

**Worth 331**

**Chapter 331: Dark Ancestry**

As Wang Baole entered the hallucination realm and sought Little Missy's advice, far away from earth in the distant space lit with endless stars, lay a spatial distortion.

The region was extremely vast, as vast as the Milky Way. Countless threads of light filled the region and were the cause of the distortion. The varied and layered light waves resulted in layered images of everything in the area. Be it the drifting dust or the silent stars—they looked like countless images of themselves layered together.

Sight and all other senses would be disrupted here, and one would sense oneself being in an illusion. Everything that one saw was distorted.

The vastness of the spatial distortion was indescribable. All life that sprung within the region seemed to contain within themselves an essence of the distortion. They hovered between the real and the surreal. As a result, the region had been given a unique name by many civilizations in the universe.

Its name... the Illusory Dark Realm!

In the deepest depths of the Illusory Dark Realm, in its core, was an inner region the size of the solar system. It contained almost no life at all and was a mysterious zone that escaped discovery by most.

It was akin to a restricted zone in the Illusory Dark Realm. Everyone who had stepped into the zone had never managed to leave alive.

There were legends that within this restricted zone, inside the vast space, was a single star. It was a gray star...

No one knew how the legend came about. After all, all who had ventured into the zone had never made it back alive. However, there it was, recorded in history since the beginning of time.

Naturally, no one attempted to test its truth.

The truth was, there was no star in the deepest core of the restricted zone. There was a vast whirlpool that was like a black hole. It was gray and spun soundlessly. From afar, it looked like a spiral formed out of countless stars.

When the Dark Fire had burst into being inside Wang Baole, a light started shining inside the constant, never-changing whirlpool. It was a light different from all other lights of the past.

It was multi-colored, and as it shone and sparkled fiercely, a gray coffin slowly drifted out from the whirlpool. It was as if it had crossed over from nothingness into being.

The coffin was black and made of an unknown material, and as it appeared, an indescribable chill erupted from the coffin.

The chilly aura spread across space, as if intending to freeze everything over. If Wang Baole were there, he would be shocked to realize that the chill gave off the exact same feeling that he had felt when he had successfully learned the Dark Art!

“When our Dark Sect was still in its peak and had not yet declined, we appeared to have gifted certain Dark Artifacts...”

“As centuries passed and our bloodline fell into decline and eventual extinction, everything became history... the Dark Artifacts of the past were all scattered throughout the lands and lost their power. Who could have known that, after all this time, a Dark Artifact would be activated and bring us a new heir... it might be a little too late, but... this is still one of our Dark Sect. We gift the Dark Coffin in hopes that he will escape the Calamity of Origins...” An ancient voice slowly traveled out from the whirlpool. It seemed to be a faint murmur and a sigh at the same time. The next moment, a gigantic, blurry hand the size of half the whirlpool gradually reached out from the whirlpool.

It was a mere silhouette when it first appeared, but soon, bone and flesh appeared and transformed it into a complete hand. It extended from a gray sleeve, its exposed skin wrinkled and its nails long and curved. The hand stretched out and gently flicked the coffin, which seemed bug-sized compared to the hand.

The coffin instantly shot out, its destination... Mars!

At present, Wang Baole had just left the hallucination realm and was still in shock. Part of it was due to what Little Missy had shared with him. The other part was because he still had doubts regarding how he had managed to learn the Dark Art.

After his return, he sat down cross-legged and started thinking. He thought for very long, recalling the various encounters and experiences he had gone through. He shuddered suddenly as he remembered something.

*Does this have anything to do with me breathing in the blood-colored mist in the cave?* Wang Baole’s breathing quickened at the thought. He knew that prior to his visit to the cave, he had met with nothing but failure when attempting to practice the Dark Art. After he had returned, he had gone into seclusion but hadn’t immediately started on practicing the Dark Art. The most recent seclusion could be considered his first attempt since the cave visit.

He had succeeded immediately during this first attempt, sensing the Negative Spirit Body and forming Dark Fire inside his body!

He couldn’t control the surge of emotions inside him as he pondered. He began to have his own guesses about the blood-colored mist. However, everything was mere conjecture at this point. Wang Baole himself was unsure of his own conclusions.

The thought of the blood-colored mist reminded Wang Baole of Lin Tianhao. Even though he had spoken to various people and had received occasional news, the blood-colored mist was too bizarre a phenomenon. He couldn’t help but be concerned for Lin Tianhao...

Wang Baole immediately pulled out his voice transmission ring. After a moment of thought, he decided to send a transmission to Li Wan'er. He coughed when Li Wan'er's cold voice rang out from the voice transmission ring.

"Minister Li, I'm Wang Baole. Erm... it has been more than a month since my subordinate, Lin Tianhao, was taken away by the military. I still haven't managed to establish contact with him..." Wang Baole paused at this point and didn't continue.

Li Wan'er was silent for a moment. Then, she spoke coolly.

"The other teams have all returned. Lin Tianhao's team sent a voice transmission two days ago reporting that everything was in order. They will be returning to base soon." Li Wan'er ended the transmission after that.

Wang Baole didn't give too much thought to Li Wan'er's attitude. She had offered him an answer which eased the worry in Wang Baole's heart. He continued studying his Dark Fire. Then, suddenly, he smacked his thigh. He raised his head and stared at the door to his chamber.

*Man... I seem to have forgotten... the donkey!* Wang Baole rose to his feet hastily. He swung the doors to his chamber open and immediately saw the donkey sprawled before the entrance. It had slimmed down considerably and had a blank, lost look in its eyes.

The donkey noticed Wang Baole. It was starving and weak. Its eyes shone with resentment, and it seemed to be asking Wang Baole why the ten days Wang Baole had spoken of... seemed so long.

Wang Baole felt slightly sheepish. He immediately removed the restriction on the donkey. As soon as the restriction was stripped away, the donkey, which had its mouth clamped shut for two weeks, finally made a sound.

"Son..."

Its voice sounded weak, and it seemed like it was about to cry. Wang Baole felt slightly guilty. He pulled out a handful of snacks and threw them towards the donkey.

"This will teach you to be on good behavior next time!" Wang Baole coughed after throwing the snacks out. He gave the donkey a few words of scolding and watched as the donkey gobbled up the food like a starving wolf. He couldn't help but soften his stance. He pulled out a few more bags of snacks.

The donkey was overwhelmed by emotion as it saw so many snacks before it. Its eyes brimmed with tears. It looked at Wang Baole with gratitude in its eyes.

"That's right, that's what I call a good donkey!" Wang Baole was pleased with the effect he had gotten from this punishment. In the next four days, he continued to study the Dark Fire and perfect his blueprints for his stronghold. He also started crafting construction puppets. The lesson of having its mouth sealed shut seemed to have been seared deep into the donkey's brain. Despite having regained its energy and vitality, it didn't dare to overstep too much. It was especially meek and obedient when in front of Wang Baole.

This pleased Wang Baole tremendously. He thought that since the donkey was so obedient now, he might consider buying it a beast bag. As he thought about it and was about to make a trip out, he suddenly received an invitation from the military via his voice transmission ring!

The Martian military cordially invited Wang Baole to instruct them in the installation of the Baole Cannon!

The Baole Cannon that Wang Baole had invented received widespread usage in the military on Earth. The Martian military had also been allocated a number of the cannons. However, due to the logistics of transportation as well as constraints on existing resources, the cannons were sent to them in parts and required assembly.

Originally, a consultant would be required to assist and supervise the assembly. This was because Wang Baole had installed encryptions inside the Baole Cannon. He had shared the encryption with the military when he sold it to them, but the encryption remained a top secret inside the military.

However... the original creator of the Baole Cannon, Wang Baole, was on Mars. No consultant could rival Wang Baole's understanding and knowledge of the Baole Cannon. That was why the military had cordially invited Wang Baole to oversee the assembly.

Wang Baole accepted the invitation readily. It was true that he was now the dean of the Dao Mountain Mist Academy, a well-known personality on Mars, and had a wide social network. However, if he should establish a good, strong relationship with the Martian military, this would further cement his safety on Mars.

With Wang Baole's agreement, the military sent a cruiser to receive him. Wang Baole gave his donkey a look. He didn't feel safe leaving it alone on its own, so he brought the donkey onboard with him, and they raced off towards the Martian military base!

### **Chapter 332: Black Donkey Versus White Donkey**

This was the first time Wang Baole had stepped onboard a military cruiser. Any other person might not have sensed the difference, but as a Dharmic Armament cultivator, Wang Baole knew at first glance what separated this military cruiser from other ordinary cruisers.

*I've never seen this material before... it should be highly heat resistant. The inscriptions on the cruiser seem to look different than the usual.* As Wang Baole inspected the cruiser, the Martian military cultivators were observing Wang Baole as well.

Wang Baole's reputation had been climbing steadily upwards in both the Federation and on Mars. His reputation in the military was the same, especially since he was the creator of the Baole Cannon.

As the military cultivators observed Wang Baole, they also caught sight of the donkey at his side. They all looked surprised. They turned and stared at one another. It seemed like they wanted to say something, but in the end, they didn't.

Wang Baole noticed the strange looks from the military cultivators. He wondered if they had heard about how greedy the donkey was and were worried that it might eat up their cruiser.

*But why do I feel like they are comparing the donkey with something else...* Wang Baole blinked. He was about to say something and get something out from them when he noticed the donkey licking the metallic walls of the cruiser. It started sniffing it like a dog and seemed like it was assessing how tasty it might be.

“Useless thing!” Wang Baole stepped forward and kicked it without warning.

The donkey immediately became meek and sprawled on the floor. It looked listless. However, as soon as Wang Baole turned his attention away, it secretly licked the wall again. It continued to droop its ears. Another moment later, it swiftly licked again...

Wang Baole, who had been chatting casually with the military cultivators, saw it. His head started throbbing. He coughed. The donkey immediately tilted its head sideways and stared at Wang Baole with its innocent eyes, as if saying that it hadn't been eating anything. It was only taking a small lick.

Wang Baole could feel a headache coming on. He thought about what the donkey was trying to put across with that expression on its face, and it seemed to make some sense. He glared at it for a while but didn't do anything else. When the cruiser finally landed on the Martian base, the metallic wall that had been thoroughly licked by the donkey had a sheen of saliva on it. Wang Baole and his donkey got out of the cruiser amidst the strange looks from the surrounding military officers.

The Martian military base was located in Zone Thirty-Six, and a large part of that zone belonged to the military and was restricted to the public. There were many military men seen patrolling the grounds, and a large number of military cultivators were also based in the military station.

The military had prepared a rather welcoming reception for Wang Baole. A dozen or so military officers led by an elder personally received him at the port.

The elder was dressed in military attire. His eyes seemed to contain lightning, and he exuded authority and power as well as a Core Formation realm cultivation. He had an overpowering presence.

His status was naturally elevated. He was one of the five most powerful figures in the Martian military. His name was Chen Feng, and he was in charge of the research of military equipment as well as the fusion of Spirit Qi and explosives for military use.

Wang Baole saw the welcome party as soon as he got out of the cruiser. The military cultivator escorting him down the cruiser whispered the names and profiles of the receiving party. The look on Wang Baole's face immediately became serious. He sped up his pace and took a deep bow before the elder.

“Greetings General Chen, I'm Wang Baole!”

Chen Feng burst out into laughter. He looked at Wang Baole with approval and encouragement in his eyes. He had started studying the various Baole Cannon parts that had been sent to them and could sense the cannon was not a simple artifact. He began to have a keen interest in Wang Baole, whom he had never met before. There was actually no need for his presence today. However, he had come just so he could meet the original creator of the Baole Cannon.

“What a young talent!” Chen Feng patted Wang Baole on the shoulder, his bright laughter ringing in the air. The other military officers followed suit, with warmth and friendliness in their smiles.

They exchanged a round of pleasantries before making a swift departure from the port and heading towards the area where the Baole Cannons were being assembled. Wang Baole walked alongside Chen Feng and answered all of Chen Feng's questions regarding the cannons with ease. He took careful note of his behavior and made sure to be half a step behind Chen Feng at all times. He maintained a humble attitude.

"General Chen, the key to the composite Baole Cannon lies in the interconnectivity of its interior inscriptions... especially inscriptions in groups seven and eight. Those inscriptions control the absorption of Spirit Qi." Wang Baole had a smile on his face. As he walked, he answered Chen Feng's questions and shared the inner workings and structure of the Baole Cannon.

The military officers behind the pair withdrew their discreet stares at Wang Baole's donkey and instead turned towards the pair before them. They sighed and marveled at Wang Baole's social skills. He didn't show off, nor brag. However, he wasn't overly reserved either. He displayed the perfect balance between humility and pride while showing the utmost respect for the military.

*This kid is kind of interesting.* Chen Feng smiled as he looked at Wang Baole. He was pleased with what he saw. The party walked through building after building and soon approached the camp where the Baole Cannons were awaiting assembly.

As they walked, many warriors they passed stopped and saluted the party. They also secretly eyed Wang Baole's donkey.

Wang Baole noticed the stares and found them odd, but he still felt slightly pleased. The donkey seemed proud as well and raised its head high and trotted along happily.

Their destination soon appeared before them. It was then that seven to eight young military officers walked out from a pavilion slightly away from the party. They were all conversing with one another. In the middle of the group was a black-haired youth. He stood tall and was handsome, and he had a resolute look in his starlit eyes.

He wore a purple-colored military uniform, which brought out his striking features. His eyes, especially, had a deep, unfathomable look in them, and he exuded a presence that was beyond his age. If one took a careful look, one might even sense a deeper air of violence that he had concealed. The young man drew all attention away and towards him just by standing there.

The young man was... Kong Dao, who had come from the Sea of Beasts and had been adopted by the current Federation President Duan Muque as his godson!

Besides the military officers who had gathered around him, he had beside him... a donkey!

The donkey was white in color. It looked striking and powerful and exuded an air of purity and holiness, and exuded cultivation energy at the fourth-stage of the True Breath realm. Both its appearance and presence were extraordinary.

Kong Dao and company instantly noticed Chen Feng, Wang Baole, and the others. The former younger officers immediately became serious and greeted the latter respectfully. Kong Dao's eyes fell on Wang Baole, a frown appearing on his brow. He didn't say anything though, merely greeted Chen Feng.

“It’s Kong Dao. Baole, you and Kong Dao are both members of the Federation’s hundred seedlings. You should know each other.” Chen Feng paid little attention to the greetings he had received earlier. However, a smile appeared on his face when he saw Kong Dao. He nodded at Kong Dao. His eyes swept across Kong Dao’s white donkey and then glanced at Wang Baole’s black donkey...

He wasn’t the only one. The officers behind Chen Feng and Kong Dao also couldn’t help themselves as they gave both Wang Baole’s and Kong Dao’s donkeys a quick glance.

This was the first time Wang Baole was seeing Kong Dao and the white donkey at his side. He froze at the sight, and his eyes widened.

*His monster egg hatched too?* Wang Baole took a closer look and was certain that they were the same breed. He couldn’t help the sudden frustration and annoyance he was feeling.

Anyone could see the difference in power between his black donkey and Kong Dao’s white donkey at a single glance. His donkey not only looked perverse and ugly, but its cultivation couldn’t compare to Kong Dao’s donkey either. This displeased Wang Baole. He sighed. He couldn’t help wonder if this was due to his own bad luck, or if the military instructor had been biased when distributing the eggs then.

*I was wondering why these people were eyeing the donkey throughout the trip. They were comparing the two donkeys...* Wang Baole felt slightly unhappy. The black donkey was stunned as it stared at the white donkey in shock. Then, its eyes widened, and a fierce light shone in its eyes. It seemed overjoyed, and it dashed out from behind Wang Baole, braying, and raced towards the white donkey.

### **Chapter 333: Save Me!**

“Son! Son!” The black donkey seemed happy to see one of its kind for the very first time. As it dashed forward, Kong Dao’s white donkey raised its head arrogantly and with a sudden burst of speed, sent its leg kicking.

It was so quick that the black donkey barely had time to react. The kick landed on its body. With a loud sound, it was flung back...

The black donkey fell to the ground with a loud thud. It wasn’t injured. However, it looked dazed. It didn’t expect the other creature to kick him.

“White Phoenix!” Kong Dao chastised his donkey. The white donkey instantly stopped in its steps. It gave the dazed black donkey a disdainful look and returned back to Kong Dao’s side, nuzzling Kong Dao’s leg obediently. Kong Dao cupped his fists and saluted Chen Feng. Then, with the arrogant white donkey and its raised head, he left.

Wang Baole was furious when he saw the scene. He stared at his donkey. It looked dazed and had that innocent look on its face. He couldn’t say a single word. This was, after all, a military base. His own donkey had been the one that had charged at someone else, as if asking for a beating.

He pretended as if the entire incident didn’t happen and continued talking to Chen Feng about the Baole Cannon. Before long, they reached the campsite where the assembly was to take place. He made his

excuses and left for the washroom when they did, which was when he grabbed the donkey and headed inside...

As soon as they stepped inside, Wang Baole turned and leveled a furious glare at the donkey. Its ears were drooping. He was angry at how useless it was.

“Where are your amazing skills when you need them? Don’t you find yourself an embarrassment? You were kicked aside by a female donkey! Look how awesome and invincible you usually are at home. You even dare to bite me! How about now? Where did all that go?”

The donkey seemed to understand Wang Baole’s words. It shuddered, and its eyes grew red.

“I, Wang Baole, am charming and talented, ferocious and invincible, have no equal amongst my peers, have never been taken advantage of by others, and have always been the one to take advantage of others. But you stupid little donkey can’t even handle a female donkey. You were even beaten up. Are you still part of the male species? You’re a disgrace!”

Wang Baole lamented and sighed. He was alright with Kong Dao’s donkey being powerful, but his own donkey had slid close and practically asked for a beating. If this hadn’t been the military base, he would have struck back.

The donkey heard what Wang Baole said and saw the scornful look in Wang Baole’s eyes. Its breathing grew uneven, and its eyes red. For the very first time in its life, the innocent look in its eyes transformed into fury. It turned its head abruptly. It was as if it could see through walls and could sense where the white donkey was. It glared in its direction for a very long time as it gnashed its teeth.

The grudge it was feeling had intensified and become an obsession.

“What’s the point of swearing? When you become stronger in the future, you can go beat it up. Grab it and take it down. That’s what you should do! Show it what you’ve got!” Wang Baole snorted. He was done with his reprimand. Before he stepped out, he couldn’t help but sigh again.

“You’re an embarrassment!”

Wang Baole didn’t notice the donkey’s burning red eyes as he stepped out from the washroom. It stared in the direction of where the white donkey was. The fury in its eyes was laced with violence, seeming to promise vengeance.

Wang Baole shoved down the unhappiness in his heart when he left the washroom and returned to the task of advising and supervising the assembly. A Baole Cannon was swiftly assembled with his instruction, and they tested the cannon and collected some data. General Chen was all praises and admiration. Wang Baole didn’t hold himself back as he personally advised the consultants from the Martian military.

After busying with the assembly for more than half the day, Wang Baole finally shared with the consultants all that he knew about the assembly and the encrypted inscriptions. Both he and Chen Feng personally supervised the process. After making sure that there were no problems, Wang Baole prepared to take his leave.



“General Chen, if there is nothing else, I’ll...” Wang Baole turned and spoke to Chen Feng. However, before he could finish his words, Chen Feng’s voice transmission ring suddenly vibrated.

The expression on Chen Feng’s face changed suddenly after he read the transmission.

“Baole, you can leave first. I still have some matters to attend to, so I won’t be seeing you off.” Chen Feng turned and left after saying that. He had a solemn expression on his face. Wang Baole could sense that something serious must have happened. He had wanted to ask about Lin Tianhao, but it seemed like this wasn’t an appropriate time for that. Just as he was about to leave, his voice transmission ring rang suddenly.

“Wang Baole, I’ve just received news. Something happened to Lin Tianhao’s team. I’m not sure what exactly. I’ll let you know when I have more details.” The sender was Li Wan’er.

Wang Baole froze when he heard Li Wan’er’s transmission. The look on his face grew serious as he recalled the somber look on Chen Feng’s face earlier. He suddenly lifted his head abruptly and stared at Chen Feng, who was hastily walking away. He decided to throw caution to the wind and shouted suddenly.

“General Chen, my vice dean, Lin Tianhao, took my place and joined one of the military teams on a mission. Do you have any news of him?”

Chen Feng, who had been hurrying off, froze when he heard what Wang Baole had said. He turned around and gave Wang Baole a deep, meaningful look. He was about to speak when Wang Baole hurried over and said hastily.

“I’ve spoken to Lin Tianhao’s father. He knows that his son had been called to serve in my place. General Chen, I have a responsibility to Senator Lin You for this matter!”

Wang Baole’s words were timely. If it had been for purely personal reasons, Chen Feng wouldn’t have shared anything with Wang Baole. Despite Wang Baole’s strong and close working relationship with the military in the Federation, the Martian military was a separate and relatively autonomous entity.

But now that Senator Lin You was included in the picture... even he had to deliberate and weigh his decisions. Finally, he gave Wang Baole a long, meaningful look.

“I don’t know the details as well. Follow me!”

After Chen Feng said that, the soldiers at his side immediately approached Wang Baole and checked his person. After that, he was brought up to Chen Feng’s cruiser. It took off and sped towards the command center in Zone Thirty-Six.

Chen Feng didn’t speak to Wang Baole during the entire ride. He attended to the numerous transmissions he kept receiving during the trip. Wang Baole found it difficult to start a conversation as well. He had a bad feeling about this. Amidst his growing anxiety, they soon reached the military command center. The two got out of the cruiser and walked into a large room with a giant spirit screen. The room was bustling with people busy with their own work. Someone approached Chen Feng hastily and reported to him.

“Sir, we confirmed that we’ve lost all communication with Team Six and Team Seven... everyone in the team, including the Array Formation cultivator, the Dharmic Armament cultivator, our military personnel, as well as the priest, have all disappeared!

“Our array formation can no longer sense the blood-colored village. It has vanished into thin air!”

“The blood-colored mist has also dispersed... we can’t find any trace of the mist in all zones in the entire Martian planet!” The reports followed one by one. Chen Feng attended to them immediately. The expression on Wang Baole’s face grew more serious, and the sense of foreboding inside him intensified.

Li Wan’er’s transmission arrived at this moment. She told Wang Baole that the military had sent out seven teams to handle the blood-colored mist incident. At present, five teams had returned. Teams Six and Seven had to travel to locations further away from the base, which was why their projected time of return had been estimated to be later than the rest.

Everything had gone according to plan. All seven teams had dug up invaluable information and resources for the colony. However, an hour ago, they had lost contact with Teams Six and Seven suddenly. After a scan via the array formation, the military had found that the teams had disappeared into thin air!

The Martian Colony was giving this due attention. The Governor, Deputy Governor, as well as the various department heads soon arrived at the command center. Li Wan’er was one of them as well.

Many noticed Wang Baole and nodded at him. However, there was no time for small talk. Everyone was concerned about the latest development of the sudden incident. The Martian military had sent out a rescue force as soon as they could to investigate the matter. The Martian Colony Governor also activated her access rights to the array formation for another scan.

Hours passed and evening arrived. They didn’t find anything new, regardless of how hard they searched. The rescue cruiser arrived at the scene where the teams had gone missing and found nothing. The blood-colored mist, the village, and the missing teams seemed to have vanished without a trace. It was as if they had never appeared in the first place.

There was dead silence, no one spoke. Everyone had come to the same conclusion. It was likely that the missing people... were all dead.

Wang Baole couldn’t remember how he had made it back to the academy. He seemed to still be in a daze. His brain had stopped working. He sat in his residence silently, staring at the four walls without speaking.

He still couldn’t believe it. Lin Tianhao had just... disappeared. Just like that...

Lin Tianhao had taken Wang Baole’s stead. If Wang Baole hadn’t been trapped in the cave with Li Wan’er, the list of missing persons wouldn’t include Lin Tianhao.

From how he saw it, Lin Tianhao had taken Wang Baole’s place and suffered what should have been his fate. Wang Baole couldn’t begin to untangle the web of complicated emotions he had regarding that.

However, he was powerless to do anything. When Lin You had found out about this matter, he set everything aside. He was now on his way from Earth.

Amidst the silence, the bitterness and the complicated, mixed feelings, Wang Baole found himself unable to train. He continued waiting silently while seeking more information. Two days passed.

No clues had surfaced regarding the missing persons... On the second day, late in the night, Wang Baole pulled out a bottle of wine and took a huge gulp from the bottle. He was filled with anxiety and guilt. His eyes shone with resolution. He intended to conduct a search personally. He wouldn't be able to ease the guilt and worry he was feeling if he didn't do so.

As the thought flashed across Wang Baole's mind, suddenly, in the dead silence of the night, his voice transmission ring started to vibrate. A familiar voice rang out. It was the faint, feeble voice of Lin Tianhao!

"Save me..."

Wang Baole's eyes widened when he heard the voice. His breathing quickened instantly, and he turned and stared at the voice transmission ring.

### **Chapter 334: Rescue!**

The sudden transmission in the middle of the night sent Wang Baole into shock. His breathing stilled for a second. He grabbed at the voice transmission ring and spoke hurriedly into it, his eyes bright with worry and anxiety.

"Tianhao, where are you!"

However, no matter how many transmissions Wang Baole sent, Lin Tianhao seemed to have vanished into thin air again. Wang Baole was greeted with radio silence. It was like sinking a rock into the deep ocean. He tried a few more times without any success before he climbed to his feet, determination shining in his eyes.

Lin Tianhao had taken his place on the team. Wang Baole knew that Lin Tianhao's disappearance had nothing to do with him, but he couldn't help his guilt. He didn't hesitate. He located the Martian Colony Governor's transmission number and contacted her.

After becoming the dean of the Dao Mountain Mist Academy, as a Secondary Rank Four Noble and part of the Martian administration's middle management, he had almost all the transmission numbers of the members of the upper Martian administration. That included the Governor and the Deputy Governor.

If it had been some other matter, Wang Baole might not have sent a voice transmission over directly. It was in the middle of the night, after all. It was inappropriate to disturb the Governor's rest so late at night.

Wang Baole couldn't care less about that at the moment. As the voice transmission connected, Wang Baole started speaking hurriedly without waiting for the other side to start talking.

"Governor, this is Wang Baole. I just received a transmission from my vice dean Lin Tianhao..."

As soon as he said that, the calm, serious voice of the Martian Colony Governor rang out from the voice transmission ring.

“Lin Tianhao from Team Six?”

“Yes, he just sent a transmission calling for help. But after that, there was no message from...”

“Bring along your voice transmission ring and report to the military base!” The Martian Colony Governor said abruptly, her voice firm. She ended the transmission.

Wang Baole could hear that the Governor was treating this very seriously. He didn’t delay a single second. He rushed out of his residence and retrieved his cruiser. The donkey, with its astute senses, realized what Wang Baole was doing and leaped aboard as Wang Baole boarded the cruiser.

Wang Baole had no time to bother with the donkey. He started the cruiser’s engines, and it surged forward with a sudden burst of speed. With a roar, it sped off into the night like a dash of a rainbow, racing towards Zone Thirty-Six.

In the daytime, under usual circumstances, one would have required some time to travel from Zone Twelve to Zone Thirty-Six. However, Wang Baole drove the cruiser at top speed, and it raced across the night sky like a shooting star. Within fifteen minutes, he arrived at the military base in Zone Thirty-Six.

There was someone waiting for him when he arrived, and he was led straight to the command center. When Wang Baole entered the command center, he saw at least a hundred people working frantically in front of a large spirit screen.

Projected onto the spirit screen was an image of planet Mars. There were hundreds of locations lit up on the planet, sparkling incessantly. The five most powerful military figures in Mars, including Chen Feng, as well as the Deputy Governor, the Governor, and the Colony Disciplinary Order’s Li Wan’er, were all there. Everyone turned their eyes towards Wang Baole when he entered the room.

If it had been some other time, Wang Baole would have capitalized on this opportunity where he had all eyes on him to show off a little, but he couldn’t summon any energy or willingness for that now. He walked quickly towards the group and stopped before the Governor. Then, he quickly pulled out his voice transmission ring.

He had guessed during the trip to the command center that the Governor must have some special way of locating Lin Tianhao through the emergency call he had sent to his voice transmission ring.

His guess was correct. The Martian Colony Governor didn’t say a word as she took the voice transmission ring from him. Light flickered across her eyes. Instantly, a perfected Core Formation realm cultivation erupted from her person. The array formation blanketing the entire planet started churning. Dazzling spots of light appeared out of thin air and gathered on the voice transmission ring on the Governor’s right palm!

The voice transmission ring floated into the air. The light threads pierced through the ring and seemed to be conducting some form of analysis on the ring...

The entire process took only fifteen minutes. Under the group’s nervous gazes and Wang Baole’s anxious gaze, the light in the Governor’s eyes intensified. A fierce light exploded from the voice transmission ring hovering in mid-air and fell onto the spirit screen. The hundreds of spots of light on the image of Mars disappeared in an instant.

After they all vanished, a red light spot appeared, marking an uninhabited region a distance away from the Martian City. It was the only light remaining on the Martian map!

“The voice transmission came from this place. It came not from the surface but from underground!” the Governor said sternly. Everyone, including Wang Baole, stared at the red light. A few amongst them saw where the location was and seemed alarmed.

“This region... seems to be in the vicinity of the Divine Armament...” The few who had been alarmed earlier looked at each other. The coincidence made them wary.

Wang Baole froze when he heard that. He suddenly remembered the selection for the Federation’s hundred seedlings. There had been news then of Kong Dao’s contribution to the Federation through his discovery of what might seem to be the resting place of a Divine Armament on Mars.

*Divine Armament...* Wang Baole raised his head abruptly and stared at the spirit screen.

“We must act immediately...” the Governor stared at the location marked out by the red light then said calmly. There was a considering look in her eyes. The Deputy Governor, the giant tree, had a somber look on his face as well. He turned towards the Governor and nodded slightly, then spoke in a low voice.

“Governor, I’ve not had the chance to prove myself since I arrived on Mars. Let me take part in this mission. I want to find out what is the cause for the recent happenings!”

Everyone looked at the Governor after the giant tree spoke. The Governor had her own considerations. Her duty was to protect the Martian Colony City, so leaving the city should be her last resort. It was, therefore, most appropriate for the Deputy Governor to lead the rescue mission. He was similarly at the perfected Core Formation realm.

After some thought, she nodded her approval, and a rescue team was soon put together. The giant tree would lead the team. The military had also included three Core Formation realm cultivators, with Chen Feng being one of them.

There were also a number of Foundation Establishment realm cultivators in the team. The team numbered more than fifty members.

Wang Baole was still concerned about the personal grudges the giant tree had against him. However, he still requested to be part of the team after some thought. The Governor gave his request some thought and agreed. She gave the Deputy Governor a deep, meaningful look before the team set off.

“My Cassia comrade, I hope there will be no accidents during this mission. Else, we will not be able to avoid the Federation’s direct investigation into the matter. After all... the mission’s location is not far... from where the Divine Armament purports to be.”

The giant tree lowered his head in acquiescence. However, he was secretly alarmed. Others might not have understood the underlying message, but he was the Deputy Governor. He had fought the Federation President. With his cunning, he naturally understood the warning in the Governor’s words.

*I have nothing against the others. The only person I might hold a grudge against is Wang Baole. Is she trying to tell me not to try anything?*

*She's truly underestimated me...* The giant tree smiled, and his eyes flashed. He wouldn't harm Wang Baole now, not with so many eyes focused on them and with what they were about to do. It was a clumsy and foolish way of accomplishing one's goals.

Besides, his intention was to carry out the mission flawlessly. He hoped to make a good impression and establish a good name for himself on Mars. He wanted to use this opportunity to gain the Federation's trust.

In reality... since he had joined the Federation, he had come to realize that Federation politics... weren't as simple as they seemed. The complexities ran deep!

He recalled what he had heard a few days earlier about something called an Anti-Spirit Bomb. It sent him reeling in shock. At the same time, his interest in the Federation's secrets grew.

*The military would identify talents every year and send them to a mysterious place which nobody else knew about...*

*Not to mention the plans to colonize the ancient green-bronze sword...*

*Besides... is there really no Nascent Soul realm cultivator in the Federation? I thought so in the past, but now... I'm not so sure.* There was a glimmer in the giant tree's eyes. He concealed his thoughts. He knew that what was most important at this moment was to prove himself.

The Martian Colony Governor and the others saw them off as they boarded a large cruiser and took off into the Martian sky. Within the cruiser was the giant tree, the other Core Formation realm, and Foundation Establishment realm cultivators... as well as Wang Baole!

The donkey was at Wang Baole's side as well. It seemed to sense the tension in the air and the terrifying presence of the giant tree and the other Core Formation realm cultivators. It sprawled quietly and obediently at Wang Baole's side and gave nobody trouble.

Wang Baole wasn't reckless with his own safety. Before they set off, he took out his voice transmission ring and reported where he would be going to the Ethereal Dao College's Sect Lord. He did it right in front of the giant tree.

His mind was set to ease after he had done that. He looked out towards the snow and ice-laden lands of the Martian planet. He muttered inwardly.

*Lin Tianhao, hold on!*

### **Chapter 335: Reanimation**

The rescue cruiser dashed through the Martian sky in a speedy blur. It seemed to pierce the heavens as it shot through the sky. Their journey took less than an hour. Flying at a speed that surpassed ordinary cruisers, they soon reached their destination.

Their destination—a wasteland. It was barren of snow, and the ground was red and bare of plant life. There was nothing, except a circular cave.

A red glow spilled out from within the cave. The dusty red Martian soil looked even redder under the light, looking as if it had been soaked in blood. Everyone froze when they saw the sight, and a strange, bizarre feeling unfurled inside them.

The giant tree, dressed in black robes, stared at the entrance of the cave with his expressionless face. An icy glimmer surfaced in his eyes. He matched the location of the cave with the coordinates provided by the array formation before saying coolly.

“This is it!”

He leaped off the cruiser and charged out. Behind him followed the three Core Formation realm cultivators from the military, which included Chen Feng. They all had somber expressions on their faces as they dashed out after the giant tree and entered the blood-colored cave.

The last to follow were Wang Baole and the remaining Foundation Establishment realm cultivators. Despite the terrifying blood-colored sight, they leaped off the cruiser without hesitation and entered the cave. Wang Baole was one of them. The donkey seemed frightened out of its wits, and it stuck closely to Wang Baole.

Under the lead of the giant tree, Chen Feng, and a few others, the party of fifty-odd people entered the cave. As soon as they stepped inside, Wang Baole caught the heavy scent of blood in the air. It permeated the cave and was like a punch to the face.

It was nauseating. It was akin to the smell of rotting corpses and freshly removed organs. It was beyond what words could describe. Their heartbeats quickened, uncontrollably as a long, cavernous tunnel appeared before their eyes.

The tunnel was ten yards wide. It looked vast, and its walls were lined with cracks. Some were so small that one would have to take a closer look to notice them, while some were so large that they formed their own tunnels and pathways that seemed to go on forever. They couldn't compare to the main tunnel, of course.

“This tunnel was freshly dug...” Chen Feng examined the walls and said slowly. The giant tree and the other two Core Formation realm cultivators checked the walls as well. Then, they looked at one another before racing down the tunnel.

Wang Baole was together with the Foundation Establishment realm cultivators. When he had stepped into the cave, he had sensed the Dark Fire inside his body stirring. It had seemed livelier than usual.

That had convinced him that his earlier guess had been right. He had been able to practice the Dark Art because he had inhaled a small bit of blood-colored mist when he had been trapped in the cave. His guess had been correct all along.

*What exactly is that blood-colored mist... they said that this cave is not far from where the Divine Armament is. Does this have something to do with the Divine Armament?* The gears in Wang Baole's head spun rapidly. He dared not allow the distraction though. This was clearly dangerous territory, and the one leading the party was none other than the giant tree.

Even though Wang Baole had contacted the Sect Lord and informed him of his location, thus ensuring that the giant tree wouldn't dare to harm him so blatantly, they were in dangerous territory.

Sometimes, there was no need to dirty one's own hands to kill someone else. Choosing not to offer a helping hand or prioritizing whom to save first could decide whether a person lived or died.

That was why since they had entered the cave, Wang Baole had chosen not to venture further up front but instead decided to stick with the other cultivators. He had no time to overthink it anyway. He pulled himself together and followed the group as they moved steadily down the tunnel. Everyone was on high alert and observing their surroundings, and they didn't progress very far before a series of sudden thundering roars rang out from the end of the tunnel.

They sounded like the roars of ferocious beasts and appeared suddenly. The giant tree, who had been walking at the front, suddenly raised his right hand and grabbed at something in the wall beside him.

His attack was swift. When he struck, black claws made out of wood seemed to appear and overlay his actual hand. His hand pierced the wall and pulled. A half rotting corpse was dragged out from the wall!

The clothes on the corpse were torn and beyond recognition, and the corpse was filled with maggots and gave off an incredible stench. It exuded the smell of death.

Despite that, it still moved. It was like a living dead. Its hands kept clawing outward even though it had been caught by the giant tree. Howls that sent shivers down one's spine crawled out of its mouth.

Alarm flashed across everyone's faces. They dashed away from the walls.

"What is that?"

"The living dead?"

"A reanimation!"

The giant tree frowned. He snorted, then with a twist, crushed the skull of the corpse he had captured. The beheaded body fell to the ground. It was still crawling on the ground after losing its head...

Wang Baole's scalp began to prickle. The others around him were equally alarmed and horrified. Shouts began to travel from afar. The sounds of something digging their way through the earth came from beneath them on the ground and around them in the walls.

Alarm and terror surged inside everyone as heads started popping out from the four walls, from the ground, and even from above them in the ceiling.

There were sounds of racing footsteps and howling coming from the end of the tunnel. The soil was glowing a blood red, and with that light, the rescue party saw, in their shock, three figures stepping out from the end of the tunnel!

They were all corpses, but there was little sign of decomposition on their bodies. Their clothes remained mostly intact, and an alarming energy force exploded from their bodies when they appeared.

When the rescue team, including the giant tree, Chen Feng, and Wang Baole, saw the clothes the three people were wearing, their eyes immediately widened in shock!

The clothes were vastly different from common Federation fashion. They were clearly from a much older era. Wang Baole had seen corpses of the ancient green-bronze sword in the Spirit Breath Village



before. He immediately recognized what these corpses in front of them were wearing... they weren't humans from earth, they were beings... from the ancient green-bronze sword!

These corpses had clearly fallen onto Mars alongside the fragmented pieces when the ancient green-bronze sword pierced the sun. It was unknown why they had become the zombies they were now!

This was the same for the heads that had popped out from the walls, the ground, and from the tunnel ahead of them. As soon as they appeared, they began to howl and struggle their way out of the soil. They charged towards the rescue party as soon as they freed themselves.

The three corpses at the end of the tunnel, brimming with violence, did the same and charged at the giant tree, Chen Feng, and company.

There was chaos in the tunnel. The sounds of explosions and howling resounded in the air. The giant tree, Chen Feng, and the other Core Formation realm cultivators were busy fighting off the hordes. They had been holding their ground before a dozen or so corpses with equally alarming murderous air charged towards the cultivators from the end of the tunnel.

A little giant that stood thirty-odd meters tall, holding a gigantic pole made from bone, marched towards them, booming every step of the way.

There were too many of them. The party fought back frantically, but they knew this wasn't sustainable. The giant tree and Chen Feng soon charged out. As they fought their way out, they yelled at the rest behind them.

"Scatter! Get out of here if you can. Those who can't, try your best to stay alive! Chen Feng, follow me. I'm going to fight my way in. I want to know what this place is hiding!"

The giant tree had a fearsome expression on his face. He had reigned supreme on the moon and was a lord in his own right. Most monsters in the Sea of Beasts would pale in comparison against his violent and brutal nature. As rage overtook his mind, he surged forward, leaving behind an afterimage of a giant tree in his wake. He charged deeper into the tunnel.

The Foundation Establishment realm cultivators, including Wang Baole, watched as the giant tree, Chen Feng, and the Core Formation realm cultivators fought their way deeper into the tunnel. They started to spread out and find a way out. Some wormed into the cracks in the walls.

Even though the corpses had come from the walls and the earth around them, the cracks in the walls were narrow and allowed the cultivators to defend themselves via a narrow crack. If they were lucky, they might even find a way out through the crack.

Wang Baole, with a cold and merciless look on his face, wielded his Dharmic Armament and slashed two corpses into halves with a single sweep of his blade. He observed the growing number of corpses around him and realized that most in his group had split up. He gritted his teeth and swept his blade across in a single slash. Then, he turned, snaked into a crack, and dashed deeper in.

The donkey had remained on its toes during the entire chaotic battle. It hadn't been able to help itself and had taken a few bites of the rotten flesh. It had then spat the meat out with a grimace. When Wang Baole had gone into a crack in the wall, it followed swiftly and raced towards it as well.

## Chapter 336: Food Approaches...

*Such excitement when we've just arrived...* Wang Baole traveled swiftly, moving deeper into the crevice. He narrowed his eyes and kept on high alert against possible dangers around him. Everything had seemed so bizarre and out of this world since they had entered the cave. The appearance of the zombies had been too sudden and unexpected.

*It seems that most of the corpses are ancient corpses though... I didn't see any Federation cultivators amongst them. That means... there's a great chance that Lin Tianhao is still alive.* Wang Baole concluded. Suddenly, he raised his right hand and slashed his blade towards the right. As soon as the blade fell, a hand and head that had just popped out from the wall were instantly chopped off.

*There's another thing. Since I entered the cave, the Dark Fire inside my body has stirred. The deeper I go, the livelier it gets...* Wang Baole frowned as he fell into deep thought. Since he had entered the crevice, he had taken the opportunity to release the Dark Fire since there was no one around him. He wanted to see if it had any effect on the zombies.

He didn't know why, but while the Dark Fire was able to exact damage on the zombies, the zombies, after being set aflame, had gone mad. Hunger appeared in their blank eyes, and they lunged at Wang Baole in a craze.

Wang Baole immediately hid his Dark Fire. He was shocked by what he had seen. He realized that the zombies must have something to do with the Dark Fire. Then, he recalled what Little Missy had said. As an early-stage Dark Art practitioner, he shouldn't reveal the Dark Fire so recklessly.

*Little Missy was right. The zombies went crazy as soon as I revealed the Dark Fire...*

Wang Baole decided not to use the Dark Fire unless it was his last resort. He raced through the crevice and soon saw an exit.

The exit led back to the main tunnel. The cave only had that one tunnel. The various cracks on the walls might connect to other cracks, but their entrances and exits all led back to the main tunnel. The only difference was which part of the main tunnel they led to.

There were also crevices that grew narrower until they led to a dead-end packed with soil. In order to proceed, one would have to dig their way out.

Wang Baole was lucky. The crevice he had chosen didn't require him to dig his way out. When he saw the opening, his eyes flashed. His mosquitoes appeared and raced towards the exit.

Wang Baole immediately got a clear view of the outside world through the mosquitoes' vision. Everything was quiet outside the opening of this crevice. There were no zombies, only a vast patch of blood-colored grass on the ground.

Wang Baole released a breath of relief. He didn't lower his guard though. He turned and stared at the donkey behind him. It was staring at the leg of the corpse that Wang Baole had just chopped off with mixed feelings. It seemed to want to eat it but knew that it wouldn't taste good.

“Eat, eat, eat. That’s all you know!” Wang Baole glared at the donkey then ignored it. He had realized that even though the donkey was at the third level of the True Breath realm, it seemed to be reaching a breakthrough. It had a strong sense of self-preservation. It had managed to keep up with Wang Baole during the chaotic battle earlier. Throughout the entire fight, Wang Baole hadn’t seen a single zombie manage to grab hold of it. It was clear that the donkey possessed some extraordinary gift that was beyond his understanding.

He decided to ignore the donkey. Wang Baole dashed out from the crevice and stepped back into the tunnel. He surveyed his surroundings immediately. The Dark Fire inside him stirred, and through the Dark Fire, he sensed the direction he should be going and was about to move.

It was at that moment that the blood-colored grass around them suddenly rustled. They seemed to undergo a sudden transformation, growing suddenly in a blink of an eye. Countless blades of Blood Grass sprouted from the ground and the walls. They were like tentacles reaching wildly for Wang Baole.

The path behind Wang Baole was the same. He was trapped. A glimmer flashed in his eyes. The Dharmic Armament in his hand shone, and he slashed.

With a thundering sweep of the blade, he slashed through a great number of them, but there were too many. They possessed an extraordinary resilience and corrosive properties. Despite Wang Baole’s coarse, thick skin, he still felt the burning agony of the grass blades touching his skin.

Their numbers posed a great challenge. He wouldn’t mind spending more time to fight his way back into the crevice. However, he would have to wade through the patch of Blood Grass. The grass was the greatest obstacle of all.

He threw everything at them. Lightning, Heated Burst, and everything else he knew, but they did little damage to the grass. He even tried his puppets, but those were useless too. The Blood Grass quickly wormed its way into the puppets and corroded them from the inside.

His frustration grew as he slashed at the grass. An icy glint flashed in his eyes. He was about to release the Dark Fire when suddenly, within the crevice that was about to be sealed shut by the Blood Grass, the donkey’s gleeful cries rang out.

“Son!”

Wang Baole was startled when he heard that. He turned towards the crevice and saw the donkey. Its eyes shone with excitement as it snapped its mouth open and munched crazily at the Blood Grass.

*It can do that too?* Wang Baole was stunned. Then he recalled how the donkey had resorted to eating flowers and grass when it had been starving in the academy.

Clearly, the taste of the Blood Grass was much more delicious than rotting flesh. It picked up its pace as it ate, and grew more excited as it ate. Within a short span of time, it decimated all the Blood Grass in the crevice. Then, it bounced out happily and saw the spread of food awaiting him. The donkey shook with excitement and joy. It bounced a few more times happily.

“Son! Son!”

Wang Baole was overjoyed as well. He kept an eye on the donkey's frantic eating while slashing his way through the grass. However, he soon grew displeased. He realized that the donkey still had the energy to prance about while eating. He thought for a bit, then yelled suddenly.

"Scram, I won't let you eat all these good stuff. I'm going to cut them all down!"

Wang Baole picked up his pace and began furiously slashing at the grass. His angry shout and actions instantly sent the donkey into a panic. Its eyes reddened. It stopped fooling around and, with even greater speed, started eating up all the Blood Grass around him. It seemed to have gotten the hang of it after a while. After taking a bit, it would suck the rest of the Blood Grass into its mouth, roots and all, then move on to the rest of the Blood Grass.

The Blood Grass in the area soon diminished rapidly under the donkey's frantic devouring. Wang Baole was very pleased. He shouted again.

"You've gone too far. There is still a lot of delicious Blood Grass ahead of us. I'm going to destroy all of them!" Wang Baole yelled furiously. He pretended that he was about to charge forward. The donkey saw that and grew even more frantic. It howled and dashed out with a burst of speed. It raced straight into the tunnel and entered the patch of Blood Grass before Wang Baole, munching madly at the grass as it advanced.

Wang Baole followed leisurely behind the donkey, yelling once in a while and swishing about with his saber, displaying mock displeasure.

Wang Baole made his way smoothly through the tunnel. At the same time, Blood Grass and zombies also made their appearances in other parts of the tunnel.

They only appeared when there were cultivators around. There were some casualties amongst the cultivators. However, as members of the rescue force, the cultivators possessed significant battle capabilities and experience. Despite their shock and terror, most of them were able to protect themselves. They didn't suffer extensive injuries and were mainly trapped.

That persisted for a while... until then. In a part of the tunnel, a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator was surrounded by countless Blood Grass. A blood-colored silhouette appeared behind him soundlessly, without his notice.

It was a blurry figure, almost translucent. It inclined towards transparency most of the time, and its features were indistinct. From its height, it seemed to be a little boy.

As soon as he appeared, the zombies and Blood Grass around him shuddered faintly. They seemed to be terrified of the boy. The boy's eyes were filled with a cold, merciless flame that seemed like it could freeze all life.

The boy stared coldly at the trapped cultivator before him. He moved suddenly and passed through the cultivator's body.

The cultivator, who hadn't noticed a single thing, suddenly trembled. The light in his eyes faded as his vitality vanished that instant, and he collapsed to the ground.

He never saw it coming. Until the moment of his death, he hadn't seen the blood-colored boy who had passed through him and appeared before him. He didn't see the white ball of flames that had appeared in the boy's hand after he had passed through his body.

The boy flung the ball of fire into his mouth and licked his lips. He took a step and disappeared. When he reappeared, it was behind another cultivator who was trapped within a circle of zombies and fighting for his dear life. He didn't pause. He passed through the cultivator, and the cultivator shuddered and died instantly. The boy swallowed the ball of fire. He disappeared again, then reappeared and killed again.

He wasn't very powerful. In fact, he could be seen as weak. However, the cultivators were all unable to sense his presence. He seemed to possess a bizarre, natural ability that made everyone defenseless against him. He moved about like this was his home and killed a dozen men in this manner. The next time he reappeared, he saw before him a donkey munching at grass frantically and Wang Baole hollering at the donkey.

The boy frowned slightly when he saw Wang Baole. His nose twitched, and doubt appeared in his eyes. He pondered for a while and seemed unable to come to a conclusion. Frustration and annoyance began to color his eyes. He moved and dashed towards Wang Baole.

He was very, very fast. He passed the donkey, which was happily munching at the grass around him, in an instant. He ignored the donkey. It was then that...

Suddenly... the donkey's nose twitched. It seemed to sense food drawing near. Not just food, but very, very delicious food... It opened its mouth wide instinctively and twisted its head towards the boy. With startling speed, it snapped its jaws shut and sank its teeth in!

### **Chapter 337: A Great Grudge!**

The boy was fast, but the speed that the donkey was capable of when it was snatching food was equally fast. Especially when it sensed that its food was rushing past it and towards its master, it panicked uncontrollably then.

It sincerely thought that the greatest enemy in its life was the guy behind it. He kept stopping it from filling its stomach. He even fought it for food.

What the donkey found unacceptable was how the food flew past it and ignored it entirely, heading straight into the arms of its master. It was unwilling to admit defeat. It turned suddenly and with a sudden bite, crunched down hard!

The bite... was unexpected and sudden. Wang Baole hadn't expected it. Even the invisible, cold and arrogant looking blood-colored boy hadn't expected it. It was something he would never have dreamed would happen. The silly-looking donkey that had been munching on grass all along had bitten him.

He found it hard to believe that the donkey could see him. What shocked him and sent his body trembling was how quickly the donkey had suddenly come at him. It had been a complete blur. It sank its teeth directly into his right arm.

There was a sudden crunch. The boy let loose a terrible scream that no one could hear. Half the length of his arm was snapped off clean by the donkey. There was an explosion of blood that no one could see. The boy's face was drained of blood instantly. Terror shone in his eyes, and he looked incredulous. It seemed as if it had never crossed his mind since the day he was born that he might one day be bitten!

The boy gasped in pain and terror when he saw the donkey attempting a second bite. He ignored the blood spurting from his arm and retreated hastily.

He narrowly avoided another horrible bite from the donkey.

Wang Baole hadn't sensed the little boy. He saw the donkey turning its head and snapping its teeth suddenly though. He found that strange. He eyed his surroundings but didn't see anything out of the ordinary.

The donkey had its back towards Wang Baole. It looked smug. It seemed happy that its food hadn't been snatched away by Wang Baole. It swayed its tail and with two to three bites, quickly chewed and swallowed the arm.

It chewed and then its eyes widened suddenly. There was a lost look in its eyes, which soon disappeared as the donkey's eyes reddened. There was a sudden crazed look in them. It turned and started looking around.

This was the most delicious thing it had ever eaten in its entire life!

"What are you snapping at? Focus on your grass!" Wang Baole saw the donkey pause in its eating and glared at it. Reprimanded, the donkey took a deep breath and stared innocently back at Wang Baole before continuing to nibble at the grass. It seemed to feel a deep sense of regret at not finding the delicious food it had bitten into.

The grass had tasted great, but now it just tasted like wax and dust. But the donkey was simply too hungry. It continued to munching rapidly...

Its earlier look of innocence when it had turned back and stared at Wang Baole scared the latter though. Wang Baole felt something amiss. He knew the donkey's character, and the silly creature wouldn't show such an expression under normal circumstances. It only did that when it ate something it shouldn't or did something it didn't know that it shouldn't. To pretend that nothing actually happened, it would put on that innocent face.

"Something's wrong. Hey, Scram. Did you go behind my back and eat something you shouldn't?" Wang Baole stared at the donkey with suspicion.

The donkey immediately panicked when it heard that. It turned around hurriedly and gave Wang Baole a look of confusion and innocence. Its deliberate attempt at concealment sealed the deal for Wang Baole. But, no matter how he searched the area, he couldn't find anything. He glared at the donkey again before leading it forward into the tunnel.

The donkey was overjoyed when it saw that Wang Baole couldn't find anything wrong. It took a few steps then started braying. The young man and donkey continued their way deeper into the tunnel, amidst Wang Baole's throbbing headache and unresolved curiosity.

The pair vanished down a tunnel that had been eaten clean by the donkey, and the blood-colored boy slowly reappeared after they left.

He was no longer as arrogant as he had been earlier. He seemed furious, his anger tinged with hate and terror. His right arm had been snapped clean in half...

He clenched his teeth. He seemed to want to pursue the pair, but then he stared at his stump of an arm and shuddered violently. He was torn. He gritted his teeth and stared into the distance. His eyes were filled with hate, but he dared not go after them. He turned away, frustrated, and went off in another direction.

If there had been someone there who had taken a closer look, they would've known that the hate in his eyes wasn't directed at Wang Baole, but at his donkey...

A great grudge... had clearly been born.

The completely oblivious Wang Baole stopped thinking about the donkey's eccentric behavior. As they went deeper into the tunnel, there was less Blood Grass to be seen. Then, the grass completely disappeared. Wang Baole saw an intense, blinding red light in front of them. He even heard the indistinct sounds of battling. It was then that the donkey shuddered and broke through from the third level of the True Breath realm to the fourth level.

Wang Baole was rendered speechless at how the donkey managed to eat its way through a breakthrough in cultivation. He ignored it and raced towards the light. He stopped before he reached the end of the tunnel. He saw, through the vision of the mosquitoes he had released, a large cave at the end of the tunnel!

A blood-red light permeated the cave. It was vivid and filled the entire cave. It was from the hundreds of light sources in the cave!

There were more than a hundred bags of flesh growing on the walls and ceilings of the cave. Each meat bag was two to three meters wide. They were the source of the blinding red light.

A closer look would reveal a cultivator lying inside each bag of flesh. Their eyes were shut, and they were still. It was as if the meat bags were sucking the life out of them.

When Wang Baole saw the scene through the eyes of the mosquitoes, his head almost exploded. His breath quickened, and he immediately recalled when he had been at the Coulomb Basin on Earth and met the giant tree... and come across the assimilated cultivators.

The similarities were just... too striking!

*Is the giant tree planning to revolt?* Wang Baole's eyes widened. He almost retreated instinctively, despite having seen what was inside the cave. The giant tree was inside and was battling a thirty-odd-meter tall giant rotting corpse. The explosions he had heard earlier were from their battling.

The giant tree wasn't alone. Chen Feng was with him. The two of them had paired up. That was how they managed to hold their ground against the giant corpse. The giant corpse had thick, coarse skin and thicker flesh. It was rotting but still possessed a strong defense. When it opened its mouth and roared,

poisonous fumes spewed out from its gaping mouth. The giant tree and Chen Feng had no choice but to fall back.

The giant tree seemed to be furious. An icy glimmer flashed in his eyes, and he was exuding an intense murderous aura.

Wang Baole sucked in a deep breath when he saw the sight. He didn't run away immediately. Instead, he weighed his options and released the mosquitoes. The nine mosquitoes raced towards the glowing bags of meat and tried to bite and tear into the bags. The damage they could do was minimal.

Left with no other choice, Wang Baole commanded the mosquitoes to conduct a swift search instead. A short while later, Wang Baole's eyes flashed. Through one of the mosquitoes' vision, he saw a meat bag hanging on the right side of the cave. Inside it was Lin Tianhao!

He seemed extremely weakened and was on the verge of death. If Wang Baole had come a moment later, there would have been no hope of saving him.

*Let's wing it. I'm already here. What's there to be afraid of?* Wang Baole gritted his teeth. He charged out with a sudden burst of speed, out the tunnel and straight into the cave. He ignored the fight and instead shot towards Lin Tianhao like an arrow.

He roared as he charged out. His cultivation erupted and flowed into the Dharmic Armament in his hand. A blinding black light erupted from the black saber as a black tornado formed behind Wang Baole. The black crocodile merged with the saber and transformed into a towering black saber light. The power oozing off it was so great that only the best of the best Foundation Establishment realm cultivators could achieve it. The blade fell and landed on the meat bag holding Lin Tianhao.

A loud thunder resounded within the cave. The sturdy, resilient meat bag couldn't withstand Wang Baole's blade. With a loud boom, it exploded and was ripped apart.

Wang Baole had controlled his saber well. The meat bag exploded, while Lin Tianhao lay inside, unharmed!

### **Chapter 338: You Can't Eat That!**

As the meat bag exploded, fluids splattered everywhere. Lin Tianhao slid out from the bag. His originally healthy, fit body was now skin and bones. He was almost skeletal, and his breathing was weak.

His rescue was timely. His eyelids fluttered as if he was trying to open his eyes. Wang Baole immediately pulled out pills and fed him a few. It was then that the giant corpse that was fighting the giant tree and Chen Feng seemed to have realized Wang Baole's rescue. It roared.

As it thundered, numerous meat bags around them started to explode. The cultivators inside them were killed immediately and transformed into zombies. They opened their eyes. Their eyes were gray. Each one of them started howling like mad beasts and charged towards Wang Baole.

Wang Baole immediately grabbed Lin Tianhao and retreated hastily. He paused for a moment as he saw the meat bags around them explode continuously. He drew near a meat bag and slashed it open. He had no time to check it. He rushed towards another one and slashed it open as well.



The horde of zombies charging towards him was too overwhelming. They were once cultivators. Despite their drained and skeletal states, the clothes they wore were still mostly intact. Many of them were military cultivators, while a few were array formation cultivators.

Wang Baole tried his best to defend himself and save as many people as possible. He managed to rescue a dozen or so people before the horde of zombies drew near. Anyone else would have fallen into grave danger then, but Wang Baole was an extraordinary fighter. He howled furiously and sent his saber in a wide sweep, slashing his way out of the zombie horde and continuing his rescue efforts.

He had saved two dozen people when a meat bag hanging on the ceiling a distance away from him suddenly exploded. A surge of Core Formation realm cultivation erupted. Out emerged a Core Formation realm zombie!

He was the leader of Team Six!

As soon as he appeared, he charged towards Wang Baole with a sudden burst of speed. Wang Baole gasped. He stopped his rescue efforts and immediately grabbed Lin Tianhao and retreated hastily.

He unleashed the full power of his Dharmic Armament and slashed at the approaching Core Formation realm zombie!

A deafening explosion sounded in the air. Blood dripped from Wang Baole's lips. He staggered back, his body like a kite suddenly cut from its string. The Core Formation realm zombie shuddered as well. He was pushed back multiple steps from that blow, his right arm sliced clean off by Wang Baole's saber!

The Core Formation realm cultivator clearly didn't possess the full strength and power of his former self before he had been zombified. He hadn't a mind of his own. He had been reduced to a beast and its base brutal nature. His loss of an arm didn't weaken his ferociousness. He howled and charged at Wang Baole again.

Wang Baole panted heavily. He knew that regardless of how weakened the enemy was, he was still a Core Formation realm cultivator. The difference in power between them was too great. He would be in grave danger should the zombie get close to him. He had no choice but to retreat, but he had Lin Tianhao with him. That made things difficult.

Wang Baole gritted his teeth. As he retreated, he flung Lin Tianhao behind him and yelled.

"Donkey, catch! Quickly, hide him!"

As Lin Tianhao was tossed into the air, the donkey appeared out from wherever it had been hiding and dashed forward, catching Lin Tianhao. It obviously knew the seriousness of the situation. It retreated immediately, dodging a few zombies. When it reached the entrance to the tunnel, it instinctively sniffed Lin Tianhao's hand, which was hanging limply by its mouth. It seemed to be thinking.

Wang Baole, who was frantically dodging the Core Formation realm zombie's attacks, snuck a glance and caught the expression on the donkey's face. He got furious immediately and hollered.

"Scram, you can't eat that. If you do, I'll make you shut your mouth for three years!"

Wang Baole wasn't sure if the donkey had finally learned obedience or if the threat of having its mouth shut for three years got to it, but a look of innocence immediately settled on its face. It stopped sniffing and fled instantly.

Wang Baole was still slightly worried. He was obviously the one in grave danger here, but the thought of the donkey taking a few nibbles at Lin Tianhao...

Wang Baole dared not think further. His head throbbed. He switched direction as he fled and banked on his speed to avoid the zombie. The Core Formation realm zombie had lost its former speed as well after zombification. Anxiety simmered inside Wang Baole. He knew that he could escape. He also knew that he was the one keeping the zombies contained by forcing their murderous attention on him.

As soon as he left, the zombies would likely turn on the other cultivators whom he had saved and were still currently unconscious.

*I can't hold on like this much longer.* The more Wang Baole thought about it, the more his head throbbed. He made full use of the mosquitoes to survey his surroundings. The sight of dozens of zombies surging forward made him clench his teeth. He waved his hand. Multiple lightning bolts descended and formed a thick lightning cloud in the cave.

The lightning cloud didn't cover a large area. As soon as it formed, it exploded. The zombies that had been approaching Wang Baole and charging at him were instantly blown to bits.

He wasn't done yet. Wang Baole formed hand seals rapidly. A sea of fire rose, its destructive force surging outwards explosively. It was the Heated Burst mystic technique.

A thundering roar rose as lightning shone beneath Wang Baole's feet. His startling speed surged, and with a sudden burst of speed, he slashed open another four meat bags before they exploded, saving another four people.

He had reached his limits though. The bags of flesh around him kept exploding. The zombies' numbers rose. The walls started shifting, and the earth started loosening—out popped gruesome faces and skulls. Wang Baole was torn. Finally, he clenched his teeth and prepared to make his escape.

It was then that a roar rang out. The other two Core Formation realm cultivators from the military who had been split up earlier finally arrived. When they saw the sight before them, alarm and horror colored their faces. One of them raced towards the giant tree and Chen Feng and joined their battle. The other raced towards Wang Baole to face the Core Formation realm zombie.

There was deep sorrow in their eyes. They knew that what stood before them was no longer their past comrades in battle.

Wang Baole finally let loose a sigh of relief at the sight of reinforcements. He raced towards the other meat bags and slashed open another dozen before all the meat bags finally exploded!

That was the best he could do. He had saved nearly forty out of more than a hundred cultivators. The rest... had all transformed into zombies!

It was then that the other Foundation Establishment realm cultivators arrived and appeared at the entrance of the tunnel. Every one of them had looks of horror and shock on their faces. They joined the

battle. Wang Baole was finally released of most of his burden in fighting the zombie hordes alone. A chaotic battle erupted in the cave.

Cries of anger, sorrow, and pain surged in the cave like tsunami waves. They rose and ebbed. The giant tree transformed into a towering Osmanthus tree and ripped the giant corpse apart and then turned and joined the other battle. The battle slowly reached its end.

All the zombies were decimated. Silence fell. Wang Baole panted and realized that almost seventy percent of the Foundation Establishment realm cultivators who had joined the fight had been killed in battle.

Out of the three Core Formation realm cultivators from the military, two sustained minor injuries. Chen Feng's injuries were more serious. The giant tree himself had a somber expression on his face. He was less concerned about his injuries. What darkened his mood was what had happened here. Wang Baole hadn't been the only one who had found it familiar. He himself had found it incredulous as well.

That was why he had risked expending his vitality and resuming his original form in the first place. He hadn't planned for the latter. He had intended to seal his original form to save his strength, as he was building up his resources so that his cultivation might advance.

However, the scene in the Blood Cave made him realize that wasn't possible. Even he had doubted himself upon the sight. Others would feel the same too. Should someone make use of this to stir trouble for him, he would be at a disadvantage.

*Damn it! What exactly is this cave? Why is it imitating me?* The giant tree simmered in his frustrations. He looked at Wang Baole and grew even more annoyed. There was nothing he could do though. He didn't try to destroy the corpses. After speaking to Chen Feng, they decided to store the corpses in their storage bracelets.

He dared not destroy them. He was afraid of further misunderstandings. He intended to bring them back and allow the Martian administration to study the evidence. He was going to use that to clear his name.

Those who had been rescued by Wang Baole were all fed pills. They were unconscious but mostly unharmed. Those who remained alive were all overcome with strange feelings. What they had encountered in the cave was vastly different from the Mars they knew and remembered.

The Mars they knew and remembered was dangerous, but it was dangerous because the dangers were unknown, not because they were bizarre and out of this world, like what they had encountered in the cave...

Weighed down by thoughts, they soon finished the clean-up. The giant tree, Chen Feng, and the other two Core Formation realm cultivators led the party out of the cave with dark, solemn looks on their faces. Wang Baole found his donkey. He saw that all of Lin Tianhao's limbs had remained intact and sighed a breath of relief.

He followed the rest out. They sealed the cave before boarding the cruiser and racing away.

As the cruiser engines roared, the giant tree suddenly lowered his head and stared at the sealed cave. He sensed, vaguely, a gaze coming from the cave. Regardless of how hard he looked, he saw nothing.

Wang Baole didn't notice that, but he realized that since he had entered the cave at the end of the tunnel, the unknown power that had roused his Dark Fire had vanished.

He had been busy saving people then though and had no time to think about it. Now, he sank deep into thought. He stared at the sealed cave below them.

*This place must have something to do... with the Dark Art... Little Missy said before that once one reached a certain level practicing the Dark Art, he would be able to wield the power of death...* Wang Baole became silent. He sensed the Dark Fire stirring inside him again without rhyme or reason. A contemplative look appeared on his face.

Neither he nor the giant tree noticed the donkey sniffing the air then. It stared at the cave below them, and its eyes brightened. It started to lick its lips.

On the ground, the boy, whom no one could see, stood. His remaining left hand tightened into a fist. He stared unblinkingly at the donkey, his teeth almost cracking as he clenched his jaw tight.

### **Chapter 339: I Can't Tell You!**

The cruiser shot through the heavens and soon reached the Martian City's military base. As soon as it landed, Lin Tianhao and the other rescued cultivators were immediately taken away to receive medical attention. The Martian City Governor and some others had been waiting for them.

Wang Baole saw Lin You as well. The latter had clearly just arrived. Else, he would have joined the mission to the Blood Cave. He saw Lin Tianhao, who had clearly lost weight but was unharmed in general, and let loose a sigh of relief.

A closer look would reveal the increased number of white hair on his head. There were more of them now than when Wang Baole had first seen him. It was clear. He might have seen calm and composed when he received Wang Baole's message, but he had been anxious then. The degree of worry he had hidden then must have been indescribable.

He wouldn't have so easily left the Ethereal City, otherwise, and traveled such a great distance to Mars. He was a senator and the lord of a city, after all.

Now that he had his heart set at ease, Lin You gave Wang Baole a long, meaningful look. He didn't say much. Instead, he patted Wang Baole on the shoulder. He stopped Lin Tianhao from being sent to the healing chamber in the Martian military base and carried his son away so that he might help him recover elsewhere.

Wang Baole let loose a sigh of relief when he saw that. He never liked owing people favors since he had been young. This unintentional accident with Lin Tianhao had almost led to Wang Baole owing someone something he could never hope to pay back. Now that everything had been resolved, he could finally set his heart at ease.

He thought back to what had happened in the Blood Cave. So many people had died. Some might not have been killed... if Wang Baole had chosen to save them first instead of Lin Tianhao.

But there was no right or wrong where such things were concerned. Anyone else would have made their own choices.

The Blood Cave encounter had left an indelible mark on Wang Baole. There had been so much blood and death. On the other hand, if this really had something to do with the Dark Art, then the Dark Art could undoubtedly be labeled as a heretic mystic art.

*The power it had displayed though... in the Blood Cave... was simply too great...*

*There's no such thing as a good or evil mystic art. Good and evil is determined by how the practitioner uses the mystic technique!* Wang Baole decided. He didn't intend to stop his practice of the Dark Art because of this incident.

He knew though, from Little Missy's advice and this incident, that he must never let anyone find out that he was practicing the Dark Art.

When they returned, the giant tree, and Chen Feng and company, immediately had a meeting with the Governor. The others were sent to receive medical attention or rest while Wang Baole was escorted out of the base. He returned back to the academy.

He knew clearly that while this matter had a deep impact on the Martian administration, the majority of Martian cultivators were unaware that anything had happened. Life went on as usual. Nothing changed.

As the days passed by, the frequency of military cruisers appearing in the Martian skies increased. This was the same for the Colony Disciplinary Order. The Martian array formation was activated and tuned up to the greatest extent.

Wang Baole took note of it all. He understood the secrecy of the matter. His current cultivation and Noble status were not sufficient for him to be privy to such matters. Lin Tianhao's return helped resolve some of his doubts.

"Baole, I'm really grateful for what you've done." Lin Tianhao was still weak, but he was clearly recovering. He no longer treated Wang Baole as purely his boss and saw himself as a mere subordinate of Wang Baole. When he looked at Wang Baole, there was more warmth and gratitude in his eyes.

He had heard that Wang Baole was the one who had saved him. If he had chosen to save someone else then instead of him, it was likely that he would be lying on the autopsy table now awaiting the military's dissection and study.

"We're all family. There's no need for thanks. You took my place in the team. Of course, I'll give my all to save you!" Wang Baole said sternly. He patted Lin Tianhao's shoulder.

Lin Tianhao was moved by Wang Baole's words. He took a deep breath. He didn't continue to express further words of gratitude. His father had taught him since he was young that some things were best remembered and kept in the heart.

"Right, my father told me to tell you that this incident has something to do with the Martian Divine Armament. Due to certain reasons, he cannot reveal where the Divine Armament is. The original plans to explore the area had been canceled. After this incident, the Martian administration has decided... to reinstate the Martian Divine Armament project!

“The new project will be different from the previous exploratory project though... the Federation and the various political forces seem to be involved. There’s some conflict and tension. He said that you might receive news of this soon. He might be able to help if you need him to.”

“Eh?” Wang Baole froze. He didn’t really understand what Lin Tianhao had said. He knew about the Martian Divine Armament. This shouldn’t have anything to do with him, though. Since it had nothing to do with him, why would he need help?

Intrigued, Wang Baole asked a few more questions. Lin Tianhao had no details to share though. He only said that his father had only told him so much and that he was to pass the message on to Wang Baole.

Wang Baole set the matter aside for further thought. Half a month soon passed. Lin Tianhao returned to office. With him back to handle the school’s administrative matters, Wang Baole had an easier time at work. He spent most of his time cultivating and going through the blueprints for his stronghold.

Wang Baole kept analyzing and perfecting the blueprints. They were near perfect. His research on the construction puppets was also near completion.

He spent a great deal of time crafting construction puppets. Following the completion of each puppet, he would inspect them and identify areas for improvement. He would perfect his design, then go back to crafting new puppets.

Half a month passed.

During the month, Wang Baole was busy cultivation and crafting, but he noticed the donkey’s strange behavior on multiple occasions. It would run out excitedly early in the morning and return home with a pleased look on its face.

That made Wang Baole curious, but he didn’t spend too much time thinking about it. After all, no one had come knocking on his door asking for compensation for something the donkey had eaten. The school administration was running smoothly.

He stopped thinking about it. He could tell though that the donkey had gone to quite a few places, including Zone Thirty-Six where the military base was.

*Did it go looking for the white donkey for revenge?* The thought flashed across Wang Baole’s mind. He didn’t think too much about it though. He focused on his cultivation and spent the remaining time crafting puppets.

A dozen or so days passed. Wang Baole had crafted a few dozen puppets. Then, he suddenly received a notice from the Colony Disciplinary Order while in seclusion.

The Colony Disciplinary Order had sent someone over to escort Wang Baole back for a chat!

If it had been before his incident with Li Wan’er in the cave, Wang Baole would have been annoyed. After so many months had passed since the incident, Wang Baole couldn’t help the surge of certain emotions when he received this invitation from the Colony Disciplinary Order.

*Looking for me again? Does Li Wan’er miss me or something?* Wang Baole blinked. He coughed and pondered for a while before leaving the academy, following the Colony Disciplinary Order officer back to their headquarters.

He didn't see Li Wan'er when he arrived. He was brought to a room, and the doors shut behind him. An array formation was activated immediately, and a sudden oppressive force appeared and weighed down on him. Wang Baole's face darkened. He eyed the shut door coldly.

"Colony Disciplinary Order, what do you mean by this!?"

"What do we mean? Wang Baole, you don't know what's going on even though you've committed a crime?" As soon as Wang Baole spoke, Zhuo Yixian's voice rang in the room. On the other end of the room, a small door appeared and opened. Zhuo Yixian appeared with seven to eight cultivators behind him. He had his hands behind his back while he sneered.

"What a pity. He actually came as we told him to. We had called for him like what we were supposed to do. If he had refused to obey or tried to drag his feet, according to the procedures, I could've sent someone to arrest him directly. Everything would be easier then." Zhuo Yixian walked into the room and stared coldly at Wang Baole. He sighed inwardly. However, he thought of the evidence he had gotten his hands on this time and grew incredibly smug. He thought to himself secretly that he would show Wang Baole what he was capable of this time. He'd skin him alive and break a few bones. He would stop calling himself Zhuo Yixian if he didn't do that.

Wang Baole frowned when he saw Zhuo Yixian walking in. His eyes grew cold. He sat down, the gears in his head spinning fiercely. *Was this about him practicing the Dark Art?*

*But no one should know about this!*

Wang Baole frantically tried to analyze the situation while appearing calm and composed. It was then that Zhuo Yixian spoke again, with a voice of authority and power. His voice rang loudly in the room.

"Wang Baole, a few months ago, on the day when the blood-colored mist and winds erupted on Mars, the military had gone looking for you but found you missing. Where were you that night? What did you do? Who did you meet?"

Wang Baole, who had been busy thinking about the Dark Art, froze when he heard that. He raised his head and stared at the condescending looking Zhuo Yixian. He blinked. A strange look fell across his face. He was no longer beset by uncertainty. He stopped thinking about the Dark Art. His posture relaxed. The expression on his face shifted though. He said nervously, "I can't tell you!"

### **Chapter 340: Zhuo Yixian's Big Case**

Wang Baole had a slightly nervous look on his face, and his eyes were shifty. It was as if he was trying to hide something. It was as if someone had found out something incriminating about him and had that information in their grasp; they hadn't yet unveiled the information yet, but once they did, it would be exposed to the public.

Zhuo Yixian had known Wang Baole for quite some time. This was the first time he had seen such an expression on Wang Baole's face. His eyes flashed, and even his breath quickened. He was secretly excited. His face remained expressionless; however, he was inwardly pleased. It was as if spring had suddenly arrived, and a field of flowers had blossomed in his heart, soothing his spirit.

He had long held a deep grudge against Wang Baole in his heart. The source of their original conflict had been Zhuo Yifan, but they had crossed paths multiple times since. Their tense relationship had evolved past that; it no longer had anything to do with Zhuo Yifan. Zhuo Yixian simply disliked Wang Baole, and Wang Baole felt the same towards Zhuo Yixian as well.

If not for his wariness of Wang Baole's impulsive nature and prowess as a fighter, Zhuo Yixian wouldn't have had to go to such lengths. He would have beaten the man up and crippled him. Who cared about how powerful he was and how powerful the people supporting him were?

Zhuo Yixian snorted inwardly. Since he had arrived on Mars and received his posting in the Colony Disciplinary Order, he had been trying to find fault with Wang Baole. He wasn't going to go on the offensive so easily. When he did, he would make sure it was a killing blow that he delivered!

He had only been giving Wang Baole a taste of what was to come when he had gone to the Dao Mountain Mist Academy to arrest the teacher. He had not seen that as part of his plan of attack. Today though... today was the day when he, Zhuo Yixian, would reveal what he was capable of!

*A cultivator who only knows how to fight is a mere brute. Since we've joined the system, we should know how to make use of all the resources we have, including our political support... today shall be the day I, Zhuo Yixian, avenge myself!* Zhuo Yixian was overcome with excitement. It had been pure luck that he had managed to get hold of the evidence he had.

The blood-colored mist and winds that had appeared a few months ago had not only received special attention from the military. The Colony Disciplinary Order had also received orders to assist with the investigation. The focus of their investigation was to find out whether the phenomenon was man-made.

Even though the Governor was of the opinion that it was highly improbable that this was a man-made incident, there was still a need to carry out an investigation. Zhuo Yixian's authority in the Colony Disciplinary Order could not equal Li Wan'er's, but he still held significant power. He had been eager to prove himself and hence had poured a great deal of energy into the case.

Li Wan'er had been busy following up with the incident that had happened to Team Six and overwhelmed with work. Seeing how Zhuo Yixian had been so hard at work, she had left him full control of the investigation.

Having been given full rein of the case, Zhuo Yixian started to investigate furiously. Amidst the investigation, he had discovered something suspicious. When the military had sought Wang Baole that night, he had been missing!

No one knew where he had gone... this would have been a small, insignificant matter if not for the series of coincidences that had happened that day: the arrest at the academy, Wang Baole's visit to the Colony Disciplinary Order headquarters, the appearance of the blood-colored mist and winds, and the discovery of the bizarre villages!

Zhuo Yixian had instinctively felt that something was amiss when studying the series of coincidences. He had felt then that something wasn't right with Wang Baole's disappearance that night. They had been mere suspicions though. It would have ended there if it had been someone else, but Zhuo Yixian had disliked Wang Baole all along. He had used his authority to his advantage and put in more energy into the investigation.



His search had led him to a shocking discovery. All records of Wang Baole that night had been wiped clean. This had included his visit to the Colony Disciplinary Order. Zhuo Yixian had been shocked by that discovery. He had pondered over the matter before intensifying the search and had even resorted to using his own family clan's resources on Mars.

That hadn't resulted in any new leads... he had found that out of the ordinary. As long as Wang Baole had been on Mars, based on the resources of the Colony Disciplinary Order and his own family clan, he should have been able to trace where he had been that night. But it was as if... a mysterious person had destroyed all records of where Wang Baole had been and what he had done that night!

Zhuo Yifan had been overjoyed and excited at that discovery. He had felt that there must be something strange going on. His instincts had told him then that there was something big going on. This was a chance for him to prove himself. He hadn't told anyone about his findings. He had buried himself deep in work and used whatever authority he had to investigate further. The heavens had smiled on him and rewarded his efforts. Finally... he had found a piece of evidence!

He had done some reverse engineering to locate that evidence. He had searched through all the files that had been modified or deleted that day. He had gone through each and every one of those countless files and had finally located a video... that had been wiped!

It had been a video that was related to the heretic cultivator who had posed as a teacher in the Dao Mountain Mist Academy. It had been a secret recording taken in the secret chamber outside the city!

The secret chamber had been preserved to lure the arrested heretic cultivator's accomplices. That was why the Colony Disciplinary Order had set up video recording equipment secretly. Few would generally check such recordings, what more modify and delete a segment.

This discovery had excited Zhuo Yixian greatly. After locking down on the secret chamber, he had subsequently found out that blood-colored mist and winds had appeared in that region that night as well!

All the evidence had led Zhuo Yixian to believe that Wang Baole had done something unspeakable that night. It had something to do with the blood-colored mist and winds!

Zhuo Yixian had realized that this was a big case. He had then become more cautious. He had continued his secret investigation. After locating the deleted segment of the video recording, he had contacted a specialist in that area in his family clan to restore the deleted recording to the best of his ability. He had secretly sent the jade slip over to the specialist.

The restoration would take some time, but Zhuo Yixian had felt his evidence foolproof. In the heat of the moment, he had not been able to contain his impatience at seeing Wang Baole's pale face drained of blood. That had been why he had summoned Wang Baole earlier.

He had thought then, that if Wang Baole had tried to resist out of fear, it would have been perfect.

Wang Baole hadn't done that and instead had gone along without making a fuss. However, now, as Zhuo Yixian watched the expression on Wang Baole's face and heard what he had said, he was beyond excited and gleeful. He placed his hands behind his back and smirked.

“Wang Baole, I heard you were in charge of disciplinary matters while in the Ethereal Dao College. Don’t you know that we, at the Colony Disciplinary Order... are in charge of finding out precisely the kind of things people wish to hide?”

“There wouldn’t be a need for us Colony Disciplinary Order if you’re willing to confess everything. Let me tell you, Wang Baole. What you’ve committed is a serious crime. Even if you try to keep your lips sealed... I’ll still have a way to make you talk!” Zhuo Yixian narrowed his eyes when he said that. An icy glimmer flashed across his eyes. Excitement surged inside him. He sneered inwardly, laughing at the state that Wang Baole had gotten himself into!

Wang Baole stared at Zhuo Yixian. He could sense the latter’s excitement. A strange feeling unfurled inside him. From where he was standing, Zhuo Yixian was racing furiously towards his inevitable downfall...

After all, the high officials’ autobiographies had been clear on this point... it was a sin to dig into the private matters of one’s superior. It was the worst crime one could commit!

*I wonder what Li Wan’er was thinking. Maybe she was too busy with other matters and didn’t realize this was happening? Maybe this is a test? Is a test really necessary... it’s highly likely that Zhuo Yixian carried out an independent investigation secretly...* Wang Baole muttered inwardly. He saw how arrogant and confident Zhuo Yixian was, and sighed. Then, he revealed a look of uncertainty on his face. It was as if he was torn. He gritted his teeth and forced blood to surface in the veins in his eyes. He raised his head and said loudly.

“I’m not saying anything!”

The more Wang Baole presented himself this way, the more excited Zhuo Yixian got. It was as if spring had arrived, and his heart burst into song. A cold glint flickered in his eyes. He slammed the table before Wang Baole suddenly.

The table, made from special material, made a loud thud. It was deafening and inspired fear. Zhuo Yixian’s voice carried a hint of threat and violence as it rang out loudly in the room.

“Wang Baole, the Colony Disciplinary Order has thirty-six ways of getting our suspects to talk. How many do you think you can withstand? I’ll ask you another time. Are you going to talk?”

Wang Baole hesitated when he heard about torture. He was deliberating whether he should just say something. It was then that suddenly, the doors to the secret room swung open. Seven to eight expressionless cultivators in black robes walked in. At the head of the group was Li Wan’er!

She had a cold expression on her face like she usually did. She walked in, with her well-endowed form and frost in her eyes!

As soon as Wang Baole saw Li Wan’er, he lengthened his neck immediately. His neck turned red, and his veins popped out from his forehead. He yelled at the top of his voice, as if in the face of death.

“Zhuo Yixian, I, Wang Baole, would rather die than tell you what happened that night!”