

Worth 221

Chapter 221: One Against Many

Wang Baole raised his brows as he continued to laugh.

“It’s all right. One should be amicable. I have a good temper, so do not worry about me.”

Hearing Wang Baole describe himself as good-tempered, Zhuo Yifan and Zhuo Yifan fell silent. Soon, the elderly instructor arrived and showcased the Supernova again. After that, he took a few more looks at Wang Baole, revealing a flash of interest as if he had seen through something. After thinking about it for a moment, he smiled, raising his right hand as he took out another object.

The object was an... egg.

“This is the egg of a ferocious beast. I have obtained it from the Sea of Beasts. I do not know its exact breed, but this can be considered a personal reward. All of you are not allowed to use any Dharmic treasures or any spells, and can only depend on your physical abilities in this battle. The victor gets the egg!”

Can it be braised...? Wang Baole took a look at the egg in the elder’s hand and wasn’t very interested in it. He guessed that he would probably braise and eat it if he obtained it.

Even though he wasn’t very interested in it, the Federation seedlings around him all grew excited the moment they saw the egg. They all knew that once the egg hatched, they could train the ferocious beast that emerged. If they successfully raised it, it would be of great help to them in combat.

There were Beast Taming cultivators in each of the four major Dao Colleges. Those cultivators specialized in cultivating ferocious beasts for their own use. Their combat capabilities depended on the strength of their ferocious beasts to a large extent.

However, most of the pet beasts owned by the Federation were either born through artificial insemination or from the current group of beasts. There were few wild-born young beasts, which made the young beasts and beast eggs originating from the Sea of Beasts an even greater rarity.

After all, the Sea of Beasts was extremely dangerous. Even if a Foundation Establishment cultivator were to try, they would only be slightly more capable of heading to the Sea of Beasts after reaching Core Formation stage. On top of that, they still had to remain vigilant. The better option would be to have several Core Formation cultivators unite in their conquest.

Therefore, to many, the beast egg was extremely valuable. At the same time, the Federation seedlings standing around were itching with hatred towards Wang Baole. Hearing the elder disallow the use of spells and Dharmic treasures was like hearing an angelic song to them. They were all excited as they all looked at Wang Baole with anger in their eyes.

Noticing that everyone was looking angrily at himself, Wang Baole tried to play it light and cleared his throat. He felt that he should remain amicable. Therefore, with a spring-like smile on his face, he raised both his hands.

“All the handsome men and beautiful ladies here. I will not participate in the fight over this egg. All of you...”

Wang Baole hadn't finished his sentence before someone from the crowd suddenly shouted loudly.

“Go, everyone! Disable this fatty first! This fella needs to be taught a lesson.” As he shouted, a youth dashed out from the crowd and charged directly towards Wang Baole.

The instant the youth emerged and attacked, everyone in the crowd started moving as well. After swallowing their indignation for the past few days, they had already come to an agreement. They had a common enemy, and all surrounded Wang Baole as they attacked him.

“Punch and destroy him!”

“This fella obviously hasn't been taught a lesson before. I have long wanted to punch him!”

“Without the use of Dharmic treasures, he is powerless!”

With angry screams erupting and with the elderly instructor overseeing the entire situation with a smile on his face, most of the Federation seedlings launched their attacks. They didn't use any spells or Dharmic treasures, relying on their physical force as their desire to teach Wang Baole a lesson reached its maximum.

That was especially so as everyone had been learning the Supernova for the past five days. They more or less had a grasp of it, and some of them had even completely gained a full understanding. All they lacked was familiarity with the skill. As they all attacked, a loud boom erupted.

Vortices that emerged from numerous Supernovas of varying sizes formed one after another, charging in the direction where Wang Baole was.

Wang Baole got a huge shock. Even though he was confident, the combined force of a unified attack was still dangerous to him. He retreated quickly in order to avoid the blow. The area he was at just a moment before had already been blasted apart by all the Supernova attacks, which made Wang Baole furious.

“All of you are unreasonable! I've already said that I would not fight over it with any of you!” He stared and decided not to give them the chance to gang up against him anymore. As the crowd approached, he stepped forward at such a high speed that it broke the sound barrier. He was like lightning flashing through the clouds, or a ferocious beast charging into a herd of sheep!

Everything happened so quickly that within the blink of an eye, Wang Baole had appeared before a Federation Seedling. That person was a young man and was roaring angrily as he made his attack in the form of a punch. However, the sudden proximity of Wang Baole scared him. He wanted to step back but was still too late as Wang Baole collided with him while snorting.

A loud bang was produced. The fresh red blood spurted from the young man's mouth, and his body was like a broken kite as he was sent flying upon impact. His mind buzzed and his vision darkened, and he felt like he was hit directly by a raging ferocious beast.

Without checking up on the cultivator that he had sent flying, Wang Baole continued without stopping as he dashed forward yet again. After hitting several of the cultivators continuously, he raised both his hands, clenched his fists, and punched in both directions.

The force of the tides erupted, instantly forming a hurricane and causing the cultivators on both sides to tumble back.

As if sensing that something bad was about to happen, Wang Baole didn't move forward anymore. Rather, he turned his body and raised his right hand, gripping the fingers of a cultivator who was trying to ambush him from behind.

"Trying to ambush me?" Wang Baole hated being ambushed the most. He twisted the cultivator's fingers forcefully. As the cultivator screamed painfully, Wang Baole kicked his stomach, causing him to fly. He then threw himself backwards, using his back to knock another cultivator who was nearing him in the chest.

Feels soft? Wang Baole was perplexed. He heard Li Yi's painful scream as she hugged her chest and retreated in a scurry. When she looked at Wang Baole, she was extremely furious and was about to start cursing him when Wang Baole made the first move and started shouting.

"How shameless of you to take advantage of me!" Wang Baole's sheepish look immediately threw Li Yi's anger over the limits, as she screamed in a piercingly loud voice.

"How noisy." Wang Baole's eyebrow twitched. In an instant, he dashed forward, arriving directly in front of Li Yi as he raised his hand and flailed, sending her into the air accompanied by a loud bang. Regardless of how she tried to evade it, she couldn't escape.

Then, he turned around and charged into the crowd again. What was impressive was that he didn't kill anyone despite his force being so strong. He didn't have to use his spells and merely relied on his physical force, which he executed impeccably. He was like a hurricane, destroying everything in his path in an astonishing manner.

He was unbelievably fast, successfully avoiding Supernovas formed by different groups of people in unison time and again, which showed how agile he was. In the eyes of Zhuo Yifan and the others who weren't participating in the fight, Wang Baole was like a tumbling ball of flesh rolling through the crowd and striking everyone in his path.

Painful screams, helpless vocalizations, curses, and angry shouts reverberated continuously in the Public Square. Wang Baole grew more proficient in his method of attack. Then, as he stepped hard on the ground and leaped into the air with his fist clenched and his body vibrating, a loud boom emerged. He was contorted into the shape of a bow as he punched the ground!

Supernova!

A series of thunderous sounds erupted immediately. Strong winds swept in all directions, and as tides were produced, a ten foot wide vortex instantly appeared, charging towards the ground loudly.

The Federation seedlings were all shocked and started to move as the loud bang reverberated, impacting everything in the surroundings and sweeping up the dust. People screamed painfully and

scurried several tens of feet away as blood spewed out of their mouths. They were all dumbfounded as they watched Wang Baole land onto the ground from the air!

In a radius of a hundred feet, there was no one but Wang Baole!

That obviously rotund figure seemed to be made of steel. Wang Baole stood there, like a gigantic fleshy mountain that was filled with so much ferocity that it was impossible to eliminate.

“How could his physical body be so strong?”

“It must be the Body Strengthening Freedom Pill... He had two of those!”

“I hate him so much. If I was the one who swallowed the two pills, I would definitely be as strong as him physically!”

Everyone was shocked. The Wang Baole before them had left them with such a deep impression that they were overwhelmed with surprise and didn't dare continue moving forward.

Even those who wanted to compete for the egg but didn't participate in the hustle, such as Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng, were surprised. Kong Dao, who also didn't participate in the fight but had been observing what was going on, revealed a strong desire to battle in his eyes. When there was no one near him, he suddenly erupted like a bolt of lightning, charging towards Wang Baole with an astonishing force!

“Wang Baole!” As he stepped ahead, the force formed grew even stronger as it erupted!

Chapter 222: Kong Dao the Lone Wolf

Kong Dao was born in the Sea of Beasts. Being able to grow up in an environment where dangers were unpredictable and where there weren't many people around meant that he had unique talents allowing him to survive. If not, he would never have been taken in as Duan Muque's disciple.

Needless to say, his experience living alone on Mars also showed how extraordinary he was.

Even though the Federation seedlings had spent several days together, his sense of belonging towards them wasn't strong. Furthermore, on the first and second day in the fight for the Body Strengthening Freedom Pill, he was defeated due to Wang Baole's Numinous Treasures. However, he had chosen to give up the fight then due to the regulations and certain inhibitions. If he were really to battle Wang Baole head-on, he was confident that he would win.

As he charged forward, he showcased his astonishing force. All the pent up unhappiness instantly evaporated, as if an attractive bright sun has risen in the enclosed army camp!

As he growled with a low voice that spread like thunder in all directions, his speed was boosted to the maximum, exceeding that of his counterparts. It appeared as if he had been transformed into a flash of lightning, and in the blink of an eye, he arrived before Wang Baole!

His right fist was clenched, and he punched straight ahead!

The moment the punch was executed, his body contorted into the shape of a bow, with his fist acting as the outlet for all the accumulated force that was emerging from all over his body. A hurricane-like vortex was immediately produced, and with the power that was capable of forcefully tearing apart everything in its path, it charged towards Wang Baole.

Wang Baole turned his head suddenly, his eyes revealing a flash. Kong Dao's move and sudden attack didn't make him retreat, but instead aroused his interest, which was apparent in his eyes

"Interesting!" Wang Baole laughed without trying to avoid the impact. He then kicked forward.

A loud boom was produced, reverberating as the duo collided with each other, hand to foot.

The ground shook, and cracks appeared. As the sound of impact reverberated, Kong Dao sneered as he retreated. Wang Baole also turned his body but didn't step back. There were more cracks under his feet, but he didn't stop. When his right foot landed, he rode on the momentum and stepped forcefully, causing the ground beneath his feet to crack open. Wang Baole then rose into the air, attacking first and charging towards Kong Dao!

Immediately, the duo made contact, exchanging punches and kicks. An impressive battle depending purely on physical strength was playing out in the army camp's Public Square, and loud bangs sounded out continuously.

The scene of battle, coupled with the sounds of impact ringing by their ears, shocked every onlooker!

"The two of them... They're freaks!"

"They have such a high level of physical strength... They can very well go head-on against a ferocious beast!"

"I finally understand why only the both of them were automatically selected..."

The surrounding crowd was filled with surprise. There were some amongst them who had either not attacked, or had attacked but were clearly not as skilled in physical abilities. There were also some who specialized in the use of spells. They were shocked, but even more amazed at what they were watching.

With the crowd looking on, the battle between Wang Baole and Kong Dao continued. Kong Dao's eyes revealed a look of viciousness, and as he attacked, a desire for blood could be sensed from his body. He seemed to have been transformed into a wild beast, disregarding his injuries as he roared with a deep voice. Even after being punched forcefully in the stomach by Wang Baole, he still raised his head immediately, kicking Wang Baole in return.

Such a battle tactic where one disregards their own survival initially felt foreign to Wang Baole. However, he was someone with a temper, and seeing that Kong Dao was acting like a lunatic, he stared with his eyes wide.

"You're trying to battle me till death?" As Wang Baole spoke, he stepped forward, and the force from his physical body completely erupted at that moment. A strong force emerged from his body, and his right hand grabbed Kong Dao's right hand with the speed of lightning as he activated his gripping skill and twisted Kong Dao's fingers.

If it were someone else, they would definitely lose their voices from screaming in pain if the joints of their fingers were twisted in that manner. However, Kong Dao looked completely unaffected, twisting his hand in another direction and breaking his wrist off with a crack. He approached Wang Baole and punched him again!

A loud boom was produced, and Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. He clenched his left fist with the speed of light and punched forward, causing a Supernova to be produced, one that surged right towards the fast-approaching Kong Dao!

It was unbelievably loud, and as the Supernova was produced, Kong Dao's body was contorted into an astonishing angle as he twisted forcefully, his left hand flailing as the nails on his hand began to grow into scary blade-like structures that slashed Wang Baole!

All of that bewildered everyone. From the moment the attacks were first exchanged till then, the duo had been moving extremely quickly. As a loud sound of impact emerged, fresh blood spewed from Kong Dao mouth as he immediately retreated hundreds of feet away. He was unable to withstand the impact and landed on the ground with a half squat, supporting his body with one of his hands. He raised his head, fresh blood flowing from the corner of his mouth while his hair covered his eyes. Even so, the viciousness in his eyes was still obvious.

Wang Baole had grown furious from the attacks. When Kong Dao tried to grab hold of him previously, he was surprised but had managed to avoid it. However, at that moment, his chest had been slashed by Kong Dao, and his clothes were torn, revealing five scratches teeming with blood.

It slightly diminished Wang Baole's arrogance, which had previously resulted from the physical transformation and strength boost that he had received. It was obvious to him that even though Kong Dao was not as physically strong as him, he was almost as powerful!

That was especially so as Kong Dao's personality was one so vicious that he wouldn't think twice about self-destruction. That allowed his combat capabilities to increase significantly. However, even so, Wang Baole was still confident that if they were ever engaged in a battle of life-and-death, he would still be able to kill him!

It would just come at a price.

The onlookers of the battle were gripped with shock. They were taken aback looking at both Wang Baole and Kong Dao's attacks.

Kong Dao, who previously seemed to be a quiet existence, was actually someone who was extremely formidable in terms of combat. On the other hand, even though Wang Baole was shameless and his Numinous Treasures were perverted, his physical strength was astonishing.

All of that made the Federation seedlings, who were also extremely proud of their own capabilities, fall silent.

As Kong Dao lowered his head slightly, a fierce look flashed in his eyes, indicating his desire to continue the battle. Wang Baole also narrowed his eyes, making preparations to attack. However, just at that instant...

“Enough!” A look of approval was obvious from the elderly instructor’s eyes as he concluded the match. He raised his right hand and revealed two beast eggs.

“These two beast eggs are from the same nest. Each of you can have one!” As he spoke, the elder tossed one beast egg to Wang Baole and one to Kong Dao.

Wang Baole grabbed hold of the egg and lowered his head to take a closer look. The egg was the size of a clenched fist, and he could feel a sign of life within it just by holding it in his hands.

Kong Dao grabbed hold of his egg too. However, he did not spend much time examining it. Instead, he looked deeply into Wang Baole’s eyes with a look of provocation and viciousness.

This gaze... He wants to be punched? Wang Baole looked askance at him and sneered. He didn’t bother with Kong Dao after deciding that the elderly instructor would definitely try to prevent further fighting between them.

The elder saw what was happening and smiled slightly. As he turned to leave, he murmured with a voice that others could not hear.

“Are both of them at the Physical Foundation Establishment stage? Interesting!”

The Federation seedlings standing around had no objections to the elder’s way of handling the matter. After all, the battle between Wang Baole and Kong Dao was proof of their physical capabilities, showing that both of them were so strong that they had far exceeded their limits.

There were less than two days left of the seven-day-long training, which quickly passed amidst the silence of the crowd as they basked in their complex emotions. As the seventh day ended, the assessment began.

The location of the assessment was set to be in the army camp. All the Federation seedlings, including Wang Baole, had managed to attain the mystic technique of the Supernova. Duan Muque arrived in person, and numerous officials from the Federation also showed up. With words of encouragement and praise from them, each individual stepped up to the large green boulder that was to be used as a test of their strength. They adjusted their force and activated the Supernova!

As the loud noise reverberated and every Federation seedling showcased their powers, all the onlookers let out praise and admiration. Duan Muque smiled as he exchanged some words with the people around him.

“Yameng is not bad!”

“This chap is quite impressive as well.”

Their laughter and judgment became the source of motivation and excitement for the Federation seedlings. As they tested their strength, one after another, cracks of varying degrees appeared after every Supernova. As the cracks healed quickly, the next person attacked.

When it was Kong Dao’s turn, he punched hard, and the green boulder vibrated. So many cracks appeared on it that it far exceeded that of those before him. After that, he first bowed towards Duan Muque and company, before turning and looking at Wang Baole provocatively.

Duan Muque smiled slightly but didn't speak. The people beside him were significantly more amazed than before.

Soon, it was Wang Baole's turn.

Wang Baole rolled his eyes at Kong Dao's provocation. He acknowledged his strength but was more confident in his own efforts. After all, in order to reach where he was, he had put in a lot of hard work and experienced trials that were more than what others could imagine.

With that thought, a flash appeared in Wang Baole's eyes as he leaped and arrived before the green boulder. He took a deep breath, and punched!

A deafening roar erupted, traveling in all directions. The green boulder vibrated like never before, with visible cracks spreading quickly across it, covering the entire boulder. Finally, it exploded apart with a loud bang!

Chapter 223: Weathering Three Main Life Events!

The collapse of the green boulder sent everyone gasping in shock instantly. Even though they had seen the power Wang Baole and Kong Dao had displayed during their fight, the Federation seedlings were still taken aback.

After all, Kong Dao's strike had only resulted in cracks spreading throughout a large portion of the stone's surface. Wang Baole, however, had shattered it with a single punch!

"He's a freak..."

"I'm so glad he had been confirmed as a seedling. If he had participated in the selection round, and we'd been unlucky enough to come across him..."

"That's weird, aren't you all concerned whether this guy will have to pay for the assessment stone after shattering it?"

Wang Baole had originally been pleased with himself. However, as the other seedlings fell into a fierce discussion, and he heard someone's curious question about compensation, his eyes widened abruptly. Then, he remembered his Silver Spirit Card with limitless credit and calmed down immediately.

Even though I, Wang Baole, come from a poor family, but as an Armament Soldier from the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, I'll honor the demand for compensation if it comes to that. I'll work hard and eat less. I'll be able to save up something! Wang Baole suddenly felt righteousness surging through his person. He couldn't help himself from reaching into his pocket and patting the Silver Spirit Card inside, making sure he hadn't lost it...

The surrounding Federation officials were all roused by Wang Baole's single punch, and waves of emotions stirred in their hearts.

"This Green Assessment Stone can withstand the power of anyone below the Foundation Establishment realm. Even if it's someone at the early levels of the Foundation Establishment, it would still be able to hold up with some difficulty. But now, it's been shattered by a single punch from Wang Baole!"

“I didn’t look too closely before, but this little fatty is obviously... at the Physical Foundation Establishment stage! Even Kong Dao didn’t manage to shatter the stone, but he managed to do it!”

As they engaged in hushed discussions, Duan Muque smiled faintly. It was clear he had already known. His eyes fell on Wang Baole and Kong Dao and were alight with hope.

Kong Dao’s pupils contracted abruptly. He remained silent as he stared at Wang Baole. The earlier feelings of provocation had morphed into an intense battle intent, though he managed to conceal it.

Wang Baole observed the crowd as they gasped in shock. Pleased and relaxed, he cupped his fists towards Duan Muque and the officials, bowed, then stepped back smugly.

A new assessment stone was quickly brought out by the military. It didn’t take long before everyone concluded their trials, and the week of cultivation came to an end.

All the observers remembered Wang Baole’s face because of the trial. It was the same for Kong Dao. As for the remaining Federation seedlings, despite their ordinary performances for the physical assessment, the spells and techniques that they possessed and hadn’t displayed would rival the physical prowess of both Wang Baole and Kong Dao—to a certain extent.

Zhao Yameng’s ultimate move, for example. Once unleashed, even Wang Baole would have a headache trying to counter it.

As such, it was difficult to identify precisely how weak or strong one was. However, there was no doubt that Wang Baole had become the focus of attention during the trial!

Duan Muque gazed at the young faces before him and stood up.

“It’s your misfortune to be born in this era, because you’ll have to face many unknown powers, numerous unimaginable threats, countless trials and tribulations... you might even come face to face with what is known as a god!

“But it is also your fortune and destiny to be born during this time. Because in this era, the Spirit Inception Era has just newly arrived. Your descendants will remember your names for many years in the future. You... may become a god in the eyes of future generations! Your journey will never stop... there is no end before you. Because the path you are walking is called the road of evolution, Dao-seeking, the journey towards immortality!

“That’s why I like to call the Spirit Inception Era... the Era of Apotheosis!”

“The future is limitless. I, Duan Muque... am willing to walk this journey with you!” Duan Muque ended his speech, an unfathomable look in his eyes. He eyed every one of them, and every single one of them was inspired and galvanized.

His words were simple, but it was as if they had unrolled a scroll before everyone. On that scroll was painted the exciting and grand future... A fierce light shone within Wang Baole’s eyes as well. The word “Apotheosis” electrified his entire body, and he could hardly control his excitement.

Amidst the crowd’s excited breaths, Duan Muque left with a smile on his face.

Following his departure, the Federation seedlings, after having undergone a memorable period of cultivation, separately boarded the cruisers headed for their political institutions or colleges...

The Federation seedlings' examination and final trial had officially come to an end!

The group from the Ethereal Dao College was received and escorted by the college's cruiser. Wang Baole, Zhuo Yifan, Zhao Yameng as well as a few other Federation seedlings, started their journey back.

On the journey back, Wang Baole wasn't the only one looking forward excitedly to his return. The others also looked forward to going back. Based on the reward and recognition they were to receive from the Ethereal Dao College for becoming a Federation seedling, they should all receive a promotion when they returned!

Every one of them, when they returned, would be promoted to Deputy Pavilion Head of their respective pavilions!

It was impossible not to be excited about their new positions. Wang Baole's heart started beating rapidly as he thought about how the position of Deputy Pavilion Head was, at that moment, waiting for his occupancy. He wished he could teleport himself to the college directly.

As he grew excited about the authority he would wield in future in the Ethereal Dao College, he also started considering the need for allies. That was something that had been mentioned in the high officials' autobiographies. Wang Baole recalled in detail what he had read, then glanced at Zhuo Yifan, who was sitting at one corner. His eyes flashed instantly. He shifted over and put his arm around Zhuo Yifan's shoulder.

"Yifan, we'll all be Deputy Pavilion Heads after we return to college. Are you excited about that?"

Zhuo Yifan stared at Wang Baole. Based on his understanding of Wang Baole, he knew that the other youth had something he wanted to say. If it had been anyone else, he wouldn't even bother to ask. But since Wang Baole had spoken, Zhuo Yifan sighed inwardly before accommodating him and asking, "What are you trying to say?"

"Haha, Yifan, are we good friends? We are, right? If we look at the details, we're friends who've survived life-or-death situations together. If we look at the bigger picture, it's the Spirit Inception Era, the Era of Apotheosis. We're fellow Daoists. We need to help each other out in our future journeys!" Wang Baole said animatedly, talking and thudding his chest at the same time.

"What I feel is, we need to form some sort of alliance. That way, when we all become gods in the future, the future generations will have something to call us by!"

Zhuo Yifan was confused. He couldn't make sense of Wang Baole's strange ideas.

"Snap out of your daze. Just look, you won't fulfill your ambitions staying in your family clan, so what's the point of your cultivation and excelling in your skills? You're just one person, after all. But if we form an alliance, you'll have me at your back, and the other members of our alliance. With so many people supporting you, if your family clan dares to make life difficult for you and turn you into a weapon, we'll crush them!" Wang Baole spoke arrogantly at first, then swiftly switched to a more persuasive tone.

Zhuo Yifan remained silent. What Wang Baole had said initially was something he didn't think was important for him to have. However, Wang Baole's last words stirred him. That was something he had been running away from since the beginning. He couldn't help but lift his head and stared at Wang Baole. After a long while, he nodded his head!

He nodded, partly because it was Wang Baole who proposed it. A tiny part of it was also because... he wanted to prepare for what was coming. It didn't matter that his family clan was powerful beyond measure and was not an entity that they could touch. Deep down in his heart, he still held a tiny flicker of hope and an intense warmth for the future that Wang Baole spoke of.

Seeing that Zhuo Yifan had been convinced, Wang Baole patted him excitedly on his shoulder, then looked at Zhao Yameng. He shifted over and squeezed next to Zhao Yameng. They were sitting so close to each other that he could smell the faint fragrance on her.

Zhao Yameng remained unfazed at Wang Baole's arrival. She glanced over calmly as if to remind Wang Baole that he was sitting too close to her.

That was Zhao Yameng's unique charm and ways that often made those who tried to approach her feel naturally unworthy and ashamed.

However, that method... was useless against Wang Baole.

Wang Baole smiled widely as if he was unaware of what Zhao Yameng was trying to convey with her glance. He shoved his head nearer and said softly, "Meng'er..."

As soon as the words were out, Zhao Yameng, despite her natural composure, felt chills traveling through her. She felt discomfort as if she had goosebumps on her entire body.

"Eh, Yameng, we've gone through thick and thin together, right? And survived death together? You know, there are three main things in life that people weather together. Life and death, life or death danger, and hardships!" Wang Baole got excited when he said that.

"We've gone through all three together. Yifan and I are going to build an alliance. Why don't you join us too? In our future lives together, I'll hold your hand, and we'll walk hand-in-hand together." Wang Baole thought he had said something most beautiful. He was extremely pleased with himself and couldn't help but pull out a bag of snacks. He had a few bites and passed the bag of snacks over to Zhao Yameng.

"If you eat this, that makes us a family!"

Zhao Yameng had a strange expression on her face. The three main things that Wang Baole had mentioned seemed to be the same thing to her. As for the last thing he said, it seemed to have some other meaning to it. But she was a reserved person and barely had any friends in the college. To be precise, she had one friend, and he was Wang Baole. She nodded, then after some thought, took the bag of snacks from Wang Baole. She picked a piece out and took a small bite.

Seeing how the alliance, which would undoubtedly stir a storm throughout the Federation in the future, had already secured two key members, Wang Baole waved his hands excitedly.

“Let’s think of a name then. You guys start thinking too... why not we base it on our special traits? The Adonis Association. How about that? That name sounds great. Very apt!” Wang Baole laughed out loud. He felt he had a gift in naming things.

Zhuo Yifan was at a loss and remained silent. Zhao Yameng started to regret her decision...

Chapter 224: Taking Over the Dharmic Armament Pavilion

The alliance, the Adonis Association, was officially formed on the cruiser traveling from the Federation capital back to the Ethereal Dao College. The members of the alliance had a discussion. Two of them ultimately conceded, and Wang Baole, with his one vote, was elected the first chairman.

“There are so many people who need me. My responsibilities are too many. The burden on my shoulders is too heavy,” Wang Baole stood before Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng, patted his stomach and said, lamenting.

Time flew amidst Zhuo Yifan’s persistent silence and Zhao Yameng’s remorseful regrets. The cruiser carrying a group of the Federation seedlings as well as the members of the Adonis Association entered the domain of the Ethereal Dao College and returned to the Upper Academy Island.

As soon as they landed, Wang Baole and company saw the people who had come to receive them—many in the upper echelons of the college management, including the respective pavilions’ Grand Elders and the Deputy Sect Lord, were all there.

It was a grand and warm welcome ceremony. The Federation seedlings were seen as role models, earning them a great reputation as well as the envy of countless cultivators and students in both Upper Academy Island and Lower Academy Island.

Wang Baole and company seemed to be surrounded by a brilliant glow at that moment, drawing the attention of many and establishing themselves as role models for the new generation of youths.

Publicity done by the college contributed to that, but the main contributing factor was still the live telecast of the Federation’s hundred seedling selection round, which made them known to the residents of the Federation. There was also the commendation ceremony and the Federation President’s personal commendation. The seedlings’ achievements, as well as their image, was made known across the entire Federation, inspiring envy and admiration as well as establishing their popularity amongst the people.

At present, the college announced, before the entire college full of cultivators and students, the recognition and rewards the seedlings would be receiving.

“Wang Baole, Zhao Yameng, and Zhuo Yifan are hereby appointed... as Deputy Pavilion Heads of their respective pavilions!”

As soon as the appointments were announced, many cultivators on the Upper Academy Island, despite already knowing what was going to happen, were shaken. After all, the position of a Deputy Pavilion Head... held immense power and authority!

If the Ethereal Dao College could be compared to a country, a pavilion would be the equivalent of a big city. The position of the Deputy Pavilion Head, then, would be that of a Deputy City Lord. According to

the administrative hierarchy, an island on the Lower Academy Island wouldn't even rival a pavilion on the Upper Academy Island.

Wang Baole's rank might not equal that of Chancellor Lu on the Lower Academy Island, but if it were the deputy Chancellor Gao Quan who saw Wang Baole, he would have to cup his fists and greet him respectfully. That was because, according to their ranks, Wang Baole was his superior!

Furthermore... his position was appointed by the Ethereal Dao College's Sky Path Island and was further augmented by his status as one of the Federation's hundred seedlings, and even strengthened through his faction's presence. At that moment, Wang Baole could be said to have reached the height of his power in the Dharmic Armament Pavilion on the Upper Academy Island.

Their status and their power were immediately made known to many with the announcement. Wang Baole and company were once again placed in the limelight. Even Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng's statuses and positions rose suddenly after their promotion to the rank of Deputy Pavilion Head in their respective pavilions.

If they were to take a look at their recently formed Adonis Association, it seemed to be... a different creature, of a different status.

After the welcome ceremony ended, amidst the respectful gazes of the surrounding cultivators, and with immense pleasure, Wang Baole returned to his cave abode. In the coming days, he had almost no time for rest.

After all, he had been promoted to Deputy Pavilion Head. It was no longer appropriate for him to oversee the College Administrative Department alone. After discussing with Chen Yutong, the College Administrative Department arranged for a new Armament Soldier to take over his role. At the same time, Wang Baole's jurisdiction expanded to include all supervisory and disciplinary departments.

It was at that time that his former subordinates from the Lower Academy Island like Liu Daobin and a few others also managed to enroll in the Upper Academy Island's Dharmic Armament Pavilion.

Wang Baole paid considerable attention to their arrival. Liu Daobin, especially, received special attention and recognition. Wang Baole arranged for Liu Daobin to be his secretary and to follow him wherever he went.

That was not the only good thing to have happened. After Wang Baole was appointed to the position of Deputy Pavilion Head of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion—perhaps his return and his achievements had played a part in creating some sort of momentum that resulted in what happened—Chen Yutong's master, Sun Yifeng, bested all other competitors and... rose to the supreme position that was above even that of the Pavilion Head, the Dharmic Armament Pavilion's Grand Elder.

With that, the senior brother of Chancellor Lu had finally stepped into the inner circle of the Ethereal Dao College management!

The person who was most discomforted by his promotion and Wang Baole's appointment was the Pavilion Head of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion. He was subdued by the Grand Elder from above and constrained by Chen Yutong and Wang Baole's balanced distribution of authority from below. His job as the Pavilion Head was going to be really uncomfortable.

Furthermore, in order to have a position ready for Wang Baole when he returned, the college had an existing Deputy Pavilion Head transferred out. That Deputy Pavilion Head had been one of his people. Losing him felt like having one of his limbs chopped off. The remaining two Deputy Pavilion Heads were wary of the Grand Elder. They obeyed his commands in public but defied them in private and were, surprisingly, friendlier with Chen Yutong and Wang Baole.

As a result, it wasn't a stretch to say that Wang Baole and Chen Yutong reigned supreme in the Dharmic Armament Pavilion. It was then that Wang Baole, in line with his generous and forgiving nature, sought out Chancellor Lu from the Lower Academy Island...

Wang Baole left after a simple exchange of words. Chancellor Lu saw him off. Standing outside the grand hall of the Lower Academy Island, gazing at the cruiser speeding into the distance, the chancellor smiled.

"This young man, he's not a simple-minded boy," Chancellor Lu murmured to himself. Then he issued an order to immediately remove Deputy Chancellor Gao Quan from his position and open an investigation on the various misdeeds he had committed in the past!

When the orders were issued, Gao Quan fell limp to the ground.

Following that came another order from Chancellor Lu to promote the current Dharmic Armament faculty dean, Goatee Zhang Youde... to Deputy Chancellor!

Of course, the series of dismissal, investigation, and appointment had to be reported to the Upper Academy Island. However, in general, the Upper Academy Island respected Chancellor Lu's decisions in the management of the Lower Academy Island.

The vacant Dharmic Armament faculty dean's position was filled by someone whom Chen Yutong trusted and was allied with, a transfer from outside the faculty.

After a series of human resource restructuring, Wang Baole and Chen Yutong managed to secure almost complete control in both the Dharmic Armament faculty and the Dharmic Armament Pavilion!

They were the true sovereigns of the whole Dharmic Armament discipline in the entire Ethereal Dao College. The Pavilion Head, with his power hijacked... had authority in name only.

He had no means of fighting back and could only resign to his fate. He retreated to seclusion and dove into the research of Dharmic treasures, distancing himself from the running and administration of the pavilion...

Rumors regarding the matter of discipleship also began to spread in the college. Some heard that the Grand Elder of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion intended to take Wang Baole as his disciple. Others heard that... the Grand Supreme Elder seemed to share similar intentions.

Wang Baole was surprised by the news as well. He asked Chen Yutong about it, but even Chen Yutong was unaware of the details. After some thought, Wang Baole decided that there was no need to panic. As the party directly involved in the matter, he would eventually come to know.

Following Wang Baole's return, he had reached an interval in the politicking and power play. Wang Baole knew the importance of power and authority, but he also understood that ultimately, everything rested on his cultivation!

After everything had finally been settled, the first thing Wang Baole did was find out more about the Foundation Establishment realm.

He knew clearly that after reaching the peak of the True Breath realm, the most important step following that was the Foundation Establishment realm!

That was also the aim of the Hundred Seedling Plan in Operation Sword Sun. Learning the Supernova was only the first step. The many things that followed after required them to reach the Foundation Establishment realm first!

Wang Baole had little knowledge of the Foundation Establishment realm. After all, prior to his most recent journey, he had only been at the fourth-level of the True Breath realm—a far cry from the perfected True Breath realm.

Who would have thought that his most recent travel would bring him such tremendous good fortune, disrupting his original preparations and putting many things into motion earlier than what he had originally planned.

“I only know that to reach the Foundation Establishment realm, all cultivators from the respective political forces in the entire Federation need to gain an opportunity to travel to the moon...” Wang Baole muttered. He contacted Chen Yutong and started asking questions.

Chen Yutong knew a lot more than Wang Baole where the Foundation Establishment realm was concerned. He was, after all, an experienced Armament Soldier and had been preparing his advancement to the Foundation Establishment realm for a long time!

There was too much information regarding the matter, though. Chen Yutong shared a brief introduction before telling Wang Baole that he would tidy up the information later and document them in a jade slip before sending it to Wang Baole for his detailed study.

While Chen Yutong tidied up the information on the Foundation Establishment realm, Wang Baole started the incubation of the monster egg. However, the incubation required the appropriate environment and time.

The problem of a suitable environment was easily fixed. With his current authority, a few simple words would have Liu Daobin getting everything arranged and prepared for him. He only had to wait for Liu Daobin to inform him when the egg was about to hatch.

He did all that. Then, standing inside his cave abode, he sucked in a deep breath and pulled out the red palm tree that he had bought in the Federation capital!

The plant would make a good herb. But to Wang Baole, its main value was the fingernail-sized black fragment amongst the many fragments embedded in the tree.

He carefully extracted the fragment and stared at it. Memories of the past few years, everything that had happened after he had been admitted to the Ethereal Dao College, surfaced in his mind. He was overwhelmed by emotion.

I've made it so far, one step at a time, relying only on my immense natural potential and undying perseverance. Through my own hard work, determined not to rely on any external help, after all these

blood and sweat and tears, I've finally reached my current position and acquired my current skills and power!

I don't need help from anyone, because I am my greatest ally! Wang Baole lifted his head high proudly. He regulated his aura, and, inside his head, called out softly.

"Little Missy, are you there?"

Chapter 225: Birthday Present

A moment later, Little Missy's distant voice sounded in his head.

"You've thought of some request and have decided to summon me again? Come on, tell me what you want."

Wang Baole smiled upon hearing her words. There was a faint flicker in his eyes. Her words had exposed his exact motive for calling upon her. From that alone, he could immediately conclude one thing.

Little Missy undoubtedly was able to observe the external world, either through himself or through some other means. The fragment, for example, must have been something she had known about as soon as he acquired it.

But she hadn't spoken a word about it...

"Little Missy, you've misunderstood me. Am I that sort of person? I'd planned to give this fragment to you as a birthday present," Wang Baole blinked and said immediately, without hesitation.

"Birthday present?" Little Missy froze.

Wang Baole was inwardly pleased. He had chosen his earlier words to let the other ask exactly that question. He personally felt that he had almost fully grasped Little Missy's character. It was the same as speaking to a girl. He would first have to say something to spark her interest or curiosity. The explanation that followed didn't matter; what mattered was how sweet his words were.

"I don't know when your birthday is, but I hope that every present I give you is a meaningful one, and is a pleasant surprise to you, like the flowers I got you previously..."

"I wish for you to be happy. I want to hear you laugh. This way... I'll be happy too," Wang Baole said gently.

Little Missy: "..."

Wang Baole was pleased upon discovering Little Missy's silence. He mused about his skills and how he had started practicing them since he was in kindergarten. Even though it seemed that they had become less useful as he had grown older... after some practice those few years, he discovered that the skills had started to display their original impact and prowess once again.

Especially when used on Little Missy. It works every time. I'm guessing no one on her previous planet was as gifted as I am, Wang Baole thought and started feeling all pleased about himself. He pulled out the Hallucination Pillow and entered the Hallucination realm, picked up the black mask, and placed the black fragment on top of it.

Very quickly, the fragment seemingly melted and then fused with the black mask. What had been a damaged half-mask became slightly more complete with the fusion of the fragment.

A moment later, after Wang Baole's patient waiting, Little Missy's voice resounded in Wang Baole's head with a strange timbre.

"... thank you.

"You've reached a pivotal point on your cultivation journey. The next level is the Foundation Establishment realm.

"You can see the Foundation Establishment realm as a kind of magnifying glass. It amplifies your original foundations multifold. As a result, two aspects determine your weaknesses and strengths after you reach the Foundation Establishment realm. One is how you reach the Foundation Establishment realm, and the other is the strength of your foundations.

"There are many ways to reach the Foundation Establishment realm, but you lack in many of the requirements now. I can't help you with those, but if your foundations are extremely strong, when you reach the Foundation Establishment realm in the future, the augmentation of your abilities and your power will far surpass your peers."

Wang Baole's eyes lit up upon hearing what Little Missy said, and his heartbeat quickened. He had been waiting for her to say something like that as well as her guidance on the matter. He understood what she was trying to say.

"That means, if my foundation is a ten on the scale, and reaching the Foundation Establishment realm will magnify the original by, say, ten times, then when I reach the Foundation Establishment realm, I will score one hundred... Similarly, if my foundation before reaching the Foundation Establishment realm scores a hundred, then I'll score a thousand when I reach the Foundation Establishment realm!"

"That is the principle of it. The method I'm teaching you is called the Compression Art. There are limits to the True Breath realm. Like a completely filled bottle, it's impossible to pour anything else into it. But through the Compression Art, you'll be able to compress your cultivation and carve out space for more cultivation. This will strengthen your foundation!"

"This method can be applied not only on your cultivation but also on the branding of inscriptions during your crafting," Little Missy explained patiently—a rare thing for her to do—and finally taught Wang Baole the formula to the method. Then, her voice disappeared.

After memorizing the Compression Art's mantra, Wang Baole was energized. He ran through the formula in his head, confirmed that everything was in order, and retreated from the Hallucination realm. He immediately began cultivation.

He didn't try the method on himself first. After some deliberation, he decided to try it on the inscriptions on a Numinous Treasure. After he had familiarized himself with the method, he would then try it on himself.

Time passed one day at a time. Wang Baole retreated into seclusion, forwent sleep and forgot to eat, and practiced the Compression Art. The effects of the method were spectacular. Combined with his skills

at crafting artifacts, Wang Baole managed to craft his first... supreme third-grade Numinous Treasure within half a month!

A supreme Numinous Treasure, a Numinous Treasure that was beyond perfect, was rare throughout the entire Federation.

The Federation knew the ways to refine supreme Numinous Treasures; however, the success rate was too low. The Numinous Treasure would be destroyed if there was any failure encountered during the crafting process. Wang Baole had worked on the foundations of a perfected third-grade Numinous Treasure, applied the Compression Art, and carved ten times the number of inscriptions on the Spirit Kernel. That amplified the power of the Numinous Treasure, forcibly transforming it into a supreme Numinous Treasure.

“This Compression Art can forcibly increase the level of a Numinous Treasure... but it’s only one level. Unless there’s a more advanced Compression Art, this is the best that I can do with what I know.”

Wang Baole muttered to himself. His eyes were bright with excitement. Even if what he had managed to achieve was merely the leveling up to the supreme grade, the impact was still extremely big to him. Especially when he was considering his advancement to the Foundation Establishment realm. His breakthrough in refining Numinous Treasures gave him greater confidence in and a greater chance at reaching the Foundation Establishment realm.

As a result, in the following days, Wang Baole gave it his all and comprehensively revamped his Numinous Treasures. He applied the Compression Art and enhanced more than half of his treasures to the third-grade supreme level. He became more familiar with the application of the Compression Art.

At that point, he finally made up his mind and began to apply the Compression Art to his own cultivation!

Wang Baole sat cross-legged in his cave abode and applied the Compression Art to his cultivation. In an instant, his body started to shudder. He felt an immense pressure from all corners of the room pushing down on his body, sinking deep through his flesh and blood, like targeted molecules that had honed in on his Spirit Qi and started compressing them without warning!

The compression was like a form of forceful cohesion. He could feel intense pain in his blood and flesh. Wang Baole started panting heavily, and his face turned white. Large beads of sweat started dripping from his body.

Why is it that every mystic technique Little Missy teaches is always so painful to learn... Wang Baole was torn, but he could clearly feel the effects of the method. He felt that as the Compression Art worked its magic, the Spirit Qi within his body gathered and clustered tightly together without stopping. It was as if there had been many gaps in his Spirit Qi that, with the application of the method, were being compressed and shrunk until there were fewer of them left.

With the contraction, Wang Baole’s cultivation level seemed to be dropping. However, his aura had instead grown stronger and stronger!

After the gaps within his Spirit Qi were compressed and reduced in number, the stability and resilience of his Spirit Qi grew to its peak. The change in the internal structure of his Spirit Qi also enhanced the viscosity of his Spirit Qi. It was akin to a transformation from iron to steel.

As a result, despite the extreme agony, Wang Baole still grit his teeth and persevered. It was after he had withstood two weeks' of such torture and hammering... that his cultivation finally compressed to an extreme and was no longer at the peak of the True Breath realm, instead, appearing to be recently advanced into the fifth-level of the True Breath realm.

In reality, though, the spiritual aura he was exuding was t30% more powerful than it had been before. That was the same for his combat capabilities!

Even his meaty body had shrunk one size in those two weeks under the Compression Art. His originally round chubby face had slimmed down slightly.

When Wang Baole discovered that, he was both shocked and overjoyed. He stared at himself in the mirror, overwhelmed by excitement.

I see my chin!

It was impossible to describe how excited he was feeling at that moment. He stared into the mirror for a full two hours, touching his chin repeatedly. Finally, he raised his head skyward and burst out laughing.

I'm someone with a chin now! Overjoyed, Wang Baole walked to and fro in his cave abode. After quite a while, he slowly set aside the unexpected happiness and examined his cultivation. After noting the crystal inside his body, his eyes shone brightly.

The next step is to return to the peak of True Breath realm as soon as possible... this crystal is key. Looks like I have to make another trip to the Lightning Domain. The thought of that energized Wang Baole. On the one hand, he looked forward to returning to the peak of the True Breath realm. On the other, he looked forward even more to slimming down by one size more after leaving the Lightning Domain.

Let's go! Level up cultivation, and burn calories! At the thought of that, Wang Baole charged out of his cave abode in a manly manner, racing straight for the Array Runes Pavilion... and its Lightning Domain!

Chapter 226: The Foundation Establishment Fusion Method

Lightning crashed and thunder rumbled in the array formation in the Lightning Domain. Many cultivators could be seen on the towering pagodas, some teleporting in, some teleporting out, and others withstanding bolt after bolt of lightning strikes.

When Wang Baole arrived, he passed through the array formation immediately and appeared atop one of the pagodas. His entrance immediately drew the eyes of a few people. They didn't pay him too much attention in detail though. They could be struck by lightning anytime as long as they remained there.

"Come on!" Wang Baole's chubby body shook as he grew excited. He yelled at the lightning storm clouds in the skies. A bolt of lightning came crashing down instantly and struck him.

Loud rumbling resounded in the air, and Wang Baole shook, his hair standing on end. Countless arcs of lightning traversed within his body. The crystal inside him was forcibly broken down under the onslaught of rapid quakes. It fused into Wang Baole's meridians.

It doesn't seem to hurt? Wang Baole's eyes flashed. He bounced a few times and was surprised and overjoyed. He could still remember the first time he had suffered the lightning strike and the agony and numbness that had assailed his entire body.

I've already mastered the first mystic technique, Flash Arc!

Next step, let's see if I can attain the second mystic technique... Electromagnetic Pulse! Wang Baole bounced on his feet eagerly. He wondered if his taking of the Body Strengthening Freedom pills had transformed his physical body and made him less affected by the lightning strikes.

Filled with confidence, Wang Baole started to fantasize about acquiring the complete set of mystic techniques that could be obtained in the Lightning Domain. There were five in total: Flash Arc, Electromagnetic Pulse, Instant Sword, Explosive Dragon as well as... Hell Sea!

If one learned all five mystic techniques, he would be able to wield... the Electromagnetic Pulse!

In the Ethereal Dao College's records, a True Breath realm cultivator typically only managed to acquire the Flash Arc. Only the rare few got their hands on the technique, Magnetic Pulse. The latter three techniques could only be achieved by one at the Foundation Establishment realm.

Wang Baole began his stay in the Lightning Domain. The days passed, and his endurance of the lightning strikes grew to an impressive extent. The crystal inside him rapidly broke down and fused with his meridians. His cultivation advanced steadily.

After many days, with a final lightning strike, Wang Baole finally acquired the second of the five mystic techniques hidden in the Lightning Domain!

Magnetic Pulse! Excitement stirred within Wang Baole. With a sweep of his hand, an invisible magnetic force field appeared around him, warping the surrounding space instantly. The force field held a startling electrical force.

By releasing his Flash Arc and allowing it to travel in the force field, the power of the Magnetic Pulse would be amplified.

Overjoyed, Wang Baole attempted the third wave of lightning strikes. If he managed to overcome that wave successfully, he would have a chance to acquire the third mystic technique in the Lightning Domain!

Instant Sword!

Feelings of excitement and anticipation rose within him at the thought. The third technique was said to only be attainable by one at the Foundation Establishment realm though. A difficult road lay ahead of Wang Baole.

Fortunately, he had a strong and hardy physical body and managed to pull through with great difficulty. The crystal inside him broken down even further with waves of quakes traveling through his body, fusing with and strengthening him further. He stumbled and staggered through the days ahead in a mad haze.

His cultivation grew steadily, and the crystal inside his body slowly melded with him. It was after he had stayed at the Lightning Domain for a full month when...

The third wave of lightning strikes descended... as the shocked and gaping crowd stared on, Wang Baole bore the full onslaught of the third wave with a physical resilience that rivaled a monster. As the last lightning bolt vanished, he remained standing, almost scorched to the core. Waves of emotion surged through him. He had acquired the third Lightning Domain technique, the Instant Sword!

Instant Sword was a technique that could summon a flying sword created out of lightning in the blink of an eye. The speed of the flying sword was startling and the strength of its attack fearsome. It was an immensely powerful, near-invincible technique at the level of the True Breath realm.

Even a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator would have to keep his guard up when encountering such a technique!

Wang Baole's acquisition of the Instant Sword was, besides the Supernova, another edge he had when facing off against a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator!

After a long month of baptism by lightning, his cultivation had also been reinstated from its post-compression fifth level of the True Breath realm to the peak of True Breath realm.

There was a vast difference in terms of actual power though, between his current peak at the True Breath realm and his initial peak status at the True Breath realm. If he were to face off against himself a month ago, the current him would crush the latter without any doubt!

During the month, Chen Yutong had tidied up the detailed information and resources regarding the Foundation Establishment realm. He had also sought guidance from his master. After acquiring a more comprehensive picture, he hurriedly sent everything to Wang Baole without delay.

The information he had gotten didn't come only from the Ethereal Dao College but also included information sourced from other colleges. Included were also a few incomplete theories regarding the ancient Foundation Establishment realm cultivators that had resided within the realm of the Great Sword World.

"The Foundation Establishment realm is the second step to go from being mortal to immortal. It's a very important step in the entire cycle!

"To begin one's path towards immortality, one has to first build a foundation for immortality. After that, he will have nature at his beck and call and become a cultivator who can take flight on a sword!

"There are many paths to the Foundation Establishment realm. There are the Heavenly Dao Foundation Establishment Method, the Perfect Foundation Establishment Method, the Grand Foundation Establishment Theft Method, and even methods utilized by the barbarians that had been recorded in a few fragments... most of them are not fully documented though and ill-suited for our needs.

"The most appropriate method for us is the one created thirty years ago after much study and trial by countless highly powerful and prestigious cultivators of that period in the Federation... the Fusion Method!

“The Fusion Method works by first obtaining unique fragments from the numerous fragments that had fallen from the ancient greenish-bronze sword, fusing them in one’s dantian and using the fused product to form one’s foundational core... the Foundation Establishment core!

“Only such extraterrestrial fragments contain an endless source of Spirit Qi and can fuel our Foundation Establishment core. After all, the Spirit Qi that is found in the Federation is the product of these countless fragments.

“However, not all extraterrestrial fragments have such an effect. That’s why there’s a need for careful selection, and why luck plays a great part in this. The luckiest person... is the one who can find a fully intact artifact to serve as his Foundation Establishment core!

“Our Grand Supreme Elder, for example, found a fully intact bell that was of extreme rarity and contained immense Spirit Qi. He used it as his Foundation Establishment core to build his Foundation Establishment cultivation!

“There are other leading figures from the other political forces, many of whom also acquired completely intact artifacts. Such opportunities are rare and few, however. It all depends on one’s luck.”

“A typical person reaches the Foundation Establishment realm by obtaining a unique fragment that can be used for fusion. The elites, on the other hand, dream about acquiring a fully intact artifact!” Wang Baole let out a breath of air when he read that. Finally, he had a more complete understanding of the Foundation Establishment realm.

He continued reading.

“The Mystic Luna Realm was created because the number of fragments that could be acquired by each political force is finite. The fragments they obtain are key to sustaining the development of the political entity. Out of all the fragments, the ones that can be absorbed by the body and can be used to reach the Foundation Establishment realm are of greater value. That’s why, unless there are certain special reasons, they are often set aside and not freely used.

“That is why the Mystic Luna Realm was created! There are large quantities of fragments on the moon. The presence of these fragments in such large quantities resulted in a climate that is harsher than the earth’s climate and a landscape more treacherous than the earth’s... it’s only been three decades since we started excavating the site. There’s a shortage of men, and the process is slow. That’s why despite all the political forces having spent so much time and energy in the excavation process for many years, there are still many regions on the moon hiding countless extraterrestrial fragments and artifacts!

“This is especially so for the dark side of the moon!

“After all... the transformation of the luna landscape after the descent of the fragments has made the moon an inhabitable place. Only cultivators who’ve at least attained the fifth level of the True Breath realm can survive for long periods of time on the moon.

“It is due to this reason that the moon has gradually become a place of opportunity for the disciples of the respective political forces in the Federation to seek a breakthrough from the True Breath realm and to advance into the Foundation Establishment realm. They travel there to seek a chance to reach the Foundation Establishment and also to further attempts to colonize the land!

“The Mystic Luna Realm is filled with danger and death, as well as immense opportunity.”

Wang Baole couldn't keep his composure as he read through and gained an understanding of the materials sent by Chen Yutong. His Spirit Qi started to stir and rouse. He reached the last line of the documents, where Chen Yutong ended everything off by telling Wang Baole that the entrance to the Mystic Luna Realm was opened once every year.

The next opening would take place in two months. Then, the respective political forces would send someone to fight for a chance to strike gold. Chen Yutong had already submitted his application.

“Baole, you have to consider this carefully. This is not the same as the Spirit Breath Village. Spirit Breath Village belongs to the four Dao Colleges, and killing is forbidden; the worst that can happen to you is being injured.

“But for the Foundation Establishment realm... things are different. It is a real battle for resources and opportunities. Fights to the death are common when one is faced with a rare chance of striking it lucky. Besides... all the political forces in the Foundation Establishment will be participating in this fight in the Mystic Luna Realm!

“You must think this through properly!”

Wang Baole fell silent as he considered what Chen Yutong had said. Slowly, a fierce and determined light appeared in his eyes.

He knew that if he missed the window, he would have to wait another year. If things had gone according to his initial plans, it wouldn't have been possible for him to participate in the upcoming trip. However, the crisis with the giant tree and the opportune Hundred Seedlings training had accelerated his plans and made it possible for him to take part...

Wang Baole pondered for some time before his eyes lit up with determination.

I'm so powerful, others should fear me instead. What do I have to be afraid of?

Wang Baole made his decision. As he applied to the college for access to the Mystic Luna Realm, somewhere inside Ethereal City, within the residences of the Ethereal City Lord, stood an ancient tree. It towered a hundred feet tall, with a crown that spanned a hundred yards wide, and that was weighed down by countless drooping branches. Amidst its richly green leaves were numerous young fruits that had not yet fully ripened. It was at that moment... they brightened into a deep flush of red, and ripened!

Waves of unique fragrance spread throughout the City Lord's residence and lingered in the air. The City Lord of the Ethereal City, Lin You, stood before the ancient tree with his hands behind his back. He gazed at the fruits and smiled.

“We have a great Ethereal Fruit harvest... send out the invitations to the heroes from the respective establishments to join us for the Ethereal City Fruit Feast and share in the fruits of our labor!”

Chapter 227: Ethereal Fruit Feast

The Ethereal Fruit was well known in the Federation. It was said to be a strange fruit that, while not equal to the mythical heavenly peaches, contained strong nourishing properties for a cultivator. A normal person who ate the fruit would be blessed with good health and strong immunity, as well as an increase in lifespan.

The effects of ingesting the fruit were mild, to the point that even babies could eat them.

The only thing unfortunate about the fruit was that it couldn't be preserved and didn't last long after being picked. It had to be eaten within three days.

The Ethereal Fruits came from an Ethereal Tree, which could also be referred to by its other name... the Great Mahogany Tree!

Of course, there were differences between it and the Great Mahogany Tree of the myths that cycled between eight thousand years in spring and another eight thousand years in autumn. The Ethereal Tree merely possessed the characteristics of a lengthened lifespan.

The Ethereal Tree had been the result of a strange encounter during one of the city lord's earlier travels. He found a dry tree branch amongst cooling embers that wasn't yet dead and brought it back to the Ethereal City. Under his careful and tender administration, the branch grew and, ten years prior, transformed into its current thousand-foot spanning form—bearing its first batch of Ethereal Fruits.

Even though the fruits contained extraordinary properties, the time of their ripening wasn't fixed. Since he had brought the tree back from the verge of death, it had borne fruits three times. That was the fourth...

To City Lord Lin You though, the Ethereal Fruit was of great value, but it was ultimately only a physical thing. Its worth couldn't compare to the value of a strong social network. That was why the past few times the Ethereal Tree had borne fruit he sent out invitations to invite the Federation's younger generation of heroes to join him in a feast and share in the harvest.

On the one hand, it was a means of strengthening his relations with the parental generation of the young heroes, and on the other hand, it served to seed future favors with the young ones.

Such a strategy appeared alarmingly simple but was one few could manage to apply in reality. After all, it was a fruit that could prove helpful to a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator, and there he was, giving them all away.

One could see the breadth of Lin You's ambitions and aspirations from his actions. After all, for someone to become a senator in the Federation Senate and a lord of a city, they had to have certain extraordinary qualities in the way they treated others and managed matters.

In comparison, his son Lin Tianhao still had much to learn...

"Hao-er, you'll host the upcoming Ethereal Fruit Feast." Inside the Ethereal City Lord Residence, under the Ethereal Tree, Lin You turned around, looked at his son, and spoke calmly.

Lin Tianhao had always looked upon his father with fear and respect. Even though he was reluctant to simply give away the Ethereal Fruits, he nodded solemnly and submitted to his father's instructions.

A smile slowly appeared on Lin You's face as he gazed at Lin Tianhao. He knew his own child's nature. To a certain extent, he was grateful to Wang Baole.

After all, after being admitted to the Upper Academy Island in the Ethereal Dao College, Lin Tianhao had experienced quite a few trials and tribulations. He had matured. Lin You was comforted by the fact.

"Do not feel it a waste. This is a society that runs on favors and obligations. The value of social relations is greater than you can imagine. I no longer need to curry more favors. You'll be the one dispensing favors and building relations this time."

"I understand, Father," Lin Tianhao took a deep breath and replied quietly.

"I've made an effort to invite the children of the other senators and city lords, as well as the young heroes from the four Dao Colleges. There will be someone from the Five Generation Sky Clan as well. As for the other two sects and the Trilunaris Corporation, we don't have frequent exchanges and interactions, so it's not a big matter if they don't turn up. But if they do, you'll be sure to attend to them properly." Lin You passed down a few tips and reminders. He lifted his head and stared at the Ethereal Tree and its ripened fruits, then as if suddenly reminded of something, he spoke again casually.

"I've also invited a few young heroes from the Ethereal Dao College. Wang Baole is one of them"

Lin Tianhao fell silent momentarily when he heard Wang Baole's name. If it had been in the past, he would have disapproved of the invitation. Even if he didn't voice his displeasure, he would still be inwardly unhappy. But... after having come head to head with Wang Baole a few times, he had resigned to his fate. At present, he remained silent for a while before nodding his head in obedience.

"The unhappiness between him and myself was the result of my own immaturity and hot-headedness. I'm sorry for the worry it has caused you, Father."

When he said that, Lin You spun around abruptly and stared at Lin Tianhao for a long time. A smile slowly surfaced on his face. It grew wider and wider until Lin You burst into laughter.

It was a smile that was freeing and filled with joy. In all of Lin Tianhao's memories, that was the first time he ever saw his father displaying such happiness before him.

"Good, Hao-er, you've grown up!" Lin You laughed out loud as if a burden had been lifted from his shoulders. He walked up and patted Lin Tianhao on the shoulder. When he turned and left, it was with immense comfort and pleasure.

Lin Tianhao stood in the same spot as he watched the retreating back of his father. After a long while, he shook his head and smiled bitterly. He muttered.

"It's not entirely true that I've grown up. It's that Wang Baole... is someone I can't afford to offend."

The Ethereal Fruit Feast was set to be held three days later at the Ethereal City's City Lord residences.

The invitations were sent out and soon received by every one of the political forces in the Federation. It was as Lin You had foreseen. There would not be anyone coming from the two main sects. The Trilunaris Corporation had also replied with a non-attendance.

Only the Five Generation Sky Clan, who maintained a cordial relationship with Lin You privately, readily accepted the invitation.

That was something that had been within Lin You's expectations. His network of relations was concentrated mainly in the Senate and four Dao Colleges. The children of the sixteen senators had accepted his invitation and would all be attending. That was the same for the four Dao Colleges. The respective youths would be heading towards the Ethereal City in their cruisers.

Zhuo Yifan, Wang Baole, Zhao Yameng, and a few other Federation seedlings as well as all reputable disciples from the Upper Academy Island, were in the list of invitees.

The thought of turning down the invitation had not occurred to Wang Baole. In fact, he was extremely pleased for having received it.

This Senator Lin is indeed an impressive figure who recognizes my brilliance. It's just unfortunate that his son isn't of the same caliber. Wang Baole slapped his stomach happily. He thought it a great thing, being able to get a free meal, especially since the Ethereal Fruit was such an extraordinary fruit. Wang Baole did some research and decided that the fruit would be more useful for his parents.

After having made a decision, Wang Baole contacted Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng. They decided they would journey together to the Ethereal Fruit Feast.

Three days passed quickly, and as the day of the Ethereal Fruit Feast arrived, Ethereal City bustled with noise. Every resident of the Ethereal City knew about the Ethereal Fruit Feast. They watched as luxurious cruiser after cruiser sped across the heavens and headed for the city lord's residences.

The cruisers were just... too lavish!

One cruiser was built out of black gold and shaped like a scimitar. It exuded an aura that was both lethal and futuristic all at once, as if it was something that existed outside of that time. It wasn't only fast, but it also struck awe in those who saw it.

Such a cruiser wouldn't be something that came out of a factory line production. It was a customized cruiser that could only be crafted by a great artisan. Be it in price or capabilities, it vastly surpassed the cruisers that were available on the market.

The cruiser was only the tip of the iceberg. There was another even more opulent-looking cruiser—a giant head made out of metal, with long fearsome-looking teeth and a horn growing out of its forehead. It dashed across the sky, appearing less like a cruiser and more like a beast.

The fearsome aura it exuded, its speed, as well as the structure of the cruiser, was a frightening and awe-inducing sight to all who saw it.

Cruisers of a similar breed came from all four corners of the sky, rousing waves of shocked gasps from the residents of the Ethereal City that day.

"My god, I've seen the leaf-shaped cruiser on the Spirit Intranet before! It's so expensive that it costs as much as a mansion in the Federation capital! The money I earn from a life of working will probably only get me one door on that cruiser!"

"Did you guys see that... that's a flying race car made from Spirit Stones?"

“I have to give it up to the person...”

Amidst the rise and fall of the city residents’ cries of surprise and awe, luxurious cruisers, oddly shaped and each one of them priceless, gathered at the Ethereal City Lord Residence. As they landed, out walked young men and women, all of them were dressed in expensive attire, in high spirits, and giving off an air of nobility that made them stand apart from the typical commoner.

They were the children of the other Federation senators, and it was clear that they knew Lin Tianhao, as they started chatting happily when they met.

“Young Master Lin, many thanks for the invitation.”

“Haha, Brother Sun, have you changed your cruiser again? I saw this on the Trilunaris Corporation’s announcement a while back. There are only ten such cruisers in the entire Federation. I can’t believe you actually managed to get one.”

“Not just one. I bought them all.”

Laughter rose in the air. They appeared to converse nonchalantly about one another’s cruisers, engaging in casual banter, but in reality, every one of them was secretly measuring the others up.

The extravagance of their cruisers gradually gave the Ethereal Fruit Feast a different flavor. It had become a bragging contest.

In the bustling and lively Ethereal City Lord Residence, as Lin Tianhao received the guests and engaged in cordial conversation, the invitees from the Five Generation Sky Clan finally arrived. The cruiser they traveled on caught everyone’s attention as soon as it appeared.

It was...

A miniature battleship... capable of traversing outer space!

Chapter 228: The Greatest Truths Are the Simplest

The battleship spanned a ten thousand feet. It flew slowly and cast a forbidding and imposing aura. It was clear that it had been modified before and was fueled by Spirit Stones, and its body was painted in black. The sight of it sent everyone quaking in fear.

As soon as the battleship appeared, the senators’ children’s pupils contracted. The surrounding observers and the residents of the Ethereal City gasped in shock when they saw the cruiser.

“My god, using a miniature battleship for transport...”

“Who’s the one sitting inside...”

Amidst the heated discussion, the battleship gradually slowed to a halt. Zhuo Yixian, dressed in white robes and exuding an air of elegance and charm, walked out with a smile. He was not alone. A dozen other disciples from the White Deer Dao College followed behind him. Li Yi was one of them.

Lin Tianhao's face broke into a smile as they walked out. He went forward immediately to welcome them. He started chatting happily with Zhuo Yixian while leading them into the residence.

There was no need for introductions. Zhuo Yixian was well known in their unique social circle. The senators' children soon approached, smiling, and started trading stories.

The names of Li Yi and company had been made known to the public during the selection of the Federation's hundred seedlings. As a result, many came forward to get to know them better soon after they entered the residence. The sounds of laughter and conversation rose in the air.

The city lord's residences were alight with laughter and conversation. Members of the Holy River Dao College and the White Deer Branch College gradually made their entrances, and their cruisers had been chosen carefully as well. The Holy River Dao College's disciples came in a cruiser that seemed to be made from crystal.

The entrance of the White Deer Branch College was even more dramatic. Their cruiser was a metal horse carriage which charged towards the venue with a series of rumbling roars.

The purpose of having the entire feast seemed to have changed even before the actual feast had officially begun. Instead of putting them away, the cruisers were left to lay out in the open... The sight invited intense scrutiny from almost everyone. Many even took pictures and posted them on the Spirit Intranet, stirring a greater storm on the intranet.

Due to the Ethereal Dao College's close proximity to the Ethereal City... a majority of the students arrived via their own cruisers. They had obviously not been prepared, and their cruisers paled immeasurably when compared against the other cruisers. Next to the others, they felt almost embarrassed to land...

They clearly ranked bottom in the competition. Even though it was all a game, the young heroes were still youths. It was natural that while some were pleased, others would be embarrassed by it all.

The entire affair quickly spread throughout the Spirit Intranet. Many from the Ethereal Dao College who had arrived at the feast quickly contacted the college to find out if there were any others who hadn't yet embarked on their journey. Some even reached out to Wang Baole and informed him what was going on.

When Wang Baole received the news, he had just found Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng. The three of them had been about to travel out on their cruisers when their voice transmission rings vibrated urgently. Even Zhao Yameng received news from someone else.

The three of them read their messages and were taken aback. Wang Baole raised an eyebrow.

A bragging contest?

Zhuo Yifan frowned. He had received news that Zhuo Yixian from the Five Generation Sky Clan would be attending the feast as well. A cold glint flashed in his eyes when he found out about the news.

Zhao Yameng felt nothing for such ostentatious gloating of one's wealth. She couldn't care less. In her entire life, except one person, the rest of her peers... were simply not as rich as she was. She was used to it.

“What’s all this rubbish? Aren’t we just going to eat some fruit? When did this become some sort of pissing contest?” Wang Baole shook his head and smiled. His expression was one of disdain, like a grown-up watching children fight over whose toy was the best.

“These people are just too childish. It’s just a party, what’s with showing off their cruisers? So what it’s made from black gold? So what it’s a limited edition... what’s all this about? This is all so silly, so superficial!” Wang Baole read the news and started lamenting.

“We cultivators should aspire towards the Great Dao. We should be carrying the baton of the past forward into the future. We should be striving for the ultimate good of the universe. How could we waste our lives on such meaningless competitions?” Wang Baole spoke with great force. Intense conviction emanated from his person.

“Today, the three of us will use the simplest and plainest possible way to travel there. We must let these youngsters know that showing off their wealth is a crime. Simplicity is the most absolute and truest purity. The greatest truths are the simplest!”

Zhuo Yifan was slightly stirred when he heard Wang Baole’s words. Even Zhao Yameng eyed Wang Baole with surprise. Before they could voice their agreement though, Wang Baole lifted his head arrogantly, raised his hand, and placed his fingers in his mouth, blowing fiercely.

A shrill whistling rang out from Wang Baole’s mouth instantly, piercing through the air and traveling far into the distance.

As the whistle pierced through the air, amidst the shock of Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng, a thundering roar sounded from the direction of the Beast Taming Pavilion. A towering figure charged out from the pavilion, a swift and awesome shadow appearing in the sky.

It was... the Diamond Ape!

Towering a hundred-odd meters and covered in black fur, a pair of wings sprouting from his back, the Diamond Ape exuded a fearsome aura that was amplified by his domineering stance that surpassed the True Breath realm and was, in fact, of... the Foundation Establishment realm!

It approached, a fierce wind heavy with the scent of blood like it was riding a tornado towards Wang Baole and his friends. It arrived in the blink of an eye. The Diamond Ape hovered in mid-air, its wings fluttering and stirring vicious winds. It seemed happy. It cupped its fists and thudded its chest repeatedly, its thudding causing loud rumbling in the air. Its actions made it seem even more ferocious.

Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng’s breaths stilled when they came face to face with the Diamond Ape, and they unknowingly took a few steps back. The Diamond Ape’s immense physical form was terrifying.

It might even be able to put up a decent fight if it met the perfected Foundation Establishment realm giant tree in the Coulomb Basin.

As Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng stood, stunned, Wang Baole lifted his head nonchalantly and greeted the Diamond Ape. The Diamond Ape was overjoyed. It had long buried the hatchet with Wang Baole. Their friendship had grown, especially after Wang Baole had returned a while back and had not forgotten to send a few puppets over.

The Diamond Ape had started to feel that Wang Baole was treating him too well, and started to become friendlier to Wang Baole. At that moment, it grinned widely and roared.

“Diomy, someone’s trying to bully me. We’ll going to bring you along. Take your cue from me. If there’s anyone who’s mean to us, just smack him!” Wang Baole said arrogantly.

The Diamond Ape was a sentient creature. Even though it wasn’t particularly intelligent, it could make out the general meaning behind Wang Baole’s words. Upon hearing that it was being summoned to fight, the Diamond Ape got excited immediately. It thundered at the sky before it turned around and raced straight into its cave at the Beast Taming Pavilion.

Wang Baole stood there, stunned. It returned quickly with its appearance dramatically transformed!

On its body was an armor of gold that turned his originally immense hundred-meter figure into a small gold mountain instantly. Its figure had become even more fearsome and awesome than before!

The armor had clearly been painstakingly crafted by the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, made from costly materials and lined with complex inscriptions. The entire armor appeared to be a sixth-grade Numinous Treasure, which meant that the ape’s original battle capabilities would be augmented exponentially with it on. A ferocious, terrifying aura emanated from the Diamond Ape as it hovered in mid-air, stirring whirlpools of spirit energies around him.

The ape wore a huge helmet on its head and metal gloves on its hands. Every accessory and armor came together to transform the Diamond Ape into a truly formidable being!

That was the first time Wang Baole had seen the Diamond Ape in such attire. He was shocked speechless before excitement overtook his senses. Letting loose a great laugh, he leaped up and landed directly on the Diamond Ape’s shoulder. He sat down and gestured towards Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng.

“Yifan, Yameng, come on, we have a feast to attend. We’re going to go in this simple and plain manner, a bit casual and informal, and meet those people trying to show off their wealth. Fear not, because we have our dreams, and we have the Dao in our hearts!” Wang Baole was completely taken in by his words. He truly felt how pure and simple he was being...

Zhuo Yifan slapped his forehead. He realized he shouldn’t have wasted his emotional energy being roused by Wang Baole’s speech about grand truths and absolute simplicity... Zhao Yameng was speechless as well. Silently, the pair leaped into the air and landed on the Diamond Ape’s shoulder. They sat behind Wang Baole. Then, Zhao Yameng seemed to have suddenly understood something. She smiled faintly.

“What Baole said is right. We may be poor, but we have our dreams!”

“...” Zhuo Yifan’s lips started twitching at the edges. He stared at Zhao Yameng and felt the similarities between Wang Baole and Zhao Yameng keenly at that moment... he couldn’t help muttering silently, “If you’re considered poor, there can be no wealthy people in this world...”

Wang Baole heard Zhao Yameng’s affirmation of his words and almost pulled her into a hug and kissed her out of sheer happiness. Fortunately, his reason was still intact. He suppressed the impulse, gave the Diamond Ape a pat and said, his spirits soaring.

“Diomy, let’s go. Our destination... the Ethereal City Lord Residence!”

The Diamond Ape lifted its head abruptly and let loose a thunderous, earth-shattering roar that rang out across the skies, startling countless people on the Upper Academy Island and drawing their attention. Then, with a leap, the wings on its back started flapping. With an imposing manner, it charged... straight for the Ethereal City!

Chapter 229: The Diamond Ape Arrives!

At that moment, in the open-air square inside the Ethereal City Lord Residence, the guests who had arrived were all gathered in small groups of three to five, chatting and laughing. The topics of their conversations varied widely, jumping from cruisers to luxury goods, then from luxury goods to cultivation, and to the soon to be accessible Mystic Luna Realm.

All sorts of talk went on, and laughter rose frequently and rang through the air. Servants of the residence carrying drinks wove between groups, bringing wine to the esteemed guests.

As the host, Lin Tianhao was surrounded by numerous friends. As they chatted and laughed, his charming manner and attractive appearance caught the admiring eyes of many female cultivators from the other Dao Colleges.

Li Yi was one of them. She was holding a glass of wine and gazing at Lin Tianhao with a smile on her face. As he said something humorous, she pressed her lips into a demure smile. She couldn’t help but draw a comparison between Lin Tianhao and Wang Baole then. Compared to Lin Tianhao, she felt that Wang Baole was akin to a pile of dung...

Besides Lin Tianhao, Zhuo Yixian—with his status as the young master of and heir to the Zhuo family in the Five Generation Sky Clan—was also surrounded by many young men and women who desired his friendship. He engaged in a pleasant conversation with them.

The sons and daughters of senators were all brought up in a superior environment. That led to their desire to boast about their wealth. However, their family clan’s teachings also ingrained deep within them many good qualities. Be it the way they carried themselves or their cultivation; both were exemplary when compared to any typical person.

Many of them were unlike Lin Tianhao, who was a single child. They had elder brothers or elder sisters. Compared to the higher cultivation levels of their elder siblings, even though their cultivation didn’t reach the Foundation Establishment realm, they had obviously led rich and exciting lives.

An exemplary upbringing and self-restraint ensured that they dialed down their arrogance when they mingled with the prodigies from the four Dao Colleges. Both groups made friends with one another and started building their own connections.

It could be said that the people gathered there represented a portion of the upcoming generation of young heroes in the Federation. Even though over time, many would fall from the ranks of heroes, numerous great figures of the future would undoubtedly emerge from their midst.

Li Xiu, for example, was one of them. The “Xiu” in the name was not in reference to gender but meant excellence. Li Xiu, naturally, wasn’t a female cultivator, but a tall young man.

As the son of the Head Senator, even though he had an elder sister whose cultivation was approaching the Core Formation realm, he was the only son in his generation in the family clan. The focus and hopes placed on him were greater than the average person.

He was holding a glass of wine and sitting lazily in a corner, and surrounding him were many of the other senators’ children. It was clear that he was treated as the emperor of the group. Even Lin Tianhao, who didn’t follow him around like one of his followers, treated him with extreme cordiality.

“I heard the Ethereal Dao College found themselves a Wang Baole. Tianhao, you’re from the Ethereal Dao College too. You familiar with this Wang Baole?” Li Xiu threw a look over at Lin Tianhao, who was talking to Li Yi, and asked casually.

“Wang Baole...” Lin Tianhao could tell Li Xiu’s interest in Wang Baole. He deliberated for a while. If it had been in the past, he would have seized the opportunity to secretly incite conflict between Li Xiu and Wang Baole even before they had the chance to meet each other. However, after some thought, Lin Tianhao shook his head slightly.

“I’m not familiar. I don’t know much about him.”

“Oh?” Li Xiu’s eyes flashed when he heard Lin Tianhao’s reply. There was a flicker of a smile on his lips. He knew Lin Tianhao’s character and could discern something deeper hidden in the seemingly simple answer.

As Li Xiu pondered, Li Yi snorted in disdain. Despite both of them having the same family name “Li”, they weren’t from the same family clan. She said contemptuously.

“I’m quite familiar with this Wang Baole. He’s despicable, shameless and a pervert. His head is filled with evil and nasty thoughts. Sooner or later, he’ll be castrated and made into minced meat by someone!”

Li Yi’s words were heard by many around her, and they turned and looked at her. Li Xiu had a curious look on his face too. He was about to question her further when a sudden roar, like the rumbling of thunder, came crashing from the distant skies.

The sound was deafening, sending tremors across the air and whipping up fierce winds. The winds blasted the surrounding trees into a flurry and stirred up sand storms. Everyone in the square looked out in shock.

Lin Tianhao, Zhuo Yixian, Li Yi, Li Xiu, and the other young heroes did the same. They turned their faces towards the roaring. Instantly, everyone widened their eyes in shock. Some couldn’t help themselves and gasped out loud.

“What is that!”

In the distant heavens, amidst the boiling clouds and stormy winds, a black spot emerged. It was a small speck that grew in size within the blink of an eye. In the span of a few breaths, it transformed in everyone’s eyes into a giant figure that towered like a small, armored mountain.

The Diamond Ape had arrived!

The appearance of the Diamond Ape, its violence-streaked aura, the pitch black fur exposed outside the armor, its crimson eyes and its flapping wings that stirred violent winds, immediately sent everyone shuddering in awe and fear.

“A monster!”

“A Foundation Establishment realm... a Foundation Establishment realm monster!”

There were countless gasps of shock. It was not merely the young heroes who were stunned; many residents in the city had a changed expression on their faces when they caught a clear look of the Diamond Ape. They retreated amidst cries of terror.

Just imagine... the Diamond Ape’s hundred-meter-tall form, clad in majestic armor and transforming it into the likeness of a Beast God. Its Foundation Establishment realm cultivation alone made it invincible. The imposing and awesome aura it exuded sent all who laid their eyes on it quaking with fear.

Its immense physical form was equally awe-inspiring, amplifying its power.

As it approached, and as its aura radiated from its body, everyone on the open-air square in the Ethereal City Lord Residence sucked in a breath of cold air and shuffled back instinctively. Even the residence’s guards stood stiff with alarm and trepidation.

Fortunately, there were disciples from the Ethereal Dao College amongst the people, who obviously recognized the Diamond Ape. Others from the other Dao Colleges seemed to have heard of the Diamond Ape from the Ethereal Dao College. In their surprise, they started shouting.

“It’s the Diamond Ape from the Beast Taming Pavilion!”

“My god, why is it here?”

“That’s... the Diamond Ape of the Ethereal Dao College!”

The repeated shouts of surprise calmed the crowd down slightly. They were still fearful of the rapidly approaching Diamond Ape. However, as the Diamond Ape continued to approach and grew clearer in everyone’s eyes, the three figures sitting on its shoulders—including that of Wang Baole—were seen by someone.

“There’s someone! There’s someone on the monster’s shoulders!”

“How is that possible? The War Beast of the Ethereal Dao College... has turned into a mere mount!”

The crowd wasn’t given time to get a closer look. With a thundering roar, the charging Diamond Ape descended straight from the heavens. With a loud thunderous sound that sent the ground shaking, the small mountain of a Diamond Ape landed directly on the square in the Ethereal City Lord Residence.

It sent quakes through the ground as it landed. The Diamond Ape seemed pleased. It ignored what, to him, appeared to be tiny little humans, lifted its head skyward, let loose a fierce roar, and thudded its chest with both fists—a loud rumbling resounded in the air. As the crowd looked on with fear, it knelt, allowing everyone in the crowd, whose scalps were numbed with terror, to see Wang Baole and company sat on its shoulder!

One after the other, the three leaped off the ape's shoulder. Everyone's eyes initially honed in on Zhao Yameng and Zhuo Yifan. Zhao Yameng, in her white robes, was like a fairy, unearthly and not of their world. She exuded both purity and grace, and her extraordinary beauty and calm gaze imbued her with a unique charm.

Beside her, Zhuo Yifan stood tall and poised, a charming figure with attractive features and clear eyes untainted by evil. He was like the sun. All who gazed upon him could feel a blinding brilliance emanating from his person.

The couple, one handsome and the other beautiful, was—regardless of height, form, or aura—the pinnacle of perfection on earth. Anyone who had the slightest hint of self-doubt would feel ashamed when standing before them, as well as be robbed of all attention and seem like pale imitations beside the pair.

It was between the two... that Wang Baole stood. His physical appearance was clearly not a match for the other two's. In terms of his height or body shape, he was nowhere near perfect. However, he remained the glaring focus of attention.

He stood right there, giving off a strange and unexplainable feeling. It was as if... he was the leader in the group of three!

Upon a closer look, it was clear that both Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng had unknowingly fallen half a step behind Wang Baole!

The others in the crowd didn't know why that was so. Even Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng hadn't noticed the shift in their mentalities. The various scenes at the Coulomb Basin—such as that of Wang Baole standing before them, his back towering like a mountain—were that etched in their memories!

That battle had an immense impact on them. They might not have shown it most of the time, but deep in their hearts, they had already acknowledged Wang Baole's position in their circle.

The change in their mentalities affected Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng's auras. On the other hand, Wang Baole had never known self-doubt; there was no such word in his dictionary. The culmination of the two was Wang Baole standing with his head high and chest out between Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng, slapping his stomach—which had been sucked in when he had puffed his chest out—terrorizing the entire crowd.

“Excuse us for the late arrival.”

Chapter 230: From the Traps Pavilion—Huang Shan!

Few words could describe the scene of someone—who had clearly raised his head high and puffed his chest out but still appeared to be sticking out his tummy—slapping his stomach. Words could hardly describe the indescribable aura that exploded from such a person!

At that instant, Wang Baole felt as if the people before him had all been stunned by his tall, striking figure and the aura of the strong exuding from his person. He stared at their wide-eyed, gaping-mouthed faces and felt extremely pleased.

The little fatty seemed to have forgotten that standing behind him was a wide-mouthed and grinning Diamond Ape emanating waves of violence and ferocity. He lifted his head slightly and coughed.

"Is this where the cruisers are parked?" Wang Baole glanced towards a City Lord Residence guard standing at a corner and asked.

The guards all around were breathing nervously. They had all been frightened by the strong aura radiating off the Diamond Ape. They nodded instinctively, giving Wang Baole yet another chance to show off.

"Diamy, wait for us here." Wang Baole turned and patted the Diamond Ape.

Upon hearing Wang Baole's words, the Diamond Ape growled and thudded its chest hard. It shook its bum, pretended to hold its breath, and winked at Wang Baole.

"I get what you mean. We won't use the ultimate move unless we have no choice." Wang Baole felt that the Diamond Ape was playing along with the entire thing extremely well. He happily pulled out from his storage bracelet... a Diamond Ape puppet! He flung it at the Diamond Ape.

The Diamond Ape's eyes fastened onto the puppet instantly. It roared, yanked the puppet into its arms, and started playing with its toy in the square...

The scene shocked the entire crowd. Be it the senators' children, or the prodigious students from the other Dao Colleges, the group of young people who had earlier been secretly boasting about their cruisers were all dazed. They sucked in a deep breath, a storm of emotions welling within them.

It was impossible not to be confounded by it all. They had been competing on the level of cruisers when Wang Baole and his company leaped straight out of the beginners' league and came riding in on a monster. A sense of helplessness came over them, and they grimaced inwardly. It was... impossible to compete with that!

They had mere cruisers while the competitor... had sent out a War Beast! The two were completely different playing fields. Cruisers were just simple transport, while the taming of a War Beast that could also serve as a mount was an almost insurmountable task.

Especially when it was... a Foundation Establishment realm War Beast!

It was as if one was driving a sports car and feeling all pleased about himself when he saw the other party flying a warplane!

Lin Tianhao couldn't help the grimace on his face as he witnessed the scene. He was no longer surprised by whatever Wang Baole managed to conjure up. He had one belief cemented firmly in his heart.

Wang Baole's life must be a game hack. He's either got an amazing father or an even more amazing godfather who's helped him plan out his life... A sour taste swirled in Lin Tianhao's mouth. In his exasperation, he became more determined to stay out of Wang Baole's way.

Li Yi, on the other hand, was gnashing her teeth in fury. She breathed heavily, her rage sending her chest heaving as she tried repeatedly to shove down the anger that arose from her dislike of Wang Baole.

Interesting. Amidst the crowd and surrounded by the other senators' children, Li Xiu's eyes brightened, a growing interest clear in his eyes when he looked at Wang Baole.

Amidst the staring eyes of the crowd, Wang Baole laughed and, alongside Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng, approached the crowd. Even though Lin Tianhao was reluctant to have anything to do with Wang Baole, as the host of the feast he could only bite the bullet and approach the group, cupping his fists and extending a polite welcome.

Wang Baole didn't get along well with Lin Tianhao. However, he was able to sense a change in Lin Tianhao's attitude towards him. He blinked, then smiled at Lin Tianhao, though he was on high alert inwardly.

Did this guy turn over a new leaf or is he plotting something again? Wang Baole hid his surprise while pretending to be friendly, almost brotherly, to Lin Tianhao. Lin Tianhao quickly introduced him to everyone else.

Zhao Yameng was herself gifted with natural beauty and clearly knew a few of the senators' daughters, and the latter quickly sought her out for company. It was the same for Zhuo Yifan. No one outside his family knew that he was a War Soldier of the Zhuo family, and his exemplary achievements, as well as his powerful family background, led others to readily make friends with him.

The three of them separated and mingled around at the feast.

Wang Baole hadn't participated in such feasts before, but he had studied the high officials' autobiographies since he was a young boy. He was fearless in the face of such high brow gatherings. In fact, he seemed almost like he was in his element. Laughing every now and then, he chatted up strangers happily, putting his arm around their shoulders or pulling them into a hug as if he already knew them very well.

Li Xiu, who was already interested in knowing Wang Baole, upon being pulled into a hug by the latter, also hugged him back. Smiling widely, he asked, "Brother Baole, aren't you graduating soon? Will you be going to the Mystic Luna Realm to train? Are you interested in joining my family business after that?" Li Xiu smiled as he spoke.

Wang Baole laughed out loud at the solicitation. He didn't turn down the offer, nor did he give an affirmative reply. Li Xiu wasn't bothered by that. It was, after all, a huge matter and not something that could be decided immediately. The thought of canvassing for Wang Baole to join their family faction had been a sudden one.

The feast went on. Music started to sound through the square. In the Ethereal City Lord Residence, some of the young heroes of the generation mingled merrily. Even if they particularly disliked someone at the feast, they wouldn't show it. The atmosphere grew livelier and livelier as the disciples from the four Dao Colleges and the children of the senators got to know one another better.

A moment later, Wang Baole escaped from the casual conversations with some difficulty. He let out a sigh of relief, then grabbed a glass of wine from a pretty female servant passing him by. He eyed the crowd, pleased, sipped at the wine, then frowned.

“Pretty lady, do you have Ice Spirit Water here? Preferably with ice. It’ll be even better if there are lemon slices in it as well... oh, right, where do I find food? Are there soy eggs? Snacks? How about fried potatoes or beef jerky, that sort of thing?” Wang Baole held on to the glass of wine and stared at the female servant with anticipation in his eyes.

The female servant froze. That was her first time encountering such a request. She nodded her head hastily and went in search for Wang Baole’s Ice Spirit Water and soy egg.

Big family clans are just different. They have everything. Wang Baole was immensely pleased. He held onto the wine glass. Even though he didn’t find it delicious at all, the rest seemed to be used to it. He pretended to place the glass against his lips and was about to take a tiny sip when Zhao Yameng stepped out from the crowd behind him. She had a lovely smile on her face. She laughed softly beside Wang Baole and appeared to be saying something.

Others couldn’t hear what she was saying, but judging by the expression on her face, she seemed to be relating something interesting.

Zhao Yameng walked towards and paused beside Wang Baole, seemingly with a smile on her face. The words that left her lips, however, were deadly serious!

“Baole, don’t turn around... behind you, on your left, there’s a young man with long hair who’s wearing our college uniform...”

“He seems normal, but I don’t know why when I passed him earlier, I was suddenly caught by the feeling—that I seem to know him from somewhere, and that he’s unfamiliar. It’s hard to describe this feeling! I realized he’s also watching us. Especially you...”

“My instincts are telling me that this person... is extremely dangerous! He seems to harbor ill intentions towards us...”

Wang Baole’s expression remained unchanged when he heard that. He burst out in laughter as if he had just heard something extremely funny. It was then that the female servant returned with his Ice Spirit Water and snacks.

Wang Baole turned and grabbed the Ice Spirit Water from the servant’s tray. His eyes glanced casually towards the distance in a lazy sweep without focusing on any one person. He immediately saw who Zhao Yameng was referring to.

His eyes turned away without hesitation or pause. He took a gulp from the Ice Spirit Water in his hand, smiled, and said quietly.

“That’s weird, I find him slightly familiar but also unfamiliar at the same time...” Wang Baole said. Wang Baole and Zhao Yameng stared at each other. They didn’t continue their conversation, instead, separating and joining the crowd again. Both had their guard up.

Wang Baole secretly contacted the Dharmic Armament Pavilion and instructed his subordinates to get the name list of the disciples who had been invited to the Ethereal City Lord Residence. They were to include visuals for the attendees.

An Armament Soldier might have faced some difficulty in organizing such an effort, but Wang Baole was the Deputy Pavilion Head. To a certain degree, he and Chen Yutong were the two supreme sovereigns reigning over the Dharmic Armament Pavilion. As soon as Wang Baole's orders were issued, many in the Dharmic Armament Pavilion started scrambling around.

The list of names was quickly collated and sent over to Wang Baole. He sipped at his Ice Spirit Water while browsing through it, and soon found who he was looking for!

Huang Shan from the Traps Pavilion!

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. The person whom both Zhao Yameng and himself found familiar, and who was watching him, was Huang Shan—a long-time disciple who advanced to the Upper Academy Island four years ago. Huang Shan, with talent in traps, a rather impressive family background, as well as the Traps Pavilion's elder as his senior, was promoted to Deputy Pavilion Head of the Traps Pavilion the last year.

The Traps Pavilion... did we meet before in college? But why is this person watching me, and why does Zhao Yameng feel threatened?