivated by Wang Shouzhe lurking under the surrounding sea, no matter where Cao Youqing fled or how he fled. They could always stop him. And this slight delay would be enough for Liu Ruolan to catch up. Two quarters of an hour later, Cao Youqing was killed on the seas a dozen miles away. The illustrious heavenly proud of the sacred land fell on the Qingluo Sea. After a short while, Liu Ruolan, who had collected the spoils of war, came back gracefully and landed next to Wang Shouzhe. Wang Shouzhe and his son Wang Zong'an rushed forward, using caring words for his wife/mother, taking extreme care of her. "You've worked hard, my wife. Are you injured at all? Is there anything uncomfortable? Sigh~ For such ruffians, in the future, let me deal with them myself. There is no need to bother my wife." "Mother, it's all because of my incompetence and insufficient cultivation base, that even had to make you personally deal with them. Don't worry, I will practice even more diligently and gain the strength to protect you soon." The father and son were experts in flattering, each better than the other. Their constant words were refreshing the bottom line of humanity. Suddenly! Liu Ruolan's cold eyes focused on the Tian Yan Immortal, assessing her from head to toe. Wang Zong'an had a sinking feeling in his heart, he sensed trouble. Tian Yan Immortal kept on saying that she wanted to be his father's lover. But she had helped his father and their family during this family crisis. Killing her would be... At the same time, Wang Zong'an also received a hint from his father's eyes. Alright then! At times like this, it's up to me, the Young Clan Leader, to smooth things over. Wang Zong'an steeled himself, preparing to stand up and say a few good words for Tian Yan Immortal when he saw Tian Yan Immortal had acted faster than him. She dashed forward and appeared before Liu Ruolan.

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Wang Zong'an was so frightened that his breath hitched. No, no, no! The celestial Tian Yan actually dared to challenge his mother, even after witnessing her strength. Was she absolutely insane? Surprisingly, events took a turn that completely caught him off guard. "Sister, you're powerful and domineering." As soon as she reached Liu Ruolan, Tian Yan cooed like a little bird perching on someone's arm, "At first, I was worried for you, sister. But who would have thought, that pitiful slob, Cao Youqing, would ever be a match for you?" "Sister, your moves just now were so amazing. Little Yan felt as if she was watching a goddess descended from heaven. Just how lucky this Young Master Shouzhe is to be able to marry a goddess like you!" "Sister, you have such lovely skin! Are

you perhaps using the Wang family's skincare line? Huh, you don't? Oh, I am so jealous! No mortal can compare to your natural beauty, sister." The expressions, the attitudes, the dialogues were even more sycophantic than Wang Shouzhe and Wang Zong An's, completely shameless. Wang Zong'an's eyes bulged round, and even the usually composed Wang Shouzhe was left dumbfounded and disoriented. A quarter of an hour later, Liu Ruolan had been thoroughly schmoozed. The two women moved to a corner, discussing common feminine topics like skincare routines and cooking recipes as if no one else was around. Under Tian Yan's fawning, Liu Ruolan's passion for cooking was reignited. She even started inviting Tian Yan to the Wang family residence so she could cook for her.... Father and son Wang Shouzhe exchanged looks. Who knew Tian Yan was capable of this? Could it be, she was planning to save the day in a roundabout manner? ... Several days after the death of Cao Youqing, came the downfall of the Cao family's "Old Master Kunhao", who had been besieged by the three Purple Abode cultivators at the edge of the Qingluo Sea. The survival capability of the Purple Abode cultivators was much greater than that of the Heavenly Human realm cultivators, not to mention the "Old Master Kunhao" who had been alive for hundreds of years, holding countless trump cards. Hence, it was more difficult to defeat him. It was a remarkable feat that they managed to kill him with three against one. Not long after, the news spread throughout Longzuo county and Liaoyuan county, the message even reaching Qing'an prefecture. The number of Purple Abode cultivators was already scarce. Apart from those who naturally died of old age, or died outside the territories, the instances of internal deaths due to conflicts were scarce. And now, with the downfall of Old Master Kunhao, the Sky Pride of the Sacred Land, Cao Youqing had died too. This incident naturally led to heated discussions and captivated attention. However, the Prefectural Governor of Longzuo, Taishi Ankang, had already prepared. He handed over all evidence acquired in advance to the National Capital and the Sacred Land to prove that Kunhao and Cao Youqing were the culprits seeking their own death, while Wang Shouzhe and the others merely acted in self-defense. The investigation and changes that followed are not detailed herein. For most people, this news was just gossip fodder during their meals. However, for the Cao family of Liaoyuan, it was disastrous news. Just as the family was immersed in grief and mourning, a crisis immediately ensued. Old competitors bared their teeth, suppressing and disrespecting the Cao family. While some allies steered clear for fear of getting implicated, some added fuel to the fire and seized this opportunity to gain a piece of the pie. Whether the Cao family could make it through the present crisis was uncertain, but their decline was inevitable. Simultaneously, as the victors of this conflict, the social standing of the Qian family of Longzuo and the Wang Clan of Changning in both Longzuo and Liaoyuan counties rose rapidly and in the short term, even surpassed the local prominent Purple Abode families. ... Within the same timeframe. North of the Southern Desert County is not the territory of the Great Qian Land. Cross the vast outer grassland and desert, and you will reach a seemingly boundless uninhabited forest further north. Pass through this uninhabited forest and go further north, and you will reach a comparatively flat plateau, less complicated in terms of the environment. This plateau is known as the "Desert North Plateau". Living on the plateau is a tribe known as "Kuyeswa", who make a living from hunting and nomadic pastoralism. In their language, "Kuyeswa" means "children of the sky and earth". The Kuyeswa tribe regards the Dapeng and the gray wolf as their totems, believing that they are the descendants of the "king of the sky", the golden-winged Dapeng, and the "king of the earth", the ancient gray wolf, and are thus the favored children of the heavens and earth. However, within the Great Qian Land, they are also known by another name - "The Barbarians of the Desert North". The Desert North Barbarian tribe is a vassal state of the Great Qian Land. Every ten years, both lands send merchant groups to each other to trade. A lot of the widely popular cattle and horse breeds in the

Great Qian Land, like the North Heavy War Horse, North Beef, etc., are the offspring of native breeds and the Desert North breeds. Correspondingly, the Great Qian Land also had a massive influence on the Desert North Barbarian tribe. The heir to the throne of each generation from the Desert North, after being chosen, would go on to study in the Lingyun Sacred Land of the Great Qian for decades and only after completing their education, would they return to their homeland to inherit the throne. Over thousands of years, the culture of the Great Qian had deeply rooted in the Desert North.

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The most obvious point was that, even in ordinary families in the Desert North, many delicate ornaments and fabrics produced in Da Qian could be seen. On the dressing tables of royal ladies, one could even see skincare products from the south of Da Qian. And even if a cultivator who doesn't speak the Barbarian Tribe's language came to Desert North, he wouldn't encounter too much communication difficulty. Because the majority of ordinary people in the Barbarian Tribe could speak a few sentences in Da Qian official language with an accent, they could figure out the gist through guessing and with a bit of struggle. The Desert North Barbarian Tribe had also long abandoned their entirely nomadic lifestyle and developed a unique Desert North breeding and farming system. The tribespeople were mostly scattered across the entire plateau in a dispersed settlement pattern. The center of the entire plateau was the political center of the whole Desert North Barbarian Tribe, the location of the Desert North Royal Court. This place was also the most prosperous place in the entire Desert North. Despite the environmental constraints preventing the establishment of a city, they had a huge encampment where the tent of the Barbarian Tribe's king was located. One day. Nearing sunset, the horizon was already bathed in a magnificent red by the setting sun, even the rustic old trees and the colorful totem flags fluttering inside the camp were tinged with a layer of gentle hue in the sunset glow. A huge silver-grey wolf lay lazily dozing off at the entrance of the encampment. The harsh wind of the Desert North seemed to have no effect on it; between breaths, its spiritual energy fluctuated like a tide, intimidating to anyone who saw it. Trivially inducing the might of heaven and earth was something that only powerful beings above the Purple Abode Realm could do, and for fierce beasts, it required at least a Level 7. This gray wolf was a powerful fierce beast above Level 7. Suddenly. The wolf perked up as if it felt something, its ears suddenly standing upright. At the same time, its eyes suddenly opened. Its dark purple eyes filled with a brutish aura gazed far off towards the horizon. In the distance, near the horizon, there was a shadow slowly moving closer in the sunset. After watching for a moment, the grey wolf seemed to have confirmed something, shook its ears, and lay back down, continuing to doze off lazily with its eyes half-closed. It was only when the shadow drew closer that it could be seen that it was the body of a massive Desert North yak. Even lying on its side, the yak was at least as tall as a two-storey building, its body covered with thick fur as if it was wrapped in several layers of blankets. In front of the yak were a group of young people, panting as they dragged the yak's body forward, their faces filled with excitement. In the most eye-catching position in the crowd was a tall girl dressed in a thick fur coat. She walked with her head held high, surrounded by young people who all looked at her with admiration. This woman was none other than Wang Licui, who had been away from home for a long time. Wang Licui was only two years younger than Wang Shouzhe, and was now in her late fifties. When she first arrived on the Desert North Plateau, she had already ascended to the Heavenly Human Realm. With plenty of fierce beast meat supplied on the Desert North Plateau, her strength increased rapidly. Now five years later, she had reached the Mid-Late Stage of Level One of the Heavenly Human Realm. In another three to five years, she would ascend

to Level Two of the Heavenly Human Realm. The only regret was that although the fierce beasts on the plateau were powerful, and her master, Master Yunyang, personally hunted down a Level 7 wild yak for her, her growth in bloodline talent was still slow. It remained at the stage of Premium Grade Class C, just slightly increased within the Class C level. However, according to her master, Master Yunyang, the fact that her bloodline could still increase was already a significant advantage. If it were someone else who wanted to further improve their bloodline after becoming a Great Heavenly Proud: They would have to rely on 7th Rank, 8th Rank, or even 9th Rank high-quality Dan medicine, or treasures of the same level. Those items were not only rare but also extremely valuable. Not to mention his Purple Abode Realm, even an Enlightened One would have to exhaust their family wealth to afford them. Only Wang Licui, with her innate Gluttonous Bloodline, could still grow in bloodline talent. These years, because Wang Licui often went hunting for fierce beasts on the plateau, and although she was powerful, she didn't have much of an air about her and was very agreeable, she inadvertently became close with the young people in the Desert North Barbarian Tribe. Many young people were particularly keen to go hunting with her, and every time she went hunting, the slots for accompanying people had to be fought over before they could be determined. "Elder Lici, I want to go hunting with you next time." "Elder Lici, please take me with you next time." Chatting and laughing, the group of young people unconsciously approached the royal court's encampment. However, before they even entered the encampment, a loud boom suddenly erupted from within the encampment. Immediately following, two figures, one preceding the other, rushed out from the encampment and began fighting in the sky. One of them was a tall woman with a handsome face, dressed in crude barbarian armour, her hair in thick braids, wielding two huge axes. Her heroic bearing was like that of a War Goddess descended to earth. This woman was the current queen of the Desert North Barbarian Tribe, who had also once "studied" in the Da Qian Holy Land during her youth. She was extremely strong. Every swing of her axe made it seem as if the sky would be torn apart.

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Meanwhile, the other one was a gray-robed old man with white hair and beard, who could only try hard to defend himself but was incapable of retaliating. He was hit quite embarrassingly. "Junior Brother Yunyang, you and your disciples have been living off me, eating mine, and drinking mine. You're not even willing to spar with me?" The Barbarian Tribe Queen was extremely fit and attractive, her voice thunderous. "Yo, Queen Sister, please go easy on me." Master Yunyang defended fiercely while complaining, "You're such a figure in the Divine Power Territory, bullying me in the Purple Abode Realm. Why don't you pick on Lang Ya instead? Remember him? He was pretty arrogant back then." "Oh? You think I wouldn't dare to pick on Lang Ya?" The Barbarian Tribe Queen, not having had enough fun, immediately put away her double axes and started using her iron fists to inflict violence on Master Yunyang, "I'm taking my daughter to the Sacred Land soon. I'll get a chance to beat up that Lang Ya guy." "Daughter? Sister, didn't you refuse to take a husband because you liked...How do you have a daughter? I've never seen her. Could it be..." Master Yunyang was being beaten and howled in pain, but his curiosity was aroused. "Hehe~ Junior Brother Yunyang, you're still the same, always asking for a spanking. Sister here will satisfy your special request." "Sister, I was wrong! I was really wrong." Meanwhile, a row of young Barbarians from the Northern Barbarian Tribe hid in a trench, revealing only their heads, and watched enthralled. They discovered that their Queen had such a past. And that old man, Master Yunyang, was quite resistant, he could withstand so many hits from the queen. In this line of young ones, Wang Licui was included. She looked sympathetically into the sky at her Master, who was being

beaten and howling miserably. Her venerable Master had to bear such humiliation just for the sake of her Bloodline advancement. She remembered that just a few years ago, the Queen liked her a lot...But in recent years, the Queen started to spar with her master from time to time, raining punches on him. While fighting, she would frequently say things like, "Junior Brother Yunyang, my palace in Desert North is well known for being poor... Yunyang, weren't you going to take Lici to the Frost Moon Immortal Dynasty for a visit? Lici is full of potential, don't waste it!" and such. Wang Licui was very familiar with these words. Every time she heard such words, she knew they were going to move again. However, the "Shuoyue Festival", held once every thirty years on the Desert North Plateau, was just two months away. By then, there will be a surge in Taiyin's power between heaven and earth, and a large number of young wolves with excellent Bloodline Talent and high potential will be born in the Gray Wolf pack. She should figure out how to snatch a few wolf cubs from the Wolf King during that time, and raise them to serve as mounts for the younger generation of her family. The fifth day after the Shuoyue Festival of the Desert North kingdom. Master Yunyang and his disciple appeared at the edge of the Desert North Royal Court. The Master and the disciple, carrying big and small bags, followed by a group of puppy-like young wolves, were full of energy, and seemed quite spirited. "Was the Desert North Palace fun, girl?" "It was fun, the Queen gave me many gifts before I left." "Once we cross this vast ice field and traverse a sea, we'll arrive at the renowned Frost Moon Immortal Dynasty. It's even more fun there." "Yay~~" Wang Licui screamed excitedly, "Frost Moon Immortal Dynasty, here comes Miss Lici! Wait for me~ Ahoo Ahoo~" "Ahoo Ahoo~" The little wolf cubs also howled along. ...

#### Chapter 100: The Wang Family's Promotion to Grade Six Prominent Family\_1

... Time hurried on. In the blink of an eye, another thirty years had passed. For the entire Da Qian, a mere thirty years was but a snap of the fingers. However, at the level of the Changning Wang Clan, thirty years was enough to induce earth-shattering changes. In the spring of the 3215th year of the Great Qian Longchang era. Seventy years had passed since Wang Shouzhe had traversed time. He had grown from an eighteen-year-old heroic youth to an "mature young man" at the age of eighty-eight. This was no joke. Due to Wang Shouzhe's early promotions to the Spirit Platform Realm and the Heavenly Human Realm, his appearance didn't change much from when he was in his twenties. However, his temperament had become even more gentle and restrained, mature and steady. Over the years, the Wang Family had experienced some minor setbacks, but didn't face any major obstacles. Hence, the Wang Family had been quietly growing stronger in low profile. However, up to now, the Wang Family is becoming less able to keep a low profile. Especially after the family's two core members, Wang Shou Yong and Wang Luotong, both entered the Heavenly Human Realm last year. Longzuo County's Prefectural Governor, Taishi Ankang, could no longer bear the Wang family's strategy of remaining unobtrusive. In his words, Wang Shouzhe, do you intend to sneak your way to Grade Four before promoting? Especially now that the development of the Qingluo Guard was nearing its end, if the Wang Family did not have the official status of a Grade Six Prominent Family, how was it qualified to defend one of the posts on behalf of the Court? There and then, Taishi Ankang directly used the prefectural order to officially announce that he was assisting the Changning Wang Clan in their application for promotion to a Grade Six Prominent Family; it was said that the relevant departments in the National Capital had already approved it. The plaque of the Grade Six Prominent Family, which was supervised and created by the Prefecture Mansion, was about to be delivered to the Wang family to replace the threshold. The secret was thus out in the open. After discussions within the Wang Family, it was decided that it was time to reveal some of their true strength to deter all those who had their eyes on the benefits of New Peace Town and the

Qingluo Guard. This time, a double Heavenly Human banquet was held for Wang Luotong and Wang Shouyong, and the promotion threshold ceremony was held simultaneously. A family usually only has one "Heavenly Human" promotion in a short period, which is a rare occurrence. After all, cultivating a Heavenly Human not only depends on their aptitude but also the family's income must be adjusted to the interval. Most 7th-ranked noble families would find it challenging to cultivate two Celestial-type individuals at the same time due to the depletion of resources not keeping pace. Even the Purple Abode families would control the pace of Celestial-types' cultivation. Most of them would cultivate a Heavenly Human elder every ten or twenty years to maintain the total amount of the family's Heavenly Human elders. Therefore, the Wang Family's joyous news caused a sensation in the Southern Six Guards, and the news spread throughout Longzuo County with the movement of flying carriages, becoming the topic of conversation for many after meals. It caused many ripples in the water. At the same time. One of the Southern Six Guards was the Zhenze Guard. The reason why it was called Zhenze was because it was located near the Great Wilderness Marsh, hence it was named with the intention of guarding the Great Wilderness Marsh. Throughout history, the most powerful family in the Zhenze Guard was the Zhenze Wang Family. The first old ancestor of the Wang Family, Wang Kunyuan, was a skillful practitioner at the eighth level of the Heavenly Human Realm, and had always enjoyed the reputation of being the first advanced stage Heavenly Human old ancestor in the Southern Six Guards. This old ancestor was unobtrusive in his youth and quietly developed in a low profile. About fifty years ago, Wang Kunyuan broke through from the peak of level six to level seven in one fell swoop, and then he was no longer low-key, but announced to the public that Elder Kun Yuan was actually Sky Pride. At that time, Wang Kunyuan's fame surged in the Southern Six Guards, and the name of the Zhenze Wang Clan slowly spread throughout Longzuo County. However, the Wang Family was ultimately just a strong Grade Seven Prominent Family, at most, it could claim to be high and mighty within the scope of the Zhenze Guard. With the resources from just one Guard's territory, it would be as difficult as skyrocketing to elevate Elder Kun Yuan to the Purple Abode Realm. In fact, even pushing Kun Yuan's cultivation base to stage seven of the Heavenly Human Realm had already caused the Wang Family to suffer tremendously. Many of the younger generation, were even delayed in their careers and missed their best time for cultivation. Therefore, the best way out for the Wang Family was to expand its influence in the Southern Six Guards with the status and strength of Sky Pride, and, in plain terms, to find a way to gain from other families' pots. Only by gathering the power of several guards could they potentially satisfy Elder Kun Yuan's desire to advance to the Purple Abode Realm with its insatiable demand for resources. Unfortunately, Elder Kun Yuan was born in the wrong era. When the Zhenze Wang's family extended its reach to places like Changning Guard, they faced retaliation and targeting from the Changning Wang Family's In-laws Alliance. After several covert struggles and confrontations, the Zhenze Wang Family withdrew in disgrace. Afterwards, the Wang Family was even more shocked to learn that Wang Liyao of the Wang Family had become the disciple of the Enlightened One... After the Changning Wang Family soared to the sky, the Wang Family immediately behaved themselves. They no longer dared to covet the Changning Guard. Furthermore, in the subsequent business expansion in other guards of the Southern Six Guards, the Wang Family was repeatedly suppressed and faced repeated failures by the Wang's In-Law Alliance. This gradually caused the Wang Family's plan to take a shortcut to the Purple Abode level to gradually fail. Fifty years had passed, and Elder Kun Yuan, who had just been promoted to stage seven of the Heavenly Human Realm, had barely managed to advance to stage eight! Elder Kun Yuan is now over 300 years old. The road to the Purple Abode becomes more distant as time passes. For various reasons, the Zhenze Wang Family naturally abhorred the Wang Family, but due to the

growing strength of the Changning's In-Law Alliance, they could only swallow their anger. Certainly. This hatred was only one-sided. For the Changning Wang Clan, they hardly put the Zhenze Wang Clan in their eyes. It was merely noted in the Wang's Ancestral Inheritance Chronicles that there was a minor friction with the Zhenze Wang Clan in a certain year, and they parted in displeasure.

#### Chapter 100: The Wang Family's Promotion to Grade 6 Prominent Family\_2

Despite the Wang Family's extreme low profile today, their status within the Southern Six Guards of Longzuo County is akin to an invisible overlord.

Besides the Hundred Islands Guard, an unsuitable cluster of islands for farming, and the Wang family that staunchly defends its main base at Town Zhenze. Almost all other guards have become the Wang Family's grain planting base, producing an endless stream of high-quality grains for the Wang Family every year, which in turn provides significant financial benefits.

However, they are, after all, fellow countrymen. The Wang family treats various planting families quite well, leaning some benefits towards them while fulfilling their own economic interests.

As a result, the 7th, 8th, and 9th-ranked prominent families from all the other guard areas have come to regard planting grains for the Wang family as their primary industry. Following the Wangs equates to immense financial earnings, and they are all smiles.

Even the Tuoba and Dantai families from the Eastern Sea Guard, who once had great conflicts that resulted in bloody fights, eventually buried the hatchet under the mediation of the Wang family. They now sincerely engage in farming or participate in sea transportation.

In these times, who could resist money? Except for the Wang family in Town Zhenze, they own 150,000 acres of fertile lands and refuse to sow the Wang family's grain, even if it led to their ruin.

In fact, the other 8th and 9th rank prominent families from Town Zhenze have secretly sided with the Wang family, clandestinely growing crops for them. Even though the Wang family in Town Zhenze is aware of this, they turned a blind eye as they simply can't fight the Wangs.

As for the Wangs of Town Zhenze's non-cooperation, the Wangs of Changning let them be. Their 150,000 acres of fertile land is no longer a necessity to the Wang Family.

One day.

In the main residence of the Wang family in Town Zhenze.

Upon hearing a report from the young Family Head Wang Xingzu, the somewhat decrepit old patriarch, Wang Kunyuan, looked incredulous, "How is this possible? How? Both Wang Shuyong and Wang Luotong are merely around ninety and have already been promoted to the Heavenly Human Realm. Isn't this a sign of being a Sky Pride?"

Wang Kunyuan has always been proud of his Sky Pride status. Even though the Wang Family does have Sky Prides in the Academic Palace, as well as Great Sky Prides with limitless prospects.

But he, Wang Kunyuan, also has the pride of a Sky Pride after all.

The face of Wang Xingzu was bitter, "Old Ancestor, we had no idea the Wang family hid so deeply. Besides their several Sky Prides in the Academic Palace, they've concealed three more in their family, no, four. As it turns out, Wang Shouye, Master Danding's direct disciple, is a Sky Pride too!"

"The quantity of their Sky Prides..." Wang Kunyuan was taken aback, "Why are they appearing in such large numbers?" It would already be against the heavens' luck if a regular aristocratic family, blessed with good fortune, produced a single Sky Pride.

If they produce two, it undoubtedly means they've accumulated the virtuous deeds of numerous generations in their ancestry.

When appearing in large numbers, it could either mean the Wang family's bloodline returned to their roots or they encountered some special stroke of luck. Similar situations have not been unheard of in Great Qian's history.

In addition, some prominent families also have their own secret methods to ensure a continuous supply of Sky Prides and so on!

"Old Ancestor, no matter what, the Wang family already has a great chance." Wang Xingzu tried to convince, "In future, they will ascend to a Grade Five Prominent Family, and possibly even Grade Four! We cannot continue opposing them."

Wang Kunyuan's face was full of bitterness. Over the past fifty years, the Wang family has always seen the Wang family as an enemy. Judging from the foundation revealed by the Wang family today, they probably never took the Wang family seriously.



"Old Ancestor, we can help the Wang family plant grains crops. With the extra Qian Gold we will earn, we can buy more cultivating elixirs for you..." Wang Xingzu said, "As long as you can break through to the Peak of Tianren Realm, we of the Wang family will support you in ascending to the Purple Abode Realm, even if we have to sell all our family assets."

"Purple Abode Realm?" Wang Kunyuan shook his head in bitterness, "No chance. Most Sky Prides don't exceed three hundred and thirty years at the latest when challenging the Purple Abode Realm. Forget it, Xingzu, you go and lower your head to admit your mistakes to the Wang family. From now on, our family will help them farm."

All the resources we receive will be used to nurture the younger generations of our clan."

"Old Ancestor, you..." Wang Xingzu anxiously responded.

"The decision has been made, no, I should personally go to Master Shouzhe and apologize, with abundant gifts. I hope the Wang family, considering our shared history, will let bygones be bygones." Wang Kunyuan had completely understood that the Wang family was booming. The Southern Six Guard area was bound to become the Wang family's traditional base.

The action by the Wang family of Town Zhenze was not accidental.

Upon hearing the news, all the 7th-rank aristocratic families of the Southern Six Guards received a congratulatory invitation from the Changning Wang family and decided to send their family patriarch and family head to the Wang family. They would bring lavish gifts, and after expressing their blessings, they would visit Ping'an Town in Changning to observe the ceremony when the date comes.

No matter how they genuinely feel, whether they're happy or not, they must seem joyous at this moment.

The families who were most jubilant were the 8th and 9th-rank prominent families. Living under the 7th-rank prominent families, they didn't harbor high ambitions.

Not only is the Wang family now making money with its large enterprise, but it has also elevated itself to the position of the only sixth-rank prominent family among the Southern Six Guards,

naturally making it a regional overlord. With their newfound status, if they ever face unsolvable troubles, they won't find themselves without recourse.

The seventh-rank families that once held sway over them won't dare act so recklessly anymore. However, this time when the Wang family advanced to the sixth rank, the eighth and ninth-rank families weren't invited. After all, there are simply too many seventh-rank families in the Longzuo County; how could all families of the eighth and ninth ranks possibly be invited?

Nonetheless, those eighth and ninth-rank families don't mind, deciding mutually to observe the promotion ceremony from afar.

Setting aside the Wang family and the Southern Six Guards of Longzuo's backyard.

Many clans in Longzuo County have received the Wang family's invitations, and all of them are presenting sincere attitudes, preparing to send prestigious delegations to witness the ceremony. In the grand scope of Longzuo County, aside from two and a half families of the Purple Abode realm, there are only six existing sixth-rank families, with the Wangs just making the seventh!

From this vantage point, one can assert that the Changning Wang clan is now among the top ten families in Longzuo.

Furthermore.

Some families outside Longzuo County have made responses as well. For instance, the Fang Family from the distant Liaoyuan, a newly risen Purple Abode Prominent Family, shares a very good relationship with the Changning Wangs. Wang Zongrui, the second son of Wang Shouzhe, married the rightful heir apparent of the Fang family.

Time flies.

Half a year has passed in the blink of an eye, and the promotion ceremony of the Changning Wangs is imminent.

Guests begin to converge upon Changning.

One after another, cargo and passenger ships arrive at the Peace River, anchoring at the Dingpu Port.

Dingpu Port!

After more than seventy years of development and reform, it has now become an important port and trading marketplace for the Wang family.

In addition, endless fleets of flying carriages descended from the sky, stopping in the flying carriage station.

Among them, five consecutive flying carriages landed one after another, and a crowd of expensively dressed people, mostly youths, stepped out. The leader of the group was a mature young man sporting a small mustache.

Leaning on his hands at his back and leisurely surveying his surroundings, he remarked with emotion, "This Dingpu Port, I, Wang Shihai, have not visited for just over thirty years, and the changes are so huge, it's almost unrecognizable."

This man is none other than Wang Shihai, a Sky Pride of the Southern Desert Wang family. He returned to Ping'an Changning with Wang Shouzhe and helped in the initial development, living there for several years before returning home.

The current Wang Shihai is far from the young wastrel he once was. The seventy-one-year-old has last year broken through restrictions and ascended to the Tianren Realm. Such achievements, even among the Tianren Realm, are quite impressive.

"Grandpa Thirty-nine~" A lethargic yet pleasant feminine voice said, "Is this Ping'an Town? It looks very good, and as you mentioned, it's dripping with gold. Considering you kept your promise this time, I'll allow you to defer repayment of the eighty thousand Qian Gold you owe me by six months... But you can't skimp on the interest."

The woman, looking beautiful, was ablaze with vigor when talking about money.

"Wang Mei Tao." Wang Shihai's face changed, "Six months? How would that work? Even if I start working for Fourth Grandpa, I wouldn't make that much in six months... And remember, the one hundred thousand Qian Gold that laid the foundation for your wealth was from me..."

This woman is none other than Wang Mei Tao from the Southern Desert Wang family. When she was still a snot-nosed child, Wang Shihai, in his misplaced generosity, gifted her one hundred thousand Qian Gold.

Then, it spiraled out of control.

With that initial sum of money, she started lending money among the younger generation of the Southern Desert Wang family and exhibited a formidable talent for doing so. In less than fifty years, that original sum has multiplied into millions of Qian Gold.

Today, she has a leading reputation among her peers in the Southern Desert, known as "Bloodsucking Peach"... and even Wang Shihai isn't exempt from her oppression.

"Grandpa Thirty-nine~ Paying back a debt is a natural obligation. If you can't repay, I am already doing you a favor by allowing for a delay." Wang Mei Tao spoke casually, her voice languid.

"You're always boasting about your close relationship with Old Ancestor Shouzhe, right? Well, then you can go and plead with him."