

Chapter 341: Zhuo Yixian, Do You Want to Die?

Li Wan'er heard Wang Baole's shouting voice when she walked into the room. She had no expression on her face. Zhuo Yixian immediately turned and greeted her when she walked in.

"Greetings, Minister Li." Zhuo Yixian got even more excited at the sight of his superior. He had been investigating in secret and on his own all along. Once he cracked the big case, part of the glory would inevitably go to Li Wan'er, but he would still have the lion's share.

He had no intention of keeping this matter under wraps. Before he had gone to interrogate Wang Baole, he had sent a voice transmission to Li Wan'er. He didn't expect her to make a personal appearance. He had only just started asking a few questions.

This shows how seriously she treats this case. I'm definitely going to be rewarded for cracking the case! The more Zhuo Yixian thought about it, the more excited he got. He found his reasoning and deductions iron-clad. He deliberated on how he should showcase himself before his superior. He turned and leveled an icy stare at Wang Baole.

"Wang Baole, it seems like we're going to have to rough you up before you will talk!"

Wang Baole lifted his head suddenly when he heard that. He glared at Zhuo Yixian furiously and yelled.

"I'm one of the Federation's hundred seedlings, the dean of the Dao Mountain Mist Academy. I'm a Secondary Rank Four Noble. I'm also the founder of the Soaring Cloud Student Platoon, which the Governor personally named. I saved dozens of people in the Blood Cave. Zhuo Yixian, you dare use torture on me?"

The look on Li Wan'er's face darkened as she listened to Wang Baole's hollering. Frustration simmered inside her. She had been busy with other missions during this period, and her own cultivation had reached a critical stage. That was why she hadn't been spending as much time and attention on the Colony Disciplinary Order, which resulted in the current oversight...

She hadn't been able to sit still since she had received Zhuo Yixian's voice transmission. She had rushed over, fury burning inside her. She gave Zhuo Yixian a frosty glare. She had originally approved of the way he had conducted himself and worked. Those feelings were slowly turning into annoyance and irritation.

Wang Baole had been observing Li Wan'er. His eyes flashed. He decided to dial it up and shouted again.

"Zhuo Yixian, don't bother trying to get anything out of me. I won't say anything, no matter what you do. Even if I'm to lose an organ or body part, you won't be able to make me talk!"

Zhuo Yixian was furious. It wasn't just the difficulty of prying anything out of Wang Baole; it was how Wang Baole dared to yell at him in the presence of his superior. Li Wan'er looked really unhappy and seemed displeased with him. This made Zhuo Yixian angrier. He had planned to showcase himself in front of her. He slammed the table in front of Wang Baole again.

The loud thud resounded in the room. His voice was colored with the threat of violence and brutality as he spoke.

“Wang Baole, I don’t care if you’re one of the hundred seedlings or a Secondary Rank Four Noble. You’re nothing before the Colony Disciplinary Order. You’re going to talk, whether you want to or not... I’ll have you know... there hasn’t been a mouth that I haven’t pried open and gotten to speak since I, Zhuo Yixian, was posted to the Colony Disciplinary Order!

“You don’t have to try and hide. I’m not trying to trick you. You weren’t in Martian City on the night of the blood-colored mist and winds. I have undeniable proof of that!”

“I also know exactly where you were that night, and I will find out who you met and what you did that night!” The force behind Zhuo Yixian’s words grew as he spoke, asserting pressure on Wang Baole.

“I won’t tell you what I did!” Wang Baole heard what Zhuo Yixian said and saw the increasing unhappiness on Li Wan’er’s face. He tried to appear nervous, as if his heart was racing. He snorted then stopped talking.

Zhuo Yixian also sensed Li Wan’er’s sour mood. He clearly misunderstood the reason for it though... he thought she was displeased at how he had failed to make Wang Baole talk. He started to panic. He knew that torture was just an empty threat. Unless he had concrete proof and the necessary approval, he wouldn’t be able to go ahead with torture.

Wang Baole remained stubborn, and Li Wan’er was clearly in a bad mood. Zhuo Yixian gritted his teeth. He knew the solution was to weaken Wang Baole’s resolve and spirit. He slammed the table again.

“Wang Baole, you can continue to be stubborn. But let me tell you, I’ve already sent out ten teams—a total of three hundred people—to the Dao Mountain Mist Academy before I walked into this room. They will be searching through your room and the entire school. I don’t believe you can completely hide what you did that night!

“I’ve also found out that you have an accomplice. Your partner was the one who helped you erase all your records of that night. Wang Baole, your partner has some skill, but no matter how skilled he or she is, there is no such thing as a complete wipe!”

“You and your partner must have something to do with the appearance of the blood-colored mist and winds, and the appearance of the strange villages!” Zhuo Yixian sneered. He noticed the flicker of emotion across Wang Baole’s face. The latter seemed nervous. Zhuo Yixian’s eyes flashed, and he turned towards Li Wan’er nervously.

It might seem like his words were directed at Wang Baole, but they were actually meant for Li Wan’er. He wanted to prove his competency in front of her. He wanted her to know how hard he had worked.

He snuck a glance at Li Wan’er. Her face seemed to have darkened a shade, stiff with anger. It was as if she was brimming with fury and was on the verge of eruption...

Zhuo Yixian shuddered inwardly. He wondered if she was thinking how incompetent he was for having nothing to show for it after dispatching so many people out on the search.

Panic flooded Zhuo Yixian. He had the perfect case before him. He wasn't going to ruin it. He decided that he needed to pump in a bit more work and continue to break Wang Baole's spirit. It was then that suddenly, his voice transmission ring vibrated.

Zhuo Yixian glanced at it and was instantly overcome with joy. He turned it on immediately, and an old, aged voice rang out.

"Young Master, the task you have requested has been completed. The erased video segment has been sent to you."

Li Wan'er's eyes widened when the voice rang out. Wang Baole froze in shock as well. Zhuo Yixian lifted his face towards the ceiling and broke out into mad laughter. He was beyond joy and couldn't control his excitement and glee. He immediately played the restored video clip that had been sent over to everyone in the room.

His voice transmission ring instantly projected a screen in the room. An image formed. It was of the heretic cultivator's cave outside the city. Wang Baole's big face appeared in the image...

He seemed to be studying the surroundings curiously.

Everyone's pupils contracted when they saw that scene. Their cultivation started churning. They immediately locked onto Wang Baole, who was sitting, confused, in the room. They stared at him as if he was their greatest foe. Their sudden hostility was clearly because of Wang Baole's appearance in the video.

"Wang Baole, you think no one knows where you were that night? You were in the heretic cultivator's secret room outside the city. Your partner somehow erased the recording, but I've spared no effort and even employed my family clan's resources to restore the recording. Take a look at that. Isn't that you?"

"Wang Baole, you appeared in a secret room you should have no knowledge of. You were there when the blood-colored mist and winds appeared. It's too late now for you to say anything. I have no doubt that you are a heretic cultivator. You took part in the conspiracy that led to the blood-colored mist and winds!"

"Your partner... will definitely appear in the video as well. See, there's your partner. Let's take a look and find out who that is..." Zhuo Yixian said excitedly. He burst out in maniacal laughter again. A myriad of expressions flashed across Wang Baole's stunned face. Li Wan'er's eyes burned. They looked like they were about to shoot lasers out of them... it was then that a female silhouette with a curvaceous form appeared beside Wang Baole on the screen.

Before it could fully come into the screen, with only a partial form revealed, Li Wan'er's rage finally reached its climax and exploded. She hadn't taken action earlier because she wanted to know how much Zhuo Yixian knew. Now, she knew that Zhuo Yixian had even gone to the extent of restoring the recording. She could hold it in no longer. She dashed before Zhuo Yixian. With a sweep of her finger, a deafening thunder exploded. The projection alongside Zhuo Yixian's voice transmission ring disintegrated instantly. As they turned to dust, she turned towards a dazed Zhuo Yixian and leveled a glacier-like, murderous glare on him.

“Enough! Release him immediately. This case ends now. And one more thing... Zhuo Yixian, do you want to die!?”

Li Wan’er had forced the last few words out one by one through her clenched teeth. Every word sent the temperature in the room spiraling downwards. There was an oppressive tension in the room that intensified. When she was finally done speaking, everyone in the room, except Wang Baole, was sweating profusely. Their hearts were racing a mile a second.

They seemed to have connected the well-curved form in the video with Li Wan’er’s outburst. The realization was an unpermitted taboo thought. They felt as if they were being pulled under by a ferocious tsunami. The expressions on their faces changed suddenly. They turned towards Wang Baole and stared at him in horror. It was as if they were looking at a demon. Their minds started buzzing, and a white blank descended in their heads...

Chapter 342: New Mars Region!

It was as if a hurricane had swept through the room. Everyone’s breathing stilled in terror. Li Wan’er, who had destroyed both Zhuo Yixian’s voice transmission ring and the video recording, gave Zhuo Yixian a frosty glare. She turned and left with no expression on her face.

The tension in the room didn’t go away with her departure. In fact, after she had left, everyone gradually recovered from their earlier fright, and as they recollected what they had seen, their hearts started racing again.

Wang Baole watched as dead silence descended over the group. Zhuo Yixian still seemed to be in a daze. He had a lost look in his eyes. Wang Baole coughed awkwardly. He rose to his feet and patted Zhuo Yixian on his shoulder.

“Yixian, I told you. This matter shouldn’t be spoken of, but you... had to ask. Why? You’ve made a grievous mistake.” Wang Baole sighed and shook his head. He was secretly pleased though. He placed his hands behind his back and strolled out of the room with everyone else staring at him like he was a god.

A few even rushed to see him off. They only managed to barely come to their senses. If the young woman in the video was not Department Head Li, her destroying the video still proved his innocence. Not just that, it also proved the strength of Wang Baole’s political backing.

After all, the murkiness of the entire political situation must have reached a certain level for the fair and just Li Wan’er to do what she had done.

However... if the woman in the video was indeed Li Wan’er, then the relationship between the two must not be an ordinary one, seeing how they had spent the night alone in the cave. Either way, it was worth the effort to befriend Wang Baole and repair the damage that had been caused.

As they gave Wang Baole a warm and cordial send-off, the rest fled the room hastily. Before they escaped, though, they all looked at Zhuo Yixian. They all knew. It was highly likely... that this was going to be the end of Zhuo Yixian.

Li Wan'er had clenched her teeth and forced those last words out. The promise of violence in her voice still sent them shivering as they thought back to it.

Zhuo Yixian stood alone in the room as everyone left. The confusion in his eyes slowly turned to horror and panic. Beads of sweat started dripping profusely from his forehead. He was soon drenched in his own cold sweat. The others might not have caught a clear look because of where they stood, but he had been standing right in front of the screen. He had seen most clearly what the others had not.

The video might have been destroyed by Li Wan'er, but as Zhuo Yixian started to recall what he had seen, his face grew paler by the second. He couldn't lie to himself. He had caught a glance at the woman's face in the recording.

She... was Li Wan'er!

The worst was what he knew what the others didn't. He knew that Wang Baole had gone missing for the entire night... he had only appeared back in the city in the afternoon the next day.

An entire night... Zhuo Yixian shuddered at that thought. His face was drained of blood. He couldn't control the numerous images that flooded his mind... it had been a dark night then. His superior and Wang Baole had spent an entire night together in one room...

Li Wan'er's outburst was the key. That had been rage fueled by embarrassment. It was clear that there was some unspeakable secret between the two of them.

Zhuo Yixian shuddered even more violently at that thought. He was weeping inside. He knew he had done the unforgivable; he had looked into his superior's private affairs. He had looked into her personal, romantic life...

There was a loud buzzing in Zhuo Yixian's head. He felt dizzy. He couldn't forget what Li Wan'er had said to him and the look in her eyes before she had left. It terrified Zhuo Yixian.

He understood Li Wan'er's character. He knew how vicious she could be. She was cold-blooded and merciless, and backed by a powerful family. She was a strong and powerful fighter herself. She was ill-tempered, and there were many rumors surrounding her. Her father was the leader of the Senate. He was a Secondary Rank One Noble. It might seem as if he was the equal of the Martian Colony Governor, but his authority and power was something even the Governor didn't possess.

He was, after all, the leader of the Senate!

The Five Generation Sky Clan was powerful as well, but it was an entity formed from various family clans, and it had suffered losses during the lunar incident. The Zhuo family clan was one of the five most powerful clans in the Five Generation Sky Clan, but it wasn't the only one. Zhuo Yixian was only the eldest son of the Zhuo family clan. He couldn't compare with Li Wan'er. They were worlds apart.

Furthermore... Li Wan'er was his superior on Mars. This fact alone nearly drove Zhuo Yixian to tears. He thought about how he had arrived at Mars, his initial fears, and how he had toed the line. At the same time, he had great ambitions and had wanted to make a name for himself. Now... he had only despair.

He had no energy left to concern himself with Wang Baole. He left the room hastily and got a voice transmission ring off someone. He immediately sent a transmission to his father.

Zhuo Yixian's father was the master of the Zhuo family. He was an important figure in the Federation. Despite his status, his heart nearly stopped when he heard Zhuo Yixian recount to him everything that had happened. He asked his son hastily, "Yixian, does Li Wan'er know that you used your family resources for this matter? It's still not so bad if she doesn't know. After all, this is your..."

"She knows..." Zhuo Yixian had a distressed look on his face. He had no choice but to tell his father.

"She's not the only one. Many in the family clan probably already know. The original video recording... is still with the clan."

Zhuo Yixian's father got into a rage when he heard that. If this matter had stayed contained between the young ones, there was still hope of resolving it. It would only be a misunderstanding between children. But now that the family clan had gotten involved, it was no longer as simple.

"How did she know you made use of your family clan resources!" Furious, Zhuo Yixian's father thundered.

"I told her myself..." Zhuo Yixian grimaced. He knew he shouldn't be hiding anything at this point. He gritted his teeth and admitted the truth.

When Zhuo Yixian's father heard his son's reply, he fell silent. After a long moment, he sighed. He sounded like he had aged considerably.

"I'll handle this matter... Yixian, stop giving me so much trouble. Your father is old. I can't handle this much stress. Her father, Li Qidao, is famous for being difficult. Can't you tell just by looking at his daughter?"

Wang Baole was obviously unaware of the exchange between Zhuo Yixian and his father. He had just returned to the academy in high spirits. He had no time to think about what was going to happen to Zhuo Yixian. He happily continued practicing with his Dark Fire and the Lightning Dao: First Volume. He also didn't forget to spend time crafting and perfecting his construction puppets.

Wang Baole continued to craft construction puppet after construction puppet. Life slowly returned to normal. The donkey continued to leave the residence early in the day and return late at night. It always left excitedly and returned with a satisfied look on its face.

Wang Baole couldn't help his strange curiosity the few times he saw that. He had been considering following the donkey and finding out what it was up to. Then, Jin Duoming came visiting and that put that idea on a temporary hold.

Jin Duoming hadn't brought along his gigantic stronghold. He had only a few dozen guards and an equal number of female servants in his procession.

Jin Duoming was about to speak when he saw Wang Baole, but Wang Baole cut him off with an excited question.

"Brother Jin, have you come to buy the donkey?"

Jin Duoming had wanted to start with a casual greeting before diving into serious business. However, once he heard Wang Baole's question, alarm flashed across his face. He got even more alarmed when Wang Baole seemed prepared to promote and market his donkey in great detail. He raised his hand and

interrupted Wang Baole. Then, he coughed and decided to save the chat for later. He started speaking hurriedly about why he was there.

"Baole, have you heard about the new Mars Divine Armament Region?" Jin Duoming asked. His eyes narrowed. Even his voice seemed lower than usual.

"A new Divine Armament Region?" Wang Baole froze.

"That's right. The original Divine Armament exploration project has been put on hold, but I heard it was being brought up again after the blood-colored mist appeared. The exploration will be challenging though, that's why they need a series of foundational preparations to be done. The energy and resources required for the project in the future would definitely be significant. That's why the Governor has proposed building a new city zone!

"Build a new city zone around the area where the Divine Armament lies and be in charge of the exploration for the Divine Armament... the new city zone will not be considered as part of the current Martian Colony City. It will be viewed as an external administrative zone!"

"The person who becomes the head of the zone, the mayor, will be holding a Primary Rank Four Noble. This is a rare opportunity. The competition will be fierce, but I can help you fight for your candidacy... it's just that..." Jin Duoming paused and gave Wang Baole a deep, meaningful look. He believed that after saying so much, based on his understanding of Wang Baole's character, the latter should realize what he was trying to say.

And that was indeed the case. Once Wang Baole heard what Jin Duoming had said, his heartbeat quickened. He lifted his head and looked at Jin Duoming. The memory of what Lin Tianhao had said, the message his father Lin You had wanted him to pass on to Wang Baole, surfaced in Wang Baole's mind...

So that's what he meant!

Chapter 343: A Honey Trap?

"Brother Jin, please, speak your mind!" Wang Baole pondered for a moment before turning his eyes towards Jin Duoming. He knew clearly in his heart. It wasn't like he was Jin Duoming's father or anything. The guy didn't owe him anything. Besides, the high officials' autobiographies also emphasized one thing. He had spent a great deal of time thinking it over and had been rewarded for it. The one thing they always mentioned was... the thing that often cost you the most in this world, was the thing that came free!

It was clear that while Jin Duoming had come and offered his help to Wang Baole, it wasn't without a price to pay. In fact, Wang Baole would find it odd if Jin Duoming had nothing he wanted in return.

"First of all, I will do my best to fight for your candidacy, but this concerns the various political powers on Mars. Your competitors will come from all the various political forces. I cannot guarantee a one hundred percent chance of success... if I fail, then, well, that'll be the end of this matter. But if I succeed, I want you to promise me one thing, brother Baole!"

"What promise?" Wang Baole narrowed his eyes and glanced at Jin Duoming.

"When the time comes, without breaking any Federation laws and regulations, show your favor towards us, the Trilunaris Corporation..." Jin Duoming looked straight into Wang Baole's eyes and smiled faintly.

Wang Baole pondered for a moment. Then, he said, "You have complete confidence in getting me selected as a candidate?"

Jin Duoming hesitated. Even he didn't possess that kind of confidence. After some thought, he shook his head.

"There are too many variables. I only have a fifty percent chance of succeeding."

"If that's the case, then let's add another condition to the agreement. It has to be something that doesn't go against my own principles! Since you only have a fifty percent chance of success, I'm going to have to look for someone else to help me with the remaining fifty percent." Wang Baole sensed a trap in the other's words. That was why he set a trap himself. It didn't matter if it wasn't ever going to be used, what mattered was that it was there.

Jin Duoming deliberated over Wang Baole's words and nodded. They stared at each other, then laughed. After, Jin Duoming didn't prolong his stay. He was worried that Wang Baole would bring up his donkey again, so he said a few words and then bade his farewell, leaving in a hurry.

He left in quite a hurry. Wang Baole shook his head with slight regret. He had wanted to speak more about the donkey, but Jin Duoming left in a hurry before he could. He sighed and shook his head before he returned to his office and immediately called for Lin Tianhao.

He got Lin Tianhao to speak to his father about the message he had left him. He needed his help on that.

Lin Tianhao didn't know the details, but he knew that this must be something important for his father to speak of it so seriously. He immediately sent a voice transmission to his father. Lin You got Lin Tianhao to inform Wang Baole that he would do his best to help Wang Baole, but he said the same thing that Jin Duoming did. This was a big deal, and he didn't have a one hundred percent chance of succeeding either.

Wang Baole thought it was enough though. He had both Jin Duoming and Lin You helping him, after all. It might not mean that he was guaranteed success, but there weren't many things in life that were guaranteed.

He set the matter aside and looked forward to seeing how it would turn out. In the meantime, Wang Baole's life returned to normal. He continued cultivation and crafting more and more construction puppets.

The donkey continued to leave early in the day and return late at night, and the frequency of such occurrences increased. Wang Baole had been observing it for a while and finally couldn't contain his curiosity. One morning a few days later, he noticed how the donkey was more animated than usual. It seemed really excited.

He watched the donkey race out early that morning. It rolled around in the school's pool as if it was taking a bath. That surprised Wang Baole.

Something must be going on! Wang Baole recalled the donkey's behavior during the past weeks. Initially, there had been slight changes to its behavior, and the changes had grown more and more obvious. It was acting completely out of the ordinary today.

It was as if it had been planning for something for a long time, and today was the day it was finally going to execute its grand plan. Wang Baole blinked. The look on his face grew serious as he left the school hastily and followed the donkey secretly.

The donkey had reached the fourth level of the True Breath realm. Its cultivation had improved vastly, and it wasn't far from the fifth level of the True Breath realm. Its speed had also increased significantly.

It didn't take the common, wide roads but instead chose to sprint through the small alleys. It was like a black lightning bolt snaking through alleys and the occasional underground canals...

This shocked Wang Baole. He realized he had been neglecting the donkey. He didn't know the creature had become so familiar with the city.

If he didn't have the ability to sense the donkey's location, and he had been someone else instead, he would have had to spend a lot of trouble and effort to keep up with the donkey. An error in judgment might result in him losing its trail.

This ass is definitely up to no good! Wang Baole's curiosity grew. He relied on his speed and innate senses and followed the donkey secretly. The donkey didn't seem aware of Wang Baole's stalking as it snaked out from the underground canal and reappeared in Zone Twenty-Seven. It seemed familiar with the area and raced towards the beast station located in the zone.

There was a beast station located in Zone Twenty-Seven. It had been set up by the Martian government to train beasts. The beast station provided trained beasts to the military as well as for sale to the public.

It was like the Beast Taming Pavilion in the Ethereal Dao College, except it also bred beasts instead of just cultivation and taming them.

The donkey drew nearer to the beast station and snaked into the underground canal again. Wang Baole stopped where he was. His senses told him that the donkey had snuck inside the beast station.

This gave him another shock. He had no idea how the donkey had found out about this place.

What's it doing here? Wang Baole was shocked and intrigued. He sensed the donkey leave the canal and appear inside the beast station, and then it snuck back into the canal after a while.

Wang Baole hid and eyed the entrance of the canal the donkey would be reappearing from. His eyes widened in shock when the donkey appeared.

The donkey was not alone. It had in its mouth a white lion beast that was much bigger than it was!

The beast was a beautiful creature, with white fur and eyes like gems. It looked majestic. Upon a closer look, one would be able to tell that it was a male lion. It was obvious that it was a fine male specimen amongst its own species. It would have reigned supreme in the pride.

Its cultivation was also at the fourth level of the True Breath realm. Despite that, this fine beast was cowering before the donkey. Its eyes shone with fear, and it shuddered violently. It seemed like it was

about to whine and cry for mercy, but the donkey snorted a few times fiercely, and the lion instantly lost all fight in it. There was despair in its eyes.

What's it trying to do... Wang Baole went from shock and straight into a daze. He stared, stunned, at the limp lion that had stopped struggling and at his donkey. The latter picked the lion up with its teeth and dashed out of the underground canal. Then, with another startling burst of speed, it raced into another canal and sped away.

This time, it was headed towards Zone Thirty-Six, where the military base was!

Wang Baole tried to recover from his shock. He followed them all the way to Zone Thirty-Six. He saw his donkey appear in a corner outside the military base while carrying the lion.

Its timing was impeccable. It seemed to know the timing of the shift duties very clearly. The timing it had chosen to appear was when the base seemed most empty of people. It had also made a deliberate choice of where to appear...

It had appeared at a small back gate which wasn't normally used. The donkey seemed to grow more cautious as it neared the gate. It flung the lion at the entrance and growled at it in a threatening manner.

The lion trembled and growled back. It seemed to be stating its refusal. The donkey grinned and opened its mouth wide, sinking its teeth into the curb beside them. With a loud crunch, it bit off a huge chunk of the curb. Then, it turned and stared at the lion.

The lion shuddered, and terror colored its eyes. It lowered its head in submission.

Wang Baole watched incredulously as the pleased donkey sped away. It hid in the bushes nearby. As it folded its legs and sprawled on the ground, the fur on its body shifted colors. It transformed and blended perfectly into its surroundings.

Wang Baole's eyes widened when he saw that. The donkey's presence vanished in the same instant. It had concealed itself perfectly.

Wang Baole was once again shocked by the discovery. He realized that the donkey was somehow changed after it had eaten the gray mosquito... he didn't have time to ponder further though. The lonesome lion started howling outside the back gate of the military base, its voice filled with anguish.

Its howling wasn't loud. It was as if it were summoning something...

The faint howling continued for a while. Before long, the back gate, which was hardly unlocked, creaked open a crack. A white donkey stretched its head out. It seemed to recognize the lion, and there was a strange light in its eyes...

"What's that all about? A honey trap?" Wang Baole's eyes almost popped out of his head. He muttered in confusion.

Chapter 344: A Fight at One's Doorsteps

Wang Baole was lost and trying to figure out what was going on. The white donkey stood behind the gate, its head peering out. It had a strange look in its eyes. It seemed hesitant, then fearful. It quickly scanned its surroundings, seeming torn over whether it should venture out through the gate.

This surprised Wang Baole. The lion started howling quietly again and seemed to be beckoning the white donkey. The lion swayed slightly as it howled, its fur glowing gold under the sunlight. It looked beautiful. One could hardly take his eyes off it.

The odd light in the white donkey's eyes brightened. It seemed to have made up its mind. It trotted out and very slowly... left the array formation protecting the military base...

The white donkey stepped out of the array formation and came to the lion's side. It started nuzzling the lion. Wang Baole stared with his eyes wide open and a dropped jaw as the hidden black donkey dashed out—like a blur of black lightning, so quick that it left an afterimage in its wake—and charged at the white donkey.

It was quick and had appeared unexpectedly. The white donkey was equally quick. It widened its eyes at that critical moment and retreated hastily, but it was too late by then... the lion opened its mouth wide and, with a sorrowful look, bit the white donkey.

The white donkey looked shocked. It paused and was about to cry for help when the black donkey arrived and, in an instant, sent its hooves kicking. There was a loud thud as he kicked the white donkey's head fiercely. The force of the kick was boosted by its burst of speed. The white donkey passed out almost immediately. It felt stars spinning around its head and barely had time to scream before it passed out.

It fell to the ground with a thud. Wang Baole watched, stunned, as the overly excited black donkey approached and sank its teeth into the white donkey's ear. It started to run as it dragged the white donkey away.

It didn't forget to turn around and level a glare at the lion. The expression on the lion's face turned from anguish into awe instantly. It seemed to realize it had been given permission to leave. It trembled and then raced off with its tail between its legs.

The black donkey ignored the lion. Its eyes shone with excitement. With the unconscious white donkey in its mouth, it fled away hastily. It was gone in an instant. It seemed to be extremely excited and kept snorting happily as it ran.

A shocked Wang Baole witnessed the entire scene. This was the first time he had been so shocked by a donkey. The black donkey had seemed like such a stupid creature. Who would have thought it would know how to set a honey trap...

The lion had looked so meek and oppressed, like it had been the frequent target of the black donkey's bullying. It seemed like it couldn't disobey the donkey's commands and had been coerced into seducing the white donkey.

From the white donkey's earlier reaction, Wang Baole could vaguely sense that the black donkey had spent some time and done its research. He had a crazy thought...

Could it be that the white donkey and the lion had been a couple previously? Wang Baole thought. His eyes widened. Setting aside the question of how the two might get together, if this was indeed true and his guess was correct, the black donkey would have had done something really horrible.

This is like kidnapping someone's boyfriend, then getting the boyfriend to trick her out into the open... and then hitting her on the head and dragging her off... Wang Baole smacked his forehead. He immediately extended his senses and tried to find out where the black donkey was headed. He soon sighed.

He had a taste of the donkey's ability to hide its presence. At present, its presence had completely vanished without a trace. It would take a lot of effort to try to locate it again.

Whatever... Wang Baole smiled wryly as he shook his head. He thought he might be overthinking things. He left hurriedly and returned to the academy, but he couldn't help thinking about this entire incident.

The donkey was absent the entire day. Wang Baole was finally able to stop thinking about it late that night. He had sunk into silent meditation when suddenly, his eyes opened, and he stared at the door.

The donkey was prancing merrily in the distance. It raced back and entered the residence with a satisfied look in its eyes. The excitement radiating off it was that of finally having gotten what it had wanted. This was different from what it had displayed in the past few weeks. It was as if the prior excitement had arisen out of anticipation... today, however, it had reached a milestone in the donkey's life.

It couldn't contain its smug look when it saw Wang Baole. It started braying. Wang Baole's head started throbbing. He stood up abruptly with a stern look on his face. Then, he grabbed the excited donkey's ear swiftly before it could even react.

"What have you been up to all day? Come on, spill it out!" Wang Baole thundered. His stern expression seemed to threaten violence.

The donkey froze. There was shock in its innocent eyes as it stared in confusion at Wang Baole. It didn't seem to understand why Wang Baole was scolding it again today.

"Don't try to look innocent in front of me. You think I don't know what you're up to? Continue the bluff, and I'll make sure you can't open your mouth for a whole month!" Wang Baole glared. The donkey shuddered when it heard that. It withdrew the look of confusion and innocence hastily and tried to appease Wang Baole by nuzzling him. This was while Wang Baole was still gripping its ear tightly.

"You..." Wang Baole was about to say something when he noticed something on the donkey. Its close proximity resulted in his notice of the white fur on its body. There was quite a lot of white fur...

At a closer look, he could see white fur everywhere on the black donkey. Wang Baole sighed. He realized there was no need for further questions. It was clear that whatever had happened between the two donkeys had been extremely physical.

Wang Baole released the donkey, and exasperation rose inside him. He didn't understand how someone as amazing as he was could be stuck rearing such a perverted and filthy-minded donkey!

“Just be more careful and make sure you don’t get found out. You sick little donkey. How did I manage to get stuck taking care of you? My greatest regret is hatching you!”

“Look at other families’ donkeys. They are all born. You came from an egg... you shouldn’t be called Scram, you should be called Asshat!” Wang Baole sighed in exasperation and shrugged. The donkey had rendered him completely speechless.

The donkey watched as Wang Baole released him. It seemed to vaguely understand what Wang Baole was saying, but it didn’t seem to care. It gave Wang Baole a pleased look and returned to a corner of the room. It sprawled onto the floor and narrowed its eyes, reliving the day in its mind. Once in a while, it would grin and bob its head. It seemed like it wanted to bray loudly but didn’t dare to. It only called out a few times in a soft voice.

Wang Baole sighed again as he stared at the donkey. He decided to ignore it completely and went back to his meditation. Days passed. The donkey continued to rise early and return late, but Wang Baole couldn’t be bothered with it anymore. Besides cultivation, he also started asking around about the New Mars Region.

Five days later, one afternoon, Wang Baole had just ended his meditation. He was in the office speaking to Jin Duozhi. He had decided to get Jin Duozhi to find out more about the New Mars Region, as the youth saw him as his idol, and anything he said would be treated as gospel.

“Duozhi, you are the student I have placed the greatest hopes on, the one I care most about. I expect great things from you. I have a mission for you now...” Wang Baole coughed. Jin Duozhi was staring at him and overwhelmed with excitement. His eyes shone brightly. Wang Baole was pleased, and he prepared to go on with what he had to say.

It was then that the familiar piercing shrieks of a donkey rang out from the school field. They were louder than usual.

The donkey’s cries resounded in the air. In the distance, a furious roar boomed like thunder.

“Wang Baole, you’ve gone too far!”

The cries of the donkey and furious roars resounded throughout the entire campus. Wang Baole froze, then walked out hastily. His eyes widened as he looked out.

The black donkey was racing frantically across the field towards his office. Behind him was a furious Kong Dao. He was livid. Held under his arm was a limp white donkey. It looked weak and feeble, like it was on its last breath.

Kong Dao came charging like a mad man.

Chapter 345: An Ass for a Teammate

The donkey was naturally fast. It was faster on its feet when it was panicking and afraid. Kong Dao wasn’t to be trifled with when he was furious though. His eyes bright with rage and murder, and he charged at the donkey and looked like he was about to catch up to it.

The donkey let loose a tragic scream. Fear shone in its eyes. Everything was taking place too quickly, leaving Wang Baole no time to think. He saw Kong Dao leaping into the air, his hands forming hand seals and a sea of fire erupting from his hands. Surrounding the sea of fire was a chill that formed ice.

It wasn't a cold fire. Kong Dao's mystic technique allowed him to wield both the elements of ice and fire at the same time. They didn't clash with one another and instead augmented each other's power.

With a thundering roar, ice and fire enveloped the entire area. From afar, it looked as if a phoenix formed from flames and a dragon formed from ice had risen to the heavens. The teachers and students in the academy were all shocked to their core at the sight.

Wang Baole knew the donkey had met its match. He immediately dashed out from the office building, racing through the sky and appearing next to the donkey in the next moment.

He kicked the donkey aside, then turned. His right hand formed rapid hand seals. With a sudden wave at the approaching fire phoenix and ice dragon, bolts of lightning instantly exploded in the air. Wang Baole stood in the center of the sea of lightning surging outward and transforming thirty-odd meters around them into a pool of lightning!

Within the pool of lightning, lightning bolts sprung from the ground and dashed up towards the skies, clashing with the descending fire phoenix. There was a deafening explosion that resounded in the air. Wang Baole continued to form hand seals and summoned his Heated Burst. A sea of fire immediately blanketed the field. Kong Dao's mystic technique fused ice and fire, but Wang Baole's was different, he was the fusion of fire and lightning. Both elements came together and created an earth-shattering explosion that collided with the ice dragon.

Wang Baole and Kong Dao were standing a distance away when the force of their mystic techniques collided. The resultant explosion surged outwards and alarmed the surrounding spectators. Their breathing all quickened as they witnessed the fight.

Wang Baole turned his head abruptly, and a murderous aura erupted from his person. He stared at the rapidly approaching Kong Dao and the equally murderous aura surrounding his person.

"Kong Dao, you should check out who the master is before you give the pet a beating. Were you really going to kill my War Beast in front of me?" Wang Baole said with steel in his voice. He could tell that Kong Dao was also in the mid-stage of the Foundation Establishment realm. He knew that Kong Dao was different from the other hundred seedlings. He had been born in the Sea of Beasts and had survived in the Martian wilderness on his own when he had been at the True Breath realm. Violence was in his blood.

Kong Dao was clearly skilled in hunting and killing beasts, and in surviving in the wild, he had been the one who had discovered the location of the Martian Divine Armament. It was clear how exceptional an individual he was.

He had an equally extraordinary family background. He was the godson fostered by the Federation President Duan Muque and was the star military officer in the Martian military. Even Zhuo Yixian couldn't compete with him. Only a person like Li Wan'er could possibly stand on equal ground with Kong Dao.

Wang Baole knew all that. Even though he disliked Kong Dao, they never had any major conflicts. There was that minor dispute when they had been in the cultivation camp for the hundred seedlings, but Wang Baole thought that a small matter. Kong Dao clearly thought otherwise. His attitude towards Wang Baole had been hostile since then.

Wang Baole, on the other hand, was the sort of annoying character who would make use of any opportunity to piss off the people who found him annoying in the first place...

The resultant series of encounters led to the current hostility between both of them. It would have been fine if there hadn't been something to spark off another round of conflict. Unfortunately, their donkeys ended up in a similar tense situation...

At present, Kong Dao was furious. His eyes were cold with rage. He set his white donkey down and charged at Wang Baole. They had bullied his War Beast, and he couldn't just take that lying down. As he approached, he flung his fist out and attacked with the Supernova!

There was a sudden explosion as a tornado erupted before Wang Baole. His fist flew towards Wang Baole. Wang Baole raised his eyebrow, snorted, and stepped forward with an identical Supernova!

The fists of the two young men collided, and a loud explosion thundered in the air. Kong Dao's pupils contracted as he stumbled back a few steps. He could feel a strong backlash spreading from his fist throughout his entire body. He was taken aback momentarily.

He's grown stronger! Kong Dao's breathing grew uneven. He knew what had happened to Wang Baole on the moon. Even so, he had thought himself as powerful as Wang Baole then. At present, his eyes grew red. He growled and, as if transformed into a beast, charged towards Wang Baole again. His right hand raised in the air. With a sudden wave, it transformed into black claws!

The claws looked lethal. It was difficult to tell what they were made of. The murderous aura exuding from Kong Dao grew stronger when they appeared. His spirit energy roared and rose to the skies, and a black leopard appeared behind him!

The powerful presence of a Dharmic Armament could be sensed from the claws. The claws were... a Dharmic Armament!

Wang Baole wasn't surprised at all that Kong Dao had a Dharmic Armament. Dharmic Armaments were rare and precious, but they weren't unobtainable for people like Kong Dao and Li Wan'er.

Power exploded from Kong Dao with the reveal of his Dharmic Armament. He seemed to have merged with the black leopard behind him. With a sudden burst of speed, they charged at Wang Baole. Kong Dao sent his claws slashing at Wang Baole's neck!

You think you're the only one with a Dharmic Armament? Wang Baole snorted. His Dharmic Armament saber appeared instantly. With a low growl, he collided with Kong Dao.

Explosions kept resounding the air. The backlash from their blows surged outwards and sent the ground quaking. Everyone in the academy was shaken to their core. Everyone held their breaths as Wang Baole and Kong Dao exchanged more than a dozen blows.

Kong Dao was a powerful warrior. He had a Dharmic Armament and had displayed a sudden explosive power at first. However, his stamina, physical resilience, and strength couldn't compare to Wang Baole's, which was bolstered by his Green Lotus Foundation Establishment core. After a dozen or so blows, Wang Baole remained strong while Kong Dao was seeing a slide in his strength and stamina. Wang Baole tirelessly wielded his saber and continued to attack relentlessly. Kong Dao's breathing grew more and more uneven under the barrage of blows. His eyes shone with incredulity. He was unwilling to give up, but he could only retreat steadily under the relentless attack.

Damn it, how did this freak get his physical body to be so strong? Kong Dao hollered inwardly. He watched as Wang Baole unleashed the full power of his Dharmic Armament repeatedly and was steadily overcome by an indescribable feeling. Even though Foundation Establishment realm cultivators had the ability to unleash the full power of Dharmic Armaments, they could generally only keep it up for a dozen attacks or so.

They weren't Core Formation realm cultivators, who could unleash the power of Dharmic Armaments infinitely without rest. There was a backlash from wielding a Dharmic Armament. It was a strain on the physical body. Kong Dao himself had confidence in his own physical resilience, but even he could only wield the Dharmic Armament for a dozen or so attacks. Wang Baole had sent almost a hundred blows at him, but his pace wasn't slowing down a bit. Instead, he seemed to grow stronger with each attack.

Kong Dao had his ultimate attack though. He fell back, and his breath stilled suddenly. There was hesitation in his eyes as he deliberated over whether he should unleash his ultimate attack. It was then that he sensed something amiss. He turned his head abruptly and started looking all around. His white donkey had gone missing...

Wang Baole realized something was wrong as well. He continued wielding his saber as his eyes scanned the area. Both of their gazes soon landed a distance away at the school gates... the black donkey had the white donkey by the neck and was happily racing away...

While the two had been in fierce battle, the black donkey had snuck up and knocked the white donkey out again. It had then dragged the white donkey away...

Kong Dao almost went mad when he saw that. He howled and ignored Wang Baole, turning and racing towards the black donkey. Wang Baole had a strange look on his face, one intermingled with a sense of exasperation.

I'm here cleaning up after the trouble you've made while you seem to be enjoying yourself... this is just... what an ass!

Wang Baole simmered in frustration. He sighed as he watched Kong Dao chase after the donkeys and had half a mind to watch them go, but in the end, he stomped his feet and went after them. The black donkey seemed to realize the seriousness of the matter, and with great reluctance, it dropped the white donkey and wormed into an underground canal, making its escape.

Kong Dao was no longer in the mood to fight Wang Baole. He glared at Wang Baole, as if he was searing this grudge deep in his heart, before forcing his anger down and bringing his white donkey away.

What the hell was all that about? Wang Baole was furious as well. He stared at the direction his donkey had escaped, then smirked. He returned to his residence and waited for the donkey to come back.

Chapter 346: A New Region Confirmed!

The donkey didn't return the entire night...

Wang Baole wasn't in a rush. Even though his extended senses couldn't tell him where the donkey was, he knew that it was still alive. He trained while he waited. He was going to give it three days. If the donkey hadn't returned by then, he would issue a command and seal its mouth shut.

The donkey might have sensed the impending threat. Three days later, late in the night, the donkey snuck back. It had a pill bottle in its mouth as it ran back. As soon as it got through the door, it dropped the bottle and kicked it towards Wang Baole. It had a look on its face like it was being an obedient child trying to appease its parent.

It was of no use, though... As soon as Wang Baole opened his eyes, he grabbed the donkey and gave it a thrashing. The donkey cried out in pain. Wang Baole finally gave it one last angry kick.

"Tearing the house down just because you haven't had a beating in three days. Say, are you stupid? Don't you know there's this thing called silencing others once you're done? You stupid ass, you should learn how to clean up after yourself!"

Wang Baole glared at the donkey, like a teacher furious with his unrepentant student, and kicked it again. The donkey didn't cry out this time. There was a considering look in its eyes. The look on its face turned serious a moment later. It seemed to think what Wang Baole had said was right. It turned its head in the direction of the military base and glared with violence in its eyes and snorted a few times.

Wang Baole couldn't be bothered with the donkey. He gave it another round of verbal lashing before picking up the pill bottle and opening it. He didn't know what the pills in the bottle were, but they smelled all right. The donkey must have found it somewhere. He snorted, kept the bottle, and yelled at the donkey again.

"If you're gonna be an ass, you should at least try to be a smart ass. If you do this again, I'll cook you for dinner!"

Wang Baole shrugged. He could feel his anger dissipate. He decided to go back to his meditation. The donkey might have been screaming like a pig earlier, but it was still a beast. Its cultivation had advanced, and its physical body had grown stronger. The earlier cries had mostly been a pretense.

The donkey saw Wang Baole ignoring him and climbed to its feet sturdily. There were no signs of it being abused. It was as if it had grown used to such beatings and hadn't even felt any pain. There was a look of deliberation in its eyes though. It gazed in the direction of the military base again, as if considering the possibility of silencing its accomplice...

It was clear that while the idea seemed pretty straightforward, its execution wasn't as simple as it seemed. The donkey might be quite stupid, but it still had some self-preservation instincts. It knew that it would invite more trouble and might have to run for its life if it really executed the plan. It sighed and snorted through its nose, deciding to give up on the idea. However, it kept the idea of silencing its accomplices after doing the deed in its mind.

At that thought, the donkey snuck a glance at Wang Baole. There was an inkling of human emotion in its eyes. It was... idolization.

It truly felt that its master was an amazing person. He had taught it all these important principles, which had all turned out to be true. He had told it that it should retaliate. That's what it had done. Now, the white donkey trembled in fear whenever it saw it.

The donkey grew pleased with itself at that thought. Time passed steadily as it continued to sneak glances at its master...

Half a month passed in the blink of an eye. During this period, the donkey had become more obedient. It still left the house early in the day and returned late at night, but it seemed like it was no longer visiting the military base. Wang Baole was too busy to keep a constant eye on it anyway. He was busy refining his construction puppets. He had perfected the design. What was taking up his time now was the mass production and modifications.

He had also been keeping track of news about the New Mars Region. Through the many channels he had, he finally pieced together quite a complete picture of the situation. His excitement grew as he brainstormed over how to increase his chances of success.

He didn't bother with the donkey. It ran wild, seeking its own food and saving Wang Baole from having to buy too many snacks.

The news about the plans to create a New Mars Region slowly spread within a select circle these two weeks. The various political forces in the Federation soon began to place great importance on the initiative. They started to compete with one another. Everything was eventually finalized. The Martian government soon issued an announcement!

There was going to be a new city zone built on Mars!

The new city zone would be built in a designated location in the wilderness. It would be larger than any of the city zones in the current Martian Colony City. The initial plans showed that the size of this new city zone would be one-tenth of the current city!

It was clearly a big-scale initiative. A new city zone would naturally need its own branch of administration that followed the Federation structure, and the person in charge of running the new city zone would be designated a Primary Rank Four Noble!

Regardless of who became the person running the new city zone, his office would be promoted to a Primary Rank Four Noble!

A Primary Rank Four Noble was the level grand elders of the various Pavilions in the four Dao Colleges possessed. Most at that level would be Core Formation realm cultivators. There were those who were at the Foundation Establishment realm, but they were few. Every one of them had immense political clout.

Based on the normal rate of career progression, Wang Baole knew that he would require some time before he could rise from a Secondary Rank Four Noble to a Primary Rank Four Noble. That was even if he made significant contributions. His cultivation would have to be at a certain level as well.

However... the creation of a new city zone presented a great opportunity. As long as he could be recommended to the job, he would shoot through the ranks. He not only would rise to become a Primary Rank Four Noble, but he would also control an entire city zone. Thinking about the extent of power he would possess at that point excited him, and his eyes shone with anticipation.

He had dug out quite a bit of information from various channels during this period of time. He had pieced together quite a clear understanding of what the new city zone meant in the grand scheme of things and knew that it was key in the continual excavation of the Divine Armament. The person who controlled the new city zone would have a great advantage in the future excavations for the Divine Armament!

None of the political forces would be able to resist such temptation. They fought viciously in private and eyed the prize with hungry eyes. Wang Baole might not see the fight going on, but he could imagine it in his mind.

After all... this would be the second Divine Armament to appear in the Federation. No political force would give up the chance to possess it. It would be hard for the Federation to monopolize the Divine Armament as well. If it didn't handle the matter properly, it might spark a fierce fight. That was why the plan for a new city zone had been concocted. On the one hand, it served the needs for further Martian colonization. On the other... it gave the various political forces in the Federation a chance to pit themselves against one another in a setting with enforced rules and regulations!

The announcement had provided the rules for selection, to decide who would be the mayor of the new city zone.

Ten candidates would be selected out of countless qualified applicants, and there would be an assessment trial to determine the winner.

To ensure fairness, the assessment would be broadcast in real-time across the entire Federation. Everyone would be able to witness the trial, and its location would be the wild plains where the new Divine Armament Zone was to be built.

Ten zones surrounding the Divine Armament Catacombs had been demarcated. Every candidate could bring along ten thousand people. These servants' cultivation must not surpass the candidate's. They would set up camp in their zone and build a simplified model of a city based on their own proposals and blueprints. They would then be assessed through real battle!

When the party of strong warriors from the Federation had investigated the catacombs where the Martian Divine Armament lay then, they had found many creatures that had mutated due to the power of the Divine Armament.

Due to certain unique reasons, they couldn't immediately excavate the Divine Armament and could only seal the catacombs. During this trial, the seal would be partially removed so that some of the creatures inside could escape.

The trial was to withstand and defend against the Beast Tide from the Divine Armament Catacombs. The candidate with the last city model that remained standing after the Beast Tides would emerge victorious and become the mayor of the New Mars Region.

The basis for the trial was to ensure that the newly selected mayor was the most suitable person qualified to build the new city zone as well as take charge of the future excavations for the Divine Armament. He or she must be skilled in the planning of the city zone and its defense.

The first round of selection was to select ten candidates. Every applicant would have to submit a proposal detailing how he or she planned to build the city zone. They would have to describe and draw their plans out. The proposal would be judged by the Governor and a few others, and the panel would single out the ten best proposals. The designers would be the ten finalists.

It was an assessment that judged one on both theory and practice. It seemed like a fair assessment, but it also presented opportunities for unfairness. Every candidate had their own political forces backing them, and everyone had at least ten thousand helpers. The political forces backing them would pour in all their resources to support their candidates.

This was, however, the best that they could do. Everyone was, after all, eyeing the Divine Armament hungrily. The condition to allow ten thousand servants to assist the candidate was something the various political forces had all agreed on.

This was a good outcome for the Martian Colony Governor. These external political forces were contributing to the expansion of the Martian Colony.

She knew that the competition would be intense. Regardless, the Divine Armament was on Mars. She was the Governor of this planet. No matter who won in the end, they would have to abide by her rules and show her a bit of respect.

She had no preferences over whom the new mayor would affiliate himself or herself to. She only had one condition, and that was... the applicant must be stationed on Mars prior to application.

Many cultivators, including Wang Baole, in the Martian Colony City, were roused when they heard about that singular requirement.

Chapter 347: Self-Reliant Wang Baole

I knew it! A Primary Rank Four Noble! Wang Baole started pacing in his office excitedly after he read the announcement. His eyes were shining with a bright greedy light, and his heart started racing. He wanted this new appointment in the New Mars Region so much.

He even remembered what the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College had said. To become a grand elder of a Dao College's Pavilion and a Primary Rank Four Noble, one needed to have Core Formation realm cultivation and sufficient experience. Time was also required for that to happen. All three conditions had to be met.

He had also been indirectly involved when Chen Yutong's teacher had fought from being a normal elder to become a grand elder. That took almost six months before he had finally acquired his promotion. He had fought and won against other competitors during the process.

That had been a challenge. A Pavilion's grand elder and the mayor of the New Mars Region might be both Primary Rank Four Nobles... but the extent of power they wielded was drastically different.

Wang Baole was overwhelmed with excitement at that thought. He studied the various ways to become a potential candidate carefully again. Then, he thought hard.

The selection criteria for becoming a candidate is obviously based on theory. If the theory passes the mark, the candidate will have to implement it and put it to the test in the Divine Armament Zone. This will be broadcasted live across the entire planet...

This means that baseless grand plans won't work. Even if one got through and became a candidate, if their theory can't be put into practice, they won't be able to rise to become the new city zone's mayor... what kind of proposal should I submit... Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. He thought for a long while. Then, his eyes flashed. A bold idea popped into his head!

Since we're going to implement this... why don't I use my Eternal Fortress blueprints, which I've worked so long on... as the proposal? Wang Baole's breath quickened at that thought. He had decided to build his own stronghold after he had seen and grown envious of Jin Duoming's stronghold. It took a great deal of his time and energy. He had even prepared quite a sizeable army of construction puppets.

This had been a hobby that had been a result of his own materialistic desires and his proficiency in refining. Now... as he read the announcement and went through the requirements, Wang Baole suddenly felt that nothing could beat submitting his own stronghold for the proposal.

I'm going to build something gigantic, that is both a stronghold and a city! Wang Baole's heartbeat started racing, and his eyes sparkled. He never thought there was a chance his stronghold would come to be of use when he had designed it. This was an unintentional boon. He couldn't help his excitement. This felt like predestination. It was as if he was fated to win this.

Seems like everything's been written in the stars. It's fated that, I, Wang Baole, will rise and leave an everlasting mark on Mars! Wang Baole burst out into laughter. He quickly pulled out the blueprints of his stronghold and made some modifications. He made up his mind; he was going to become the new mayor of the new city zone.

As Wang Baole went about his preparations, Kong Dao, Zhuo Yixian, Li Yi and the rest were also making their own preparations. They were all tempted by the newly created post for the New Mars Region and the important role it would play in the future. The political forces supporting them had also done their homework and were excited about their representatives becoming a candidate and potentially emerging as the new city zone's mayor.

This was true of the dominant political forces in the Federation as well. Even the Galactic Dusk Sect, which had been punished during the Mystic Luna Realm incident, decided to join in the fight. It had already started preparing so that it might emerge victorious this time.

The various political parties began their politicking and infighting. News of a New Mars Region incited heated debates throughout the entire Martian Colony City. There were discussions carried out on earth as well. Countless media agencies began reporting fervently on this news unanimously, as if they had received some message from the powers that be.

Time passed steadily as the debates grew more heated. Both the residents of Earth and Mars were following the news with great interest. As public attention on this matter reached a climax, the various political forces also completed their preparations. They had received the news earlier than the public

and had utilized the entire establishment's resources. The structure and theory the proposal would be based on should be fairly sound, without any major flaws. Everyone had their own strengths and weaknesses when it came to their proposals.

Wang Baole had also modified and perfected his proposal. He checked it a few times before confidently submitting his application. He had appended his proposal alongside the application.

He couldn't sit still at all after that. He followed the discussions regarding the new city zone that were taking place on Mars closely. He also contacted the people he knew to find out more information on what the other political forces were doing. He couldn't control his anxiety and fear over getting a candidacy.

Jin Duoming might be influential, but this really means too much to me. I don't feel safe with only his help... even if City Lord Lin has come into the picture and offered his help, it's still not a guaranteed placement... Wang Baole pondered for a moment. Then, he pulled out his voice transmission ring and contacted the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College.

As soon as the transmission connected, Wang Baole spoke hastily.

"Sect Lord, the Martian government just announced that they will be setting up a new city zone. Is it possible for you to help..." Wang Baole shared the details with the Sect Lord eagerly. The words poured out of his mouth in a rush. He revealed his desire to participate and was about to request the Sect Lord's aid. It was then that the Sect Lord's exasperated sigh drifted out from the voice transmission ring.

"Baole, don't participate in this matter..."

"What?" Wang Baole froze.

"I've known about the New Mars Region, and I've tried to fight for your candidacy. But... the four Dao Colleges have come to a decision to pool all our resources and support Li Yi to become the mayor of the New Mars Region..." The Sect Lord sounded tired.

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes when he heard that. While silent, he found it unacceptable.

"Why her?" Wang Baole finally spoke in a low voice after a moment of silence.

"Because she has the support of the Martian Colony Deputy Governor, Fellow Daoist Osmanthus. He has spoken to the Dao Colleges and promised his full support for Li Yi... with the Dao Colleges' additional backing, Li Yi's chances of success will increase to sixty or seventy percent."

"The four Dao Colleges is aiming for the mayorship of the New Mars Region... after a joint assessment, they judged Li Yi's chances of success higher than yours," the Sect Lord said slowly. He felt that the decision had been unjust and was still feeling slightly sore about it, but the other three Sect Lords had given their approval. Li Yi had found herself a strong ally as well. The four Dao Colleges might not have paid a great deal of attention to her alliance if it had been with some other political force, but this was the giant tree, the Deputy Governor of the Martian Colony!

His support was enough to persuade the four Dao Colleges to give Li Yi their full backing. The Deputy Governor had suggested that the Dao Colleges concentrated on one candidate instead of splitting their resources so as to ensure the greatest chance of success. The White Deer Dao College, where Li Yi had

been from, had agreed and made the decision to pool their resources together for a single candidate—Li Yi.

“Baole, don’t make trouble. Even though you weren’t chosen this time, I’ve fought for the position of vice mayorship for you! The new city zone will have four vice mayors.

“If Li Yi succeeds, you’ll become the New Mars Region’s vice mayor!”

Wang Baole’s face darkened with unhappiness as he listened to the Sect Lord over the voice transmission ring. He felt as if someone had dumped a bucket of ice water over his head. The resentment he was feeling was so strong he couldn’t control what he said next.

“Sect Lord, I’ve done so much for the Dao College. I bled for the Dao College, I became one of the hundred seedlings as well, I...”

“Baole!” The Sect Lord cut Wang Baole off. He sighed. His tone was gentler when he spoke again, and his low voice sounded exhausted and filled with powerlessness.

“Baole, the Ethereal Dao College is not the one helming the four Dao Colleges. The White Deer Dao College leads us now. The Ethereal Dao College only has one vote. We cannot change what has been decided. The most important thing is, the Deputy Governor of the Martian Colony has promised his full support for Li Yi!”

He comforted and consoled Wang Baole for a while longer before ending the transmission. There had been regret and apology in his voice. Wang Baole stared at his voice transmission ring as the resentment in his heart grew stronger. He glared.

What’s so great about having support? There’s nothing wrong with having no backing. As long as I become one of the candidates, who cares about Li Yi? I’ll crush her! The more Wang Baole thought about it, the more furious he became. He clutched onto his voice transmission ring as he steeped in furious thoughts. He immediately contacted General Zhou, whom he had sold his cannons to, for help.

General Zhou treated Wang Baole’s transmission seriously. The military on Earth owed Wang Baole a debt. After he understood what Wang Baole needed from him, he thought for a long while, then informed Wang Baole that while the military was unable to help him with the final trial in the Divine Armament Zone, they would be able to help him obtain a place in the list of ten candidates.

They couldn’t guarantee success. Regardless, his chances of success had improved!

Wang Baole was instantly moved, and they exchanged a few words before ending the transmission. Wang Baole placed his voice transmission ring down and sucked in a deep breath. He knew that he was born from a commoner’s family. He had no backing from any strong political figure or entity. Everything that he had now, he had earned through hard work.

How great can these people be if they have to rely on others to back them up. I’ll crush them all with my own efforts! Wang Baole snorted. He felt that he had completed all the necessary preparations. He was still not fully confident of being placed as a candidate, but at least now, he felt that he had a greater chance than before.

The days passed. Ten days later, after having gone through a few rounds of selection, the applications were narrowed down to the last twenty. Their proposals were presented before the Martian Colony Governor and Deputy Governor. They would be the ones to select the final ten candidates!

Chapter 348: All Mighty and Imposing!

Twenty proposals were delivered to the Martian Colony Governor's office. The giant tree had carved out time from his schedule and arrived in the office. He sat opposite the Governor and smiled. They chatted casually while looking through the respective jade slips.

"This proposal is quite creative. It proposes to use an array formation as an anchor to absorb the energies of the seal over the Divine Armament Catacombs and use said energy to augment its own power..." The Governor smiled after reading the proposal. She handed it over to the giant tree.

The giant tree scanned through the proposal and caught the name of the person who submitted it. It was Zhuo Yixian from the Five Generation Sky Clan. He smiled and nodded his head in approval. Then, he pointed to another jade slip and handed it over to the Governor.

"I think this is quite a good proposal as well. The city zone will be circular in shape, with three rings in the inner zone and another three in the outer zone. They are interconnected and infused with reflective powers. That'll allow smooth migration of people and serve as a protection against the Divine Armament's radiation. It's commendable for having considered the latter."

The Governor took a look after hearing that. She saw Li Yi's name on the proposal and glanced at the giant tree. She smiled slightly.

"Not bad, we'll take her."

The giant tree smiled back without saying a word. They continued to look through the proposals. They were soon done with all twenty proposals and had easily chosen nine candidates.

There were differences in opinions for the last tenth candidate.

"Governor, I think the proposal submitted by Senator Chen's son, Chen Lu, fits our requirements better. Wang Baole's proposal... isn't bad, but there are clearly elements of exaggeration in it. He calls it the Eternal Fortress. I don't believe there is a stronghold in this world that can withstand everything and stand eternal." The giant tree shook his head. He couldn't be bothered to pick on Wang Baole. Everyone already knew he disliked the young man. Instead of trying to conceal his dislike and mincing his words, he decided to express his views honestly and openly.

He found it surprising that Wang Baole's proposal had found its way into the last twenty proposals for selection. Each one of these proposals was backed and recommended by a dominant political force. That was how they had successfully made their way through the earlier rounds of selection that had eliminated countless other applicants and gotten themselves into the last round—presented before himself and the Governor.

There were many who hadn't made it into the top twenty and had been eliminated in earlier rounds. They were all applicants who came from powerful political entities. Wang Baole had succeeded when they had not. Clearly, this must have been the result of a great deal of work on his part.

So what? This Eternal Fortress seems like a good idea, but it's too wild an idea. Even if there is someone backing Wang Baole, it won't do. The giant tree sneered inwardly and looked at the Governor.

The Governor didn't speak. She held Wang Baole's proposal up and looked at it in detail. There was a deep, considering look in her eyes. She seemed to be weighing her decisions. She was deliberating. The Trilunaris Corporation and Lin You had both said good things about Wang Baole. Even the Sect Lord from the Ethereal Dao College had spoken to her a few days ago.

It was already an incredible feat getting three parties to provide varying degrees of support. She had even received a voice transmission from her partner yesterday. The military had contacted him...

This Wang Baole really has quite a few tricks up his sleeve. The Governor's eyes were cold. She wasn't opposed to such tactics. However, she herself found Wang Baole's proposal impractical. She agreed with the giant tree. She was about to place Wang Baole's proposal aside when... her voice transmission ring sounded.

The Governor lowered her head. A smile appeared on her face instantly. She rose to her feet and walked away. A shield came up around her before she started the transmission.

The giant tree sat in his seat, unmoving and expression unchanged. He had noticed the look in the Governor's eyes. He was confident that Wang Baole wouldn't be selected as one of the finalists.

This was a small matter. He didn't put too much attention on it. He picked up Li Yi's proposal and read through it carefully. He had promised the four Dao Colleges his full support and had provided some advice for the proposal. The more he read it, the more pleased he became.

The Governor soon ended her voice transmission. She returned and sat down. She deliberated for a while before finally smiling and pointing at Wang Baole's jade slip.

"Let's pick Wang Baole as the last candidate."

Surprise flashed across the giant tree's eyes when he heard that. He lifted his head and stared at the Governor. There was a considering look on his face as he recalled the earlier voice transmission. Confused and still uncertain what had happened, he nodded and agreed without giving away his thoughts.

The ten candidates were finalized. The list was announced the next day throughout Mars and was broadcast in the Federation as well. The candidates immediately became the center of attention.

Kong Dao, Li Yi, and Zhuo Yixian made up three of the ten candidates. The other six candidates came from the Galactic Dusk Sect, the Plume Manifestation Connate Sect as well as the Senate. They weren't well known. One of the requirements for candidacy was that the candidate had to be stationed on Mars. Most of these candidates were only chosen as representatives of their political institutions.

Who they were wasn't important. What was important was the political entity backing them. As for the Senate, their candidate turned out not to be Lin Tianhao. Lin Tianhao had fulfilled the requirements, but after some discussion with his father, he had decided not to go ahead with his application.

There was also a candidate from the Trilunaris Corporation, but it wasn't Jin Duoming.

As for the last candidate—it was Wang Baole!

The oblivious masses wouldn't have found it surprising that Wang Baole's name appeared in the list. His reputation and abilities were well known, and he was from the four Dao Colleges. Those qualifications were sufficient to make him a candidate.

The knowing few were surprised when they saw the list. The White Deer Dao College had contacted the Ethereal Dao College immediately when they saw the list of candidates. Their words to the latter had been stern. They were afraid of creating any misunderstanding between the Dao Colleges and the giant tree.

The Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College was furious when he received the stern message from the White Deer Dao College. He had exploded in a rage then. They ended up disagreeing violently with one another, without any resolution in the end.

Li Yi grew immensely annoyed when she saw Wang Baole's name. Mindful of her cultivation, she pushed aside her disdain and annoyance and sent a saccharine voice transmission to Wang Baole to congratulate him on his candidacy.

Wang Baole didn't bother replying to Li Yi's voice transmission. He was beyond excited when he saw that he had been selected. He quickly sent his thanks to Jin Duoming, Lin You, as well as the military. After thinking for a moment, he sent a voice transmission to the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord as well.

The Sect Lord had found out about the name list. He smiled wryly and said nothing.

After that, Wang Baole spent all his time furiously refining construction puppets.

He knew that his candidacy was only the first step. He had no advantages over the other candidates whatsoever in the final trial. It was a completely unfair fight as everyone was allowed to bring ten thousand servants!

Wang Baole had no means of doing that. He might be able to achieve it if he brought his students along, but this was not a practical solution. He had done his research. The trial had an element of danger, and the Martian Colony City wouldn't provide any protection for the servants. Only the candidate would be given a jade slip. He or she could shatter the jade slip and activate the inscriptions on it to establish a connection with the Martian City's array formation. Then, the candidate could be teleported back to the Martian Colony City.

To activate the array formation required immense resources. It was impossible to fit everyone with a jade slip. That was why only the candidate possessed the ability to teleport out. Of course, the various political forces had their own resources. They clearly would have made their own preparations and contingency plans to ensure that the servants were given the greatest degree of protection.

Wang Baole's fighting spirit remained strong in spite of everything.

It's a battle of wits... I have to be prepared. Wang Baole geared himself up and started his preparations. He even bought some wood and made a few statues...

He modified his megaphone and created an enlarged version... he did other similar preparations. When he was finally done, he could feel himself all fired up and ready to go.

Then... the day of the assessment arrived. Wang Baole rode on his donkey and arrived at the Martian port. He stared in shock at the mass of crowds around him and was stunned.

Ten large cruisers were parked in the vast port, scattered across the entire port. Every cruiser had enough space around it for ten thousand people.

Out of the ten cruisers, nine were surrounded by a crowd of people... the remaining cruiser was surrounded by a vast empty space. Wang Baole... stood alone beside it.

It was too stark a juxtaposition...

Wang Baole suddenly felt a bit short of breath. He saw Li Yi and the ten-thousand strong army of cultivators behind her. The weakest one amongst them was at the peak of the Ancient Martial realm. There were quite a few at the True Breath realm and even a number of Foundation Establishment realm cultivators—more than a hundred of them. Many were from the Ethereal Dao College... they had noticed Wang Baole. The looks on their faces were unnatural. They seemed slightly sheepish.

Wang Baole didn't notice their guilty looks. He was reeling from the strong presence of Li Yi and her army of cultivators. The fighting spirit in his heart wilted as he sucked in a breath... he took a look at Kong Dao, Zhuo Yixian, and the other candidates. Everyone had an army of ten thousand people behind them.

The nine candidates formed nine armies in the wide sky port. Their fierce presence would rouse the spirits of everyone who saw them.

The idea of a ten-thousand strong army, and the reality when one actually saw it, were two vastly different things. Wang Baole distinctly felt that difference. He hadn't realized it earlier, but now, his eyes stared widely. The look on his face had transformed. He stared at the nine troops and looked back at himself, where he stood, and the wide empty space around him. He lowered his head and saw the donkey huddling between his legs, obviously terrified. He couldn't help the rising fear in his heart.

His entrance had drawn the attention of the other parties. It was... impossible not to notice him. The others had all made their grand entrances. Their people crowded around them. Only Wang Baole stood in his wide empty lot... alone with his donkey.

The vast emptiness inspired a certain special tragic loneliness... everyone, be it Li Yi, Kong Dao, or the other candidates, all had a strange look on their faces. A few even started laughing openly.

"So what! One of me can take all of them. Right, Scram? Come, tell me, what do you call them?" Wang Baole shoved down his feelings of inadequacy, gritted his teeth, and patted the donkey on the head.

The donkey forced itself to stop trembling. After Wang Baole patted it on the head, it let loose a loud shrieking bray into the air.

"Son! Son!"

Wang Baole suddenly felt the atmosphere change as it brayed.

Chapter 349: A Donkey for Starters

The candidates and their servants had either strange or mocking expressions on their faces when they looked at Wang Baole. The Martian Colony Governor and Deputy Governor, as well as many of the Martian administration, were at the command center. They saw the scene and blinked. Some pretended they hadn't seen it, while others shook their heads and smiled wryly.

They didn't have high hopes for Wang Baole. This had nothing to do with Wang Baole himself. The trial might not be fixed, but it was a battlefield for the various political forces. Every one of them had poured in a lot of their resources and expended a lot of energy into their preparations. The servants and servants they had prepared for their candidate were armed with a comprehensive range of skills.

They had brought along Combat cultivators, Array Formation cultivators, and Dharmic Armament cultivators. They had everything prepared so that they could overcome whatever obstacle they came across.

They had come to understand what had happened to Wang Baole. The other political entities had also dug up what had happened. They knew that Wang Baole had made the decision to go against the arrangements of the four Dao Colleges. He had unilaterally applied for candidacy.

Everyone had the same assessment regarding his decision. Wang Baole had no one supporting him. Even if he had been chosen as a candidate, what awaited him was a tragic failure.

There was no need to compare oneself with him. He was but one man. His resources were paltry compared to the other candidates.

The main objective of this trial was to set up a line of defense in the short span of time available before the Beast Tide descended upon them. As they held the Beast Tide back, they had to fight against time and construct the base for the new city zone so that they could defend against stronger waves of Beast Tides and remain standing at the end.

Wang Baole was a one-man party with no resources. He was going to shatter his jade slip and teleport out after making a brief appearance in the entire trial. He was going to be eliminated from the selection...

"He's still young. This is a fight between the various political forces. It's not possible for a lone candidate with no support to win."

"There's no chance. This Wang Baole is being quite foolish here. This is a farce."

"That's right. I heard the White Deer Dao College was furious. The college actually openly criticized the Ethereal Dao College..."

While everyone was sighing in the command center, the giant tree remained expressionless. He had a faint sneer on his lips as he stared at the distant figure of Wang Baole. In his opinion, Wang Baole had overestimated himself this time.

Does he think this is the Mystic Luna Realm?

They were either deep in discussion or shaking their heads. The Governor couldn't bear to see this continue, so she issued a command.

"Get the cruisers to take off. The trial will commence as soon as the cruisers reach the Divine Armament zone!"

All ten cruisers in the port immediately roared to life as soon as the Governor issued her orders. They were ready to take off anytime. Li Yi and the other candidates received the notification and immediately raced for their cruisers.

As Li Yi boarded her cruiser, she gave Wang Baole a sweet smile. Then, she entered her cruiser. In the privacy of the cruiser, with no one else but her around, condescension and disdain shone clearly in her eyes.

"That pig!" She cursed. Li Yi was extremely pleased at the moment. She imagined that once she became the new zone's mayor, she might not have to continue with the Heartless Willow Art. After all, her status would be changed then. She could no longer stand to flirt with Wang Baole. She not only found that disgusting but shameful as well.

While Li Yi was deep in thought, Zhuo Yixian had boarded his own cruiser as well. He had a sneer on his face the entire time. He didn't hide the hostility in his eyes as he stared at Wang Baole. His thoughts were similar to Li Yi's. He was scornful and proud.

You're only one of many graduates from the four Dao Colleges. Without their support, you're just trash!

Kong Dao didn't display his disdain and enmity as openly. However, he had never held any friendly feelings towards Wang Baole. His views of him had worsened because of what had happened to his white donkey. He gave Wang Baole an icy stare then ignored him entirely.

The other candidates did the same. Some didn't hide their mockery as they shook their heads and laughed at Wang Baole. They looked at him as if he were a clown. They didn't pay him any further attention and boarded their own cruisers.

Wang Baole didn't see some of these looks directed at him. The others, he caught clearly. They made him angrier.

So what if you have status and your family backing you? I'm my own backing! Wang Baole shoved his annoyance down. He clenched his teeth and headed for his cruiser. He and his donkey boarded the cruiser that could seat ten thousand people. He stared at the wide space before him and thought it felt great. At least he had space...

The ten cruisers lifted off and dashed away at full speed. They sped across the Martian wilderness, reaching their destination in six hours.

Wang Baole's excitement grew as they approached. This was the first time he had been so far away from the colony city. The travel had taken such a long time. Their progress was slow because there was strong, disruptive radiation surrounding the periphery of the Divine Armament zone. It was like an electromagnetic force that dragged the cruisers down. They had no choice but to slow down.

There were loud collisions heard outside the cruiser. The ten-thousand seat cruiser rocked turbulently as it flew. However, if one were to take a look outside, one would see clear skies and nothing else. Wang Baole was shocked by the sight.

As the cruiser flew ahead, the ground slowly turned from snowy white plains to lands with exposed patches of red earth. The nearer they got to their destination, the more startling and exposed the red earth was.

The entire land looked like it was drenched in fresh blood. It was a disturbing sight to everyone who was seeing it for the first time.

Another hour passed. The ten cruisers finally made their way steadily across the blood-red lands. Mountain ranges began to appear before the passengers' eyes. Their breathing grew uneven. Finally... they reached their destination...

The Divine Armament Zone!

This was the center, the belly of the Martian planet. It stood far away from the Martian Colony City, and mountains covered the lands. The catacombs in which the Divine Armament was hidden was amongst the mountains... There was a vast plain amidst the towering peaks. From afar, it looked like a valley.

This plain was where the New Mars Region was going to be built. There was a gigantic catacombs in the middle of the plain, and a colorless, glowing seal blanketed the hole. It ensured that everything in the catacombs stayed inside. One could see numerous gruesome-looking beasts headbutting the seal.

The seal shone every time anything collided into it. Its blinding light colored the skies.

One could hear the faint, frustrated growls of beasts ringing out from inside the sealed catacombs. They resounded in the air. The ten cruisers approached steadily. Everyone on board immediately saw the ten zones spread out around the catacombs on land.

The ten zones bordered one another, and there was a clear boundary between each zone. Inside each zone was a vast land empty of buildings, though some areas were blanketed in strange plant life.

The cruisers soon landed. As soon as the engines were killed, Li Yi and the other candidates leaped off their cruisers. They led their servants and rushed for the various zones. They seemed to have spoken to one another earlier and had claimed a zone for themselves. Everyone made their way forward in an orderly manner.

It took but a few moments before everyone found the zones they had decided upon earlier. There wasn't a moment's delay as they issued commands swiftly. Their servants immediately pulled out countless resources from their storage bracelets... and started construction rapidly!

This was what Wang Baole saw when he got out of his cruiser. In nine of the ten zones, servants bustled around, pulling out various building materials and ingredients. Even though Wang Baole had mentally prepared himself for this, he couldn't help salivating at the sight.

"They're so rich!" He muttered, then sighed. He saw the last abandoned zone that no one seemed to care for. It was covered in dead weeds and rotting trees. It seemed more barren than a desert...

Unwilling to call it quits, Wang Baole rushed forward and decided to start with weed removal first. After the first few yanks, he found out that the weeds were really sturdy. It would have been fine if he had more people with him, but if he was the only one doing this, it would take a long time before he could clear such a large area of all its grass.

That's too much. They didn't even discuss with me before leaving me the worst piece of land! Wang Baole felt aggrieved. He had half a mind to pull out his construction puppets, but it wasn't the time to reveal them yet. He turned towards the donkey.

"Asshat, eat!" Wang Baole coughed.

The donkey took one bite and almost threw up. Before it could do that, it saw the hostile look Wang Baole was giving it, and it cowered instead. It stared sorrowfully at the other crowded and bustling zones before lowering its head in resignation and continuing its nibbling...

The ten cruisers rose steadily into the air. They hovered in mid-air and started filming from various different angles. At the same time... the live streaming across the entire Federation started!

Instantly, hundreds of thousands of families across the Federation got a look at the Divine Armament Zone through the spirit screens belonging to various media companies. They saw Li Yi and the others busy with construction in the nine zones. Naturally, they also saw... Wang Baole, alone, with his hands behind his back, kicking the donkey scornfully as it nibbled grass slowly...

His lonesome figure immediately and forcefully captured the attention of countless stunned viewers...

Chapter 350: The First Beast Tide

"What's going on? Is that fatty... Wang Baole?"

"Is this what a legendary hero looks like? He must be it. There's no other way to explain why he's alone while others have a ten-thousand man setup!"

"And that donkey. I remember a legend that begins with a donkey..."

Every viewer in the Federation was shocked. The difference in resources in this trial was simply too striking. Compared to the bustling zones crowded with countless people, Wang Baole had only himself and a donkey. He immediately caught everyone's attention. Commotion spread across every city.

Many from the four Dao Colleges were also following the live stream. They were all stunned when they saw the scene. Those from the White Deer Dao College immediately showed their disdain. A few even started to joke mockingly.

"Pandering to the masses! He doesn't know his own limits!"

The reactions of those in the Ethereal Dao College were completely different from those in the White Deer Dao College. Liu Daobin and the others had been stunned when they saw the sight of Wang Baole and his donkey, but Liu Daobin had reacted swiftly. He eyed the silent crowd and immediately cheered.

“That’s what I call the greatest senior brother our Ethereal Dao College has ever seen! Did you guys see that? The fearless attitude. As if proclaiming that he alone can take on ten thousand others!” Liu Daobin tried his best to pull together some semblance of speech and spoke loudly. As soon as his words rang out, many in the crowd immediately responded positively. They looked at Liu Daobin with respect in their eyes. It was quite a feat he had achieved, stringing together such a pretty speech.

The Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College was watching the live streaming as well. He smacked his forehead. He was speechless. At the same time, his heart ached for Wang Baole, but he could only sigh.

Zhuo Yifan and Zhao Yameng were watching the live stream at different locations too. There was exasperation on their faces, but no hint of surprise or shock. They were already used to Wang Baole’s antics.

The residents of Earth and Mars were in an uproar. All the teachers and students in the Dao Mountain Mist Academy were tuning in. Jin Duozhi’s voice was the loudest, but compared to Liu Daobin, what he said sounded slightly less polished. He had focused on the heroic figure that Wang Baole was displaying.

Wang Baole had stolen the limelight and drawn all eyes to him, but he was oblivious to it all. He wasn’t even thinking about how the people watching the live stream might feel. He himself was simmering in frustration. He was extremely unhappy with the speed the donkey was eating the grass.

He observed the two zones sandwiching his. One belonged to Zhuo Yixian, another to a candidate from the Martian military. The latter was shameless. Each one of his servants was equipped with ten Baole Cannons. When the hundred thousand Baole Cannons lined up together, they created a majestic sight.

That wasn’t the end of it. Zhuo Yixian was even more infuriating. In a short span of time, his servants had gone to work like madmen and built a towering city wall...

The wall was made of metal and black in color. His ten thousand servants carried out numerous Fire God Cannons, as well as other large Dharma artifacts as the construction progressed. It was clear that his city model was going to possess considerable offensive and defensive capabilities.

This was only the basic framework. The other candidates had done something similar as well. The most impressive model was not from Zhuo Yixian or the candidate from the Martian military... but Li Yi!

Li Yi had gotten her ten thousand servants to set up an array formation. From afar, lines of light crisscrossed one another where she stood, forming a gigantic disk that gave off an immense, powerful Spirit Qi. Its glowing seemed to resonate with that of the seal over the Divine Armament Catacombs.

That was truly an incredible feat!

Luckily, I was prepared before I came here... Wang Baole cheered for and consoled himself. He tried to ignore the elaborate construction taking place in the nine zones around him, but he couldn’t help sneaking a few glances at them. He saw how the basic structure of their city models steadily formed under the help of their respective ten thousand helpers and couldn’t control his emotions.

His eyes felt watery, and his heart ached with bitterness at the sight. He turned and saw the donkey slacking. Furious at its unrepentant attitude, he kicked it.

“Quick, get to work!”

The donkey turned and gave Wang Baole a sad look, as if it had been abused without cause. It continued to nibble listlessly at the grass...

Time passed steadily. An hour went by. The entire Federation watched in real-time as Li Yi and the other eight candidates continued their work in their respective zones. Their work had shown some results, and it was clear that what they had built was capable of holding up against the Beast Tide. They had numbers on their side. Everyone knew there was no time to waste and spared no time as they worked frantically.

Sounds of explosions and clashing rang in the air as the zones bustled with activity. The city structures in the zones looked sturdy and impressive. In Wang Baole's zone, there remained him alone and a donkey.

The donkey kept trying to steal breaks to the point of staging a revolt in the end. Despite multiple kicks from Wang Baole, it stopped working. Instead, it sprawled on the ground and snorted. It wouldn't get back up to its feet and instead started rolling around in the grass...

The residents of the Federation watched with strange looks on their faces. Wang Baole sighed. He stared at the vast expanse of his zone and its barren land. Then, he walked over to a spot he had found earlier. The ground there was slightly softer.

The patch of land had been covered in weeds. The donkey might be lazy, but it had started its weed extermination on that patch of land. That was why it was relatively clean of grass.

After taking a few steps, Wang Baole sighed again. He patted his storage bracelet and, under the stunned gazes of the viewers watching from outside the Divine Armament Zone, pulled out a small chair...

He placed the chair on the ground and sat on it. Then, as if bored, he pulled out a bag of chicken wings from his storage bracelet and started eating...

A distance away, the donkey's eyes started sparkling. It dashed over and crouched before Wang Baole. It stared unblinkingly at the wings and began to drool. It started fawning, and its tail began to wag furiously.

"Are you a dog or a donkey? Where did you learn such a stupid habit? Wagging your tail! You're an embarrassment..." Wang Baole glared. Then, sparing a thought for the donkey's feelings, he reluctantly flung the chicken bones of the wings he had left over.

The donkey didn't seem to mind at all. With a loud crunch, it bit into the bones and swallowed them. Then, it continued to wag its tail...

The entire thing was caught on the live stream by everyone in the Federation. They had been paying attention to Wang Baole. They didn't know whether to laugh or cry when they saw him sitting down and snacking.

"What sort of courage must one have... to even be able to eat at this critical time? No wonder he's so fat!"

“This Wang Baole is a bit too much. The donkey is so adorable and even helped him with his work, but he only threw bones at it? The fatty even checked if there was any meat left before giving the bones to the donkey!”

“My heart weeps for the donkey!”

Countless gasps of shocked resounded in the homes across the Federation. The Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College placed his palm over his forehead, utterly speechless. Liu Daobin was stunned as well. He racked his brains, then smacked his thigh suddenly.

“This is the face of a man fearless before death and danger! Everyone else is nervous and afraid, but our great senior Wang Baole remains composed. You may think he’s eating, but in truth, he is showing the world that he’s calm and untroubled by the challenges he is faced with. He has been gifted with wisdom. He has a plan!”

The students heard what Liu Daobin had said, and their admiration and respect grew. Not for Wang Baole, but for Liu Daobin...

Liu Daobin felt he had reacted quite quickly as well and felt pleased with himself. Then, while no one else was looking, he quickly turned on his voice transmission ring and whispered into it.

“Say no more, I owe Wang Baole a great debt. Even if the odds on Li Yi are three to one and his are a thousand to one, I’m still going to bet ten Spirit Stones on Wang Baole! Help me place a thousand Spirit Stones on Li Yi too!”

Due to the scale of the New Mars Region trial and the attention it was generating, many important figures who rarely made public appearances in the Federation had emerged and set up temporary gambling dens for the event. News of this had spread throughout the Federation. Both commonfolk and cultivators were allowed to participate.

The odds for Wang Baole was a thousand to one while Li Yi’s was three to one. As the trial progressed, more and more bets were placed. Compared to Wang Baole, the most popular betting choice was Li Yi!

Time passed steadily. Wang Baole and his donkey had eaten ten bags of chicken wings. It was then that a deafening thunder erupted from within the sealed Divine Armament Catacombs that sat in the middle of the ten candidates’ respective zones.

It was deafening like thunder. As it resonated in the air, a somber expression appeared on the faces of Li Yi and the other candidates. They barked out orders, and a portion of their people separated from the rest and prepared for battle.

They all knew that the real trial had just begun!

Wang Baole lifted his head and glanced over as well. At that precise moment, the seal over the Divine Armament Catacombs... thinned considerably. Openings appeared in the seal...

Instantly... the howlings and roars of beasts erupted from the catacombs. Gruesome-looking beasts, seemingly in the state of partial decomposition, crawled out of the catacombs through the openings. Madness and violence colored their eyes. They surged out swiftly like violent waves!