

Worth 361

Chapter 361: A Grudge That Would Last Centuries

The donkey had learned its lesson and grown smarter. Perhaps it had finally understood the darkness and evils present in this world after Wang Baole's repeated thrashings and scoldings. It had no choice but to shed its original naivety and learn to be cunning.

It learned to conceal itself, to sneak up on others, to wait patiently for the perfect ambush...

Like what it was doing now. After the food had appeared and it had discovered it, the donkey had become so excited it had started to tremble. But it had worried that it would frighten its food off. That was why it had hidden itself and concealed its tracks. After racing out of the Eternal Fortress, it had predicted that the food would come after Wang Baole. That was why it had practiced patience and quietly hid in a corner. It hadn't even dared to blink.

Indeed, heaven smiled upon those who put in the effort. After some time, it finally saw the arrival of its food. The boy approached Wang Baole. Before he could slip through Wang Baole's physical form, at the same time that Wang Baole realized something was amiss, the donkey cried excitedly and dashed forward with a sudden burst of speed.

The donkey seemed to have unleashed its full potential as its speed surpassed that of lightning. When Wang Baole looked over, he saw but an afterimage of the donkey. In the blink of an eye, the donkey got itself between Wang Baole and the boy. Excitement shone in its eyes. It widened its jaw at the boy who seemed to have walked straight into its mouth, and took a loud, crunchy bite.

Everything had happened too quickly. The boy was stunned. A moment ago, a fatty had stood before him, and the next moment, the world seemed to have turned upside down. The fatty had disappeared, and in his place was the hateful and terrifying monster!

The monster's eyes were glowing brightly. The boy thought he was hearing things. He seemed to hear the monster laughing maniacally as it asked him...

Are you surprised? Are you thrilled..

These thoughts flashed across the boy's mind as the donkey appeared suddenly and bit him. Before he could react, his newly grown right arm was bitten clean off by the donkey. Then, the donkey charged forward again and opened its mouth. It was going to swallow the boy's head whole.

The donkey's speed was extraordinary, its movements fluid. There was a great possibility that it had rehearsed this before. The boy was no simple creature though. He let loose a pained shriek that no one could hear after his arm was bitten off and blood-red light suddenly erupted from his person. He retreated instantly, narrowly dodging the lethal bite from the approaching donkey.

The boy fled into the distance. He was on the verge of tears as he stared at his twice-lost arm and the donkey still frantically searching for him. He was furious. He was about to go mad, but in the end, he clamped everything down. He stared at the empty space where his arm had been, then, with great sorrow and anger, turned and raced away.

Wang Baole had immediately felt the Dark Fire stir inside his body. It quieted after the donkey arrived in a sudden blur and crunched on something. His eyes flashed. He tilted his head and studied the donkey. The donkey had a contradictory look of satisfaction and regret on its face.

Its mouth was still chewing. It seemed to sense Wang Baole's stare and shuddered. It chewed more quickly and hastily swallowed. Then, it turned and gave Wang Baole an innocent-looking stare, its tail wagging.

"What did you eat this time?" Wang Baole was speechless.

The donkey blinked and pretended it didn't understand what Wang Baole was saying. It brayed a few times. Wang Baole got annoyed and kicked it away, sending the donkey flying.

It hit the ground and rolled to its feet, uninjured. It couldn't hide the look of immense satisfaction in its eyes. It felt that it had once again stopped food from running into Wang Baole's arms. It felt the same as stealing Wang Baole's snacks from him. The donkey was extremely pleased, and its longing for the food grew.

It was clear that its pure and simple-minded brain had decided that what had eaten... had simply been too delicious. It was more delicious than anything it had ever eaten!

The sudden appearance of the boy had led to Kong Dao's elimination in the trial. At present, only two parties remained who continued to hold their ground against the Beast Tide. One was Wang Baole, and the other, Li Yi!

What this meant was... the four Dao Colleges were the clear victors in the contest for the New Mars Region. They had fought and won against the other political forces. They would definitely hold an edge over the others when the Divine Armament was uncovered and up for grabs.

Many political forces in the Federation fell into a dead silence. It was clear they felt sore about their defeat. The Five Generation Sky Clan, especially, gnashed their teeth as they watched Wang Baole. Zhuo Yixian's preparation might not compare to Li Yi's, but if he had been able to survive the early stages of the trial and complete his city model in the later stages of the trial, he still stood a good chance of winning.

Unfortunately... lifetimes of accumulated bad karma made him neighbors with Wang Baole. He had been sabotaged and his city model completely demolished and taken apart. He had been eliminated. The factors resulting in the other candidates' defeat were many, but Wang Baole was undeniably involved in their eventual elimination from the trials. He had disappeared and pretended he hadn't existed. His megaphones. That mysterious mystic technique that he used to terrorize the Beast Tide. All these antics he had conjured had driven the monsters headed for his zone into the zones of others.

From the beginning of the trial, the other candidates had been placed under stress much greater than that of Wang Baole. Li Yi and Kong Dao had been luckier than the rest. Their zones were further away from Wang Baole, and, as a result, they hadn't suffered as much collateral damage.

Kong Dao's luck had run out though. That was why only Wang Baole and Li Yi remained. If Wang Baole chose to give up now, Li Yi would become the new city zone's mayor.

The White Deer Dao College immediately contacted the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College. Their tone was no longer as harsh as it had been before. It toned down considerably. They tried to negotiate tactfully for Wang Baole to throw in the towel... in exchange, the White Deer Dao College was willing to arrange a posting for Wang Baole in the Federation Capital that was at the same Primary Rank Four Noble.

The Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College didn't even consider the proposal. He turned it down instantly. He knew Wang Baole's character. The young man wouldn't agree to something like that. A Primary Rank Four Noble in the capital city would be a mere deputy to the head of a key department. This couldn't compare with being the mayor of the New Mars Region. They were worlds apart.

He knew that if he presented the proposal to Wang Baole, he would lose his integrity as a Sect Lord! He would have been undeserving of his title!

The significance of him turning down the offer and Wang Baole turning down the offer was different. The consequences were different. He would rather the White Deer Dao College be displeased with him. He was, to a certain degree, trying to protect Wang Baole.

The conflict between White Deer Dao College and Ethereal Dao College played out. At the same time, on the battlefields of the New Mars Region, explosions rang in the air as the eighth wave of Beast Tide began!

The sixth wave hadn't yet been completely decimated, while the seventh wave was still going strong and attacking relentlessly. Li Yi and Wang Baole struggled to hold the fort, but the arrival of the eighth wave immediately turned the battlefield into a critical situation. Victory seemed to be in sight. The outcome of the trial was going to be decided!

Li Yi started to panic. She poured her full concentration into keeping the city running. With the aid of her servants, the city's array formation suddenly unfurled to reveal three gigantic rings inside. They were intertwined with one another and spun ceaselessly!

The three giant rings spun rapidly and let loose an immense power. It seemed to be able to cut through anything. The surging Beast Tide was immediately stopped in its tracks. This didn't last for long, though. The outermost ring soon showed signs of cracking.

That's alright. I just have to hold on longer than the fatty! Li Yi gritted her teeth in the face of danger. She couldn't stop herself from sneaking a glance at Wang Baole. The sight that greeted her sent her trembling with shock. Her eyes widened. There was an incredulous look on her face.

This... this is simply...

Li Yi wasn't the only one stunned. Her servants, the anxious Federation residents watching the live stream, the powerful figures from the various political forces, and even the Martian Colony Governor and the giant tree were all... in shock. Many rose to their feet, gasping.

"Heavens. Wang Baole's Eternal Fortress..."

"This is..."

Tens of thousands of eyes stared in shock as Wang Baole stood atop his stronghold and pressed his fingers together into a series of hand seals. With a wave of his hands, his stronghold suddenly started rumbling. As countless monsters in the series of Beast Tides charged at him madly... the earth quaked and his stronghold... rose to the skies!

Chapter 362: A Grand Victory!

The stronghold didn't simply rise into the air. That would have been shocking, but it wouldn't have blown everyone's minds like it was doing now. As the stronghold hovered in mid-air, Wang Baole completed a series of rapid hand seals and unleashed the full power of his stronghold. He unleashed the final and ultimate attack that he had designed for his Eternal Fortress!

The stronghold instantly dismantled itself before everyone's eyes, in the face of the approaching waves of Beast Tides!

Nineteen pages separated from the stronghold and scattered in the air. The front and back covers did the same. They started circling in mid-air, and Countless Baole Cannons and Fire God Cannons appeared on the pages. Numerous other Dharma artifacts, which had appeared before in the earlier attacks, were all revealed.

The dismantled stronghold blanketed nearly half of the Divine Armament Zone. Its presence cast a looming shadow over the approaching Beast Tides beneath it. It unleashed its full power suddenly!

Thunderous booms resounded in the air and shook the heavens. Construction puppets moved swiftly across the pages, repairing the artifacts frantically. What followed was utterly mind-blowing. When the artifacts on a single page were deemed to be completely irreparable, the page would fall from the skies and slam straight into the beast hordes, self-destructing instantly!

Wang Baole had spent a lot of time designing the inscriptions for the self-destruction mechanism. The explosion was extremely powerful, and the force of the explosion surged outward in strong waves. It was the result of hundreds of Baole Cannons blowing up at the same time, the destruction of a page formed from vast quantities of resources and materials. It was the result of the inscriptions' frantic absorption of Spirit Qi from the surrounding air before its eventual self-destruction. That had been part of Wang Baole's design as well.

One page exploded with a thunderous boom. The Beast Tide suddenly halted in its tracks. This wasn't the end of it. The second page lost its ability to battle and fell crashing into the horde. A series of explosions sounded as that happened to a third page, fourth, fifth...

Wang Baole was going mad. He knew that this was the moment that decided whether he would emerge victoriously or instead be defeated. This was the moment that decided his mayorship for the New Mars Region. Everything banked on him holding strong and lasting longer than Li Yi!

He no longer had the time and energy to observe what was going on with Li Yi. In the midst of this very critical period, Wang Baole continued to maneuver his stronghold. He heard nothing else except the booming explosions that drowned out the roars of the beasts and kept ringing in his ear.

The ninth page followed, then the tenth... the fourteenth page fell and sent the ground quaking. Everyone in the Federation watching the live stream was stunned. Their scalps were prickling with numbness, their eyes widened, and their jaws dropped.

Both Wang Baole and Li Yi had gone to their limits at this very key, decisive moment. Wang Baole's book was left with two pages while Li Yi's city had been invaded. Waves of beasts, eyes mad with violence, howled and charged at Li Yi's helpers. Two Core Formation realm beasts headed straight for Li Yi!

Wang Baole encountered a similar problem. Two Core Formation realm beasts dashed at him. They were about to draw near when Wang Baole suddenly lifted his head and, with a loud roar, slapped his storage bracelet. A full suit of armor flew out and enclosed him entirely within its protection. He held his Dharmic Armament in his hand and sent it slashing at the two charging Core Formation realm beasts!

A loud explosion thundered. The armor on Wang Baole shattered into pieces. He spat out a mouthful of blood and shuddered. His face was drained of blood. Wang Baole clenched his teeth and violence colored his eyes as he swept his arm across the air, summoning nine mosquitoes. He held firm instead of shattering his jade slip. The last two pages in the air exploded at the same time.

Li Yi was gritting her teeth and holding on for dear life as well. She was relying on the emergency, life-saving array formation that the giant tree had given her to resist the attacks from the Core Formation realm beasts. She unleashed the remaining power from the city and continued to retaliate, in hopes that she would last for a little longer.

Both Li Yi and Wang Baole were reaching the end of their ropes. This was the deciding moment. It all depended on whom would outlast the other. The viewers watching the live stream—the residents of the Federation and the various political forces—held their breaths and dared not blink.

At present, not even the four Dao Colleges dared to assert... whom the final victor would be!

It all comes down to their fighting spirit... The same thought appeared in the minds of everyone viewing the battle. Wang Baole had come to the same conclusion as well. He had also been observing the array formation around Li Yi. He knew clearly that in terms of resources, he still couldn't compare with Li Yi, who had the support of the four Dao Colleges and the giant tree!

If nothing unexpected happened, he was bound to lose.

He had fought so hard and gotten so far. Wang Baole didn't intend to lose without putting up a fight. His breath quickened and grim determination flashed in his eyes.

"Li Yi!" Wang Baole leaped into the air and shouted at Li Yi as the two Core Formation realm beasts were temporarily held back by the simultaneous blasts from the pages.

Li Yi, who was struggling to defend herself against two Core Formation realm beasts with the array formation that the giant tree had given her, turned her head when she heard Wang Baole's yell. She saw Wang Baole pull out... his teleportation jade slip!

As soon as the teleportation jade slip was shattered, it would teleport whatever was in its immediate vicinity away. Li Yi's breath quickened when she saw Wang Baole pull out his jade slip. As for those who were watching the live stream—the residents of the Federation, those from the various political forces,

the Sect Lord and members of the Ethereal Dao College, Jin Duozhi and the others from the Dao Mountain Mist Academy...

Everyone's eyes fell on Wang Baole unanimously. Some of them had a look of shock on their faces, others mockery, and some others relief. Some showed regret that Wang Baole seemed to be giving up. It was then that... Wang Baole let out a loud laugh. He flung the teleportation jade slip... at one Core Formation realm beast!

As the jade slip approached the beast, Wang Baole howled and sent his blade slashing. The light from his blade erupted with a thundering boom and snaked after the jade slip. It hit the jade slip the moment the latter reached the Core Formation realm beast. There was a loud boom as the jade slip shattered under the slicing light of the saber blade!

The teleportation spell was released amid the explosion. It swept over the struggling, retreating beast. There was a sudden blinding light, and then, the beast vanished. It had been sent away!

The scene shocked everyone. No one had expected Wang Baole to do that. They were all reeling from the decisiveness and viciousness of Wang Baole's action!

He was asking for death!

"Wang Baole!" The Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College stomped his foot after witnessing the scene. He was fraught with anxiety. The Grand Supreme Elder was watching the battle in the college as well. He hadn't made a single comment throughout the entire trial, but at present, even he was alarmed.

Besides the Ethereal Dao College, the other political forces were also stunned at Wang Baole's move. Those from the Five Generation Sky Clan sucked in a sudden breath. They were all... shocked by Wang Baole's brutal decisiveness.

It was easy to be brutal and hard on others, but to exact the same kind of viciousness on one's self was something few could achieve.

Wang Baole was doing just that. He was leaving himself with no way out. The Federation populace was stunned. Even Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng were alarmed. The Governor of the Martian Colony had a stern look on her face and was silent. She didn't bother with the Core Formation realm beast that had been teleported away. It wasn't a candidate so it wouldn't survive the Martian array formation during the teleportation. It was highly likely it would be torn apart by the array formation during the process.

Li Yi was caught by surprise as well. Her breathing grew uneven, the look on her face that of alarm and shock. She gasped aloud.

"Wang Baole, you're crazy!"

Wang Baole lifted his face skyward and laughed out loud. He had his saber in his hand. In the sky, the pages continued to circle and erupt with explosive force. His voice rang out and resonated in the air.

"Li Yi, I don't plan to leave the fight. If you have the guts, you can do what I just did. If not... scam and go back to being the baby that you are!"

The power of Wang Baole's Dharmic Armament saber erupted with an explosive boom. He coordinated with the pages in the sky and clashed with the Core Formation realm beast. Despite not engaging the

beast in direct battle, despite the aid from the pages of his stronghold, Wang Baole was still not the beast's match. But he had a strong physical body. Blood continued to flow from his wounds. It was a tragic sight, but he held strong. In his mind, he considered chanting the scripture as a last resort if it came down to that... at the moment though, he could still afford to display a bit more of his fearsome figure in battle.

The donkey's eyes burned red with madness. It charged and bit every beast it saw.

Li Yi had a dark look on her face. She wanted to do what Wang Baole had just done as well, to leave herself with no way out and hold her ground bravely, but she didn't have the courage or decisiveness. She knew clearly that without the jade slip, there would be no immediate rescue should she be faced with extreme danger. The Governor and her people might be able to teleport themselves over, but that required time. Time was a luxury in such moments that could determine one's life or death.

Her will was weakening. Under the attack of the two howling Core Formation realm beasts, her array formation started to show signs of falling apart. Cracks appeared. It was about to collapse... if Li Yi's fighting spirit had remained strong and she had been left with no retreat, she might have been forced to continue fighting with her life. But now... in the midst of her panic, as the array formation exploded and fell apart, as the two Core Formation realm beasts lunged at her, Li Yi instinctively shattered the jade slip she had been holding in her hand all that while. Instantly... she was teleported away!

Eliminated!

On the battlefield stood the last candidate. It was Wang Baole. The fight had ended. Wang Baole... had achieved a grand victory!

Chapter 363: A Primary Rank Four Nobleship!

The trial for the New Mars Region ended. It had been an exhilarating and heart-stopping watch filled with exciting moments for the Federation residents who had been watching the trial from the start to the end.

Wang Baole had monopolized the limelight almost from the beginning. He had drawn the eyes of many viewers since his appearance and held them captive throughout the entire trial.

The Federation masses had gained a greater understanding of Wang Baole. They had seen a fatty who dug a hole and buried himself, a Dharmic Armament cultivator who used his wits and gigantic megaphones to fight against the Beast Tides, and a jerk who muttered to himself and kicked his donkey. They had also seen him face the beasts alone and rush into the beast hordes, slaying the leader of the Beast Tide...

They had seen a striking figure who unleashed a mysterious mystic technique that terrorized the beast hordes, the spectacular attacks from the Eternal Fortress, and finally... the most memorable sight that they had seen was Wang Baole... casting aside his teleportation jade slip, leaving himself with no escape and emerging victorious from the battle!

Wang Baole's grim, almost brutal, determination had been fully displayed before the entire Federation populace. They hadn't been the only ones moved. The powerful warriors from the other political forces had been silenced by his action.

A singular thought rose in their minds... unless it were the only option available to them, it would be unwise to offend such a character.

They also recalled what had happened in the lunar incident. They might have had some things to say about that or had their doubts regarding the matter then. But now, after they had placed the lunar incident next to what had happened in the trial, they were left with a clear and deep understanding... this Wang Baole was someone who was willing to put his life on the line!

In a time of peace, such a man would either die or suffer a boring, mundane life. In the current Spirit Inception Era though... he would rise to become a hero!

Wang Baole hadn't yet fully grown into his own. However, now that he had emerged victorious in the trial, he would become the mayor of the New Mars Region and a Primary Rank Four Noble. He was going to become an important figure in the Federation. Once he reached the Core Formation realm... he would undoubtedly rise to become one of the powerful personalities in the Federation!

As the entire Federation was overcome by emotion, Wang Baole remained inside the New Mars Region. He noticed Li Yi's teleportation but had no time for joy or relief. He retreated hastily while shrieking at the top of his voice.

"Save me, Governor!"

His scream was sudden and high pitched. The speed he was fleeing was much greater than any speed he had displayed earlier. He kept shouting as he ran away.

"Quick, save me! I'm the mayor of the new city zone. This is going to be embarrassing for Mars if I die!"

"Governor, come save me, quick..."

The scene stunned everyone who had still been dwelling on the earlier intense battle. The expression on their faces froze. It was as if they had just mistaken a dog for a person... the immense impression that Wang Baole had left them when he had stared death fiercely in the eye had been too great and shocking. His transformation had been so sudden they couldn't get used to it...

That alone would have been fine, but Wang Baole, upon seeing the Core Formation realm beast's relentless pursuit as he ran away, panicked. He maneuvered another page to crash down and explode in the hopes of slowing the beast down. Then, he grabbed his donkey and jumped onto its back.

The donkey was used to such treatment. It kicked its hooves and sprinted away, desperate and fleeing for its life. It was just that... the Federation populace wasn't aware that the donkey was used to this. When they saw what Wang Baole had done... there was an odd expression on their faces. Wang Baole's figure was so shapely that one could hardly see the donkey after he sat on it...

"My heart goes out to the donkey..."

The tens of thousands of families across the entire Federation didn't know whether to laugh or cry. An indescribable feeling emerged in these ordinary folks' hearts. They didn't even realize that when they

had been looking at Wang Baole with admiration and respect, they had also been feeling an unbreachable distance between Wang Baole and themselves.

But now, as they watched Wang Baole yelling for help and bullying his donkey, it was like they were looking at their neighboring family's kid. A sudden warmth and sense of familiarity surged inside each ordinary citizen.

They liked the little fatty.

The Governor didn't know whether to laugh or cry either. She had half a mind to delay rescue to punish Wang Baole. This was being broadcast live to the entire Federation. His shrieking and cries for help were an absolute embarrassment. After all, he was... the mayor of the New Mars Region, a Primary Rank Four Noble.

The giant tree couldn't help his glee when he saw the scene. He couldn't control his resentment. He really wished that Wang Baole would just die there. That would be the end of it all. But he remembered the fruit inside Wang Baole's body and was torn. Alive, Wang Baole was a nuisance. Dead, he was still a source of frustration.

What is he up to! The giant tree snorted. Next to him, the Governor had also decided to delay her rescue. Suddenly, her voice transmission ring started to vibrate fiercely.

The Governor lowered her head. She had an exasperated look on her face, and she glared at the spirit screen. Wang Baole was slapping his donkey's ass and yelling at it to speed up. She murmured inwardly then raised her right hand. She directed the Martian array formation, immediately transporting herself, the giant tree, and the other upper Martian administration away from the command center.

They appeared in the air above the New Mars Region. As they descended, the Governor issued another command. The seal over the Divine Armament Catacombs erupted with a blinding light. It transformed into tens of thousands of beams, like arrows that shot out in every direction and pierced through beasts in their wake, slaughtering the beasts instantly.

The Core Formation realm beasts that had been pursuing Wang Baole weren't spared such a fate either. They were only at the early stage of the Core Formation realm. They had been mutations born from the Divine Armament Catacombs's radiation and were hardly intelligent creatures. They were defenseless against the power of the array formation. The beams of light pierced through their bodies and killed them on the spot!

Everything happened within the span of a few seconds. Every beast on the battlefield of the Divine Armament Zone was killed...

Wang Baole was overjoyed at the sight. He stopped running and was thinking whether he should make a show of his courage and heroism when, suddenly, a thundering roar rang out from inside the Divine Armament Catacombs.

As the roar resounded in the air, the seal over the Divine Armament Catacombs seemed to suddenly swell outwards. A giant face appeared, and with it, earth-shattering energy suddenly erupted!

The Spirit Qi was so overpowering that Wang Baole was struck by fear and alarm. His legs felt weak, and the donkey shuddered and almost fell to its knees... Wang Baole's heart raced. He could sense that this Spirit Qi had surpassed that of the giant tree and even Duan Muque...

Is that a... Nascent Soul! Wang Baole's eyes widened. His heart leaped into his throat. He saw a fearsome-looking face, its features contorted into a gruesome expression, pressing against the seal from inside the catacombs. It seemed like it was trying to get out but was stopped by the seal. Its features pressed hard against the seal, forming an imprint on the seal.

The giant tree, hovering in mid-air, was also affected. He had heard about the secrets surrounding the sealed Divine Armament Catacombs, but he had still been struck dumb by the immense power that surged from the catacombs.

Next to him, the other Martian high ranking officials, who were either from the military or from the administration, and were all Core Formation realm cultivators, had somber looks on their faces. Only the Governor remained unfazed as she lowered her gaze at the face trapped beneath the seal. She was expressionless as she formed a series of hand seals and pointed.

The seal instantly shone with a bright light and sank downward. It forcibly shoved the face back down into the catacombs, and the howling gradually faded.

Silence returned. Wang Baole's heart was still racing. In the sky, the Governor appeared in the live streaming screens across the Federation as the last, parting image. As everyone was still reeling in shock from seeing the giant face, she spoke coolly. Her musical voice was like a decree from Mars itself!

"On this day, the New Mars Region is established!"

"Wang Baole, I have been appointed by the Federation to take charge over and defend Mars on behalf of the Federation. The Martian government is empowered to appoint any office below the Secondary Rank Three Noble. Today... I appoint you the first mayor of the New Mars Region, a Primary Rank Four Noble!"

"I hope you will not disappoint the hopes that the Federation and Mars have placed in you, and will do your best in setting up the New Mars Region!"

Everyone watching the live stream became very serious as they listened to the Governor's words. Anyone who knew something about the Federation structure knew very well that from this day onwards, Wang Baole was going to become a rising star in the Federation's political realm!

He would wield actual political clout in the Federation. He wasn't a deputy head in any ordinary department, but the mayor of a Martian city zone. This new city zone was going to be hotly fought over by the various political forces in the Federation in the near future.

He had won his appointment before tens of thousands of people. This meant that as long as he committed no mistake, his position in the New Mars Region was secure!

Even though Wang Baole had known that his appointment was guaranteed, when he heard the Governor's words with his own ears, he still experienced a moment of dizziness. It was followed by a trembling that spread across his entire body. His breathing quickened.

His eyes sparkled like stars. He was overwhelmed with excitement. Wang Baole inhaled a deep breath and extended a salute towards the heavens. He said loudly, "Yes, ma'am!"

Chapter 364: The Divine Armament Wall

The mayor of the new Martian city zone was declared before the masses. The announcement stirred the entire Federation. Countless media agencies continued to broadcast and report about the news even though the live stream of the trial had been seen by almost everyone. Those who hadn't tuned in to the live broadcast soon learned about Wang Baole's name as well!

Wang Baole's parents hadn't watched the live stream. As soon as the live stream ended, their voice transmission rings started vibrating fiercely with transmissions.

The City Lord of Phoenix City personally paid them a visit. He had treated them cordially in the past, but his attitude had grown even friendlier now. It hadn't yet reached the point of being ingratiating, yet when he greeted them and exchanged a few friendly words with his parents, he was obviously more polite and respectful than he had been before.

Indeed... things seemed to have changed. The Wang Baole who had come from this family and had left Phoenix City currently possessed a cultivation that vastly surpassed his own Foundation Establishment realm cultivation. Wang Baole's Noble class was above his as well. In fact, if he wasn't the City Lord of Phoenix City, he might not even be worthy of visiting his family.

He knew very clearly the extent of power the New Mars Region's mayor held. Wang Baole would be the most powerful Primary Rank Four Noble in the entire Federation!

Wang Baole's parents had first been stunned by the visit. After they realized the reason for the visit, they experienced more worry than happiness. But they knew, from the moment Wang Baole enrolled successfully in the Ethereal Dao College, that he had made his choice and decided his own path.

That was why they buried their worries deep in their hearts so that Wang Baole wouldn't worry for them. The archeology team that Wang Baole's father was in had also decided, as Wang Baole rose higher up in rank and status, to appoint his father as the leader of the team.

Under the Phoenix City City Lord's orders, Wang Baole's mother was also transferred to a city administration department. She was given a comfy, leisurely job with considerable authority. In addition, she wouldn't be held accountable if anything went wrong.

As soon as Wang Baole's parents recovered from their daze and good fortune, they began to discuss privately.

"We can't let the rascal keep fooling around like that. I'm going to get him to go for matchmaking sessions when he visits the next time!"

"That's right. Old Huang's daughter seems not bad. He's spoken to me about her a few times."

The two concurred on their plan of action. As for the Ethereal Dao College, as soon as they heard the announcement, loud thunderous cheers spread throughout the college. Wang Baole had become a legend in the Lower Academy Island. He was a role model they idolized and strove to emulate. The

teachers of the Lower Academy Island often shared stories about Wang Baole to encourage and inspire the students.

The reactions in the Upper Academy Island weren't as dramatic, but the cheers were still endless. Everyone had been simmering with resentment over the four Dao Colleges supporting Li Yi instead of Wang Baole.

Be it cultivation, battle capabilities, or achievements, Wang Baole overwhelmingly crushed Li Yi. But the Ethereal Dao College only had one vote. They couldn't steer all four Dao Colleges from their final decision to support Li Yi.

Regardless... it was almost as if Wang Baole had staged an ambush with just him and his donkey alone, wiping the floor with the other candidates and emerging as the mayor of the New Mars Region. The students of the Ethereal Dao College basked in his glory. The Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College too was heartened. Even the Grand Supreme Elder, who stayed out of politics, had smiled faintly.

Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng had sent their congratulatory messages to Wang Baole while they remained at their stations. Zhao Yameng, especially, had told Wang Baole that they could always put their heads together to help him solve any problems he encountered. The trial that had just passed, for example. If Wang Baole had required their help, she and Zhuo Yifan would have tried their best to come up with something.

Wang Baole was moved by what she had said, but he didn't think too much about it. On his way back to the city, he saw the messages overflowing in his voice transmission ring and started to read and reply to them, one by one. He saw Liu Daobin's transmission as well.

Liu Daobin had been overcome with excitement at first. Then, he recalled his bets and froze. He did some simple calculations and concluded he did earn some winnings. He still regretted dearly though. If he had placed all his money on Wang Baole instead, he would be so rich now...

Wang Baole continued to receive and reply to his voice transmissions on the journey back to the Martian Colony City. He didn't know if the Governor had done this intentionally, but he had not been given the privilege to be teleported back with them. He could only take the cruiser.

While he wasn't afraid to fight for his rights, Wang Baole felt that he wasn't a mean-spirited person. He had already forgiven the Governor for her "oversight".

Wang Baole coughed, then got off of the cruiser. When he returned to the academy, he could sense the enthusiasm of his students. He was inwardly pleased. He said a few words of encouragement, and had a brief exchange with Lin Tianhao and his staff, before returning to his residence with his donkey.

Now that the order had been issued, he simply had to wait for the Governor to call for him. He began his preparations for the setting up of the new city zone.

During his trip back earlier, he had received a voice transmission from the Governor herself. She had informed him to quickly hand over the responsibilities he had on hand within the next few days. She had provided him with some recommendations for potential successors to take over his position as dean at the Dao Mountain Mist Academy.

Wang Baole already had someone in mind to take over as the next dean. It was going to be Lin Tianhao.

Lin Tianhao was the most qualified and suitable person for the role. Of course, Wang Baole could choose a junior brother from the Ethereal Dao College to take over his position. This would allow the Ethereal Dao College to expand its political influence on Mars through its control over the Dao Mountain Mist Academy, whose status had been steadily rising in the colony city.

However, to do so would be rather unfair to Lin Tianhao. Wang Baole would also incur the displeasure of people on Mars. He didn't think further on this matter. He decided that Lin Tianhao would become the next dean.

He was showing his gratitude to Lin Tianhao's father, who had helped him during the fight for mayorship. At the same time, his final decision was also the natural outcome of Lin Tianhao's growing support for him and the strengthening relationship between the both of them.

After he had some rest, Wang Baole sought out Lin Tianhao and had a long conversation with him. When Lin Tianhao left, his eyes were shining with excitement. He looked radiant and in high spirits. He was extremely thankful for what Wang Baole had done for him. He sighed happily. His father had been right!

Lin Tianhao had been qualified to compete for mayorship as well. However, Lin You had considered the pros and cons carefully and decided not to let his son participate in the fight. He had told his son that Wang Baole was a man who knew gratitude and would return the favors he owed. If Lin Tianhao stepped out from the fight willingly, and Wang Baole succeeded in becoming the new mayor, the latter would definitely remember how the Lin family had helped him in his quest.

Even though there was a higher chance of Wang Baole failing, but even if he didn't succeed, he would still remember how the Lin family had helped him...

If Lin Tianhao had joined the fight, things might have turned out fine if he had won. If he had lost, he would have no choice but to transfer out from the Dao Mountain Mist Academy.

Lin You was clearly well versed when it came to assessing the grand scheme of things and picking the best option possible to move forward. After the excited Lin Tianhao left, Wang Baole got down to business immediately. He sat in his office with a stern face and turned on his voice transmission ring. Inside was a highly confidential document that the Governor had sent him!

Only Secondary Rank Three Nobles and above were allowed to view the information in the document. Wang Baole hadn't been qualified to access it previously. Now that he was the mayor of the new city zone though, his status and office had changed. He had been given special permission to read the document.

The document contained information on the Divine Armament Catacombs and detailed the reason for setting up a new region and building a new city there.

The Divine Armament Catacombs had been discovered by Kong Dao years ago. He had reported his findings to the Martian administration. Prior to his discovery, it would have been difficult even for the Martian array formation to identify anything amiss in the region.

The Federation had placed great importance on Kong Dao's findings. The Governor herself looked into the matter multiple times. Finally, with the joint support from the many powerful cultivators of the various political forces in the Federation, they carried out a secret exploratory exercise.

Through the exercise, they found out that it extended deep underground. Its depth was immeasurable... it was impossible to determine how deep it went through means of human investigation, mystic techniques, or even technology.

Despite the joint efforts of some of the most powerful cultivators in the Federation, no one had managed to reach the deepest and lowest level of the catacombs. They had fought through countless waves of Beast Tides and had been finally stopped by a wall!

This wall was later called the Divine Armament Wall!

The wall was ice-cold. It was impossible to break through even with their combined forces. The only way to break through the wall was if the Federation President used his Divine Armament. However, they could sense the similarly strong power of a Divine Armament behind the wall. If they forcibly broke through the wall, they would be faced with an inevitable battle between Divine Armaments.

Should such a situation occur, the resultant collateral damage from the fight... would likely cause a dramatic transformation on Mars. The planet might be torn apart. Such a possibility existed.

Those caught in the middle of the fight would suffer grievous injury and even death. The Federation President himself might face a backlash and turn to dust, while the Divine Armament remained unharmed and whole.

This was a price the Federation had been unwilling to pay, and the Martian Colony Governor had found unacceptable. That was why the excavation ceased...

Chapter 365: Qi Fostering Spirit Array Formation

The project had been terminated, and the colonization of Mars postponed. They had originally wanted to wait until the Federation was ready and had the means, and for the conditions to be ripe, before they restarted the project to colonize the area.

Based on their estimates, it would be at least thirty years before they were ready.

That was why when they had left the catacombs, they had set up a seal. That had been to prevent the beasts, who had absorbed the radiation from the Divine Armament and mutated, from escaping from the catacombs and causing chaos. That had been how peace had resumed in the region.

If not for the blood-colored mist and winds that had suddenly swept across half the Martian planet, the current situation might have persisted. The plans might even have been postponed further. But with the appearance of the blood-colored phenomenon, and strange villages and the corpse in the Blood Cave, investigations had been carried out by the Martian administration. Their findings all pointed towards the Divine Armament Catacombs.

Their findings had already proven that the seal over the Divine Armament Catacombs had prevented the Divine Armament's radiation from spreading and resulted in a build-up of pressure within the catacombs. That had, in turn, resulted in the appearance of the blood-colored mist and winds.

There had been no conclusive findings on the strange villages that had appeared though. None of the powerful figures in the Federation had any clue why they had appeared, but they guessed that it had something to do with the Divine Armament as well.

They had reason to believe that if they continued to maintain the seal over the catacombs, more catacombs and underground caverns might begin to appear on Mars... Based on their deduction, they might have another ten years or so before something like that began to happen...

Once that happened, they wouldn't be able to continue with their colonization. The Martian colony would be faced with incredible danger as well.

After serious deliberation and weighing their options, the Martian Colony Governor came up with a bold plan. They would set up a gigantic array formation above the sealed Divine Armament Catacombs.

The array formation had two functions. The first was to release beasts from the catacombs on a regular basis for extermination. That would lessen the pressure building up inside the catacombs and provide Mars with countless materials that could be farmed from the dead beasts. Not only could they conduct studies on the farmed materials, but they could also observe in detail the changes inside the catacombs through what they had scavenged after each extermination.

Its second purpose... was key.

This was akin to... gradually smoothing a stone with the continuous trickling of water droplets. They would use the power of the array formation to slowly wear down the wall. Based on the Governor's studies, it might take them only ten years to wear the ice wall down to an extent that they wouldn't need to unleash the Divine Armament to break through it. They needed only the combined powers of the Core Formation realm cultivators in the Federation to blast through the wall.

The Governor had handed the proposal over to the Federation. The Federation had conducted their own studies and research, and finally, they had given the Governor permission to build a large array formation outside the Divine Armament Catacombs!

The name of this array formation was... the Qi Fostering Spirit Array Formation!

The array formation was immensely powerful. After the ancient green-bronze sword had appeared, they had discovered the Qi Fostering Art on a gigantic sword fragment. This array formation had been recorded on that same fragment. It could be viewed as a supplementary array formation to the Qi Fostering Art!

It had a special feature. The greater the number of people practicing the Qi Fostering Art inside the array formation, the more powerful the array formation.

Every political force had unanimously promoted and encouraged the practicing of the Qi Fostering Art. There hadn't been any opposition from any of them. The official reason put out to the public, for pushing the Federation populace to practice the Qi Fostering Art, was to refine Spirit Stones so that the

Federation would have a supply of Spirit Stones to serve as both currency and resources. But the hidden objective that was concealed from the masses was to sustain the Qi Fostering Spirit Array Formation!

Every political force used the array formation. After a city on earth was built, the Federation would send over specialized array formation cultivators to set up the array formation.

Be it Mars, the Moon, or the Federation Capital—all their major array formations were Qi Fostering Spirit Array Formations!

The Federation made minor adjustments and modifications to the array formation after conducting some research. Each array formation was encrypted. They might all be sustained by the same source, but as long as the core of the array formation wasn't being controlled or hacked into, they remained independent entities separate from the other Qi Fostering Spirit Array Formations.

The unique feature of the array formation dictated that its power grew with more people practicing the Qi Fostering Art. Further studies showed that it posed no harmful effects to the Qi Fostering Art-practicing public. The only side effect was people expending more energy when they used the Qi Fostering Art to refine Spirit Stones.

That was why population size became a focal issue for the Federation.

That was the reason for the countless immigration to Mars after the new colony city was built. Similarly, in order to build the array formation outside the Divine Armament Catacombs, they would have to build a city zone there as well... and after that, transport numerous Federation residents over to form the new residents of the new city zone.

Only with a sufficient population size could they sustain the array formation. After the population reached a sufficient size, it would then have an impact on the excavation of the Divine Armament Catacombs and the wearing down of the ice wall.

All this was highly confidential information that was restricted from public eyes. Even the exposure of the Qi Fostering Spirit Array Formation would incite public terror in the Federation. Even though it was harmless, the energy drain that came from refining Spirit Stones would draw public unhappiness.

Wang Baole gasped after he was done reading everything.

I was wondering why I felt a severe diffusion of my Spirit Qi leaking into the surrounding when I was using the Qi Fostering Art to refine Spirit Qi... this is the reason!

I was also wondering what the new city zone had to do with the excavation of the Divine Armament. So this is why... Wang Baole was clearly affected by his discovery. He took a while to calm himself down. He started thinking about the Federation. Gradually, a thought formed in his head.

The politics inside the Federation are too complex. As you climb up the ranks, it's like unveiling layer after layer of secrets. Every new discovery is more shocking than the previous... also, is it really true that the Federation has never had a Nascent Soul?

A myriad of emotions flashed across Wang Baole's face. The knowledge that had been instilled deeply in him since he had been a boy had just been exposed as superficial. There had been another layer of truth

hidden beneath all along. The discovery unsettled him, and he couldn't control the surge of emotions he was feeling.

After a very long time, Wang Baole finally accepted the truth that had been laid out before him. He fell silent as he stared at the voice transmission jade slip before him. The Federation had kept this matter under wraps too well. Every political force also didn't wish for too many people to find out about this secret.

Now, Wang Baole was aware of it as well. But he knew that he could never disclose this. No one could ever disclose this truth.

Fortunately, he had never heard of any cases of someone being sucked dry by an array formation and then dying. He had first-hand experience as well, and he had never felt any discomfort inside the array formation. Besides, Wang Baole firmly believed that both the Sect Lord and the Grand Supreme Elder of the Ethereal Dao College knew about this. They had chosen to remain silent. This meant that the only harm the array formation had on the general populace was limited to the energy they expended while refining Spirit Stones.

After all, they were all living inside the array formation.

Wang Baole released a sigh of relief at that thought and continued reading the document. When he was finally done with it, it was already late into the night. He noted the warning on the document that instructed its readers not to leak any part of the information to anyone else. That would amount to treason.

The document self-destructed after he was done reading it. Not a trace of it remained.

Wang Baole stared at the emptied voice transmission jade slip and shut his eyes. He slowly digested the contents of the top-secret document while waiting for the Martian Colony Governor to call for him.

Three days passed in the blink of an eye.

During those three days, Wang Baole stayed in his residence and didn't leave. He began to meditate and train while waiting. He could sense that his cultivation was reaching the peak of the mid-stage of the Foundation Establishment realm. When the time arrived, he would try for a breakthrough and enter the late-stage of the Foundation Establishment realm.

Due to his practicing of the Lightning Dao: First Volume, the lightning bolts resting within both his legs were fully charged. He needed only a single thought to unleash them.

After the initial breakthrough in his practice of the Dark Art, his progress grew exponentially. He could sense the Negative Spirit Body during every practice session. He had also successfully formed the second Dark Fire inside his body!

The presence of both Dark Fire sped up his cultivation tremendously. The Green Lotus inside his body had grown as well, and he no longer needed to train his physical body; it grew stronger naturally, without any aid from him.

It reached a point where Wang Baole felt that there wasn't much use in him practicing any more mystic techniques. If he encountered an enemy that couldn't be downed in a single blow, he would simply hit

him another ten times, or a hundred times. He was filled with endless energy anyway, and he healed at a startling rate.

His only regret was his very own Dark Corpse Face Art... the Dark Art!

He hadn't had the opportunity to try it out. He itched with curiosity every time he thought about it. He really wanted to find out how powerful the Dark Corpse Face Art was, and what it actually did.

It's a pity there's no opportunity... Wang Baole sighed. He didn't want to risk being associated with the Divine Armament Catacombs should he be found out for using the Dark Art and then dragged off to become a specimen in a lab...

He might be able to convince others to disregard his knowledge of the scripture with his status in the Ethereal Dao College and as the new mayor. If he exposed the fact he was practicing the Dark Art, he would be very surprised if nobody tried to pry the truth out of his mouth and find out exactly what was going on.

Caution is the word. Wang Baole sighed and reminded himself. He continued his cultivation. Four days later, noon came... Wang Baole was deep in practice when his voice transmission ring suddenly vibrated. A stern voice, sending him a message on behalf of the Martian administration, rang in Wang Baole's ear.

"Mayor Wang, the Governor has a fifteen-minute window in an hour's time. Please arrive at her office on time!"

Chapter 366: Criticism and Appraisal!

Wang Baole perked up instantly when he received the notice from the Martian Governor's office. He had been waiting for it while training the past few days. He was no longer the young, naive boy who had just joined the Federation. He knew the importance of his new office. He was going to set up an entirely new city zone!

The resources and labor required for the project were immense. That was why the Governor needed to speak to him. She needed to pass along her instructions so that her mind could be put to ease.

Wang Baole immediately got to his feet upon receiving the notice. He changed his clothes, then stood before the mirror. He had admired himself a million times, but he thought that still wasn't enough, so he did it once again.

Such a slim figure, such a good-looking face... who knows which lucky girl will get to have me, a beautiful man, in the future... Wang Baole lost himself in his own beauty. Pleased, he left the academy and boarded his cruiser, heading straight for the Governor's office.

The cruiser sped the entire way to the office, and Wang Baole soon reached his destination. He immediately drew the attention of the people rushing in and out of the office as he got out of his cruiser. Men and women extended a bow towards him instinctively. They all knew that this fatty... had ascended the ranks and now sat amongst the powerful!

Amongst them were many female cultivators who saw past Wang Baole's slim figure and good-looking face. It was as if they could see the very essence of his soul, and there was a strange light in their eyes.

Their stares pleased Wang Baole tremendously. He was torn as well, as he felt he shouldn't be so cold towards them and should be friendlier. On his way to the Governor's office, he would stop and say hello to the prettier cultivators and exchange contact details with the surprised and overjoyed women.

When Wang Baole finally reached the Governor's office, he had the contact numbers of a dozen female cultivators, which caused him to sigh.

It's a troublesome thing to be so good-looking. Who should I call first... Wang Baole was troubling himself over the matter when he heard a stern voice filled with authority inside the office. He set aside his feelings of self-satisfaction and put a serious expression on his face as he pushed the door open. When he saw the Governor, he immediately puffed his chest out and lifted his head, speaking loudly.

"Your humble subordinate greets the esteemed Governor!"

The Governor had her head lowered as she read through some documents. She ignored Wang Baole, leaving him to stand in the office for a while. She finally lifted her head and glanced over at him, her face expressionless when she asked him a question.

"You enjoy collecting female cultivators' contact numbers?"

Wang Baole didn't know if he was imagining things, but he could feel a chill behind his back when he heard what the Governor said. He felt that this was his own private affair. Even his parents didn't involve themselves in his matters, so why was the Martian Colony Governor getting herself involved?

Maybe... she has a daughter, and she's looking to make me her son-in-law? It was unclear how Wang Baole got to that conclusion, but his eyes widened, and he stared at the Governor. It was clear that she was getting on in terms of her age, but she still looked beautiful despite that. Wang Baole was instantly torn.

No, I, Wang Baole, am a man of principle. Wang Baole took in a deep breath. He was thinking about how to turn the Governor down in a tactful manner when the Governor snorted.

"You're still young and immature. You shouldn't be obsessing yourself with romantic dalliances. How could you take on the heavy responsibilities of your office with such a character!" The Governor gave Wang Baole a cold stare. Wang Baole was instantly alarmed. He knew he wasn't imagining things this time. He could feel a murderous intent behind her chilly stare.

He shuddered. He pulled out his voice transmission ring without hesitation and deleted the contact details of all the female cultivators he had spoken to earlier right before the Governor's eyes.

The Governor seemed to remain dissatisfied despite Wang Baole's swift reaction and immediate regret of his earlier actions. She couldn't comment further, however. He had shown repentance, after all. She didn't speak further on the subject and instead went straight to business.

"The Federation and the Martian administration will provide some resources for the set up of the new city zone... however, I can let you know now that with the current financial situation Mars is in, the resources we can provide you will be limited. This should also be the case with the Federation.

"The resources that we can provide will only help to set up the basic infrastructure of the new city zone. You'll have to think of something to continue further development of the city zone!"

“That’s the first thing I want to tell you. Secondly, I’m giving you six months for the city zone construction. Thirdly, after the six months of construction... we will be moving a hundred million residents to the new region. I’ll also be making a trip to the new city zone to assess if it has been constructed in a satisfactory manner and if it can indeed host a hundred million people!

“That is all. You will be traveling to the new city zone alongside all the resources prepared in three days. I will be dispatching a hundred thousand people to help you with the first phase of construction. You will decide how to use them to build the city zone. Wang Baole, I hope you won’t disappoint the people who are watching this with interest! In addition, I want to remind you that the main focus of the project is not the construction of the new city zone, but the setting up of the array formation!”

The Governor gave Wang Baole a jade slip after she was done speaking. The jade slip contained the blueprints of the new Martian city zone’s array formation, which was top-secret information. She instructed Wang Baole that no one else was to access the full blueprints!

She gave Wang Baole another look. Her expression was calm, her thoughts indiscernible. She said coolly, “I have a meeting shortly. Do you have anything else to say?”

Wang Baole was stunned. He opened his mouth, wanting to say something. The Governor hadn’t picked up her teacup and started sipping her tea, but it was clear from her actions that she was done with him and was sending him away.

He panicked. The first condition that the Governor had mentioned already posed a challenge. It was impossible for him to make up the rest of the resources that were required and hadn’t been allocated to him. Even if he wanted to, he wouldn’t be able to cough up so much...

The second requirement on the half-year construction time limit and the third on the population size were also challenging to fulfill. Based on Wang Baole’s knowledge of his Eternal Fortress, he knew that the resources and labor required to create a city zone within six months that could host a hundred million people would be immense. It was almost an impossible feat...

“Governor, it’s almost impossible to fulfill all three requirements,” Wang Baole said hastily.

“That’s your problem. If you can’t do it, we’ll just have to find someone else!” The Governor frowned slightly. It seemed like her dissatisfaction towards Wang Baole was growing. She had a rather positive impression of Wang Baole prior to his performance during the trial. Now though... it seemed like she had started nitpicking.

Wang Baole started to sweat. He felt unjustly treated. He had fought for this mayorship with his life, but he would become the joke of the town if he didn’t do a good job.

It was clear that the Governor wasn’t going to provide any help with the problem of insufficient resources. Wang Baole tried hard to control his emotions. Gears started spinning furiously in his head as he recalled the tactics he had read about in the high officials’ autobiographies. The frown on the Governor’s face started to deepen. She was about to order Wang Baole to leave when Wang Baole raised his head and stared straight into the Governor’s eyes.

“Governor, it’s alright if the resources allocated are insufficient, but the responsibilities of constructing the new city zone are too heavy. I, Wang Baole, may be able to do the work of a hundred thousand men,

but I don't wish to disappoint the expectations you have placed on me. I am asking for your permission to give me the right to choose my deputies. The office of the vice mayors must be Secondary Rank Four Nobles!" Wang Baole was making a gamble. He remembered what the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College had said regarding vice mayors. He had no choice but to use the promise of vice mayorships to buy more resources.

The Governor remained expressionless when she heard what he had said. She stared at Wang Baole, then said coolly, "You can have two."

Wang Baole's eyes brightened when he heard what she said as he originally only wanted one vice mayor. He didn't expect the Governor to allow him to have two. He started thinking furiously. He put on a wronged expression on his face and said loudly.

"Governor, I'll be the one who has to answer for it if problems crop up in the new region. Since I'm to be held responsible, I'll need ten vice mayors. That's the only way to ensure that everything goes well!"

"You can stop that. You'll get four!" The Governor saw through Wang Baole's devious plans immediately. She replied coolly and left no room for negotiation. Then, she added that Wang Baole had the power to recommend people to the position of vice mayor, but the final decision rested with her. That meant that while it was still possible to become a vice mayor despite Wang Baole's strong and vehement protest, the chances of that happening were very low.

The Governor had to consider Wang Baole's views and opinions, after all.

Wang Baole understood that this was part and parcel of the process. He didn't comment further on this. He knew that the final pool of candidates would be those he had recommended. There wasn't a need to make everything so transparent. He let loose a breath of relief. He informed the Governor of his recommendation for Lin Tianhao to take over as the dean of the Dao Mountain Mist Academy before leaving.

The Governor reminded him again before he left that the main focus of his task wasn't the city construction but the set up of the array formation!

Wang Baole could tell how much this matter meant to the Governor after her repeated reminders. His focus also aligned with hers.

The Governor's expression softened after Wang Baole left. She rose to her feet and walked towards the windows. Soon, she saw Wang Baole board his cruiser and leave.

This fatty's not that stupid... She laughed. She seemed consoled by the fact, and her feelings were shown in her eyes. She viewed the setup of the new city zone even more seriously than Wang Baole did. If Wang Baole hadn't reacted quickly enough and hadn't known how to gather more resources for the city zone's construction, it would have resulted in her disappointment. However, she would still give him a few pointers to ensure that nothing went wrong during the construction process.

Of course, if that had happened, she would begin to have doubts and might even start considering the most suitable person to become the next mayor.

But Wang Baole had clearly reacted quickly to the challenges posed. She couldn't help but approve of his reaction, but as she started thinking further, her approval lessened. There was a tinge of criticism and assessment to her views.

Kid, if that's all you've got, it's not going to be enough!

Chapter 367: Greatly Sought After

Wang Baole's enthusiasm towards his new office as the mayor of the new city zone diminished after he left the Governor's office. His head started throbbing when he thought about the three conditions the Governor had set.

She's forcing me to prostitute myself! Wang Baole simmered with resentment. He returned to the Dao Mountain Mist Academy. He sighed. He knew he didn't have much time left. He was leaving in three days' time, which meant he only had three days to find a solution to his problems.

That's alright. Why should I give myself so much stress? Even if I can't solve everything within these three days, I can still try to come up with something during the construction of the new city zone. Wang Baole released a sigh of relief. He brainstormed furiously for solutions. He felt that his current situation was no different from his situation prior to the trial, as he had had no resources then either. He only had his blueprints for his Eternal Fortress and his construction puppets.

His current situation was similar. He was still impoverished in terms of resources. Only, instead of blueprints and puppets, now he had potential vice mayorships as his only bargaining chips.

To think that I, Wang Baole, a man of honor and principles, and extremely good looks, who never stooped to underhanded means, am now forced and coerced by the Martian Colony Governor to do whatever it takes to achieve one's goals. Fine, I'll go against my principles just this once. Wang Baole sighed. He got his mind to settle down as he thought about how best to use his bargaining chips and get the best deal out of them.

He knew very clearly in his heart that every political force would eye the vice mayorships greedily. They might not be able to get one of their own to become the mayor, but a vice mayorship would guarantee that they didn't lose out in the long run.

It'd be great if I could host an auction for them. Wang Baole thought with great regret. He only considered the idea briefly. If he really did that, he believed he would be arrested and taken away by the relevant authorities the next day...

Wang Baole thought about the best way to make use of the vice mayorships he had. Then, that night, whilst he was meditating, he received a voice transmission from a stranger.

The caller was an old man. His aged voice immediately revealed who he was as soon as Wang Baole picked up the call.

"Wang Baole, I'm the Sect Lord of the White Deer Dao College... according to the agreement amongst the four Dao Colleges, Li Yi will become your vice mayor and support your work in the New Mars

Region...” The Sect Lord had mixed feelings while he spoke. He tried to control his agitation and anger. His tone seemed authoritative and commanding, but this was already the best he could do.

Before he could finish speaking though, Wang Baole hung up on him without saying a single word!

The Sect Lord of the White Deer Dao College froze. He could no longer control his rage and exploded in anger.

That rascal, he actually dared to hang up on me! The Sect Lord slammed his desk. A loud thud rang out inside the White Deer Dao College.

He had a bad impression of Wang Baole all along. Wang Baole had disobeyed the Dao Colleges and went ahead to join the trial. He had gone against the Dao Colleges, which was akin to treason. The four Dao Colleges had agreed to support Li Yi. Who could have thought that Wang Baole would suddenly throw a spanner in the works and rise to become a candidate?

It would have been alright if he had stopped there. But no, he had actually gone ahead and succeeded. The Sect Lord would have had a different view towards the matter if Wang Baole had hailed from the White Deer Dao College, but Wang Baole wasn't one of his own, and he had disobeyed him. The Sect Lord felt nothing but annoyance and irritation for him.

After Wang Baole had dared to hang up on his voice transmission, his anger grew. He snorted in disdain.

To be so arrogant at such a young age. I'm going to make you understand that Li Yi will become your vice mayor even without your agreement. No matter how much you resent it, you will have to swallow your resentment! At that thought, the Sect Lord immediately contacted the Deputy Governor of the Martian Colony.

They spoke for a while. The Sect Lord was stunned when the giant tree told him that he didn't have the authority to interfere either. After enquiring in more detail, he became more incredulous. He heard the giant tree sigh as he told the Sect Lord that he had inquired about the vice mayor openings for the new city zone as well. The Governor had said firmly that no one was to interfere with the selection.

The giant tree was clearly dissatisfied with the entire matter. He said, with resignation, that everything still boiled down to Wang Baole and his recommendations.

The Sect Lord's head immediately started throbbing. He was of half a mind to send another voice transmission to Wang Baole, but he really didn't know what to say...

Wang Baole, who had just hung up on the Sect Lord, was overcome with excitement. His eyes burned. He had intentionally hung up because the other's tone of voice displeased him greatly, but Wang Baole had also done so to test the other.

What's next? Who will the old man seek help from? The giant tree? The Governor? Or maybe even the Ethereal Dao College's Sect Lord?

As Wang Baole enjoyed a moment's self-satisfaction, his voice transmission ring started vibrating again. He lowered his head and saw that the transmission was from the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College. He wasn't surprised. He immediately put the call through. After a short exchange with the Sect Lord, the Sect Lord sighed.

“Baole, the Sect Lord of the White Deer Dao College called me earlier... if you really find his proposal unacceptable, I will turn him down...” The Sect Lord was himself overwhelmed with emotions. He was proud of what Wang Baole had done, but he was also troubled by the difficult position he had been placed in. Regardless, he would always stand by Wang Baole.

Wang Baole would never refuse what his Sect Lord asked of him. He thought for a bit and decided to share with him the three requirements the Governor had set him openly.

“Sect Lord, I’m fine with having Li Yi, but she has to bring along resources as well. The White Deer Dao College has to be responsible for two-tenths of the resources required to set up the new city zone. If she can do that, she’ll be a vice mayor!” Wang Baole didn’t mince words when speaking to someone on his side. The Sect Lord heard what he said and laughed.

“The resources won’t only come from the White Deer Dao College. It will come from the four Dao Colleges. The Ethereal Dao College will do our best as well since the resources will be for your use. But you’re still too soft-hearted. How could you only ask for two-tenths? You should at least be asking for forty percent!”

Wang Baole’s eyes brightened instantly. The Sect Lord really treated him very well. His belief in the Sect Lord’s favor towards him grew. He chatted a while longer with the Sect Lord before ending the transmission. Within half an hour, the Sect Lord sent another voice transmission. He said only one thing.

“The four Dao Colleges will provide forty percent of the resources required by the New Mars Region!”

Wang Baole’s eyes brightened. He let loose a sigh of relief inwardly. For the sake of the resources, he decided to disregard the tensions between himself and Li Yi. He also knew that even if he disagreed with the choice, with the power the White Deer Dao College held, they would be able to persuade the Governor eventually and get Li Yi her vice mayor’s position.

Of course, they would have had to pay a greater price, but they wouldn’t be of much help to him.

Next... we still have three more positions to fill. Wang Baole’s eyes burned. He stared at his voice transmission ring. He had a feeling that he didn’t need to worry himself with coming up with solutions, as the fat sheep would line themselves up before him and await slaughter.

As he expected, he received voice transmissions from the Five Generation Sky Clan, the Plume Manifestation Connate Sect, and the Galactic Dusk Sect shortly thereafter. They seemed to have heard of what was going on. They started their transmission with how many resources they were willing to contribute. The Galactic Dusk Sect promised fifty percent right from the start!

Wang Baole was extremely tempted by their offer. Just as he was weighing the pros and cons of their offer, he received a voice transmission from General Zhou. Wang Baole had known the general since the battle at the Seventh Line of Defence. He didn’t mince his words and said honestly that both the military stationed on Mars and Earth wanted Kong Dao to become a vice mayor of the new city zone...

Wang Baole considered the matter. He knew that he had a close working relationship with the military, and it would be difficult to reject their offer. They had provided him aid during the selection process for the candidacy, after all.

Just as he was considering the matter, his voice transmission ring vibrated again. This time, it was a call from the headquarters of the Federation President, Duan Muque. The caller was not the president but one of his deputies. His tone was polite and respectful. He said that he was following the president's orders when he congratulated Wang Baole on becoming the new city zone's mayor and gave the latter some words of compliment and encouragement.

The two voice transmissions came one after the other. Even if Wang Baole was an idiot, he would still be able to realize what was going on. The Federation President, Duan Muque, was Kong Dao's godfather. The meaning behind the voice transmission was very clear.

I want a godfather too. Wang Baole smacked his forehead. He sighed and informed General Zhou that he would be recommending Kong Dao as a vice mayor. However... Kong Dao would have to be responsible for forty percent of the resources required for the city's construction. Li Yi was going to provide the same, after all.

Because of his relationship with the military, though, he was willing to accept twenty percent. General Zhou laughed out loud when he heard what Wang Baole said. He knew what was going on and enjoyed the young man's honesty. He nodded and said that he would pass on the message and let the others know the favor Wang Baole was doing them.

After a day's busy work, Wang Baole confirmed the names of two of his vice mayors. He had also guaranteed sixty percent of resources required for his new city zone!

Together with the resources the Federation and the Martian administration were giving him, he should have sufficient resources to tide him over. This lessened the burden on Wang Baole immensely. He remembered that he still had two openings and perked up at the thought. He might be able to amass more resources and build a greater city zone than he had initially planned!

Chapter 368: The Virtues of Lin You

The news that Wang Baole was given the right to choose his vice mayors spread. The various political forces had also guessed the important role Wang Baole was going to play in the process, and their guesses were confirmed after some checking with their sources on Mars.

Two names from the four Dao Colleges and the military had been confirmed, which left the political forces with two remaining openings to fight over. The competition became intense.

It was then that Jin Duoming came looking for him. Wang Baole thought Jin Duoming would use the agreement between the both of them to get himself a vice mayor's position in the new city zone. However, the strange thing was, Jin Duoming didn't mention a single word of their initial agreement.

"Brother Baole, I'm here on behalf of my father. We, the Trilunaris Corporation, are willing to sponsor the resources Mayor Wang requires for the construction of the new city!"

"Our master has spoken. Regardless of the size of your stronghold, we will provide you half the resources you need!"

“There is only one condition, I get to be a vice mayor.” Jin Duoming glanced around inside Wang Baole’s residence, as if he was trying to catch a look of the donkey. He spoke casually, as if he couldn’t care less if he did become the new city zone’s vice mayor in the end.

After failing to find the donkey, Jin Duoming coughed. He strayed from the main topic of their conversation, leaned towards Wang Baole, and whispered.

“Brother, I did some research. Your donkey should be some sort of mutated beast. There’s a great chance of it rebelling against you and consuming you in the future. There were instances of people rearing such beasts in the past. I’ve reconsidered the matter and decided I want to buy it over. That’s right, where has it gone?” Jin Duoming blinked. He knew no one in hell would believe a single word he had just said.

After Wang Baole brought the donkey along for the trial, it was the donkey instead of Wang Baole that had become extremely famous. There was nobody in the entire Federation who hadn’t heard of the donkey. It was clear that there had been great public attention garnered during the live stream of the trial. The adorable behavior the donkey had displayed, as well as its intelligence and cute physical appearance, had all been captured on screen.

The value of the beast spiked as well. There were people on Earth who had offered high prices to buy over the donkey!

Wang Baole had been busy with gathering resources for the new city zone and hadn’t been following such news. However, he did hear something regarding the matter. He gave Jin Duoming a side glance and had half a mind to ignore what he had just said. However, it would be rude, considering their friendship. In order to maintain the cordial relationship between them, he coughed instead and said.

“The donkey? I didn’t bring it back. It should still be inside the Divine Armament Catacombs.”

Jin Duoming froze when he heard that.

“What? You didn’t bring it back?”

“Yup. I promised that I would let it eat for three whole days if I became the new mayor. You must know that the Eternal Fortress that I built during the trial suffered great damage and was on the verge of collapse. The city structures of the other candidates were also severely damaged. There was little point in recycling them. I need to clean out the area as well before I can build the new city zone...”

“It should have cleaned out the entire area by now!”

Jin Duoming immediately lowered his head and turned his voice transmission ring on. He pressed a few buttons and suddenly, a screen was projected from the voice transmission ring. On the screen was the location of the trial at the Divine Armament Catacombs. The area had been transformed...

It was no longer a mess. Everything seemed to have been cleaned out. One could see a donkey prancing about happily, wagging its tail and munching happily on a damaged page of a book.

Regardless of how damaged it was, it still spanned thousands of feet. However, it shrank steadily as the donkey munched at it...

Jin Duoming gasped at the sight, and his eyes were filled with shock. The donkey's capacity to eat had once again exceeded his wildest imagination. It was as if he had been kicked by a donkey in the head, as there was no other reason to explain why he had reconsidered buying the donkey... If he did buy it and brought it home, the donkey was likely going to eat him out of house and home...

"Since Brother Jin likes the donkey so much, let's start discussing how much to sell it for." Wang Baole patted Jin Duoming on the shoulder and grinned at him.

"Brother Baole, I, Jin Duoming, am not the sort to snatch a beloved possession from someone. I'll never covet the donkey. That's right, I still have a date with Li Yi. I'll be taking my leave now," Jin Duoming said seriously and left in haste. He was terrified of Wang Baole mentioning the subject again, as well as the consequences of him becoming impulsive...

Wang Baole sighed as he saw Jin Duoming off. His spirits were high. He welcomed the idea of Jin Duoming coming on board, especially the wealth of the Trilunaris Corporation and the overpowering promise to provide half of the resources required regardless of the scale of his city construction. It reminded Wang Baole of when he had first stepped foot into the Federation Capital and received the Spirit Card with limitless credit from Zhao Yameng's family...

I'm starting to miss our Yameng. Wang Baole shut his eyes. The image of Bunny surfaced in his mind. As he stared at her in his mind, he soon felt as if something was missing. The image of Zhao Yameng slowly appeared next to Bunny.

*It's a pity I couldn't transfer her over to Mars. Else, with Zhao Yameng and Zhuo Yifan here, the Adonis Association would be able to take over the whole Martian planet. We still don't have enough members in the Adonis Association though. Wang Baole sighed. He started considering who should fill the last opening for vice mayorship. *

He kept thinking, then suddenly, he thought of Lin Tianhao.

Even though he had recommended Lin Tianhao to become the dean of the Dao Mountain Mist Academy, he started thinking about how well Lin Tianhao followed his orders and how powerful his father was. He considered adding him as a member of the Adonis Association.

I can't have my enemies fill the positions of my vice mayors. Li Yi and Kong Dao definitely won't cooperate with me. Jin Duoming's just interested in being around Li Yi, so who knows how much help and support I can get from him during critical moments... Wang Baole's caution grew as he thought further. He realized that he couldn't allow his vice mayors a chance to gang up on him. He couldn't lose sight of that possibility while trying to get as many resources as possible for his new city zone.

He immediately realized that he needed an ally as one of his vice mayors. After some thought, Wang Baole didn't hesitate as he sent a voice transmission to Lin Tianhao. He told Lin Tianhao that he intended to recommend him as a vice mayor. Lin Tianhao hadn't yet recovered from his shock of becoming the dean of the academy before he was stunned again by what Wang Baole told him. Emotions of joy and extreme excitement flashed across his face.

"Dean, I..."

“Tianhao, do a good job. Remember what I told you before? I, Wang Baole, will never forget my friends. As long as I get a promotion, I’ll pull you along as well. At first, I wanted you to take over my position in the academy, but I’ve since given it greater thought. With the capabilities you have, you should be standing on a greater stage so that you have a chance to showcase your abilities!

“Tianhao, I’ve given you this stage! Let both of us build and realize our dreams in the New Mars Region!”

Wang Baole spoke with passion. Lin Tianhao shook with excitement, and his brain was buzzing. He didn’t know what else to say. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him!

Lin Tianhao took in a few deep breaths, then said, “I... I have to inform my father!”

“Go!” Wang Baole was pleased with the outcome. He wanted Lin You to know that he was a man who knew how to return a favor with a favor. He knew that the more he groomed and pulled Lin Tianhao up the ranks, the greater the alliance between himself and Lin You would grow!

It was a reassuring thing to have such an experienced and cunning man with elevated status and authority as an ally. He needed only to handle the matter of Lin Tianhao properly.

Wang Baole grew pleased with his deepening understanding of what he had learned from the high officials’ autobiographies. Lin Tianhao ended the transmission with him and excitedly sent a voice transmission to his father.

Lin You simply smiled faintly when he found out about the matter. His eyes were colored with deep satisfaction and approval. He hadn’t told Lin Tianhao, but he made a gamble when he decided to stop his son from participating as a candidate for mayorship!

He had gambled on Wang Baole’s success. Once Wang Baole became the mayor, he might not immediately decide to promote Lin Tianhao and transfer him to his city zone, but as he started work in the foreign environment, he would start to consider pulling familiar people over and placing them as deputies in his office.

When that time came, the only person he would and could think of would be Lin Tianhao!

Even if he made a losing bet, he would still push for Wang Baole to become a vice mayor. Lin Tianhao would still become the dean of the Dao Mountain Mist Academy.

He would win either way. This was where Lin You showcased his full cunning!

Lin You had another virtue... he never treated anyone as an idiot. Even though he felt that Wang Baole hadn’t yet seen through what he was trying to do, he knew that as Wang Baole became exposed to more situations and gathered more experience, he would soon realize what had been going on all along. It wouldn’t be to Lin Tianhao’s advantage if he were made to come to that realization then.

That was why Lin You decided to make full use of the experience he had accumulated. Now that Wang Baole had reached a critical stage in his career, Lin You was going to give him... an intensive lesson!

He was confident that the advice he was going to give Wang Baole would resolve any tensions between them. Even if Wang Baole realized what he had been up to all along, he wouldn’t carry any unhappiness or displeasure towards him or Lin Tianhao!

Chapter 369: Advice From Lin You

Wang Baole didn't have to wait long for his lesson. After ending the transmission with Lin Tianhao, Lin You made himself a cup of tea. He took a sip, waited for a moment, and after he drank half a cup of tea, he took out his voice transmission ring and called Wang Baole.

The timing wasn't too hurried or too delayed; it was just right. The other party would be able to sense his sincerity as well as his composure. This was a life lesson that Lin You had distilled from his long life. It was something that those who hadn't experienced it personally wouldn't be able to understand.

Wang Baole had been expecting Lin You to call and thank him when his voice transmission ring vibrated. He saw Lin You's name on the device and was about to pick it up. Then, he thought for a bit. He waited for a few moments before putting the call through.

Wang Baole's interactions with Lin You were limited. Lin Tianhao acted as their intermediary most of the time. The last time Wang Baole had contacted Lin You was because of Lin Tianhao's disappearance, and he had made the call while feeling extremely guilty for what had happened.

Despite their limited interactions, they were able to converse with ease. Lin You was an extremely charming person. His charm wasn't limited to his physical appearance but came from the way he treated others and his attitude towards other people. He congratulated Wang Baole and thanked him for giving Lin Tianhao such an important task.

Lin You then paused, seeming to be taking a sip of tea before he spoke again, softly.

"Baole, you and Tianhao are of the same age. That's why I'm going to treat you like a nephew. Have you ever thought about your future progression in the Federation?"

"I've heard about your ambition. You want to become the Federation President. That is a good ideal to strive towards. I envy your father. If Tianhao could be as ambitious as you, I would be able to put my mind at ease as well." Lin You sighed. He had said that from his heart. He had lacked for nothing in this life. He was gifted with above-average talents and was confident that with time, he would be able to reach the Nascent Soul based on his talents and resources!

His greatest regret was Lin Tianhao... that was why he was so grateful towards Wang Baole.

Wang Baole coughed after hearing what Lin You said.

"Uncle Lin, you are right. I thought the same since I was a little boy. I envy my father for having such a good looking, talented, and ambitious son as well."

Lin You fell into momentary silence. He seemed to have come to his senses after hearing what Wang Baole said. He had an odd expression on his face, and he hastily changed the topic and spoke immediately.

"Baole, you have now reached an important point in your career. The times have changed. It's no longer what it was before when I was young. When I was young, as long as your cultivation was sufficient, as long as you possessed certain maturity and will, and were willing to showcase yourself, you would either fall from grace or rise up the ranks to stand above the rest!

“Now, the climate has stabilized. Every political force desires a prolonged period of stability and security. Even if Duan Muque has grand visions and ambitions for the future, he finds great difficulty in each progressive step he’s taking.

“That is why... what I mean is, in such times, a Primary Rank Four Noble is the highest rank a person without power and authority can hope to achieve. If nothing unexpected occurs... you have now reached the pinnacle of your life. Nothing will change unless you are like our Fellow Daoist Osmanthus, who reached the perfected Core Formation realm and broke through the glass ceiling.

“However, you must pray that when that happens, the Federation President and people like us haven’t advanced to the Nascent Soul realm...

“Baole, do you understand what I’m getting at? If you wish to progress, it’d remain difficult to do so even if your cultivation reaches the Core Formation realm. After all, currently, the four Dao Colleges aren’t headed by the Ethereal Dao College...”

Lin You’s words were straightforward and honest. He was analyzing Wang Baole’s future based on his vast experience. That was why Wang Baole grew more serious as he listened to Lin You. He pondered over what Lin You said and couldn’t deny that most of what Lin You said was true.

He became slightly depressed. He wondered if there might be any major contributions that he could make in order to advance from a Primary Rank Four Noble to a Secondary Rank Three or even Primary Rank Three Noble.

“However, you have become the mayor of the new Martian city zone. You have made a correct move. In fact, this could be an opportunity for you...

“You must know that you have just made something out of nothing. You’ve created a new path for yourself where none existed and risen to become a Primary Rank Four Noble. There hadn’t been a New Mars Region prior to this...

“Setting up a new city zone might not be the same as founding a new land, but it’s still an impressive achievement. That is why the various political forces have fought so hard for this opportunity. On the one hand, they were doing it for the Divine Armament. On the other, they were also fighting for a future accolade for their own heirs!

“As the world stabilizes and peace reigns, the opportunity to make such impressive and extraordinary contributions to the Federation can no longer be found. Such achievements could only be made during the past fearsome war with monsters and when the seventeen strongholds were built.

“This is an opportunity given by the gods. That is why you must remember to treasure it dearly. You must be cautious of others taking credit for your work after the new city zone is built. You must ensure that your name is remembered for all the effort you put in and not the names of others!”

It was clear that Lin You was baring his soul to Wang Baole. Wang Baole was instantly moved when he heard those words. His breath quickened. He had read about such incidents in the high officials’ autobiographies. He knew clearly that if others successfully took credit for what he had done, then his efforts would be wasted. He would become an accessory to someone else’s success.

“You must know clearly who your friends and enemies are. You must identify them clearly. Li Yi, for example. I believe the four Dao Colleges have not given up hope on her. That’s because she has the support of our Fellow Daoist Osmanthus. She will become your greatest enemy!

“That is because... the both of you have the mark of the four Dao Colleges on you. She is the official representative while you are the unexpected challenger. Most importantly, she hails from White Deer Dao College while you are from the Ethereal Dao College.

“This is no longer a conflict between you and Li Yi. It has become a problem of which college between the White Deer Dao College and the Ethereal Dao College has the final authority. The White Deer Dao College will never allow you to have authority over Li Yi! Even if the Ethereal Dao College wants to help you, they won’t do so too openly because they need to consider the overall pros and cons of the four great Dao Colleges as an entity as well as the Dao College traditions.

“To them, the political stability of the Dao Colleges comes above everything else. The current Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College isn’t extremely assertive either. These factors are to your disadvantage.”

Wang Baole listened to everything carefully. He didn’t say a word and took every word Lin You said to heart, ingesting them and mulling them over carefully. He felt that he had a greater understanding of his future.

“Since the four Dao Colleges support Li Yi, your top priority then is to single out Li Yi’s flaws and mistakes. You have to do your best to force her out of the competition in an open and legitimate manner!

“You will then become the four Dao Colleges’ only representative in the New Mars Region. When that happens, they will have to support you regardless of whether they’re willing to do so. No matter how displeased they are, they will need to give you their full support!

“When that time comes, even if the Ethereal Dao College’s Sect Lord isn’t an assertive man, he will be smart enough to seize the opportunity and seize the control the four Dao Colleges have within the New Mars Region!”

“That is when you will be able to reap the rewards of your labor.” Lin You finished what he had to say and took a sip of his tea. He heard Wang Baole’s fast breathing over the voice transmission ring and smiled lightly.

Wang Baole’s breathing quickened. Lin You’s analysis and assessment, and his final solution to Wang Baole’s troubles, had cleared Wang Baole’s mind and lifted his spirits. He couldn’t help but sigh inwardly. Lin You... was indeed a man with a clear mind and whose thoughts were thorough. He had an extraordinary way of weighing and deliberating his options, isolating the best option available!

“Now that we’re done talking about enemies, let’s talk about your friends. Baole, when one is surrounded by enemies, he will find it hard to accomplish great deeds. What you need to learn is to differentiate those enemies whom you can befriend and those you will never be able to become friends with. Those whose hostility towards you cannot be resolved must be swiftly brought down in the shortest time possible.

“Kong Dao, for example. He is the foster son of the Federation President and a member of the native Martian military. You cannot afford to isolate him. That is because you aren’t the four Dao Colleges’ only option. You still need the support of the Martian natives! Your relationship with the military allows them to naturally give you their support!

“Kong Dao will serve to provide you with this support in the background. You have to analyze the various political forces in the Federation. Are they willing to join forces with the Martian administration and share control over the new city zone? The answer determines that Kong Dao will only ever be a vice mayor. Do you believe that if Kong Dao had gotten first place in the final trial, the positions for vice mayorship wouldn’t be four but five? In addition, Kong Dao will never reside inside the new city zone!

“That is why you only need to ensure that he appears to listen to your orders. Don’t worry, he will never try to seize power independently!”

Wang Baole’s eyes widened. Lin You’s analysis and explanations seemed to have opened a door. He seemed to suddenly grasp the lessons that he had read in the high officials’ autobiographies and had been slightly confused over!

Chapter 370: Building a New Region!

“I understand now. Based on this analysis, I can apply the same approach to Jin Duoming. I only have to remain as friends with Jin Duoming as there aren’t any conflicts of interest between the both of us!” Wang Baole immediately said. His voice traveled through the voice transmission ring. Lin You picked his teacup up and took a sip. He smiled.

“You’re right. You should know that the Trilunaris Corporation is in a difficult place, politically speaking. There are too many factions within the corporation fighting to control the corporation in the future. Jin Duoming is not the only competitor! They will face fierce competition in the future.

“Even though Daoist Jin acknowledges and recognizes Jin Duoming as the heir to the Trilunaris Corporation, he had been severely injured during the past Monster War. He is still suffering from the side effects of his injuries. It is likely... that he will never be able to break through the Core Formation realm and enter the Nascent Soul realm. The only option left to the Trilunaris Corporation is to bind their survival tightly together with the Federation’s survival.

“After all, the Federation would take more care in maintaining its image and reputation as compared to the other political forces when they are trying to devour the wealthy and resource-rich corporation. Why do you think the Trilunaris Corporation spent so much energy and resources in helping you set up the New Mars Region? It’s to ensure that you remain friendly towards them and also to maintain a friendly relationship with the Martian administration as well as the Federation!”

“Daoist Jin is a businessman, he isn’t the same as the rest of us...” What Lin You said showed his understanding and analysis of the various political forces. His words were priceless. They couldn’t be given a price tag. The only ones in the entire Federation who were qualified to have such a level of understanding and analysis of the situation would be those who shared his rank and status.

It was clear that this conversation was Lin You baring his true thoughts to Wang Baole. He held nothing back. He was standing in Wang Baole's place and helping the latter plan for his future.

Wang Baole took a deep breath after listening to everything that had been said. A strange light glimmered in his eyes. He recalled the agreement between himself and Jin Duoming... it had been between him and a Trilunaris Corporation that was headed and represented by Jin Duoming.

The meaning behind Jin Duoming's words seemed deep and layered as he pondered them.

"The Trilunaris Corporation isn't to be underestimated though. Even though Daoist Jin doesn't have a chance to break through to the Nascent Soul realm, and his corporation is plagued by faction politics, the situation would change if someone achieves a breakthrough. In addition... this Daoist Jin is extremely innovative. He has joined forces with the Federation to come up with an Anti-Spirit Bomb. In theory, if the bomb is successfully made, its power will be immense. A Nascent Soul is nothing in the face of the Anti-Spirit Bomb... the various political forces have tried hard to dig up more information but failed to find out more details. There have even been rumors that the Anti-Spirit Bomb has been tested and proven to be a success multiple times..."

"This is all for your information and understanding only. You only need to remember that Jin Duoming's status dictates that he has to remain neutral in the face of Federation politics. What he needs isn't a friend... but an ally!" Lin You spoke carefully and with great emphasis. He seemed to have heard the quickening of Wang Baole's breathing after he was done speaking. He placed his teacup down, and a flash of approval flickered in his eyes where Wang Baole couldn't see. He thought for a moment, then said softly.

"Baole, do you feel that the politics are much too complicated? Like you are stepping into a deep, bottomless lake?"

Wang Baole raised his head and stared at his voice transmission ring. After a moment of silence, he nodded.

Even though Lin You couldn't see Wang Baole nod, he could imagine him doing so. He lowered his voice.

"Regardless of how clear a lake may seem, when you first wade into the middle of it, you will think the lake deep and bottomless. It is vast and murky and seems to hide countless secrets..."

"But, once you leave the lake and stand at its edge, when you look at it again, you will realize that the waters are clear. You can see right to the bottom of the lake."

"Why is that? You know the answer. Your sight is obscured because you are in the waters. This doesn't mean that you should leave the lake. It means that when there comes a day when you are no longer standing at the edge but are above the lake, in the sky, gazing down at it, you will find out that the waters are not only clear... but will realize that the lake is only as big as the size of your palm..."

"If you look further into the distance, you will be able to see a vast ocean many times bigger than the lake. If you rise further up and lift your head skyward, you will find a greater universe that is even more extraordinary than the world you are in!"

"There are some things I'm not in the position to share openly... Baole, we humans... are but mere grains in a vast ocean." Lin You seemed like he wanted to continue, but due to some unknown reasons, he

decided not to. He only sighed a sigh that seemed to reveal powerlessness and an inability to control his own fate. That marked the end of their conversation.

The sigh echoed in Wang Baole's ears and his head even after the transmission ended. He grew silent gradually as he mused over what he had been told.

A grain in a vast ocean... After a long while, Wang Baole lifted his head and gazed out into the starlit skies. He stared for a very long time, then, he shut his eyes. He wasn't someone who tried to strive for things beyond his means. He knew very clearly that his only immediate concern was the New Mars Region. He would handle whatever came in the future when the future arrived.

With that thought in mind, Wang Baole continued his preparations. Time passed in a blur. Soon, the day of departure arrived.

Wang Baole had submitted his recommendations for his vice mayors prior to the date. They had been approved by the Governor without a hitch. His vice mayors were Li Yi, Kong Dao, Jin Duoming and Lin Tianhao.

Lin Tianhao would accompany Wang Baole and head for the new region, while the remaining three would follow after. They needed time to prepare the resources their respective political forces had promised. Wang Baole had a condition for making them vice mayors. They had to bring along the resources they had promised before they could take up office.

Regardless of how resentful Li Yi and Kong Dao felt regarding the arrangements, they could only swallow their resentment. Jin Duoming had no opinion on the matter though. He didn't care whether he went or not, or if he did, when he would depart. The new city zone was just going to be a barren, deserted land. It was going to be so boring if he departed sooner.

In fact, there had been no disputes raised by any other political forces regarding Li Yi's and Kong Dao's candidacy during the fight for vice mayorship. Jin Duoming, however, almost lost his spot. It had been a narrow fight despite the Trilunaris Corporation offering to foot fifty percent of the bill.

Both the Galactic Dusk Sect and the Five Generation Sky Clan had eyed the vice mayorship hungrily. Due to the tensions between the Galactic Dusk Sect and Wang Baole, their request for a position had been rejected. The Five Generation Sky Clan, however, had met all the conditions. They even promised more than what the Trilunaris Corporation promised.

However, in the end... they had still failed.

Wang Baole had heard about it as well. It seemed that the head of the Senate had spoken at the most critical stage. This had caused the Zhuo family of the Five Generation Sky Clan to back down in resignation. Zhuo Yixian had also been transferred away, out of Mars. After slicing up the entire cake and dividing it amongst the various parties, he had been left with no cake and kicked out of the fight.

An outsider might have seen this as an internal fight amongst the various political forces. Wang Baole had thought about it for a while though and felt that Zhuo Yixian's persistent and foolhardy investigation into the incident when Wang Baole and Li Wan'er had spent a night together had been one of the reasons for his current predicament.

Well, there's no way around that. He chose his own grave and buried himself in it when he insisted on investigating the matter... Wang Baole had been rather pleased with the outcome and viewed the matter with relish. After which, he had set it aside and didn't think about it further.

The day of departure arrived. Wang Baole and Lin Tianhao took up their new office. The Martian Colony Governor and the other high ranking officials of the Martian administration saw them off as an enormous fleet of five hundred cruisers slowly rose off the ground inside the Martian City port and into the sky.

Out of the five hundred cruisers, three hundred carried the hundred thousand men charged with constructing the new city zone. They were to follow Wang Baole's orders. The remaining two hundred cruisers were packed with the resources given by the Federation and the Martian administration.

Loud booms thundered in the air. Wang Baole stood on the deck of the cruiser heading the fleet, and Lin Tianhao stood next to him. The two of them lowered their gaze at the land beneath them. They turned their eyes towards the Martian City, then raised said eyes towards the direction where the new city zone lay. Lofty aspirations and grand ambitions filled Wang Baole's thoughts.

"Tianhao, give the orders. Move forward at full speed!" Wang Baole barked his orders. Lin Tianhao inhaled a deep breath and immediately complied. The five hundred cruisers soon rumbled and sped forward.

From afar, it looked like five hundred arcs of rainbow dashing across the heavens, racing into the distance...

Hours later, the five hundred cruisers reached the Divine Armament Zone. The ruins that had littered the lands had vanished, and donkey sprawled on the ground, lazy and pleased. Its cultivation had erupted during the period where he had been clearing the trash after the battle. It appeared to have reached the perfected True Breath realm.

Wang Baole ignored the donkey. The cruisers landed, and with Wang Baole's orders, the blueprints showing the first construction phase of the Eternal Fortress were distributed. Only the core components of the Eternal Fortress were excluded from the plans. A hundred thousand people immediately went to work and commenced construction.

Wang Baole's puppets were activated as well. Every one of those puppets followed Wang Baole's orders and participated in the construction process as the main architects.

Together, they were building... the Eternal Fortress!