

Daily Life 541

Chapter 541: Set a Small Target for Yourself

It was a very powerful punch and Loopy Toad's paws felt like they were filled with explosive power.

The so-called practice and actual combat were two completely different things; it had never felt this during practice.

After throwing the first punch in the starting form, Loopy Toad felt like its entire body was on fire. Although its paws were very small, this punch wouldn't lose out to a punch by a Soul Formation cultivator.

Reasonably speaking, a second-class spirit beast would never be able to exert power at the Soul Formation stage, but Loopy Toad's body also housed the "Great Sword Dao Spell" which it had yet to finish cultivating.

Although it had only absorbed forty percent of the power of Sword Dao so far, the increase in its strength was clear.

When Loopy Toad got serious in particular, the power of Sword Dao would secretly and invisibly boost the Basic Dog Skills. This punch didn't just contain the super high attack speed of the Basic Dog Skills, the driving force of the power of Sword Dao was also mixed into it.

This force caused the power of Loopy Toad's Dog Skills to rise intangibly several times over!

"Eh?"

Sheep was also a little amazed as she had never expected Loopy Toad's starting form to be so powerful.

The wind kicked up by this violent punch brushed past Sheep's cheeks and made her meatball-shaped hair buns jump.

But this speed was still far from enough against Sheep; gripping the small umbrella, her small body flitted around the garden as if she was dancing.

“Too slow!” Using the umbrella, Sheep easily evaded the attack.

Loopy Toad threw the eighty-one punches of the first form in a second, but none of them touched Sheep.

During its rapid attack, Loopy Toad’s eyes also tracked Sheep’s movements. She absolutely wasn’t using her full speed to dodge, but even then, Loopy Toad could only see a faint shadow.

This speed was really too fast, and Loopy Toad was keenly aware that it couldn’t catch her with its current strength of vision.

After this offensive strike, it stopped attacking and instead stared at Sheep as it thought up countermeasures.

Holding the small umbrella, Sheep narrowed her eyes and smiled as she explained, “My current speed matches the highest speed that you can display at your current class.”

“That’s really unfair…” Loopy Toad couldn’t help grumbling in its heart. It had had no idea that the top speed for second class would be so dazzling.

Loopy Toad felt that it needed to find its own attack style.

From the current situation, it was clear that it wasn’t a speed-type player. Every spirit beast had their own particular trait based on breed and class, and thus had their own distinct advantage. But Loopy Toad’s current situation was a little more unique as it had been formed from a merger between a soul and body.

When it used to be a toad, it had had primarily defensive and binding abilities, which was a typical “fatan” role.

But its soul was now fused with an akita… The point was that akitas weren’t spirit dogs! Loopy Toad wouldn’t have been able to cultivate at all if it hadn’t been for its demon king soul as well as Little Master Ling modifying its Demon King Heart Sutra!

Akitas...

This breed...

Apart from their heads being used in memes to sell meng ... Loopy Toad really couldn't imagine any other advantages they might have.

Actually, it still had to wait for its soul and body to align more closely with each other.

That was because its previous "narcolepsy" hadn't completely disappeared. Its first immersion in the holy beast blood provided by Little Silver had only alleviated the symptoms of the narcolepsy. As long as its condition persisted, this indicated that Loopy Toad's soul and body weren't fully aligned yet.

It would take at most another month or two for it to fully adapt to this body, and only after it had fully embraced this body would Loopy Toad actually be able to study its specific advantages.

"Looks like I'll have to temper this body in the future!" Loopy Toad pondered.

Although it hadn't be able to even touch Sheep just now, the fight this time had hugely inspired Loopy Toad.

It was still in the process of adapting to this body and studying how to use it. Except for the "tongue techniques" and the "Space Swallowing Spell," which were minor spells that Loopy Toad could still use normally even with spirit energy, it had already completely discarded all the rest.

Since it had chosen to live in the world of modern human cultivators...

And to live with Little Master Ling...

At this stage, Loopy Toad set a small target for itself — to do its best to adapt to this new life and to become a dog that wouldn't cause Little Master Ling to lose face when he took it out!

After it was done cultivating, Loopy Toad went to the backyard and took off the yellow exercise uniform it had been wearing and put it in a bamboo basket. This was something Mother Wang had prepared for Loopy Toad: each time it was done cultivating, the exercise uniform had to be washed promptly.

The Toad clan had always been lazy and not prone to worry about small things; there were times when they might sleep for several years and hence not take a bath. But after becoming a dog and following Wang Ling, Loopy Toad found that it was starting to become fond of being clean.

On this point, Loopy Toad felt that it had been strongly influenced by Little Master Ling.

Little Master Ling's bedroom was spotless every day, and Mother Wang hardly needed to clean it. Especially recently, because Loopy Toad had started to shed fur after cultivating industriously, Little Master Ling was even more diligent in tidying up than before.

So much so that when Loopy Toad entered the bedroom, it could detect a fragrance...

Loopy Toad felt that for a boy's bedroom... Wang Ling cleaned it too thoroughly! In contrast, Wei Zhi's place was actually quite casual when Loopy Toad had been there; apart from the environmental room that had been built for Pushing Large Butterfly, there were piles of odds and ends in Wei Zhi's own bedroom, ranging from spirit beast magazines and snacks to all kinds of daily necessities that were stacked randomly on his desk – to Little Master Ling, all of these were quarantine zones!

Admittedly, this had to do with personal habits. Wei Zhi got up early and was out until late every day taking care of so many contract spirit beasts, so he had no time at all to tidy up.

Like master, like spirit beast...

Loopy Toad now sincerely felt that this statement really was true.

What impressed Loopy Toad the most was all the books and test papers around Little Master Ling... the four corners of every one of these printed texts were always flat! If they were folded even a little, Wang Ling wouldn't hesitate to use the power of Heavenly Dao to break the item down and then reassemble it...

After putting the exercise uniform in the bamboo basket, Loopy Toad turned on the faucet in the back garden to wash itself. As it shook off the water, it used its spirit energy to heat up its body quickly. In a handful of seconds, it was dry.

Through the glass door in the back garden, Loopy Toad saw Father Wang and Lie Mengmeng on the sofa as they watched TV with nervous expressions on their faces.

Loopy Toad suddenly remembered that today was July 17th; this was the middle of the month when the battle for the double monthly votes happened on “Cultivation Chinese Network” where Father Wang’s novels were hosted. The double votes happened from the 15th to the 17th, and today was the last day.

This TV program was a vote counting program which “Cultivation Chinese Network” ran with the TV station.

Currently, the writer in top place in the monthly votes ranking was: Braised Pork Shoulder; monthly votes: 980,120.

The writer in second place was: Braised Pig Feet in Sauce; monthly votes: 965,772.

And Father Wang’s pen name, Wang Situ, was in third place. Monthly votes: 462,333...

Chapter 542: Please Break The Sky Open With Me!

“Only third?”

To be honest, Lie Mengmeng was flabbergasted at this result.

It hadn’t been two months since Father Wang had released his new book, but the reader rating on the website was eighty-seven percent, which was quite a high number. What was more, a major characteristic about Father Wang’s novels was that his readers were very loyal. Based on this strong

loyalty, the average number of subscriptions to Father Wang's chapters was as high as three hundred thousand.

This was an astonishing amount.

The most important thing was that this three hundred thousand was just the number of subscriptions on Cultivation Chinese Network. Subscriptions to Father Wang's chapters on forty-plus other novel collaboration platforms were also considerable. Of course, Father Wang couldn't see these subscription channels, but Lie Mengmeng would take a look every month, and the number of current subscriptions on these channels for Father Wang's chapters in total was going to break one million very soon.

Of course, the success of Father Wang's last book, *Let Go of That Wet Nurse*, was a big part of the reason for this staggering volume.

But despite that, the number of votes in this month's double monthly votes battle had ended with an unprecedented and thrilling result.

The monthly votes for the first and second novelists were very close, and both were on the verge of breaking one million...

This month's monthly votes were a bit of an exaggeration!

"Brother Wang, what should we do?" Lie Mengmeng was a little anxious. "How about you explode 1 and plead for monthly votes?"

"Explode?" Father Wang raised his eyebrows. "Didn't I just explode yesterday? There's no way I can do it again so soon, absolutely impossible. It shaves a few years off my life each time... the gains don't make up for my losses! Want me to explode? I'd rather dress in women's clothes. How about I do that and beg for monthly votes? I can wear black silk stockings, but on the condition that you don't show my face; I need to uphold my reputation!"

Lie Mengmeng was shocked. Father Wang could actually come up with such an unprincipled operation... This was quite shameless behavior!

“Better not, elder brother. You in women’s clothes is too much of an eyesore,” Lie Mengmeng said. “Besides, even if you don’t show your face, you’ll have to shave your legs if you wear silk stockings, which will be too troublesome! Also... it’s not very good for men to shave their legs...”

The editorial board had previously organized a hot springs salon trip for their gurus, and both Father Wang and Lie Mengmeng had gone.

As he had soaked in the hot spring, Lie Mengmeng had glimpsed Father Wang’s thick leg hair.

If he had to describe it in words, he thought that he could stir-fry a pot of Chinese leeks if all of Father Wang’s leg hair was shaved off...

“In any case, elder brother, I think something’s unusual about the votes!”

Lie Mengmeng hugged a pillow as he sat on the sofa and defended Father Wang.

Father Wang lit a cigarette and said very calmly, “What’s unusual? It’s completely normal for people to willingly throw money at their favorite writers... Besides, aren’t these Braised Pork Shoulder and Braised Pig Feet in Sauce also old writers on the website? It’s not like you don’t know that rich readers can send red packets now, which causes the monthly votes to soar.”

Lie Mengmeng sighed. The fact was that he had overlooked this; he should have noticed it sooner.

He had always assumed that with Father Wang currently sitting at a stable number one on all the lists, the top position on this month’s monthly votes ranking should be a given, so he hadn’t paid close attention to it. In the end, on the last day of the double monthly votes campaign today, Lie Mengmeng was immediately dumbfounded when he saw the vote counts on TV.

There were still six hours left until the end of the double monthly votes at midnight; to be frank, Lie Mengmeng thought that it would be near impossible to make up the difference of nearly half a million monthly votes in that amount of time. But if they didn’t seize this opportunity to double the monthly votes, it would be even more difficult to surpass this number after the campaign was over.

Lie Mengmeng looked at the book review sections for the two writers with the top monthly votes.

Sure enough, because the difference in the number of votes was so close, almost on each other's heels, fans on both sides had already started a series of campaigns for votes in the book review sections in support of their respective writers.

This monthly votes battle was actually a way to stir up fans. In addition, Cultivation Chinese Network had introduced a fan tag operation where the tag for the writer you supported would be displayed next to your ID. So if the writer came out on top in the monthly votes, the fans who supported them would definitely burst with pride.

However, once the monthly votes battle entered the white-hot stage, a war of words would inevitably flare up between fans of the different writers. Lie Mengmeng hadn't been in this profession long, only a handful of years, but he had gained a lot of knowledge and experience in that time.

As a veteran who had entered the industry earlier than Lie Mengmeng, Father Wang was wearing the expression of someone who was already used to the big waves; he didn't even need to look at the book review sections to know what was going on. "Have the fans on both sides already started fighting each other?"

Lie Mengmeng: "Mm... Looks like it's pretty rowdy; Braised Pork Shoulder's champion fans 2 entered Braised Pig Feet in Sauce's champion fan group; because of some conflict, some of Pig Feet's champion fans have been kicked out, and both sides are now making noise because of this."

Father Wang tsked. "Hey, hey, hey, both writers haven't said anything, have they?"

Lie Mengmeng shook his head. "Not yet, but the spectators are increasing... Everyone knows about the quarrel between both sides, not just on our novels website, but also on other literature forums, and they're all discussing it right now."

"That sounds about right." Father Wang nodded.

Who was the happiest when fans squabbled? The writers, for sure!

This maneuver might look like a quarrel, but it was in fact a joyous and harmonious trick for helping each other pull in votes. Father Wang thought this was pretty brilliant! Not only did it incite the readers to support their authors by pulling in votes, it would also draw in large numbers of spectators to read the books; subscriptions would thus rise and the number of new fans would increase, and the authors would reap huge rewards...

After watching the vote count on the TV screen for five minutes or so, Father Wang said, “Take a look and see if Braised Pork Shoulder has released a standalone chapter as a statement.”

Lie Mengmeng looked at his phone and was stunned. “He really did! He released a standalone chapter! Brother Wang, how did you know without looking at your phone?”

Father Wang pointed at the TV. “Just now, the vote count on TV soared again. Braised Pork Shoulder’s votes are now nearly 1.1 million. It must have been because he issued a statement, thus injecting his readers with chicken blood.”

“...”

Lie Mengmeng refreshed the novel’s table of contents and was shocked yet again. “Damn! He released two standalone chapters in a row! And the title of the second chapter is so aggressive! It’s called ‘Please Break The Sky Open WithMe 3 !’”

“It’s fine, I’ll catch up. I reckon that at the absolute most he’ll only have a million and a half votes by twelve o’clock... I’ll look for people later to directly make my votes three million,” Father Wang said lightly.

“Bro, but now... We’ve only got nearly half a million votes. If that happened, won’t we be suspected of rigging the votes?” Lie Mengmeng was suddenly a little worried.

At that point, he suddenly noticed that Father Wang was done with his cigarette and had switched to a cigar...

Father Wang raised an eyebrow. “Rigging votes? That Braised Pork Shoulder can get 1.5 million monthly votes with an average of one hundred and fifty thousand subscriptions; I have three hundred thousand subscriptions, how can I not get three million monthly votes?”

Lie Mengmeng: “...”

Father Wang: “Help me put together a standalone chapter; I’ll dictate, you write it down.”

Lie Mengmeng gave a quick nod. “Okay! What’s the title?”

Father Wang: “‘What Do I Need This Cudgel For 4 ?’”

Lie Mengmeng: “...”

Chapter 543: Ten Generals!

Father Wang was already an old guru on the website. There was no one who didn’t know this “Wang Situ” pseudonym in the whole of the online writing circle. It was in fact very common for writers to compete in the monthly votes battle. The harder a writer strove for votes, the stronger the sense of honor and unity would be among their fans.

In Father Wang’s eyes, this ‘battle’ between Braised Pork Shoulder and Braised Pig Feet was very smart. Both of them were popular frontline writers with huge sales volumes. After this incident, their popularity would increase further. They wanted to use this double monthly votes campaign as an opportunity to thoroughly crush Father Wang this month with dominant vote numbers.

There were some young readers who were too easily instigated; after reading the heroic and lofty words in the writer’s standalone chapter, they were especially prone to impulse spending as they bestowed gifts on the authors they supported while eating instant noodles themselves. Of course, everyone was free to support whoever they wanted... But Father Wang had always felt that they should be a little more rational and consider their current situations first.

For those readers who didn’t have extra money to compete in the monthly votes, even just a legal subscription was actually already the greatest encouragement to writers.

That was why Father Wang on the whole wouldn’t actively plead for monthly votes or rewards from his readers. Despite that, given his current status in the industry, Father Wang was still ranked number one in all types of monthly statistics.

But the standalone chapter should be released had to be released, so Father Wang’s standalone chapters were usually just words of comfort.

“You can speak now, elder brother, I’m ready.”

Lie Mengmeng had already logged on with Father Wang’s author account and was ready to put together the statement for the standalone chapter.

Title: “What Do I Need This Cudgel For”...

“Yes, just write it like that.”

Father Wang nodded. “Situ’s path is obstructed on the way to godhood. Currently I am third in the monthly votes and the gap is large. This is a true time of crisis, but Situ is not in a hurry. I am indebted to the support and love of my readers, and I pledge that I will give the final strike with the cudgel at midnight and surpass the numbers... It has only been two months since this book was released, but I also intend to fight for first place in this year’s annual list. You can say that I am being delusional, but I, Wang Situ, will tear down the southern wall and I won’t turn back 1 ... This final cudgel, will wipe everything out completely!”

Lie Mengmeng: “...”

After he was done compiling it, Lie Mengmeng clicked “Send” and then breathed a long sigh of relief.

“Can we really catch up?” He watched the gap in the number of votes grow wider on the TV, and was understandably doubtful.

Father Wang’s last book Let Go of That Wet Nurse had indisputably crushed everyone else almost every month. This huge disparity in vote counts was truly the first time for him.

But the truth was that the monthly votes list this time was just a minor unforeseen issue for Father Wang.

It was true that Braised Pork Shoulder and Braised Pig Feet in Sauce these two writers were very difficult to handle.

But most unfortunately, they had misjudged how Father Wang's fan group worked.

In Father Wang's champion fan group, there was an epic-level boss who kept watch.

When there was such a huge disparity in votes, Father Wang usually only needed to send this "old pal" a private message...

...

At the same time, in a splendid rectangular building in Jinghua city, which was the Huaxiu Alliance Building in the heart of Jinghua...

The full name of Huaxiu Alliance was Huaxiu Alliance of Cultivators which was a cultivator organization directly under state jurisdiction.

What the Huaxiu Alliance managed now was all the Huaxiu light forces that were on record.

All legally established cultivator sects came under the administration of the Huaxiu Alliance, including the recently popular "Society of Saints" that was known to be gathering a large number of young and talented cultivators.

Tonight, in the top-class conference hall on the top floor of Huaxiu Alliance, the Ten Founding Generals would gather together for an internal top-level meeting.

General Yi, Yi Jianchuan, and Marshal Jiang, Jiang Lei, came at the same time and showed up together downstairs.

A brawny man dressed in a special service uniform stopped the two of them at the main entrance. "Senior chiefs, please cooperate, this is standard procedure!"

"Very well, go ahead!" General Yi and Marshal Jiang nodded.

Special service personnel like this brawny man could be found throughout the entire Huaxiu Alliance Building. These people had been trained by "Magnificent Immortal" and were already top-ranked leaders in the guard. Wherever this group was, the area for fifty li around would be clear.

In order to hold this Huaxiu Alliance top-level meeting tonight, all the roads in a radius of fifty li around the Huaxiu Alliance Building had been closed, and no one was allowed to pass through except for the security teams and the staff involved in the meeting.

Holding a bronze mirror in his hand, the special service employee held it up to Yi Jianchuan's and Jiang Lei's faces respectively. Hidden in this magic mirror was a great spell that could distinguish between what was real and what was fake, and which would see through any disguise.

After verifying General Yi's and Marshal Jiang's identities, the special service personnel nearby saluted them in unison, and the brawny man who had been responsible for inspecting their identities swiftly stepped aside to let them through into the corridor behind him. "Senior chiefs, please come in! Thank you for your cooperation!"

"Has the head of state arrived yet?" Dressed in exercise clothes, General Yi was floating in the air as usual.

The brawny man respectfully replied, "Yes, senior chief! The head of state arrived half an hour ago!"

General Yi nodded slightly, and without saying anything else, he and Marshal Jiang directly hurried to the conference hall on the top floor.

When both of them arrived at the conference hall, they found that almost everyone attending this meeting had already arrived... They were all familiar faces!

Body Saint Minister Shi, Minister of the Ministry of National Defense. Known as the person who had the body of a Steel Saint, he fought seven demon gods at the Battle of Shimen back then with his powerful physique and hadn't fallen.

Wisdom Saint President Qi, President of the Cultivation Academy of Science, who had controlled the layout of the battlefield and the formation of the various holy arrays.

Spirit Saint Sun Dakang, Secretary Sun, the person who currently helmed the Alliance of Ten Thousand Schools and who was the direct leader of all the branches of the General Administration of 100 Schools. He had the ability to hear the voices of all living things.

Weapons Saint Minister Ke, the director of Huaxiu nation's magic treasure munitions factory, who was proficient in the use of all kinds of magic treasures.

Dark Saint Minister Ying, Minister of Intelligence. He travelled all over the country all year round on counterintelligence reconnaissance missions and his movements were a mystery. He had excellent body movement techniques and was a master of illusion.

Medicine Saint President Luo, the president of the general military hospital. She had super regenerative abilities and could survive even if her head was the only thing left of her.

Including Blademaster General Yi, Battle Saint Marshal Jiang and the head of state who was sitting at the very front with his head lowered in deep thought...

If the remaining two generals showed up, the Ten Founding Generals would have all assembled.

As for the last two people who weren't there, it just so happened that in terms of overall military strength, one was in first place and the other in second.

One was General Bai, Bai Xing, who was the chairman of the board of the state enterprise Hua Xing, which was currently Huaxiu's largest manufacturer of smart products. Nicknamed Explosion Saint, he had the ability to create independent explosions.

General Bai was currently ranked first in terms of overall combat strength.

And the second strongest person who hadn't shown up was Skin Saint Minister Ku, who could control the power of rhythm and by playing the pipa, kindle the will to fight.

Chapter 544: Humanoid Magic Treasure

General Yi and Marshal Jiang sat down in their reserved seats.

It happened to be President Qi who was presiding over the meeting this time. He put down his coffee cup and stood up from his chair. “Everyone, Explosion Saint General Bai and Skin Saint Minister Ku are currently on a mission.”

“Together?” Everyone else was blank.

These two were exceptionally strong, and it was really rare for them to go on a mission together...

In fact, the sudden announcement that they would be having this top-level meeting in itself was a testament to how urgent this matter was; it was very likely that whatever the crisis was, it was already imminent.

President Qi nodded. “Yes, General Bai and Minister Ku went together. So it’ll be the eight of us discussing the matter in this meeting, and the head of state will make the final decision. I spoke to General Bai and Minister Ku previously about the agenda for this meeting. They have no objections at all, and are entirely at the disposal of the organization. I will preside over this meeting.”

Everyone nodded. “Alright!”

President Qi smiled slightly and then turned to look at the head of state on the side. “I’m sure everyone can already tell that there’s something a little different about the head of state today.”

“That is not the real head of state...” Spirit Saint Secretary Sun Dakang narrowed his eyes. He could hear the voices of all living things involuntarily. In fact, he had already realized it as soon as he had arrived.

“That’s right, the head of state you’re looking at now is a weapon replica developed by our Academy of Science. However, it’s currently still in the experimental stage and has yet to be made public, so it cannot be mass produced. The head of state you see now is a humanoid magic treasure; the highest level of power which it can currently exhibit is close to Itinerant Immortal level.”

President Qi said, “This human replica magic weapon is a project that has actually been in the works for a very long time. This was previously a secret study which our Huaxiu Academy of Science was carrying out with Weapons Saint Minister Ke, and it’s only today that we’re making it known to everyone, with the head of state’s permission. My sincere apologies.”

“Business is business, Old Qi, you’re too polite.” General Yi couldn’t help laughing.

“Although I could sense that there was something unusual about the head of state, I couldn’t be completely sure. But to actually be able to make it look so alike, this is truly astonishing!” Staring at this “human replica magic weapon” which looked almost identical to the head of state, Marshal Jiang couldn’t help but marvel.

“Performance?” asked Medicine Saint President Luo.

She was the only woman among the Ten Founding Generals and a real beauty. Her brown hair was coiled up and she wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses as she exuded the imposing manner of an elite.

“We’ve finished fine-tuning its basic performance. Of course, as everyone present knows, the head of state is far, far more powerful than this humanoid magic treasure,” President Qi replied. “This is currently our country’s first humanoid magic treasure prototype modeled on the head of state, number: 001.

“Command of the humanoid magic treasure is connected to the head of state’s neurons, and he can directly and remotely control it; you can think of it like a contract. But the craftsmanship involved in making this humanoid magic treasure is a little more special, so it doesn’t have a weapon spirit.

“If we get to the point where we can mass produce this in the future, the theory is that you can implement mass contracts. But ultimately, the number of contracts you can take on in fact has a lot to do with your strength, because the amount of spirit energy needed to control multiple humanoid magic treasures is considerable.”

All the generals nodded, basically understanding how the “humanoid magic treasure” worked.

“Does the humanoid magic treasure have artificial intelligence?” At this time, Secretary Dakang asked a rather vital question.

Given the level of science and technology in Huaxiu, creating artificial intelligence actually wasn’t difficult. But President Qi shook his head. “At this stage, we don’t plan to combine the humanoid magic treasure with artificial intelligence. If we do so and give the humanoid magic treasure the ability to think for itself, then the contract will be meaningless.”

Everyone understood when they heard this. To put it bluntly, they were afraid that if they gave the humanoid magic treasure artificial intelligence, and it gained wisdom and the ability to think for itself, it could in the end be uncontrollable. Clearly, the best way to avoid this kind of situation was to form a contract and control it remotely.

When Old Qi said this, Wang Ming was listening in at the research institute.

However, Wang Ming didn't have a visual on the meeting and could only listen to it. He was one of the many contributors behind this 'humanoid magic treasure' research, and President Qi had reported that Wang Ming wanted to listen in on the meeting, which the head of state had approved.

Of course, only President Qi, the head of state and Wang Ming knew about this.

For now, Wang Ming's identity remained a secret.

He couldn't help laughing when he heard the talk on artificial intelligence.

In fact, most so-called "artificial intelligence" was "pseudo-intelligence"—real artificial intelligence was the ability to think independently. However, the so-called artificial intelligence on the market was actually just the result of software programming which didn't have the technology to truly and meaningfully learn to reason and think independently.

Powerful magic treasures all had weapon spirits which were formed after harmonizing with the spirit energy of heaven and earth day after day, and when the rapport with their owners reached a certain degree.

However, if "artificial intelligence" could be combined with magic treasures, it would actually be completely possible to achieve what people called "man-made weapon spirits."

But for now, this technology was jointly banned by the countries that had signed the convention.

In the end, people were still afraid of the idea that artificial intelligence brought destruction.

...

Back to the humanoid magic treasure itself.

Huaxiu nation had always prioritized peace above all else. Although the humanoid magic treasure was also a weapon, this was treated as a very distant secondary use. General Yi, Secretary Dakang, Marshal Jiang, Dark Saint, Medical Saint and the others who were listening knew that the ultimate use of this humanoid magic treasure was to protect the safety of the head of state himself.

However, this had probably already been classified as a top secret experiment. As for why it was being made public at this time, everyone present could already guess that it was likely related to what President Qi was going to say next, which was also the reason for this meeting.

No one spoke as they quietly waited for President Qi to explain.

At the very front, the replica Head of State 001 was still sitting with its head down as if in deep thought... This was in fact the specific posture it assumed in standby mode.

“I’m sure everyone has some idea about what I’m going to say next.”

As President Qi stood at the front, spirit light glowed in his hand and a 3D image of a map was directly projected into the air of the meeting room. He said very seriously, “This is space data collected by our Huaxiu Cultivation Academy of Science’s surveillance magic treasure ‘Divine Eye 1 1’. Based on the data... it’s likely that the entrance to the secret land that is Devil Valley is going to open very soon. And the site is Songhai city!”

Chapter 545: Real and Fake Remains

Sure enough!

President Qi’s words were disconcerting.

All the people present had in fact vaguely guessed what President Qi had been about to say. Wang Ming, who was listening in on the meeting elsewhere, also had an unperturbed expression on his

face. He had known about this even earlier than the people at the meeting since the “Divine Eye 1” magic treasure which was used to monitor space fluctuations had been developed by hundreds of scientific researchers based on his theory.

Both he and Old Qi had analyzed the entire situation inside out in the morning, including the origin of Devil Valley, so Wang Ming could not be any calmer...

The way Devil Valley appeared was a little similar to the Gate Between Worlds. The difference was that monitoring the space fluctuations from the Gate only allowed them to foresee its descent, but they couldn't accurately pinpoint its landing site.

However, by using the most sophisticated magic treasure instruments, such as “Divine Eye 1,” they could accurately pinpoint the specific location of Devil Valley.

But this was precisely the most troublesome bit about the whole situation.

“We are no strangers to Devil Valley, and some of you here have even visited it in person. Devil Valley is also known as Beast King's Remains and is a mausoleum which the king of holy beasts, Devil King, had built for itself back then. It's full of all types of precious resources that have already disappeared in the present era. It's already been a hundred years since Beast King's Remains last opened, and although we have been very careful this time to safeguard this information, word that Beast King's Remains Devil Valley is about to open has still spread like wildfire.” Speaking up to this point, President Qi frowned.

“Spies?” General Yi narrowed his eyes.

“There are always spies.”

As Minister of Intelligence, Dark Saint Minister Ying said coldly, “Actually, since a few years ago, I've already increased investigation efforts in our counterintelligence operations, and we've apprehended countless foreign spies. But the other side is still trying whatever they can to infiltrate our country, and it's really hard to guard against this.”

Saying this, Minister Ying sighed. “You don't know, but this year, we captured the most bizarre spy yet. In order to sneak into our country, he actually used a forbidden spell to shrink his body and hide himself in a caplet... he then paid a foreign student to come in with the caplet hidden inside the student's anus.”

“Then... then what happened...”

“Luckily, when the student was passing through immigration, our Investigation Division’s Section Chief Sima Guang noticed something wrong with this student thanks to his keen insight. He immediately examined the student’s whole body and ultimately discovered this caplet, thus successfully intercepting the spy at customs! Otherwise, the consequences would have been unimaginable,” said Dark Saint.

“Hm... I think I heard about this.” General Yi nodded. “Wasn’t this Section Chief Sima Guang given a commendation later?”

Dark Saint solemnly said, “That’s right, my ministry conferred a special title on him: ‘Sima Guang Breaks The Anus 1 ‘.’”

Everyone: “...”

” Cough cough .”

Clearing his throat, President Qi said, “As you can see, because of Beast King’s Remains, not only are the various dark forces in our country starting to get restless, foreign forces are seizing the opportunity to make a profit. Beast King’s Remains is a precious historical resource for our country, and all of the extinct resources that grow in it are valuable riches...”

From what President Qi was saying, his objective was in fact already very clear, and everyone listening couldn’t help nodding their heads.

These long extinct resources which could only be found in Beast King’s Remains absolutely weren’t to be exploited at all. The most important thing was to safeguard these precious resources and to find ways to breed them on a broader scale so that they could grow once again in the modern world.

“Beast King’s Remains Devil Valley is a historical resource unique to Huaxiu nation; no unlawful dark forces or foreign powers have the right to enter it. The head of state has already given clear instructions: what we need to do is to protect the remains and leave the extinct resources to continue as they are; we also need to think of ways to take a portion out to grow once more in our current environment.”

After saying this, President Qi looked at everyone else. “Does anyone have anything else to say about safeguarding ‘Beast King’s Remains’? If you have any objections, you can just press the red button on the table as usual.”

Everyone shook their heads and this motion was passed unanimously.

President Qi was about to move on to the next item.

At that moment, Marshal Jiang asked, “Does Explosion Saint and Skin Saint’s mission have something to do with protecting the remains?”

“That’s right!” President Qi was actually just about to talk about this. “Right now, who knows how many dark forces and foreign invasion forces have their eyes fixed on Beast King’s Remains. In order to better protect the remains, Explosion Saint and Skin Saint are currently on a secret mission under direct orders from the head of state... to create a forgery of Beast King’s Remains.”

Creating a forgery of the remains...

Everyone was shocked; so there was this kind of operation?!

“But those who intend to enter Beast King’s Remains aren’t ordinary people. Can we fool them?” Medicine Saint had some misgivings.

“Creating a forgery of Beast King’s Remains isn’t something we came up with on the spot. Actually, the head of state has already been moving pieces into place since a long time ago. He drew the basic blueprint himself, and Explosion Saint and Skin Saint have now gone to take charge of constructing the nomological laws for the place.”

President Qi smiled and nodded. “If this plan goes smoothly, the fake Beast King’s Remains will be opened after the entrance to the real remains opens and will draw away the unlawful forces that want to enter Beast King’s Remains. We’ve estimated that the real and fake remains will open no more than half an hour apart.”

“I still feel it’s risky...” The female Medicine Saint President Luo shook her head.

President Qi smiled. “You should have some faith in our country’s ability to create counterfeits... Isn’t that how we got through the most difficult times?”

President Luo: “...”

“Furthermore, to ensure that this plan of using fake Beast King’s Remains as cover is carried out properly, we also need the help of Old Sun’s Alliance of Ten Thousand Schools,” President Qi said.

Secretary Sun Dakang nodded and looked at President Qi. “How can we help, just ask!”

“Divine Eye 1 has calculated that the entrance to Beast King’s Remains Devil Valley will ultimately appear somewhere inside Songhai city. While we have yet to pinpoint the exact location, I think Old Sun can still make preliminary preparations.”

President Qi said, “I hope Old Sun can contact some of the high schools in Songhai city and have the headmasters organize a study tour of Beast King’s Remains for the students; this can be considered an activity for broadening their horizons.”

Secretary Dakang frowned. “But what if they encounter those unlawful forces? How do we ensure the safety of the students?”

President Qi raised an eyebrow. “Who told you that these students would be entering the fake remains? Before we set this plan in motion, I’ll arrange for information on the fake remains to be leaked first.”

Everyone: “...” Damn! It turned out that there was a game plan!

President Qi chuckled and said, “Can you imagine what those unlawful groups will think when they see a bunch of students prepare to enter the remains as a summer camp?”

Chapter 546: An E-Bomb Raining Down From Above

When President Qi spoke up to this point, everyone in fact already understood his meaning.

This was a decoy.

They would use the students to confuse the forces that would be attempting an unlawful invasion while at the same time enrich the students' extracurricular activities.

Unlike the past, most of the younger generation of cultivators nowadays had no especially ambitious dreams or pursuits. Moreover, the outbreak of "chuuni disease" was concentrated around the high school period, when many students might start to become confused for various reasons. This would be immediately followed by posts in WeChat Moments or QQ Zone that weren't mainstream chicken soup 1 .

So in order to reduce the occurrence of this type of phenomenon and guide students toward establishing a more enriching mentality and system of values, the Alliance of Ten Thousand Schools had in recent years planned a fair amount of similarly practical exchange activities, like the previous spirit sword exchange meet and the upgraded "gaming" version of the military training drill.

The spring outing, autumn outing and summer camp were originally extracurricular activities organized by the school every year.

Initially, the Alliance of Ten Thousand Schools' education head office had planned to upgrade the basic extracurricular activities this year, and they would cover any insufficient funds that this might entail. Thus, in addition to places that students frequently visited for their extracurricular activities like the spirit beast park and the Xiao Family Compound, schools now had more options and could even organize sightseeing tours outside the city for students to broaden their horizons.

The truth was that historical sites and scenic spots were very good choices.

Summer camp in Songhai usually took place in August.

This was because the climate in Songhai was a little strange; the hottest time of the year was in October, so Songhai students started school and had their winter and summer vacations later than schools in other urban areas.

Thus, the process of endorsing the venue for the summer camp in Songhai city had yet to be completed.

Secretary Dakang had initially planned to go and endorse it after this top-level meeting of the Huaxiu Alliance, but now it wasn't necessary... he could just directly make it an edict.

"I'm all for the students visiting Beast King's Remains as long as their safety can be guaranteed," said Secretary Dakang. The head office's plan this year had been for students to visit historical sites and scenic spots to begin with, to say nothing of a place like Beast King's Remains, which only opened once every century. There might be some people who in their whole lives would never have the opportunity to enter the remains.

Whatever you could learn from them would definitely be helpful in broadening your horizon.

Sometimes, how broad your view was could often determine the height you would achieve in the future...

This didn't necessarily mean realm, but could also be a mental or spiritual breakthrough or an accomplishment in some other aspect.

President Qi had in fact already accounted for the security issue. Whether it was for the real or fake remains, once the entrance was open, they would immediately dispatch someone to set up a True Immortal barrier; any regular Tom, Dick or Harry wouldn't be able to so much as touch the stones inside the remains.

"Of course, a decoy is a decoy. To avoid any sly dark forces from sneaking in, we'll also dispatch manpower to protect the students. My suggestion is that besides Secretary Sun Dakang who will be organizing this tour for the students, Dark Saint and Medicine Saint should also go along. Weapons Saint and I will use magic treasures to provide remote assistance and can launch the Heavenly E-Satellite if necessary... In addition, Head of State 001 will also be assigned to participate in this student protection plan," President Qi said.

This arrangement made the corner of Wang Ming's eye twitch... This security lineup was too strong!

In addition to Spirit Saint Secretary Dakang, Dark Saint Minister Ying and Medicine Saint President Luo would also be going along. Old Qi and Weapons Saint Minister Ke, the latter in charge of the magic treasures munitions factory, would provide remote assistance, and Head of State 001 that was undergoing testing would also be there.

Five True Immortals would be heading out with Number 001...

If this matter were to get out, some people would definitely think that the “Great War of Two Worlds” between the human race and the demon race had broken out again...

It had already been a thousand years since the last time so many True Immortals went out together; that was when they had joined forces to fight back against the demon gods that had emerged from the Gate Between Worlds.

Furthermore, it wasn't just the five True Immortals who would be going out; the “Heavenly E-Satellite” would be coordinating with them. Wang Ming suddenly felt that any criminal attempting to make a play for “Beast King's Remains” would basically already fail the instant they wanted to infiltrate the place...

This satellite was in fact a magic treasure which could gather together a dense concentration of spirit power and directly launch an “E-Bomb Raining Down From Above 2 ” via remote control in the form of a spirit power laser cannon shooting through outer space as a long-range bombardment.

Heavenly E-Satellite...

When these “Ten Generals” heard this name, they visibly paused and couldn't help shuddering.

“Heavenly E-Satellite... this isn't necessary, is it...?” Secretary Dakang wiped at his sweat.

Frankly speaking, this thing was the nuclear bomb of the modern cultivation era!

It had power equal to one strike from a True Immortal. A True Immortal might not die if they were hit head-on by this thing, but they would lose half their life... The main point was that this thing was extremely powerful!

If this cannon was shot, Beast King's Remains might be directly wiped out.

“I also think this is a little excessive.” General Yi also nodded on the side.

“Don’t worry, everyone, it isn’t excessive at all.” President Qi waved his hands. “It’s not actually a real explosion.”

Secretary Dakang: “What do you mean?”

“When we were designing this Heavenly E-Satellite back then, we had both live ammunition and duds to begin with. The power of live ammunition is indeed very strong, and can’t be used willy-nilly without the head of state’s personal signature and approval. But a dud can be fired at any time.”

“Du... Dud?”

The lips of the other “Ten Generals” twitched.

Even Weapons Saint was surprised. “There was this kind of setup? Why don’t I know anything about it?” It was his munitions factory that had manufactured this Heavenly E-Satellite back then! He had seen the blueprint!

“This dud bomb was part of the program setup; you definitely wouldn’t have seen it in the original blueprint. It seems that none of you know about it.” President Qi smiled. “The dud functions similarly to an illusion spell. While it doesn’t look any different to live ammunition when it’s fired, it actually doesn’t generate any kind of energy.”

Everyone: “...”

Wang Ming: “...”

It wasn’t just the “Ten Generals” present; even Wang Ming, who had personally taken part in the program setup, hadn’t known that there was such a thing. That was to say, this “dud bomb” design was something which Old Qi himself had added, and except for the head of state, probably no one else had known about it.

Sweating, General Yi raised his hand quietly and asked, “Excuse me, the reason for this dud bomb design is...”

President Qi’s answer was succinct. “To intimidate.”

Everyone: "..."

"This is an era of peace. How can we dispatch the 'E-Bomb Raining Down From Above' so easily? Since the founding of our Huaxiu nation, what we have been pursuing is world peace, not a nuclear wipeout 3 . So the dud bomb design is very necessary! Duds don't have any power! They can't hurt anyone, but at the very least they can create the sound of an explosion!"

President Qi continued non-stop. "For example, why were people so afraid in the past when the Xiao clan set off their 'Angry Buddha Fire Lotus'? It was because it created a mushroom cloud that was so big and so loud! It looked powerful enough to make people cower!"

Everyone: "..."

Chapter 547: I've Taken a Fancy to the Old Man at the Door

President Qi had already thought all these plans through prior to this meeting. In terms of strategy, Wang Ming felt that this was actually very consistent with Old Qi's style, which was "to bluff." In order to protect Beast King's Remains this time, Old Qi had gone so far as to plan early on to create fake remains, which amply demonstrated how much priority they were putting on security this time.

And it was clear that the Ten Generals' ultimate aim wasn't just to protect Beast King's Remains, but to give a stern warning to the unlawful forces that wanted to try for the remains.

"Then according to procedure, if you have any objections about the summer camp project and the protection plan I've just put forward, please press the objection button in front of you," said President Qi as he looked around.

The way Huaxiu Alliance worked was that after each meeting, the Ten Generals would vote on the proposals that had been put forward before they were submitted to the head of state for final approval.

At the meeting, if more than half of the people present were in agreement, the plan would be passed.

As Wisdom Saint, President Qi was an absolutely wily person with experience in looking at the big picture. Even Wang Ming who was called “the strongest brain” couldn’t imitate him. A person could hardly rely solely on IQ alone to control an overall situation; this was something that accumulated over time and with countless experiences of putting it into practice.

When Huaxiu had first been founded, it had been in constant turmoil as criminal dark forces acted out in unbridled and arrogant ways.

Wang Ming hadn’t been born yet then. It was Old Qi who had fixed these people thoroughly...

The Wisdom Saint’s power wasn’t just for show.

This was also the reason why Wang Ming had been perfectly happy to stay with Old Qi and learn from him.

No one pressed the objection button, and the motion was passed again like before.

“Great, then we just need to wait for the head of state’s endorsement. I will now officially activate Number 001 and have it connect remotely with the head of state. The Number 001 you’re looking at now is still in standby mode.” Wisdom Saint President Qi nodded with satisfaction.

Then his eyes turned to the machine Number 001 on the side and he said very soulfully, “I’ve taken a fancy to... the old man at the door...”

His voice was extremely tender, almost as if he was speaking to his lover.

What the hell?

The Ten Generals all got goosebumps. “...”

These were all outstanding founding ministers who had gone through thick and thin back in the day and knew each other inside out.

But this really was everyone's first time seeing this kind of adoring manner from President Qi...

This was in fact the activation code, and after President Qi said it, he also couldn't help blushing. "Cough! It was the head of state who set up this activation code himself; furthermore, it has been specially encrypted, so it has to be expressed in a particular way in order to take effect..."

The Ten Generals: "..."

Activation code accepted, Head of State Number 001 slowly lifted its lowered head.

Its pupils began to focus as it started up, and the Ten Generals present could already hear the sound of it breathing.

To be honest... when it was activated, Number 001 really looked exactly like the head of state — you couldn't see any difference at all!

President Qi explained, "If you observe Number 001's minute facial expressions, you'll see that we've achieved one hundred percent synchronization. The head of state's facial expressions are perfectly synchronized with that of Number 001, including movement, appearance and tone of voice."

"Comrades..." At that moment, Number 001 steepled its fingers and rested its chin on them before slowly opening its mouth.

— Even the voice sounded exactly like the head of state's!

"It's like a clone..." the female Medicine Saint exclaimed.

"In truth, Number 001 is actually more formidable than a clone," President Qi said. "As we all know, a clone is created through magic. As soon as it's violently attacked head-on, it'll disappear. But Number 001 won't... furthermore, Number 001 can also produce its own clone. This is actually in line with our cultivation philosophy that 'One is the child of the divine law. After one comes two, after two comes three, and after three comes all things.'"

The Ten Generals instantly sucked in their breaths sharply; what damn “after three comes all things”... But if the mass production of this type of human replica magic treasure truly became a reality, they would be too powerful!

“At Itinerant Immortal level, up to ten thousand clones can be summoned at one time... If we produced ten of these humanoid magic treasures, it would truly be an army!” Marshal Jiang clicked his tongue repeatedly in admiration.

Medicine Saint: “Let’s not...” She was extremely afraid of winding up with a phobia of men...

“I haven’t decided on mass production yet for the time being, and Number 001 is still in the experimental stage.” Suddenly, the head of state opened its mouth.

Silence instantly reigned in the conference hall.

As leader, even if what he said was just a short sentence, it carried a great deal of weight, and people couldn’t help attaching heavy importance to it.

“Dear comrades, even though Number 001 was in standby mode just now, I was still remotely listening in on the meeting. After the meeting ends, I’ll formally endorse President Qi’s conference report. But before that, I need to add two more points.” The head of state said, “Based on leads which I currently have, there is a foreign dark power called ‘Night Chief’ which everyone needs to be aware of. I’ve only mentioned it in passing to Old Qi, as investigation into this matter is still ongoing.”

General Yi frowned. “What kind of force is it?”

“Currently, it’s very difficult for us to catch them since they are a foreign dark power. Furthermore, we are unable to apply for an international Heavenly Dao arrest warrant without any evidence. But one thing we have confirmed is that this Night Chief has a minor leader who is on the run in our country at the moment. And this man... you may have heard of him: he was exposed a while ago, and is Bai Zhe, leader of the Demon Hunters Association.”

Everyone was stunned. “It’s actually him...”

The head of state: “This person is currently on the run. At this stage, we’ve only arrested a tree gremlin who is willing to serve as a witness. According to what this tree gremlin has divulged, it’s

highly possible that this person is the ringleader responsible for the massacre that led to the extinction of the holy beasts. According to all the signs so far, this man is sure to act in relation to Beast King's Remains. Dark Saint's intelligence department will have to concentrate all their efforts into making sure that this person is brought to justice before Beast King's Remains opens."

"No problem," Dark Saint Minister Ying said solemnly.

"Mm..."

Remotely controlled by the head of state, Number 001 nodded. "That was the first point I wanted to add. Now I want to add a second point. This, is just as important! And it's also terrible!"

Everyone sat upright. For some reason, it felt like the atmosphere had suddenly turned even more serious...

Head of State Number 001 rested its chin on its steepled fingers. "Dear comrades, do you know Wang Situ?"

The Ten Generals present: "???"

"..."

Elsewhere, Wang Ming, who had been listening in the whole time, was also blank.

The head of state: "This is my most favorite writer. He texted me twenty minutes ago..."

General Yi: "Could it be that this person has news on the president of the Demon Hunters Association?"

"No!"

The head of state shook his head. "He said that the monthly votes for his novel have been overtaken, and it's by a whole six hundred thousand votes! That's really terrible!"

General Yi instantly sucked in his breath sharply. “Head of State, your meaning is...”

The head of state: “All of you, contact the person in charge of that website and vote.”

The Ten Generals: “...”

The head of state was very calm. “Let’s set a small target first. For example, before midnight tonight, let’s push the votes up to one hundred million.”

The Ten Generals: “...” This is a transliteration of what the lyrics in Bulgarian singer Azis’s song “Hop” sounds like in Chinese, which then became a meme. This is from ‘Tao Te Ching,’ a Chinese classic text on religious and philosophical Taoism.

Chapter 548: Wang Situ’s Counterattack

On the other side, Wang Ming put his earphones down with a blank look on his face as he repeatedly confirmed to himself that he hadn’t heard wrong.

Wang Situ...

Wasn’t that his uncle’s pseudonym?

Was the head of state actually a fan of his uncle?

The fact was really too terrifying, and Wang Ming couldn’t help sucking in his breath sharply as his mind felt like it had already fallen into chaos.

...

At that moment, there were only five hours left before the end of the double monthly votes campaign.

Lie Mengmeng looked at the ranking chart on his phone. In first place was Braised Pork Shoulder, whose votes had already reached 1.6 million, while Braised Pig Feet in Sauce, who was ranked second, had 1.58 million votes. They were hot on each other's heels, neither giving way to the other.

After they had posted that perfunctory standalone chapter, Father Wang's monthly votes had only just reached eight hundred thousand... Although his monthly votes had increased by nearly four hundred thousand, the gap between him and first and second place was growing wider and wider.

But Father Wang didn't seem worried. He calmly smoked a cigar as he watched a TV drama; he didn't even bother to watch the live vote counts on TV.

Lie Mengmeng actually understood himself what the fight over monthly votes was like.

At the initial stage, it was a fight between writers, when the number and quality of their chapter updates often determined whether readers would enthusiastically vote for them. But at the middle and late stages, it basically already wasn't about the writers any longer as it became a battle between nouveau riche readers...

"I just asked the chief editorial office, and they confirmed that Braised Pork Shoulder and Braised Pig Feet in Sauce aren't rigging the votes; each of these teachers has a heavenly-level sect backing them..." When Lie Mengmeng said this, he was actually already feeling despair in his heart.

To understand the concept of a heavenly-level sect, the annual net profit for a light force heavenly-level sect was over one hundred million; it wasn't surprising at all that they could set aside a portion of their expenses to send a red packet's worth of monthly votes to their favorite author.

Lie Mengmeng had thought that there was something wrong with the number of votes for these two authors earlier, but that was purely because he hadn't understood the situation. All in all, both authors had already gotten almost a million monthly votes by six o'clock. If you wanted to send a monthly vote red packet now, each monthly vote cost five immortal gold, so such a large number of monthly votes absolutely wasn't something that ordinary people could afford.

"Oh, heavenly-level sects, that's a little awesome!"

Father Wang, however, laughed when he heard Lie Mengmeng's words.

Lie Mengmeng almost puked blood. How was it a little awesome... It was pretty awesome!

Currently, how many heavenly-level sects were there in the country which had been certified by the government? No more than fifty... If you could rope in a heavenly-level sect as your patron, that was the equivalent of getting an entire financial group behind you.

“Big bro, do you have any big names like a heavenly-level sect or whatnot in your fan group? If not heavenly-level... earth-level will also work...” Lie Mengmeng couldn’t help asking.

After all, looking at the current fan base, Father Wang certainly had a lot more fans than the other two writers; it was impossible that there weren’t any big shots among them.

“Oh, that. Certainly, someone approached me before, and said that they were from Spirit Sword Sect,” Father Wang said.

“Spirit Sword Sect?” Lie Mengmeng was shocked. “This... This is a heavenly-level sect! Big bro! The heavenly-level sect currently supporting Braised Pork Shoulder is Spirit Sword Sect!”

“Oh, I know that!” said Father Wang. “But they wanted me to advertise their sect in my book, so I declined.”

Lie Mengmeng: “Why... Why did you decline...”

Father Wang pushed his black-rimmed glasses up in a habitual gesture. “True fans won’t have so many demands.”

Lie Mengmeng: “...”

Looking at Lie Mengmeng who had a tense expression on his face, Father Wang couldn’t help laughing. “How come I feel that you’re more nervous than I am?”

“The gap in the monthly votes battle this time is too wide... If we lose, I’m guessing some of your fans might leave for someone else.” Lie Mengmeng sighed.

In fact, “some” was a conservative estimate. Father Wang, after all, was a veteran guru on the website and had dominated the charts for many years. If he was overtaken and “slaughtered” in this battle, this would definitely become explosive news.

In addition, the other two writers currently had heavenly-level sects as their patrons. If they could ride the momentum this time, Lie Mengmeng felt that Father Wang would have a very difficult time in the future. Father Wang had refused to advertise a heavenly-level sect in his novel, and if the person helming this sect was a petty one, he might suppress Father Wang.

Lie Mengmeng didn’t understand why Father Wang still looked relaxed.

Father Wang: “Hehe, don’t worry, just wait and see.”

A heavenly-level sect was indeed profound and formidable...

But the issue was that the “heavenly-level sects” behind these two writers were Father Wang’s leftovers.

They wanted to fight him head-on?

...

There was unexpectedly a lot of attention being paid to the shots being fired during the double monthly votes campaign in this particular round of monthly votes.

After Wang Ling finished his homework and scanned the ranking chart, he discovered that Father Wang was lagging behind in third place. He immediately opened some discussion forums and news apps. Sure enough, this monthly votes battle had already become a news item.

[News Headline]: “A god has fallen? Wang Situ, veteran guru of Cultivation Chinese Network, falling behind by a wide margin in the monthly votes battle for the first time!”

There were many similar news reports, and in what seemed like an instant, they dominated the various major news channels and hot topic searches.

When Lie Mengmeng and Father Wang had been talking downstairs, Wang Ling had also heard about the “heavenly-level sects” that backed the two writers who were competing for votes.

Wang Ling was guessing that it might have been the heavenly-level sects adding fuel to the fire behind the scenes by disseminating this news...

Actually, there were many cases in recent years of sects collaborating with popular writers. The writers would advertise the sects in their books, and in return, the sects would support the writers in the competition for monthly votes or by giving them gifts.

This was the current trend in the market. In this mass of online cultivation novels, popular writers frequently based the worldbuilding in them on the modern cultivation framework, so big name sects had already long eyed this as an advertising opportunity; some sects would even look for authors to specially write “cultivation novels” featuring their own sects as the backdrop.

Initially, however, it had mostly been earth-level sects who had sought out writers to collaborate with, because it was the earth-level sects that didn’t have enough students.

Who knew when heavenly-level sects had started doing the same thing...

There was a lot of discussion in the class group on this. In fact, quite a number of people in class were fans of Father Wang, but in the end they were just students. Five immortal gold bars for a monthly vote – where would students get the money for that? Wang Ling thought that as a student, an official subscription as a form of support was already pretty good! Saying that you didn’t have money because you were a student and so you read the pirated version was never an excuse.

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal always followed Father Wang’s books closely!

So after watching the news, he immediately expressed support for it in the group. “Everyone! Senior Wang’s book *The Live Streaming Life of the Immortal King* is now ranked third in the monthly votes chart! Is it possible for everyone to mobilize whatever strength there is around you to help Senior Wang campaign for votes?”

Dharmaraja was the first to respond as he immediately sent an OK sign. “No problem! I’ll vote for Senior Wang!”

Cailian Zhenren sent a fist salute emoji. “I don’t really read this type of novel, but I still support Senior Wang. I’ll contribute a hundred monthly votes.”

Immortal Toya: “But Senior Immortal, our strength alone is not enough. This gap is a little big.”

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal nodded his head and said, “Everybody, vote first. I’ve already announced an event in my cultivation forum to cheer Senior Wang on! No matter what, we have to make Senior Wang the top!”

Just then, he directly sent out the link to the event.

When Wang Ling clicked on the link, he saw two big words on the event’s main page: Summit War 1...

Chapter 549: Lie Mengmeng Is Stupefied!

As administrator, Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal rarely popped up in the cultivation forum. He only came on to handle any disputes forum members might have, and he hardly ever posted anything in support of anyone.

Actually, Wang Ling had always felt that Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal’s appeal shouldn’t be underestimated. As soon as this renowned “Great Death-Courting Senior” in the cultivation circle posted, it almost immediately spread throughout the circle.

In less than ten minutes, there were already close to a thousand replies on this “Summit War” post.

“The hell?! Senior Immortal actually popped up!”

“I never thought Senior Immortal would also be following this book! He’s actually helping Wang Situ campaign for votes, it looks like he’s a true fan!”

“Cry cry cry! I really like Uncle Wang Situ! But Spirit Sword Sect also has an event on! They say that if you give Braised Pork Shoulder twenty monthly votes, they’ll send you a tray of frozen Wang Lu sashimi as a gift!”

“Senior Immortal, you are a real comrade! [Fist Salute] [Fist Salute] But Wang Situ is fighting a losing battle in the monthly votes this time... The gap is already too big.”

...

Reading these comments, Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal’s heart was as clear as a mirror. There was actually a limit to what he could do with the cultivation forum’s resources; he could only help create momentum and vocalize his support for Father Wang at the most. After all, the target users in the cultivation forum and on Cultivation Chinese Network were different; it was almost impossible for a single post to turn the tide in the number of votes.

As a result of the double monthly votes campaign, Father Wang was currently falling behind by nearly a million votes.

Generally speaking, the true explosion happened on the final day of the monthly votes battle or in the final hour of the double monthly votes campaign.

But whether it was the Spirit Sword Sect which backed Braised Pork Shoulder or the Divine Dynasty Sect which backed Braised Pig Feet in Sauce, both of these heavenly-level sects had yet to demonstrate real force.

Looking at the ranking chart, Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal couldn’t help frowning.

When all was said and done, these were heavenly-level sects.

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal, on the other hand, just ran an online forum. He had earned quite a fair bit over the years, but if he were to go head to head with a heavenly-level sect, he would definitely lose. Nowadays, there were actually plenty of companies that had started as online businesses first before expanding into the real economy. Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal had in fact been harboring a bold idea all this time — he also wanted to establish a sect!

It was just that this wouldn’t be easy – if you wanted to achieve something, you needed to put in the effort. Construction, planning, philosophy, school system, business model, enrolment regulations... He had to think about all of this.

But at the rate that the cultivation forum was growing, even if he could settle all the above issues, the sect would at best only qualify as earth level in the final appraisal.

An earth-level sect was not Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal's goal!

Since he wanted to do it, he had to go all the way!

Of course, that was a story for later...

The most important thing now was to campaign for votes for Senior Wang!

Although heavenly-level sects had a very solid foundation, the cultivation forum's online influence also wasn't low!

Besides, he still had a general whom he had yet to mobilize!

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal was just about to open the live streaming program to look for Daoist Guang when the latter directly sent him a private message. "Brother Lei! Is Senior Wang's novel calling for votes now? I just advertised it for Senior Wang in the live stream room!"

Daoist Guang attached a screenshot of the live stream room; at the very top, he had posted a link to Father Wang's novel in big, bold characters. His live stream room numbers now held steady at over ten million people! He had almost become the big brother of the live streaming entertainment circle!

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal: "Thank you for your support, Brother Guang!"

However, Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal was now confronted with the same kind of problem advertisers faced.

Because the audience was different, there was a limit to the number of people who could help Father Wang.

After all, not all of these ten million people read novels, and not all of them were rich – most of Daoist Guang's fans were very young. And if one had to know, the top position on Daoist Guang's

fans list was still occupied by Father Wang's registered ID [Has Three Days And Two Sleeps Been Updated]!

Daoist Guang sighed and typed in reply, "But Brother Lei, I don't think the results are very good... I just heard the water friends say that there are two heavenly-level sects backing the other two writers' books. If we rely on just your and my strength to wrestle with established heavenly-level sects, I'm afraid we're not their match."

At this time, Dharmaraja in the group sent a message. "Senior Wang's votes have increased very quickly, it's now at 1.2 million. But the other two writers already have almost two million votes..."

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal frowned. "So it's a consistent difference of eight hundred thousand votes..."

"How about we think up other ways? Like rigging the votes..."

"Absolutely not!" Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal shook his head at once and replied, "Since the votes of these two writers weren't rigged, but were due to the support from heavenly-level sects, I'm afraid that we'll become laughingstocks if we got found out for helping push Senior Wang up. And most importantly, his reputation will also suffer."

After Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal said this, the group immediately fell into a deep silence.

All of a sudden, Nine Times Man, who had been silent in the group the whole time, sent a fist salute emoji at that moment. "Everyone, I will offer up five hundred thousand monthly votes to Senior Wang later."

At this message, the chat group instantly exploded.

Immortal Toya: "???"

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal: "???"

Cailian Zhenren: "???"

Lightning Dharmaraja: “Damn, it turns out Nine Times Man is an invisible tyrant!”

“...”

Wang Ling kept quiet, for he knew Nine Times Man’s real identity: this was the side account which “General Yi,” one of the Ten Founding Generals, used to lurk in the group!

In fact, when he saw this, Wang Ling already knew... Father Wang had most likely already contacted that strongest fan of his.

In the end, this was one of the Ten Founding Generals...

If it was five immortal gold bars for a monthly vote, five hundred thousand monthly votes would come to 2.5 million immortal gold bars!

This was just too terrifying!

...

Meanwhile, Lie Mengmeng was still nervously waiting in front of the TV, but Father Wang was watching a drama, so Lie Mengmeng could only use his phone to check the chart.

He was gratified to see that Father Wang’s votes continued to increase, but while the gap was getting smaller, it was clearly still far from enough.

“I’m going to the bathroom.” Father Wang patted Lie Mengmeng on the shoulder.

Father Wang’s butt had barely left the sofa when Lie Mengmeng grabbed the TV remote to switch to the channel for the monthly votes count.

After flipping through a few channels, however, he felt something was off with some of the TV programs...

[Cultivation Sports Channel]

At the world table tennis championships, a male player from their country with the surname Ma was giving a moving speech after receiving the gold medal. “I’m grateful! I want to thank my country! I want to thank my parents! I want to thank my coach! I want to thank my training partners who were with me the whole way. I also want to thank Teacher Wang Situ’s The Live Streaming Life of the Immortal King for bringing me joy! Whenever I felt like I couldn’t carry on anymore, it was Teacher Wang Situ’s book that encouraged me! Everybody, please cast a monthly vote for him, thank you!”

Lie Mengmeng: “???”

Lie Mengmeng changed the channel with a befuddled expression on his face.

[Cultivation Food Channel]

A chef was being interviewed by a reporter on the street. “Mr Chuangzhen, how do you find inspiration for the various culinary delights that you create?”

This chef called Chuangzhen smiled slightly into the camera and gave a V sign. “Of course it’s by reading The Live Streaming Life of the Immortal King! Teacher Wang Situ writes very well! 666!”

Lie Mengmeng: “???”

Another channel...

[Cultivation News Broadcast]

A female newsreader sat upright and solemn as she reported the international news. “Today, in response to Mixiu nation making unnecessary trouble, the spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, Minister Shi, has said that he will see the matter through to the end...”

After saying this, she suddenly paused.

Because at that moment, she was suddenly handed a document from the side. Thanks to her professional bearing, she remained unruffled. “Everyone, the following is urgent news!”

The female newscaster lowered her head and skimmed the contents of the document before quickly looking up once more. “Please offer up your monthly votes to The Live Streaming Life of the Immortal King by author Wang Situ! Thank you!”

Lie Mengmeng was utterly stupefied. “What the f**k!!!” Wang Lu is the protagonist of the Chinese novel “Once Upon A Time, There Was A Spirit Sword Mountain.” The running joke is that he can prepare all kinds of sashimi dishes. This is the Chinese pronunciation of the name of the protagonist in “Shokugeki no Soma,” a manga and anime series set in a culinary school.

Chapter 550: The Unperturbed Editorial Office

Lie Mengmeng rubbed his eyes and dug out his ears repeatedly to confirm that he wasn’t hallucinating!

Yes! He hadn’t seen wrong!

All the programs now were broadcasting news helping Father Wang to campaign for votes. Whether it was sports athletes, local celebrities or big shots in various industries, all of them had started to campaign for monthly votes for Father Wang on TV... Lie Mengmeng looked at the list of trending topics, and sure enough, this matter had already climbed to the top as a hot search, and it wasn’t in just one topic.

In a short instant, trending topics like “XXX Expresses Support for Wang Situ” and “XXX Begs for Votes for Wang Situ” dominated the list.

When Lie Mengmeng looked at the editors’ group, he noticed that they were all calm. This was a private group which Lie Mengmeng had set up himself. He got along well with all the editors in the group, which included colleagues working on other novels, his own leaders, and even some editors from other novel websites that they collaborated with... Lie Mengmeng was Cultivation Chinese Network’s social butterfly, and he was worthy of this title.

“Why isn’t anyone reacting? This is a huge deal!!!” Lie Mengmeng expressed his shock with three exclamation points.

The chief editor of Cultivation Chinese Network, with the ID “Little Squad Captain,” gazed at his screen with the expression of one used to such things. “Little Song, you’re still too young... But you’re not Wang Situ’s first editor, after all; if you had been in charge of his books from the beginning, you would already be used to this. Teacher Wang Situ isn’t just any ordinary person.”

“What do you mean, captain...”

“Hm... I can’t say too much.”

It was very obvious that the chief editor knew something. “Do you know why our editorial office didn’t react at all to the various opinions in the outside world today when Braised Pork Shoulder and Braised Pig Feet in Sauce overtook Teacher Wang Situ in the votes?”

Lie Mengmeng was shocked. “Holy shit! So you really didn’t react? I just thought the editorial office wasn’t online!”

“...”

Chief Editor Little Squad Captain: “This is nothing. You just need to remember, those writers who want to compete with Teacher Wang Situ for monthly votes... are basically just courting death.”

Actually, when the chief editor said this, it was as if Lie Mengmeng could already understand it a little better...

Looking at the strength of a society that had currently joined forces on TV and in the list of trending topics, Father Wang could indeed be said to be unbeatable. What kind of power was it that was holding him up behind the scenes... Lie Mengmeng’s imagination had already started to run wild.

The problem was, he hadn’t seen Father Wang do anything!

It seemed that he had merely sent a text message to one of his big shot fans...

Looking at it now, this clearly wasn’t any ordinary big shot; it was very likely a force with a background and foundation that was stronger than any heavenly-level sect.

Lie Mengmeng was very perceptive and he expressed his gratitude immediately. “Thank you, captain!”

There were some things that you could discern but shouldn’t speak about...

“This is a trivial matter; just remember, you just need to keep calm in the future. Also, if reporters come looking for you to interview Teacher Wang Situ or something, the website’s general policy is to reject all of them; Teacher Wang Situ isn’t interested in any of this. I’ll make a point of it at the meeting tomorrow.”

Little Squad Captain nodded and said, “Anyway, keep in mind that your duty is to prod him for more chapters, at all costs and in any way possible... This is your main assignment! You basically don’t need to bother with the ranking competition. In any case, as long as Teacher Wang Situ’s novels are still being serialized, he’ll always be ranked first.”

Lie Mengmeng: “Mm, okay, captain!”

Speaking up to this point, the chief editor paused, and then suddenly said, “You probably know about that guru author Zhuge who competed against Teacher Wang Situ back then, right? This Teacher Zhuge was initially on our website as well.”

Lie Mengmeng nodded weakly. “Yes...”

At that moment, the chief editor sent a facepalm emoji. “You should now know why Teacher Wang Situ made Teacher Zhuge angry enough to leave back then, right?”

Lie Mengmeng: “...”

...

It was July 18th on Tuesday in the thirteenth week of the semester.

The “Summit War” last night between both Pork Shoulder and Pig Feet and Father Wang (Wang Situ) ended with Father Wang proclaimed the victor after he obtained a crushing number of votes

which turned the tide by midnight; by the end of the double monthly votes campaign, the monthly votes for the two writers Pork Shoulder and Pig Feet were around three million, while Father Wang was far in front with an outstanding six million monthly votes...

But the truth was that Father Wang's votes last night had actually surpassed ten million; it was just that the website had kept the remaining four million votes a secret with Father Wang's permission.

After all, they were all authors on the same website and he should help his peers save some face...

The impact of this incident wasn't minor; Wang Ling heard people around him discussing it on his way to school that morning. After all, so many celebrities had expressed their support last night!

Yesterday's trending topics had been about the support from various celebrities; today's topic was [Who Exactly Is Wang Situ]...

As soon as Wang Ling walked into the classroom that morning, he could hear Dopey Guo making a ruckus as he recounted the fierce battle in the "Summit War" last night.

The students in class weren't just simply bystanders; the vast majority were in fact fans of Father Wang... Wang Ling felt that in some sense, his old man was just as invincible as he was.

Dopey Guo slapped his thigh and sighed feelingly. "Wang Situ is really too strong... That wave last night, tch... The only thing he's lacking now is the support of the head of state!"

Wang Ling: "..."

Someone suddenly said very curiously, "But then again, who on earth is Wang Situ? I heard that except for the website editors, no one has ever seen him in person; also, this Guru Wang Situ has never appeared on camera and doesn't participate in any events. He has Weibo, but he seldom posts, and it's the website that manages the account."

"Dopey Guo, have you found out anything?" Little Peanut asked.

Everyone in class couldn't help turning to look at Dopey Guo at the same time.

“I seem to remember you saying last time that you have an uncle who works at Guodian...”

“What does Guodian have to do with this? Is the factory director going to take the stage?”

“Guodian... is short for National Telecommunications and Cybersecurity Administration...” The corner of Super Chen’s lips twitched as he replied 1 .

“...”

“Last night, one of my uncles indeed did investigate Wang Situ’s identity...” Dopey Guo sighed when he brought this up and was a little depressed. “But before he could find out anything, he was caught by his leader and punished; he’s been suspended for a week, and is writing a self-reflection at home.”

“...”

Everyone trembled when they heard this, feeling as if they’d gotten a taste of what the forces which ran society were like... That there was something in this world which Dopey Guo didn’t know was really amazing!

Just then, Super Chen joked, “Actually, I’ve always wondered if this Wang Situ might be Wang Ling’s dad. Hahaha! Even the surname is the same!”

Wang Ling: “...”