

Protect OCL VI4 46

Chapter 46 Life-bound Immortal Plant! Master Shouzhe is on the Rise

...

In that lightning-fast moment, Wang Shouzhe had already thought of several ingenious solutions.

However, every single one seemed like a ticket to death.

Instantly, Wang Shouzhe's expression darkened as he grasped Liu Ruolan's jade hand and said, "My lady, ever since you married into my family, you have been tirelessly managing our household. These years, you have worked so hard. Marrying you is the greatest fortune of my life."

"What nonsense are you spouting, the children are still here~" Liu Ruolan chastised him with a playful scolding glance, "Stop messing around, what will people think?"

Wang Liyao and Wang Zong'an on the side exchanged glances.

They hadn't expected that after so many years, their father's sweet nothings still remained at the same level as their childhood days...

Having left the protection of their parents for so many years, to hear such saccharine sweet nothings again really felt like a blast from the past. They felt as if they were back in their parents' courtyard, still living those days when they would occasionally listen to their father's stories or be chased around the yard with a stick by their mother when lazy with their homework.

"Yes, yes, my lady's right." Wang Shouzhe let go of her hand and said lovingly, "Lately, with the competition for the Emperor's son and other numerous complex matters demanding my attention, I have been somewhat preoccupied. Once this busy period is over, I will definitely pay more attention to my lady, and spend more time caring for and accompanying you."

"Mm, my husband, you're so good to me. It's truly my fortune to have met you," Ruolan responded.

The younger generation, peers, and elders all took their cue to disperse.

Wang Shouzhe and his wife had been married for over seventy years, and everyone had long since figured out a pattern. When they were loving, it was best to stay away; when they fought, it was even more crucial to stay away.

Because the former could be sickeningly sweet, and the latter could easily drag one into the fray, becoming collateral damage.

Therefore, the ancestor Longyan took Luotong, Shu Yong, and a few of the younger generation aside to impart cultivation insights. Wang Liyao and her siblings pulled aside their aunts Luo Jing and Luo Qiu to gossip about the Academic Palace and the Sacred Land.

Only the very young Wang Anye was left unattended on the side.

Uncertain where to go, his eyes, ears, and soul continually endured such intense sweetness that he felt like he was on the verge of collapse.

Making matters worse, Liu Ruolan's peripheral vision accidentally caught sight of Wang Anye, and she immediately frowned in disgust and said, "Wang Anye, what are you doing standing there? Have you finished your homework for today? Artifact Spirit~ Artifact Spirit, come out for a moment."

"What can I do for you, Ruolan?" the Artifact Spirit asked respectfully since Liu Ruolan was the record-holder for the graduation exam at the Fifth New Soldier Training Camp. Moreover, she wasn't known for creating records by stalling for time with shameless tactics; she achieved them with her formidable strength, crushing everything in her path.

"Could you please keep a closer eye on Anye's homework? His recent scores are barely passing the tests," Liu Ruolan criticized, "Anye, you weren't like this at the Clan School. Have you become distracted recently?"

Wang Anye felt tears welling up in his eyes.

Great-grandmother, are the assignments in the Clan School really on the same level as the current ones? You can't judge solely by the score...

"Ruolan is right. Anye, perhaps your sister has been too lenient with you. I have some practice exams here that might help," Artifact Spirit added.

"..."

Wang Anye looked up at the sky at a forty-five-degree angle, with bitterness in his clear, bright eyes, and his heart filled with sorrow.

In the past, as the junior clan leader of the Wang family, he found the days predictable and dull; but now, reality had handed him a heavy burden along with a thrilling and unpredictable life.

If he had the choice, he would rather return to that carefree past.

After Wang Anye was taken away by the Artifact Spirit, Wang Shouzhe and his wife finally had their world to themselves again.

"My lady, we've all been pushing hard lately. I saw near the lair of the Golden Tiger King, where the spiritual energy is lush and the mountains and lakes are beautiful. Why not build a hut and stay there for a few days to relax? I have had quite an insight in cultivation recently and have been making rapid progress; I would like to discuss and exchange insights with you."

"Mm," Liu Ruolan blushed slightly, a hint of spring in her expression, and whispered, "I, too, haven't compared notes on the Dao with my husband in a long while. It's because there have been too many people around and too many distractions, making us lax."

...

Ten days later.

The Wang Shouzhe couple, who had taken leave to relax, returned to the training camp. Compared to Liu Ruolan, who was radiant, Wang Shouzhe appeared a little weary.

After this short break, everyone had returned to a better state.

Next, it was time to study how to overcome—oh, not that—to utterly defeat Level Eight.

Wang Zongchang, Wang Luotong, and the rest were only at Heavenly Human Realm Level One, and Level Seven was already their limit. Now, there were only seven people left who were qualified to challenge Level Eight.

But this did not hinder everyone from gathering to watch the final battle. After all, at this level, a cultivator's battle is not only a contest of techniques and Mysterious Energy but also includes their understanding of the Heavenly Dao Laws. Watching the battle closely, if lucky, one might even gain some insights.

Even Wang Anye, who had been dragged away to do homework, was permitted to bring over his desk and watch the battle. However, during breaks in the fight, Anye still had to diligently complete the Artifact Spirit's assignments, and life was bitter beyond words.

"Anye, reaching Level Eight in the graduation exam is something I've never seen before," said the Artifact Spirit excitedly, "I never thought our Fifth New Recruit Camp might have the opportunity to achieve such an honor. I wonder if Ruolan can break through? So far, no one has."

Chapter 46 Life-bound Immortal Plant! Master Shouzhe is on the Rise_2

"The current record holder for the eighth challenge of the entire army is Little Princess Wu Panpan, a special recruit from the First Military Training Camp. At the tender age of sixteen, she commenced the graduation exam of the camp and breezed all the way through to the seventh challenge. It wasn't until the eighth challenge that, after persisting for two hours, she found herself at a disadvantage and felt she couldn't win, so she chose to give up. Otherwise, with her strength, although she wouldn't have been able to win, she still could have lasted for a very long time."

Sixteen years old...

Even though it wasn't the first time Wang Anye had heard the Artifact Spirit talking about this, he was still somewhat stunned.

To have reached the Heavenly Human Realm at sixteen!

This year he was already eleven years old, which meant that the formidable entity known as "Wu Panpan," who set the record, was only five years his senior when she did so.

How strong and what level of combat ability must one have for such talent? Monsters from the Divine Martial Dynasty Era really were too abnormal.

"Anye, treat your wife well in the future," Wang Zongchang said with a chuckle from beside him, "That Wu Panpan might be an ancestor of Little Princess Yiluo. If the Little Princess can awaken a bloodline like her ancestor, our Wang family will certainly be able to share in the glory."

"Anye, I heard that Little Princess Yiluo is quite beautiful, and her Bloodline Awakening Level is also high, possessing the genuine Azure Dragon bloodline of the Imperial Household. She's quite a match for you," Wang Luotong also joked, smiling, "After this is over, I'll apply to be transferred to work at the Annorth Garrison, so I can help you keep an eye on Yiluo nearby."

Wang Anye wore a smile on his face, but internally he rolled his eyes. These boring elders just loved to tease him. And he, as the junior, could only respond with a smiling face, which was extremely vexing.

Besides, what's so good about a wife? Especially Wu Yiluo, who not only had a fiery temper but was also unreasonable, just a troublemaker at heart.

Whenever Wang Anye thought about having to cuddle up in bed with Wu Yiluo when he grew up, or having kids through the boring activity of kissing, his scalp would go numb with the thought that his future life would become utterly drab and joyless.

If he had a choice, he would rather spend his days doing the basic subject simulation papers from the lovely Miss Artifact Spirit.

The Wang family members had all gained great benefits this time around, so they were in good spirits and adopt a more relaxed demeanor.

"Luo Jing, fight well, you just need to hold on for two hours," Master Shouzhe instructed, "Don't even think about winning, that's impossible."

"Yes, Fourth Brother, I won't be wilful," Luo Jing obediently responded, then fluttered onto the training field like a graceful, variegated butterfly, coolly saying, "Artifact Spirit, initiate the eighth challenge."

The eighth challenge begins!

This time, a demon with an extremely fearsome presence appeared.

Wang Shouzhe and the others were quite familiar with the demon catalog within the army. They quickly recognized that the bloodline of this kind of demon belonged to the true kings among demons, internally referred to as the "Demonic God Clan."

This type of demon was exceedingly rare, but each one could grow into an incredibly powerful entity. Their overall power and status were equal to that of humans with an Innate Taoist Body.

Unlike the Great Yao, the Demonic God Clan demons no longer had the ferocious appearance but instead took on a form very similar to humans, save for the crimson eyes and the blood-like patterns on their foreheads, emitting an aura of the eerie and ominous.

Of course, a less ferocious appearance does not mean weaker strength.

They were born with the ability to manipulate laws; by the time they reached the Heavenly Human Realm level, they were already equivalent to a human with a Seven-Tier Bloodline, and their mastery of such laws was almost to the extent that their commands followed the law. They possessed formidable combat power, incredibly fearsome.

If allowed to grow to their full potential, they could become a Demonic God capable of destroying heavens and earth.

Even though the Demon God Clan puppet present was only in the Early Stage of the Heavenly Human Realm, it was definitely not to be underestimated.

"Please be careful, Your Excellency Luo Jing, the demon puppet of the eighth challenge is a universal examination material for all army camps. The entire army has only that one juvenile Demonic God. It was captured by the Saint Emperor himself back in the day and refined by Master Craftsman. If it is completely destroyed during the battle, you will be judged as having damaged the Divine Dynasty's property, and your examination results and rewards will be nullified," the Artifact Spirit warned, knowing among these Wang family members was Liu Ruolan, who couldn't be taken lightly and thus gave a prior notice.

"However, don't let this hinder your fighting spirit too much, as long as you don't kill it on the spot. The Puppet Space can repair it, although it will delay the examination time for the candidates," it added.

"A monster equivalent to the Seventh Level Bloodline of the Heaven-human Realm..." Wang Shouzhe's expression also became particularly grave, "Simply standing in its presence is already putting great pressure on me. Its pure combat strength may well be no less than that of a Cultivator in the Early Stage of the Purple Abode Realm."

This monster's Bloodline Awakening Level was much higher than that of the Great Heavenly Proud. Normally speaking, a Great Heavenly Proud needed to advance to the Divine Power Territory before their bloodline reached Level Seven awakening.

The Wang family members had their advantages, too—their age advantage, as well as the cultivation levels that came with it.

Liu Ruolan, Wang Luo Jing, and the youngest of the seven was already over eighty years old, and the one with the lowest cultivation base was at Level Three of the Heavenly Human Realm. This was significantly higher than the juvenile Demonic God, so they should at least be able to offset some of the disadvantages of their bloodline tier.

Of course, if this wasn't the case, Master Shouzhe wouldn't allow Luo Jing and Luo Qiu to fight at all. After all, the gap between their Bloodline Talents was simply too vast. If their cultivation levels were equal, there would be no point in fighting—the smarter move would be to surrender early on.

Chapter 46 Life-bound Immortal Plant! Master Shouzhe is on the Rise_3

Just as Wang Shouzhe was contemplating, Wang Luo Jing had already started battling with the juvenile Demonic God.

She was very clever and obedient, purely trying to delay time, and one could say she was strictly following the strategic guidelines set by Wang Shouzhe in advance.

It was evident that even though Wang Luo Jing's Bloodline Talent had reached the level of a Second Rate Great Heavenly Proud, Middle Segment, and she also had a Level Three Celestial Being cultivation base and a Divine Spiritual Treasure with a Blank Artifact Spirit, she still had a considerable gap in strength compared to the juvenile Demonic God.

Luckily, she was not aiming to win, just to buy time.

With the help of various Shou Zhe Brand seed plants, the unpredictable Phantom Butterfly Dance, and the occasional use of Gu Bugs to even out some disadvantages, Wang Luo Jing, though constantly suppressed by the juvenile Demonic God, kept persistently holding on.

The top new recruits graduating back in the day were all proud and arrogant, young and having faced very few setbacks, they were also easily swayed by public opinion, thus they were reluctant to shamelessly use tactics like delaying time.

But the Wang family was different, even after being knocked to the ground, they would find ways to roll around and buy even a moment's time. Their goal was clear: to break the record and get the reward, face and dignity aside.

Therefore, Wang Luo Jing's fighting style was extremely crafty, everything she did revolved around the three words "delay time". Even so, after half an hour, she was gradually beginning to falter.

At the two-hour mark, she had already been in peril several times, only barely holding on by using drugs and Longevity Tree leaves, among other means.

Once the record was broken, Wang Shouzhe immediately called a halt and helped the heavily injured Wang Luo Jing to heal.

"Congratulations to Miss Wang Luo Jing, although you failed to overcome the eighth challenge, you have refreshed the army record previously set by little Princess Wu Panpan," the Artifact Spirit said, this time without mockery.

For one thing, Wang Luo Jing was already a top-tier powerhouse, and secondly, the Artifact Spirit knew that mocking these people would have little effect.

"As such, you will receive the record-breaking reward of 'Protection of the Legion Leader,'" the Artifact Spirit explained seriously. "This is a military order token, formed when retiring legion leaders of advanced age sealed part of their cultivation within it. Once the token is crushed, it can unleash an attack with the power of an ordinary strike from a Transcendent Emperor, which is highly lethal and intimidating to Cultivators in the Divine Power Territory."

"This is the self-sacrifice made by the legion leaders to protect the supreme talents in the army. I hope Miss Luo Jing will not disappoint the intentions of the legion leaders."

"Phew~"

Wang Luo Jing let out a sigh of relief. She had not let her fourth brother down and had secured the reward for breaking the record.

Such one-time use trump cards like 'Protection of the Legion Leader' were extremely rare even during the Divine Martial Dynasty Era. Otherwise, it would not have been offered as the reward for breaking the record at the eighth challenge.

With the Wang family obtaining a trump card of this calibre, they could handle the upcoming Emperor's son competition more comfortably and gain stronger self-preservation capabilities.

After all, no Magic Realm big shot would willingly take a direct hit from a Transcendent Emperor.

Luckily, Wang Luo Jing was no weakling, and under the healing from Wang Shouzhe's Life Origin energy, she quickly regained much of her spirits and went back to her own barracks to heal.

Next up was Wang Luoqiu's turn to take the stage.

Her goal was also merely to last ten more breaths than Wang Luo Jing. The battle was extremely fierce. Even though her Liuli Mingwang War Body was highly cultivated, she ultimately was no match for the juvenile Demonic God.

Fortunately, her Bloodline Tier was not just that of an ordinary Great Heavenly Proud, and she had some advantages in terms of cultivation base, which allowed her to just barely hold on. When she finally came off the field after dragging out the time, she was barely able to stand, and in the end, Wang Shouzhe had to carry her off.

For the esteemed "Young Empress" this was the most awkward battle of her life.

However, the benefits of this battle for her were immeasurable, after all, her War Body Bloodline and the War Body True Method she cultivated needed constant battle-hardening to break through quickly and become increasingly stronger.

And what better way to hone oneself than battling a juvenile Demonic God?

After this, her overall combat ability is expected to leap to another level of quality. Once she digests the gains from this battle, even if she follows in Wang Liyao's footsteps and heads to Shangjing City to sweep through the Sky Pride, she is likely to leave smiling and return smiling.

"Remember, do not go to Shangjing City to try the challenges," Wang Shouzhe warned fiercely as he carried her into the barracks and dropped her onto the military bed. "Otherwise, don't blame your fourth brother for expelling you from the family."

Jokingly, the family had already shown enough potential. If Wang Luoqiu caused another stir, it might not arouse admiration and respect, but fear instead.

More importantly, Emperor Longchang would surely summon Wang Luoqiu if she completed the challenges.

Emperor Longchang was obviously not a good fellow, but where could Wang Luoqiu possibly be good?

Each would act out their part, you playing your game, me playing mine.

In doing so, there was a risk they might become displeased with each other and a conflict could arise. What if Emperor Longchang were to be angered to death?

In Wang Shouzhe's future plans, An Commandery Prince still needed the support of Emperor Longchang.

"Don't worry, sweeping through the Sky Pride in the Imperial Capital and following in the footsteps of my niece is really beneath me," Wang Luoqiu answered seriously. "I won't go to the Imperial Capital, nor do I wish to see the Great Emperor's aged appearance."

Chapter 46 Life-bound Immortal Plant! Master Shouzhe is on the Rise_4

"That's more like it. You've finally grown up and come to your senses," Wang Shouzhe said, gratified.

"I'm planning to visit the Immortal Court to seize the opportunity to sweep them," Wang Luoqiu said, sitting against the wall. Her face was still somewhat pale, but her eyes exuded an indescribable aura of dominance, "The Imperial Capital is no longer in my eyes. I want to assess the strength of the Immortal Court."

"..."

Wang Shouzhe was utterly speechless.

The topic returned to the eighth challenge.

After Luo Jing and Luo Qiu, both "cannon fodder," had acquired a Protection of the Legion Commander token, it was Liu Ruolan's turn, according to the plan.

Although her Six-fold Bloodline was one level lower than that of the youthful Demonic God, she certainly had a great advantage in age and cultivation base.

Moreover, by this point, she had concealed so many abilities that even Wang Shouzhe could no longer fully grasp them.

Indeed, during her battle with the youthful Demonic God, Liu Ruolan always maintained an ease of overpowering the opponent, making it appear effortless.

If Wang Shouzhe hadn't asked her to delay and create sufficient time for the others, she might have accidentally exerted too much force and killed the youthful Demonic God.

"Already at the seventh layer of the Heavenly Human Realm..."

Watching his wife's effortless movements, Wang Shouzhe also felt deeply moved.

Although they spent most of their time together, he had no idea when his wife had broken through to the seventh layer of the Heavenly Human Realm, officially entering the advanced stage of Heavenly Human beings.

After all, he truly hadn't seen Ruolan seclude herself to break through realms.

Ordinary cultivators of the Purple Abode Realm are born from Sky Pride. At the Heavenly Human Realm, they possess the Fourth-tier Spiritual Body and by the Purple Abode Realm, they attain the Fifth Level Dao Body. By now, Liu Ruolan had already attained the Sixth-tier Saint Body...

Just speaking of her bloodline alone, she could already suppress a whole major level of the Purple Abode Realm. Adding her advantages in Divine Spiritual Treasures and other equipment... Liu Ruolan had truly become the undisputed ace of the Wang family.

If any ordinary cultivators from the Purple Abode Realm dared to cause trouble, in Ruolan's hands, they would likely have a hard time getting out unscathed.

Time passed bit by bit.

Liu Ruolan's battle with the youthful Demonic God had been "maintained" for three days now, and the various methods and strengths of the youthful Demonic God had been thoroughly understood.

"Old Ancestor, do you think you have a chance to defeat the youthful Demonic God now?" Wang Shouzhe asked.

Longyan Old Ancestor's eyes became slightly grave, "I'm currently at the Peak Level Six with a First Class Heavenly Proud Bloodline. There is a significant gap between my bloodline and that of the youthful Demonic God, and my cultivation base is also only at Peak Level Six. If I could reach Level Seven, bolstered by the Divine Spiritual Treasure, I still wouldn't dare claim I could definitely win against it. The battle would likely drag on for a long time."

That was still quite an impressive achievement.

Wang Shouzhe was immensely gratified.

The overall strength of this youthful Demonic God was equivalent to ordinary cultivators between levels one and two of the Purple Abode Realm. This meant that after some more cultivation, Longyan Old Ancestor would be able to contend with it.

After all, a First Class Heavenly Proud Bloodline is quite high already. Unlike ordinary cultivators of the Purple Abode Realm who are just entering the fifth layer, the Longyan Old Ancestor was at a high segment of the fifth layer. Together with the aid of Divine Spiritual Treasures, this could almost even out the gap in cultivation base.

"Shouzhe, do you think you can defeat it?" Longyan Old Ancestor also asked curiously.

In her eyes, Shouzhe rarely took action, yet his strength was unfathomably deep. Plus, he had numerous tactics; heaven knows how many trump cards he held.

"It's hard to say, with my current overall strength, I'm also not very confident that I can manage to kill it. Even if I reluctantly manage to, the losses would be too great," Wang Shouzhe also frowned and said, "Firstly, my cultivation base is still a bit low, second, my bloodline would be best complemented by a life-bound spirit plant for combat. Bloodthirsty Vines aren't qualified to be a life-bound spirit plant, so I am waiting for Ruolan to help me break through."

This was also because Wang Shouzhe had made a fortune in this wave at the military camp, his bloodline had also been greatly enhanced, and he had even gotten a Divine Spiritual Treasure Spirit Shield among the blank artifact spirits, only then could he dare to say he had a chance to kill it.

If it had been the Wang Shouzhe who had just arrived, facing such a young Demonic God, there would have been no chance to kill it. However, if it were in the wild, that would be another matter altogether, Wang Shouzhe still had many tricks up his sleeve to kill it.

The battle continued.

When Liu Ruolan made this initial breakthrough, it lasted a full ten days, simply because she prepared to leave enough combat time for someone "weaker" who would follow.

"Boom!"

The young Demonic God was blasted to the ground, its two legs broken.

This too was what Wang Shouzhe instructed Liu Ruolan to do, since there was only this one young Demonic God puppet, Wang Shouzhe naturally wanted to see if he could take advantage of this somehow.

"Congratulations to little Lady Ruolan... unprecedented..." After a long series of fulsoling compliments, the Artifact Spirit finally announced the rewards for this clearance.

The first-time reward was as expected: one Immortal Plant Seed - Life Tree Immortal Seed (unique), one egg of a Immortal Spirit Biochemical Beast - Kunfish (unique), and one Blank Artifact Spirit Dao-level Item (unique).

This was almost the pinnacle of rewards.

After all, according to the regulations of the recruits training camp, a young person who could clear a young Demonic God for the first time was at least a common Innate Taoist Body. Such characters, who were destined to be the top pillars of humanity, the Divine Martial Dynasty could hardly be said to be overgenerous in their rewards and cultivation.

They used the best prizes to encourage the finest young people to strive for the highest achievements, for the future sake of the country.

Surely, this must have been what that great Saint Emperor thought.

Unfortunately!

He probably hadn't anticipated that in today's world, already ten thousand years since the fall of the Divine Martial Dynasty, his new recruits camp would encounter the Wang family, a bunch of bug exploiters.

If he knew about this, who knows whether he would be so agitated he'd rise from his grave?

Of course, apart from the first-time rewards, the normal clearance rewards were also very generous.

There were a total of four items.

First, a Dao Spirit Pearl. This item could enhance one's cultivation and combat capabilities by absorbing spiritual energy from spirit veins, substantially amplifying the power of one's techniques, as if carrying a mini top-quality spirit vein with oneself in combat. (unique)

Second, a top-quality Bloodline Talent Improvement Liquid (unique). It could activate one's bloodline, greatly bringing out the potential contained within the bloodline, safe to consume for those with a Six-fold Bloodline or higher.

Third, a Mini Portable Cave House (unique). This item's internal space was equivalent to a small cave house, containing a mini top-quality spirit vein suitable for living, cultivation, cultivating spirit plants, and was equipped with a high-end Hidden Formation Method, making it extremely difficult to detect unless deliberately exposed.

Fourth, a Mysterious Ice Phoenix Egg (unique) (uncertain whether it would hatch an Ice Phoenix or an Ice Feng, with growth potential of Level Eleven).

Listening to the string of unique rewards, Wang Shouzhe also felt quite delighted.

"First-time reward, select—Life Tree Immortal Seed," Liu Ruolan spoke lightly, choosing the item already agreed upon in advance, "Clearance reward, select the Top-quality Bloodline Talent Improvement Liquid."

Chapter 47: The Family's Trump Card! Old Ancestor Longyan Ascends to the Summit

...

Due to Wang Shouzhe's strategy of expecting the unexpected, he had long used Wang Anye to suss out the list of prizes. He had pondered over these prizes many times. He had even calculated clearly who would make the first move and who would move later.

How long Liu Ruolan would fight and what she would choose after achieving the first breakthrough were all carefully strategized to maximize benefits.

What Wang Shouzhe was in most need of now was a Life-bound Spirit Plant.

Yet if it was merely a Spirit Plant of the Longevity Tree level, or even one significantly stronger, after being refined into a Life-bound Spirit Plant, its short-term contribution to combat capability would not be of much help.

But an Immortal Spirit Seed was different, for even in its sapling phase, such a level of Spirit Plant was exceedingly formidable. And the reason he knew about how formidable it was, naturally, came from information gathered through Anye.

Over this period, Wang Anye had become quite familiar with the Artifact Spirit lady, nearly being regarded as something akin to her son, given reliable responses on anything asked, so long as it didn't break the rules.

"As you wish, Little Princess Ruolan," the Artifact Spirit's way of addressing Liu Ruolan had changed.

One could imagine that a young person capable of clearing the eighth challenge would hold an exceptionally high status in the era of the Divine Martial Dynasty.

Very quickly.

Liu Ruolan returned, proudly presenting three prizes to claim credit, "Husband, your wife has not let you down this time, right?"

"Not at all, not at all, my dear wife has worked hard." Wang Shouzhe started adeptly massaging her back and legs, showing utmost care, "To be able to marry my wife..."

"To be able to marry my husband..." Liu Ruolan's beautiful eyes shone with a playful light.

Here it started again...

Everyone promptly sealed their five senses and began to look up at the sky.

Even Wang Anye learned his lesson, quickly taking out a pair of earplugs and focusing on writing at his desk, occasionally revealing expressions of deep thought or sudden inspiration.

"Husband can do as he pleases with these three prizes."

"You are so kind, my dear wife."

"It is you who are truly kind, my husband..."

After about a quarter of an hour's worth of mushy affection, the couple finally settled down.

Wang Shouzhe, after briefly inspecting the three prizes, said to the Artifact Spirit, "Miss Artifact Spirit, something seems off here, doesn't it?"

"Mr. Wang Shouzhe, do you have any doubts?" the Artifact Spirit questioned.

"The breakthrough reward just now, was it for the entire camp's first passage?" Wang Shouzhe asked with a furrowed brow, "Then what is the reward for our camp's first passage? Miss Artifact Spirit, are you intending to pocket our camp's first passage reward?"

"Slander! That's slander!" The Artifact Spirit reacted as if its tail had been stepped on, "I am an Artifact Spirit with principles, responsibility, ideals, and honor. All rewards for the first passage within each camp are set and adjusted by the camp itself. There is no reward for the first passage of the eighth challenge because the leadership of this training camp believes there is no point in setting it while no one has yet to pass the seventh challenge."

"Then call your leader out to set up the reward for the first passage of the eighth challenge," Wang Shouzhe said earnestly.

In fact, he had been aware that the reward for the first passage of the eighth challenge in their camp had not been set, and he had not brought it up earlier for reasons of his own.

"The leader? I've been looking for him for a long time now, and can't make contact," the Artifact Spirit replied, "According to the camp's rules, if all leaders in the sequence are unreachable, this Artifact Spirit may take temporary command of this training camp."

"Well then, please take the trouble, Miss Artifact Spirit, to set the reward for the first passage of the eighth challenge in our camp," Wang Shouzhe said.

"Well... I don't have the authority to set rewards, but I can offer one more item to Little Princess Ruolan from the first passage reward of the seventh challenge," the Artifact Spirit considered a compensation plan, "This does not violate the administrative rules."

"You're joking, right?" Wang Shouzhe switched to a mocking tone, "Why don't you just give Ruolan the first passage reward from the first challenge? Here, Little Princess Ruolan, this is the first passage reward for our camp's eighth challenge, a bottle of [Beginner's Cultivation Assist Pill], wishing you to become an early pillar of the Divine Dynasty, striving for the rise of mankind."

"That..." The Artifact Spirit hesitated, feeling that swapping the seventh challenge's reward for the eighth challenge's was indeed inappropriate, and became rather troubled, "What do I do then? Shall I try contacting the leader again?"

"If you couldn't contact them before, you definitely won't be able to now. How about this, among the rewards for the first passage of the eighth challenge, isn't there a Kunfish Egg and a Blank Dao-level Item Artifact Spirit? Just offer one of those," Wang Shouzhe said casually.

"That's impossible!" The Artifact Spirit became alarmed upon hearing this, its tone shifting, "That is the final challenge's reward for the entire camp's first passage, all of its prizes are the best and ultimate rewards. The first passage reward for our camp can't possibly be replaced with the ultimate reward."

"Miss Artifact Spirit, my wife Ruolan represents [The Fifth New Recruit Training Camp] and has taken the lead over all other camps, becoming the first to clear the eighth challenge, securing the first passage. This is not only her personal glory but also the glory of the entire [The Fifth New Recruit Training Camp], as well as your glory, Miss Artifact Spirit. In such a glorious event, wouldn't it be a disgrace to this glory if our Fifth New Recruit Camp were to appear too petty?"

His repeated use of the word "glory" nearly caused the Artifact Spirit to crash.

What sort of being was Mr. Wang Shouzhe?

In previous discussions about glory, he had trampled it underfoot. Now, when it came to rewards, he was invoking the word "glory" at every turn! Could he be this fickle?

Chapter 47: The Family Trump Card! Old Ancestor Longyan Ascends to the Summit_2

However, I must admit, Mr. Wang Shouzhe's words do have some truth. This is the highest honor of The Fifth New Recruit Training Camp, a splendid achievement that could be etched into history, even greater, by many folds, than the honor left by Mr. Wang Chuanwu back in his day.

If we could get in touch with the leader, I'm sure they wouldn't be stingy either.

"Sister, if you can make a decision on this matter, please help our family." Under the encouragement of great grandfather's gaze, Wang Anye started acting cute and coquettish, "Our family is too poor, and it wasn't easy for my great grandmother to achieve the first completion. Of course, this should

all be done within the scope of your authority, Sister. Otherwise, it would be bad if you were punished because of us."

Wang Anye's words were indeed true. Having received the care of Artifact Spirit Sister these days, he had grown quite fond of her. He did not want her to suffer danger on behalf of the Wang family.

"Anye, you are really good. Although this matter skirts the rules, if Ruolan, your Highness, becomes the pillar of humanity in the future and the glory comes from our new recruit camp, the leaders would also approve," said Artifact Spirit. "Let me first apply to the leaders for approval."

After a while, Artifact Spirit said, "The leader hasn't responded ... this makes it difficult for me to decide."

"Miss Artifact Spirit," said Wang Shouzhe, "usually, no response from the leadership implies consent. How about this, you can award it to us first. If the leadership objects later, we can simply return the prize. If they don't agree even to this, our family will submit a complaint to the military department and transfer our military credentials and honors to another new recruit training camp."

"I believe among the first, second, or even the ninth and tenth new recruit training camps, there must be leaders who recognize true talent."

Actually, Wang Shouzhe had no idea where the other camps were, let alone the military department. However, he believed that saying so would surely put pressure on Artifact Spirit.

As expected, Artifact Spirit's voice grew anxious: "Mr. Shouzhe, please don't be rash. This honor belongs to our Fifth New Recruit Training Camp. As you said, we will give you the first completion reward first; if the leaders oppose it, we can return it later. After all, your futures are boundless. You won't lose much over something small."

"In that case, I will initiate the emergency wartime channel. According to the military regulations, when we cannot contact the person in charge and the situation is very urgent, Artifact Spirits can activate the emergency channel, taking over the highest authority of the camp temporarily. However, I must later submit a detailed memorial stating the circumstances. If the reasons stated are deemed insufficient and the evidence is considered inadequate by the leadership, and it seems like I might have embezzled, I could be formatted. When the leadership sends someone down to audit and confirm the situation, you must testify for me."

"Of course."

Wang Shouzhe readily agreed.

After all, the so-called "higher-ups" mentioned by Artifact Spirit had long ceased to exist. Naturally, Wang Shouzhe would agree to whatever Artifact Spirit said.

At the same time, he couldn't help feeling a bit emotional. Unexpectedly, during the era of the Divine Martial Dynasty, control over Artifact Spirits was quite strict, a bit different from what he had imagined. He thought he just needed to persuade the Artifact Spirit, not realizing he would have to exploit loopholes in the Divine Martial Dynasty's rules.

After a while, Artifact Spirit's voice rang out again: "All set. The first completion reward for our camp's eighth challenge has been arranged. Miss Ruolan can choose between two rewards: the Immortal Spirit Biochemical Beast—Kunfish egg (Unique) and the Blank Artifact Spirit Dao-level Item—Legion Commander's Sword (Unique)."

It was successful!

Wang Shouzhe felt secretly thrilled.

When he discovered this loophole, he hadn't immediately reported it, waiting instead for Ruolan to wrap up the inaugural honor of the entire camp before negotiating with Artifact Spirit. Thus, he might obtain even better rewards.

As expected, he succeeded!

But then, Wang Shouzhe started to feel conflicted again.

Should he choose the young Kunfish or the Dao-level item? Both were top quality treasures, and missing either might lead to lifelong regret.

So, he decided to let his clan members choose.

However, just after a short moment, he began to regret it. As the clan members discussed whether to take the young Kunfish or the Dao-level item, they gradually split into two factions.

Opinion of Wang Shou Yong: "Our Wang family has many Sky Prides and Great Heavenly Proud individuals. With more and more children showing talent and opportunity, we need to focus on nurturing them. Given our economic strength, just raising them is already a challenge, and we will need to expand our industries in the future. The legendary Kunfish is enormously large and eats a lot, making it hard to feed and costly to care for. Additionally, it won't grow quickly, so it might be difficult to recover the investment quickly, and it could even affect the growth of other children in our family. I don't recommend choosing the Kunfish."

"Indeed, we should choose the Blank Artifact Spirit Dao-level Item," Wang Shoulian also seemed uninterested in the Kunfish. "Given that my fourth sister-in-law has already reached the sixth level of the Saint Body Bloodline, she can somewhat utilize the power of the Dao-level item. If we wait for her to break through to the Purple Abode Realm and reach the seventh layer of the Immortal Spirit body, her combat power will be enormous. Who knows how long it would take to raise the Kunfish."

"But Kunfish are so cute," Wang Luo Jing caressed the newly acquired Mystical Spirit Treasure Bug Flute in her palm, her eyes shining brightly, "Moreover, it has the potential to rise to the thirteenth level as an Immortal Beast. Once successfully raised, our Wang family could stand at the pinnacle of the world, no longer fearing threats from other powers."

Chapter 47: The Family Trump Card! Old Ancestor Longyan Ascends to the Summit_3

...

"That's right, I've seen in the ancient texts at the academy, adult Kunfish have the ability to traverse the Void," Wang Luoqiu's eyes also shone as she spoke, "If there's a chance to battle in an alternate world and claim a vast territory, I could be an emperor. Dao-level Items are nothing special, being National Treasures, just our Da Qian has two of them, not rare at all. Unlike Kunfish, if you miss the chance to get one, who knows when you'll ever get another opportunity?"

"..."

This statement made everyone look askance at her, especially Wang Shouzhe, who couldn't help but twitch at the corner of his mouth and secretly rolled his eyes at her.

His sixth sister really was relentless in her ambition to become an emperor. Must she fulfill the big talk from her childhood?

And what does she mean by Dao-level Items are "just" National Treasures? Aren't National Treasures desirable? Others still long for them~

However, Luoqiu's words were not entirely without merit. Getting a Dao-level item means immediate power since it can be used right away, while a Kunfish is strong in the later stages and needs to be nurtured gradually.

Of course, Kunfish have one downside; they're just too expensive to feed in their early stages!

"I also think Kunfish are pretty good." Wang Anye might be young, but he too had the right to voice his opinion, "Great Grandfather has always been coveting the overseas markets, right? If we had a Kunfish helping us navigate the seas, it would be much safer. As for food, if we raise the Kunfish in the sea, it can fend for part of its needs."

"Since Anye has said as much, let's go with the Kunfish first," Wang Shouzhe said decisively, not wanting to listen to any more arguments, "No need to rush about making money, once we develop our territories outside the realm, our wealth will keep growing. As for family defense, we now have several 'Protection of the Legion Commander' tokens, which give us a bit of self-defense capability."

Wang Anye was stunned.

Great Grandfather, are you giving me too much credit? Was our family decision really made so casually just because I mentioned it offhandedly?

"Since this is Anye's request, then Anye, you'll be responsible for looking after the young Kunfish and teaching it basic cultural knowledge," Wang Shouzhe continued, "When it's small, it can be raised in Zhuwei Lake, and as it grows, it can be moved to Deep Taihu Lake... and once it gets even bigger, it will have to be released into the Eastern Sea."

"Oh no..."

Wang Anye was on the verge of tears.

Great Grandfather, must you trust me so much? Not only do I have to juggle my studies, but I also need to take care of Grand Aunt Liling, and now I'm in charge of looking after a young Kunfish.

He was only eleven years old and yet he had to shoulder so many responsibilities. Was this reasonable?

The most speechless thing for Wang Anye was that a bunch of elders actually praised the Great Grandfather's decision, saying that Anye, being such a careful and steady child, would surely take good care of the young Kunfish.

"Turns out being too competent is also a burden," Wang Anye said with his hands behind his back, looking up at the sunset, feeling his heart mature all at once.

Then naturally, it was Liu Ruolan's turn to ask for the Kunfish.

As a result, an egg appeared on the training grounds.

Truly worthy of a Kunfish Egg, the eggshell was as white as jade, like a goose egg magnified countless times, with mysterious and complex silver-white patterns faintly visible on the surface, looking very high-end.

It's just that the size of the egg was slightly big, probably around four Zhang long...

Wang Shouzhe broke a cold sweat.

Just the egg itself was this huge, one could imagine that once the Kunfish inside was hatched, it would definitely be a Big Stomach King even more terrifying than Wang Licui.

He immediately felt an urgent sense of being eaten out of house and home.

"Luoqiu, you're strong, carry it to the storeroom first and keep it in a well-ventilated and cool place," Wang Shouzhe ordered Luoqiu, and then called out to his two younger brothers, "Shu Yong, Shu Lian, help her out a bit to prevent Luoqiu from slipping."

Hearing this, everyone who had been staring dumbfounded at the egg snapped back to reality.

Luoqiu, Shu Yong, and Shu Lian immediately began to carefully move the Kunfish Egg, and that scene, upon first glance, looked like three ants transporting a quail egg, oddly filled with a sense of humor.

After dealing with the Kunfish Egg.

Wang Shouzhe then dealt with the remaining three rewards in his hands.

He put one of the record-breaking rewards, the 'Protection of the Legion Commander' token, into his Storage Ring.

This type of treasure, with the explosive power on par with a small nuclear bomb, with three now in stock, gave Wang Shouzhe a sense of partial satisfaction in terms of security; he felt as if the family's firepower was significantly increased—comforting!

Then, he passed the Top-Quality Bloodline Qualification Improvement Liquid to Old Ancestor Longyan.

"Shouzhe..." Old Ancestor Longyan frowned slightly, "I cannot accept this. Among the rewards this time, this is the only Top-Quality Bloodline Qualification Improvement Liquid. If I use it, what will you do?"

Originally, Old Ancestor Longyan thought there would be more than one bottle of Extreme Modification Liquid, so she did not oppose Wang Shouzhe's plan. Now, however, she couldn't possibly accept it.

Since there was only one, it should naturally go to Shouzhe.

"Old Ancestor, if you don't use it, we will no longer be able to stretch time to gain record-breaking rewards," Wang Shouzhe persuaded, "Do you really intend to give up a 'Protection of the Legion Commander', as well as an incredibly precious completion reward?"

"Shouzhe... when you arranged the order, did you already anticipate my reaction?" Old Ancestor Longyan was slightly angry, "And you even deliberately concealed the details of the prizes, leaving me with no chance to choose."

For Old Ancestor Longyan, it was uncomfortable to take it, but not taking it would cause great loss to the family, putting her in a real dilemma.

Chapter 47: The Family Trump Card! Old Ancestor Longyan Ascends to the Summit_4

"Old Ancestor, as the Family Head, Shouzhe will naturally consider everything and maximize the benefits. Besides, you have made so many sacrifices for the family; it's only right that you advance to be an Innate Spiritual Body a step ahead of me." Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "And since I grew up under your protection, I also hope that the Old Ancestor will keep protecting the family."

"Moreover, there's an Intermediate and Advanced Officers Training Academy below, and I'm sure I can find the Extreme Modification Liquid there."

"Enough, enough, scolding you now won't do any good," Longyan Old Ancestor glared at Wang Shouzhe, stopped being sentimental, and took the Extreme Modification Liquid back to her quarters.

She had watched Wang Shouzhe grow up and had seen him, bit by bit, bring the Wang family to prominence. Naturally, she understood that this young man, although seemingly easy to talk to, was actually extremely stubborn in his bones, with his reasoning always in order, and she could never out-talk him.

Seeing that the Old Ancestor was returning to her quarters, Wang Shouzhe immediately followed obediently.

Helpless, this was the first time using the Extreme Modification Liquid, and its potency should be very fierce; he was worried about the Old Ancestor meeting with an accident.

As expected, even though the Old Ancestor already had the talents of a Great Heavenly Proud (Top Grade Bloodline) Grade A, and her cultivation base was nearing the late stage of the Heavenly Human Realm, she nearly had an accident when using the Extreme Modification Liquid.

The drug's potency was too fierce, nearly causing her meridians to burst and unable to endure.

Luckily, Wang Shouzhe's Life Origin was incredibly powerful, forcibly pulling her back from the path of bloodline collapse and helping her fully digest the Extreme Modification Liquid.

And at this time, Longyan Old Ancestor's bloodline had soared all the way from top grade A to an Innate Spiritual Body Class C, surpassing both Ruolan and Li Yao by a fair amount.

With her soon-to-be breakthrough to the late stage of the Heavenly Human Realm, she had once again reached the top, becoming the family's number one ace, truly deserving of her name.

"Congratulations, Old Ancestor, I celebrate this joyous occasion for you," Wang Shouzhe said with great delight as he gave a formal salute, "Old Ancestor, may you live for tens of thousands of autumns; the Purple Abode Realm is within reach, and the Divine Power Territory is not far off either."

"Flatterer," Longyan Old Ancestor gave Wang Shouzhe a sidelong glance with her pretty eyes, "Anyway, I, Wang Longyan, seem destined to be tied down by the family in this lifetime, doomed to be the umbrella for you little scamps. When I was young, I was just as proud and lofty as Lici and Luo Qiu, wanting to visit the Sacred Land, stroll around the National Capital, and even see the sights of the Immortal Dynasty."

With her strength returned to its peak, Longyan Old Ancestor's mood had also improved considerably, and she had become much more cheerful and confident.

"Old Ancestor, with your qualifications as an Innate Spiritual Body Class C, not to mention the Divine Power Territory, even the Transcendent Void Realm shouldn't be a problem. When it comes to the overall lifespan, you're still a young girl," Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "Once the strife for the Emperor's son has settled, the Old Ancestor can travel wherever you please. Then, you can go anywhere you want, even visit the Immortal Dynasty for fun, and by the way, you can also drag that unruly girl Lici back home. It's been so long since she's been home~"

Listening to these words, a look of expectation also appeared in Longyan Old Ancestor's eyes.

Back then, when she was afflicted with the Yin Sha poison and her life was in its most desperate and lowest point, all she could think about was to take a Dan medicine that could temporarily suppress her injuries when Shouzhe reached the Spiritual Platform Realm and then, with a sword in hand, kill her way to the Liu and Zhao families, taking down their treacherous Old Ancestors in one fell swoop.

Never had she expected that, as Shouzhe ascended to the position of Family Head, the once modest Wang family would begin to skyrocket, and the former great enemies, the Liu and Zhao families, had long since been turned to ash.

The Shouzhe of today was even starting to use the entire Da Qian as a chessboard for his moves, stirring up the clouds and rain, participating in the battle for the Emperor's son!

Reflecting on all the past events, she found them unbelievable even now, as if she was living in a dream.

For a moment, her long-sealed heart stirred slightly.

"How could reaching the Void Realm be so easy? Apart from potential, one also needs a Heritage Codex; just this requirement alone has blocked many," said Longyan Old Ancestor, "After the strife for the Emperor's son is over, perhaps it's time for me to go out and take a look, to see the scenery of this world."

"Shouzhe, you needn't worry about me anymore. You've newly obtained an Immortal Seed, and I'm sure you are already itching to cultivate it. Go ahead, plant it, and refine it into your life-bound Immortal Plant."

"If that's the case, Old Ancestor, please take a few days of rest to familiarize yourself with the enhanced power of your bloodline; Shouzhe will not disturb you further for now."

After taking his leave with a formal bow, Wang Shouzhe exited Longyan Old Ancestor's temporary quarters and returned to his own independent quarters.

As soon as he entered his room, he immediately began to examine the other gains he had acquired.

There's no need to mention the Protection of the Legion Commander any further.

This thing was simply a one-time consumable that sealed the power of a Peak Void Realm Great Emperor, similar to the former Purple Abode Sword Symbols.

However, most protective artefacts like Purple Abode Sword Symbols are commonly refined by ordinary cultivators at the Purple Abode Realm, expending their own energy, and most can only unleash the power of a single strike from a cultivator at the peak of the Celestial Being Realm.

But the Protection of the Legion Commander is different. Referring to the strength of that Seventh Army Commander from the Ancestor Chuanwu, it is believed that most army commanders possess the strength at the advanced stage or peak of the Transcendent Void Realm.

This also makes the "Protection of the Legion Commander" extremely powerful, and an ordinary cultivator of the Divine Power Territory would definitely not fare well if struck by it.

Of course, what truly captivated Wang Shouzhe was the seed of his Immortal Spirit Plant, the "Life Tree."

The seed was not large, only the size of a fist, but crystal clear and extremely pleasing to the eye.

It was unknown how the Divine Martial Dynasty had preserved it, but even after a hundred thousand years, the seed looked as if it had just been produced. Through the thin shell of the seed, Wang Shouzhe could even feel the vast and intimate life energy within.

Immortal Spirit Plant!

This was an Immortal Spirit Plant!

Once it matured to its limit, it would become a Level Thirteen Immortal Spirit Tree!

The old Longevity Tree in Changchun Valley was currently only at the peak of Level Eight, and its growth potential could at most reach Level Nine. In terms of the hierarchy of life alone, this Immortal Spirit seed was four minor levels and two major realms higher than the Longevity Tree.

The difference between them was as vast as the difference between clouds and mud.

Wang Shouzhe's God Sense fused with the Immortal Seed, as his body's pure Life Origin energy flowed continuously into the Life Tree Immortal Seed.

The next instant, the Immortal Seed began to tremble slightly.

A very tender consciousness actively approached Wang Shouzhe. He could feel the exuberance and joy of that tender consciousness, as if it felt extremely close to and admiring of Wang Shouzhe.

And Wang Shouzhe also felt that its life energy was incredibly pure, the most suitable Spirit Plant for him that he had encountered so far.

In an instant, both Wang Shouzhe and the Life Tree Immortal Seed had a mutual feeling of attraction, as if they were peas in a pod.

Like dry tinder meeting a fierce flame, they could no longer restrain themselves and wanted to merge together as quickly as possible.

And as Wang Shouzhe's Life Origin energy continued to pour in, the energy within the Life Tree Immortal Seed finally accumulated to a critical point.

"Pop!"

A soft sound, a slender root broke through the semi-transparent skin, spreading across Wang Shouzhe's palm, entwining around his fingertips, and supporting the small seed.

Immediately after, the thin seed shell fell off, revealing a pair of small, tender green leaves which leisurely unfurled.

A vast and pure life energy suddenly poured out.

At the same time.

The Life Tree Spirit Seed seemed to have activated some ancient mechanism long at rest.

A voice that was dignified yet carried a hint of kindness echoed in Wang Shouzhe's mind: "Child of the human race, this Emperor congratulates you on obtaining the Life Tree Immortal Seed and gaining her approval."

"This voice..."

Even with Wang Shouzhe's usually unflappable disposition, he couldn't help but tremble slightly at this moment.

Chapter 48: Returning Home! The Huge Increase in the Wang Family's Overall Combat Strength

...

The voice could actually transmit directly into his mind through his God Sense, what terrifying and powerful ability was that?

Moreover, the sound of that voice, resounding like the evening drums and morning bells, each word seemed to strike upon his soul, making his blood boil with excitement.

He suddenly thought of someone, someone he had complained about many times—the revered Saint Emperor of the Divine Martial Dynasty.

"Child of the human race, by the time you hear these words, I will have already perished. This is merely a message without active consciousness, so you need not worry about any threat of possession. With my pride, I would not stoop to such despicable acts."

"The war between the Demon Clan and our race is getting more intense. Our side keeps sending troops into the spatial rifts to block the demons, yet many lower-level demons have breached the array barrier and entered the human world. I had no choice but to initiate a conscription, calling up militia, elite militia, war soldiers, and veteran soldiers, to barely maintain the situation."

"For you to enter the new recruit training camp and receive this Immortal Seed, you must be an Unparalleled Heavenly Child of exceptional standing. This Life Tree Immortal Seed was something I found while traveling through different spaces in my youth, but since I already had a Life-bound Immortal Plant, I no longer wanted to waste it. Since you are fated to obtain it and have received its recognition, please treat it well."

"If the demons haven't retreated, then do what you can within your abilities to help the human race."

As Wang Shouzhe listened to the Saint Emperor's voice droning on, his mood gradually settled down. He tried asking, "Your Majesty, the Divine Martial Dynasty has already perished a hundred thousand years ago."

However, the voice was completely unaffected and continued, "If the demons have already retreated, then live a good life on your own, perhaps you could visit other worlds for fun."

Wang Shouzhe, not giving up, continued, "Your Majesty, why don't you give me the highest authority of the Divine Dynasty, so I can develop its relics... and contribute to the expulsion of the demons."

"Alright, alright, I've inadvertently said so much, let's leave it at that. Take good care of the Life Tree, it's a very magical Immortal Plant and will bring you a lot of help."

"Your Majesty, Your Majesty? Can you give me all the inheritance..." Wang Shouzhe persisted with the final half-sentence, but stopped abruptly.

Because the voice had already lost the connection.

This left Wang Shouzhe quite disappointed.

The mighty Saint Emperor had such mighty power and only left behind a "recording" in the Life Tree Immortal Seed, not even creating a mark capable of mutual communication.

Was he afraid Wang Shouzhe would take advantage?

The Divine Martial Dynasty had perished so long ago, and now the undeveloped relics were getting fewer and fewer, even just giving him access to the shared dimension storeroom of the training camp would have been great~

Otherwise, even a batch of heritage codices as a reward would be good...

So stingy, even in death!

Disappointing!

Forget it, it's better to focus on the present.

Feeling the Life Tree sapling in his palm swaying its tender leaves and emitting a joyful and exuberant mood, Wang Shouzhe's spirits also somewhat recovered, and he continued to stimulate his Mysterious Energy to nurture it.

His Mysterious Energy contained the power of Life Origin, which was highly compatible with the Life Tree, and under his encouragement, the small sapling with just two tender leaves grew rapidly, soon increasing from the size of a palm to half an arm's length, with a much thicker trunk and leaves growing from the pitiable original two to a lush and thriving few dozen.

The Life Tree at this stage was beginning to show a semblance of a tree.

Compared to other seedlings of the same juvenile phase, it was much shorter, but the trunk was unusually robust, showing a tendency for horizontal growth. At the same time, its leaves were also very large and luxuriant, a clear sign of vigorous vitality.

Immediately after, Wang Shouzhe began to use the methods from the 'Longevity Youth True Verses' to refine it into his own Life-bound Spirit Plant.

Given how highly compatible the Life Tree sapling was with Wang Shouzhe's own Mysterious Energy attributes, and with the sapling showing no signs of resistance, cooperating very well, the refining process went exceptionally smoothly.

It wasn't long before Wang Shouzhe successfully refined the Life Tree into his Life-bound Spirit Plant. A spiritual connection also formed between him and the Life Tree.

Before, he could only vaguely sense the emotions of the Life Tree, but with the formation of this spiritual connection, both he and the tree could share consciousness, and the emotions of the Life Tree could be clearly conveyed to his sea of consciousness.

"Eep eep ah ah~~"

The voice of the Life Tree was crisp and childish, brimming with vitality. The only problem was... he couldn't understand it~~

It was like a newborn baby, whose vocal cords were not yet well developed and who didn't know how to pronounce correctly, could only make cooing and babbling sounds, leaving others clueless about what they want to express.

Luckily, with the spiritual connection, Wang Shouzhe, although unable to understand a single word, at least grasped the basic meaning.

It was simply expressing its joy and affection for Wang Shouzhe.

And with the Life Tree becoming Wang Shouzhe's Life-bound Spirit Plant, the functionalities of the Life-bound Spirit Plant slowly began to manifest.

You should know that between the Life-bound Spirit Plant and its owner, there exists a degree of life force and energy sharing.

The reason why Master Changchun could live over eight hundred years while still being so energetic, showing no signs of his lifespan nearing its end, was largely due to his Peak Level Eight Longevity Tree.

Chapter 48: Returning Home! The Tremendous Increase in the Wang Family's Comprehensive Combat Capability Part 2

And the Life Tree, as an extremely rare and precious Immortal Spirit Seed, naturally had stronger effects.

Even though it had just germinated not long ago, Wang Shouzhe could still feel that while he was infusing it with Mysterious Energy, a slight strand of vitality-filled energy was being reciprocated from the Life Tree, slowly nourishing his body and giving him a sense of refreshing clarity.

This must be one of the benefits that a Life-bound Spirit Plant brought to its master.

However, since the Life Tree was still young, the effect was not very pronounced. But Wang Shouzhe could feel that this energy was very beneficial for the body. With long-term nourishment, his physique should be able to improve significantly, and perhaps even his lifespan could be greatly extended.

"From today onward, you are a member of the Wang family," Wang Shouzhe said, touching the tender leaves of the Life Tree, his mood very delighted, "From now on, just like Wang Lilong, you'll be my child~ Let me give you a name, how about... I'll call you 'Tree child,' what do you think? When you grow a bit larger, I'll..."

"No way!" Liu Ruolan happened to come back to the room and, hearing what Wang Shouzhe had said, immediately expressed her disagreement, "For a girl's name, how can it be something as unpleasant as 'Wang Li Tree'?"

"Wife, it's still just a seedling, how can you be so sure it's definitely a girl? What if it's a boy?" A drop of cold sweat rolled down Wang Shouzhe's forehead.

Strictly speaking, a species like the Life Tree didn't really have a gender distinction, after all, many trees are self-pollinating, and whether it is male or female wholly depends on which way its emerging self-consciousness leans.

Therefore, it's best not to assign a gender prematurely, otherwise it might lead to problems. Senior Brother Jinshan's peony is a painful example of this.

However, Liu Ruolan didn't see it that way.

In her view, the abilities of the Life Tree were about giving birth and nurturing, so how could it possibly be a boy?

The two could not reconcile their opinions.

Not long after, the newly born Life Tree sapling was sent out of the room, and the door of the barracks slammed shut.

The Life Tree, naive, shook its leaves and, picking up the sounds coming from inside the barracks, sensed vaguely that something wasn't quite right.

How come the aura of its master seemed to have become weaker?

After a "friendly debate", Wang Shouzhe finally decided to yield to his wife and gave the naming rights to Liu Ruolan.

And the Life Tree's name, ultimately set by Liu Ruolan, was from the character "Immortal" within Immortal Spirit Seeds, dubbing it "Wang Lixian", with the predetermined gender being a daughter.

Wang Shouzhe gave up the struggle.

Wang Lixian it is then~ A daughter it is then, anyway, with so many daughters, one more doesn't make a difference.

However, the Life Tree, which had just germinated, was only at Level One, obviously unable to help in the upcoming battles. Therefore, Wang Shouzhe started to use his own Mysterious Energy characteristic to fully promote the growth of the Life Tree.

As an exceptional species by nature, the Life Tree had significant differences compared to Spiritual Medicines like Vermilion Fruits and Purple Mushrooms which hardly ever develop Spiritual Intelligence. Essentially, it was closer to Fierce Beasts and Spirit Beasts. Therefore, the classification of its strength was also based on the strength levels of Fierce Beasts and Spirit Beasts.

With Wang Shouzhe's nurturing, the Life Tree's strength grew rapidly.

One day later, Wang Lixian's strength had reached Level Two, equivalent to the mid-late stage of the Vital Energy Refining Realm in humans.

Such a result, while anticipated by Wang Shouzhe, still made him inwardly marvel at its swift advancement. Under natural conditions, a wild Life Tree could never grow this fast.

The main reason was still due to the Destiny Offering Refinement. Before the Life-bound Spirit Plant's realm caught up with its master's, the growth would be relatively rapid. And Yi Wood Mysterious Energy (various Wood Types) had a certain effect on promoting the growth of Spirit Plants.

It was the alignment of Wang Shouzhe's Life Origin energy with the Life Tree that produced such a miracle.

Six days later, the strength of the Life Tree reached Level Three, equivalent to the early to mid stage of the Spirit Platform Realm in humans.

After reaching Level Three, its growth noticeably slowed down. It took more than twenty days to break through and reach Level Four.

Nevertheless, an Immortal Spirit Seed is, after all, an Immortal Spirit Seed, and even at Level Four, it should not be underestimated.

The four-level "Wang Lixian," now had a trunk so thick it required several people to embrace it, the canopy so lush and broad it looked like an umbrella.

The overpowering and pure life energy it possessed had become as vast as an ocean, naturally forming a "Life Domain."

This was the strength of an Immortal Spirit Seed.

Thanks to its formidable life essence, her at only four levels was already almost equivalent to a human who had awakened the Sixth Level Bloodline, naturally able to wield Heaven Dao Divine Abilities, and these Divine Skills were clearly much stronger than ordinary Small Divine Powers.

Had it not been for the Life Tree's low level, this Life Domain could have been even stronger.

The life energy within the Life Domain was incredibly rich, almost seeming to solidify.

Wang Shouzhe had Shu Lian help with an experiment and found that, under the coverage of the Life Domain, simple wounds healed almost instantaneously. For more severe injuries like bone fractures and internal organ damage, the recovery was slower, but it only took about a quarter of an hour.

This effect was already comparable to the healing results of Wang Shouzhe's Mysterious Energy and had a broader range.

He originally wanted to test the Life Domain's effect on damaged meridians, but after glancing at Shu Lian, whose complexion was already looking a bit off after being tormented several times, he decided it was best to put aside that idea.

Chapter 48: Returning Home! The Tremendous Increase in the Wang Family's Comprehensive Combat Capability Part 3

Forget it~ If I keep going, Shu Lian might end up with psychological scars.

Afterwards, Wang Shouzhe experimented with the life-promoting effects of the Life Domain and to his surprise, the results were extremely good.

Within the range of the Life Domain, the Life Tree could manipulate plants directly through bloodline instinct to foster extreme growth, which was essentially an enhanced version of Wang Shouzhe's own abilities, an enhancement of an enhancement.

As the Life Tree's level increased, Wang Shouzhe, as its master, also reaped many benefits beyond the substantial consumption of his Mysterious Energy.

His physical strength had increased by at least a third compared to before, his meridians had widened, and even his stamina had significantly improved.

This feeling did not resemble the increase in strength from raising one's cultivation base, but rather the sensation during a bloodline breakthrough—a fundamental enhancement of life's essence. It was possible that this had also increased his lifespan limit, although it was not visibly apparent.

This must have been due to the influence of that strand of life essence transferred from the Life Tree.

If a Level Four Life Tree was already this formidable, what about Level Five, Level Six... How strong would they be?

Wang Shouzhe could not help but marvel at just how strong Immortal Spirit Seed was.

It was truly a reward for being the first to pass a challenge.

Taking into account that it had taken over twenty days to foster Wang Lixian from Level Three to Four, and considering it might take several months to reach Level Five, he temporarily shelved the idea of continuing the fostering process.

Next, it was time to break through the eighth challenge.

Soon, Wang Shouzhe summoned the Wang family members and once again arrived at the training grounds, applying to the Artifact Spirit for the challenge of the eighth level.

The Artifact Spirit naturally agreed.

Having grown accustomed to Wang Shouzhe's shameless tactics, it even felt a hint of anticipation.

During the seventh challenge, Wang Shouzhe had refreshed the records several times with his shameless strategies, and this time, was he planning to do it again? Could he succeed?

...

In the training grounds.

It was that familiar young Demonic God again.

But the Wang Shouzhe facing it was different from before.

He now had a Life-bound Spirit Plant—Life Tree, Wang Lixian!

Wang Shouzhe and the young Demonic God were locked in a tough and contentious battle.

The entire training ground had turned into a primordial forest-like battlefield.

Wang Shouzhe sat cross-legged at the center, floating. Beside him was the still-immature Immortal Plant Life Tree—Wang Lixian's sapling, whose crystalline roots penetrated deeply and widely into the ground of the training ground, firmly extracting nourishment from the earth.

Some of the aerial roots were even entwined around Wang Shouzhe's body, reminiscent of a child who has just learned to walk, who feels insecure without holding onto their parents' hands when outside.

Moreover, she could draw some Life Origin Energy from her father to supplement her own life energy deficiencies.

As an Immortal Plant, Life Tree Wang Lixian could not possibly fight by whipping branches at people.

Her combat style heavily relied on "subordinates," such as Witch's Long Hair, Speedily Grown Enhanced Fire Dragon Fruit, and other plants developed or enhanced by Wang Shouzhe—they were Wang Lixian's best soldiers.

Vast and pure life energy spread from her in waves to all directions.

Witch's Long Hair grew wildly, spreading over the entire ground and sky like a cage, entangling the sturdy vines around the young Demonic God like steel bars.

Although the young Demonic God was very powerful and could easily tear apart those annoying vines, as soon as it did so, new Witch's Long Hair would entangle it again. The scene was like something out of a horror movie.

Meanwhile, rows of Speedily Grown Enhanced Fire Dragon Fruits swayed rhythmically, launching ripe fruits like grenade shells with each sway, which would then explode, leaving behind flames burning fiercely.

The power of a single Fire Dragon Fruit was "not great"—at least not strong enough to significantly harm someone of the young Demonic God's caliber. But there was strength in numbers~

Around Wang Lixian, Fire Dragon Fruits grew in circles, having reached hundreds in number and still increasing.

With such a formidable barrage of firepower, even many strands of Witch's Long Hair were blasted to pieces, becoming fuel for the fire. But the growth rate of Witch's Long Hair was too rapid. With a wave of life energy, the seeds would quickly sprout, and even the scorched vines would come back to life.

This infuriated the young Demonic God, who maintained a semblance of consciousness, causing it to roar thunderously with fiery eyes, continuously howling in rage.

At the same time, it kept summoning the Innate Divine Ability of the Demonic God Clan, Demonic Flame, causing widespread destruction.

This was a blackish-red flame mixed with thick Blood Fiend Devil Qi, extremely powerful and highly destructive to Witch's Long Hair.

Wherever the Demonic Flame spread, swathes of Witch's Long Hair were reduced to ashes.

In terms of life stages, Wang Lixian was almost on par with the innate Demonic God Body of the young Demonic God. The only shortfall was that the young Demonic God had already reached the early stage of the Heavenly Human Realm, equivalent to Level Five.

Whereas Wang Lixian, having only recently been born and nourished rapidly to Level Four thanks to her father Wang Shouzhe's Destiny Offering Refinement and feeding of Life Origin, was still catching up.

Clearly, however, Wang Lixian was not to be trifled with. She had a father behind her who could provide a continuous supply of Life Origin Energy, allowing her to open up her Life Domain without any reservations.

Chapter 48: Returning Home! The Huge Increase in the Wang Family's Overall Combat Strength_4
...

Isn't it just seeds of the Witch's Long Hair? There are as many as you want in Daddy's Storage Ring, and even if we continue to squander them like this for several more months, we might not be able to use them all up.

At times like these, what you're competing with is depth of resources.

"Eee yah yah."

Wang Lixian, in her first battle of life, appeared very excited, engaging in a war of attrition with the youthful Demonic God puppet and continuously drawing Life Origin Mysterious Energy, along with a variety of seeds in large quantities, from Wang Shouzhe.

The seed inventory amassed by Wang Shouzhe was visibly dwindling at a rapid pace.

Wang Lixian might be young, but the youthful Demonic God puppet wasn't necessarily any more mature, likely just born not long before being captured by the Saint Emperor to be turned into a trial puppet.

"Yah yah, eee eee eee~yah~"

Wang Lixian swayed her translucent branches brimming with the aura of Immortal Spirits, directing the Fire Dragon Fruit Tree to bombard wildly like an enthusiastic warmonger, a master of firepower.

"..."

Wang Shouzhe, sitting cross-legged, was speechless. This girl even complained that his Fire Dragon Fruits were not explosive enough and lamented that the Witch's Long Hair lacked resistance to blasts and fire, preventing her from achieving the best combat results.

He had never imagined that Wang Lixian would be such a warlike Life Tree, completely not requiring his assistance and treating him like a battery instead.

"Li Xian, conserve some Life Origin Energy, don't just wildly attack; you need to learn micro-manipulation... Daddy's Mysterious Energy can't keep up." Wang Shouzhe's Mysterious Energy was failing to recover even with the help of medicines and meditation due to the severe consumption.

"Eee yah eee yah, eee eee yah yah." Wang Lixian, however, didn't think there was any problem with herself but berated Wang Shouzhe instead.

Daddy, your cultivation base is too low, which severely limits her combat power~

What micro-manipulation, fine-control, those are all tasks for the weak. If you can't beat the enemy, the only reason is that the firepower isn't fierce enough, the Mysterious Energy isn't strong enough, the storage of Battle Seeds isn't ample, and the variety of combat plants isn't rich enough.

Huh? That dumb, dumb Bloodthirsty Vine was only broken into three sections and it dares to shrink in a corner pretending to be dead?

Wang Lixian sent a wave of Life Energy fluctuation, and the Bloodthirsty Vines quickly reconnected and healed. Under her supervision, they sprang back to life and lunged toward the youthful Demonic God once more.

This battle lasted a full seven days.

In the end, it was the youthful Demonic God's inexperience and lack of restraint that led to its depletion by Wang Shouzhe and his daughter, finally collapsing with a bang and turning into a white light, being taken back into the Puppet Space for repair.

Wang Shouzhe was utterly exhausted.

If this battle had not been won, it would've come down to using all kinds of trump cards with brute force.

"Congratulations, Young Master Shouzhe..."

The Artifact Spirit was extremely excited. To have two super talents that cleared the eighth level emerging consecutively from this military camp was something it hadn't even dared to imagine before.

After a lot of "blah blah blah," it swiftly presented the [Protection of the Legion Commander] along with the [Dao Spirit Pearl] that Wang Shouzhe had requested as reward for clearing the level.

The Dao Spirit Pearl is a type of energy storage item capable of storing Spiritual Veins' energy and one's own Mysterious Energy, and it can also amplify the power of moves. It's a very strong and practical item.

If Wang Shouzhe had had a large-scale "power bank" like the [Dao Spirit Pearl] when fighting the eighth level, he wouldn't have struggled so hard and nearly drained himself, and he could have easily handled Wang Lixian's boundless demand for his Life Origin-infused Mysterious Energy.

"Eee yah yah, yah eee yah eee..."

Wang Lixian, still not recovered from the excitement of her first victory, waved her branches around and babbled nonstop to Wang Shouzhe, Daddy daddy, we need to increase our investment in developing combat plants, we need to speed up cultivation, we need to enhance the Fire Dragon Fruit's power!

She also suggested that her daddy entrust her with a [Protection of the Legion Commander] to increase her firepower reserve.

Hehe~ Wang Shouzhe's mouth twitched.

A Life Tree, what a benign-sounding Immortal Plant, visually attractive and with an "appealing" speech, but why so excessively battle-oriented?

As for something like the [Protection of the Legion Commander], a trump card, Wang Shouzhe would never give it to her. He believed that given Wang Lixian's prodigal tendencies, it was very likely that at the start of a battle, she would use their biggest trump card right away!

Our side starts with a trump card! The rest of you, do as you please...

Wang Shouzhe ignored Wang Lixian's "eee yah yah" and handed the [Dao Spirit Pearl] to Li Yao, instructing her to start refining it and store up more Mysterious Energy.

In theory, Wang Liyao, now with a Sixth-tier Saint Body, should overpower the youthful Demonic God by a significant margin.

But isn't it even more certain to have an additional trump card prepared?

He also realized during the battle with the youthful Demonic God that its physical strength was abnormally formidable, almost comparable to a Magical Treasure. Without significant power, it would be difficult even to inflict damage on it.

Furthermore, Wang Shouzhe validated a finding that even if the youthful Demonic God puppet had its legs broken, it would fully recover after some time spent in the Puppet Space.

Thinking to cheat in this way was almost impossible.

Ten days later.

Wang Liyao began her grand battle with the restful and mended youthful Demonic God puppet. She fought maturely and steadily, overpowering the puppet from the start, and never giving it a chance to recover.

After five days, she won with ease.

If not for leaving some time for Old Ancestor Longyan to prepare, she wouldn't have needed as long as five days.

"Respected Young Miss Liyao..."

The Artifact Spirit was very excited, offering a round of flattery and then presenting a [Protection of the Legion Commander] and a [Mini Portable Cave House].

Chapter 48: Returning Home! The Tremendous Increase in the Wang Family's Comprehensive Combat Capability Part 5

This item was undoubtedly a treasure prepared for Wang Shouzhe.

It was a pendant-type treasure that needed to be unfolded for use. Once unfolded, a subspace vortex channel would appear, allowing its owner and those designated by the owner to enter and exit.

In addition, it also came with a high-level miniature hidden formation method, which the owner could manipulate at will to activate its concealed state.

However, this item had many limitations; storage equipment like storage rings could be brought in, but the storage ring could not be opened within the carry-on cave mansion.

After all, the overlap of dimensional spaces was already dangerous. In one dimensional space, opening another dimensional storage space was very likely to cause a dimensional space shock storm due to the mutual influence of the space energy.

Moreover, although the space of the mini portable cave house was quite large, much larger than Divine Tool Level Storage Rings, it was far inferior in terms of storage functionality.

First of all, it could not communicate directly through God Sense for storing or retrieving items; the owner had to physically move in and out of the carry-on cave mansion to transport items back and forth. Each entry and exit also consumed a substantial amount of energy, which needed to be replenished by a large number of Spirit Stones or Mysterious Energy.

Secondly, unlike storage rings, which were in a vacuum-sealed state to prevent goods from deteriorating, the inside of the carry-on cave mansion was a genuine environment rich in Spiritual Energy, where food would rot, and metals and other objects would oxidize and corrode over time.

In short, this item could not be used as a normal storage equipment.

Its greater function was to provide the owner with a carry-on cave mansion, a quiet and private space that belonged directly to themselves. It could bring "home" into the wilderness, or into the bustling city.

Wang Shouzhe loved this thing very much.

Well managed and constructed, this carry-on cave mansion could become his secret base, and also offer him and Ruolan a truly private space.

His own small courtyard, although nice, had too many bear kids coming in and out and also often required dealing with clan affairs.

And while the Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion on the island in Zhuwei Lake was peaceful, it could not avoid the likes of Wang Lilong sneaking around in the water.

Besides, Kunfish would live in Zhuwei Lake for a while in the future. It wouldn't make sense to have to sweep the water every time he wanted to spar Profound Martial Techniques with his wife, right? That would be too exhausting.

Having obtained the carry-on cave mansion, Wang Shouzhe felt like he had acquired a beloved grand toy, studying it for a full ten days with undiminished fondness.

At this time, the final battle of Old Ancestor Longyan commenced.

To be cautious, Old Ancestor Longyan also stored a wave of Mysterious Energy using the "Dao Spirit Pearl" before going into battle and carried a "Protection of the Legion Commander" on her.

However, as Old Ancestor Longyan, who had gradually adapted to the Level Six Sacred Body, had just broken through to the seventh level of the Heavenly Human Realm a few days ago.

This significantly enhanced her strength.

As a result, with an overwhelming advantage, she defeated the young Demonic God Puppet in just over an hour.

It showed that although the young Demonic God Puppet had the strength of an ordinary cultivator in the Purple Abode Realm, due to its stripped wisdom, leaving only instincts, along with territorial restrictions and other factors, its difficulty was likely half a notch lower than that of a wild Purple Abode Realm cultivator.

Even so, Old Ancestor Longyan no longer needed to be inhibited by ordinary Purple Abode Realm cultivators.

Afterward, Old Ancestor Longyan smoothly obtained a "Protection of the Legion Commander" and the final clearance reward, a "Mysterious Ice Phoenix Egg."

The potential of the Mysterious Ice Phoenix, although only reaching Level Eleven, is still a rare treasure.

After all, the strength of a Level Eleven Spirit Beast is already equivalent to that of a human Profound Martial Cultivator in the Transcendent Void Realm. Once it matures, the Wang family will effectively have an additional Great Emperor.

Moreover, the stronger the essence and potential of the Spirit Beast, the faster its early advancement speed. This Mysterious Ice Phoenix may take a long time to advance to the Transcendent Void Realm, but it should be relatively quick progressing to the Purple Abode Realm and the Divine Power Territory. Perhaps we will be able to use it soon.

Within the family, only Longyan, the Old Ancestor, has a bloodline that is the most compatible with it, so without a doubt, this object went to the Old Ancestor.

Up to this point,

the journey of exploiting (shearing the sheep) at the Divine Martial Army's Fifth Recruit Training Camp has also come to an end.

But the Wang family's development of the Fifth New Recruit Training Camp has just begun.

Within the family, there are still many Sky Prides who have not yet caught this opportunity, such as Wang Shouzhe's eldest grandson Wang Shizhao, daughters Wang Liyue and Wang Lizhu, and direct line descendants like Zongrui, along with Wang Luomei's younger sister and Wang Luoyi's elder sister, and the great aunt Gongsun Hui, Zongsheng, Zonghui, etc.

Currently, their bloodline talents are not bad, but they have not yet reached the Heavenly Human Realm, and coming here would be of no use, as they cannot break any records.

Moreover, although Wang Luomei, Wang Luoyi, and great aunt Gongsun Hui are also of Heavenly Proud Level Spiritual Platform Realm, their fighting will is weak, and their Profound Martial Fighting Techniques are not sufficiently cultivated. Even if they reach the Heavenly Human Realm, it would be hard for them to achieve good results.

As for Wang Shouye, the Alchemy Master, and Wang Zongyao, the Master Refiner, although they are also heavily cultivated by the Wang family and have relatively high levels of strength and realm, with Shouye even already in the Heavenly Human Realm.

But one practices alchemy and the other refines artifacts, they are not purely combat personnel, making it also difficult for them to achieve good results.

Therefore, Wang Shouzhe moved them to the second or third batch, preferring to wait until their cultivation base was higher before letting them go.

And by their own efforts alone, they might not be up to the task; they still need the support of talented younger generations, such as Wang Anye and Wang Ying Xuan, to carry them through and make a sweep.

What the final results will be and how many benefits they can obtain will all depend on themselves. After all, opportunities must be seized by one's own efforts; no one can be a nanny for someone else for a lifetime.

After a brief rest of several days at the camp, Wang Shouzhe and the others set off for home. Their strength was so formidable that they made no effort to conceal their tracks; those who could fly took to the air, while those who could ride flying carriages did so.

If some Level Seven or Level Eight Fierce Beasts blindly crashed into them, it would be equivalent to a free gift; Wang Shouzhe couldn't hope for more to come his way.

Compared with the hardships of the journey there, the trip back home was extremely fast; unfortunately, it was entirely uneventful, and they gained no such windfall.

Upon arrival at home, Wang Shouzhe briefly managed some critical clan affairs, then prepared to enter seclusion to properly tinker with his Mini Portable Cave House, and to cultivate his relationship with Wang Lixian.

Once she grew a little more mature, he planned to send her to the Clan School to learn about culture, so she wouldn't think about firepower all the time!

But before Wang Shouzhe even had the chance to rest, the Prefectural Governor Taishi Ankang came knocking on his door.

As soon as he walked in, Taishi Ankang had a sour expression, with a face full of grievance as he cried out, "Shouzhe, save me~~~" His appearance was exactly like that of Qian Xuehan's from before.

This left Wang Shouzhe somewhere between laughter and tears.

Chapter 49 Unparalleled Prestige! Old Ancestor Shou Zhe Has Become a Great Figure

...

In the Wang family's guest-reception hall.

"Prefectural Governor, why do you say so?" Wang Shouzhe hurried to support his arm, arranging for him to sit down and speak slowly, soothingly saying, "Don't rush, don't rush, let's discuss the matter calmly."

Upon seeing Wang Shouzhe, Taishi Ankang seemed to find his rock, and his emotions stabilized a great deal.

Only then did Wang Shouzhe divert his attention to look behind Taishi Ankang.

This time, Taishi Ankang did not come alone; among those who accompanied him was an old man.

That old man wore a simple long robe, exhibiting a cultivation aura that was profound and restrained, subtly exerting some pressure on Wang Shouzhe, clearly a powerful cultivator of the Purple Abode Realm, just like Taishi Ankang.

However, compared to the prime-aged Taishi Ankang, the old man's back was somewhat hunched, his face riddled with wrinkles, and in many places, liver spots were clearly visible. In his forehead, there lingered an air of twilight that one couldn't wave away, portraying the image of a person who is old and near the end of his life.

His slightly outdated sleeves were embroidered with a small clan emblem.

In Longzuo County, Wang Shouzhe was quite familiar with this clan emblem.

Always focused on intelligence work, Wang Shouzhe recognized the old man's background with just a glance.

Although Wang Shouzhe had recognized the visitor, since he did not know the purpose of the visit, he still feigned ignorance and clasped his hands in greeting, "This senior's demeanor is extraordinary, may I know which Prominent Family's Purple Abode Old Ancestor you are?"

Taishi Ankang, supporting his head, said, "Shouzhe, look at what you've done to me, made me all flustered. Let me introduce you first, this is Yan Yufei of Longzuo's Yan Family, Old Ancestor Yufei."

"So, it is none other than the greatly celebrated Old Ancestor Yufei himself. Shouzhe has long wished to meet the Old Ancestor and witness his grace, regretfully, it has not happened until today," Wang Shouzhe said politely, bowing his hands in a salute.

The Longzuo Yan Family was indeed a greatly celebrated Purple Abode Prominent Family. However, their territories mostly lay to the north of Longzuo, and their circumstances hadn't been particularly great in the past few centuries, showing signs of decline, which is why they generally conducted themselves with a low profile.

Therefore, when the in-laws alliance between the Wang family and the Qian Family's Keep Achieving Commercial Firm extended their business throughout Longzuo County, the Longzuo Yan Family did not interfere but was relatively cooperative instead.

Just for this reason alone, they had built a good relationship with Wang Shouzhe.

"Not at all, not at all." Old Ancestor Yufei's face showed a pleasantly surprised look, and he put on a slightly ingratiating smile as he clasped his hands in return, "It's said Master Shouzhe is a paragon among people, and Yan had thought it was mere flattery. Only upon seeing you today do I realize how understated the rumors were. Master Shouzhe's demeanor is extraordinary, profound, and towering, truly the bearing of a True Dragon."

In this world, since real dragons exist, the Transcendent Emperor would not use the term True Dragon to describe himself, for it would appear demeaning.

But because dragons have noble bloodlines and often top the food chain, the term dragon and phoenix could be used to describe some extraordinary men.

Yet here was Old Ancestor Yan Yufei, a venerable Purple Abode Elder of more than seven hundred years, humbling himself before a younger person, which was rather abnormal and probably due to some desire.

Wang Shouzhe's mind swiftly speculated, and he already had a rough guess, but his face did not show any signs, and he continued to exchange pleasantries, receiving him with the high regard due to the etiquette of Prominent Families.

After all, be it Taishi Ankang or Yan Yufei, both were notable figures of Longzuo County. With guests arriving, the Wang family naturally could not neglect or lose the proper decorum.

On this occasion, Yan Yufei did not come alone either.

Among the Yan Family's group from Longzuo, there was the current Clan Leader Yan Feihong, his direct line great-great-granddaughter Yan Shuang Er, and some young men and women from other direct and secondary lines, quite a number in total. They had been arranged by the guards at the gatehouse to be entertained in the Honorable Guest Hall with fine teas and fruits.

Following that, the Wang family went about making arrangements to entertain the guests according to the appropriate protocols.

Since the family's first ancestor, Old Ancestor Longyan, never wished to make public appearances for social interactions, Wang Shouzhe made special arrangements for Wang Shou Yong and Wang

Shoulian, two Celestial Elders, to keep them company, along with the Lil Junior Clan Leader Wang Shizhao.

Furthermore, from the arrival of so many young people from the Yan Family of Longzuo, Wang Shouzhe could make a guess about the purpose of their visit. Therefore, he also arranged for some young elites from his family to accompany the guests.

The private rooms for the young people were set at some distance from their elders', so as not to inhibit the youth by the presence of their seniors, allowing them to enjoy themselves freely.

On the main banquet table, in addition to a host of elders, was the little direct line girl from the Yan Family, Yan Shuang Er. She appeared to be about thirteen or fourteen years old, exquisitely beautiful and though a bit nervous, she did not lose the poise of a noble's daughter, appearing dignified and graceful.

What was more important was that Wang Shouzhe saw through her cultivation at a glance. For her young age, she had already reached the seventh level of the Vital Energy Refining Realm, and her Bloodline Talent was undeniably that of a Sky Pride.

"Old Ancestor Yufei is blessed," Wang Shouzhe personally poured wine for Yan Yufei as a sign of respect and smiled in praise, "Shuang Er is so young yet possesses such a bloodline talent, the Purple Abode Realm awaits her future indeed."

As he spoke, Wang Shouzhe pulled out a red envelope and handed it to Yan Shuang Er, uttering several auspicious phrases of praise.

Yan Shuang Er hastily rose to give a reverential salute, "Many thanks to Old Ancestor Shouzhe, Shuang Er does not deserve such reward without merit, please take it back, Old Ancestor."

"No need to worry, consider it a gentle prod for a promising young person from our hometown, it is not worth mentioning," smiled Wang Shouzhe lightly, "Shuang Er should not feel burdened, just concentrate on your cultivation diligently, and bring glory to our Longzuo County and your Yan Family."

Chapter 49 Unparalleled Prestige! Old Ancestor Shou Zhe Has Become a Great Figure_2

From the position and perspective where Wang Shouzhe now stood, he had long since moved beyond the confines of just one guard post and county.

In light of his current prestige in Longzuo County, regarding the Yan family as fellow clansmen and Yan Shuangshuang as a younger member of the same region was also an expression of his status and prestige.

"This..." Yan Shuangshuang felt a bit flustered and stole a look at Old Ancestor Yan Yufei.

Before Old Ancestor Yan Yufei could speak, Taishi Ankang next to him laughed and said, "Shuang Er, there's no need for modesty. Nowadays, who doesn't know that the 'Wang' and 'Qian' families of Longzuo are wealthy Prominent Families? It's only right for Master Shouzhe who has earned so much money to give a leg up to an outstanding junior of the same region like you, the Little Sky Pride."

"Since the Prefectural Governor himself has spoken so, Shuang Er, you should accept it." A warm smile appeared on the aged face of Yan Yufei.

"Shuang Er thanks Old Ancestor Shouzhe for the favor of his support." After these words, Yan Shuangshuang bowed deeply to Wang Shouzhe, her eyes filled with gratitude.

The current state of the Yan family in Longzuo was very clear to all its members. They had spent so much to cultivate her. She always got the best things first, while the cultivation resources for her brothers and sisters were scanty, making their days extremely difficult.

"Shuang Er, go play with your brothers and sisters, and learn as much as you can from the outstanding young people of the Wang family," Yan Yufei encouraged, fondly stroking her head, a trace of guilt deep in his old eyes.

"Yes, Old Ancestor," replied Yan Shuangshuang. After bowing to all the elders once more, she withdrew, guided by the maids to where the young people had gathered.

After Yan Shuangshuang had left, Yan Yufei signaled Yan Feihong, the current Noble Family Head of the Yan family, with a look.

Yan Feihong promptly stood up with a beaming smile and respectfully proposed a toast to Wang Shouzhe, "Master Shouzhe, I have heard that your esteemed daughter Li Yao, the Great Heavenly Proud, has recently swept through all the competing Sky Prides of Shangjing City, glossy with honor. This brings glory and respect to all of us from Longzuo, and we hold her in the highest esteem."

"I just visited Shangjing City not long ago for some affairs, and the officials were somewhat dismissive at first. But as soon as they heard I came from Longzuo, they immediately became three parts more courteous. When Li Yao's name came up, they showed nothing but awe, and promptly resolved my tasks. I toast to you, grateful for the reflected glory."

Yan Feihong, now over one hundred and fifty years old, was a Noble Family Head at the Heavenly Human Level born from the Little Sky Pride, whose mature and steady appearance, coupled with his warm generosity, showcased the grace of a time-honored Noble Family Head of the Purple Abode Realm.

Wang Shouzhe did not put on airs and stood up with a laugh, pretending to help him up: "Family Head Feihong, you praise too highly. Your venerable eldest son, Yan Yujing, is also a remarkable Sky Pride. It is said that he had entered the Heavenly Human Realm at the age of seventy-nine and is now in his early one hundred and twenties, reaching the early stage peak of the Heavenly Human Realm with immense potential. In the future, he will surely be a respected Old Ancestor who revitalizes our lineage."

Upon mention of Yan Yujing, a hint of gratification appeared in Yan Feihong's eyes, "Yujing has been in seclusion cultivating these past two years. Once he emerges, I will have him come to pay his respects to Master Shouzhe."

"There's no need for formalities. When Yujing visits our Wang family, Shouzhe will certainly be a gracious host," Wang Shouzhe elegantly said.

Through the exchange of toasts and the wine flowing thrice, the Wang and Yan families grew much more familiar with each other.

It was then Taishi Ankang said, "Shouzhe, I came to see you this time for two reasons. One of them, after seeing you, I feel much relieved, so it can wait. Let's talk about the Yan family first."

"When I first arrived in Longzuo County, I also benefited from the care of Predecessor Yan Yufei, which allowed me to gradually stabilize my position. I believe you're also aware of the current situation faced by the Yan family," Taishi Ankang said with sighs, "Originally, for nearly two to three hundred years, the main industry of the Yan family had been gradually affected by the development of the northwest, with profits declining and the family slowly weakening. Still, with years of accumulated resources, it was able to barely hold on. Sadly, a hundred years ago, filled with the hopes of his family, Yan Jingchi failed in his attempt to advance to the Purple Abode Realm due to an unstable state of mind during the breakthrough. Not only did this result in all the Yan

family's investments being wasted, worsening the situation, but it also directly caused issues with the succession of the Purple Abode."

"The one thing Prominent Families dread most is encountering complications during succession," Wang Shouzhe also said with empathy, "I can understand such a predicament. Once upon a time, our Wang family also faced such difficulties."

"Isn't that the truth? They say a Purple Abode makes for a millennium-long Prominent Family, but once a Purple Abode cannot overcome the transition, the family will quickly weaken," Taishi Ankang lamented, "In that northwestern region, countless large and small families are waiting for Predecessor Yan Yufei to pass away, so they can secretly join hands to attack and chip away at the waning Yan family."

"Currently, the biggest problem for the Yan family is that Predecessor Yan Yufei does not have many years left. Even though he has taken Lifespan Extension Pills, he has at most fifty years left. And the new generation's Purple Abode Seed, Yan Yujing, will need at least another one hundred and fifty years to achieve the Purple Abode. This hundred-year gap without a Purple Abode is the Yan family's most vulnerable and dangerous period."

"When the time comes, and the wolves start circling, whether the Yan family can withstand the onslaught is uncertain. But at the very least, Yan Yujing would struggle to obtain enough resources for cultivation and to break through to the Purple Abode Realm. And I, as the Prefectural Governor, cannot get too involved in the regular competition between the Prominent Families."

Prominent Families rely on the deterrent force of the Purple Abode Realm experts to command respect from the lesser families and deter others from challenging their authority. Once the Purple Abode falls or succession issues arise, the substantial family wealth quickly turns into a death warrant.

The saying goes, 'an innocent man bears no blame, but possession of a jade invites trouble.' Without sufficient strength, possessing a wealth that others envy beckons covetous glances.

Chapter 49 Unparalleled Prestige! Old Ancestor Shou Zhe Has Become a Great Figure_3

The reason why the Yuwen Clan was eager to advance Yuwen Chiwei to Seven Tails was due to this. It was only because Lady Biliand hailed from the Grade Four Shangguan Clan and had the backing of the Shangguan family, which deterred other Prominent Families, that they could barely maintain their position. Otherwise, Yuwen Chiwei might not have even survived until reaching Seven Tails.

Even Wang Shouzhe relied on having the Enlightened One from Tianhe and Wang Liyao, the public face of the Great Heavenly Proud, to deter other Prominent Families from messing around, allowing him to boldly develop the flying carriage business and other industries and rapidly accumulate wealth. Otherwise, the more money he made, the faster he might have died.

The plans in the North Peace defense were also feasible only with the endorsement of the Imperial Household. Otherwise, a Rank Six Prominent Family possessing a massive amount of wealth would simply be courting death.

Wang Shouzhe held his wine glass and slowly savored it before he said, "The ebb and flow, the waxing and waning of the moon, are the natural states of this world. From a macroscopic view, when the Yan Family falls, whether it takes three hundred or five to six hundred years, a new Purple Abode Prominent Family will surely emerge in the northwest of Longzuo."

"Looking over the history of Great Qian, such rise and fall of Prominent Families continually play out."

The expressions of Yan Yufei and Yan Feihong changed, their eyes suddenly becoming grave.

Did Master Shouzhe mean to avoid the issue? Did he not want to get involved?

Suddenly, both became uneasy and fearful, involuntarily looking towards Taishi Ankang, hoping he could exert his influence again.

"Alas, although that's the case, Yu Fei Old Ancestor ultimately showed kindness to Ankang," Taishi Ankang clasped his hands and said, "If Shouzhe could lend a hand, Ankang would be grateful..."

Before he could finish, Wang Shouzhe solemnly interrupted him, "Prefect, please do not flatter Shouzhe so. The Wang family has grown with the frequent care from Prefect Taishi, and Shouzhe is grateful."

"This matter is not that I am unwilling to involve myself. Just speaking truthfully, the crisis that the Yan Family faces today is not a calamity that happened overnight. Let's put this aside for now and instead discuss your second matter..."

Before he could finish, the head of the Yan Family, Yan Feihong, became anxious.

He quickly stood up and said, "As long as Master Shouzhe agrees to help our Yan Family overcome this crisis, our family is willing to marry Bright Pearl Shuang'er to the Wang family."

As soon as these words were spoken,

Wang Shouzhe's expression darkened, and a trace of coldness flashed in his eyes upon looking at Yan Feihong. The previously smiling Wang Shou Yong, Wang Shoulian, and Wang Shizhao also instantly froze.

Just one sentence turned the warm atmosphere of the gathering into one distinctly oppressive.

"Feihong, you are being reckless," Old Ancestor Yu Fei's heart sank, he quickly reprimanded Yan Feihong, "Master Shouzhe is a man of deep foresight. He has his reasons for arranging things as such. When he is speaking with the Prefect Taishi, it's not your place to intervene recklessly."

"Yes, yes, Old Ancestor, my mistake," Yan Feihong realized his impulsiveness, his face paled as he wiped the cold sweat from his forehead, "Master Shouzhe, it was my urgency that caused my lapse in manners. Whatever punishment Master Shouzhe deems fit, Feihong will accept."

Upon hearing this, Wang Shouzhe's cold expression melted like ice, and he smiled warmly like a spring breeze, raising his wine glass and then saying as he got up, "Old Ancestor Yu Fei, Master Feihong, Shouzhe has just returned from abroad and is unavoidably tired, hardly able to hold my liquor, so I shall not stay. I will drink this cup as an apology, and after that, Shi Zhao, Shu Yong, and Shu Lian will keep you company."

Although his demeanor remained as pleasant as before, it nevertheless sent a chill to the bottom of the hearts of those from the Yan family.

Yu Fei and Yan Feihong exchanged glances, quickly conjuring smiles and repeatedly said, "Master Shouzhe should prioritize his health, please feel free, feel free."

"Shi Zhao, make sure you and your fifth and sixth uncles take good care of our honorable guests. Don't let our Wang family be seen as lacking in hospitality," Wang Shouzhe patted Wang Shizhao's shoulder, "Make sure our guests enjoy themselves."

"Yes, Grandfather," Wang Shizhao clasped his hands in response.

After making some arrangements, Wang Shouzhe then invited Taishi Ankang, "Recently, Anye paid respects with some Wild Spirit Tea. While it's not as expensive as the high-grade Immortal Tea, it has a profound implication and a unique flavor. If Prefect doesn't mind the rustic nature of wild tea, how about we enjoy some tea in Shouzhe's courtyard?"

Taishi Ankang stood up, gladly accepting, "How could the tea that Anye can offer be ordinary? Since that's the case, today I will bask in Shouzhe's glory."

As he left the banquet hall with Wang Shouzhe, he directed a look towards Old Ancestor Yu Fei that spoke volumes of his unspeakable sentiment, helplessly shaking his head before following Shouzhe.

"Esteemed predecessors visiting our Wang family, if there are any oversights, please feel free to point them out," Wang Shizhao began graciously hosting the members of the Yan family, seemingly unaffected by the earlier incident, "Old Ancestor Yu Fei, try some of our Spiritual Gourd's homemade Spiritual Wine... Master Feihong, this is Peace River's specialty steamed Red-Tail Spirit Eel, pepper and salt Level Five Spirit Crocodile meat."

The hospitality extended by Wang Shizhao, Shu Yong, and Shu Lian was undeniably attentive, warm, and thorough.

The Yan family members also did their best to appear supremely pleased and surprised, creating a lively and highly enjoyable scene as expected.

However, as Old Ancestor Yu Fei and Master Yan Feihong happily accepted the hospitality with smiles all over their faces, their hearts grew increasingly uneasy.

They wanted to understand Master Shouzhe's true intentions, yet after several careful probes, all were inadvertently sidetracked by Wang Shizhao.

Chapter 49 Unparalleled Prestige! Old Ancestor Shou Zhe Has Become a Great Figure_4

This made them even more uneasy, but they had no choice but to continue to "enjoy" the hospitality without any appetite.

...

Meanwhile.

The young members of the Wang family responsible for entertaining the young generation of the Yan Family had truly integrated with their peers from the Yan Family.

The family education of the Wang family was extremely strict, and the Clan School imposed stringent demands on various etiquette standards, as well as on social interactions and the treatment of others, which included learning and assessments.

All these results would be calculated into the total score of the Clan School—who would dare to fail in this regard? If someone did fail, they were usually met with a severe beating and sent back to the Clan School to relearn everything.

This time, the leader in charge of receiving the Yan Family's younger generation was the fifteenth of the "Shi" generation, Wang Shi Feng. He was the second son of Wang Shouzhe's second son, Wang Zongrui.

Even though Wang Shi Feng was not born into the direct senior line of the Wang family like Wang Zong'an, but rather the direct junior line, his status and position were still very high as long as Wang Shouzhe was alive.

This year, he was twenty years old and had naturally inherited the handsome and heroic looks of his grandfather Wang Shouzhe. Moreover, he had been earnestly working at the grassroots level of Changning United Manufacturers Department for two years, and had now been promoted to the position of Deputy Principal of the third section of the Deep Research Department for Glazed Manufacturing Craftsmanship.

At work, he had shed the greenness of his Clan School days and was gradually developing the demeanor of an elite youth.

Unlike the other younger brothers and sisters present, or the youthful members of the Yan Family who had not yet shouldered responsibilities, Wang Shi Feng's every word and deed demonstrated maturity and stability, and his actions were comprehensive, bearing a strong resemblance to his father Wang Zongrui.

Not only did his younger siblings revere him, but even peers from the Yan Family began to look up to him with admiration and awe unconsciously.

"Brother Shi Feng,"

spoke a girl who had also stepped into the family business—Wang JingLei.

Pouting slightly, she said, "I'm really envious of you. In just two years, you've been promoted to Deputy Principal. I've been working almost a year now, and Shi Chuan, my sixth brother, still treats me like a kid. I'm always assigned to run errands like delivering messages and handling correspondence, trivial tasks that make no use of the skills I learned at the Clan School."

"Yinglei, you need to be patient. Every child in our family starts from the bottom," Wang Shi Feng said with a reassuring smile. "However, with the big age gap between you and sixth brother, he indeed sees you as a little sister and feels you haven't grown up yet. If you really want to grow, you can start by applying to work in the sales department of artifact refining products. Tone down the aura of a lady from a Prominent Family a bit, work hard on the ground for two years, achieve some results, and then speak of it."

"There are Honorable Guests present today, so I won't discuss this in detail with you," Wang Shi Feng said, not wanting to neglect the guests. "I'll be free tomorrow. Come find me, and I'll help you strategize."

"Thank you, fifteenth brother," Wang JingLei's eyes lit up with joy.

A young direct line girl from the Yan Family, Yan Yuxiang, overheard this conversation and asked curiously with her beautiful eyes twinkling, "Brother Shi Feng, I don't quite understand. As a prestigious direct descendant of the Wang family, why do you still need to work at the grassroots level for two years when you enter the family business? Do you really have to obey the commands of those servants?"

Those from the Yan Family who accompanied her on this visit came with a purpose, so all the young men and women were very good-looking and carefully dressed, with the boys appearing handsome and heroic and the girls gentle and charming.

"Miss Yuxiang," Wang Shi Feng bowed slightly, gracefully responding, "Our Changning United Manufacturers Department belongs to a common enterprise of the Alliance Family. It is a vast economic entity that requires systematic management to endure."

"Although our Wang family holds a larger share in it, we cannot act arbitrarily, or how can we expect others to follow? Even though I started at the grassroots, those at the base are the cornerstone of the Manufacturers Department and its true backbone. Everyone who serves as a Deputy or Principal has excellent qualities worth learning from. I respect them because I have learned a lot from them."

"Brother Shi Feng is really impressive,"

a few girls from the Yan Family looked at Wang Shi Feng with eyes full of admiration. Although they didn't quite understand many of the words, it didn't prevent them from appreciating the unique charm of Wang Shi Feng that set him apart from ordinary sons of Prominent Families.

The young noblemen of their family were also considered outstanding among their peers within the Yan territory and quite popular among the girls. But after interacting with the young Wangs, they realized there was quite a gap in terms of demeanor, vision, and breadth of knowledge and conversation; they were not on the same level at all.

It is this comparison that is most daunting for people.

As a result, the young Yan men felt somewhat disheartened.

They also tried to interact with Wang JingLei, Wang Yinghuan, and Wang Yingmeng—the Wang young ladies of their age—making subtle attempts to boast about their own cultivation base and knowledge. Unfortunately, they found, to their dismay, that in every aspect they were no match for those gentle and humble girls.

Often, their words would be enlightening, and sometimes, they were even completely incomprehensible.

What they didn't realize was this was a disparity in cultural heritage. The way of thinking, the understanding of the world, and broadening of horizons were on entirely different scales.

It wasn't that they were too weak; rather, the Wangs' youths had been exposed to a very comprehensive education since infancy that naturally elevated their consciousness and expanded their horizons.

Chapter 49 Unparalleled Prestige! Old Ancestor Shou Zhe Has Become a Great Figure_5

Under a cloud of gloom,

a young man named Yan Xiang Da, without much to say, addressed his direct-line younger sister, Yan Shuang Er, "Sister Shuang Er, you mentioned earlier that the Old Ancestor Shouzhe gave you a red envelope. Why don't we open it and have a look?"

"This..." Yan Shuang Er hesitated, "isn't it inappropriate?"

"Sister Shuang Er, let us witness it for once. I bet it contains five thousand Qian Gold."

"I bet there's ten thousand Qian Gold. It's said that Old Ancestor Shouzhe really likes to support outstanding young people. After all, our sister Shuang Er is blessed with Heavenly Chosen Talent, Old Ancestor Shouzhe must be pleased to see it."

Unable to withstand the pleading of her brothers and sisters, Yan Shuang Er finally opened the red envelope, which contained only one gold note, a purple gold note.

"Purple Gold Note!"

The shiny purple color nearly blinded the eyes of all the young people from the Yan Family.

They had never imagined the Old Ancestor Shouzhe, whom they had never met, could be so generous, to give a Purple Gold Note just like that. This was a Purple Gold Note, worth a hundred thousand Qian Gold!

Wang Shi Feng said with a smile, "Congratulations, Miss Shuang Er. My grandfather usually carries many red envelopes with him, but a Purple Gold Note is indeed the biggest one. It seems my grandfather really likes you."

The other young members of the Wang family also offered their congratulations.

"This... this is too much..." Yan Shuang Er was somewhat stunned, "Brother Shi Feng, could you return it to grandfather—or rather, to Old Ancestor Shouzhe for me?"

The Yan family is now so down on their luck, all their family resources are invested in cultivating Purple Abode Seeds, how could a child ever come across a Purple Gold Note?

"Sister Shuang Er, just keep it," Wang JingLei said with a laugh, "There's no precedent of taking back a red envelope once the fourth elder has given it out."

"Besides, the fourth elder hands out red envelopes to the family's children every New Year. If someone shows they're truly outstanding, they too can receive a Purple Gold Note. I did extremely well on my graduation exams last year, so the fourth elder gave me a Purple Gold Note red envelope, as a kind of support and indirect resources subsidy."

In that moment, including Yan Shuang Er, all the young Yan family members' gazes became somewhat dazed, full of envy as they looked toward Wang JingLei and the others.

This Wang family is too extravagant, giving out Purple Gold Notes to the children's red envelopes...

How wonderful it would be to be a child of the Wang family?

This sentiment uncontrollably lingered in the young Yan family members' minds.

...

Wang Shouzhe's small courtyard.

The moon shone brightly, and the aroma of flowers was intoxicating.

Wang Shouzhe and Taishi Ankang were leisurely drinking the Wild Spirit Tea that Wang Anye had respectfully provided.

"Excellent tea, truly excellent. This tea has a sweet and bitter taste with a prolonged aftertaste," Taishi Ankang praised, "It's even better than the tribute Spirit Tea I've had before."

"If the Prefectural Governor likes it, I'll share two grams with you," Wang Shouzhe leisurely sipped his tea.

"It's a deal," Taishi Ankang's eyes lit up. But then he sighed and said, "Shouzhe, is there really no chance for the Yan Family? If you refuse to intervene, I doubt any other Prominent Families in

Longzuo County will want to get involved. And the Yan Family wouldn't dare seek help from outside counties, as it would provoke a general outcry, with even less chance of a favorable outcome."

"Your Excellency, the Yan Family's problem lies at the root," Wang Shouzhe sighed, "When they rose to wealth, it was by pioneering land in the early days. But their descendants were not enterprising, gradually losing their industrial edge, relying solely on the accumulated prestige of a Purple Abode Prominent Family to avoid a sudden downfall. Even the successful Purple Abode transition more than a hundred years ago merely delayed their inevitable elimination."

"A thousand-year Prominent Family... such families are not so easily sustained for a millennium. If they do not change their mindset, it would be better to demote themselves sooner rather than later, discarding part of their wealth, clinging to survival by severing their own tail."

"Are you angry because you feel pity for Shuang Er? The Yan Family's desperate efforts to elevate Shuang Er to a Heavenly Chosen Talent were aimed at auctioning off the child for strong support for the family, which you find distasteful?"

Taishi Ankang, astute as ever, understood clearly.

He lamented, "This reminds you of the most difficult times for the Wang family, doesn't it? When your Ancestor Longyan had no choice but to send a direct-line child to be wed to the Xu Family in Changning for protection."

Taking a sip of the Spirit Tea, Wang Shouzhe gave him a sidelong glance and said, "A high-ranking Prefectural Governor troubling himself over the thoughts of a 'small fry' like me? Aren't you embarrassed?"

"A 'small fry'?" Taishi Ankang's mouth twitched in frustration as he emphatically drank his tea, "If Wang Shouzhe counts as a 'small fry,' then who in Longzuo County can be considered a big shot?"

"With just a whim, you can determine the life and death of a Purple Abode Prominent Family. Doesn't that make you a big shot?"

"Your mere displeasure can make someone like Yan Yufei, a Purple Abode elder, become extremely anxious, constantly wondering what could have possibly upset you. Doesn't that make you a big shot?"

"Moreover, His Majesty issued a decree taxing me with increasing Longzuo County's revenue by another fifty percent within ten years. Eunuch Yao, the announcer of the decree, revealed privately that this was because His Majesty was greatly irritated by you, Wang Shouzhe, and was inventing ways to make you uncomfortable. But I don't get it—if His Majesty wants to pick on you and is unhappy with you, why drag me into it?" Taishi Ankang complained with a troubled face, "I'm just an ordinary, pitiful Prefectural Governor. Oh, Great Master Wang Shouzhe, when you're at odds with His Majesty, could you perhaps avoid dragging me into it recklessly?"

"I'm afraid that's not possible," said Wang Shouzhe, lightly sipping his tea, "For in the eyes of His Majesty, in the eyes of Kang Commandery Prince's crowd, in the eyes of the many prestigious families in Return to Dragon City,"

"Prefectural Governor, you've long been hand-in-glove with me, Wang Shouzhe, in disrepute."

"I instigated the rumor, and since we are all one of our own, there's no need for thanks, Prefectural Governor."

"I..." Taishi Ankang's face twitched involuntarily, feeling a sudden urge to smash the scene before him.

Chapter 50: Birth of the Young Immortal Beast Kunfish! Yan Family Girl Silently Gives Her Heart

...

Taishi Ankang solemnly observed Wang Shouzhe.

However, Wang Shouzhe's face remained unflushed, his heart steady, still calm and composed.

"Why must it come to this, why must it come to this~" Taishi Ankang said helplessly, "Am I not allowed to quietly wait for my 'retirement and return home'?"

"Difficult." Wang Shouzhe admitted frankly, "Da Qian has only seven counties in total, and each Quasi Emperor's Son wishes to garner the support of the forces in each county to enhance their influence."

"For Kang Commandery Prince, Longzuo County is now a 'conquered area,' a staunch support camp of An Commandery Prince. Prefectural Governor himself is also quite close to the Wang family and

Qian family, frequently lending support and assistance. Not to mention you wanting to raise a banner of neutrality, even if you proclaim your allegiance to Kang Commandery Prince, do you think Kang Commandery Prince would trust you? Would he accept you?"

"If you wait for Kang Commandery Prince to assume power, with his petty character like the Emperor's, you and your 'ordinary' martial family would certainly be the first to be suppressed and marginalized," explained Wang Shouzhe as he poured Spiritual Tea, analyzing, "On the other hand, An Commandery Prince His Highness is generous and broadminded; even if he ascended to power, he would not specifically trouble a neutral Prefectural Governor. But you cannot just bully such an honest person as An Commandery Prince, can you?"

"Unless you retire now and hand over such a powerful and lucrative position as the head of a county, stepping away from any worldly affairs. Otherwise, under the overwhelming tide of this global transformation, how many can escape the whirlpool of the Emperor's Son's conflict? At least An Commandery Prince and I, Shouzhe, still offer some kind of guarantee for our character. Prefectural Governor, if you do not team up with me, do you really want to switch allegiance to Kang Commandery Prince?"

"Alas~~" Taishi Ankang sighed deeply, "I admit, Shouzhe, you are right. We mediocre beings only deserve to follow the flow; who are we to escape the whirlpool of global conflict?"

Although he said that, his gaze toward Wang Shouzhe was still profound, his tone carrying a hint of reproach: "But you should have discussed it thoroughly with me, allowing me to slowly prepare myself mentally. To suddenly drag me onto the thief's... ship, this life is indeed too abrupt and thrilling."

"Sooner or later, you had to board," Wang Shouzhe said with a smile, "To avoid you, Prefectural Governor, hesitating and suffering internally, I simply took a firm hand and pulled you aboard. In the future, we shall share blessings and face difficulties together."

"Shouzhe, I thank you," Taishi Ankang said with mixed emotions.

"No need for thanks," replied Wang Shouzhe with a benevolent smile.

So be it, it seems I've already been firmly ensnared by Shouzhe's bandit ship.

Since it has come to this, let it be.

Taishi Ankang quickly adjusted his mindset, declaring indifferently: "Shouzhe, since we are now in the same boat, the matter of increasing the tax by fifty percent within, no, nine years, is now on you."

"If you handle this well, from hereafter I, Taishi Ankang, will follow your lead, allowing you to send me on any task. If you handle it poorly, you needn't worry about me quitting on my own; the Emperor will surely dismiss me. By then, the selection of a new Prefectural Governor... hehe~ you know~"

Wang Shouzhe could not help but glance sideways.

The Prefectural Governor had just joined the team and already passed the buck with such proficiency; could it be that he had a background as an army cook in his youth?

Alright, I'm not showing you some strength here, you don't know the capabilities of Wang Shouzhe.

Wang Shouzhe put down his teacup, the base gently tapped on the table, emitting a crisp sound.

This sound, as if flipping a switch, triggered a new phase.

Wang Shouzhe folded his hands, his voice slowly rising: "As I understand, Longzuo County's national taxes mainly come from three sources. Three hundred and twenty million mu of fertile land, about 100 Qian Gold for every ten thousand mu, totaling 3.2 million Qian Gold in national taxes. The ordinary grain fields of various Prominent Families, about twenty million mu, at 250 Qian Gold for every ten thousand mu, totaling 500,000 Qian Gold. Approximately six hundred thousand mu of Wang family's high-quality grain fields, 500 Qian Gold for every ten thousand mu, about 300,000 Qian Gold. Thus, the national taxes from ordinary farmland total about 4 million Qian Gold."

"This..." Taishi Ankang's eyes widened, "How... how did you come up with these numbers? They are pretty close, last year it should have been 3.8 million Qian Gold."

"Hehe~ Just a bit of careful investigation and calculation," Wang Shouzhe continued calmly, "Moreover, the major part of the revenue comes from Spirit Field taxes. Longzuo County has about 1.8 million mu of Low Grade Spirit Fields, about 1.8 million Qian Gold in national taxes, Middle Grade Spirit Fields about 120,000 mu, about 1.2 million Qian Gold, Top Grade Spirit Fields about

9,000 mu, about 900,000 Qian Gold, and Top quality Spirit Fields about 800 mu, about 800,000 Qian Gold. Hence, the national taxes from Spirit Fields total about 4.7 million Qian Gold."

"Additionally, there is the regular commodity transaction tax, about 4 million Qian Gold in national taxes, of which 1.8 million is from industries related to the Wang family In-laws Alliance and Qian Family Alliance, including Keep Achieving Commercial Firm, Changning United Manufacturers Department, and so on."

"The tax from breeding, fishing, and fisheries amounts to about 500,000 Qian Gold in national taxes, of which 270,000 is paid by the Wang family's fisheries department."

"Profound Martial product trade and flow taxes, given the high prices of Profound Martial products, are based on a ratio of one thousandth for national taxes, and two thousandths for county defense taxes, totaling 2.7 million Qian Gold in national taxes, estimating the total Profound Martial product capital flow in Longzuo County at nine billion Qian Gold!"

"Other minor items total about 1.2 million Qian Gold in national taxes," concluded Wang Shouzhe without even bringing out a ledger, he casually burst out a series of numbers, summarizing, "Last year, Longzuo County was supposed to pay around 17 million Qian Gold in national taxes."

Taishi Ankang looked at Wang Shouzhe in utter shock.

This fellow, although the figures were not completely accurate, the total was surprisingly close! If it weren't for Taishi Ankang who was the Prefectural Governor, he might truly not have known this data.

Chapter 50: Birth of the Young Immortal Beast Kunfish! Yan Family Girl Silently Gives Her Heart_2

"Prefectural Governor, this tax includes nearly three million in national taxes, directly or indirectly contributed by various industries of the Wang family in-laws alliance, as well as the Keep Achieving Commercial Firm and others... My lord, with such a tax burden, you still want me to find a way to increase it by fifty percent?"

Taishi Ankang's face turned red, and he glared at Wang Shouzhe: "The Prefectural Governor also has no choice, does he? Longzuo County is a newly established county and naturally cannot compare to those older counties. Otherwise, I wouldn't be so eagerly waiting for you to return to discuss this matter."

"Have you cried yet?" Wang Shouzhe asked.

"What?" Taishi Ankang was bewildered.

Seeing his dumbfounded look, Wang Shouzhe felt somewhat helpless: "What I mean is, have you cried to His Majesty? At least, have you submitted a memorial to cry about it?"

"No... As soon as this came up, I thought of coming to find you. Who would have thought your trip to the frontier would take so long?" Taishi Ankang complained, "Shouzhe, what exactly did you do to His Majesty? Why would he impose such a difficult problem on you?"

"Then go and cry," Wang Shouzhe said leisurely as he sipped his tea, "Go cry in Shangjing City, use all the connections you can, and beg His Majesty to reconsider."

"Shouzhe, are you sure that doing this will make His Majesty reconsider? Although it's embarrassing, if it really works..." Taishi Ankang hesitated.

"Based on my understanding of His Majesty's character, he won't reconsider. The more fiercely you cry, the more tumultuous it gets, the more delighted and proud he will be," Wang Shouzhe said calmly.

"Then why are you still asking me to embarrass myself?" Taishi Ankang felt an urge to hit someone, "Shouzhe, even I, Taishi Ankang, have my pride."

"Do not be hasty, Prefect. Let me explain in detail," Wang Shouzhe put down his teacup and explained thoroughly.

Taishi Ankang's eyes gradually brightened, and he slapped his thigh: "Why didn't I think of that?"

...

In the following days.

The Wang family continued to entertain the Yan family from Longzuo diligently, with the Wang family elders taking care of the Yan family elders, while the younger ones entertained their peers.

They took the Yan family peers from Ping'an Town to Xin An Town, and from Xin An Town to newly developed frontier lands.

Each place showcased different aspects of the Wang family, leaving many young people both shocked and greatly admiring.

Gradually, they also finally understood why the Wang family, still a Rank Six Prominent Family, was sought after even by their Fifth Grade Yan family.

The children had fewer worries and could fully enjoy and appreciate the elegance of the Wang family, but for Yan Feihong, the Old Ancestor of the Yan family, the pressure was enormous.

As they increasingly felt the strength and extraordinary foundation of the Wang family, they repeatedly tried to meet with Wang Shouzhe, but were deferred and refused time after time.

Inside the luxurious suites of the guesthouse used by the Wang family to entertain the honorable guests.

The floor-to-ceiling glass windows were bright and clean, offering a good view. Through the windows, one could see the entire landscape of Zhuwei Lake, which was extremely pleasing to the eye.

But at this moment, the Old Ancestor Yan Feihong and the Family Head Feihong were gathered together, and they had no desire to admire the view.

Their faces were filled with worry, as if burdened with heavy thoughts.

"Old Ancestor." Yan Feihong's eyes were anxious as he bowed and said, "Master Shouzhe has deferred meeting us several times, and he probably has no intention of helping our Yan family. Perhaps we should consider other options... Let's not pin all our hopes on one possibility."

"Other options?" The Old Ancestor sighed, the gloom in his brow seeming to deepen, "Now that the Wang family and the Qian family have formed an in-laws alliance, supporting each other, they almost dominate Longzuo County. If our Yan family wants to maintain the dignity of a Purple Abode Prominent Family, we absolutely cannot avoid dealing with both the Wang and Qian families."

"Moreover, Prefect Taishi once hinted in secret that we shouldn't underestimate the Wang family just because they are still a Rank Six Prominent Family. Currently, the Wang family covertly harbors a Level Seven Azure Dragon and a hidden early-stage Purple Abode Realm Puppet."

"If we come to a critical moment, along with the help of the Firefox Old Ancestor, the Wang family's Purple Abode-level battle strength can reach three! Add to this Li Yao the Great Heavenly Proud, and Zong'an the Great Heavenly Proud, the Wang family's overall combat power is already comparable to an average Grade Four Prominent Family!"

"A Purple Abode Realm Puppet?" Yan Feihong's mind reeled in disbelief, "Such an item is usually priceless, isn't it? Even if it were for sale, it would cost fifty or sixty million Qian Gold. This thing is even more valuable than a Purple Abode Realm Old Ancestor..."

"Eighty million! It is said that the An Commandery Prince and An Commandery Prince Consort secretly brokered a deal, spending eighty million to procure one from the Gongye family."

Eighty million!

This was a terrifying figure, enough to cultivate two Purple Abode Realm cultivators from scratch and still have money left over. This amount of money was astronomical for the Yan family of Longzuo at present.

They had bought an Infinite Treasure Pill for Yan Shuangshuang through connections, and it was only by pawning many of the family's fixed assets that they barely managed to obtain it, and they had to additionally invite Master Changchun from Changchun Valley and the Old Ancestor as protectors to use their Mysterious Energy to help Yan Shuangshuang digest the Infinite Treasure Pill.

All of this was to cultivate a Heavenly Proud-level direct daughter, to hold for a high price, seeking allies. Among them, the emerging Changning Wang family in Longzuo was the prime choice for an alliance through marriage.

After all, the Wang family had a "shallow foundation" and was still only a "Rank Six Prominent Family," which compared to those seasoned Rank Five or Grade Four Prominent Families, was much easier to deceive.

Most importantly, the Wang family had two Great Heavenly Prouds, with boundless potential. Forming a connection with the Wang family meant not only could the Yan family retain its Fifth Grade, but it might even gradually regain its former glory.

Chapter 50: Birth of the Young Immortal Beast Kunfish! Yan Family Girl Silently Gives Her Heart_3

However, they hadn't foreseen that the Wang family's Master Shouzhe would be such a tough nut to crack. To this day, both of them didn't understand why he turned his face that day.

"Old Ancestor, although the Wang family is indeed better than we imagined," Yan Feihong said helplessly, "but dragging this on is not a solution. Perhaps, Master Shouzhe somewhat looks down on us~ We might as well use the backup plan and seek a marriage alliance with the Left Hill Clan of Qing'an Province."

"Let's wait a bit longer. Firstly, the Zuoqiu family is too big, and their family structure is overly complex," pondered Old Ancestor Yufei, "Secondly, the Zuoqiu family has had hostility and friction with the Wang and Qian families and was even repelled. If we enter into a marriage alliance with the Zuoqiu family, it will inevitably offend the strong local families. Nowadays, the Wang family is stronger than I had imagined."

"No wonder, even the Qian family now subtly regards the Wang family as the leader."

"Let's try to make another effort," sighed Old Ancestor Yufei. "After all, the Wang family has a good reputation. Once they agree, they will not go back on their word, which is somewhat more reliable than other prominent families."

He found the Wang family at the first opportunity, largely for this reason.

The situation within the prominent families is complex, with severe internal strife in some. Sending the girls over there not only means they would suffer, but it might also fail to meet the Yan family's goal, making it not worth the loss.

Compared to this, the Wang family is much better. At least, the lives of the daughters-in-law who marry into the Wang family are well-known to be good throughout Longzuo County.

As the two senior members of the Yan family worried over their family's affairs, in the sky, two Spirit Bird flying carriages descended from the sky, landing directly next to the flying carriage station beside the Wang family's welcoming hotel.

From the two carriages, a group of young people, full of vigor and vitality, filed out, walking towards the restaurant with laughter and conversation.

"Shi Feng, thank you for taking the time to show us Shouzhe Pass. It was truly magnificent and breathtaking," Yan Shuangshuang said, her pretty face slightly flushed with both excitement and a tad of shy glancing at Wang Shi Feng, her eyes filled with a touch of girlish affection.

Apart from Yan Shuangshuang, the other two young women also developed some fondness for the young descendants of the Wang family.

Being from secondary branches, they did not have the status to compete with Yan Shuangshuang and moreover, felt they did not match up to Wang Shi Feng. Hence, they turned their attention to the "Shi" generation's number sixteen, Wang Shi Jing, and number seventeen, Wang Shi Lian.

One was nineteen, the other sixteen, respectively the grandsons of Wang Shou Yong and Wang Shouliao, both young talents among the younger generation of the Wang family. Although slightly less so compared to Wang Shi Feng, they were still considered among the cream of the crop in Longzuo County.

In any prominent family's marriage alliance, unless unexpected, it is always a woman who marries up.

After experiencing the style of the Wang family, the three young direct branch males from the Yan family felt increasingly inferior in front of Wang Yinglei, Wang Yinghuan, and Wang Yingmeng, three direct branch females of the Wangs, losing confidence and even the courage to pursue them.

However, the girls of the Wang family differed from other families' daughters. The family might suggest a matrimony alliance with a certain family, but whether they approve of the suitors and their decision to marry lay entirely in their own hands.

The situation for the men of the family was completely different. Facing eligible men of direct branches, Master Shouzhe would use various methods to urge them towards marriage.

For direct branch males, their fate was even more tragic, often facing forced marriages from the Family Head, like the predestined engagement of Wang Shizhao.

Master Shouzhe, besides having a severe "fear of inadequate firepower," also suffered from a severe "fear of insufficient family members."

Aside from having five children himself as an example, the methods he employed to urge and coerce the Wang males into marriages were endlessly inventive.

Once a man married, whoever quickly had many children could look forward to Master Shouzhe's smiling face and receive frequent and generous red packet rewards. But if anyone dared delay having children, they often faced relentless pressure to reproduce from the Family Head, who did not even greet them with courtesy.

Thus, the Wang family men did not resist interacting with the Yan family daughters, for they were, after all, direct daughters or secondary daughters from a Fifth Grade prominent family, and couldn't be too bad.

Old Ancestor Yufei and Yan Feihong saw this scene through the glass window.

The two glanced at each other, both alarmed by how quickly their family girls fell and simultaneously dissatisfied with the several direct branch males who were too timid to even speak a few more words to the Wang family girls, silently angry at their lack of spirit.

At the same time, a strong sense of crisis also surged in the hearts of the two Yan family elders.

This matter could no longer be delayed, or else the Yan family would completely lose initiative, perhaps resulting in losing both one's wife and soldiers.

...

Meanwhile.

At the heart of Zhuwei Lake, Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion.

This place, bearing Master Shouzhe's special memories over several decades, had been temporarily sealed.

Firstly, he had already obtained a Mini Portable Cave Mansion, a high-level treasure.

Secondly, Master Shouzhe had once asked Enlightened One Tianhe to use divine skills to extract a small Top Grade Water Spirit vein and transplant it under the Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion, while also setting up a Spirit Gathering Array to concentrate Spiritual Energy in a certain area.

This caused the Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion to be enveloped in water mist and Spiritual Energy year-round, which was quite suitable for Ruolan's daily cultivation. Originally, the Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion had been built for Ruolan's secluded cultivation.

However, the costly Top Grade Water Spirit vein ultimately did not play a significant role.

Chapter 50: Birth of the Young Immortal Beast Kunfish! Yan Family Girl Silently Gives Her Heart_4

Liu Ruolan typically cherished spending days in the small courtyard toying with "gourmet food," urging the children on with their studies. But whenever visiting the Water Moon Heavenly Pavilion, she was usually accompanied by Wang Shouzhe as a pair.

Hard practice and bitter training? What was that?

It was simply a waste of Wang Shouzhe's good intentions and money...

To know, hiring an Enlightened One with Divine Skills was costly, either you owed a favor or you paid money, and neither option came cheap. The desperate Enlightened One of Tianhe, at most, might discount the service on account of Li Yao, but a free service was out of the question.

However, this miniature top-grade Water Spirit Vein finally found its use.

At this moment, floating in the very center of the Small Gathering Spirit Array was a giant egg.

The Wang couple stood beside the egg, looking exceptionally delicate and exquisite by comparison.

Right then, the egg was devouring the Elemental Water Aura from the Spirit Vein at a visible rate to the naked eye.

As the Elemental Water Aura gradually filled it, the shell began to glow bit by bit, with the originally silvery mystical patterns emitting streaks of flowing light, and fine luminescent dots appeared on the white shell, until a faint blue luminescence covered it.

Within a matter of days, a miniature top-grade Spirit Vein brimming with Spiritual Energy was drained by the egg, forcing Liu Ruolan to supplement it with her own Elemental Water Mysterious Energy by the end.

Fortunately, with Liu Ruolan's profound Mysterious Energy, it finally "ate its fill" after drawing on a large portion of her energy.

"Crack! Crack!"

With the sound of the eggshell cracking, waves of Water Aura surged in all directions.

The aura emanating from within the egg was surging and vast, carrying an ancient and vast flavor, making it clear at a glance that it was no ordinary creature.

Then, a chubby "big-headed fish" wiggled out from the eggshell, shook off the mucus on its face, and opened its large, silly eyes.

It looked very cute, and when it lowered its head to look at Wang Shouzhe and Liu Ruolan, its gaze seemed to burst with an extraordinary splendor.

Wang Zongkun had hatched!

Wang Shouzhe and Liu Ruolan, looking up at the huge Kunfish baby, felt a surge of excitement in their hearts.

Long before the hatching, the couple had already established the gender of the young Kunfish through consulting ancient texts and special means, and they named it accordingly. They also harbored concerns about whether this ancient Immortal Beast would recognize them and whether it would be easy to raise.

Thankfully, the young Kunfish seemed to greatly recognize them and was affectionate as well.

Just as the couple was about to approach and deepen their bond with the young Kunfish,

it suddenly turned around, opened its mouth wide and sucked in, drawing the eggshell into its mouth with the water flow, crunching it as though it was eating rice crisps, appearing utterly delighted with the snack.

Wang Shouzhe's face darkened slightly.

This fish was indeed a glutton—its first instinct upon opening its eyes was to eat!

As Little Kunfish Wang Zongkun polished off the eggshell in a few bites, it then remembered the parents it had seen upon opening its eyes.

With a flick of its tail, creating a splash, it swam wobbly over to them.

"Hmm~"

A rich, ear-thrumming sound reverberated in the water, causing Wang Shouzhe and his wife to feel a subtle disturbance in their blood and energy. Fish, shrimp, and crabs within a several-mile radius were all stunned by the vibration and turned belly up.

Seeing this scene, Wang Zongkun's appetite was whet once more.

As it engaged in excited anticipation of the feast before it, Wang Shouzhe hastily intervened, vibrating his voice first in the water, "Little Kunfish, stop there; daddy has brought you something to eat."

With that, he shook the Storage Ring called "Endless Abyss," gifted by his great-grandson, and thousands of pounds of delicious Spirit Fish were transferred out.

This initial feeding was crucial, a prime opportunity to establish the deepest trust and affection.

"Hmm~"

Wang Zongkun didn't understand what "Little Kunfish" meant, but it instinctively knew that it was delicious and beneficial to eat.

After an excited howl, it opened its mouth to gulp and suck, and hundreds of pounds of Spirit Fish vanished.

Another gulp and a suck, and the rest were gone too.

Such a ferocious eating manner put pressure on Wang Shouzhe as he continued feeding, making him acutely aware of the looming financial strain.

With Little Kunfish's hearty appetite, it was uncertain whether the Wang family's current assets would suffice. It seemed necessary to urgently develop the family's business.

Otherwise, the Kunfish might not yet be fully grown before the Wang family found itself bankrupt.