

Worth 541

Chapter 541: A Sense of Danger!

Alarm colored Liang Long's face when he heard what Wang Baole had said. His mind became fully awake. He stopped breathing momentarily when he realized his mistake. He wanted to correct himself, but he had been completely played by Wang Baole. There was no way he could salvage the situation at this moment. As he panicked, Mie Liezi, who had been silent all the while, shook his head.

"Liang Long, do you know where you went wrong?"

"Your humble disciple..." Liang Long froze. Wang Baole's pupils contracted, and he took a few steps towards Feng Qiuran. The expression on Feng Qiuran remained unchanged, save her eyes, which narrowed slightly as she looked at Mie Liezi.

"Your mistake was in insisting on reason. You needed to be right." A tinge of disappointment flashed across Mie Liezi's eyes. He turned and suddenly raised his right hand, making an unexpected grab for Wang Baole.

The color of the sky changed as winds lashed through the skies and clouds boiled and rumbled. The Sea of Fire around them erupted. An immense, indescribable force transformed into a tornado. It threatened to tear everything apart and came charging towards Wang Baole, intent on swallowing him whole.

A sudden impending danger descended upon Wang Baole. He was rendered immobile as if his cultivation was being overpowered. It seemed as if an invisible chasm separated him and Mie Liezi. In this world, Mie Liezi was akin to a god!

Fortunately, Mie Liezi wasn't the only god here. There was Feng Qiuran as well!

Feng Qiuran lifted her right hand as soon as Mie Liezi struck. She pointed a finger at Mie Liezi, and ripples of water appeared beneath her feet instantly. They surged outwards and transformed into a vast ocean in the blink of an eye. Roaring waves surged in all directions, engaged in an invisible battle with Mie Liezi. A deafening thunder erupted.

Wang Baole's body shuddered, and blood spilled from his lips. Liang Long experienced the same thing. He sensed blood flowing from his eyes, nose, mouth, and ears as he swayed on his feet, ready to collapse to the ground anytime. Only Mie Liezi and Feng Qiuran remained standing. Their clothes weren't even ruffled. The deserted island beneath their feet, on the other hand... Wang Baole watched in shock as mountain rocks turned to dust and the entire island was wiped off the face of the sword. It vanished completely. The Sea of Fire surged in and took its place. It was as if the island had never existed.

"Wang Baole, so what if you can reason your way out?" Mie Liezi stood in mid-air, his hands behind his back and his cold eyes sweeping across Wang Baole's face.

“Remember, if you dare play any tricks on my disciple again, you’ll end up like this island!” Having said that, Mie Liezi nodded at Feng Qiuran, then turned and took the heavily injured and unconscious Liang Long away. They vanished without a trace.

Wang Baole fell silent, and Feng Qiuran shut her eyes. She slowly opened them again after a long moment. She seemed on the verge of saying something, but in the end, she said nothing. Exhaustion colored her eyes, and she seemed to be sighing. She turned and left.

Wang Baole remained the only person hovering in mid-air for a very long time. He stared at the direction that Mie Liezi and Feng Qiuran had left. After a while, he narrowed his eyes.

It’s better to rely on myself than on others. Elder Feng is too gentle. She might be the best partner for the Federation, but she’s not someone I can rely on personally...

In the end, I still have to rely on myself... The Soul Conduit realm. If he really dared try to kill me earlier, I would wing it and summon Little Missy, then fight my way to the sword body! Wang Baole shook his head, then took a deep breath. He turned and took a step forward. He didn’t head towards the Vast Expanse Dao Palace but instead raced towards Green Fire Island.

When Wang Baole returned to his own island, he sat down cross-legged in his cultivation and fell into a deep, long contemplation. The image of Mie Liezi’s final attack resurfaced in his mind. He had felt the weight of the entire heavens pressing down on him then. It intensified his desire to advance his own cultivation.

I have to reach the Nascent Soul realm as soon as possible! When that time comes, I should be able to exercise some control over the Dark Artifact! Having made up his mind, Wang Baole took out the jade slip documenting the Lightning Immortal Transformation and read up on the second level of the technique.

In the second level of the Lightning Immortal Transformation, he was to create a Lightning Avatar that would possess certain fighting abilities. He had to nurture and nourish this Lightning Avatar inside his own body. It would be able to unleash a power greater than his own.

However, he would also be adversely affected should this avatar be destroyed. There were pros and cons to the Lightning Avatar. Wang Baole’s core was different from that of others, though. He believed that the impact he would suffer if his Lightning Core were damaged would be significant but not overly so. It would be something that he could withstand and survive.

Having come to that conclusion, Wang Baole didn’t hesitate. He shut his eyes and began meditation, practicing the second level of the Lightning Immortal Transformation. He continued to ingest the pills that he had acquired in the coming days. As his cultivation progressed, his mid-stage Core Formation realm cultivation began to stabilize. He began to inch steadily towards the late-stage Core Formation realm.

Time passed slowly, and a month went by. Liang Long didn’t return to the island during this one month. Even though Mie Liezi had issued a warning to Wang Baole, Liang Long had clearly grown fearful of Wang Baole’s methods. He had instinctively chosen to avoid Wang Baole.

The strange and wondrous rope found its way back to Wang Baole one night...

There was also the matter of his donkey. Wang Baole didn't know how long he would be training this time, so he released the donkey into the wild so that it could find its own source of food. After all, the donkey could transform into a perfected Core Formation realm python. It would be able to survive and defend itself as long as it didn't incur the wrath of freakishly powerful entities.

The donkey was excited to be released by its master. It had thought it was going to starve to death. When it was released, it immediately dashed out. It took a chunk out of the mountain rocks and nibbled at the trees and the grass. In its hunger, it even took a gulp of the unpalatable molten lava.

Wang Baole ignored the donkey and continued his seclusion. As his cultivation progressed, bolts of lightning began to appear around his meditating body. They wandered all over his body and grew in number. A duplicate image of him gradually appeared and layered over his actual body.

It was as if he was slowly forming a duplicate of himself.

It was clear that time was needed in order for one to truly master the second level of the Lightning Immortal Transformation. He was only able to form the initial prototype of his avatar. As he continued his cultivation, he received good news from Yun Piaozi.

He had finally found a generous client for the fleet of Spirit Boats that Wang Baole had built. The client was willing to purchase the entire fleet. The price he gave was almost the same as the capital he had invested in building the boats—three hundred battle credits for each Spirit Boat!

Overjoyed, Wang Baole initiated negotiations with Yun Piaozi immediately. He retained a few boats but sold the rest. He earned more than sixteen thousand battle credits.

Wang Baole had read the high officials' autobiographies diligently. He wasn't going to keep all his profits to himself. Even if he wanted to do that, he wasn't going to do so for something that many people knew about. He very generously sent three thousand credits to Yun Piaozi as a show of his appreciation. He also set aside two thousand battle credits and requested Yun Piaozi to pass that to his clan brother, as a token of his gratitude for his reminder that day.

Yun Piaozi was delighted when he received the credits. He grew increasingly certain that Wang Baole's was a friendship that he could cultivate. His clan brother smiled when he received his credits as well. He still didn't really like the cultivators from the Federation, but he felt differently towards Wang Baole now.

He has cultivation, tact, and brains... Wang Baole is not a simple character!

With the sudden increase in wealth, Wang Baole brimmed with satisfaction as he stared at the thirty-odd thousand battle credits he now had. He continued his seclusion happily. Besides practicing the second level of the Lightning Immortal Transformation, he also spent some time studying the Thearch Armor inheritance!

Wang Baole finally understood what the inheritance was after some studying. Simply put, it was the formation of another flesh and blood body outside his current physical body. It appeared similar to the Lightning Immortal Transformation and the Lightning Avatar, but they weren't the same.

The Lightning Avatar was an illusion. Thearch Armor, on the other hand, was real!

The Lightning Avatar was meant to be released outside one's body. Thearch Armor was meant to encase one's true form, never to be separated.

This so-called physical form of the Thearch Armor was only a metaphor. In reality, he would be cultivating an armor made of flesh that would then encase his true physical form!

That was Thearch Armor.

The first step to mastering this inheritance was to form blood-colored meridians on his skin. They would cover his entire body, like vines, and form a basic structure!

To accomplish this would be to master the first level of Thearch Armor. Wang Baole tried to envision that in his mind. He could imagine how bizarre and frightening he would look once he managed to reach that stage!

The next step would be to form a skeletal structure outside his body. He had to cultivate bones that would fuse with his meridians. It would be like growing a skeleton on his actual body. His resilience would reach astonishing heights at that point!

Finally, when a full suit of flesh and blood armor formed on top of his true physical body, he would have truly mastered and reached the final level of this inheritance!

What truly shocked Wang Baole was the incremental effects it awarded!

The three levels disregard one's cultivation completely. The increase in power is three, six, and nine times at each level respectively!

Chapter 542: The Dharmic Armament Problem!

Wang Baole took a deep breath. When he had been in the Eye of Infinite Techniques, he had been focused on acquiring as many inheritances as possible. That was why he hadn't spent too much time and energy studying the Thearch Armor inheritance. After a detailed analysis, he was blown away by how powerful it was.

I have more than a hundred other inheritances in my head. I have to find time to learn all of them. I might just become invincible after that! Wang Baole's eyes shone brightly. He knew how unrealistic that was though. He thought about finding some way to document the inheritances he now had. That would be the wisest and most prudent option.

If Little Duanmu still doesn't want to give his presidency up to me when I leave this place, I'll just smack him with the inheritances I have! Wang Baole puffed up with pride from his accomplishments. The image of that filled him with anticipation and excitement.

He finally calmed himself down after some time. He took a deep breath and attempted to learn the Thearch Armor inheritance. It might have been fine if he hadn't made an attempt to do so. He tried and was slightly surprised... to find how difficult this Thearch Armor inheritance was.

The first step was to form meridians outside of his body. The inheritance documented how to go about doing it. Despite that, regardless of how Wang Baole tried to follow what the inheritance said, he had no idea what he was doing and was unable to succeed.

Something's not right... Wang Baole scratched his head. After some thought, he began to run through the steps in his head carefully and with full concentration. Time passed. Two weeks went by. However... Wang Baole still saw no progress with his Thearch Armor inheritance.

I've followed exactly as the inheritance instructed! Wang Baole was going mad. His understanding of the inheritance had deepened during the two weeks. He was confident that he hadn't made any mistakes following the steps documented. However... his efforts were like a heavy stone sinking into the ocean. Nothing came out of it.

Seems like I'm missing a catalyst... A tired Wang Baole frowned. He couldn't help but recall the powerful figure who passed down the inheritance. Wang Baole concluded that the powerful figure must have intended for this to happen. He intentionally didn't provide Wang Baole with the catalyst required for learning this inheritance. That was why the Thearch Armor inheritance was so difficult to learn, and why he couldn't make heads or tails of it.

Wang Baole started to sulk at that thought. It was as if a mountain filled with treasures stood before him, and he had no means to retrieve the treasure. He couldn't take this lying down. He gritted his teeth and shut his eyes. He tried to recall the contents of the inheritance and search for clues pointing to the catalyst, that might let him know what exactly it was.

Wang Baole continued his cultivation. Without any supervision, the donkey remained quiet and obedient for a while before it grew bolder. It attempted to dive into the Sea of Fire. It returned quickly, then realized that Wang Baole didn't pay much attention to where it was going. Its eyes shone with excitement as it continued to dive into the Sea of Fire repeatedly.

It began to return later in the night. There was nothing interesting on the island. It wasn't as fun as the Sea of Fire. It had plenty more to eat underwater, and when thirsty, it could drink molten lava.

The donkey gradually realized that Wang Baole really had no time to keep an eye on it, so it let itself go completely. It would spend two to three days in the Sea of Fire whenever it went out. Every time, it would return with a look of extreme satisfaction on its face.

However, it was still too young and inexperienced in its ways. It didn't realize that Wang Baole had been keeping track of its trips and appearance when it returned from those trips. There had been no way he wouldn't notice. The extreme satisfaction on the donkey's face had been simply too obvious. In addition... this was clearly not the first time the donkey had gone out and done something sneaky behind Wang Baole's back.

Did Scram manage to find a lover here, out of all places? Wang Baole grew curious as he trained. The donkey clearly had learned its lessons and grown smarter. It would check that Wang Baole was deep in cultivation before it snuck out secretly into the Sea of Fire.

Wang Baole might have been in the mood to follow the donkey secretly and find out what's going on if his cultivation were progressing smoothly. However, he was currently being frustrated by the progress

in his cultivation. He wasn't in the mood to care too much about what the donkey was up to, even though he knew that it was indeed up to something.

His years of experience in cultivation told him though, that if he was unable to find a solution to his problem, he should try looking at it from another angle. This was especially true when it came to identifying catalysts for inheritances, which required one to be inspired. He shouldn't fixate on the problem. After some thought, he decided to spend less time on the Thearch Armor inheritance. He set aside his energy to practice the second level of the Lightning Immortal Transformation.

The Lightning Immortal Transformation was comparably easier than the Thearch Armor inheritance. Wang Baole's Lightning Avatar gradually formed. Wang Baole didn't relax when it came to Dharmic Armaments either. He had enhanced his sword scabbard to a sixth-grade Numinous Treasure prior to his arrival at the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. It was only one step away from becoming a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament!

It was a huge step to take. One that was difficult and required plenty of materials, including Armament Sand. As long as he had sufficient battle credits, he would be able to resolve the latter challenge concerning the materials required. As for the level of difficulty involved in enhancing the scabbard... it would be challenging with Wang Baole's current proficiency in Dharmic Armaments.

Perhaps by the time I can finally refine an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament, I'll also be able to enhance my scabbard to a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament? Wang Baole thought about it, then calculated the battle credits he would need to purchase all the materials he required. He needed approximately fifty thousand credits. This might be a huge sum to other people, but it wasn't a challenge to Wang Baole.

That's alright. I'll try and refine an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament first and use the experience to improve my proficiency in Dharmic Armaments! Wang Baole made up his mind then. He set aside time to refine an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament while practicing the Thearch Armor inheritance as well as the Lightning Immortal Transformation.

Prior to his arrival to the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, he had obtained huge quantities of gods. As long as he had sufficient materials, he could continue to refine Dharmic Armaments. He got out ten thousand battle credits and purchased vast quantities of materials. Then, he began to refine Dharmic Armaments.

As a result, Wang Baole's current seclusion went on for quite some time. He was almost in seclusion for two months. The result of the seclusion... was that while he continued to face difficulty in practicing the Thearch Armor inheritance, he had grown familiar with the second level of the Lightning Immortal Transformation and was able to form an avatar that could be separated from his true physical form!

The avatar was formed from electricity and looked quite different from Wang Baole's true physical appearance. However, it was able to unleash a third of Wang Baole's battle capabilities. Wang Baole was more powerful than his peers at his current level of cultivation, so his avatar was capable of fighting it out with a regular early-stage Core Formation realm cultivator and winning most of the time.

According to what he had read of the Lightning Immortal Transformation, as long as he continued with his cultivation and the nurturing of his avatar, it would eventually be identical to him in terms of physical appearance and energy signature. It would have his full battle capabilities. An ordinary person wouldn't be able to tell him and his avatar apart. It would be immensely powerful as well!

Wang Baole was slightly consoled by his progress with the Lightning Immortal Transformation. However, he still wasn't very happy since his progress with the Thearch Armor inheritance was dismal. His attempt to refine an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament was also not showing much success. He hadn't had a single successful attempt. All his attempts had failed at the final, critical step, leaving him with Dharmic Armaments that could only be used once.

Fortunately, Wang Baole had discovered the crux of his problem after his multiple attempts during seclusion. However, it wasn't something he could resolve in the short term. He could only shake his head and postpone his attempts to refine an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament.

My thoughts will jumble up without my control when I reach the final step during the refinement. That's clearly because my spiritual senses aren't powerful enough. That results in instability when I try to infuse the artifact with the remnants of the god. That is why I am unable to succeed and can only create Dharmic Armaments that can only be used once.

I wonder how my elders in the Federation who managed to refine eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments manage to solve this problem? Wang Baole rubbed at his forehead. He believed there must be a way to resolve this problem. However, it was difficult for him to do so here. He left Green Fire Island and made a trip to the Vast Expanse Techniques Chamber. He wanted to find out if the Vast Expanse Dao Palace had any information regarding such matters.

There was information about this subject and many solutions. However, the solutions revolved around refining treasures and techniques that trained one's spiritual senses. Each technique cost a ton, with the cheapest one requiring more than ten thousand credits.

Wang Baole was rendered speechless. He couldn't bear to part with his credits.

I just don't believe that I can't arrive at a solution on my own! I've always relied on myself, my own wits and abilities. I'll definitely find a solution! Wang Baole returned to Green Fire Island. He stood outside the cave abode and stared at the distant skies. He secretly came to a decision. He took a deep breath, then, with an extremely sincere voice, he called out gently in his mind.

"The beautiful and smart Little Missy, are you there?"

Wang Baole waited for a while, but there was no reply from Little Missy, so he blinked and tried again.

"The beautiful, smart, and incomparable Little Missy, are you there?"

There was still no response...

"The most beautiful in the entire galaxy, the prettiest in the entire universe, the one and only who surpasses all and shall never be surpassed, the one whose name shall live forever in song, the most beautiful, smartest, incomparable Little Missy—are you there?"

"Yup." Little Missy coughed, then replied happily.

Chapter 543: A Visit From Kong Dao!

Wang Baole began to butter her up again after hearing her response. Finally, he voiced his views about enhancing his spiritual senses. After hearing that Wang Baole wanted to know how to enhance his spiritual senses, Little Missy fell into a contemplative silence. She said that there were ways to do that. However, the price was often complete physical exhaustion.

She didn't encourage Wang Baole to carry out any of those solutions. Instead, she offered an alternative.

"You've been to the vision heritage's Eye of Infinite Techniques, one of the Lands of Five Senses in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. In your next trip to the sword body, I'll see if I can help you locate the Land of Hearing. I recall the aural Dao there could aid in enhancing the spiritual senses of someone who's hearing it for the first time."

"The Land of Hearing?" Wang Baole's eyes brightened. They shone with anticipation. However, the sword body was simply too dangerous a place. Even with Little Missy's help, Wang Baole felt that he needed to make sufficient preparations before he embarked on another trip there.

After some thought, Wang Baole decided he would continue his cultivation for some time first. After he had fully absorbed his previous loot, he would make another trip to the sword body. He set aside the matter regarding enhancing his spiritual senses and began to focus on practicing the Lightning Immortal Transformation as well as the Thearch Armor inheritance.

As for refining eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments, even though he had no success with that, he had acquired a damaged ninth-grade Dharmic Armament spear. After studying it, Wang Baole concluded that he could repair it partially. He was unable to restore it fully due to his current level of spiritual senses. However, with whatever repairs he could do, he would be able to use it like an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament.

There's also the recipe for the Divine Armament... let's not think about that first. We'll study that after I can refine an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament successfully. Wang Baole took a deep breath and set his thoughts aside. He began his cultivation and his repair of the spear.

Two weeks flew by. A year had almost passed since Wang Baole and the other Federation Seedlings had arrived at the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

Based on the agreement between the Federation and Feng Qiuran, after a year was up, the second batch of cultivators from the Federation would arrive at the Vast Expanse Dao Palace for their cultivation.

During the past year, the first batch of Federation Seedlings, including Wang Baole, had seen great improvements in their level of cultivation. Zhao Yameng had reached the Core Formation realm. Zhuo Yifan had advanced to the perfected Foundation Establishment realm. The others had also gained much from their one year here, all advancing a level in their cultivation. There was also Kong Dao...

The last time Wang Baole, Zhao Yameng, and Zhuo Yifan had journeyed to the sword body, Kong Dao had been away on a mission with another team. He hadn't been able to join them in their quest. As a result, he had missed the opportunity to acquire his inheritance at the Eye of Infinite Techniques. However, he had clearly come across some other golden opportunity. Even though it might not be as amazing as what Zhao Yameng and Zhuo Yifan had gained at the Eye of Infinite Techniques, he had

similarly reached the perfected Foundation Establishment realm and was a mere step away from the Core Formation realm!

It was a step that could be said to be both challenging and simple to take. His foot was at the door, ready to cross over. Everything boiled down to how he planned to kick the door open. Kong Dao knew that such things couldn't be rushed, though. Despite that, he still came looking for Wang Baole.

It had nothing to do with his breakthrough in cultivation though. It was something else that he needed Wang Baole's help with.

Wang Baole welcomed Kong Dao heartily. He exited from his seclusion and took a seat in his cave abode. He stared at Kong Dao. The latter clearly looked different than when he had been in the Federation. Wang Baole's eyes shone brightly.

He had known right from the start. If he were to pick someone else besides him in this current batch of Federation Seedlings who was going to flourish in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, his first choice would be Kong Dao. After all... Kong Dao had been born in the sea of beasts. To a certain extent, he was part monster.

He had survived on his own on Mars when he had been a child, young and weak. His experiences revealed the strong survival instincts and streak of independence in Kong Dao's character. He had tried to conceal the blood lust exuding from his person while he had been in the Federation, but in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, he unleashed his full blood lust. Dressed in Daoist robes, Kong Dao appeared like a sharp blade that had been unsheathed from its scabbard!

As a result of the aura of violence surrounding him, cultivators from the Vast Expanse Dao Palace dared not offend him easily. They could sense that his hands had been stained with the blood of many.

Others of his kind began to draw nearer to him. The team mission had been a result of that. Kong Dao had kept a low profile during the year. However, he had quietly established his own circle of allies as well as his own network of connections in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

He knew very well that those in his circle couldn't be considered his true friends. Nothing would go wrong while he was still strong and powerful. However, should he show signs of weakness, he would be eaten alive.

After all... he had done similar things in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace!

He sat before Wang Baole now. He might seem cold and distant, but he was clearly considerably relaxed, as his eyes weren't as cold as they were usually. After some thought, he spoke.

"Baole, I need your help!"

Wang Baole's expression grew serious when he heard that. He didn't question Kong Dao and simply nodded his head and agreed to help.

A smile appeared on Kong Dao's face when he saw how Wang Baole agreed to help him without even thinking or questioning him. He thought for a while, then said in a low voice, "I used the Spirit Boat you lent me the last few times I carried out my missions. I accidentally found a secret cave abode under the

Sea of Fire... It's well-preserved and protected by a hex. Because of its unique location, no one else except me has discovered this cave.

"During this period... I found chances to observe the cave in secret. Nothing's changed in the past few months, so I am fairly confident that no one has discovered the cave.

"I've tried getting past the hex but found it challenging to do it alone. Baole, we'll have a greater chance of success if we do it together. Your level of cultivation is higher than me. For everything that we manage to find there, you'll get..."

"We'll split everything in half!" Wang Baole waved his hand. He knew what Kong Dao was trying to say. The latter wanted him to have a bigger share. He would have gone along with that if someone else was speaking to him about this, but Kong Dao was his brother. It was within reason for him to get a bigger share of their gains, but Wang Baole couldn't do such a thing.

Kong Dao stared at Wang Baole, then shook his head and laughed. Warmth unfurled inside him. He didn't quibble with Wang Baole and shared everything he knew about this cave abode in detail. After discussion, they decided that they couldn't afford any further delays. They left Wang Baole's cave abode and immediately set off while the sky was darkening.

Wang Baole and Kong Dao raced speedily in their Spirit Boats underwater. They approached their destination as Kong Dao led the way. Finally, after two hours, they reached some ruins under the Sea of Fire.

Forceful blasts savaged the area. Numerous cracks lined the seabed. The area was flooded over by the Sea of Fire. It was clear that this had been the battleground between powerful cultivators. One might even call it an ancient battlefield. There were many skeletons scattered around the place, though most had been searched through. What items remained on them were worthless.

"This is it. Baole, follow me." After sending a voice transmission in the Spirit Boat, Kong Dao steered his boat ahead, circling the battlefield several times. Then, he located a crack amongst the countless small and large cracks on the seabed and snaked in. Wang Baole followed him close behind. He watched as Kong Dao's Spirit Boat went further inward for some time. Then, Kong Dao stepped out of his Spirit Boat. He endured the scorching temperatures and the agony of being burnt as he swiftly pressed his palm on the wall beside him.

A distortion appeared on the wall. As it contorted and warped, a crack appeared on it. Kong Dao returned inside his Spirit Boat hastily, then steered the boat through the crack and advanced.

Wang Baole watched in shock as Kong Dao executed the same series of steps repeatedly and unlocked a series of cracks in walls swiftly. The openings gradually healed shut after they entered.

How did he manage to find this place? Wang Baole had an odd expression on his face as he followed behind. They soon reached the depths of this battleground ruins and found themselves in a cave!

There was no Sea of Fire in this cave. They were surrounded by complete darkness. On the wall before them was a large stone door!

Beyond the stone door were two stone statues in the shape of bats. One had lost its head, and aside from a huge gash on its chest, the other could be said to be rather well-preserved. It stood immobile beside the stone door.

“This is the place. I found this place when I was chasing after an Inferno Rat. This was originally the nest for a dozen Inferno Rats.” Kong Dao seemed to have sensed what Wang Baole was thinking and began to explain how he had found this place. He pointed at the large stone door.

“There’s a hex on the door. Based on my previous attempts, it takes a great deal of strength to push it open. After it’s opened, we have a span of ten breaths before the stone statue comes to life and attacks any trespasser in the area!”

“I have no idea how powerful the stone statue used to be, but right now, it’s as powerful as a late-stage Core Formation realm cultivator. I accidentally resurrected it the last time and only managed to escape with the life-saving treasure that my godfather had given me.” Kong Dao took a deep breath and looked at Wang Baole. His eyes were colored with anticipation.

“Tell me. What should we do?”

Chapter 544: Battling the Stone Beast!

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. He stared at the door, then looked at the stone statue. After a long moment of silence, he suddenly asked, “Kong Dao, how long do you need to push open the stone door?”

“I won’t be able to do it within ten breaths. Based on my past attempts though, I should be able to do it... if you give me fifteen minutes!” Kong Dao said in a low voice after some thought.

Wang Baole had a considering look on his face as he did some calculations. Even with him in the picture, it would be a challenge for them to push open the door within the span of ten breaths. Since the stone statue could come to life, it remained a danger to them.

With my current strength, I wonder if I’ll be able to fight... someone at the late-stage Core Formation realm! Wang Baole’s eyes shone with anticipation at that thought. He truly wanted to know the extent of power he possessed now in a fight.

However, he would take the shortcut if there was one. He raised his right hand, and a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament flying sword appeared in his hand. With a single slash, a force that could cut through anything erupted and gathered in the flying sword. The sword shone with a dazzling light as it flew towards the stone statue.

There was a loud thud. The stone statue moved slightly, but it was undamaged. Auras that seemed to imply that it was stirring awake began to exude from the stone statue.

“Seems like it’s not really possible to hack it into pieces before it can wake. Since that’s the case...” As Wang Baole muttered to himself, the cultivation inside his body began to churn. As he activated his Lightning Core, vast quantities of lightning bolts appeared, filling the air. Icy Dark Fires appeared as well. Blood Qi surged from Wang Baole’s body at the same time. Lightning, Dark Fire, and Blood Qi combined to form a fearsome power around Wang Baole!

Alarm flashed across Kong Dao's face then, and his pupils contracted in shock. Wang Baole had grown much more powerful since he had arrived at the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

"Kong Dao, push the door open. I'll handle the stone statue when it comes to life," Wang Baole said as his eyes shone with a bright light. Kong Dao thought for a bit and stared at Wang Baole. He didn't question Wang Baole. Instead, he nodded and headed straight for the stone door. He stood before it and took a deep breath. Then, he raised both his palms up and roared. He unleashed his cultivation and the power of his physical body and pushed the door.

The stone bat statue shook again as Kong Dao began pushing, and waves of spirit energy began to spread from the statue. It seemed connected to the stone door. Once someone started pushing the door, it would wake from its slumber.

Wang Baole's eyes flashed. He took a few steps forward and stood behind Kong Dao, right in front of the stone statue.

Kong Dao would have found it difficult to unleash his full power if the person standing behind him wasn't Wang Baole. He would have continued to keep an eye on his back and made preparations to escape as soon as something went wrong. At the moment though, his eyes stared straight ahead. His whole focus was on the door before him, and he paid no attention to the statue behind him.

He trusted Wang Baole. He unleashed his full cultivation and pushed madly at the door with a strength he had never exhibited before. The span of ten breaths passed swiftly as Kong Dao unleashed his full power.

As soon as the tenth breath was released, the stone bat statue suddenly released a piercing shriek. Waves of spirit energy surged from the statue as its shut eyes opened. Overpowering spirit energy exploded from the statue before it shifted and charged straight at Kong Dao!

Kong Dao was clearly not as powerful as the bat. Without any life-saving means, his body and spirit would have undoubtedly been destroyed in the fight. As soon as the bat came charging for him, Wang Baole unleashed his full cultivation once again. He took a step forward and sent his fist flying out!

He unleashed Supernova with his punch. Numerous lightning bolts surged outward even before his fist landed. They appeared to transform into an electromagnetic hurricane, spreading outward and colliding with the approaching bat.

A loud explosion erupted. The resulting shock wave sent dust flying in the air, and the bat was flung back. Wang Baole's laughter erupted in the air. He dashed forward, through the flying dust, towards the bat.

A red light appeared in the bat's eyes. The gash on its chest began to glow with a similar light. As soon as Wang Baole approached, it let loose a piercing noise that seemed like it could cut through diamond and shatter stone. The space between the bat and Wang Baole began to ripple with energy. They surged towards Wang Baole.

The waves of spirit energy were swift and their power terrifying. They hit Wang Baole instantly. Wang Baole shuddered, and his organs quaked in his body. He could sense the difference between this aural attack and his megaphone. Besides the aural shock waves, the spirit energy seemed to contain the

power to drain one of his vitality. It could seal his cultivation as well. It had the ability to seal Wang Baole's cultivation shut and drain him dry until he died.

Any other mid-stage or even late-stage Core Formation realm cultivator might have been alarmed in the face of this attack, as it was clearly one of the bat's most powerful attacks.

With a sudden burst of speed, the bat transformed into what seemed like a dying rainbow and came charging. It was about to tear its way through Wang Baole's chest. However, as soon as it drew near, Wang Baole, who had been affected by the aural attack, suddenly smiled. A duplicate image of him could be seen over his physical body. A semi-illusory hand formed from lightning raised into the air and grabbed the approaching bat by its neck!

That was Wang Baole's Lightning Avatar!

Everything happened too quickly. From the beginning of the fight, to when Wang Baole's avatar raised its hand, everything took place within a split second. From afar, the hand made out of lightning that Wang Baole had raised exuded terrifying power. Lightning bolts filled the air and made it difficult for one to tell that it was an avatar. It looked like a spirit exiting from its physical form instead.

The bat hadn't expected the sudden attack, and it was too late for it to free itself. A single word slipped out from Wang Baole's mouth.

"Explode!"

The right hand that he had grabbed the bat with exploded immediately. The power of lightning that was within the hand, and flames from Wang Baole's Dark Core, erupted at the same time. Dark Fires surged out and enveloped the bat. Lightning bolts descended like a fierce storm, flooding it with electricity.

The bat released a shrill shriek of agony amidst the thundering booms. It fell back swiftly as red light surged forward, battling Wang Baole's lightning and fire. While that happened, the bat was also able to manipulate some of the red light, gathering it into the shape of a fang. The bat sent it flying forward with startling speed. It pierced through the air and charged right at Wang Baole.

The fang exuded a spirit energy tinged with blood. The blood in Wang Baole's body solidified, resulting in his momentary immobility just as he was about to attack. The fang hit him directly.

There was a loud thud. Wang Baole stumbled back as blood spilled from his lips, and the shield in front of him began to crack. It was one of his many disposable, one-time-use-only eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments. It shattered and turned to dust after taking the hit for him.

Seems like it's going to be a difficult fight if I don't use any Dharmic Armaments. Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. He took a big step forward. The megaphone appeared in his hand instantly, and he hollered into it. As aural shock waves rippled out, his tri-colored flying swords came swooping in, slicing through the air and charging at the retreating bat. It tore through space. The bat drew its wings back and tried to shield itself against the attack as danger approached.

It was then that Wang Baole's avatar approached it from behind soundlessly. The avatar walked out and sent a punch forward. A hurricane formed from lightning enveloped the bat, rendering it helpless against the tri-colored flying swords.

With a thunderous boom, the bat pushed its wings wide open. An immense force surged from its wings, driving Wang Baole's avatar back and away from it. Two of the three flying swords were sent flying into the distance as well. However, Wang Baole's avatar had succeeded in holding the bat back. The bat had no choice but to unleash its attack earlier. The remaining flying sword continued its path and pierced right through the bat's right wing!

An agonizing shriek rang in the air. The bat retreated hastily, staring unblinkingly at Wang Baole, with fear and caution in its eyes.

What a pity. If I'd managed to master the third level of the Lightning Immortal Transformation, I'd be able to switch places with my avatar and kill this monster! Wang Baole's breathing quickened slightly as he stood and stared at the most powerful opponent he had fought since his arrival at the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

Their staring contest was short-lived. Just as a cold light colored Wang Baole's eyes and he was about to strike once again, Kong Dao's voice, filled with excitement and urgency, rang out behind him.

"Open!"

With a loud rumbling, under Kong Dao's persistent pushing, the stone door finally budged open, revealing a narrow opening. As soon as the opening appeared, extremely rich Spirit Qi, trapped for too long inside the cave, escaped through the sliver of an opening and surged out!

Chapter 545: Defense and Reinforcements!

As soon as the stone door was pushed open, Spirit Qi surged out. All around them, the land quaked and rumbled. They were at the deepest part of the ancient battlefield. The battlefield clearly had some connection with the stone door. As soon as the door was pushed open, the ancient battlefield began to quake. It seemed on the verge of collapse. The Sea of Fire around the battlefield stirred and surged outward.

Even though they couldn't see the changes affecting the area outside, Wang Baole could sense what was going on and draw his own conclusions. The expression on his face shifted. He was clearly slightly worried. Such a commotion might draw other disciples from the Vast Expanse Dao Palace who were also in the Sea of Fire.

This is a secluded area. It's quite late in the night too... hopefully, there's no one in the vicinity! As the gears in Wang Baole's head spun furiously, the red glowing eyes of the bat hovering in mid-air suddenly flickered. The glow faded away. It turned back into a stone statue again and fell with a loud thud, landing on the ground.

It seemed to have given up trying to defend the door. The opening of the stone door was a sign. It no longer tried to interfere.

Wang Baole didn't drop his guard. With a wave of his hand, he summoned his avatar again. It appeared next to the stone statue. He turned and stared at the stone door behind him. The Spirit Qi escaping from within was rich beyond measure.

It spread all the way to where he stood. He subconsciously absorbed some of it, and it caused the cultivation inside his body began to churn more quickly. Wang Baole was startled. The Spirit Qi in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace was already many times thicker and richer than that found in the Federation. In fact, it wasn't an exaggeration to claim that it was dozens to a hundred times richer than the Spirit Qi found in the Federation.

The Spirit Qi that was currently escaping from within the stone doors was even richer than that found in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. It was approximately ten times richer.

This meant that it was a thousand times richer than the Spirit Qi found on Earth. It was an extreme rarity.

"Baole, help me stand guard. I can feel myself reaching a breakthrough!" As Wang Baole stood shocked, Kong Dao spoke hastily as his breathing quickened. He stood right next to the opening. The rich Spirit Qi wormed its way into his body without his active absorption. He was already at the verge of a breakthrough, and the current surge of Spirit Qi was like ingesting Spirit Pills. Signs of a breakthrough immediately began to show themselves.

"Don't worry!" Wang Baole knew that Kong Dao couldn't afford any disturbance now. He replied immediately. At the same time, he waved his hand and summoned a dozen puppets. They kept a cautious lookout as they guarded the area.

Kong Dao sucked in a deep breath almost as soon as Wang Baole summoned his puppets. He sat down with his legs crossed immediately. Determination flashed in his eyes, and he unleashed his full cultivation. He trusted Wang Baole. He also knew that this was an extremely rare opportunity. Should he began the absorption process too late and the Spirit Qi dispersed further in the area, he would have wasted this precious opportunity.

He knew that a breakthrough from the Foundation Establishment realm to the Core Formation realm required an extremely safe and secure place of seclusion. He needed to be prudent and couldn't afford any disturbance. Otherwise, he might suffer a backlash. He might not be able to succeed and even suffer a total annihilation of his current cultivation.

Kong Dao was a man of decisiveness though. He didn't hesitate at all. He began to absorb the Spirit Qi and attempted his breakthrough!

Wang Baole looked alert. He stood next to Kong Dao, absorbing the Spirit Qi in the area while at the same time monitoring Kong Dao's progress. With Kong Dao's current level of cultivation, he wasn't capable of absorbing all the Spirit Qi here even if he was trying to break through to the Core Formation realm. He only required a portion of the Spirit Qi available. That would form the momentum that would propel him towards his breakthrough.

Without Wang Baole here, the Spirit Qi in this area would disperse and spread out into the surrounding areas. It would thin out. The result would be a richer level of Spirit Qi found in the ancient battlefield above it.

There was a limit to the Spirit Qi found within the stone doors, after all.

However, since Wang Baole was here, there was no way he would allow the Spirit Qi to disperse and thin out so easily. His eyes flashed, and the devouring seed inside his body began to churn. It formed a suction force that began to absorb the Spirit Qi at a rate that ensured that sufficient Spirit Qi remained for Kong Dao to not only reach a breakthrough in his cultivation but to also stabilize his recently attained Core Formation realm cultivation.

Wang Baole's body shuddered as Spirit Qi flowed into his body. The Lightning Core inside him began to pump like a real heart. Wang Baole's Dark Core churned rapidly at the same time. The green lotus inside his body seemed to sense an influx of Spirit Qi. It swayed and began to absorb the Spirit Qi in the area madly.

Wang Baole's physical body began to grow stronger as it was nourished by Spirit Qi.

The appearance of this Spirit Qi was a rare opportunity for both Kong Dao and Wang Baole. As they continued their absorption, the stone door began to slide open slowly!

More Spirit Qi began to flow out as the door slid open, and a chain reaction seemed to form. The greater flow of Spirit Qi pushed the door open more quickly, and the surrounding land began to quake more fiercely. The ancient battlefield above also shuddered violently. The intense tremors and growing cracks in the ground triggered violent waves in the surrounding Sea of Fire.

A dozen miles away from them, nine Spirit Boats were racing through the deep Sea of Fire. They had planned to pass this area and head towards another location for a mission. The huge stir in the Sea of Fire made them pause in their tracks. About nine Core Formation realm cultivators immediately stepped out from their Spirit Boats. The waves of cultivation exuding from their persons were strong, and the blood lust surrounding them was intense.

After the sect had acquired the recipe for Wang Baole's Spirit Boat, it had started mass production of said Spirit Boats. Currently, almost every Core Formation realm cultivator had one with them all the time. The leader of the current party was a middle-aged man with excess fat on his face. He appeared to be at the late-stage Core Formation realm. His eyes shone brightly as he stared at the ancient battlefield.

"I remember that there's an ancient battlefield over there. Why is that kind of spirit energy coming from that place?"

"Could it be some treasure?" They looked at one another. Interest colored their eyes. Even though they had formed a team to carry out another mission, it wasn't one of urgency. They welcomed any other opportunities that might cross their path on the way to carrying out the mission.

The team had a brief discussion before the middle-aged leader shrugged.

"Let's go and take a look!" As soon as he said that, they boarded their Spirit Boats and raced towards the ancient battlefield at full speed.

The team approached the ancient battlefield. The stone door beneath the battlefield was halfway opened, and the Spirit Qi within had surged and spread out across a wide area. However, Wang Baole contained the Spirit Qi within the area with his devouring seed's suction force. As he absorbed the Spirit Qi, he ensured that Spirit Qi spread out and surrounded Kong Dao. He ensured that there was sufficient

Spirit Qi around Kong Dao as he contained the Spirit Qi within a fixed area. Because of what he was doing, he couldn't move around easily. He was worried that the presence of such rich Spirit Qi in the area might attract potential dangers though. That was why he controlled his avatar and ensured that the stone statue had indeed fallen back into slumber. Then, he withdrew his avatar and swiftly stepped into the chamber behind the stone door!

It was a cave abode. The cave abode was not big, and there weren't many items lying around. Wang Baole had no time to inspect them. He controlled his avatar and got it to quickly rummage through the area, taking everything that he saw.

There were no identity tokens, storage bags, or corpses. However, what he found there would likely fetch a good price. There was also a large alchemical cauldron in the furthest end of the cave.

What drew Wang Baole's interest was a separate stone chamber and a jade box found within it. The jade box floated in mid-air and shone with a colorful spectrum of lights. It looked extraordinary.

Without any hesitation, Wang Baole sent his avatar forward and retrieved the jade box. He put away everything in his storage bag. Then, he released a breath of relief inwardly. He had gotten his rewards from this trip. What was left was to wait for Kong Dao to reach a breakthrough in his cultivation. After which, they would be able to leave.

Kong Dao finally reached a critical point in his cultivation, so Wang Baole stopped absorbing the Spirit Qi in the area. His devouring seed continued churning though and used its suction force to contain and gather Spirit Qi around Kong Dao.

He's reaching a breakthrough. Wang Baole's eyes swept past Kong Dao. He could sense Kong Dao forming his Golden Core now. The aura belonging to a Core Formation realm cultivator began to form around him.

His own cultivation had also been enhanced considerably after his earlier absorption of Spirit Qi. His cultivation at the mid-stage Core Formation realm had stabilized, and he had also made a huge step towards the late-stage Core Formation realm.

If I can find a few other places like this, it's not entirely impossible for me to advance to the Nascent Soul realm in one go! Wang Baole licked his lips. He was satisfied with his gains during this trip. His spiritual senses extended outwards. He was about to search for other valuable items in the area when something flickered in his eyes. He lifted his head suddenly upwards and stared above him!

Chapter 546: You're Quite Lucky!

Just as Wang Baole lifted his head, and the stone door opened, the soil above them began to shudder and part. A gigantic tear appeared. The Sea of Fire surged in from above, like a fiery waterfall!

The underground cave was significantly expansive though, so the Sea of Fire would take some time to fill it completely. However, with the gradual and continuous collapse of the ancient battlefield, it wouldn't take long before this entire place became flooded with the Sea of Fire.

Of course... Wang Baole wouldn't have batted a single eyelid if it were merely the flooding of the Sea of Fire. His face swiftly darkened though, as nine Spirit Boats dove in alongside the Sea of Fire through the large crack. They swam through the Sea of Fire and appeared in the underwater cave. The Spirit Boats shone glaringly as nine Core Formation realm cultivators from the Vast Expanse Dao Palace appeared suddenly.

Shock flashed across their faces when they appeared and saw what was going on in the cave. They saw the stone statue missing its head, Kong Dao who was on the verge of a breakthrough in his cultivation, Wang Baole and his avatar standing guard, as well as...

The wide-open doors to the cave abode as well as the emptied interior—a sign that it had clearly been searched and rummaged through. They could also sense the extraordinary richness of Spirit Qi in the area. The sight of Kong Dao in meditation led to all of them coming to the same shocking realization. An expression of agitation appeared on all their faces at once.

“The initial opening of a cave abode!”

“Only when a cave abode that has been sealed off from the outside world for many years is opened would there be such rich Spirit Qi escaping from it!”

“Haha! We've struck the lottery this time. To think we've actually managed to come across such a treasure trove!” The Core Formation realm cultivators all became excited. They didn't seem to pay Wang Baole or Kong Dao much attention. They naturally recognized who Wang Baole was. However, they continued to disregard his presence. A mid-stage Core Formation realm cultivator dashed past Wang Baole and Kong Dao excitedly and headed towards the cave abode, intending to see what was inside.

The look on Wang Baole's face grew dark immediately. The devouring seed inside his body continued churning, and he continued to remain where he stood. However, as soon as the mid-stage Core Formation realm cultivator walked towards him, Wang Baole's avatar took a step forward and stood before the cultivator. It sent a kick flying without a single word. The attack was swift and accomplished by the sounds of wind and thunder. Lightning descended. The mid-stage Core Formation realm cultivator sneered.

“A Lightning Avatar from the Lightning Immortal Transformation?” He swept his hand across and tried to push Wang Baole's avatar away. However, he had clearly underestimated the avatar. A thunderous boom erupted as soon as they touched. Wang Baole's avatar charged forward, disregarding his opponent's spell, and approached instantly. Lightning erupted from its body and formed a sudden force. Alarm flashed across the mid-stage Core Formation realm cultivator's face. He tried to retreat, but it was already too late. As thunder boomed, blood spilled from his lips. The other cultivators around him stepped forward and managed to rescue him. They all turned and stared at Wang Baole with alarm and wariness.

The light from Wang Baole's avatar faded slightly. It didn't pursue the cultivator and instead took a few steps back. It stood next to Wang Baole, and they stared coldly at the intruders.

The newly arrived cultivators narrowed their eyes and leveled a stare at Wang Baole. They had noticed Wang Baole's presence and known who he was. However, they hadn't paid much attention to him. After

all, they outnumbered him and had a late-stage Core Formation realm senior brother leading them. At the same time... they belonged to the hostile, extremist faction. They were scornful towards cultivators from the Federation. Many of them were like Liang Long, who thought of cultivators from the Federation as lowly life forms.

However... with the sudden attack from Wang Baole's avatar, while their views might not have changed, they did become warier. The fact that a mere avatar had been able to send a mid-stage Core Formation realm cultivator retreating showed that Wang Baole was quite the powerful opponent.

"Interesting. You're Wang Baole, right? Hand over your loot. We'll take nine-tenths of it and not pursue this matter any longer after that." The person speaking was the one leading the team, the middle-aged man at the late-stage Core Formation realm. He had a cold expression on his face as he stood there, like a figure of authority. The tone of assertion in his voice allowed no negotiation. He seemed to think that the remaining one-tenth left to Wang Baole was an immense generosity on his part.

It would seem so. After all, in the world of cultivation, the strongest had the final say. Power determined everything. He clearly saw himself as the more powerful one here!

The consent and approval of weaklings was meaningless and unnecessary!

If Wang Baole decided not to accept the generous deal, he might have some trouble with the clean-up after. However, for a cave abode that was opened for the first time, he believed that killing a lowly life form from the Federation was a small matter. That was why he continued speaking indifferently, "You have ten seconds to think about it. Decide if you want to live or die!"

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes when he heard that. He weighed his options. The opponent had numbers in their favor, but he was confident that he could kill most of them. In fact, he might even be able to kill all of them. That wasn't beyond the realm of possibility. He had to consider the consequences though. He also had to consider the consequences of affecting Kong Dao's breakthrough in cultivation should he decide to start a fight.

There was no way of ending this amicably though. Wang Baole considered lying that he was here on Feng Qiuran's orders. He also thought about bribing the other party with battle credits to avoid a fight, but he gradually eliminated these options.

The bloodlust oozing off them, and the hostility in their eyes, told him clearly where and who the problems were. There was no use in trying to avoid it. None of them were idiots. There was no point trying to delay the inevitable.

If that was the case... murderous intent surfaced in Wang Baole's heart. He revealed none of his intentions on his face. Instead, he smiled. He was about to send his avatar over to Kong Dao to guard the latter and then attack when suddenly, an overpowering presence that surpassed that of a Core Formation realm cultivator emerged from the crack above them!

The overwhelming presence descended and loomed over the entire cave. An ancient voice tinged with impatience and annoyance boomed in the air.

"That's enough. Wang Baole was the first person to discover and open the cave. The sect rules dictate that he now owns the place. As for you, Li Bin, you are to leave this place immediately!" As the voice

rang out, someone walked right out from the crack. He was an elderly man with a head full of red hair. He was one of the Nascent Soul realm cultivators from the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, Chi Lin!

The commotion in the Sea of Fire that had erupted due to the tremors in the ancient battlefield had drawn him over as well. He had witnessed the standoff between Wang Baole and Li Bin. Despite his reluctance to interfere, he still belonged to Feng Qiuran's faction. Despite his growing doubts in Feng Qiuran's vision and ideals, he had chosen to step in.

Wang Baole's display of tact a year ago in the grand hall had also contributed to his willingness to help Wang Baole. However, he still harbored dislike towards the cultivators from the Federation from the bottom of his heart. As soon as he spoke, he glanced coldly at Wang Baole and then eyed the cave abode. Based on his experience, he assessed the cave abode as an ordinary cave abode. He didn't speak further. Instead, he turned and left.

Even though he had left, his orders still stood. No matter how reluctant Li Bin was, he dared not go against a Nascent Soul realm cultivator's orders. He clenched his teeth and murder flashed across his eyes as he glared at Wang Baole.

"Kid, you're quite lucky this time, but who knows how long that'll last..." He left his words trailing. He sneered, turned, and left. The others followed with hostility and a promise of vengeance in their eyes.

Wang Baole blinked. He didn't think himself lucky. In his opinion, they were the lucky ones. If Chi Lin hadn't appeared, he would have struck. After Wang Baole's fight with the stone bat statue, he was confident that he could kill all of them. He would make it seem that both sides were heavily wounded from the battle. Even if the sect found out about it, he would have a way to protect himself.

Next time, we'll see if you're still so lucky! Wang Baole withdrew his stare. He turned towards Kong Dao and patiently waited.

Thirty minutes went by. The cracks above them grew in numbers, and the Sea of Fire rushed in. Then, Kong Dao suddenly shuddered as a Core Formation realm cultivation erupted from his person. An illusory eye appeared behind him!

It was shut. After about fifteen seconds, it began to disappear gradually. It clearly had something to do with the cultivation technique Kong Dao was practicing. After the illusory eye disappeared, Kong Dao opened his eyes. A brilliant light shone within. He got to his feet, cupped his fists, and saluted Wang Baole!

Chapter 547: The Mysterious Dried Fruit

Wang Baole had now witnessed the core formations of both Kong Dao and Zhao Yameng. He had seen the core of their cultivation techniques.

That was why when a cultivator was advancing from the Foundation Establishment realm to the Core Formation realm, he would typically find a quiet spot for seclusion. This was to prevent others from disturbing him as well as to maintain the secrecy surrounding one's cultivation techniques.

However, it was clear that both Kong Dao and Zhao Yameng trusted Wang Baole very much. Wang Baole couldn't help but compare the two. The more he did that, the more he realized how extraordinary Kong Dao truly was.

He didn't share our experiences at the Eye of Infinite Techniques. Despite that, an illusory eye appeared at the point of his breakthrough. The power he exhibited then was comparable to Zhao Yameng's... This Kong Dao is really something! Wang Baole patted Kong Dao's shoulder.

"Not bad. Keep up the good work. We have another great general joining the ranks of our Adonis Association!" Wang Baole burst out into laughter. Kong Dao looked excited and invigorated as well. The Core Formation realm and the Foundation Establishment realm were two completely different cultivation realms. As a peer of Wang Baole, he had been facing considerable pressure. Wang Baole's progress had been too astonishing. Kong Dao could finally catch a break now, after having reached the Core Formation realm.

He thanked Wang Baole. The Sea of Fire was going to flood the entire place soon, so they didn't linger. They retrieved their Spirit Boats and left hastily. After they left, the Sea of Fire surged in and finally filled the entire cave. After they emerged outside, they saw how the ancient battlefield had sunken considerably into the sea.

Their journey back was smooth. They didn't meet any obstacles during the trip. They soon flew out of the Sea of Fire and returned to Wang Baole's Green Fire Island. Once they were inside Wang Baole's cave abode, Wang Baole watched as Kong Dao calmed down from his earlier excitement. He took out everything he had looted from this trip.

The loot was sizable. There were many small items that were worth quite a bit. Three items were particularly eye-catching. One was the large alchemical cauldron, the second, the jade box, and the third, the stone bat statue!

The cave abode had been opened for the first time after many years, so everything was well-preserved. The two of them even discovered a pill inside the alchemical cauldron!

They weren't sure what kind of pill it was though. That was why they didn't open the cauldron. Wang Baole might not be familiar with alchemy, but he had the basic common knowledge. He knew the last step to alchemy and how different types of pills required the cauldron to be opened in different ways. After some discussion, they decided that Kong Dao would take the cauldron away. He would find someone to take a look and find a way to open the cauldron.

Then, there was the jade box. It was sealed, but the seal wasn't particularly powerful. The primary purpose of the seal seemed to be to seal in the spirit energy within the jade box. Wang Baole and Kong Dao managed to get it open very quickly. They found inside the jade box... a dried fruit!

Its skin was wrinkled, and it was the size of a chicken's egg. It seemed ordinary. However, as soon as the jade box was opened, whiffs of strange fragrance began to ooze out. It was a strong, rich smell. Wang Baole had only taken a slight sniff before startlement flashed across his face. He felt energized suddenly, and his spiritual senses seemed clearer.

Wang Baole was immediately excited. What he desired the most now was a way to enhance his spiritual senses, and the fruit seemed to possess properties that could achieve that. He said hastily, "Kong Dao, I have uses for this fruit!"

Kong Dao knew how valuable the fruit was. As soon as he heard what Wang Baole said, he pushed the jade box towards Wang Baole without hesitation. He didn't look at it any longer and ignored the stone bat statue as well. He said immediately, "Take the stone statue with you as well. I can't handle it if it comes back to life one day."

Wang Baole didn't try to reject the offer. He nodded, then gave seven-tenths of the remaining loot to Kong Dao. Kong Dao smiled at his gesture and accepted the reciprocation readily. The two of them were pleased with the treasures they had gotten. They had also gained in terms of their cultivation. Kong Dao had advanced to the Core Formation realm, while Wang Baole had made advancements in his mid-stage Core Formation realm. Overjoyed, they began discussing the encounter they had with the murderous cultivators from the Vast Expanse Dao Palace earlier.

"I was in the midst of my breakthrough, but I could sense the danger then. I got a peek and saw Li Bin..." The expression on Kong Dao's face was serious as he spoke in a low voice.

"Baole, you have to be careful. That Li Bin... based on what I know of him, he's a vicious character. He holds some authority amongst the disciples in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, and no one dares to offend him. There are even scandals of other disciples dying by his hand... but his master is a Nascent Soul realm cultivator. He's also at the late-stage Core Formation realm and hence relatively powerful. That's why he's managed to get his way and stay out of reach of the law."

"Since he has his eye on us after this incident, based on his vengeful and greedy character, he'll definitely find a chance to make life difficult for us!" As Kong Dao spoke, an icy glint flashed in his eyes. He might have only recently reached the Core Formation realm, but his lust for violence had always been strong. He narrowed his eyes and spoke in a low voice.

"I suggest that we find a chance and gather our own people to get rid of this Li Bin once and for all!"

Wang Baole smiled when he heard what Kong Dao said. He shared the same intentions. However, they needed some time to plan this carefully. It was easy to kill someone, the difficult part was cleaning up after.

"There's a high chance of someone finding out if we do it in the sword handle. That should be our last resort. Keep an eye out on him. Check if Li Bin will be visiting the sword body any time soon. If he does, we'll make sure he doesn't return!" After some thought, Wang Baole shared his intentions with Kong Dao. Kong Dao then left.

Wang Baole watched as Kong Dao vanished into the distance. He returned to his cave abode, picked up the jade box, and opened it again. He took out the dried fruit inside and took another sniff. The sensation of his senses clearing up resurfaced. He studied it in detail and confirmed that if he continued to absorb the spirit energy given off by this fruit over a prolonged period of time, his spiritual senses would definitely improve.

A heavenly fruit that can enhance one's Spiritual Sense... Wang Baole licked his lips. He had half a mind to swallow the fruit whole. However, he hesitated as he stared at the shriveled form of the fruit.

I can't eat it recklessly. What if it gives me food poisoning... At that thought, Wang Baole decided to return to the Vast Expanse Dao Palace to research more on the fruit. He wanted to know if he could find more information on the fruit. Wang Baole tried calling out to Little Missy as well, but she didn't respond to him. He knew Little Missy's character. She would always pretend to be asleep when it came to matters that she knew nothing about!

Wang Baole sighed at that thought. He sat down and began to meditate and stabilize the growth in his cultivation after his earlier massive absorption of Spirit Qi. When the following morning arrived, he walked out from his cultivation and headed straight for the Vast Expanse Dao Palace to research the fruit.

A month soon passed. The Federation Seedlings had spent a full year in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

According to the agreement between the Federation Seedlings and Feng Qiuran, the second batch of Federation Seedlings should be arriving soon. However, Wang Baole realized that the Vast Expanse Dao Palace didn't seem to be carrying out any preparations for the second batch's arrival. That caused Wang Baole to fall into thought.

During the past month, he had spent some battle credits and searched through many records. He tried to locate information on the fruit. After some searching, he found as many as six types of fruits that fit his search criteria. Each one had extraordinary properties, and they were all similar, which made it difficult for Wang Baole to tell them apart at once.

This didn't interfere with his cultivation with the dried fruit though. During each cultivation session, he would place the dried fruit before him, and his spiritual senses would come to life. They had shown significant development in the past month.

That translated to clear results in his refinement of Dharmic Armaments. Even though Wang Baole was still unable to refine an actual eighth-grade Dharmic Armament, out of every ten attempts, he had managed to create an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament that could be used twice instead of once.

Most importantly, he could clearly sense that he was moving in the right direction. As long as his spiritual senses continued to improve, there would come a day when he would finally be able to refine a true eighth-grade Dharmic Armament!

Once I can refine an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament, based on my proficiency in Dharmic Armaments and the battle credits I can and will exchange, I'm confident that I can enhance the scabbard to the level of a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament!

Wang Baole lifted his head. His eyes shone with anticipation and excitement. His scabbard had been a challenge to enhance all this while. There was the challenge of acquiring materials. There was also the fact that it was different from ordinary artifacts and posed a great challenge during the refinement process. Wang Baole had a feeling that if he should fail during the refinement process, he would also suffer considerable damage.

It was still manageable when the scabbard was at the level of a sixth-grade Numinous Treasure. However, enhancing a sixth-grade Numinous Treasure to a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament was a critical stage when a Numinous Treasure became a Dharmic Armament. That was why Wang Baole was especially careful.

There's also the spear. When I can finally refine an actual eighth-grade Dharmic Armament, I'll have the ability to repair it. Even though it won't be restored fully, it would still be able to unleash incredible power. Wang Baole's eyes shone. He had also been practicing the Lightning Immortal Transformation as well as the Thearch Armor inheritance during this period. His progress with the Lightning Immortal Transformation proceeded without any hiccups. The avatar he summoned had a clearer form.

There was still no progress where the Thearch Armor inheritance was concerned though. His suspicion that he lacked a catalyst of sorts began to grow. Wang Baole felt that he was only missing a critical step.

Perhaps what I lack is a kind of enlightenment... That can't be right. What exactly am I missing... Could it be a demonstration?

Chapter 548: The Evil Art, Flame Snatch!

Wang Baole was about to go mad. Since he had started his journey of cultivation, he hadn't come across any cultivation techniques that had managed to frustrate him so much. Even the Dark Art had been easy to grasp once he had begun absorbing Dark Qi.

The Dark Art? Wang Baole's eyes flashed. He had previously thought he lacked some sort of catalyst. Now, he was sure that he must be missing a certain step. That was why he hadn't seen any success in his practice.

Do I have to make another trip to the Eye of Infinite Techniques? Wang Baole smacked his forehead. He had tried asking Little Missy about the difficulty he had been facing with the Thearch Armor inheritance in the past month, but Little Missy hadn't responded to his questions at all. She had pretended to be asleep.

Wang Baole was finally beginning to see through Little Missy's act. Whenever there was something she didn't know or didn't wish to reveal, she would pretend to be asleep.

Wang Baole sighed. He had no choice but to set the Thearch Armor inheritance aside. Despite his reluctance, he had no choice in the matter. He began to study the other inheritances he had acquired. There were, after all, simply too many inheritances in his head.

Human nature dictated that one would always make comparisons, and feel dissatisfied upon making said comparisons. This was what Wang Baole faced. Even though he had plenty of inheritances, after comparison, it was clear that the most powerful inheritance was still the Thearch Armor inheritance!

The inheritance that was slightly less powerful than the Thearch Armor inheritance was something called the Flame Snatch. It was incomplete, not because Wang Baole had acquired only parts of it, but because... it had originally been incomplete. Even the person who had passed it down to him didn't have the complete version.

It was an extremely evil cultivation technique. Every time the practitioner killed someone, he would steal his opponent's vitality and will, then forcibly inject it into his own body. After which, he would continue killing... the adverse effects were great. The practitioner would gradually lose his own mind. In the end, he had to either kill his way to a clear mind or, failing to withstand the numerous minds that

clashed with his own inside his head, go completely crazy. His body and spirit might be completely destroyed. He might go mad and kill himself.

The one who had passed it down to him had practiced only the initial levels. He hadn't dared to continue with the inheritance. That was how he had maintained a relatively clear mind. The inheritance was rather impressive though. That was why the Vast Expanse Dao Palace had kept it and left it in the Eye of Infinite Techniques.

The Flame Snatch... Wang Baole shook his head. He dared not consider trying what was clearly a demented inheritance. However, after some thought, he began to have mixed feelings. After all, he was unable to master both the most powerful and the next most powerful inheritances... Fortunately, his research and study of the runic soldier was also in progress at the same time. Even though it belonged to a different system and hence he couldn't yet fully discern its workings, his progress in learning how to control a single copper coin had been relatively smooth.

Even though he could only control one copper coin, and couldn't summon the runic soldier puppet that rivaled a Nascent Soul, he did manage to figure out the Eight Trigrams seal on the back of the copper coins.

It was a spell that could allow the copper coin to form a seal. It would become one of Wang Baole's secret weapons to be used as a last resort.

During the past month, the frustrated Wang Baole had also discovered, on many occasions, that the donkey had been sneaking out secretly. The donkey would disappear for a few days, then turn up with a satisfied look on its face. This had surprised Wang Baole. He might not have paid it too much mind if that had been all there was to it. He might have concluded that the donkey had found itself a romantic partner.

However, Wang Baole had discovered that the donkey's level of cultivation had increased exponentially. It had returned once with a perfected Foundation Establishment realm cultivation. That had sent Wang Baole reeling back in shock.

What's going on? Perhaps this fellow didn't find a partner but found some extraordinary treasure instead? Wang Baole's breathing quickened. He knew that the donkey was extremely wary. That was why he had pretended not to notice anything while observing it secretly. A few days later, one night, as the donkey sneaked back into the Sea of Fire, Wang Baole's figure appeared at where the donkey had vanished. He concealed his presence and followed the donkey secretly.

The donkey raced through the Sea of Fire. It seemed to be familiar with its surrounding. It would stop every once in a while and observe its surroundings warily. It would even turn its head suddenly and stare behind it, as if worried that someone might be following it.

Wang Baole was almost discovered.

The ass finally grew some brains! Wang Baole followed hastily behind. He became more careful and more curious as well since the donkey was being so careful. He saw the donkey snake behind some ruins. It didn't reappear.

If Wang Baole hadn't used his senses as its master and realized that the donkey was hiding out in a discreet spot in the ruins, unmoving and monitoring its surroundings, he would have approached and checked the ruins out.

If he had really approached, he would have exposed himself.

He's learned how to set up an ambush? Wang Baole was shocked. Pangs of anger burned inside him. Based on his understanding of the donkey's character, it must be hiding some incredible treasure. There was no other reason for it to be so cautious and wary.

Wang Baole decided to practice patience. He stared at where the donkey was hiding. He was determined to uncover its secret. He waited for four hours, and just as Wang Baole expressed surprise at the donkey's patience, the donkey acted. It dashed into the distance, not further into the Sea of Fire but deep underground.

Wang Baole immediately followed. The entire fiasco took the whole night. The donkey hid in various locations in the Sea of Fire. It would dig holes and dash out, set up ambushes and then sit tight and wait. Someone else who wasn't Wang Baole would have either lost or attacked the donkey by now. Wang Baole, however, not only knew the donkey's character, but he had also done something similar and succeeded before. In addition, he had a certain mental connection with the donkey. He could manipulate the connection and ensure that the donkey remained unaware of it.

That was how he managed to tail the donkey for an entire night without losing it. After running around for a full night, the donkey finally seemed assured that no one was tailing it. Its heart was set at ease. With a merry heart, it pranced into the distance and soon arrived at another ruin.

This should have been a mountain valley. However, the mountain rocks had collapsed, and the Sea of Fire had flooded the entire place. It looked completely deserted and barren. The donkey clearly grew excited when it arrived. It began scouring the place. It would dig holes, then stomp on the ground with its hooves. Its nose continued sniffing as if it was trying to locate a scent.

The sight surprised and intrigued Wang Baole. He hid himself carefully, a distance away, and observed. Half an hour passed. After prancing around merrily, the donkey wormed underground. Then, soon after, it emerged, dragging with it... a corpse!

The corpse had three heads and six arms. It was one of the Never-Ending Clan!

There was a huge hole where the heart was meant to be. The corpse was missing body parts and didn't seem to have any artifacts or storage bag on it. It was clear that these had either been looted years ago or that they had been taken by the person who had killed him after their fatal battle.

Is there a need to be so excited just because it's found the corpse of an Never-Ending Clan member? Wang Baole couldn't control his shock and surprise. He had come across such corpses before. There was one in his storage bag now. Curious, Wang Baole crept closer. He was about to observe more closely when alarm and shock colored his face.

After the donkey dragged the corpse out, it didn't hesitate at all. With a loud crunch, it began to snack on the corpse's arm!

There was a happy expression on its face as it began to munch more quickly.

The sight sent Wang Baole reeling back. His eyes grew cold. He knew that the donkey was a glutton, but he hadn't expected it to lust after and feast on the rotting flesh of dead bodies!

I can accept you eating living creatures, but to eat a corpse! Wang Baole flew into an instant rage. He couldn't be bothered to conceal himself any longer. He flew out immediately, unleashing his full speed and charging towards the donkey.

The donkey, which had been munching happily on its delicious treat, froze when it saw Wang Baole's sudden appearance. Its eyes shone with guilt and sheepishness. It didn't hesitate, however. It opened its mouth wide, as if planning to finish eating everything in one go. Wang Baole, furious, sped towards it with extraordinary speed. He sent his leg kicking as he approached.

With a thunderous boom, the donkey cried out as it was kicked aside. It might have a thick skin, but that still hurt. It was about to escape when Wang Baole appeared beside it. He grabbed its neck and dragged it before him. His eyes shone with fury.

"What a great job you've done!"

The donkey shuddered. It tried to appease Wang Baole, but before it could bray, Wang Baole pushed it towards the corpse and forced its mouth towards the corpse's half-eaten arm.

"Come on, take another bite." Wang Baole snorted. The donkey was no idiot. Even though it secretly drooled at the delicious sight before it, it shook its head hastily. The expression on its face indicated that it wouldn't take a second bite even if it were given a beating.

Wang Baole glared as he pressed the donkey towards the corpse's arm. He was about to say something when he froze. He stared at the half-eaten arm of the dead Never-Ending Clan member suspiciously. A quiet sound of surprise and suspicion escaped from his lips.

Chapter 549: A Flame-Snatching Demonic Armor!

He hadn't looked closely at the arm earlier since he had been angry at the donkey for eating the flesh of a corpse. Now, he instantly noticed that the remaining half of the arm wasn't made of flesh and blood!

It was formed... from a kind of crystal!

Wang Baole was stunned by his discovery. He let go of the donkey, then bent down and examined the arm in detail. He found out that out of the three heads and six arms belonging to this dead Never-Ending Clan member, only this arm was made of crystal. The rest were flesh and blood.

Wang Baole grew slightly suspicious and confused. He pulled out the corpse that he had gotten inside the golden beetle out from his storage bracelet and compared the two. All three heads and six arms of the corpse in the beetle were made of flesh and blood. He recalled that those that he had seen before had all been flesh and blood. Only this particular corpse that the donkey had been munching on was different from the rest.

It felt as if this half-eaten arm had been formed from a kind of energy source. After the Never-Ending Clan member had died, it hadn't dissipated. Instead, it had transformed into crystal!

After some contemplation, Wang Baole decided to take the corpse. He turned back and glared at the donkey. Even though he had misunderstood the donkey, as its father, he was right even when he was wrong!

The donkey felt slightly aggrieved. However, it was truly frightened of Wang Baole. Its head drooped, and it looked repentant. The expression on Wang Baole's face finally eased. He snorted, then left and headed back to Green Fire Island.

The donkey followed behind, with its head drooping and its spirits low. It dared not run around when it returned to the island. It sprawled inside the cave abode and stared at Wang Baole with its guileless eyes and misery clear on its face.

Even Wang Baole began to feel embarrassed and uncomfortable. He straightened his face and glared at the donkey. Then, he threw one of the last nine pieces of chips he had left at the donkey.

"Fine, take it. After eating that, you can go run around outside. Remember to stay on the island."

The donkey stared at the snack that was giving off a strange smell in front of it. It froze. Finally, it swallowed the chip with misery written all over its face. It forced itself to show that it was enjoying the treat, then left hastily.

After the donkey left, Wang Baole coughed. He gathered his thoughts and took both Never-Ending Clan members' corpses out from his storage bracelet. He placed them before him for a more detailed examination. He tried to recall what he had read before when he had been at the Dark Sect. He had mostly read up on the cultivation techniques of the Dark Sect. He had little knowledge of the Never-Ending Clan.

He took quite some time before he gradually noticed the differences between the two corpses.

Firstly, their attires were different. Although they were both torn and tattered, the corpse with the crystallized arm wore something that was woven from a cloth that was resistant to decomposition. It was a refined sort of attire unlike the armor on the corpse found inside the beetle.

Their body shapes were different too. The former could be described as slim and the latter strong and well-built. Everything pointed to the seeming conclusion that... the former had been an academic while the latter had been a warrior!

That's not right... Wang Baole shook his head. He called out for Little Missy in his head. She was awake this time and responded to Wang Baole's summons.

"It's such a simple thing. Haven't you figured it out?" Little Missy said indifferently. Her words were colored with a sense of intellectual superiority as well as disdain.

"I caught a few members of the Never-Ending Clan when I was seven years old. After some examination, we discovered that a typical member of the Never-Ending Clan has three heads and six arms for their entire life—from when they are born and until they die. Only their royalty... after undergoing some special form of cultivation, can transform their three heads and six arms into sources of energy!

"The first level is when they transform one head and one arm into energy sources. They would rival a Planet realm cultivator. Two transformed heads and two transformed arms meant they were at the

Eternal Star realm. If they could transform all three heads and six arms into energy sources, they would be at the greater Star Domain realm!

“As for the corpse before you, one arm has been transformed into an energy source while one head is in the midst of its evolution. He must have been at the Spirit Immortal realm prior to his death. Once that head fully transformed into an energy source, he would have attained a breakthrough and entered the Planet realm!”

Little Missy seemed satisfied with her explanation to Wang Baole. Wang Baole began to gain clarity in his thoughts after hearing her explanation. Gradually, his eyes began to shine with a strange, bright light.

Transforming one's arm into energy... this sort of cultivation method seems familiar... Wang Baole fell into deep contemplation. He examined said arm carefully. After a long moment, his breathing suddenly quickened.

The Thearch Armor inheritance requires one to form an armor that's made of flesh and blood outside of one's true physical body... To a certain degree, isn't that the same as energy transformation? The difference lies in the fact that the Never-Ending Clan's royalty transform their own bodies while the Thearch Armor inheritance creates a new body outside the original one! Wang Baole's thoughts raced through his head. The light in his eyes grew increasingly brighter. He felt that he had grasped something important.

It was something key that could help him in mastering the Thearch Armor inheritance!

At that thought, Wang Baole immediately waved his hand and pulled out a flying sword. His eyes flashed. He made a slice on the corpse with the sword... He intended to dissect the corpse, locate its meridians, and identify the cause that transformed the arm into an energy source!

As the dissection was carried out, as further examination and research were carried out, and as time continued to pass, Wang Baole forgot completely about food and rest. He instructed the donkey to go back to the Sea of Fire and find him a few more of these corpses with arms that had been transformed into energy sources. A month passed. He had managed to dissect seven to eight similar corpses. He still didn't understand much about the cultivation methods of the Never-Ending Clan. However, he had found clues about the arms that had been converted to energy sources!

They were... meridians that were formed from Spirit Qi and that were found in the dead bodies!

That single discovery allowed him to further expand his understanding. He grew excited as he gained a new understanding of the Thearch Armor inheritance.

There may be other ways to practice the Thearch Armor inheritance, but what I'm thinking of... should be one of those methods, which is... to link every meridian inside my body with Spirit Qi, then allow them to emerge from inside my body and form a circulatory system outside my body!

“It's as if... my body has become a seed. To a certain extent, I'm spreading and scattering my meridians outwards, then reforming them outside my body!” Wang Baole muttered to himself. The more he thought about it, the more he believed that his was a workable idea. The only thing that was holding

him back was how his approach seemed identical to the Thearch Armor inheritance but was in actual fact slightly different.

The final flesh and blood armor formed from the Thearch Armor inheritance would exude power and strength. It would also augment his original physical body multiple times. It served almost like a magnifying glass. The source of the augmentative effect was the accumulation of Spirit Qi within the armor.

The armor could be seen as a new body. Its rate of absorption and cultivation would be much faster. It could be compared to the humps on a camel. As his cultivation continued to accumulate, it would be fed back into the original physical body. That was how the augmentative effect would come to be.

Regardless, the armor that was formed would become a part of him. He could move it like his own limb, but he couldn't separate it from his true physical body.

However... if Wang Baole practiced the Thearch Armor inheritance based on the method he had just thought of, the results would be different. He was extending his existing meridians and forming a circulatory system outside his body. He would be applying the same approach when forming the skeletal structure as well. However, it was simply an extension. It wasn't something that was inseparable from his original physical body. Simply put, it was as if Wang Baole had refined an artifact that encased his true form!

The disadvantages of his method were that precisely because it wasn't something inseparable from his body, it wasn't a part of him and only an external object. In terms of cultivation, accumulation of Spirit Qi, and the armor's augmentative properties, they wouldn't be able to compare with the former approach.

The advantage of his method was that it was simple and straightforward. If he resolved the first problem, the power of the armor and speed of cultivation would far surpass that of the former approach.

Of the two cultivation methods, one was good and the other... evil!

This was because... there was only one way to resolve the problems regarding the accumulation of Spirit Qi and the armor's augmentative properties. There was only one way one could acquire a vast accumulation of Spirit Qi without the need for cultivation.

Wang Baole had his ideas regarding this method as well. It was... the incomplete inheritance that was second most powerful following the Thearch Armor inheritance... the Flame Snatch!

This technique was perverse. It required killing someone and then stealing said person's vitality and will. If the practitioner were unable to maintain control, he would lose his own will and descend into madness. This was because as the number of people he killed grew, and as the number of discordant wills that were infused into the practitioner's body grew, he himself would find it increasingly difficult to withstand the resultant mental and psychological chaos.

However... if this armor extending from one's body could be used as a vessel to hold and accumulate the vitality and wills after each kill, everything could be solved. He would grow stronger with every kill. In fact, there would be no limit to the number of people he could kill!

However... Wang Baole wasn't sure what would happen if he did learn the inheritances. With the increasing number of murders he would rack up, would there come a day when this armor of his would become... a demonic armor with a blood lust that rose to the skies and shook the heavens and earth!

He remained silent as his eyes lit up with determination. He had made up his mind. He whispered, "A vessel for my murderous karma... so be it!"

Chapter 550: The Leaves of the Hyacinthus Tree!

Wang Baole might seem like a cheerful character who smiled all the time and had an optimistic outlook on life. However, he knew that deep in his bones hid a streak that he himself found terrifying.

It wasn't something that easily revealed itself. However, whenever it did reveal itself, the resultant murderous determination and viciousness were enough to send everyone reeling back in shock. It showed itself most fiercely and intensely whenever he was faced with danger or threat of death.

Simply put... if someone wanted to kill him, he would kill that person!

In another age when the ancient greenish-bronze sword had never made its appearance, such a streak would have been hidden deep in his heart. Perhaps as time went by, it might even be worn away with age.

In the current Spirit Inception Era, however, with the rise of cultivators, and as the Federation's cultivation civilization continued to be seen as a weaker power, this streak in Wang Baole continued to grow. The violence and blood lust in him might be hidden, but when unleashed, it would fan out fiercely like fire!

It was because of that streak in him that Wang Baole didn't hesitate after thinking. He chose the method he had come up with to practice and master the Thearch Armor inheritance decisively. Then, he immediately tried to extend the meridians inside his body using his Spirit Qi.

It might look as if Wang Baole was emulating the cultivation method belonging to the Never-Ending Clan. It was a sight that was not only bizarre but one that gave off evil and demonic vibes. The meridians that extended and then popped out from his body looked like hordes of tentacles poking out of his body!

They weren't bright red but semi-transparent. It was still a horrifying sight. As time passed, and as Wang Baole continued his cultivation, the tentacles began to encircle him. They formed a circulatory system that formed the basic structure of a human body!

Through unorthodox means, Wang Baole had finally managed to achieve success and master the first level of the Thearch Armor inheritance. The next step was to rely on the Flame Snatch and increase his strength by slaying his foes and opponents!

It's just a pity that the Vast Expanse Dao Palace isn't a suitable place to practice the Flame Snatch. Wang Baole opened his eyes. He observed the beginnings of an armor forming outside his body. Then, he took a deep breath. With a mere thought, the primitive armor disappeared and returned inside his body. It formed a diamond-shaped crystal on his heart. It was like a brand.

It was the core of the Thearch Armor inheritance. If Wang Baole had followed the orthodox approach, this core was supposed to replace his heart, instead of the brand Wang Baole now had.

During the period that Wang Baole had been practicing the Thearch Armor inheritance, something monumental had happened in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace as well. News of it had spread throughout the sect and into the ears of the Federation Seedlings. It had sparked discussions on the regional Spirit Internet.

Wang Baole only learned about it after ending his practice of the Thearch Armor inheritance and logging on to the regional Spirit Internet.

The leaves of the Hyacinthus Tree... were about to fall!

The Hyacinthus Tree—Wang Baole had been unfamiliar with the name when he had read it. However, he soon found out what it was. It was the tree that he had first seen when he had arrived at the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, the tree that was planted on the mountain peak on the main island... the spectacular ancient tree!

In Wang Baole's memories, the tree was immensely huge. However, it was covered with dead leaves. It seemed as if it were dead, but its presence and aura left a deep impression on him.

Two weeks ago, three new leaves had actually grown on this ancient, dried-up tree. A strange fragrance began to envelop the entire main Vast Expanse Dao Palace island when the new leaves appeared. Everyone was invigorated when they smelled it. Feng Qiuran and the other two Elders placed a great deal of importance on this matter.

This was because... the leaves of the Hyacinthus Tree not only had medicinal value, they also served another purpose that was very important to the three Elders!

The exact purpose was considered highly confidential. There was plenty of speculation. The Federation Seedlings asked around and came back with their own guesses. Everyone discussed it in the group chat. The conclusion was that this leaf should be some kind of emblem!

No one knew the details, however. Wang Baole didn't get any answers when he asked Yun Piaozi. As a native cultivator of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, Yun Piaozi seemed not to know much about this either.

Finally, he managed to find out what the leaves were used for when he sent a voice transmission to Xie Haiyang!

"The leaves of the Hyacinthus Tree. That's some good stuff there. There are a hundred and eight Hyacinthus Trees on the ancient greenish-bronze sword. I'm afraid most of them are already dead. In the past, whenever a Hyacinthus Tree sheds its leaves, the ones who managed to get their hands on the fallen leaves would get to bring those leaves and enter the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. If they passed the assessment, they would be able to become a disciple of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, and have their names recorded down accordingly!

"Now though, even though the current sect has inherited the name of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, in truth... there are but a dozen or so disciples who have their names listed in the sect's records and can be counted as true disciples of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace."

“So, how much do you think this leaf is worth? This is something that can allow a disciple’s name to be listed in the sect records, an opportunity for one to become a true disciple of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace!” Xie Haiyang’s explanation was extremely detailed. He concealed nothing from Wang Baole and shared everything he knew with the latter.

Wang Baole was tempted by what he had heard. He didn’t place his full faith in what Xie Haiyang had said though. After some thought, he called out to Little Missy and asked for her verification. Her answer was similar to Xie Haiyang’s. Little Missy also told Wang Baole that if he managed to get a leaf from the Hyacinthus Tree, he would save himself a trip in finding the sect records. If he earned the right to have his name listed in the records, she would have a way to elevate his status as a disciple.

Wang Baole knew that this was an opportunity not to be missed. Once his name was listed in the sect records, his status in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace would change drastically. Based on his analysis, this would serve him well when he entered the sword body and hunted for treasures as well.

At the very least, I can bypass the many restrictions... At that thought, Wang Baole began to grow excited and agitated. He got to his feet and left Green Fire Island in haste. He headed for the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. As soon as he approached, he caught the scent of the Hyacinthus Tree leaves in the air. He could also see the three leaves on the tree!

Wang Baole hungered with longing as he gazed at the leaves. His eyes narrowed as his nose twitched. He smelled the fragrant air around him carefully, doubt and confusion appearing in his eyes.

This fragrance is kinda familiar... Wang Baole’s breathing suddenly quickened. An intense light flashed in his eyes, but he concealed it quickly. He didn’t enter the Vast Expanse Dao Palace and instead wandered around the area as he might ordinarily do, then left.

Once back on Green Fire Island, he immediately got out the unknown fruit that could enhance his spiritual senses. He placed it before him and sniffed at it carefully. He stopped breathing momentarily.

The smell is exactly the same! Wang Baole’s heart started to race. He inspected the fruit more carefully and concluded that he was right. This unknown dried fruit came from the same source as the Hyacinthus Tree!

He hadn’t found anything about the Hyacinthus Fruit in his previous research. However, there was no way he was wrong about this smell. He grew suspicious of the fact that nothing about this fruit had come up during his research though. Little Missy hadn’t appeared to recognize it either. More questions surfaced in Wang Baole’s mind, and he considered investing a sizable portion of his battle credits to find more information.

Wang Baole didn’t feel comfortable asking Xie Haiyang. Just as Wang Baole was immersed in thought, on the main Vast Expanse Dao Palace island, in the grand halls atop the mountain, the three Elders were also seated together, deep in contemplation.

There were few things that could gather them together for a discussion. You Ran, especially, had only appeared when the Federation Seedlings had first arrived. Then, he had gone back into seclusion. It was clear that something important had happened today. He had to end his seclusion.

Their contemplation didn't take long. An expressionless Mie Liezi said coldly, his raspy voice colored with a tinge of authority.

"Fellow Daoist Feng raised two matters. The first pertains to the activation of the teleportation array formation and allowing the second batch of Federation Seedlings to enter. I don't agree to this. They are of no use to us at all!

"The second pertains to the Hyacinthus Tree's shedding of leaves. This is what is important. This is what we should be having a serious discussion about!"

"We've come to a decision regarding the arrival of the second batch of Federation Seedlings many years ago. We've also confirmed a year ago that this project must be executed. Mie Liezi, you are regretting your decision now. You do not agree to it. I, similarly, do not agree with your view!" Feng Qiuran frowned. She grew increasingly exhausted mentally. The annual deadline had passed. Based on their agreement, the Federation should be sending their second batch of cultivators over. However, Mie Liezi had grown increasingly forceful while she had increasingly wavered. The voices of dissent had grown stronger over the year. Feng Qiuran found it increasingly challenging to carry out the joint project with the Federation. Negotiation and compromise were necessary every time.