

## Worth 181

### Chapter 181: Open Fire!

As the stronghold experienced a renewed vigor in its fighting spirit, the fighters charged forward in a full-fledged counter assault. The gigantic bat suspended in the hurricane in the distance narrowed its eyes. It split its gory mouth wide open and blasted out an ultrasonic wave.

The ultrasonic wave was piercing, and strong winds rose where it passed. Big-bearded commander-in-charge and the two Foundation Establishment realm cultivators shuddered, and blood spilled from their lips.

At the same time, the two fleeing Foundation Establishment realm beasts whirled around and used the opportunity to strike back. There was no hesitation in their movements. It was clear that as Big Beard was conspiring against them, they were also scheming against the stronghold. The timing of their move was impeccable, and their sudden strike placed Big Beard and the two Foundation Establishment realm cultivators in immediate danger.

“Damn it! Why hasn’t help arrived?” Chen Yutong’s face darkened, and his fists tightened fiercely. He was helpless and at his wits’ end. Despite being at the peak of the True Breath realm, the chasm between him and the Foundation Establishment realm was too great. There was little assistance he could provide.

Wang Baole’s face turned heavy as well. The warriors around them fell into a gloomy silence. The wave of surprised cheer had just risen moments earlier, but with the sudden change in the tides of battle, the situation became unpredictable. Everyone was fraught with worry and tension.

*The key lies in that giant bat!* An icy light shone from Wang Baole’s eyes. It had been clear from the start that the bat was the commanding general of the army of beasts. It had only struck twice; the first attack wiped out the array formation and a great number of the Fire God Cannons, tilting the scales in their favor, and the second assailed the Foundation Establishment realm cultivators, sending a heavy blow to the stronghold’ earlier raised morale!

*Unless we kill the giant bat...* Fury rose within Wang Baole. He knew that only by destroying the bat could they affect the outcome of the battle. Otherwise, unless help arrived soon, defeat was inevitable.

At the thought of that, a vicious look appeared on his face. He knew that his cultivation level was inadequate. The only thing he could rely on... was the crippled Fire God Cannon.

*We’ve not reached the end of the line yet... there’s still one last option...* Wang Baole eyed the Fire God Cannon, then turned his eyes towards the distant bat. He gritted his teeth, madness bright in his eyes.

*Since it’s come to this, let’s give it a shot!*

“Senior Brother Chen, help me fight for time. I need five minutes. I’m going to modify the Fire God Cannon!” Wang Baole said in haste. His right hand rose and pressed onto the Fire God Cannon once again.

Upon hearing that, Chen Yutong's pupils contracted. He stared at Wang Baole. Wang Baole's earlier modifications of the inscriptions had revealed his proficiency in Dharmic Armaments. His mastery was impressive; though not as accomplished as Chen Yutong himself in some areas, in others, Wang Baole had clearly surpassed him.

Chen Yutong didn't comment further. He stepped back to guard Wang Baole. There were many Dharmic Armament cultivators from the four Dao Colleges who had arrived. They heard Chen Yutong's instructions and were shocked at what Wang Baole was planning to do, and a few had doubts in their minds. If the situation had been different, they would have voiced their protests. However, in such a time of crisis, there was no time for talk. After all, it was a Fire God Cannon under Wang Baole's charge—and it had held strong and remained the last one standing.

They didn't speak further and instead, chose to spread around and stand guard.

The warriors followed suit. Behind the layers of defense, standing in the middle of it all, Wang Baole raised his right hand—eyes bright with a hint of madness—and pulled out vast quantities of materials!

The materials were but a distraction; his real target was amidst the materials, concealed and inconspicuous, the Armament Sand!

Wang Baole's refinement of Armament Sand had fallen in frequency after he had refined his scabbard to the third grade. However, his occasional refinements led to the accumulation of thousands of grains of Armament Sand.

He was left with no other choice. More than two-thirds of the Fire God Cannon inscriptions had been fragmented; even if he were to continue with their modifications, the cannon would break down after the next few firings.

In addition, the Fire God Cannon was powerful, but with its range, it could not reach the giant bat. The only option that remained for Wang Baole was... to bet on the Armament Sand!

"Please, let me hit the jackpot, just this once!" Wang Baole uttered a silent prayer. His breathing quickened as he melded the materials with the Fire God Cannon, and focused his concentration on controlling the Armament Sand and melding it with the cannon.

That was his first time using the Armament Sand to reform a composite Numinous Treasure. He focused all his energies on his efforts nervously, slowly separating the Armament Sand into several hundred portions and pouring them into the Spirit Kernel inscriptions on every Numinous Treasure—effecting changes on all Numinous Treasure inscriptions that were beyond his control.

Wang Baole had no idea what would come out of the changes. The Armament Sand melded with the inscriptions before his eyes, and the inscriptions glimmered; some fragmented parts melded together with one another, forming entirely new inscriptions.

What was even more astonishing was the appearance of what had originally been concealed on the Spirit Kernel—inscriptions that had been hidden from Wang Baole's eyes. Wang Baole was staggered by the hidden inscriptions' appearance.

He had heard someone mention on the Spirit Intranet before that some extremely powerful Dharmic Artifacts had hidden inscriptions that were like an encrypted code of sorts. No one except the original creator could see or replicate them.

The hidden inscriptions appeared before Wang Baole then, large parts of them fragmented. A flurry of thoughts raced through his mind, and realization struck him. The reason why the inscriptions he had modified earlier couldn't be sustained was that he only modified the inscriptions visible to him. The concealed inscriptions were hidden from him, and he couldn't modify them, which was why the repairs were incomplete!

The Armament Sand served as a cipher key that unlocked the inside of the Fire God Cannon, unveiled the hidden inscriptions, decrypted their encryption, and unleashed their full potential!

The secrets within the Fire God Cannon revealed themselves before his keen eyes. The sudden descent of good luck brought clarity to his mind, and the gears in his head turned more quickly. He had a stronger grasp of the inner workings of the Fire God Cannon, deepening his understanding of the inscriptions within.

There was no time to reflect over his discoveries. He let them sink in as the fusion of the Armament Sand completed. He couldn't discern the effects immediately as the Fire God Cannon was too complex. In the end, he gritted his teeth and aimed the cannon at the giant bat. He fired the cannon. The shot was a test of the effect of the fusion in actual battle.

*Please be a success!* A raging howl rose silently within Wang Baole. The cannon fired, and shook the heavens!

The blast was no different from the earlier cannon firings, the explosive beam of light identical to previous blasts. It dashed across the battlefield towards the Beast Tide, as if it was charging straight at the giant bat in the eye of the hurricane.

Chen Yutong and the surrounding warriors watched nervously; even the giant bat turned its head and watched as the beam of light raced from the distance towards it.

As the crowd looked on anxiously and Wang Baole prayed fervently, the skyward beam froze in mid-flight, transformed into a huge sphere of light, and fell upon the earth...

The sudden turn of events left everyone dumbfounded. Even the giant bat was equally stunned. It hadn't expected that a Fire God Cannon blast could morph into a sphere of light.

As Wang Baole cried out in dismay and the crowd stood stunned, the ball of light landed on the swarm of beasts on land. Upon its landing, a deafening explosion that surpassed the combined explosions of all the Fire God Cannons rippled through the heavens and sent the earth quaking. It was like giant waves crashing onto the land, an ear-splitting roar that rose to the skies.

The thunderous boom shifted the landscape. Clouds rolled back, and a gush of strong wind swept across the lands. The color drained from the faces of the Foundation Establishment realm entities battling in the skies.

The warriors around Wang Baole, the Dharmic Armament cultivators from the four Dao Colleges, and Chen Yutong were all stunned speechless.

“This... This is just...!”

Wang Baole was equally dumbfounded. He watched the waves of light that exploded from the light sphere when it landed, its impact so strong it would shock one to hear that it rivaled the combined blasts of a dozen Fire God Cannons. The explosion formed a sea of light that splashed and sprayed everywhere, and where the light landed, beasts were wiped out instantly. From afar, within the endless rising Beast Tide, an empty space appeared. In that space... there stood no living beast; the grounds were strewn with their bloodied corpses!

The destructiveness of the ball of light was too overwhelming. As tremors traveled through the earth, both camps fighting on land were struck dumb by shock.

The Dharmic Armament cultivators from the four Dao Colleges, including Chen Yutong, whirled around and stared at the dazed Wang Baole. They were all gasping and overwhelmed by emotion.

It was then that the giant bat in the distant hurricane turned its eyes on Wang Baole. It let loose an ultrasonic wave. As the ultrasonic wave burst forth, Big Beard and the Foundation Establishment realm cultivators shuddered; it was as if needles were being driven into their bodies. Their cultivation was being suppressed, and the threat of death grew greater as the two Foundation Establishment realm beasts attacked.

The beasts surrounding Wang Baole’s platform seemed to have received orders as well. They howled, eyes crazed, and charged at Wang Baole fearlessly. It was as if they were determined to destroy the platform even if it cost them their lives!

“Defend with all you’ve got!” Light glimmered fiercely in Chen Yutong’s eyes. Wang Baole had used action to prove himself. As his senior brother, it followed that he too had to stand his ground. His Spirit Qi spread out as he spoke, leading the rest in facing battle.

The other Dharmic Armament cultivators were equally impassioned and roused by Wang Baole’s earlier cannon shot. They gathered their thoughts, scattered out and, together with the warriors, met the beasts rushing in from all directions in battle.

The intensity of the battle spiked all of a sudden. The beasts numbered too many, all of them in a raging madness. Amidst the drowning roars, death lurked around every corner.

Amidst the massacre, Wang Baole stood, panting heavily, his eyes bloodshot. He tried but couldn’t get the Fire God Cannon to fire again. It seemed that it had only enough for that last shot. He became frantic as he looked at the tragic fates that befell more and more people around him and the crazed, charging beasts swarming heaven and earth.

Madness flashed across his eyes, and he took out the Armament Sand again!

He had never tried to perform a second round of modifications on a Dharmic Artifact that had already been modified. There was no time to deliberate further; he flung the Armament Sand into the Fire God Cannon.

It was then that he discovered excitedly that the Armament Sand could be used for a second round of reform!

However, such a manner of modifications contained too much uncertainty. As soon as the modification was complete, the Fire God Cannon shuddered. Instability wrecked its internal parts, and it seemed on the verge of collapse. An alarmed Wang Baole quickly pulled out more Armament Sand and initiated another round of modifications.

Finally, after he went through five rounds of modifications, the Fire God Cannon that had been crippled and damaged beyond repair, shook with an unprecedented force; it was as if a terrifying energy was stirring within. Waves of Spirit Qi surged from all around. The inscriptions stabilized, and there were no signs of self-destruction or collapse.

“It’s done!” Wang Baole whooped with excitement. He snapped his head up and slapped the Fire God Cannon with his right hand.

“Fire!” Wang Baole roared. An earth-shattering blast of light shot from the Fire God Cannon, and exploded instantaneously!

The intensity and force of the blast surpassed all blasts that had come before and left them trailing in the dust. There was no competition to be had in the first place. Its color was no longer white but blue, and as it shot out, the mere waves of energy rippling out disintegrated the hordes of beasts all around. The beasts screamed in pain as they turned into dust!

The landscape shifted, and the blast of light became the focus of the entire battle. It sped across the sky, an unbending beam of light headed squarely for the giant bat that had its mouth gaping wide open to launch another ultrasonic wave.

### **Chapter 182: Target Locked! Shoot to Kill!**

The beam of light was too swift; wherever it passed, beasts that stood before it were torn into shreds instantly. Even a slight brush from the blast’s rippling energy waves sent one frothing at the mouth, and the beasts were either slain or grievously wounded.

With night soon descending, the bright blue cannon beam shook and dazzled. It shot past with startling speed through the battlefield, With a thundering roar, it carried an intent to destroy, and approached the giant bat in the hurricane.

The giant bat had its mouth wide open, ready to release another wave of ultrasound interference at the Foundation Establishment realm-level fight. It was then that an icy shiver traveled through its body, and alarm flashed across its eyes. If it had hair, one imagined they would be standing at that moment. It snapped its mouth shut and dodged swiftly to one side. As it tried to move away, the beam of light, with a speed that far surpassed its own, came thundering forward and shot right... past its body...

It missed...

Despite missing its target, the rippling waves of energies that spread out sent quakes through the bat’s body. It spat blood out, and terror and shock rose in its heart. It had calculated the projectile range of the Fire God Cannon and stayed far away from the cannon; it would never have imagined being almost killed by the cannon’s blast!

The giant bat's eyes turned red as it trembled, and it raised its head skyward and let loose a shrill scream. Its eyes locked onto Wang Baole, a murderous aura exploded in the air.

The prowess of Wang Baole's Fire God Cannon was so immense that the bat felt death at its doorstep.

If it had moved a little bit too quickly earlier, it could have slammed headfirst into the cannon beam. The thought terrified the intelligent beast, and it unleashed a frantic, ear-piercing shriek. In an instant, the beasts surrounding Wang Baole's Fire God Cannon platform spiraled into further madness. They lost all reason and charged mindlessly forward.

The two Foundation Establishment realm beasts in the sky grew agitated as well. However, they couldn't leave. Instead, they roared as the giant bat screamed, driving the beasts and giants in the Beast Tide into descending madness. The beasts disregarded the cultivators and warriors around them and, with a leap into the air, rushed at Wang Baole.

The cannon shot of Wang Baole was like striking a wasp nest, sending the beasts into a raging madness. Chen Yutong and the surrounding warriors were momentarily overwhelmed.

Big Beard and the Foundation Establishment cultivators saw what happened, and were shaken to their core. They realized it was a golden opportunity. The giant bat was too caught up in the moment to interfere with their fight. The turn of the tide galvanized them, and as they pressed forward towards the two Foundation Establishment realm beasts, Big Beard's voice rang across the battlefield.

"Everyone, protect the Fire God Cannon platform!"

"Wang Baole, as long as you can distract the giant bat, you'll be the hero in this battle! If you manage to kill it, I'll personally request a huge reward to be bestowed on you!"

As Big Beard's words rang out, the warriors and cultivators on land sped towards the direction where Wang Baole's Fire God Cannon platform stood. They fought with all their might, and Chen Yutong and the rest gave all they had as well, attacking madly.

The battle intensified around the Fire God Cannon platform in an instant!

As for the giant bat in the sky, its cultivation was clearly not of the Foundation Establishment realm level. Else, even accounting for its cautious nature, it could have struck multiple times. It was clear that it possessed an impressive talent at spellcasting, and its value was in supporting and commandeering the beasts.

Terrified, the giant bat dared not pause too long at any one spot. Its body swayed and flew from one place to another without rest, summoning tornadoes that spread out across the battlefield and obscured vision.

It dared not fly too close to Wang Baole. It was still shaken by the earlier cannon blast, and as a result, it continued dodging attacks in the distance with the intention of relying on the intensity of the Beast Tide to destroy the enemy.

That was slightly time-consuming, but to the bat, it was the safest way to victory.

That was indeed the reality. Slaughter overflowed all around Wang Baole, and he was going mad in his anxiety. The cannon blast that missed its target was through no fault of his. After all, there were too

many uncertainties present in the revamped Fire God Cannon. It was near impossible to wield it as smoothly as before.

He had heard Big Beard's words, but he had no time to fantasize further. Fierce battles occurred all around him, and death lurked at every corner. Wang Baole took a few deep breaths. He dared not lose his concentration as he injected all of his Spirit Qi into the cannon. The initial automated target lock-on mechanism was switched to manual mode. To eliminate all potential mishap, he released the mosquitoes that had already been destroyed many times.

The mosquitoes flew out instantly and headed speedily towards the giant bat. With the aid of their eyes, everything taking place in the air appeared within Wang Baole's sight. An all-encompassing, three hundred and sixty-degree field of vision with no blind spots—in that moment, he saw everything with startling clarity.

The bat was too quick, though, and hidden by the hurricane. Wang Baole couldn't firmly lock down his target with complete accuracy. He grew more agitated as he watched the bloodbath around him. He was going mad.

*Don't rush it, don't rush it!*

*What I need is an opportunity!* Wang Baole kept sucking in air and forcing himself to calm down. As the Fire God Cannon started its activation, the terrifying and violent energies in the air intensified. The surrounding Spirit Qi was sucked by abruptly. A sea of calm settled within Wang Baole gradually, and he only saw the distant skies and the ever-moving form of the giant bat.

The Fire God Cannon shook fiercely, but Wang Baole could no longer spare any effort to attend to it. His breathing steadied slowly, and the field of vision he had borrowed from his mosquitoes seemed to be shrinking...

He waited silently for a window of opportunity. If it didn't arrive, Wang Baole didn't know if he would choose to go ahead and fire the cannon. Not firing would pose a greater threat to the giant bat. The fight would determine the outcome of the aerial Foundation Establishment realm-grade battle. As long as Big Beard and his company emerged victorious, the tide of the battle would turn.

The price would be great.

It was then that suddenly, within Wang Baole's line of vision in the distant sky, two light arcs rushed towards them. Following the arcs were seven to eight massive cruisers, speeding towards the battlefield at equally high speeds.

They were the rescue forces who had come to aid the seventh primary stronghold. There were two cultivators within the arcs; both were of Foundation Establishment realm cultivation. Their faces were pale, and both were clearly wounded, but they continued to rush forward resolutely. The teleportation array formation between strongholds had clearly been destroyed, and they could only hurry over on cruisers.

As they appeared over the horizon, Wang Baole's eyes brightened.

*A window!* Wang Baole held his breath. His vision shrunk instantly.

Lock on!

Lock on!!

Lock on!!!

In a blink of an eye, as the giant bat witnessed rescue approaching from afar and started trembling uncontrollably, Wang Baole roared and chose at that moment... to fire the cannon!

A thunderous boom resounded, shaking the heavens and earth. A massive beam of light shot from the Fire God Cannon. As the blast surged forward, the Fire God Cannon started shattering into pieces. Finally, as the beam shot out from the cannon entirely, the cannon broke down completely and became a piece of junk. The inscriptions within shattered in unison!

As for Wang Baole, who had expended all his energies, blood splattered out from his mouth. He keeled over and was caught by the Armament Soldiers behind him. His eyes stared unblinkingly at the sky at the blast of light he had just fired.

The earth-shattering beam of light thundered and sped heavenward like an enormous blue dragon. It was swift, like a bolt of lightning, piercing the skies and appearing in an instant before the giant bat.

The giant bat let loose a howl of rage and tried to escape, but it was too slow. In the blink of an eye, the light surged past its body. Suddenly, the massive body started disintegrating before one's eyes.

Its wings cracked and shattered piece by piece, and its gruesome mouth exploded under the force of the blast, splattering blood all around. Not a single hair remained. It was as if an invisible giant hand had wiped out all traces of the beast!

The sight sent a wave of shock across the battlefield. Chen Yutong and everyone on the platform buzzed with agitation and excitement. It felt like they had just had a dream. The warriors and cultivators from the four Dao Colleges on the battlefield were equally shaken, then overjoyed.

The Beast Tide was equally agitated, and fear appeared on many of the beasts' faces. The tides had turned. The two Foundation Establishment realm beasts in the midst of battle with Big Beard froze. One screamed as it was beheaded, and the surviving beast retreated in mad haste.

It didn't manage to escape. The two approaching Foundation Establishment realm cultivators who had rushed there in aid, amidst their shock and disbelief, struck. Together with Big Beard, they slew the last beast.

Terror overtook the entire Beast Tide on land. They howled and began to fall back, slamming into one another and escaping mindlessly. The battlefield was a scene of utter chaos.

The murderous aura exuding from Big Beard didn't weaken in the chaos. He barked out orders amid the cacophony, commandeering the entire stronghold in a full-scale counter assault. The warriors and cultivators around Wang Baole charged out and joined the counterattack.

Despite his exhaustion, Wang Baole leaped into the air as well and joined the battle. He commanded his mosquitoes to follow him.

Under their counter assault, the Beast Tide scattered further and stampeded over one another. The death count of the beasts soared. Finally, worn out and exhausted, they stopped their pursuit and watched the Beast Tide flee into the distance.

Big Beard heaved heavily. He turned and saw Wang Baole, ragged and covered in blood. He laughed aloud and walked over, pulling Wang Baole into a hug and patting him on his back with great force. It was fortunate that Wang Baole was hardy with a thick skin and thicker flesh, else the pat would have sent him puking blood across the ground.

Despite his thick skin and even thicker flesh, he could still feel the pain. Not to be outdone, he hugged Big Beard back and gave a forceful slap that thudded loudly.

Big Beard felt something amiss and released Wang Baole immediately. He coughed awkwardly, then turned and pulled Wang Baole's hand high into the air. He looked at the crowd around him, and the rescue troops, and shouted, "Tell me, who is he?"

"Wang Baole!" All around, the warriors who had escaped death cheered.

They had seen close-up with their own eyes the scene of the cannon blast blazing across the heavens and slaying the giant bat!

Wang Baole listened as the people around him shouting his name. Hot blood coursed through his veins, and his face grew warm. That emotion was something he felt for the first time. It was indescribable.

The thousand-odd warriors on the Fire God Cannon platform, especially, were overwhelmed with emotion. They rushed forward and started cheering, taking advantage of Wang Baole's momentary shock and tossing him, again and again, into the air. Laughter rang and echoed across the battlefield from where they had emerged victorious.

The cultivators from the four Dao Colleges watched as the warriors flung Wang Baole into the air repeatedly, their eyes bright with fervor. The rescue forces couldn't keep their calm either. The cannon blast that they had witnessed upon their arrival... the impact it left on them was too astounding!

### **Chapter 183: Olive Branch**

The retreat of the Beast Tide and the cheers of the warriors sent hot warmth coursing through Wang Baole. The mountains of corpses and sea of blood, and the countless dead strewn across the battlefield, soon turned his excitement into sorrow and there was a heavy weight on his heart.

They returned to the stronghold, and big-bearded commander-in-charge ordered a clean up of the battlefield. The bodies of warriors and cultivators were carried back to the stronghold; some had been mutilated beyond recognition. The bloody sight left many silent.

The clean up took three days, and normalcy returned after. The military preserved the beasts' corpses; they would be used as resources and materials. The bodies of their comrades were placed together, their names recorded in the military's Martyrs' Scroll, and the ashes and compensation would be sent to their families. Special remuneration would also be provided for the cultivators killed in battle.

As everything came to an end, the people in the stronghold, including Wang Baole, started to hear more and more about the horrendous battles that had taken place in the seventh primary stronghold and across the entire seventh line of defense.

The Beast Tide reached its finale at the seventh primary stronghold, with the death of the Beast King at the hands of General Zhou. Countless beasts had perished, but the stronghold paid a terrible price and suffered heavy losses.

The scale of the Beast Tide had been greater than the Federation had anticipated. Nearly a third of the minor strongholds along the seventh line of defense had been successfully invaded. Few from those strongholds—warriors and cultivators alike—managed to survive. Most had died in battle.

Out of the remaining two thirds, almost half held strong and prevailed until rescue arrived. However, the casualties suffered were equally great.

The remaining strongholds held on stubbornly despite delayed rescue, using sheer force and determination to wear down the onslaught of the Beast Tide. The scale of those strongholds surpassed that of the minor stronghold where Wang Baole was stationed; they had an abundance of warriors and cultivators.

As for the smaller minor strongholds, Wang Baole's stronghold wasn't the only one that managed to overcome the attacks. However, such strongholds remained in the rare few. As a result, Wang Baole's stronghold became the focus of much attention in the entire seventh line of defense.

While the rescue forces had arrived in the end, even if they hadn't appeared, the outcome of the battle had already been determined with Big Beard's ambush, as well as the sacrifice of the two Foundation Establishment realm cultivators and Wang Baole's cannon blast!

With such accomplishments achieved in battle, the names of Wang Baole and many others were soon repeated throughout the entire stronghold, spreading further across the entire seventh line of defense with big-bearded commander-in-chief's dissemination.

Everyone who heard of what had happened was blown away. They had gone through that Beast Tide themselves and knew all too well how difficult it would have been to accomplish such great feats in the battle.

As a result, Wang Baole enjoyed a hero's treatment for the next few days.

There was nearly no one who didn't know his name. When he stepped outside, the warriors who saw him greeted him with a salute and eyes filled with enthusiasm and zeal.

The military commanders were the same. Their gratitude wasn't a mere appearance out of formality, but straight from the heart. They were thankful for what Wang Baole had done for them!

When Wang Baole and Chen Yutong had come face to face with danger, they could have retreated and abandoned the Fire God Cannon, but they had chosen to remain. When the news of that spread, Wang Baole's reputation grew further.

Chen Yutong and the others who had protected Wang Baole received an unprecedented warm and enthusiastic treatment from the entire stronghold as well.

However, the excitement paled against the heaviness weighing against Wang Baole's heart. He couldn't forget the slain warriors and the scenes of the massacre. It could even be said that the battle had made a deep impact on his life.

It was hard to come to terms with what he was feeling within a short period of time and return to his earlier cheerful disposition.

At the same time, many had found out that Wang Baole was into collecting beasts' teeth. As a result, over the next few days, he received countless beasts' teeth. They were presents from the heart. The warriors were grateful to Wang Baole; they liked him but didn't know how to express their feelings. The gifting of beasts' teeth became their only way of showing how they felt.

The storage bracelet was filled to the brim and could carry no more additional items. Wang Baole was moved beyond words, and couldn't bring himself to turn down any gifts. Finally, Chen Yutong handed two storage bracelets to him silently; he finally managed to pack all the gifts.

The disciples from the four Dao Colleges had experienced the same deadly battle as well. Their feelings towards the stronghold, towards Wang Baole, and towards their fellow Daoists from the four Dao Colleges grew. There was a greater sense of familiarity and camaraderie and they mingled more frequently and befriended one another. How they interacted with the warriors, whom they had become comrades with, was no longer the same as when they had first arrived.

As the Beast Tide receded and the entire stronghold recovered from the attack, and as Wang Baole bustled about receiving an endless horde of guests, an Honor Roll—delivered from big-bearded commander-in-charge—reached General Zhou of the seventh primary stronghold.

In the Honor Roll were listed the names of almost all of the disciples from Dao Colleges as well as the names of a great many brave warriors. One might even say that the list contained the names of nearly everyone who had survived.

The names of Wang Baole, the two surviving Foundation Establishment realm cultivators and Big Beard himself were listed at the top, in the lead for the military's recognition and reward.

In the general's tent, General Zhou looked through the Honor Roll. He smiled wryly, lifted his head, and looked at Big Beard.

Zhou Lu stood behind General Zhou. She seemed to be injured, and her face was pale. But the glint in her eyes, which spoke of her experience having been forged from the crucible of blood and slaughter, had grown sharper. Her eyes paused on Wang Baole's name on the Honor Roll.

Big Beard remained calm under General Zhou's calculating look. He secretly and intentionally exerted force and forced fresh blood to seep through the bandaged wounds on his body. He didn't say a word, but his intentions were loud and clear... *I'm not leaving until you agree to the sizable rewards for my men.*

"Stop sneaking around and hiding. Just lay everything out." General Zhou didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He pointed at Big Beard and scolded.

Big Beard blinked, then pulled out another Honor Roll which looked heavy beyond words. His face was somber. He approached with the Honor Roll in both hands and did not place it on the table but presented it to General Zhou.

General Zhou's eyes fell unblinkingly on the roll. He seemed to have arrived at a certain understanding, and a shadow fell across his face. He stood and received the Honor Roll with both hands, unscrolled it and read through the names belonging to every single person who had died in battle. Silence fell over him.

The leading names placed at the top of that Honor Roll were the names of the Foundation Establishment realm cultivators who had perished!

"General, I understand the difficulties of the army and the Federation's current situation. It's alright even if we cut the number of accolades by half, but the reparations must be given in multiple folds. This battle... was a complete massacre..." Big Beard lowered his head and uttered softly.

General Zhou was silent. After a long while, he looked towards Big Beard and spoke in a low, calm voice, "How could we reduce the number of accolades by half. All accolades will receive three times the reward. As for reparations... they'll be threefold as well!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Big Beard's body shook. He didn't speak further, and instead cupped his fists and saluted General Zhou. Then, he gave a deep bow and left.

General Zhou watched Big Beard leave. He stood in front of the table and was silent for a long time. Then he spoke softly, "Zhou Lu, make arrangements. In three days' time, I'll travel personally to all the strongholds and... visit the Armament Soldiers."

Zhou Lu hurriedly shifted her eyes from Wang Baole's name on the Honor Roll, lowered her head and replied with a "Yes, Sir".

Three days passed swiftly. With the Beast Tide ended, the disciples from the four Dao Colleges started to leave and return to their respective Dao College. Wang Baole, Chen Yutong, and their friends, too, bade farewell to the Armament Soldiers and were prepared to depart. Before they could be on their way, Wang Baole received a message from Big Beard.

*General Zhou wants to see me?* Wang Baole blinked. He had gotten a clear grasp of General Zhou of the seventh primary stronghold. He was the man whom he had caught a glance of in the college, a general in the upper echelons of the army named Zhou Dexi, who had wiped out an entire species of beasts and attained a monumental accomplishment!

When Wang Baole hadn't known of the other man's identity, he hadn't been nervous. Knowing exactly who the man was, though, the thought of Zhou Lu's constant shadow behind General Zhou gave Wang Baole slight pause.

*Could it be that Zhou Lu is this General Zhou's concubine?* At the thought of that, Wang Baole was struck with a headache.

However, he considered the accomplishments he had made and quietly exhaled a sigh of relief. He remained alert though, as he approached Big Beard's tent. As he arrived outside the tent, he saw Zhou

Lu standing outside. Their eyes met, and a hint of perplexity was clear in Zhou Lu's eyes. She cast a glance at Wang Baole, shifted her eyes away, and spoke coolly, "The general is waiting for you."

Wang Baole noticed the perplexed look in her eyes, and a glimmer flickered in his eyes. He stared at the tent and marched wordlessly forward, straight inside. He saw General Zhou, dressed in black uniform, standing before a map with his back towards him.

It was a figure that towered like a mountain. When Wang Baole's eyes fell on the general, he was assailed with the sudden feeling akin to standing before a huge Fire God Cannon. His breath quickened, and he lowered his head, cupped his fists, and bowed deeply.

"Greetings, General Zhou. I'm Wang Baole!"

"Wang Baole, come." General Zhou didn't turn towards him. He stood staring at the map before him and spoke coolly.

Wang Baole raised his head and stared at General Zhou. He deliberated, briefly, before taking a few steps forward. He stood next to the general and gazed at the map. The map had caught his attention earlier; it was the topographic map of the seventh line of defense. Beyond the seventh line of defense was the vast primordial lands. Even further beyond that, was the expansive ocean.

"It might seem like that seventh line of defense was partially breached in this battle, but in reality... we won a great strategic victory!" General Zhou spoke slowly. His right hand rose and pointed at the vast area of sea.

"The four Dao colleges, the senate, and the other political forces staged an ambush on the Sea of Beasts. We suffered great casualties, but also managed to kill nine Beast Kings and secure at least twenty years of stability at the borders!"

"But there are pros and cons to everything... the internal conflicts in the Federation, having been suppressed for more than a decade, will inevitably surface in an explosive clash sometime in the next twenty years. The four Dao Colleges will not escape unscathed from the political storm when it happens. Only the military remains untouchable. So..." General Zhou, having said all that, turned around suddenly, his eyes shining brightly, and looked at Wang Baole.

"Wang Baole, are you willing to join the military?"

### **Chapter 184: Secret Weapon!**

"It involves working in the military forever, not just distancing from the Dao College!" A fire was visible in General Zhou's eyes. His voice was deep and naturally carried an intention to kill.

"This..." Listening to General Zhou's words, Wang Baole was momentarily dumbfounded. What General Zhou said was extremely sudden to him. He had never thought that there were so many other issues underlying the battle.

From the viewpoint of the Federation, in the face of those unexpected changes, sacrifices must be made. That was something that Wang Baole could understand as someone who had read the high

official autobiographies. However, as a small fry, and based on his relationship with the warriors who were equal to him, he minded those sacrifices.

*How would I choose if I were the President of the Federation...* Wang Baole stayed silent. He couldn't predict the future, but he believed that if such a day came, his choice would definitely be something that he was satisfied with.

In addition, it seemed like General Zhou hadn't expected Wang Baole to make a decision immediately. Therefore, after finishing his sentence, he looked at Wang Baole and spoke calmly, "I know that this is a serious matter that you need to carefully consider. Therefore, you don't have to give me an answer immediately."

With that, General Zhou felt that he had already clearly listed the pros and cons. The decisions that Wang Baole would make after that would be related to what he said. Therefore, he had wanted to add on more details when Wang Baole showed hesitation and asked him a question.

"General Zhou, erm... after joining the military, is it possible to become the President of the Federation in the future?"

"What?" General Zhou was taken aback and carried a bizarre expression on his face.

"The President of the Federation." Wang Baole suppressed the thoughts that had surfaced due to the tone General Zhou used to reply to him. He repeated himself again and looked at General Zhou, filled with anticipation.

"... The military cannot be involved in politics. If you want to become the President of the Federation, you would have to revolt. Do you plan to revolt?" after a brief moment, General Zhou replied calmly.

When Wang Baole heard the reply, he trembled and laughed awkwardly.

"General Zhou, you have mentioned that the matter about joining the military isn't urgent. So... I'll think about it carefully."

General Zhou remained silent and took several glances at Wang Baole before laughing.

"Wang Baole, the military isn't as simple as you think. Do you know why I said just now that there would be chaos in the Federation, with peace only in the military?"

Wang Baole looked confused and shook his head. He was indeed ignorant about that matter. However, seeing how confident General Zhou was, he revealed a look of trust towards him after shaking his head.

Disregarding Wang Baole's facial expression, General Zhou turned around to look at the map, his arms held to his back as he began to speak calmly.

"Even though the number of cultivators in the military is fewer than that in the other forces, and our heritage is not as rich, we have a secret weapon!" As General Zhou had finished his sentence, he looked towards Wang Baole, waiting for him to ask further questions.

In reality, he didn't plan to give too much detail about the secret weapon. He only wanted Wang Baole to know that joining the military was the right choice. He thought that he would just pass matters by

after Wang Baole questioned him, with the goal of piquing his curiosity. After all, he was once a youth with a strong sense of curiosity.

Wang Baole blinked his eyes and felt that General Zhou's mention of the shocking secret weapon had changed the situation. The method of piquing one's curiosity was a trick that Wang Baole knew since he was three years old. He expected that General Zhou would definitely try to make things even more mysterious after he asked further questions, with no guarantee that he would reveal the truth. If he really wanted to find out, he should act in the opposite way instead. Therefore, he didn't ask.

Just like that, General Zhou waited and slowly felt that the situation was becoming unbearable, seeing how Wang Baole had not asked him about it as he had expected.

Seeing the changes in General Zhou's facial expression, Wang Baole sighed. He felt that General Zhou was more capable than himself, and he wouldn't lose face if he gave in. Therefore, he opened his mouth and asked, "What secret weapon is that?"

After hearing Wang Baole's words, General Zhou inhaled deeply. He appeared to have seen through Wang Baole's trick but still felt that it was necessary for him to educate Wang Baole on the mightiness of the military. As such, he raised his head to look at the walls of the tent. His gaze appeared as if they could transcend the tent to look at the skies, and he began to speak calmly.

"The appearance of the Spirit Qi disrupted nuclear fission and fusion, resulting in the failure of all nuclear bombs on earth, but throughout these years, the military has manufactured two inferior black hole bombs that are significantly more powerful than a nuclear bomb."

"These two inferior black hole bombs are the secret weapons of the military!"

Hearing what General Zhou said, Wang Baole, who was initially distracted, suddenly grew alert. He opened his eyes wide and gasped in shock.

"What is that?"

Even though he was born in the Spirit Inception Era and had never experienced the technological revolution that happened before the arrival of the ancient greenish-bronze sword, he had managed to gain some understanding about the ferocity and power of the nuclear bomb from some history books that belonged to his parents.

He was used to the notion that the Spirit Qi had altered the structure of materials and transformed them into a new form of power. That power had eliminated much of the technological products from the Spirit Inception Era. Therefore, General Zhou's words felt foreign to Wang Baole ears and made him feel incredulous.

"What I am referring to is a kind of bomb that can theoretically wipe out most living things and break the world into two if twenty of them were detonated at the same time... The inferior black hole bomb!" Noticing Wang Baole's shock, General Zhou felt at peace and spoke calmly with his hands spread.

"It's a pity that the process of manufacturing an inferior black hole bomb is a huge challenge. The materials needed to make it are rare, such that we've only managed to make two bombs successfully after all these years. Furthermore, it doesn't have the power of a real black hole bomb and is not

powerful enough to wipe out the beasts. There are some very ferocious beasts around, and there might be legendary beasts wandering as well..."

"Even so, these two inferior black hole bombs can still act as a form of deterrence. After all, sometimes, not using it is more powerful than using it!"

"I've mentioned to you previously that the border of the Federation remained safe for twenty years, and that was due to the deterrence effect played by the inferior black hole bombs!"

Wang Baole's breathing was slightly unsteady. His mind was whirling, and his only thought was that the General Zhou in front of him seemed to have become more superior. He even felt that the military had instantly become more mysterious.

Satisfied with Wang Baole's surprise upon hearing the matter, General Zhou spoke slowly once again.

"Do not belittle the technological prowess of the Federation. Even though the appearance of the Spirit Qi changed many things, currently, the Federation is researching on how to combine the Spirit Qi with the inferior black hole bomb theory, complement it with Dharmic Armament knowledge to create actual anti-matter bombs or in other words, black hole bombs. Of course, it might be more appropriate to call them Anti-Spirit bombs!"

"Once that is successful, it would be akin to the Federation wielding part of God's power!" General Zhou's tone was relaxed. After he had completed his sentence, he looked at Wang Baole, who was frozen in shock, and laughed, before handing him a jade medal.

"This medal represents the friendship of the military. With this military, you can make the seventh primary strongholds, including me, help you once, as long as no rules are being violated!"

Wang Baole's breathing quickened as he accepted the medal while still in a daze. His mind was still in a state of shock processing what General Zhou said previously about the inferior black hole bomb. He inhaled deeply, and even though his mind was still a whirl, he had already managed to calm down a little. When he looked at the medal in his hands, he immediately realized how valuable it was.

*Have the seventh primary strongholds, even General Zhou, extend a helping hand to me once?* Wang Baole's pupils constricted, realizing that he had received a big reward that time around. It was like a protective talisman. Even if he didn't use it, he could use it to deter others. Therefore, he took a deep breath and greeted General Zhou with cupped fists.

"Thank you, General Zhou!"

Seeing that Wang Baole had realized the worth of the medal, General Zhou smiled slightly.

"Your efforts will be recorded, with one copy sent to the Federation and another to Ethereal Dao College. In time, you will be rewarded." After completing his sentence, he seemed to have thought of something and directed a question towards Wang Baole.

"Wang Baole, how did you alter that Fire God Cannon?"

Without hesitation, Wang Baole immediately retrieved a jade slip from his storage bracelet and passed it to General Zhou. He had long prepared for that, knowing that the force of the Fire God Cannon would definitely attract people's attention. Even though he wasn't clear how to control the changes himself, he

had recorded most of the inscriptions that were present on the Fire God Cannon after it had been altered.

Wang Baole wouldn't withhold information on changes like those, which could significantly increase the power of the strongholds. He recorded all the changes to the inscriptions that he was aware of.

However, being part of the Dharmic Armament and being knowledgeable about the Fire God Cannon, Wang Baole knew that it was challenging to make the alterations in a short time. It would require more time for experimentation before it succeeded.

As for how he would go about explaining to others his method of making the alteration successful, he felt that there was no need to go into details. All that was needed was a combination of inspiration and luck. After all, he was a Dharmic Armament cultivator and was someone who was extremely learned in inscriptions in Ethereal Dao College.

When General Zhou looked at Wang Baole after receiving the jade slip, he smiled warmly. Wang Baole had done a great deed for the stronghold and was also a disciple of Ethereal Dao College. Therefore, even if Wang Baole did not hand over the jade slip, he would have nothing to say. After all, disgraceful matters like snatching other's property were something that he, Zhou Dexi, wouldn't want to do, and wouldn't care to do.

He chatted for a while more with Wang Baole before ending the conversation. Before leaving, Wang Baole hesitated for a moment and turned to look at General Zhou. With a look of anticipation, he tried to address his queries.

"Erm... General Zhou, do you have any Foundation Establishment Beast Teeth? I need them for refining artifacts..."

General Zhou laughed upon hearing the question. He flailed his right hand, and three black Beast Teeth flew towards Wang Baole.

"Every part of the Beast King is a treasure. Since everything has to be recorded, I cannot give them to you immediately. Wait for a period of time, and I will gift you with the teeth of the Beast King. For now, I can give you these three Foundation Establishment Beast Teeth."

Seeing the Beast Teeth, Wang Baole's eyes instantly lit up. After receiving them, he bid farewell and left delightfully. After meeting up with Chen Yutong, he quickly returned with him, Zhou Penghai, and Sun Fang to Ethereal Dao College on the cruiser.

As the cruiser rose to the skies and charged into the distance, the four of them, including Wang Baole and Chen Yutong, stood on the cruiser, looking at the shrinking stronghold beneath their feet. They all were filled with different emotions, with some of them feeling sadness and unwillingness to part, while some felt other complex and bitter emotions. They each had their concerns, as even though it was not a complete change in the situation, it was similar to one.

At the same time, General Zhou also walked out of the military tent. He raised his head and looked at the cruiser which Wang Baole and company were on, staring at it for a long time as a look of appreciation gradually appeared in his eyes.

*He is thoughtful and sensitive to people's emotions and the situation. He looks honest and reliable but is also decisive and ruthless. He seems to have quite a temper... Not bad, not bad indeed. This is a good seed.*

## **Chapter 185: Big Reward From the Dao College!**

It was a fair and beautiful day, with the Sword Sun hanging up high in the firmament!

After leaving the region of the stronghold, Chen Yutong's cruiser was charging through the skies. The mountain ranges and forests shrunk in size as they flew. As they flew passed the region, the sadness that they had experienced during the Beast Tide Battle in the stronghold also seemed to dissipate gradually.

The deceased couldn't be brought back, and the only way forward was to transform their experience in the stronghold into a ripple in their hearts that would forever be a part of their lives—a part that couldn't be erased.

Zhou Penghai and Sun Fang had both suffered severe injuries. Even though the pills helped in their recovery, they still looked pale. However, it could be visibly seen that they had become more relaxed and less uptight. They retracted their gaze from the stronghold and redirected it in the direction of Ethereal Dao College with a look of anticipation in their eyes.

The reward from the military was usually in the form of recognition and medals. The Dao College gave tangible rewards, and so did the Federation, and they did so all in one go after they recorded, checked, and calculated everything.

Their hearts filled with anticipation for their return to the Dao College, and the duo chatted softly. After experiencing the life-and-death crisis together, Sun Fang and Zhou Penghai, who were initially rather distant from each other, began to grow chummier.

Chen Yutong, on the other hand, sat beside Wang Baole, speaking with a smile on his face while patting Wang Baole's shoulder, "Junior Brother Baole, you rendered great meritorious services this time. Your name will definitely be made more prominent upon your return to the Dao College. This is especially so as we are representing the Ethereal Dao College, and the deeds that we have done this time are considered to have brought pride to the Dao College."

Listening to Chen Yutong's words, which were obviously meant to comfort him, Wang Baole took a deep breath and sorted out his emotions. He gradually began chatting heartily with Chen Yutong. The duo talked about matters regarding the Dao College, and even called Sun Fang and Zhou Penghai over for a leisurely chat.

Time passed slowly, and a few hours gradually went by. The return journey was as smooth as the departing journey. As they neared the protectorate of Ethereal City, the four of them stood up, looking at their destination—the Green Forest Lake—as it began to appear before them.

"We're home..." Zhou Penghai and Sun Fang said at the same time. They hadn't experienced that feeling before, but after the life-and-death encounter in the stronghold, a sense of familiarity surfaced in their hearts as they saw the Green Forest Lake. It was as if they were returning wanderers.

Wang Baole felt the same kind of emotions as them, and he walked towards the front of the cruiser. Riding along the winds, the cruiser didn't slow down and was like a flash of silver lightning charging directly towards the Green Forest Lake.

The cruiser's quality was one of the best that Wang Baole had seen. That was especially so as they didn't need to lift a finger to fight the remaining beasts that appeared on their journey, as their cruiser could just crash into them and chase them away.

At the same time, it could safely disregard weather changes that weren't too extreme.

As they neared, the Green Forest Lake was completely revealed before their eyes. The cruiser gradually slowed down as it passed straight through the fog surrounding the Upper Academy Island. After stopping inside the fog for a brief moment so that the array formation could verify their identities, the cruiser gradually emerged out of the fog and landed on Upper Academy Island's Public Square.

Right then, on the Public Square of the Upper Academy Island, there were already tens of people standing there. The Pavilion Head of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, as well as the four deputy Pavilion Heads, were all present. In front of them, Chen Yutong's Master and the Dharmic Armament Pavilion Elder, who was extremely fond of Wang Baole, were also present. He had a smile on his face and was brimming with pride.

There was a middle-aged man dressed in a long red robe that was closely surrounded by all of them. He was... one of the three Deputy Sect Lords of Ethereal Dao College!

He was standing with his hands behind his back and a smile on his face, and he watched Wang Baole and company as they greeted him upon emerging from the cruiser.

Wang Baole was exhilarated, and so was Chen Yutong, Zhou Penghai, and Sun Fang. The four of them had just emerged out of the fog when they saw the high officials from the Dharmic Armament Pavilion. They stepped off the cruiser and immediately greeted them.

"Greetings, Master. Greetings, Deputy Sect Lord. Greetings, all Pavilion Heads!" Chen Yutong seemed to be aware of who the red-robed middle-aged man was, and immediately greeted him loudly in an agitated manner. As he bowed deeply, he also reminded Wang Baole and company to do the same.

*Deputy Sect Lord?* Wang Baole was mildly taken aback. After realizing what Chen Yutong was hinting at, as well as who he was referring to, Wang Baole immediately greeted him again. Zhou Penghai and Sun Fang were even more surprised, as to them, the Deputy Sect Lord was an important character that they looked up to immensely.

"Today, all of you don't have to be so uptight and formal!" The red-robed middle-aged man laughed, before raising and waving his right hand. He helped the four of them up from their knees gently. After that, the Deputy Sect Lord from Ethereal Dao College stepped forward, patting Chen Yutong and Wang Baole's shoulder with appreciation.

"You're a good chap, not bad! You have brought glory to Ethereal Dao College this time!"

The Deputy Sect Lord appeared to be someone very straightforward in his actions. To him, Wang Baole and company had returned after experiencing near-death. Their battle in the stronghold was considered a major deed even in the military. Even though it wasn't considered the most major one when

considering the first to the seventh lines of defense, the Ethereal Dao College has always been partial in their reward and punishment system since its establishment.

Therefore, he was acting according to the orders of the Sect Lord to reward the four of them, and to encourage other disciples by using the matter as an example. He even planned to have Wang Baole and company become role models to influence others. He began to speak in a cheerful tone.

“Tell me what your wishes are. If I can fulfill it, I will see it come to fruition today!”

Listening to what the Deputy Sect Lord said, Wang Baole and company’s eyes lit up immediately. They were all tempted, but Chen Yutong and the other two knew clearly that Wang Baole should be given the most credit. Even though they could still voice out their wishes, they couldn’t be too overboard. As such, after much thought, they replied.

Sun Fang had a simple wish. He wished for a cave abode since the number of cave abodes in Dharmic Armament Pavilion was limited. Most of the cave abodes were prepared for the Armament Soldiers, and even if one was an Armament Disciple, one wasn’t given the entitlement unless he was an Armament Disciple that had as much power as Zhou Penghai, or was an eight-inch Spirit Root individual like Wang Baole.

Therefore, to Sun Fang, a cave abode was something of great importance.

Zhou Penghai, on the other hand, chose to convert his reward to bonus points for the Armament Soldier assessment, which was the most important matter to him. After all, if he were to depend on his own capabilities, he wasn’t confident of successfully becoming an Armament Soldier. However, by converting the reward into bonus points, his self-confidence grew to more than seventy percent.

Chen Yutong’s wish was different from the rest. He didn’t want any reward. By doing so, he would receive even more benefits that would aid in his rise to become a Deputy Pavilion Head. Chen Yutong even winked to Wang Baole after voicing out his wish.

The Deputy Sect Lord smiled upon hearing the trio’s wishes. After agreeing to all of them, he looked towards Wang Baole.

“What about you, Wang Baole?”

Wang Baole’s thoughts were running about in his mind. He noticed Chen Yutong’s wink and knew that he was hinting to tell him that not wanting anything would perhaps grant him with a bigger reward. He had wanted to do so but suddenly thought about the stories in the high official autobiographies. He blinked his eyes, thinking about how prominent the Deputy Sect Lord in front of him was. Every word someone like him said would definitely catch the attention of others.

That was especially so as he was about to take part in the Armament Soldier Assessment, which was something of major importance to him. If the Deputy Sect Lord could put in a few good words for him, his attempt in the Armament Soldier Assessment would definitely be smooth sailing. With that thought, Wang Baole began to speak, as if he was testing the waters.

“Deputy Sect Lord, I do not know what reward to wish for. Right now, my greatest desire is to become an Armament Soldier, but matters like these cannot be exchanged using a reward.”

Upon hearing his words, the Deputy Sect Lord raised his eyebrows. With a slight smile, he sized up Wang Baole before falling silent. He turned back to look at the Pavilion Head and company and said, "This sly fella... Based on his capabilities, I'm sure all of you know that he didn't need to exchange the reward for the title of an Armament Soldier. It is definitely within his reach!"

The Dharmic Armament Pavilion Head and others all revealed a smile on their faces and immediately agreed with the Deputy Sect Lord's words. However, they were all secretly surprised as they stole several glances at Wang Baole. Wang Baole's words didn't directly imply that he wanted to exchange the reward for the status of an Armament Soldier, but he had managed to use the opportunity to express his wishes. The Deputy Sect Lord went with the flow, and through that, not only did Wang Baole not waste his reward, he also gained internal confirmation of his future status as an Armament Soldier to a certain extent.

That simple sentence revealed his intelligence. It wasn't simple and didn't make others feel disgusted about him either, which made it even more valuable.

Chen Yutong's Master, the Elder from the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, smiled even wider.

Seeing that everything was going according to plan, Wang Baole was exhilarated. He bowed deeply towards the Deputy Sect Lord with cupped fists, and when he raised his head, he inhaled deeply and said in a low voice, "Thank you, Deputy Sect Lord! I don't know what kind of request is most suitable as of now and would need your guidance. I will listen to all your orders!"

The moment Wang Baole spoke, Chen Yutong opened his eyes wide. As the group from the Dharmic Armament Pavilion looked towards Wang Baole, they were even more surprised than before.

In reality, Wang Baole's choice was far superior compared to Chen Yutong's choice of not wanting any rewards. What he did allowed him to build a closer relationship with the Deputy Sect Lord...

"Interesting." The Deputy Sect Lord looked at Wang Baole with a meaningful glance. From his eyes, it could be seen that he was in deep thought. After a moment, he smiled slightly, having already made a decision.

"Having been in Ethereal Dao College all these years, I have received close to a hundred pieces of fragments from the heavens. All of them are unique and incredibly valuable, and they can be used even by True Breaths. Even at the Foundation Establishment or Core Formation stage, they are still usable with formidable powers!

"Now, there are less than twenty types of them left in the Dao College. I remember that one of the heritages is related to Dharmic Armament, and is named Heated Burst!

"Would you accept it?"

Hearing the Deputy Sect Lord's words, the people from the Dharmic Armament Pavilion were all taken aback. The four Deputy Pavilion Heads from the Dharmic Armament Pavilion had their eyes wide in shock, and even the Pavilion Head trembled. They were in disbelief, their feelings of envy about to overflow in their hearts. It seemed like the Deputy Sect Lord's decision had far exceeded their expectations.

The Heated Burst technique was something that even they had strongly desired. However, they were unable to possess it, as the heritages were different from the Array Runes Pavilion's Lightning Domain.

Even though the five Lightning technique heritage from the Lightning Domain were also extremely powerful, they could be mastered by many people. Unique techniques like the Heated Burst, once mastered, could be considered a special talent instead. It was extremely special, being recorded on a fragment. Once someone imprinted it, it would be erased from the fragment and cease to exist, making it difficult for others to master it again!

That was what made it unique and one of a kind!

Even Chen Yutong's Master revealed a look of surprise in his eyes. To everyone in Ethereal Dao College, the value of the heritage mystic techniques made them envious.

Chapter 186: Heated Burst

Translator: Atlas Studios Editor: Atlas Studios

The unique mystic technique would cause the item to disappear once used. Based on Ethereal Dao College's tradition, unless someone had contributed a significant deed, it was extremely challenging to possess it, since only close to a hundred of them had been obtained over the years.

Even if the contributions that Wang Baole had made previously in the Spirit Breath Village were taken into account, to be granted the heritage of the unique mystic technique was still a stretch. If Wang Baole chose to give it all to the Dao College, it would still be possible for it to happen, but if not, he shouldn't even think about it.

Zhou Penghai and Sun Fang were somewhat confused. They didn't know much about the mystic technique, but Chen Yutong had heard something about it previously. His eyes were wide open as he looked at Wang Baole while holding his breath. He was extremely envious and shocked.

Even Wang Baole was slightly dumbfounded. He didn't understand how valuable the mystic technique really was, but had managed to obtain an indication of its value from the changes in others' facial expressions. Still shocked and bewildered, Chen Yutong's Master took a deep breath and ordered Wang Baole immediately.

"Baole, thank the Deputy Sect Lord now!"

Having heard the elder's words, Wang Baole didn't hesitate. His heart raced as he immediately stepped forward and bowed.

"Thank you, Deputy Sect Lord!"

The red-robed middle-aged man smiled and chatted with Wang Baole and company before leaving. When he left, the Pavilion Head of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion stepped forward and praised them as well. However, his tone was more formal and less amiable than that of the Deputy Sect Lord.

However, something rare happened at that time as the Dharmic Armament Pavilion also rewarded Wang Baole in the form of a cruiser. It was silver in color, making it look like a water droplet. The moment it was revealed, it immediately caught Wang Baole's eyes, such that he was instantly attracted to it the moment he saw it.

It seemed like the silver-colored droplet-like cruiser was more advanced than that of Chen Yutong's, and of better quality. It was also extremely cool, making Chen Yutong feel envious upon seeing it as he laughed bitterly. He knew that the Dharmic Armament Pavilion had spent a lot on it.

"Junior Brother Baole, this cruiser can be considered one that is specially granted to someone of the rank of a Deputy Pavilion Head. The cost of any one of these would allow one to purchase an apartment in Ethereal City's most luxurious district."

After realizing the price of the cruiser, Wang Baole was extremely excited, and he immediately conveyed his gratitude. When the Dharmic Armament Pavilion Head and company had left, Chen Yutong's Master, who stayed behind, gave Wang Baole an overview of what exactly the mystic technique was!

As he listened to the elder's words, Wang Baole's eyes widened with shock. He felt that everything had happened too suddenly. He immediately realized how valuable the mystic technique was after hearing about it. It was difficult to estimate the worth of everything, even if he were to disregard the value of the cruiser.

The mystic technique that is recorded on a piece of fragment can only be inherited once. Once inherited, it will turn into dust... Wang Baole was agitated with excitement. Even after he returned to his cave abode in the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, his emotions and thoughts hadn't normalized.

According to principles, I shouldn't be rewarded so generously... Very quickly, Wang Baole realized that something was amiss. In his bewilderment and constant thought about the issue, he noticed that in the days that followed, there was an unprecedented widespread announcement of their encounters in the stronghold on the Upper Academy Island.

Even the rewards that were given formed part of the announcement. That immediately attracted heated debate on the entire Upper Academy Island, and even Liu Daobin sent him a voice transmission. Wang Baole instantly came to know that the entire incident was being announced, even on the Lower Academy Island.

Is this to set an example? Wang Baole had some guesses, which made him more excited. He felt that the Dao College had a good eye for talent. He sat, munching on his snacks while browsing the Spirit Intranet to take a look at the discussions.

Ethereal Dao College announced all the contributions that Wang Baole and company had made in the stronghold. They made all of them heroes, and Wang Baole was made the center of attention. As a result, Wang Baole's name became the focal point of everyone's discussion on the Upper Academy Island again after the announcement was made.

As commotion spread throughout the entire Dao College, Wang Baole also tried out the droplet cruiser. Its speed was extremely fast, surpassing that of Chen Yutong's cruiser, and it was equipped with a level of combat power that wasn't to be belittled. As Wang Baole was filled with pleasant surprise, he grew even more excited in anticipation of the mystic technique that would be even better than the cruiser.

That anticipation didn't last long, as several days later, Wang Baole received the mystic technique reward from the Deputy Sect Lord!

It was a crimson red fragment the size of a fingernail, kept in an elegant box made of jade. By examining the box, Wang Baole deduced that it was probably made of Rainbow Spirit Stones in its interior, and covered with jade on the exterior. The mere realization that he had never seen anything like that before made Wang Baole shocked.

This box is already very valuable! Wang Baole's delight was apparent. He opened it up to take a look at the crimson red fragment, and extremely concentrated waves of Spirit Qi wafted continuously from the fragment towards him.

The Spirit Qi carried heat waves as if there was an invisible Heat Spirit situated within it, noiselessly roaring and filling Wang Baole with exhilaration. His entire body tensed up, and his breathing quickened.

There are many kinds of outer space fragments. Some can be directly absorbed into the body, while some could be loaned for use, like those in the Spirit Breath Village. There are some which are like the one I'm holding in my hand right now. Even though they cannot be absorbed, one can feel a vibe that seems to be like an imprint of an awakened state. Wang Baole chanted the information given to him by Chen Yutong's master in his mind. Wang Baole wasn't clear about it at first, but after seeing it with his eyes and feeling the waves of heat emanating from it, he suddenly gained enlightenment.

After a while, Wang Baole took a deep breath. He hesitated for a moment but eventually revealed a look of determination in his eyes as he raised his right hand and immediately pressed it on the fragment—just like Chen Yutong's master had taught him.

The instant his hand touched the fragment, scorching heat began spreading from his fingertips but stopped suddenly, as if waiting for something to happen.

Wang Baole held his breath. At that instant, his cultivation was being activated within his body. As it activated, the scorching heat that had stopped began to erupt, spreading throughout his body from his hands, eventually flowing completely into his head.

Wang Baole's body trembled violently, and his mind immediately buzzed as he instantly lost control of his body and his consciousness.

A while later, as Wang Baole's consciousness recovered, he had forgotten everything—including who he was. The only sensation that remained was that he had transformed into a ball of fire. The world before him was also transforming, and he saw... a hurricane made of fire!

The fire hurricane erupted towards the sky, destroying everything as it swept everything before its eyes. It covered everything and took over his heart and soul.

Days passed. After half a month, Wang Baole sat motionlessly in the cave abode with his legs crossed. There was a crimson red mark between his eyebrows, moving slowly. As it moved, his body trembled, and he opened his eyes slowly, looking confused.

The confusion didn't last long. He slowly regained consciousness, and minutes later, as the blurriness faded, Wang Baole's body tensed up as his breathing quickened. With the complete recovery of his consciousness, he opened his eyes wide as he exhaled deeply.

It feels like a dream... Wang Baole normalized his quickened breathing and lowered his head to look at the box before him. He realized that the fragment that he seemed to have just touched had already

become ash. Experiencing all the changes, he raised his head immediately to look at the time, and he realized that he had lost consciousness for half a month. A torrent of thoughts and emotions ran through him.

It was also at that moment that he experienced a sharp pain between his eyebrows. He couldn't feel anything with his hands and proceeded to check it out with a mirror. What he saw shocked him, and he stood up immediately.

This is... Wang Baole was unable to remain calm. He held his breath as he looked at the fire mark that was slowly fading between his eyebrows. After a brief moment, Wang Baole raised his hands and began chanting in his heart according to the method that Chen Yutong's Master had taught him previously.

Fire!

In that instant, a crimson red ball of fire appeared in Wang Baole's palms. Even though it burned strongly, Wang Baole was unable to sense any pain. In his agitation, he raised his right hand and flailed it strongly. Immediately, a miniature sea of fire erupted before him. The heat wave instantly spread throughout the entire cave abode, such that the array formation on the surrounding rock walls showed signs of being scorched.

In his excitement, Wang Baole immediately stopped whatever he was doing. With his will, the surrounding Sea of Fire was instantly retracted back into his right hand at lightning speed.

This is the mystic technique... Heated Burst? Wang Baole was extremely agitated. After circling the cave abode several times, he left as he planned to look for a place outside to test out the force of the mystic technique.

However, just as Wang Baole walked out of his cave abode—prepared to find somewhere to test out the Heated Burst mystic technique—he suddenly received Chen Yutong's voice transmission. The other party sounded urgent, unable to hide his agitation and exhilaration. After Wang Baole switched on his voice transmission ring, he could hear the excitement clearly.

“Junior Brother Baole, something wondrous has happened to our lineage!”

### **Chapter 187: Significant Increase in Power**

*Something wondrous?* Wang Baole, who was planning to test out the force of his Heated Burst technique, blinked several times after hearing Chen Yutong's words. Slightly confused, he stopped in his tracks and looked at the voice transmission ring.

Before he could ask, Chen Yutong's voice, which carried a clear sense of excitement, flowed from the voice transmission ring.

“Grandmaster Jiang Zhengde... The Elder has achieved a breakthrough in the early-stage of Core Formation realm and has officially advanced into the mid-stage Core Formation realm. His position has been elevated, and he is being promoted to Ethereal Dao College's Deputy Sect Lord from his previous position as the Dharmic Armament Pavilion's Grand Elder!”

“There were only three Deputy Sect Lords in Ethereal Dao College, but there are four now! Junior Brother Baole, good days have finally arrived for us!” Chen Yutong’s voice carried a sense of extreme excitement, such that his rapid breathing sounds could be clearly heard from the voice transmission. His exhilaration was apparent.

Compared to Chen Yutong’s agitation, Wang Baole was confused. He had spent some time to truly discover the Heated Burst mystic technique, and his thoughts had seeped deeply into it as if he was in seclusion. He didn’t know what happened in the Dao College during that time. As for the clan that Chen Yutong mentioned, even though Wang Baole had some basic understanding of it, he wasn’t entirely clear what it was.

Hearing the name “Grandmaster Zhou Zhengde” from Chen Yutong, Wang Baole had to inquire more about it as the name sounded foreign.

“Grandmaster?”

Upon hearing Wang Baole’s tone, Chen Yutong immediately understood Wang Baole’s confusion. He laughed and began to clarify the matter.

“Junior Brother Baole, the old Grandmaster has two disciples. One of them is Chancellor Lu of the Lower Academy Island, also known as Uncle-Master Lu Yunkun, while the other one is my master, Sun Yifeng!”

“When you gained admission to the Upper Academy Island then, Uncle-Master Lu had already made the necessary formalities. Master has also planned to accept you as his disciple for a long while now. However, it happened that your significant contribution to the Dao College, while you were in the Spirit Breath Village, attracted the attention of many, and that Grandmaster also entered seclusion during that time. The delay occurred because your acceptance is a major event that requires proper procedures to be carried out.”

“Now that Grandmaster has emerged out of seclusion and is being promoted to the position of Deputy Sect Lord, you can formally approach him as your master when everything stabilizes,” Chen Yutong explained cheerfully.

Wang Baole widened his eyes, as even though the entire matter matched what he had expected, hearing the news himself reminded him of the clan lines mentioned in the high officials’ autobiographies. He grew uncontrollably agitated, and his mind also became active. He immediately realized where the crux lay, and hurriedly spoke.

“Senior Brother Chen, since Grandmaster has been promoted to the position of Deputy Sect Lord from his previous post as the Grand Elder of Dharmic Armament Pavilion, doesn’t that mean that the seat for Dharmic Armament pavilion’s Grand Elder is now empty? Who will replace him?”

Wang Baole’s question made Chen Yutong satisfied with his attention towards details. Therefore, with a deep voice, he answered quickly. “Junior Brother Baole, when Grandmaster was promoted to Deputy Sect Lord, he recommended to the Sect Lord that Master is suitable to take over his position of Grand Elder!”

As he listened, thoughts darted in Wang Baole's mind. He immediately realized that if that was really the case, it meant that their lineage, especially within the Dharmic Armament Pavilion of Ethereal Dao College, would become extremely powerful.

There was the Deputy Sect Lord Grandmaster at the top, Dharmic Armament Pavilion's Grand Elder next, and the entire Lower Academy Island... A combination like that would certainly help make him and Chen Yutong even more prominent!

With that thought, Wang Baole excitedly took in a deep breath. Scenes of battle depicted in the high officials' autobiographies immediately surfaced in his mind. The more he thought about it, the more exhilarated he was, as he felt that he had finally become part of the core of Ethereal Dao College's authority and that he was no longer an ordinary person.

"However, there are still some uncertainties in this matter. After all, other Elders of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion are also vying for the position that has been made vacant. In the days that follow, there will definitely be competition!"

"Regardless of that, since this matter has the support of the Grandmaster, who is a powerful pushing force, the chances of succeeding would at least be eighty percent, if not a hundred percent!" Chen Yutong sounded relaxed, and it was apparent that he had complete faith in the capabilities of the Grandmaster.

He chatted further with Wang Baole and slowly calmed down after sharing his excitement with him. He took a deep breath and spoke sincerely to Wang Baole.

"Junior Brother Baole, if everything goes well, when Master becomes the Grand Elder of Dharmic Armament Pavilion, there will be no one preventing me from being promoted to the position of Deputy Pavilion Head in the Dharmic Armament Pavilion!"

"Therefore, Junior Brother Baole, you must work hard and become an Armament Soldier soon! Until then, when Master becomes the Grand Elder, he could plan things out such that the chance for you to be in charge of the College Administrative Department would be high!"

"This is a precious opportunity. Baole; if you succeed, it is possible that you would have the opportunity to become the Deputy Pavilion Head after a few years... This way, us brothers would have a significant say in the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, and even significant authority!"

Listening to Chen Yutong's calm yet optimistic words, Wang Baole was in high spirits, and wonderful thoughts flowed in his mind. He was excited with anticipation and immediately spoke.

"Rest assured, Senior Brother Chen! In reality, I can go for the Armament Soldier assessment now, but I want to be more prepared so that I will have greater chances of succeeding in it," Wang Baole said. Chen Yutong laughed happily, agreeing with what Wang Baole said.

"The Armament Soldier assessment is divided into a major and minor assessment, both of which require registration. Even though passing either of them allows you to be promoted to an Armament Soldier, there are still some differences between them."

"The minor assessment takes place once every month, and one can take part in it as long as registration is made. The Deputy Pavilion Head will supervise. As for the major assessment, it is scheduled to happen

only once a year. Not only does it require registration beforehand, but you will also have many competitors. All the Deputy Pavilion Heads and Pavilion Heads will supervise. Obviously, it is a more significant event than the minor assessment. Therefore, the promotion and position granted in the future would also be completely different from that of the minor assessment.”

“At the same time, those who dare to enter the major Armament Soldier assessment must all be very confident. People aren’t competing merely to be promoted, but to have a position in the rankings and be number one!”

“Baole, there are still over three months until this year’s major Armament Soldier assessment. If your preparation is almost complete, then you shouldn’t waste this opportunity. However, don’t give yourself too much pressure either. Once Master becomes the Grand Elder, everything will be negotiable!”

After telling Wang Baole the details of the Armament Soldier assessment, Chen Yutong ended the voice transmission. Putting down the voice transmission ring, Wang Baole stood outside his cave abode, full of optimism for the future.

That was especially so when he thought of his opportunity to be in charge of the College Administrative Department once Chen Yutong’s Master became the Grand Elder, and once he was promoted to an Armament Soldier himself. His heart beat furiously, and a determined glow emerged from his eyes.

*Three months... that should be sufficient! After some planning, Wang Baole took a few determined strides back into his cave abode, before opening up the Spirit Intranet to register for the major Armament Soldier assessment that would happen three months later.*

He stepped out of the cave abode after completing the registration. Stepping into open ground, he was agitated with exhilaration. He raised his right hand and waved, and a small Sea of Fire immediately emerged from his hand, sweeping a radius of thirty feet around him, forming a flame hurricane.

The heat wave spread and burn marks appeared on the ground. Wang Baole was in high spirits but also felt that Spirit Qi was rapidly being depleted. He tried for a while, before hurriedly retracting the sea of fire.

*If I unleash all the power, I can only last the time of approximately thirty breaths...* Even though it wasn’t a long duration, Wang Baole was already very satisfied. He happily returned to his cave abode and took out a bag of snacks and munched on them.

After a while, having finished seven bags of snacks, he rubbed his belly and began thinking about the Numinous Treasure that he would use for the Armament Soldier assessment.

“I had planned to make a Dragon Tooth for the assessment and had prepared many teeth, especially Foundation Establishment Teeth; however...” Wang Baole mumbled to himself, and a peculiar glow flashed across his eyes. As someone well-versed in high official autobiographies, he knew clearly that gaining the recognition of his superiors only won him half the battle. He also had to fight for himself and showcase his capabilities so that he could succeed.

Therefore, he couldn’t pin all his hopes on Chen Yutong’s master being successfully promoted to the position of Grand Elder. He needed to work hard himself, making sufficient preparation so that he could emerge first, instead of simply being promoted to an Armament Soldier!

That way, even if something untoward were to happen during Chen Yutong's master's promotion, he would still have brilliant results that would allow him to fight for the position he wanted!

It was just that it didn't seem enough to use the Dragon Tooth as the Numinous Treasure for the assessment. After all, even though the Dragon Tooth was powerful, it depended heavily on forging materials, even more so than its inscriptions. That factor would easily be pointed out by others and affect his ranking.

After a moment of silence, a glow flashed across Wang Baole's eyes, and a bold idea appeared in his mind...

In reality, after returning from the stronghold, a fuzzy thought has floated in his mind. The more he thought about it, the clearer the thought seemed.

"Is it possible to create a mini Fire God Cannon?" After a moment, Wang Baole mumbled softly to himself. As the thought cleared and circulated continuously within his mind, Wang Baole grew even more tempted.

*If I can create a mini third-grade Numinous Treasure Fire God Cannon, then... I will definitely be able to eliminate everything and everyone during the major Armament Soldier assessment. Then, who else would be first but me?*

With that thought, Wang Baole's heart pounded rapidly. Inscriptions within the Fire God Cannon surfaced in his mind, including the hidden ones that would appear on it after being unlocked by the Armament Sand. Sensing the inscriptions, Wang Baole had a strong gut feeling.

*I... I can create a mini Fire God Cannon!*

## **Chapter 188: Request to Be Electrocuted**

*Three months is neither long nor short... I must make good use of it!* Wang Baole sat cross-legged in the cave abode. After planning out the inscriptions for the Fire God Cannon in detail, a look of determination appeared on his face.

*I'll choose the Fire God Cannon then!* Wang Baole took a deep breath and immediately took out the jade slip. He began to structure the inscriptions for the miniature Fire God Cannon. Even though he had a reference, it was an improvisation after all, and still posed some challenges.

Thankfully, Wang Baole had a deep understanding of the inscriptions for the Fire God Cannon. Having gone through the battle in the stronghold previously, he had made many improvisations to the Fire God Cannon, allowing him to familiarize himself with every single part within it.

*The Fire God Cannon that I make cannot be too small... If not, it won't have enough force, and would be challenging to assemble...* Wang Baole scratched his head and was deep in thought as he began to adjust his plans.

*I cannot overthink the Fire God Cannon either. What I need to do is to treat it as an original, and boost its inscriptions...*

Time flew, and three days passed.

In those three days, Wang Baole sacrificed his sleep and meals as he endlessly structured and remodeled it. Finally, he managed to completely outline the ideal Fire God Cannon that he was about to make in his mind.

From its appearance, it looked vastly different from the Fire God Cannon. To put it more accurately, it looked more like a rocket.

Looking at the blueprint that he had drawn on the jade slip, Wang Baole was satisfied. He began to plan out the inscriptions according to his blueprint and the power he wished to bestow to it. Different creative thoughts emerged continuously, colliding and create sparks in his mind.

Several days passed, and Wang Baole, who was fully immersed in the improvisation of the Fire God Cannon, finally ended the planning for the inscriptions. He looked visibly fatigued.

Considering just the inscriptions alone, he had referenced the inscriptions on the Fire God Cannon and planned out over a million inscriptions. His level of cultivation and understanding of the Dharmic Armament didn't allow him to put all the inscriptions he had planned onto a single Numinous Treasure.

*I will need to assemble seventy-eight Numinous Treasures to complete the structure...* Wang Baole rubbed his glabella and took out a bottle of Ice Spirit Water. After gulping it down and taking a short break, he got to work again.

He spent the most time on that stage. He needed to strictly follow the requirements he had set out to create seventy-eight Numinous Treasures that were different in appearance, inscriptions, and function.

Furthermore, there couldn't be any mistakes, as everything had to match his blueprint perfectly so that the Numinous Treasures could have the perfect distribution of the million inscriptions. That way, when they were assembled, they could complement each other and function perfectly.

Everything had to be restarted should there be a failure at any point, since it was crucial to ensure that no mistakes were made. Just like that, after being immersed in the refinement process for a month, Wang Baole emerged, agitated and excited as he had finally completed every single one of the seventy-eight Numinous Treasures.

Even though Wang Baole wasn't completely satisfied with every one of them, considering his level of knowledge, it was the best that he could do. Even the Numinous Treasures that he had made previously weren't as demanding in terms of the amount of concentration and effort needed to produce that batch of Numinous Treasures.

In the month that passed, he was so focused on the improvised structure for the Fire God Cannon that he had forgotten all about his snacks.

*The next step will be the most difficult step of assembling everything...* Looking at the Numinous Treasures before him, Wang Baole took a deep breath to calm his agitation. He understood that assembling the Numinous Treasures wasn't as simple as putting together pieces of wooden blocks. Instead, they could only be integrated under the control of spirit energy during the refinement process.

That was extremely challenging and shockingly demanding on one's spirit energy and focus. Therefore, Wang Baole only began the assembly process after taking a day's break.

Even though Wang Baole had predicted the level of difficulty in assembling all the Numinous Treasures, he still found it challenging and experienced many instances of failure. That was especially so on the fifth day when the prototype of the Fire God Cannon before Wang Baole suddenly exploded after a loud boom emerged.

Wang Baole managed to protect himself from the impact using the protective covering provided by a Golden Bell Bead. However, looking at the Numinous Treasures that had broken into pieces, Wang Baole was on the brink of tears as he dejectedly pulled his hair hard.

*My cultivation is insufficient!* A look of stubbornness was apparent from Wang Baole's eyes. After experiencing those failures, he had realized that the assembly of Numinous Treasures required precise control of spirit energy in many aspects. Therefore, as soon as his spirit energy was unable to keep up with the pace of refinement, degradation and retardation would result, causing the assembly process to fail.

Even though Wang Baole surpassed other second level True Breath disciples, he was still unable to complete the assembly in one go. His thoughts darted around as he paced the cave abode, before suddenly stopping in his tracks.

*I can only succeed in assembling the Numinous Treasure if I become a third level True Breath!* With that thought, Wang Baole gritted his teeth as he planned to purchase more pills. He suddenly lowered his head to look at his stomach, and a bewildered look appeared in his eyes as he stroked it with his hands.

*The effectiveness of those pills is probably nothing compared to the crystal in my stomach... Every time my cultivation is activated, some part of the crystal would be absorbed. However, it is still too slow. If the rate of absorption can be increased, I will definitely be able to achieve a breakthrough in my cultivation!* Slapping his stomach, Wang Baole immediately sat down with his legs crossed and took out the Numinous Treasure that had the effect of deceiving one's mind, which was given to him by Chen Yutong.

Without hesitation, Wang Baole immediately put the Numinous Treasure on his head and began to give out orders.

"I am heavily injured, and I need nutrients..." As Wang Baole completed his sentence, the helmet-like Numinous Treasure vibrated. A current appeared to reach into his head, but that was it. There wasn't any further reaction.

Wang Baole waited for a short while and was beginning to feel troubled. He tried different commands, including that of hunger and running, and realized that everything had failed. He then stared with his eyes wide, as he felt like he needed to give out a more substantial command.

"I am pregnant again!" The moment he said it, the current from the Numinous Treasure seemed to grow in magnitude. However, even before Wang Baole could feel delighted, the current lost its effects after it entered his head.

That made Wang Baole dumbfounded.

*Could it be that I have deceived my mind too many times, such that it has developed resistance and no longer believes me?* Thinking of that possibility, Wang Baole exhaled deeply, shocked at his guess. While incredulous at the thought, he was also inevitably embarrassed. After all, the fact that his own mind didn't believe him seemed bizarre.

*This won't do...* Wang Baole was frustrated. He opened up the Spirit Intranet to look at the pills on sale. However, after browsing for a long time, he still hadn't found one that not only had no side effects but could also allow him to achieve a breakthrough in a short period of time.

A majority of the pills were milder ones that required long term consumption to increase one's level of cultivation. The pills that Wang Baole needed existed, but were something that would only come about with luck, and couldn't be forcefully attained.

Considering that it was less than two months to the major Armament Soldier assessment, Wang Baole grew anxious. He even contacted Bunny and Du Min, but Bunny didn't reply as she seemed to still be in seclusion. Du Min replied but immediately told Wang Baole that she didn't have any of the pills he needed.

Just as Wang Baole considered asking Chen Yutong about it, he suddenly remembered that when he was in the stronghold plucking the teeth of the beasts, he was electrocuted once, and that caused the crystal to break apart slightly.

With that thought, Wang Baole's eyes suddenly lit up. He immediately retrieved his Hallucination Pillow and entered the Hallucination realm. He searched for Little Missy and expressed his wish to be electrocuted...

Little Missy was confused and incredulous at the request but still electrocuted him...

However, despite being shocked several times and screaming in pain each time, Wang Baole soon realized dejectedly that everything was futile.

*This isn't right... Could it be that the electrocution in the Hallucination realm is ineffective and that only those that happened in real life work?* Wang Baole was upset and frustrated. He felt that carrying on that path would lead to his failure and death. However, when he thought about the Armament Soldier assessment and the position of being the person in charge of the College Administrative Department, he decided to give it a try by finding an electrical cable on Lower Academy Island.

However, just at that time, Little Missy from the mask gave Wang Baole a suggestion.

"Perhaps you can try to use this imaginary force of lightning... This type of lightning encompasses some laws that make it even more unique than the electricity that you can create!"

*Lightning?* Wang Baole was momentarily frozen in thought. After leaving the Hallucination realm, he thought for a moment, and recalled that the Chancellor of the Lower Academy Island had previously said that there was a Lightning Domain mystic realm that was accessible to all disciples of the Upper Academy Island!

Even though Wang Baole had never been to the Lightning Domain mystic realm since becoming a disciple on the Upper Academy Island, he had read other people's discussions about it on the Spirit

Intranet. He knew that the so-called mystic realm was actually a perfectly preserved piece of fragment from the ancient greenish-bronze sword.

The fragment was buried and encompassed a bolt of lightning inherited from the ancient greenish-bronze sword. The inheritance was split into five parts, each representing the five different spells and mystic techniques.

*These five spells are Flash Arc, Electromagnetic Pulse, Instant Sword, Explosive Dragon, and... Hell Sea!* Wang Baole narrowed his eyes and mumbled inwardly. He knew that if one could master all five spells and integrate them, they would attain the complete inheritance.

That form of complete inheritance was remarkably similar to the extremely terrible climate within the Federation. It was called... Electromagnetism Burst!

After analyzing everything in his mind, a look of determination flashed across Wang Baole's eyes. He knew that he had no time to lose, as he had to break through the second level of the True Breath stage as soon as possible and advance into the third level.

That way, he could successfully assemble the seventy-eight Numinous Treasures to create his improvised Fire God Cannon for the Armament Soldier assessment!

*I probably won't die from this!* Erasing any traces of hesitation, Wang Baole decisively left the cave abode. He took out his water droplet cruiser and charged out of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion towards the Array Runes Pavilion.

The droplet cruiser traveled at breathtaking speed. Before long, Wang Baole had reached the Array Runes Pavilion, heading straight towards the Lightning Domain mystic realm.

The Lightning Domain mystic realm was located in a small hill on the Array Runes Pavilion. There were seven to eight humongous pieces of green stones erected there, and a circular spell array lay in its center.

As that place was open to everyone, no one stood guard. After registering, anyone could enter to look for an opportunity, and could also make use of the force of the array formation for protection. As soon as a disciple met with danger inside it, they could be instantly sent back.

It was already dusk when Wang Baole arrived. Even though there were still some people in the Lightning Domain mystic realm, it was few and far between. Without further ado, Wang Baole registered himself when he arrived and stepped directly into the array formation. His vision blurred immediately, and when it cleared up, he had appeared in another realm.

It was pure darkness in that place. There was a tall pagoda erected on the ground that seemed to be made of gold. Like the tip of a sword, there were over a thousand of such pagodas on the ground when one looked from afar. There were also pulses of roaring thunder erupting in the sky. When one raised his head, he could also see that in the layers of clouds in the dark, lightning flashed irregularly and crazily, one after another.

Sometimes, the lightning landed and struck the tall pagodas on the ground, causing them to vibrate. Looking from afar, the lightning flashes that landed were like a lightning dragon, extremely frightening as it seemed like Heavenly Tribulation.

## Chapter 189: The Baole Cannon

The sight stunned Wang Baole, sending him into a daze. That was his first time here, and he was shaken by the strangeness of the place. He noticed the silhouette of a cultivator perched on each of the surrounding seven to eight towering pagodas; they were all disciples from the Upper Academy Island who were there seeking advancement in their cultivation.

Lightning flashed, and thunder resounded. The seven to eight people fought back to various degrees. A few withstood the onslaught while others, under the force of the assault, immediately activated the teleportation device and fled the place.

*So brutal!* Wang Baole's eyelids twitched fiercely. He hesitated, then gritted his teeth. He ignored the people around him and, with a sudden sway of his body, leaped onto one of the nearby pagodas. Standing atop the highest point, he raised his head and looked towards the heavens.

*There are in total forty lightning bolts... each strike is stronger than the previous one. For every eight lightning bolts one withstands, he'll be able to unravel a mystic technique from within the lightning!* The brief description he had read on the Spirit Intranet appeared in Wang Baole's mind. He sucked in a deep breath and circulated his cultivation.

It was then that thunder howled in the heavens. A stray bolt of lightning that had been traveling the skies suddenly swerved and tore itself loose. With startling speed, and an intent to destroy everything, it descended; its target... Wang Baole!

It was too quick. Just as Wang Baole caught sight of it, the lightning bolt, like a huge arc of electricity, struck—landing directly on Wang Baole.

A thundering roar resounded in the air. Wang Baole's eyes widened in an instant, and his body shook uncontrollably as he heard buzzing in his head. The lightning bolt was like a golden snake spirit, passing through him instantaneously and wandering within his body without rest. It agitated the Spirit Qi crystal, sending it into tremors and causing its rapid breakdown!

*It's working!* Wang Baole was thrilled. His body trembled, his hair started to stand, and his eyes were wide open; he was electrified.

The lightning was powerful but tolerable to Wang Baole, who was frequently electrocuted in the hallucination realm. He found himself caring less about the pain, especially after feeling the crystal breaking down.

As the crystal broke up under the assailing lightning, considerable Spirit Qi spread out, immediately filling Wang Baole's entire body. It surged through his meridians and the streams of Spirit Qi, and gradually broadening the streams into wide rivers.

As the crystal broke up and released Spirit Qi, Wang Baole's physical body, under the lightning bolt's stimulation, began to absorb the Spirit Qi for nourishment. His physical body started to strengthen at the same time.

That drove Wang Baole into further excitement and glee, and his breath quickened. He lifted his head to the skies abruptly, his finger pointing heavenward in a hook, baiting.

“Strike again, if you dare!”

His words rang out. A few of the surrounding disciples withstanding the thunder strikes heard him and looked over, startled. They couldn't spare further attention on him though, quickly refocused on resisting their own lightning bolts.

Soon, as lightning descended, crashing, Wang Baole received his second lightning bolt. It was multiple folds stronger than the first wave, landing a straight hit on him.

Wang Baole's body shook. He felt the breaking up of his crystal and was thrilled, enduring the agonizing pain stubbornly. Gradually, the third bolt and the fourth, descended, one after another.

The sensation of the lightning bolt traveling through his body was akin to a knife scraping inside him. The pain intensified as the lightning bolts grew more powerful.

When the fourth lightning bolt landed, Wang Baole could take it no longer. Despite his thick skin and thicker flesh, and his brimming Spirit Qi, he gave up and teleported out of the Lightning Domain mystic realm. He returned to his cave abode, sat down cross-legged, activated his skills, and immersed fully in absorbing the Spirit Qi released from his crystal.

A few days passed. Wang Baole brimmed with energy and could feel the tremendous leap in his cultivation levels. Invigorated and in high spirits, he headed for the Lightning Domain mystic realm again.

Day after day passed in that manner. The cycle repeated itself as Wang Baole continued challenging the Lightning Domain mystic realm, often withstanding a few bolts of lightning and breaking up his crystal further. He would hold on until he reached the limits of his tolerance before returning hastily to absorb the released Spirit Qi.

Gradually, as his cultivation level heightened and physical body strengthened, the intensity of the thunderbolts he suffered grew stronger. The number of bolts he could withstand crept steadily from five to six, then to seven!

His presence in the Lightning Domain mystic realm started to draw attention. Indeed, to many, Wang Baole's resistance of six, even seven thunderbolts, was a feat of astounding proportions.

After all, most of them could only withstand two, at most three, lightning strikes, and they wouldn't attempt a second round until quite some time had passed; however, the time between Wang Baole's visits, from the initial three to four days, shortened until he was frequenting almost every day...

Everyone who witnessed that was incredulous.

“Why is he coming every day?”

“How does his body take it?”

“Look at the strange expression on his face. It's like... damn it, why does it feel like he's enjoying himself!”

Under the shocked gazes of the crowd, Wang Baole indeed was growing more and more comfortable. Especially at the end, as the lightning intensified. Although the pain persisted, it was eased by the Spirit Qi released from the breaking up of the crystal. The advancement of his cultivation also energized him and increasingly strengthened his immunity against the thunderbolts.

The cycle repeated itself over the course of the month. Finally, the day arrived when Wang Baole withstood seven consecutive lightning bolts. The crystal inside him quaked and unleashed a surge of Spirit Qi, pushing his cultivation straight into the next level!

From the second tier of the True Breath realm, it broke through and reached the third tier!

As his cultivation broke through, the Spirit Qi laying within the meridians inside Wang Baole's body morphed from slivers of streams into wide river channels. They surged in a torrent and coursed through his body, and his spirit energy surged. He didn't choose to teleport away; instead, with an eager glint in his eyes, Wang Baole awaited... the eighth incoming bolt of lightning!

The eighth lightning bolt stood apart from the rest. A tinge of crimson colored it. When it landed, shocked gasps arose from the disciples who had been cultivation in the area. They watched as the crimson-tinted lightning rushed through the heavens and crashed directly into Wang Baole.

Wang Baole's body spasmed. It felt as if his body was on the verge of being torn apart, and he felt the extensive breaking up of the crystal in his body. In the same instant, techniques describing how one could wield the lightning appeared in his mind.

It was as if those lightning-wielding techniques were seared directly into his body, and branded straight onto his soul, transforming in his mind as an incomplete rune!

The rune glimmered. The uninitiated wouldn't understand, but Wang Baole, after allowing the sensations to sink in, seemed to grasp the meaning behind the rune intuitively.

It... was the first of the five mystic techniques of the Lightning Domain mystic realm!

Amidst the thundering roars, Wang Baole could hold on no longer. He instantly teleported away from the Lightning Domain mystic realm. As he stumbled out, staggering, a splatter of bright blood spilled from his mouth. His eyes were bright with exhilaration, and he lifted his face towards the sky and let loose a loud burst of laughter.

*I've done it!* Wang Baole climbed to his feet excitedly, patted his behind and raising his right hand. With a wave, an arc of lightning appeared instantly over his fingers. It looked tiny, but the electrical energy contained within the tiny lightning bolt sent many disciples clustering around the entrance of the mystic realm reeling in shock. Some even gasped aloud.

"Flash Arc!"

Flash Arc was the first of the five mystic techniques found in the Lightning Domain mystic realm, and few on the Upper Academy Island attained it. As a result, the appearance of a new wielder always attracted much attention!

Wang Baole appeared smug amidst the crowd's startled gasps. He didn't try to show off further, though. Instead, he happily retrieved his droplet-shaped cruiser and returned to his cave abode at the Dharmic

Armament Pavilion. He watched as his palm flipped over and out came a Flash Arc; then flipped over again and out burst a burning flame. He was excited beyond measure. He felt that he had already become very powerful.

*I have three great killer moves now—Heated Burst, Flash Arc, and Cloud Finger!* His heart filled with great satisfaction, Wang Baole felt the Spirit Qi rushing through his meridians like a great river, and at the same time felt his strengthened physical body. He laughed out loud uncontrollably.

*True Breath realm, third level!* Invigorated and spirits enlivened, he took out some Ice Spirit Water and guzzled down five bottles in one go. Then, he wiped his mouth, gave his stomach a pat, and sat down cross-legged. He pulled out the Dharmic Artifacts needed for the enhanced Fire God Cannon, his eyes ablaze with vigor.

*Next, to complete the Numinous Treasure required for the Armament Soldier assessment!* Wang Baole took a deep breath and suppressed the joyous emotions in his heart. After he gradually eased into a calm composure, he began the fusion of the Numinous Treasures.

Time inched by slowly and half a month passed. One week before the start of the Armament Soldier Assessment, one late night, the door to Wang Baole's cave abode opened suddenly, and he dashed out from within.

His hair was a mess, and he looked spent, but his eyes shone brightly. Excitement overwhelmed him. He boarded his cruiser and sped away from the Upper Academy Island towards the wilderness beyond Ethereal City.

Wang Baole stood on his cruiser, suspended in mid-air above the expanse of wilderness. He raised his right hand and waved once. A long pipe with the thickness of an arm appeared in his hand. The pipe was pitch-black in color and looked like a cannon pipe, exuding an eerie aura as well as an intense spirit force.

*This is the enhanced Fire God Cannon that I have refined!* Wang Baole caressed the cold cannon pipe, lugged it up excitedly, and aimed at a hill below him. The Spirit Qi within his body surged forward and exploded.

A blinding light grew within the cannon instantly. With an earth-shattering roar thundering across the skies, an overwhelming backlash from the firing hit Wang Baole's shoulder. The cruiser he was in was pushed many yards back. A purple blast of light surged from within the cannon.

It raced towards the hill. As explosions resounded in the air and the hill trembled. It was hit from the top at an angle, and shot straight through with a blast that created a gigantic hole two meters wide!

Wang Baole stared at the destruction wrought by the enhanced Fire God Cannon and looked blown away—disbelief filled his eyes.

*Such power... it's exceeded a perfected third-grade. It can even be ranked as a fourth-grade!*

*I've even thought of a name. Let's call it... the Baole Cannon!* Wang Baole stood on the cruiser, brimming with pride. He raised the Fire God Cannon to the sky with one hand and laughed loudly.

"At the Armament Soldier assessment, who dares to cause strife when the Baole Cannon appears!"

## Chapter 190: Armament Soldier Assessment

Wang Baole was overwhelmed with emotions. Excitement overtook him, and he tried firing a few more shots. Exhilaration sped through his body; he trembled with glee, and the glimmer in his eyes grew brighter and brighter.

Wang Baole couldn't be more satisfied. Though the Numinous Treasure's firepower couldn't compare with the actual Fire God Cannon, it was mobile and easy to transport. That singular feature increased its value immeasurably.

*Even though there are plenty of Numinous Treasures like it, most are fourth or fifth-grade treasures. Their firepower is amazing, but their energy usage is considerable as well. In that aspect, they can't measure up to my Baole Cannon!* Wang Baole did a round of assessment and ended up satisfied with his evaluation. He caressed the cannon a few more times before he reluctantly placed it back into his storage bracelet. He hummed a cheerful tune and returned to his cave abode in the Upper Academy Island in high spirits.

He did some calculations and realized that there was still a week to the Armament Soldier assessment. To ensure that everything ran smoothly on the day of the assessment, he attempted to dismantle the Baole Cannon. He had found out that there had been instances of disciples being instructed to recraft their Numinous Treasure during the assessment.

In preparation for the worst, Wang Baole even refined a separate set of composite Numinous Treasures for the Baole Cannon. He also prepared sufficient materials and ingredients concurrently. In the worst case scenario where he had to refine the cannon on the spot, he would be fully prepared to do so. After all the preparations were done, he settled down and rested so that he could go into the Armament Soldier assessment in top form.

During that period, as the assessment date drew near, the Upper Academy Island disciples who had applied for the round of assessment all started on the final leg of their preparation.

That was especially so for Lin Tianhao. After he had moved out from Wang Baole's neighboring cave abode, he ceased his provocations of Wang Baole. However, the seeds of hatred and vengeance had been buried deep in his heart. He intended to pass the Armament Soldier assessment before seeking revenge.

His preparation for the assessment was extensive. His goal was not simply to pass the assessment, but to attain first place in the Armament Soldier assessment!

Originally, it would have been impossible for someone of his caliber to accomplish that within such a short span of time, but his family was rich; they supported his single-minded focus on refining Numinous Treasures, and there was no price they wouldn't pay. They even invited a grandmaster from the Federation to instruct him personally. Their efforts were why he had managed to advance so speedily.

*I've chosen the Planetary Bottle, the Numinous Treasure that is the most difficult to refine out of all the third-grade Numinous Treasures! This Numinous Treasure is ranked top in all of the third-grade*

*Numinous Treasures that have been listed!* Lin Tianhao sat cross-legged in his cave abode and confidently studied the dazzling jade bottle scattering starlight before him.

He had heard that Wang Baole had also applied for the upcoming Armament Soldier assessment. It was a matter he took very seriously. He even pulled a few strings outside the college and found out Wang Baole had been hunting for monsters' teeth when he had been at the stronghold.

*Since he needs monsters' teeth, the Numinous Treasure he's planning to refine for the assessment must be the Dragon's Tooth!*

*The Dragon's Tooth might be a fine treasure, but it's not even in the same league as the Planetary Bottle. Furthermore, the strength of the Dragon's Tooth relies heavily on materials instead of inscriptions. If Wang Baole chooses the Dragon's Tooth for his assessment, he'll definitely lose to me!* Lin Tianhao smirked. His confidence grew.

As the disciples with the intention of going for the assessment hurried and bustled about with their preparations, the day of the Armament Soldier assessment finally arrived.

The bell sounded; its ringing echoed. Wang Baole, who had been sitting cross-legged in his cave abode, opened his eyes instantly. He sucked in a deep breath, and stood and marched out of the cave abode.

*The position of top Armament Soldier belongs to me!* With a resolute look in his eyes and eagerness in his heart, Wang Baole retrieved his cruiser and raced straight for the Middle Peak!

The venue for the Armament Soldier assessment was the Middle Peak Square in the Dharmic Armament Pavilion. At the heart of the square stood a large, eye-catching war drum. It was the war drum that Wang Baole had seen when he had walked past an Armament Soldier assessment that had been taking place. It was said that only Armament Soldiers had the right to sound the Elder Request Drum!

That was because the drum stick used to sound the drum had to be crafted on the spot. As the drum stick itself was a third-grade Numinous Treasure, Dharmic Armament disciples wouldn't be able to craft it; only Armament Soldiers could.

At that moment, before the war drum in the Middle Peak Square, dozens of people had gathered. They were disciples who had come forth to participate in the round of Armament Armament Soldier assessment. They didn't converse with one another, merely standing and waiting in silence.

When Wang Baole arrived at the Middle Peak Square, he saw the other examinees and caught sight of Lin Tianhao amongst them. The feeling of scorn arose within him.

*That weasel is here for the assessment too? He can refine a Numinous Treasure as well?* Wang Baole snorted silently. He felt that he had established himself and built a strong network of friends and shouldn't have to care too much about Lin Tianhao. He ignored the other youth and approached the war drum.

It was obvious that Lin Tianhao didn't feel the same way as Wang Baole. He leveled his gaze on Wang Baole and held it for some time before sneering.

Crowds of disciples from the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, there to observe, had arrived and clustered around the square. After all, the Armament Soldier assessment was seen as a major event to the Dharmic Armament Pavilion. The crowds of disciples had their heads lowered in heated discussions.

“Who could have guessed that so many people are taking part in this round of Armament Soldier assessment? Wonder who’ll rank first place?”

“Every Armament Soldier assessment, the Armament Soldier who ends up in first place would earn the luxury of choosing his own office. As long as there’s any vacancy in any department, he can use that privilege to be promoted to office immediately!”

“That’s what’s driving people nuts with envy. After all, there’re many out there who’re Armament Soldiers in name but wield no actual power.”

Time passed steadily as the disciples engaged in fierce discussions. After a short while, the bell started ringing hastily; it rang three times. Five figures appeared from within the Middle Peak Great Hall; they approached swiftly, with one in the lead while four trailed behind.

The one in the lead was dressed in purple robes, and his demeanor was composed, but he cast an imposing figure. He was the Pavilion Head of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion. The four trailing behind him were one elderly and three in their middle age. All exuded the aura of a cultivator who had attained the peak of the True Breath realm, and were a mere step away from breaking through to the Foundation Establishment realm!

They were the four deputy Pavilion Heads of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion.

The deputy Pavilion Head was treated with great respect within and outside the college. Their cultivation contributed to but was not the sole reason for their elevated status. They had to possess certain unique strengths or competencies when it came to crafting Numinous Treasures—that was the key to becoming a deputy Pavilion Head of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion.

At the same time, they needed to know the right people and have popular support. It could even be said that every one of the four Deputy Pavilion Heads had their own impressive background. After all, to rise from the multitudes of Armament Soldiers into the position of a Deputy Pavilion Head, one had to be exceptional in some way or another.

That was the case for the Deputy Pavilion Head, even more so for the Pavilion Head of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion.

One after another, the five people reached the Middle Peak Square. Their arrival sent the crowd into a sudden silence, and Wang Baole too sucked in a deep breath as resolve flashed across his eyes. He and the other examinees looked towards the five heads of the Pavilion.

“There are not many rules and regulations governing the Armament Soldier assessment under our Dharmic Armament Pavilion. Every one of you... present the Numinous Treasure you have prepared for the assessment, one person at a time. The five of us will evaluate it and question you before announcing whether you pass or fail the assessment. As for the assessment ranking, the one who is placed first will be rewarded with top priority for placement in office!” Purple-robed Pavilion Head declared coolly. After

he was done speaking, he threw a glance towards Wang Baole and the other examinees and pointed casually at one of them.

“Let’s start with you.”

The person who had been singled out by the Pavilion Head was an experienced disciple. After he had heard the Pavilion Head, he nodded and immediately pulled out a mirror. It was an old, plain-looking mirror with an ordinary appearance. It gave out a strong spirit aura that drew the crowd’s attention. Everyone held their breaths.

The experienced disciple was clearly satisfied with the attention his mirror had caught. He approached the Pavilion Head respectfully and presented the mirror.

“Greetings to the Pavilion Head and Deputy Pavilion Heads. This is the Heaven and Earth Mirror that I have crafted. For your assessment, please!”

Upon seeing the Heaven and Earth Mirror, the spectating crowd starting talking in hushed voices.

“The Heaven and Earth Mirror eh, that’s quite a challenging third-grade Numinous Treasure to craft.”

“It can reflect spells to a certain extent. Its inscription requirements far exceed other Numinous Treasures.”

Wang Baole eyed the Numinous Treasure as the crowd debated. Then, he thought of his Baole Cannon and was filled with confidence once again. He didn’t drop his guard though, paying great attention as the Pavilion Head and deputy Pavilion Heads conducted the assessment.

The Pavilion Head picked the mirror up and gave it a quick inspection before handing it over to the Deputy Pavilion Heads. They were Dharmic Armament cultivators by cultivation and familiar with Numinous Treasures. It did not take long—only an hour or so—before they reached their separate conclusions. They posed some questions on the mirror’s crafting process, to which the experienced disciple answered smoothly. The assessment then ended.

After a brief discussion, the results were announced.

“You passed and are promoted to an Armament Soldier. Your ranking will be determined at the end,” the Pavilion Head said coolly. He pointed at another person. The Armament Soldier assessment proceeded in that manner, where some passed while others failed.

Some received questions while some were instructed to demonstrate the crafting of a specific part on the spot. One Numinous Treasure after another was displayed, and the voices from the crowd rose and ebbed.

Wang Baole gradually made sense of the process as he observed the proceedings.

*Not everyone will be asked to demonstrate the crafting process. However, everyone will be posed questions, which are tricky and challenging to answer correctly unless he was the one who crafted the Numinous Treasure himself.*

As Wang Baole continued his pondering, Lin Tianhao’s turn soon came. He pulled out the Planetary Bottle, instantly causing a stir amongst the spectating disciples. Shouts of amazement rose, and the

other examinees were immediately drawn towards him and the bottle. Even the Pavilion Head and the four Deputy Pavilion Head displayed surprise on their faces.

“The Planetary Bottle!”

“It’s been said that this is the hardest third-grade Numinous Treasure to refine. It’s the first time I’m seeing one!”

“The inscriptions required for this treasure are extremely complex. There’s also the Planetary Stone, necessary for refinement but extremely expensive...”

Wang Baole’s eyes widened amidst the stunned gasps of the crowd. He knew of the Planetary Bottle. There were few Planetary Stones in the college, though; if one wanted to craft the Numinous Treasure, he would need to spend a great amount of effort to buy it outside. That was why he had given up on crafting it in the first place and instead had chosen the next best thing, which was almost equally difficult to refine but whose requirements of materials and ingredients were not as challenging—the Dragon’s Tooth.

Lin Tianhao didn’t show the relish and triumph he was feeling at the moment. He respectfully handed the Planetary Bottle to the Pavilion Head instead. Only then did he steal a glance at the stunned Wang Baole and sneer inwardly.

*You penniless wretch, trying to compete with me?*

Wang Baole caught Lin Tianhao looking. He raised an eyebrow, his face unsmiling, and thought, *So what if it was the Planetary Bottle. Once he revealed his cannon, even Lin Tianhao had no choice but to admit defeat and call him daddy.*

Under the stunned gazes of the crowd, the Pavilion Head took the Planetary Bottle from Lin Tianhao’s hands, and astonishment colored his eyes. He examined the bottle, a look of praise gradually surfacing on his face. He nodded and passed the bottle to the Deputy Pavilion Heads.

The four Deputy Pavilion Heads clearly approved of the Planetary Bottle. They assessed it and asked Lin Tianhao a few questions, which Lin Tianhao answered smoothly. When one of the Deputy Pavilion Heads requested that he demonstrate the refinement of the inscriptions on the spot, Lin Tianhao complied without hesitation.

The crowd was shaken by the scene. When they looked at Lin Tianhao, it was with growing respect. Anyone who could successfully craft a Planetary Bottle was the epitome of competency and wealth.

“It’s an impressive Numinous Treasure. You’ve passed, Lin Tianhao. If no accidents happen, you stand a great chance of placing first,” the Pavilion Head praised him. As Lin Tianhao stepped back excitedly, the Pavilion Head’s eyes swept past the remaining few disciples, who included Wang Baole. He pointed at Wang Baole.

“Wang Baole, show us the Numinous Treasure you’ve prepared.”

Upon hearing the Pavilion Head’s words, a slightly annoyed Wang Baole walked up immediately and without further ado, raised his right hand, flipped it over and pulled out a huge cannon!

With a loud thud, he placed it on the ground then raised his head. He spoke calmly, "The Numinous Treasure that I have refined is not from within the Dharmic Armament Pavilion's Numinous Treasure Roll but something that I've invented on my own. Its name... The Great Mighty Baole Cannon, Baole Cannon for short!"