

## Rise 167

Chapter 167: This is OK

Zhu Ping'an glanced at everyone's reactions and slightly curled his lips. "Actually, my method is very simple. It's similar to cracking an egg just now."

After witnessing what had happened with the boiled egg earlier, these accountants no longer dared to underestimate Zhu Ping'an. However, they still found it hard to believe that there could be such a simple way to detect fraudulent accounts.

Seeing the accountants whispering among themselves and discussing fervently, Zhu Ping'an slightly curled his lips again. "I know you all don't believe me. If I were in your position, I wouldn't believe it either. But in this world, nothing is absolute. I learned this method by chance from a senior expert named Benford when I was taking the academy examination in Yingtian."

At this point, Zhu Ping'an paused for a moment and then said with a slightly embarrassed expression, "Actually, I paid a considerable price to learn this method. So, while I am willing to share it with you all, you are all outstanding figures in the accounting field, and your wealth is far beyond that of a poor village boy like me. I believe you wouldn't let me walk away empty-handed. Although talking about money may seem vulgar, accounting is all about numbers—how can we avoid it?"

"Of course, only after the method has been verified," Zhu Ping'an added calmly.

Initially, he had no such thoughts. However, given the way these accountants had treated him earlier, he felt a little annoyed.

Besides, exchanging knowledge for some compensation—why not? His elder brother was getting married, and he himself still had exams to take in the future. Easing his parents' burden was nothing but a good thing. Moreover, introducing Benford's Law, which was supposed to be discovered in the 20th century, into the Ming Dynasty over 400 years earlier was, in a way, a contribution to Chinese mathematics. Who knew? Perhaps in the future, this law would be called "Ping'an's Law." Haha. If those foreigners in the 20th century discovered that this law had been proposed in China centuries earlier, their reactions would certainly be interesting.

"If your method truly works, then why not?" said a gray-haired accountant as he stroked his beard and spoke leisurely. However, doubt remained in his eyes.

"Exactly, we are not petty people trying to take advantage of you."

"Tell us first. I don't believe such a simple method exists."

The other accountants had different reactions, but skepticism was written all over their faces.

Zhu Ping'an shook his head with a foolish smile, then said calmly, "This method is very simple. You only need to look at the numbers in the account book. In any dataset derived from real life, numbers beginning with 1 appear about 30% of the time. As the leading digit increases, the frequency decreases. The combined occurrence of numbers starting with 6, 7, 8, and 9 is less than 20%. If there is a large deviation from this pattern, it is definitely a case of falsified accounts."

Upon hearing Zhu Ping'an's method, the accountants burst into laughter. How could this be possible? What a joke! This was treating accounting like child's play.

Those who had been full of expectations were now disappointed.

"Shouldn't every leading number appear equally? Who says 1 must appear 30% of the time? Nonsense..."

The accountants voiced their doubts one after another.

However, Zhu Ping'an had fully anticipated this reaction.

"That's right. At first, I had the same reaction. It completely goes against intuition. Shouldn't all leading numbers appear equally? But think about it carefully. If we start from 1 and count through 2, 3... up to 9, the frequency of each leading number is indeed the same. However, after 9, we reach 10 to 19. At this point, the numbers starting with 1 appear much more frequently than the others. And before we reach another set of numbers starting with 9, we must go through a sequence beginning with 2, 3, 4... and so on. If this number pattern has an endpoint, then numbers starting with 1 will generally appear more often than those starting with 9."

"Therefore, in an account book, numbers beginning with 1 should appear about 30% of the time, with the frequency decreasing for larger leading digits. Any account book that deviates from this pattern is undoubtedly falsified."

"If you don't believe me, you can bring in some other account books and test it for yourself."

Zhu Ping'an's expression was full of confidence, and his voice was firm and powerful. At this moment, he resembled a grand strategist standing in the midst of a military formation, holding a feather fan and silk robe, effortlessly bringing his opponents to ruin with just a few words.

The accountants were talking among themselves, still unwilling to believe.

"Father, just take any of our family's account books and let him try. There's no loss, and if he's making things up, watch how I scold him!"

The sly young lady walked up to Master Li, pouting, and shook his arm with her delicate hands.

Master Li was only shaken twice before he waved his hand, signaling Accountant Wang to fetch a few account books.

After a short while, Accountant Wang returned with a stack of books, about five or six in total.

As soon as Accountant Wang stepped through the door, the cunning Miss Li Shu snatched them away, took two quick steps towards Zhu Ping'an, glared at him fiercely, and shoved them into his arms.

"If you're making things up, you'll be in big trouble!"

Miss Li gave Zhu Ping'an another fierce glare, snorted, twisted her slender waist, and left him with a proud, arrogant figure.

So arrogant—let's see how you ever get married!

Zhu Ping'an thought to himself.

After receiving the account books, Zhu Ping'an evenly distributed the six books among three tables of accountants and grinned.

"Since it's come to this, why don't you all give it a try? If I'm wrong, I'll accept my loss."

Fine, let's test it out.

Once the results are in, let's see what excuses this kid comes up with!

The accountants went along with it, flipping through the books and making calculations. They verified Zhu Ping'an's method using the books he provided, then took two more books from the ones they originally intended to check and calculated again.

In less than half an hour, the accountants had finished their verification.

Then, one by one, their expressions turned chaotic, filled with disbelief. Their faces flushed red, and their hands trembled as they held the account books. It was unclear whether they were excited about discovering a new accounting method or ashamed for having misunderstood Zhu Ping'an earlier...

"My God, the initial accounts we checked had a discrepancy of about 30%, but these only have about 10%..."

"It's really true..."

"This is unbelievable..."

"I have a few more books here, let me test it again."

A little while later, Zhu Ping'an's cloth bag was bulging. It was filled with two- and three-tael silver pieces, several ten-tael banknotes, and even a fifty-tael banknote—this one was forcibly stuffed into his hands by the elderly accountant with graying hair, whose hands trembled as he insisted. Zhu Ping'an tried to refuse, but as soon as he did, the old accountant blew his beard and glared at him as if saying, Are you suggesting I have no discernment and don't recognize value?

With no choice, Zhu Ping'an had to accept everything.

Wow, these people are really straightforward.

Is this even real?!

On the side, the little maid Hua'er, who had been watching these accountants—who had previously mocked Zhu Ping'an—now scrambling to stuff silver and banknotes into his hands, was left with her mouth agape in an "O" shape.

They really got swindled and are even counting money for their swindler!

The sly young lady's eyes gleamed, but upon seeing Zhu Ping'an rubbing his bag with a goofy grin, her beautiful eyes couldn't help but roll.

So spineless!