Worth 431

Chapter 431: Beware, the Donkey Lurks!

Previously, Wang Baole was further away from the area and was busy with resealing the array formation, causing him to be late. However, he was extremely anxious, and therefore rode the cruiser at his highest speed. In addition, the moment he neared, he unleashed all of his physical speed.

Leveraging on the speed of his cruiser, as well as his physical speed, he was so fast that he created an afterimage of himself, resulting in an earth-shattering loud boom. The integration of his energy with his saber made the black crocodile ever clearer in the hurricane. Right now, with the loud boom reverberating, he crossed the crowd of people who had been forced to retreat and instantly neared the python.

The python's ear-piercing roar had an effect on others, but Wang Baole could resist the Dark Art within the roar since he had the Dark Fire. However, other than the Dark Art, the python's roar was also boosted by its own cultivation. Therefore, even Wang Baole felt like his body was going to get torn apart when he closed in on the python.

At that moment, the function of the green lotus in his body was completely revealed. Wang Baole's body showed signs of recovery that occurred at an astounding speed. The moment the tears appeared, they were instantly healed, such that Wang Baole could narrowly ensure that his body remained undamaged. However, the entire process was extremely painful. Despite that, right now, Wang Baole had no time to bother about issues like that. He roared loudly, and as everyone was gripped with surprise, he slashed directly at the already injured skull of the python with his saber!

The heavens and earth turned dark as the clouds churned in the wind. The slash of the saber, which Wang Baole had put all his force in, landed on the previous skull injury on the python's head. Looking from afar, one could see a black crocodile biting hard on the injury on the python's head, as if it wanted to tear it out!

If it were real flesh and blood, the python would definitely be screaming in pain. However, it was just a puppet that could only instinctively sense it and not feel real pain. Right now, sensing crisis and having its head attacked once again, a look of madness that represented that of Chen Mu was revealed in its eyes.

"Wang Baole, die!" Chen Mu screamed in his secret seclusion chamber. The python he was controlling roared loudly, and its injured tail swept forcefully towards Wang Baole as if it wanted to kill him despite having suffered from a serious injury!

Everything happened so quickly, in the blink of an eye. Seeing the python's tail fast approaching, a cold look instantly revealed itself in Wang Baole's eyes, and he immediately uttered a word.

"Suppress!"

The moment he said that word, the array formation of the new city was activated despite being damaged. It harnessed an astonishing force that seemed to be able to suppress and imprison the python as it landed on the python's body!

In reality, had the city's array formation not been damaged, or had it not had to withstand the decay of the blood-colored fog or the python's attacks, any segment of it would be sufficient to allow the activated array formation to solve the current crisis facing the city.

However, as problems showed up consecutively in the three segments, the array formation could only forcefully be activated. Furthermore, Wang Baole couldn't overstretch its limits. Once the array formation was destroyed, and the blood-colored fog entered, the consequences would be too much to bear.

Therefore, he was merely using it as a boost to form the suppressive force. The python, with its tail fast approaching, trembled. Making use of this momentary pause, Wang Baole sighed softly. Bearing with the pain in his heart, a look of determination appeared in his eyes. He let go of the Dharmic Armament and moved back, roaring loudly.

"Explode!"

The moment Wang Baole said that, the Dharmic Armament saber that was lodged in the python's head began to emit a shocking amount of heat. The inscriptions on it instantly became messy, and a sign of destruction spread from within. In the blink of an eye, a frighteningly loud boom reverberated, and the Dharmic Armament broke into pieces—completely destroyed!

The destructive force within it was like a hurricane sweeping towards the python. The fragments from the Dharmic Armament were shooting in all directions at high speed, with almost all of them piercing the python's head, causing its body to look as if it was about to break into pieces instantly. At the same time, large amounts of Blood Qi spewed out of its body like fresh blood.

Looking from afar, one could see that the black crocodile seemed to be exhibiting its final glory. The instant the Dharmic Armament self-exploded, it could be seen clearly. It was as if it was resurrected as it expanded without limits, swallowing the python whole. In that instant, the fog churned, and outsiders couldn't see the interior clearly. Instead, they only vaguely saw the python and the crocodile gnawing on each other crazily!

The moment when the swallowing and blurriness occurred, a sound that was far louder than before reverberated once again, shaking the entire area. It caused the sky to turn dark and the clouds to churn, and an immensely strong force of impact spread in all directions.

Thankfully, Wang Baole was the one who detonated the Dharmic Armament. That, coupled with the fact that he was physically strong and could dodge the impact in time while activating the guarding power of the array formation, he managed to escape from the impact. However, he was still affected, and fresh blood spewed out of his mouth as he retreated, beaten.

The moment he retreated, which was also the moment the Dharmic Armament self-exploded, the loud bangs reverberated endlessly. Cracking sounds were finally heard from the python's body, but before everyone could heave a sigh of relief, the python roared while being shrouded in the fog produced from the self-exploded Dharmic Armament!

The roar spread in all directions and was unlike one produced by a beast. Instead, it was more like a shrill scream produced by a maniac. As it reverberated, the severely injured python released more

blood-colored fog. The fog didn't spread. Instead, it formed a giant illusory python head which swallowed the black crocodile's body!

Everything happened so suddenly that everyone was taken aback. The series of attacks that happened previously were already beyond their imagination, as they were like a deck of trump cards being thrown out. Furthermore, Wang Baole also sacrificed and detonated his Dharmic Armament. Despite that, the python still managed to turn the situation around.

The huge difference in cultivation levels between the two sides couldn't be bridged by sheer numbers. As everyone reeled in shock, copious amounts of Blood Qi spread from within the python's body after it devoured the crocodile. The Blood Qi carried a strong sense of ferocity, and the python's eyes were red with rage. It dashed out of the fog, with its target being… Wang Baole!

It didn't produce any sound, but anyone who saw the python seemed to be able to sense that an astonishingly strong intention to kill was emanating from the python's body!

It was so fast that even Wang Baole, who was also speedy and had begun retreating even before the python approached, was easily caught up to by the python. At the same time, the movements in its cultivation occurred on a large scale. Looking from a distance, it seemed to have transformed into a blood-colored sun, burning everything in its path!

Wang Baole's mind buzzed noisily, and his breathing quickened. However, he didn't have the time to make too many considerations. He was too focused on the python, which was fast approaching and growing larger in his eyes by the second!

A strong sense of life and death made him instinctively control the array formation in an attempt to block it. Furthermore, even though the new city hadn't been completely transformed, he still subconsciously ordered it to activate the Eternal Fortress!

The signs of resistance couldn't be seen by outsiders. In their eyes, Wang Baole, who was targeted by the python, had no chance of survival. Be it Jin Duoming, Kong Dao, Lin Tianhao, or the surrounding Core Formation realm cultivators, no one had the ability to assist and save him…

It was as if this time, Wang Baole would die without a doubt!

Therefore, the black-robed man, who was originally watching everything from afar, chose to go near. He appeared on the top floor of a nearby building, watching the events that led to Wang Baole's death unfold. A smile was finally seen on his face, which was covered by his robe.

At the same time, a bizarre and greedy look shone in his eyes, and a chilly aura was given off by his body. The reason he chose to go near upon realizing Wang Baole's impending death was because he wanted to see if there was a chance that he could absorb the Dark Fire within Wang Baole's body the moment he died!

The black-robed man understood well that the Dark Fire was the symbol of the Dark Child, and was also the mark of their eligibility. This eligibility couldn't be transferred, but at the death of a Dark Child, there was still a chance that one could absorb the Dark Fire for themselves.

Once I succeed… A strong desire was revealed in the black-robed man's eyes. Unconsciously, he inched nearer. But the moment he neared while looking at the battleground, a sudden change that he had never imagined and never thought about occurred!

It wasn't a show of resistance by the array formation, nor was it the activation of the Eternal Fortress. Instead, the moment these two events were about to happen, the python, which was charging at Wang Baole with a strong intention to kill and intense ferocity, suddenly stopped a hundred feet from Wang Baole. Its gigantic head suddenly turned, looking in the direction of the black-robed man that no one could see!

The moment it turned to look, it extended its tongue and licked its lips. Its lifeless eyes suddenly showed signs of struggling, as if some sort of instinct was being awakened!.

Chapter 432: The Donkey Wins All!

Everything was happening too quickly. Wang Baole had been prepared to fight with his life. He had been prepared to use his last resort and transform the entire city into the Eternal Fortress in order to hold the giant python back.

To do so required time. The new city was too big. Its transformation needed to be carried out in steps. After transforming into the Eternal Fortress, its power would increase tremendously. However, the transformation would also inflict great damage to the city.

There was no time at present for him to do that. Once he activated the process, the entire new city would be destroyed. This was better than being a sitting duck, though. Wang Baole had made up his mind to fight with all that he had!

However… he hadn't yet realized his plan before the giant python's strange behavior made him pause. Especially… the way the python had stuck its tongue out and licked its lips. It seemed like a perfectly ordinary action, but somehow, Wang Baole found it extremely familiar.

He wasn't the only one who had frozen. Everyone around him had done the same. Even the black-robed man who had been standing nearby had done the same. Shock colored his eyes, and he seemed to be slightly bewildered.

As the crowd remained stunned by the giant python's strange move, the struggle in the giant python's eyes disappeared. It was replaced by a sudden bright light. It opened its mouth wide and let loose a piercing roar!

"Son!"

The sound exploded. It seemed to be able to pierce through one's eardrums. It thundered in all directions. The giant python swerved aside, no longer heading for Wang Baole but towards the distant sky which, to everyone's eyes, held nothing. It charged in that direction instead!

It was very, very fast—faster than it had been before. Its agility and speed surpassed what it had shown previously. It gave the crowd the feeling that it had been controlled by someone else previously and had now come alive!

Its astonishing speed, its sudden agility, and its roar all seemed incredible in the eyes of the black-robed man. He wasn't able to escape in time. In the blink of an eye, the giant python approached and opened its wide, gaping mouth!

Shock overcame the black-robed man. He tried to fall back hastily, but it was too late. The giant python had clamped its mouth over his body and swallowed him whole!

At that moment, inside the Divine Armament Catacombs, behind the wall, in the unknown region where the Divine Armament rested, a howl that was immensely ancient, incredibly furious, and unbelievably disbelieving rang out.

"Impossible. This is impossible!"

"Why would the puppet go out of control? Damn it. How could it see me? How could it hurt my spirit body?"

"That's wrong. Something must have gone wrong!"

Roaring and howling erupted in the deepest level of the Divine Armament Catacombs without pause. If Wang Baole had been there, he would have been able to hear them. The voice was filled with madness and disbelief. It was filled with incredulity. The true form of the black-robed man was unable to discern the reason why his clone had been devoured.

Everything had been going well. His plan had been moving along flawlessly. He had been about to reap the rewards when, at that precise moment… something unexpected had happened!

This might have been an accident. However, the black-robed man didn't know that since the first day he had entered the new city, a donkey had sensed his presence and had been tracking his scent. It had been hunting him since then…

At present, inside the new city, the giant python had just swallowed the black-robed man, which nobody had been able to see. Then, it swung its tail in mid-air and turned around abruptly. Its eyes shone with satisfaction. Then, it noticed Wang Baole. It shrunk its neck back and displayed a look of innocence in its eyes instinctively. It seemed sheepish. It seemed afraid of Wang Baole finding out that it had just eaten something incredibly delicious.

Wang Baole had long gone into a dazed stupor. The earlier braying still rang in his ears. In his bewilderment, he saw the expression on the giant python's face. The same sense of incredulity that the black-robed man had experienced flooded Wang Baole's mind.

That cry and that expression were simply too familiar to Wang Baole. He couldn't help his next words.

"Scram?"

As soon as Wang Baole said that, inside Chen Mu's place of seclusion, blue veins popped out from Chen Mu's face. He let loose a furious roar. Madness colored his eyes, and his hands formed a series of hand seals as he tried to wrestle control of the puppet back. Everything had been going well despite a few hiccups. However, he had suddenly lost control of the puppet. It was as if someone had snatched control away from him!

This drove Chen Mu mad. He couldn't simply take that lying down. He tried to fight back, but the will that had stolen the reins of the puppet was simply too strong. He couldn't regain control. Chen Mu howled again.

"My puppet! No one is allowed to take it away from me!" Howling, he pulled out the small drum that controlled the puppet. He bit the tip of his tongue and spat out a fragment of blood that contained his cultivation and his vitality onto the drum. Blood stained the little drum, causing his control over it to surge.

Chen Mu saw his action taking effect and sent caution to the winds. He spat out another three mouthfuls of blood containing his very life energy and vitality. With every mouthful of blood, wrinkles appeared on his face. When he spat out the fourth mouthful, he was no longer the young man he was but had a headful of white hair and looked fifty years old!

The effects proved great. As blood stained the small drum, on the battlefield, the giant python, which had heard Wang Baole's words and was about to respond, suddenly shuddered. The light in its eyes that belonged to the donkey dimmed. The crazed look that belonged to Chen Mu reappeared and replaced it!

The donkey didn't give up though. It seemed unwilling to be shoved aside and tried to fight back. The giant python shuddered and trembled, seeming slightly mad. Clear signs of struggle appeared in its eyes.

Through its eyes, the crowd around it could see the inner world within the giant python. There were tens of thousands of blood-colored souls within. These blood-colored souls were weaving around a donkey that was clearly many times larger than them. They appeared to be suppressing it and trying to devour it!

The donkey seemed larger and stronger, but the blood-colored souls numbered too many. The donkey gradually slid towards the losing end…

The sight alarmed the surrounding people. There was no one to explain the situation to them, but they instantly knew that someone had used some form of means to either exploit or gather those souls to form the puppet. The donkey had been one of those victims.

The mastermind behind all this had used the souls to complete his control over the puppet and to achieve the earlier destruction and massacre. That had been until the donkey had awoken and begun the fight for control.

It was clear to them all that… they had to prevent the mastermind from regaining control over the puppet. Else, with the infallibility of the puppet, they had no means of fighting back and destroying it. They would all be killed!

As these thoughts flooded their minds, Wang Baole's breathing quickened. He said quickly and without hesitation.

"Scram, if you lose this fight, you'll never get to eat anything for the rest of your life!"

As soon as Wang Baole said that, the donkey clearly shuddered. It went mad and tried to fight itself free from the blood-colored souls' stranglehold. It tried to wrestle control of the puppet back. Wang Baole saw the effect his words had and grew excited.

“Scram, give it your all! If you win, I’ll reward you with sumptuous meals for an entire month! For one entire month. You get to eat whatever you want to eat. You can eat to your heart’s content!”

This clearly provoked and excited the donkey more. The donkey, in its sudden excitement, intensified its struggling. It began to show signs of winning the battle. But Chen Mu appeared unwilling to give up. He spat out another mouthful of blood and turned the tide in his favor again.

No one could see what Chen Mu had done, but everyone could see that the donkey was being suppressed. At that moment, Kong Dao gritted his teeth. Decisiveness flashed across his eyes. He patted the beast bag on him. Instantly… White Phoenix appeared!

“Donkey, as long as you win this, from now on… from this moment on… what happens between you and White Phoenix… I… I won’t stand between the two of you anymore!”

His words were like the ultimate killer attack. The donkey’s eyes reddened, and its power erupted. It unleashed its full potential as it roared. It trampled over the blood-colored souls that were Chen Mu’s will and wiped them out. It overpowered them and once again took control over the puppet.

As soon as it took control, the small blood-colored drum before Chen Mu exploded, tearing into shreds. He suffered the backlash from the explosion as well. Chen Mu let out a pained cry. He spat out mouthfuls of blood, and his body shriveled. Only his eyes continued to shine with a fierce resentment and madness.

“No!”

He was resentful. He lost to a donkey. He was mad with regret. He shouldn’t have touched the donkey. He never expected the donkey to absorb tens of thousands of dandelions, to not only survive but become the master of the puppet!

“I can’t accept this!”

Chapter 433: An Expert!

Chen Mu’s vision turned black as he spat blood out. The backlash had been too great. His anger had surged straight to his heart. He tilted sideways and passed out.

While Chen Mu lay unconscious, on the battlefield in the new city, everyone, including Wang Baole, was staring with their eyes wide and their mouths open at the giant python. Even though they could sense that Wang Baole’s donkey had taken control over the puppet, they remained wary of the giant python, which had shown itself to be overly violent and vicious.

As the crowd watched warily and cautiously, and as Wang Baole’s breathing steadied, the giant python that had been taken over by the donkey suddenly shuddered. It started to shrink. The outer form of the giant python vanished as it grew smaller and smaller…

Finally… out popped four legs. The head of the giant python shrank and grew longer. The entire transformation took but the span of two dozen breaths or so. The giant python vanished completely and reappeared before everyone in the form of… the donkey!

The donkey shook itself as its eyes regained clarity. It lowered its head and inspected its body. There was a lost look in its eyes. It was as if what had happened earlier had been a dream, and it had just woken up. It was still unaccustomed to what had just happened. It saw the many strange gazes the people around it were giving it, and its eyes widened. It leaped and appeared beside Wang Baole. It seemed wary and at the same time, tried to put on a look of innocence. It stared at Wang Baole and nudged its head against his calf, as if to gain Wang Baole's favor.

It had on an appearance of… complete obedience, as if imploring Wang Baole not to eat it.

Wang Baole instinctively sent his foot kicking. Then, he recalled how terrifying the giant python had been and hesitated… he was afraid that the donkey might just transform after a single kick.

The donkey's not that bad. I shouldn't always hit it. This isn't because I'm afraid… Wang Baole consoled himself. The sheepishness he was feeling inside still flooded him in waves, the torrents making him feel unbearable. The donkey had transformed itself from a mere rifle into a cannon and was no longer the same donkey. Wang Baole was afraid that if he kept abusing it, it might turn on him and reverse the abuse. His cultivation was only at the perfected Foundation Establishment ream while the giant python was at the perfected Core Formation realm. The chasm separating them made Wang Baole feel like the son in this power relationship…

As Wang Baole sulked, the rest around him remained cautious. Those who had their comrades killed by the giant python felt a myriad of emotions. The donkey was equally nervous. It could feel the murderous intent in the eyes of some of the people around it, and its master hadn't kicked it, which was rare.

Its young spirit shuddered. It felt a strong sense of danger, and terror colored its eyes. It thought about the many times Wang Baole had spoken about killing it and eating it, and a sudden thought flooded its mind. It panicked and tried its best to please Wang Baole, even sticking its tongue out and licking Wang Baole's hand…

The donkey's licking annoyed Wang Baole, but the donkey seemed overly nervous and frightened. It drooled buckets and turned Wang Baole's hand into a wet mess with its licking. Wang Baole glared at it. He couldn't control himself and kicked the donkey out of habit.

Wang Baole immediately realized what he had done as soon as his leg flew out. He wanted to pull his leg back, but the donkey's eyes flashed. It released a sudden burst of speed… not to avoid the kick, but to dash straight into it. It was sent flying a short distance away.

An odd expression overtook Wang Baole's face at that sight. The donkey seemed reassured. As long as it got its beating, things would turn out alright. It happily pranced along and started braying.

"Son! Son!"

Wang Baole's heart softened at the donkey's braying. However, he had noticed the complicated looks in some of the cultivators' eyes, and the murderous intent they had been exuding. He knew that the donkey could easily incur the wrath of others due to its role in this incident. It had nothing to do with the donkey, but such public anger was something that was difficult to get rid of.

The difference between the giant python's overpowering strength and the sudden obedience the donkey was showing could easily lead the public into venting their anger on the latter.

Countless thoughts surfaced in Wang Baole's head. The gears started spinning furiously. He took one large step out and stood before the donkey, kicking it again and roaring furiously.

"You still know how to bray? Ah?"

The donkey cried out as it was kicked. It didn't hurt, but crying out had become instinctive to it. As soon as it screamed, Wang Baole grabbed hold of its long ear and gave it a thrashing.

The donkey shuddered. It felt something was amiss and was about to struggle when Wang Baole quickly gave it the stink eye.

"You may be innocent, you might have been swallowed by the giant python and is a victim as well, but everyone is feeling terrible now. You still dare to continue braying?" Wang Baole roared. He punched and kicked the donkey. He wasn't putting up a performance but was giving the donkey a genuine beating.

The donkey felt wronged. Then, it saw the look in Wang Baole's eyes. It seemed to have understood something and started to cry out with all it had. It even started weeping and begging for its life.

"There's no use in begging. Even though you contributed the most to saving us all, even though we'd all be goners without you, I still have to beat you!"

"And, even though you successfully wrestled control of the puppet, saved the new city from imminent danger, and saved all our lives, I still have to teach you a lesson!" Wang Baole continued hitting the donkey while observing the rest. The donkey seemed to have understood what was going on and cried more loudly. It looked pitiful.

The scene shocked everyone around them. Gradually, strange expressions overtook their faces. They all realized what Wang Baole was trying to do. He was trying to tell them indirectly that this had nothing to do with the donkey. In fact, the donkey had done all of them a great favor and saved their lives.

Besides, he was already teaching it a lesson. They shouldn't target their anger and wrath on the donkey unreasonably… the messages he was trying to put across were no longer subtle hints but explicit declarations. Those with comrades who had perished in the battle fell silent, sighing inwardly.

Wang Baole saw the expressions on their faces and finally set his heart at ease. He had to go through with the entire act, though. He kicked the donkey again and gave it another look. Then, he raised his right hand. Instantly, his Dharmic Armament sword appeared in his hand. He grabbed the donkey's head, his sword in the other hand, and shouted.

"My Fellow Daoists, this donkey might have saved our lives, we might owe it a great debt, it might be a victim as well, but the giant python has devoured too many cultivators. I have to kill this innocent donkey and avenge their deaths!"

As soon as Wang Baole said that, Lin Tianhao immediately stepped forward with a serious look on his face. He said loudly, "City Lord, you can't do that, the donkey is innocent. We shouldn't be unleashing our anger on it!"

The people from the four Dao Colleges all had strange expressions on their faces as they stepped forward hurriedly as well. They tried to stop Wang Baole. Kong Dao sighed, also saying a few words

himself. Even though everyone knew that this was merely a performance, they also understood what Wang Baole was trying to do.

Jin Duoming smiled wryly as well. He knew that Wang Baole was doing this mainly because of him, but Jin Duoming wasn't someone who didn't see reason. He said solemnly, "Baole, you can't blame this on the donkey. It's done a great service!"

As soon as Jin Duoming said that, the Core Formation realm cultivator next to him took a deep breath as well. He sighed as he stared at the donkey.

"This donkey is extraordinary. After fusing with the puppet, it managed to break free of the puppet's control, devour the other, and gain control instead. It trampled over the plans of the mastermind. Everything the mastermind has done has been for nothing. It has only benefited the donkey!"

"It seems like it's only at the Foundation Establishment realm, but who knows, maybe it might be able to transform one day into a giant python… at the perfected Core Formation realm!" As he spoke, the Core Formation realm cultivator turned and looked at Wang Baole. He didn't hide the envy in his eyes. He wasn't the only one; everyone else was the same. Even if they were on Earth, even if it were the president Duan Muque, he too would be filled with envy at this moment.

After all, this was a War Beast that could transform into a perfected Core Formation realm beast!

Everyone was already imagining the price Wang Baole's donkey was going to fetch after news of this incident broke. It was already quite valuable, but after today, its value would likely skyrocket…

"This is an expert!" Lin Tianhao sucked in a deep breath and gasped.

"It's just too incredible!" Jin Duoming came to the same realization instantly. As he muttered under his breath, his eyes shone. He began considering whether he should speak to Wang Baole again and find out whether he had any chance of buying such an incredible expert from Wang Baole.

Chapter 434: Attack Chen Mu

Wang Baole saw that the crowd had seen reason and that no one was going to publicly accuse the donkey of any wrongdoing. He was extremely pleased with his methods. He had been about to kick the donkey again, instinctively, but then he had heard what Lin Tianhao and Jin Duoming had said. He couldn't quite get himself to carry on with that kick.

The giant python had a considerable impact on him. He was worried that he might accidentally push the donkey into transforming with one kick. What should he do then…

He thought about his position as the donkey's master. He shouldn't be so violent and should instead shower small animals with care. He pulled his leg back and patted the donkey lovingly on its head.

His tenderness scared the donkey. It had been feeling better earlier after sensing the murderous intent fading from the eyes of the people around it. However, the tender and caring expression on Wang Baole's face that followed swiftly after made it shudder instantly. Fear shone in its eyes.

Wang Baole could see the look on the donkey's face clearly. Exasperated, he kicked the donkey again. It flew a short distance, rolled over, and got to its feet. It seemed more at ease and a lot happier.

What's wrong with this creature? Wang Baole was torn between bursting out into laughter and weeping. He received a voice transmission from Li Wan'er. The catacombs that had appeared in Fang Jing's autonomous zone was now under control. The crisis that had taken the new city by surprise had been partially resolved.

It wasn't yet fully resolved because they hadn't yet found the mastermind behind this attack. The cultivators around Wang Baole might no longer be angry at the donkey, but they were still hungry for revenge. They had murder in their eyes and needed an outlet to vent their anger. They wanted vengeance. Wang Baole knew this, and the cultivators around him understood as well.

However, the mastermind was hidden from their view. Finding him would be a challenge. Wang Baole hadn't managed to find him with his array formation in the past. However, at present… things seemed to have changed.

"Scram, get over here!" Wang Baole's eyes flashed. He immediately turned and stared at the donkey.

The donkey remained secretly cautious, but it still ran hurriedly towards Wang Baole, merrily and obediently. It wagged its tail furiously, as if trying to convey the message that it was doing exactly what it was told and asking for its life to be spared.

"Where did you get into trouble? Can you find the person who tried to control you?"

Wang Baole patted the donkey on its head and asked. The cultivators around them all stared at the donkey. The donkey blinked. It seemed to know what Wang Baole was saying. It concentrated and appeared to be extending its senses outwards. Its nose started sniffling. Wang Baole frowned. He had a growing suspicion that one of the donkey's parents must have been some form of giant dog-like monster.

The crowd didn't have to wait long. The donkey's eyes soon flashed. It brayed at Wang Baole and immediately dashed ahead in a particular direction.

An icy glint flashed in Wang Baole's eyes. Murderous intent rose in his heart and showed on his face. He didn't hesitate and immediately followed the donkey.

Jin Duoming did the same. The Core Formation realm cultivator who had died had been his protector. The man had treated him with great kindness. Jin Duoming might appear to have resumed his normal self, but his heart had been simmering with murderous intent. He followed swiftly behind Wang Baole.

Kong Dao and Lin Tianhao did the same. Their hate towards the mastermind was intense. They also had men who had died and had used the invaluable ultimate attacks that they had kept as a last resort. They wouldn't simply let this matter rest. Every Foundation Establishment realm cultivator and cultivators of higher cultivation realms soon followed. They marched forth like a vast army.

The donkey was swift. As Wang Baole followed behind it, his breathing began to quicken. He almost couldn't control his murderous rage when he realized where the donkey was headed… it was towards Chen Mu's autonomous zone!

Wang Baole wasn't the only one who had realized that. Lin Tianhao, Kong Dao, and Jin Duoming had all realized what was going on. They didn't hesitate. The murderous intent exuding from their persons grew stronger.

The army was like a sharp sword hungering for blood. They sped through the new city and charged into Chen Mu's autonomous zone. There were still plenty of Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators inside the autonomous zone, but their numbers had significantly reduced. They saw Wang Baole and his army. They didn't know why the latter was here, but they had heard about the crisis that had befallen the city. Every one of them was alarmed by the overpowering aura exuding from Wang Baole and his army of cultivators. They hastily fell back and didn't dare stop them.

Not all did the same, however. There were still some Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators who were alarmed when they saw Wang Baole and his people and tried to stop them from advancing further.

"Stop, our young master has instructed that no one is to enter these grounds!"

As soon as they spoke, before Wang Baole could react, Jin Duoming hollered.

"To hell with your young master!" He charged out, Dharmic Armament in hand. The Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators who had stood before them cried out in pain and fell back instantly.

"Chen Mu, if you're really the one who's behind all this, I, Jin Duoming, will skin you alive!" Jin Duoming's eyes were red. The members of the Five Generation Sky Clan around him stared and hesitated. Wang Baole's cold voice, firm and authoritative, rang in their ears.

"All cultivators, here are your orders. Those who try to stand in the way of the law… execute them on the spot!"

Jin Duoming's violent attack had shocked the Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators and frozen them in their tracks, but he couldn't stop the urge in them to retaliate. Wang Baole hadn't attacked, but his status and his authority had laced his words with ice. The members of the Five Generation Sky Clan all hesitated. They felt compelled to fall back.

They weren't truly afraid of Jin Duoming and the others… but after what the Five Generation Sky Clan had gone through during the lunar incident, the legend of Wang Baole's violent streak had spread within the clan. Without his knowledge, Wang Baole had become a fearsome entity inside the hearts of many Five Generation Sky Clan members.

As his words echoed in the air, the Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators all fell silent. They didn't try to stop them. They allowed Wang Baole and his group of cultivators to follow the racing donkey, and approach where Chen Mu had gone into seclusion. They drew closer and closer.

As they were about to reach where Chen Mu had gone into seclusion, Chen Mu, who had passed out earlier, seemed to instinctively sense the danger that was about to approach. His eyes opened suddenly and struggled to sit up. His eyes looked lost. He soon recalled what had happened prior to his losing consciousness, and his breathing grew heavy.

"Wang Baole!" He roared. He hated that donkey, but he hated Wang Baole even more. The donkey belonged to Wang Baole, after all… however, despite the hatred flooding his heart, he still had to consider the consequences of his actions. Things would have turned out fine if he had succeeded. But he

had failed. He could imagine the fate that would befall him if they found out that he had been the one pulling the puppet's strings.

That's not possible. No one would realize it's me… Chen Mu consoled himself. The backlash had been too strong, and his vision was still slightly blurry after he had come to. He panted and pulled out a pill, then swallowed it. He was about to get to his feet and make the necessary preparations, but as soon as he stood up, a loud thunder boomed and exploded above his head.

It was like the crashing of thunder, and it almost caused Chen Mu's eardrums to burst. Alarm flashed across his face as he retreated hastily. The ceiling above his head shattered into pieces. The secret chamber that he was in split into several parts in that instant. The walls and ceiling collapsed, exposing him in the open!

As the explosion erupted, Jin Duoming's silhouette appeared first. He had been the one to slice the residence into parts with his sword. As shattered stone rained on them, Wang Baole, Kong Dao, Lin Tianhao, and the surviving Core Formation realm cultivators appeared around the collapsed secret chamber littered with shattered stone!

"Jin Duoming, what are you doing? Are you trying to start a war between the Trilunaris Corporation and the Five Generation Sky Clan?" Chen Mu hastily stepped aside. However, he was already in a weakened state. He didn't manage to avoid the attack completely and spat out a mouthful of blood. He leaned against a shattered slab of stone as he secretly quaked inside. He tried his best not to show his fear on his face as he barked out a fierce order immediately.

"Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators, at my command!"

As soon as he spoke, the Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators who had been stopped earlier appeared despite their fear of Wang Baole and his army. They surrounded Wang Baole and his party. The Core Formation realm cultivators from the Five Generation Sky Clan also approached instantly.

"Chen Mu, you wish to speak for the Five Generation Sky Clan? Fine. You controlled a puppet and revolted against the Federation. The Federation will get to the bottom of this!" Jin Duoming laughed, and his eyes narrowed into slits. His voice was chilly, but he was slightly hesitant deep down. After all… he had no proof. It had been the donkey that had led them here. The relationship between Wang Baole and Chen Mu had been fraught with conflict. There was a possibility of Wang Baole trying to use this as an excuse to kill Chen Mu.

"That's slander!" Chen Mu grew furious when he heard that. His breathing quickened. His eyes reddened. He glared at Jin Duoming, then turned and stared at Wang Baole.

Chapter 435: For the Governor's Deliberation, Please

"I've been injured during my cultivation earlier and have been recovering from my injuries. You'll say anything to make it seem like I've done something wrong. Besides… Wang Baole, I've merely found out about the illicit affair you've been having with my fiance and have gotten hold of evidence of your adultery. Are you trying to silence me for that?"

Chen Mu seemed extremely aggrieved. In his madness, he pulled out a jade slip and shouted.

“If that’s the case, I’ll show everyone what you, the adulterous couple, have done!” Chen Mu howled. He was about to activate the jade slip when a party of people came charging from afar. Amongst them was a pale-faced figure that almost stumbled. She was Li Wan’er.

“A load of rubbish!” Just as Chen Mu was about to activate the jade slip, Wang Baole, with a stormy expression on his face, stepped forward swiftly. Chen Mu had no chance to react before Wang Baole was right in his face. Wang Baole raised his right hand suddenly and swept it forward. It landed loudly on Chen Mu’s chest. Chen Mu spat out a mouthful of blood and staggered back. The jade slip in his hand shook from Wang Baole’s attack and shattered into pieces!

“Wang Baole! Are you trying to destroy the evidence because you’re afraid!”

“Silence!” Wang Baole turned, a murderous aura erupting from his person suddenly. It rose to the skies. He stared coldly at Chen Mu, suspicion and doubt flickering across his eyes. The blood that Chen Mu had spat out seemed too little… the paleness of his face didn’t seem to be from injury but from extensive blood loss… a thought flashed across Wang Baole’s mind. He said coolly.

“Revolting against the new city and against the Federation. Falsifying evidence in order to protect oneself. These all point towards a flaw in your character! Such false evidence is merely an eyesore. Of course, I have to destroy it!

“You harbored ill intentions and worked with unknown entities. You killed your fellow Federation cultivators and tried to mess around with our senses. Chen Mu, you would do anything to escape incrimination!”

“Fine, you’re not going to admit to your crimes, are you?” Murder colored Wang Baole’s eyes. He raised his right hand and waved it towards a pile of collapsed stone nearby. A sudden force overturned the shattered rocks, revealing beneath them… a shattered, small blood-colored drum!

The small drum gave off the stench of blood and exuded an evil aura. It was weak but present! Upon closer examination, one would find that it was the same aura as that of the giant python!

Everyone was alarmed. They all turned and stared at Chen Mu. Jin Duoming and those whose comrades had perished in the earlier battle stared at Chen Mu with murder in their eyes!

“The blood inside this thing. It’s yours, isn’t it?” Wang Baole’s eyes flashed as he said abruptly. As soon as the words rang out, alarm colored Chen Mu’s face. He instinctively staggered back, his breathing quickening.

This was the best possible and strongest evidence that one could produce!

“I…” Chen Mu’s face was pale. Alarm and fear were clear on his face. He retreated hastily, shouting.

“Five Generation Sky Clan cultivators, protect me!” He immediately fell back and was about to plan his exit. As soon as he spoke, however, Wang Baole roared. It was like thunder crashing from the heavens.

“Five Generation Sky Clan, any move taken by anyone would be seen as a revolt. That’s treason against the Federation, an immense crime!”

As soon as Wang Baole's words rang out in the air, he dashed forward in a sudden burst of speed. It was even more astonishing than the speed he had displayed before. Within the blink of an eye, he arrived beside the retreating Chen Mu. He lifted his right leg and kicked out.

There was a thunderous boom. A sudden force surged outward. As the surrounding Five Generation Sky Clan members remained stunned and hesitant, Chen Mu's blood spilled from his mouth again. He let out a cry of agony. Wang Baole had kicked him directly in the crotch. He flew into the air and landed in front of Jin Duoming. He had already been seriously injured, and Wang Baole's kick had been too vicious, so he had passed out again.

Blood seeped through his clothes. It was clear that this kick had castrated Chen Mu!

Wang Baole harbored an intense hatred towards Chen Mu as well. The latter had ill intentions towards him, and he had not only targeted Wang Baole but Zhuo Yifan as well. He had long wanted to kill Chen Mu. Chen Mu had tried to turn the new city upside down and kill Wang Baole. He had resorted to desperate measures in his final moments. He deserved to be castrated!

Everything that had happened had resulted in Wang Baole barely keeping a rein on his murderous intent. It had resulted in that vicious kick, but it had only castrated Chen Mu. Wang Baole wasn't a fool; he knew what awaited Chen Mu. There was no need for him to kill the man prematurely.

The rest around him seemed to share similar thoughts. Jin Duoming narrowed his eyes. He waved the Dharmic Armament in his right hand and chopped Chen Mu's right arm off!

Blood spurted out. The agonizing pain of having his right arm sliced off drove Chen Mu right back into consciousness, screaming. The pain from his lower body and his arm was driving him mad, but he was in no position to go crazy. He could only continue screaming in pain. The donkey was furious too. It snuck its way near without anyone noticing and sent its hoof… into Chen Mu's injured crotch.

That hooved kick was like piling snow onto a glacier. Chen Mu's scream took on a different pitch. His entire body shuddered before he passed out again.

Kong Dao and Lin Tianhao had wanted to join as well, but the scene made their faces twitch. They stared at the donkey, then at Wang Baole, and didn't join in. Li Wan'er eyed the donkey from afar. It was the first time she was looking at the donkey with tenderness and liking in her eyes. It was clear that she had found the final kick from the donkey extremely satisfying.

The cultivators from the Five Generation Sky Clan might have found the scene unbearable, but they knew that this was going to be another disaster for the Five Generation Sky Clan. Their heads were all throbbing. Unfortunately, the world outside the city was besieged by blood-colored winds and all communications had been cut off. They had no means of contacting the family clan.

"City Lord Li!" As the members of the Five Generation Sky Clan panicked and fretted, Wang Baole pretended not to have seen the final blow the donkey had delivered and said coolly.

Li Wan'er immediately lifted her head. She took a few steps forward, gave Wang Baole a deep, meaningful look, and bowed.

"City Lord!"

“According to the Federation laws, which are also the laws Mars abides by, Chen Mu has staged a revolt against the Federation. He tried to overthrow his superiors and stage a coup. What should be his punishment?”

“He should be executed! We will have to dig to the bottom of this!” Li Wan’er didn’t waver or hesitate. Her voice was firm.

Wang Baole was very pleased with her reply. His eyes grew colder when he turned and stared at the unconscious Chen Mu. Chen Mu and the political force backing Chen Mu had gone too far too many times. It was similar to him having a house. He agreed to someone entering and visiting his house, and even treated the latter cordially with good food and drinks, but that someone continued to overstay and wouldn’t leave. That would have been fine, but he had even tried to amend the house deed and change the name of the owner. That someone had even tried to kill him.

This was the behavior of a bandit!

And the way to treat a bandit was to give him a severe thrashing. He immediately declared, “Arrest Chen Mu! After the blood winds have died down, report immediately to the Governor and to the Federation. I want… the Five Generation Sky Clan to answer to the millions of cultivators of my new city. I want them to answer for every single life lost. I want them to answer to law and justice!” Wang Baole’s voice was strong and powerful. It echoed in the air.

At the same time, the blood-colored winds and mist that had spread across half the Martian planet gradually weakened after the black-robed man was devoured by the donkey and after Chen Mu’s failed coup. The next day, after Chen Mu’s arrest, the mist finally cleared up.

With the re-establishment of communications, Li Wan’er immediately reported this incident to her father. She also reported to the Governor and the Federation about Chen Mu’s coup.

Kong Dao, Lin Tianhao, and Jin Duoming also exerted the full extent of their influence. Even Fang Jing seemed to have come to her senses. She realized that the appearance of the catacombs within her zone couldn’t have been a coincidence. She contacted her sect angrily as well.

Wen Huai saw what was going on and knew that he had to make a stand. He immediately contacted his sect and reported this matter for his sect’s deliberation. As soon as this incident was made known, it caused an uproar in the various political forces on Mars and in the Federation. The association between the Martian mists and this incident had intensified the seriousness of this matter.

It was clear that Chen Mu had some connection with the Divine Armament Catacombs. They had worked together. There was no way that the Martian mists were a coincidence. The Martian Colony Governor had Chen Mu taken away and imprisoned within the main Martian city. The trial was carried out jointly with the Federation and the various political forces.

The trial wasn’t made public. It was carried out internally. The final sentence—Chen Mu was to be sentenced to death!

Throughout the entire trial, the Five Generation Sky Clan didn’t speak for Chen Mu, not even once. They were very cooperative. Chen Mu had also stated firmly that this had been his idea all along and that it

had nothing to do with his family clan. However, everyone knew what was going on. This implicated too many political forces and angered too many people. There was a need for compensation and an answer.

As a result… the Five Generation Sky Clan had to compensate great quantities of materials and resources. The compensation went towards the new city as well. The Five Generation Sky Clan ached from the loss. They resented Chen Mu's actions. After all, while they had agreed to his plans, he had only had to kill Wang Baole and a few other people of little importance. There had been no need for him to offend everyone…

Even if he had offended everyone, everything would have turned out fine if he had succeeded. But he had failed…

The Five Generation Sky Clan was frustrated beyond relief. Wang Baole knew that. He immediately sent a voice transmission to the Martian Colony Governor.

"Governor, in order to put down Chen Mu, I self-destructed ten eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments. All the cultivators in the new city can vouch for me. Please speak for your subordinate and help me seek compensation from the Five Generation Sky Clan!"

Chapter 436: A Gang of Robbers!

The Governor was rendered speechless when faced with Wang Baole's impossible demands. However, she wasn't going to be the one having to pay for the compensation. She told Wang Baole that she would direct her request to the Federation. As for his chances of success, she had no idea.

Wang Baole had only been trying his luck. His eyes lit up when he saw that the Governor didn't refuse his request. His anticipation grew. As he looked forward to the response, the Five Generation Sky Clan was going mad. The head of the Chen family, especially, flew into a rage in the Chen family's residence. He almost went mad with rage.

"Robbers, they're a gang of robbers!

"That bastard Lin You. He said that his son self-destructed thirty Dharmic Armaments. Damn him to hell. His son? I doubt he himself has so many Dharmic Armaments!

"And there's that undying old fart Jin. He said that his own Jin Duoming self-destructed seven ninth-grade Dharmic Armaments. I'll be a fool if I believe that! You'd think that ninth-grade Dharmic Armaments could be easily found everywhere!

"The Martian military is equally shameless. They said that Kong Dao self-destructed twenty Dharmic Armaments. That's not the end of it. The president Duan Muque personally criticized them and said that Kong Dao didn't self-destruct that many—he only self-destructed six… a president of that rank and status playing along with the rest and adding fuel to the fire!"

"That Wang Baole as well. He dared to say that he self-destructed ten eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments!" The head of the Chen family clan simmered with rage. He simply couldn't afford it all. The Five Generation Sky Clan couldn't afford it all. As he boiled in his fury, his voice transmission ring

vibrated as it received the latest demands for compensation from the Plume Manifestation Connate Sect. They mentioned Dharmic Armaments as well…

It was like the spark that lit the fuse. The head of the Chen family clan exploded. In the name of the Five Generation Sky Clan, he announced the demands he had received to the Martian administration and to the Federation President. He asked a final question.

“Would a perfected Core Formation realm puppet require the joint self-destruction of three ninth-grade Dharmic Armaments, dozens of eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments, and more than a hundred seventh-grade Dharmic Armaments before it could be put down?”

Duan Muque had an odd expression on his face when he saw the demands made public. The Martian Colony Governor blinked as well. Everyone had only known their own demands. They hadn’t known what the other parties had asked for. As the Five Generation Sky Clan’s announcement was made known to all the political forces, similar thoughts flashed across everyone’s minds.

Wang Baole had also received the announcement from the Five Generation Sky Clan through the Governor. He sucked in a deep breath when he saw the demands from the rest.

That’s brutal, none of their Dharmic Armaments exploded, only mine did! Wang Baole instantly felt as innocent and naive as a little white bunny when compared to the others.

At present, Kong Dao, Jin Duoming, and Lin Tianhao were all feeling slightly sheepish. The political forces backing them didn’t falter though. This tug-o-war continued for quite some time. Finally, Duan Muque stepped in. The matter was finally resolved!

The Five Generation Sky Clan would compensate for the new city with large quantities of resources. This was akin to a fine for the destruction caused by Chen Mu. They would also hand over an eighth-grade Dharmic Armament and fifteen seventh-grade Dharmic Armaments.

Wang Baole got his hands on the eighth-grade Dharmic Armament, while the remaining seventh-grade Dharmic Armaments were divided amongst the others. The matter finally came to an end.

The final fate that awaited Chen Mu was also decided. After being tried by the Federation, he was sentenced to death!

His arranged marriage with Li Wan’er was invalidated as well. No one mentioned it again.

Chen Mu left a mayor’s position vacant. Wang Baole seized the opportunity immediately and recommended Zhuo Yifan for the position. It wasn’t immediately approved, but Wang Baole staked a firm claim over this office. With Li Yi and Chen Mu as precedents, the various political forces had begun to understand Wang Baole better. They knew that as long as Wang Baole didn’t agree to it, no matter whom they sent as a replacement, there was a great chance of said replacement meeting the same fate as his predecessors.

Divine Armament New City suddenly resumed an unprecedented calm and peace. The Martian Colony Governor and the Federation had dispatched inspectors to examine the donkey as well. They found strong energies that rivaled a perfected Core Formation realm cultivator inside the donkey, but the donkey seemed unable to transform at will. It seemed as if the power residing within it was asleep.

The four Dao Colleges stepped forward and vouched for the donkey in the end. That was how the donkey could remain at Wang Baole's side and wasn't taken away.

The donkey's presence meant that Wang Baole, to a certain degree, would be recategorized as one of the Federation's most powerful cultivators. He might not be seen as a fully legitimate member of this group, but he took up at least half a headcount.

As everything came to an end, and as the new city resumed its peace and quiet, Wang Baole finally received his eighth-grade Dharmic Armament from the Five Generation Sky Clan. It wasn't a weapon but a set of armor. When worn, it would form a protective barrier that could resist and defend against the attacks of powerful cultivators.

Amongst eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments, weapons that possessed offensive capabilities were naturally valued more highly than armor, but defensive armor was extremely rare. They were even rarer amongst eighth-grade Dharmic Armaments and beyond. It was difficult to judge which was more valuable. It all boiled down to the user's needs.

The Five Generation Sky Clan was clearly unwilling to hand over any offensive weapons. That was why they had chosen to give away the armor instead. Wang Baole had no complaints with that. He preferred armor, in fact.

An eighth-grade Dharmic Armament requires one to have at least a Core Formation realm cultivation before one can wield it perfectly. I'll find it challenging to unleash its full power if they'd given me a weapon. I wouldn't be able to wield it as well as a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament. When Wang Baole received the armor, he immediately inspected it. Based on his proficiency in refining artifacts, he verified that there was indeed nothing wrong with the armor. He quickly put it on. He patted the armor all over and was extremely pleased.

It's a pity the saber was destroyed… I must make full use of what time I have and quickly refine that Dharmic Armament megaphone of mine! The thought of his saber still made his heart ache. It had been by his side for so long. They had killed together on the moon. It held a certain place in his heart.

Fortunately, even though Wang Baole was down one saber, he still had a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament flying sword. After some thought, he made up his mind and began his seclusion again. He was prepared to gain enlightenment on Heavenly Evocation. He was going to direct heavenly will and create his own Dharmic Armament megaphone.

It'd be great if I could refine a Numinous Treasure that could summon the will of gods… As soon as I activate it, it would automatically draw the wills of gods to me. Wang Baole sighed. He knew that it was an impossible feat. He inhaled deeply, twice, and calmed himself down. He shut his eyes inside the secret chamber. Through the Dharmic Armament flying sword and his own armor, with their guidance, he began to allow his mind to wander. His mind went in search of the wills of gods.

Time passed. A month went by. Wang Baole let his mind wandered multiple times during the month. He went in search of the wills of gods. Every time he crossed paths with one, he tried to lead them towards him. He always failed.

Almost every time, he would sense a scorching spirit deep inside the Martian planet. It was vast like the sun. It was an overpowering presence that dominated all other remnants of gods on the planet. In fact,

Wang Baole felt that if he was able to guide this spirit towards him, he might be able to refine a ninth-grade Dharmic Armament!

His cultivation was inadequate though, so he dared not venture near. Once, tempted, he had approached slightly and was immediately assaulted by the sensation of his spirits being ripped into shreds. He was frightened into retreat. He refocused his efforts on the weaker wills of other gods after that.

After repeated attempts, he finally locked onto a god that wasn't particularly powerful but was extremely spirited. It felt like a giant fire tiger to Wang Baole, which seemed appropriate for his Artifact Spirit.

Wang Baole made up his mind. He tried, again and again, to lure it, attempting to guide it towards him. But this spirit seemed particularly bad-tempered. It would approach Wang Baole, then immediately transform into shockwaves and attempt to shatter anyone that tried to venture near it.

Wang Baole grew frustrated. He felt this spirit was like an oblivious man, while he himself was the beautiful and seductive woman. Regardless of how she tried to flirt with and seduce the man, the latter continued to ignore her. If she angered him, he would even try to hit her…

There's something wrong with this analogy… Wang Baole began to sulk. As he troubled himself over this and brainstormed over how to lure the spirit, a conspiracy targeting Wang Baole was brewing secretly!

The instigator was still the Five Generation Sky Clan. The conflict between them and Wang Baole was complicated and unlikely to be resolved. That was why they had to squash Wang Baole. This time wouldn't be like the rest. In the past, it had been the young ones from the Five Generation Sky Clan who had clashed and fought with Wang Baole. This time, the cunning elders from the family clans of the Five Generation Sky Clan were personally staging the attack!

They even contacted the Galactic Dusk Sect and the Plume Manifestation Connate Sect. The latter had come into conflict with the Five Generation Sky Clan due to what had happened in Fang Jing's autonomous zone, but they weren't going to turn down something that was to their benefit. The plan and setup that the Five Generation Sky Clan had proposed were simply too devious. It not only had a high chance of success, but it was also an open conspiracy.

An open conspiracy referred to a conspiracy that openly declared its ill intentions towards the victim. It openly declared its next steps. However, the victim would still be helpless to escape or stop whatever was going to happen next. The victim was powerless to fight back!

This open conspiracy that the few sly elders from the Five Generation Sky Clan had concocted… was to assist in the construction of the new city. They would utilize their full resources and fan the flames. They would push for the currently third-grade city to rise and become a second-grade special region!

Its status would be second only to the Federation Capital and to the main Martian city. It would hold the same special regional status as the other eighteen cities of the Federation!

Chapter 437: The Records Were All Lying!

The Federation had a strict and rigid classification system for its cities. The eighteen cities on Earth were all classified as special regions administratively. Only the capital city on Earth and the main Martian Colony City were considered main cities.

A class below the special regions were countless other identical cities. They were generally affiliated and reported to special regions. These cities were of the same class as Wang Baole's new city.

Once a new city was promoted to a special region though, it was completely transformed. It was the difference between heaven and earth. After all, the Federation had only eighteen special regions as of now, and all were on Earth.

The implications of promoting Wang Baole's city to a special region were vast. The Martian Colony Governor would definitely support this push as this was a good thing for Mars.

However, while this might not destroy his career, it would be a waste of all the effort that Wang Baole had put into the city. Even if he wasn't kicked off of Mars, he would be relegated to a secondary deputy position. His experience and cultivation were insufficient for him to become the City Lord of a special regional city.

Because… according to the laws of the Federation, only a Secondary Rank Two Noble could become the City Lord of a special regional city. In addition, such a city lord might receive an invitation to join the Senate and become one of the senators!

This was a complete transformation of one's status and class. The Federation laws had strict requirements for a Secondary Rank Two Noble. They were set in stone and couldn't be changed. Even if one had made an extraordinary contribution to the Federation, the best he could hope for was a Primary Rank Three Noble. To become a Secondary Rank Two Noble, one needed to have a Core Formation realm cultivation!

That was an essential requirement!

Wang Baole was only at the perfected Foundation Establishment realm. If they managed to implement this plan soon enough, before Wang Baole reached the Core Formation realm, based on the laws of the Federation, the Federation would have to appoint a Core Formation realm cultivator to become the City Lord. Wang Baole might not be transferred away, but he would be demoted to a deputy city lord position—it would be unavoidable.

When that time came, he would be the deputy city lord. He might rank above Li Wan'er, but that would only be in name and only by a slight margin. This wasn't only a demotion, but was more damaging than an actual demotion!

Even if everyone knew what was going on, there was nothing they could do about it. Even if Wang Baole knew about this, there was nothing he could do about it either. On the surface, this had nothing to do with Wang Baole. It was an initiative promoting the development of the new city. They were volunteering their resources and contributing to the Federation and to Mars.

Once this plan began to unfold, even the Federation President and the Martian Colony Governor would find it difficult to reject the proposal. This… was what an open conspiracy looked like!

The old foxes in the Five Generation Sky Clan were skilled at such ploys. They knew that while the various political forces were friendly with Wang Baole currently, they wouldn't object to any plans pushing for the new city to become a special region. They would simply stand at the sidelines. To not help would be a show of consent.

After all… with the promotion of the new city to a special region, it would mean a new round of competition and renegotiation of profit and power for the various political forces. There was much to be gained for everyone.

Even if the Five Generation Sky Clan should fail in their endeavor, the others wouldn't suffer any losses. This plan began to unfold like a hurricane. It gradually gained traction, and news began to spread on Earth and within the main Martian city.

They talked about the important role the new city played to Mars and to the Federation. They didn't remove Wang Baole from the conversation, but he was mentioned only briefly. The focus was placed on the leadership of the new city and their accomplishments.

Such discussions spread like wildfire in the Federation. Within the new city, Li Wan'er and the others could all sense the malicious intentions brewing in this open conspiracy!

Despite their anxiety, they were unable to reach Wang Baole. It was because Wang Baole was presently in seclusion with his mind wandering. He was trying to guide the will of a god to him, and trying to refine his first seventh-grade Dharmic Armament.

He had attempted this mental wandering repeatedly, but all his efforts at guiding the god's will had failed. However, he had grown familiar with the entire process. Besides, he had already set his sights on the god of a particular fire tiger and was prepared to guide it towards him.

To ensure his success, Wang Baole had read up on a lot of materials. He understood that this guidance involved a lot of baiting and temptation. He had to identify what the god liked.

After many tries, he finally discovered the fire tiger's preferences. This fellow… was a perverted tiger. It liked the spirits of female tigers… Wang Baole had made multiple attempts and read up intensively before he had been able to identify it in the legends and find the answer to his question. Prior to seclusion, he got Lin Tianhao to prepare vast quantities of monster spirits.

Even though these monster spirits weren't suited to become Artifact Spirits, and they only possessed True Breath realm cultivation, the sheer number of them meant they cost quite a bit as well. However, in order to successfully lure the fire tiger, Wang Baole could care less about the money spent.

This time, I'm going to succeed! Wang Baole set his mind wandering. He had with him great quantities of monster spirits. In this illusory, indistinct space between heaven and earth, he easily found the will of the fire tiger. He eyed it from afar. It was like a tiny sun in this blurry space between the heavens and earth. It was wandering within a specific, fixed area.

Its majestic appearance and overpowering aura excited Wang Baole. He didn't approach though. He quickly flung out the monster spirit of a female tiger. As soon as the monster spirit appeared, the wandering fire tiger immediately turned its head. Its body instantly vanished, and it appeared beside the monster spirit and swallowed it in a single mouthful!

Wang Baole grew merry when he saw how effective his tactic had been. He took a few hasty steps back and threw out another monster spirit, his heart brimming with anticipation.

Come on, my precious!

Under Wang Baole's hopeful eyes, the fire tiger lunged again. It swallowed the second monster spirit and was just about to leave. But Wang Baole had already taken another few steps back and had thrown the third monster spirit out.

He continued to step back while throwing out monster spirits. The fire tiger was rather silly as well. It continued to be lured forward. It swallowed monster spirit after monster spirit, following Wang Baole as the latter fell back and traveling a long distance with Wang Baole. They weren't far from where Wang Baole had gone into seclusion.

Within the room where he had secluded himself, the megaphone that he had made was already in place. It lacked only the spirit of the fire tiger.

This is too easy. I'll be able to refine a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament today! Wang Baole said excitedly. He threw out another monster spirit. He moved and was about to withdraw from his state of mental wandering back into his body. He intended to draw the fire tiger's attention to the Artifact Spirit inside his Dharmic Armament and guide it towards the Dharmic Armament.

It was then that fire tiger swallowed the last monster spirit Wang Baole had thrown at it and paused in its steps. Its listless eyes revealed a tinge of self-satisfaction and mockery for the first time. It shifted and stopped following Wang Baole. Instead, the fire tiger turned and went away.

Wang Baole's eyes almost popped out at the sight, and he panicked.

What's going on? This is different from what the books said. I thought the spirits only possessed animal instincts. How is it capable of mocking me? I… I've been deceived by the remnant of a spirit that died eons ago?

It's… it's eaten so many of my spirits! Wang Baole's eyes widened. He immediately got angry. He ached at his loss and became furious at the insult to his intelligence. In his rage, he hollered.

"Come right back!" Wang Baole was still in the fugue state. In his anger, he cast aside the prudence and care he had possessed in his previous sessions. This was the first time he had shown anger while in the fugue state. As soon as his anger erupted, three Dark Fires instantly formed inside his illusory body. It was as if his words held power!

The Dark Fires were clearly inside his physical body. However, he could see them appear while in his fugue state. They appeared and erupted into being, turning this indistinct, illusory world chilly all of a sudden. The mocking tiger suddenly shuddered as shock and fear appeared in its eyes. It wanted to retreat, but it was too late. The three Dark Fires flew out and overpowered it.

Overpowered, the will of the fire tiger roared but to no avail. Its body shuddered, and it was unable to fight back. The sight stunned Wang Baole.

You mean that works too? Emotions surged inside Wang Baole. He tried to exert control over the Dark Fires, and the flames instantly grew stronger. The fire tiger cried out. It was about to be flattened under the Dark Fires.

Wang Baole's spirits soared. He puffed his chest out, pointed at the will of the fire tiger, and said coolly.

"I wanted to coexist peacefully with you, without creating a scene. But since things have turned out this way, I'm not going to keep my head down any longer. Either you quickly enter my Dharmic Artifact of your own accord, or I destroy you!" Wang Baole yelled. The fire tiger trembled. Powerless, its eyes shone with resentment and fear. It seemed to realize that it couldn't escape. After a moment, it stirred and transformed into a glowing flame, shooting into the seventh-grade Dharmic Armament megaphone that was resting in the location of Wang Baole's seclusion. It fused with the Artifact Spirit and permeated the entire megaphone!

The megaphone seemed to go up in flames instead. It turned red as vast quantities of inscriptions appeared on it. The inscriptions were immensely complex, and both the inside and outside of the megaphone transformed in that instant. Soon, the immense power that belonged to a seventh-grade Dharmic Armament erupted from within this Dharmic Armament. As it erupted, a fearsome red tiger appeared outside the megaphone. It lifted its head skywards and roared. Its majestic appearance was stunning!

The records lied. There's no need to lure them. The best way is to simply overpower them! Wang Baole ended his fugue state excitedly. He returned to his body and opened his eyes. He stared at the red megaphone before him, able to feel a power within it that surpassed his self-destructed saber. He couldn't control the pleased laughter that burst out from him.

I'm indeed a child of Lady Fortune!

Chapter 438: An Invasion!

After realizing that he must be the son of Lady Fortune, Wang Baole ended his seclusion in a merry mood. He took his seventh-grade Dharmic Armament megaphone and was about to find a place to test its power. He wanted to take this chance to let the world know that he had become a Dharmic Armament master.

However, as soon as he ended his seclusion, before he had even stepped out from his secret chamber, he turned on his voice transmission ring and received a flood of messages.

There were too many incoming pieces of news and messages. Wang Baole couldn't afford disturbances during his fugue state, so he had turned off his voice transmission ring. But he remained connected via the new city's array formation. If something were to happen, the array formation would alert him immediately, and he would end his seclusion prematurely.

At present, upon seeing the messages, Wang Baole was stunned. He lowered his head and started reading them. Color gradually fled his face. Then it turned red. Finally, at the end, Wang Baole lifted his head and roared.

That's just too much! Wang Baole flew into a rage. The good mood that he had been in had vanished completely. He had received news from Lin Tianhao, from Kong Dao, and Li Wan'er and the others. Liu Daobin as well as plenty of people from the four Dao Colleges had also sent everything they had heard and subsequently found out regarding the special region to Wang Baole.

Li Wan'er informed Wang Baole specifically about the Secondary Rank Two Noble requirement. There was no need for her to explicitly say what would happen once the proposal was approved and the new city was promoted to a special region. Wang Baole knew what would happen when he read the messages!

They couldn't get to me with their devious ploys, so they've decided to try something new and do this to steal my accomplishments from me! Wang Baole heaved. He knew that once the new city became a special region, the fact that he wasn't a Core Formation realm cultivator meant that even if he remained in the city, he would be re-appointed as a deputy.

He had personally built this new city. To be demoted from a city lord to a deputy position was something Wang Baole found completely unacceptable! But the other party had openly conspired against him, rendering Wang Baole defenseless. He couldn't think of a way to resolve this. In his panic, he immediately contacted the Martian Colony Governor.

Even the Martian Colony Governor found this a headache. After all, the promotion of the new city to a special region would mean a great deal to Mars. From her perspective, this was incredibly advantageous to Mars.

Besides, regardless of who took over the office of city lord, he or she would still have to respect her authority. Nothing would change. Only Wang Baole would feel miserable. The Governor told Wang Baole not to listen to the gossip spreading around outside. Before she hung up though, she still tactfully shared her views on this manner.

"Due to certain special circumstances, there is a need to set up a special external department for the Anti-Spirit research facility on the Martian Colony City. It would test the results and findings from the research facility. The head of this department has to be a Primary Rank Three Noble."

Her words chilled Wang Baole's heart. Even though the Governor didn't openly state her stance on this matter, her attitude had been clear, and she had given all the advice she had. She was trying to tell Wang Baole that it was likely that the plan would be put through, and that she had already prepared a backup plan for Wang Baole.

It was a good backup plan, but Wang Baole was unwilling to let all his efforts go towards another person's glory. The Divine Armament Catacombs also played a pivotal role in his cultivation. Regardless, he wasn't going to hand over his office willingly.

After ending his communication with the Governor, Wang Baole thought hard about it and contacted the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College. Wang Baole thought himself a member of the Ethereal Dao College, so he wasn't as tactful as he had been with the Governor. He spoke immediately and with great anxiety.

"Help me, Sect Lord!"

Upon receiving the voice transmission, the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College sighed. He knew why Wang Baole had contacted him. However, the four Dao Colleges were divided into factions regarding this matter. The conspiracy that the Five Generation Sky Clan had set was done so openly and brazenly that it was difficult to address and resolve it.

“Baole, about this matter… you should be prepared. Based on what I’ve heard… there’s a high chance that the Federation will approve this…” The Sect Lord was silent for a moment before he sighed.

When Wang Baole heard that, his partially despairing heart turned completely cold. He was drowning in despair and helplessness and felt a strong sense of resentment. He was unwilling to just let this go.

“Isn’t there any other way?”

“There is!” the Sect Lord suddenly said.

“If you can achieve a breakthrough soon and reach the Core Formation realm, this matter wouldn’t only not be a misfortune but would turn out to be a golden opportunity!

“If you reach the Core Formation realm, the Five Generation Sky Clan would be handing you a golden opportunity on a golden platter. They would have wasted their own resources and bargaining chips to push you to a Secondary Rank Two Noble. You would hold greater power than you have had before and would stand at the top of the power pyramid in the Federation!

“This is the only way! I will utilize all my resources and call on all my favors to delay this and give you as much time as possible, but three months is my limit. If you can reach the Core Formation realm within these three months, this will turn into an opportunity for you!”

The Sect Lord’s voice was firm and filled with determination. He had analyzed the situation clearly and in detail for Wang Baole, but what Wang Baole needed to do first was reach the Core Formation realm!

They ended the conversation. Wang Baole sat cross-legged inside his secret chamber. His eyes had turned red. The stress was simply too immense. He knew that the approval to turn the city into a special region could arrive at any moment. He didn’t have much time left. Once the approval arrived, if he wasn’t at the Core Formation realm then, he would have to face a situation he was most unwilling to see.

It’s just forming a Core. I’ll fight it out with them! Wang Baole thought very hard about it and finally decided to wing it. He roared.

“Five Generation Sky Clan, you just wait. I’m going to enter seclusion. Once I am out, I swear… I’m going to reach the Core Formation realm!” Wang Baole got to his feet in a flurry. He knew the only way to achieve a breakthrough in cultivation was to enter the catacombs and train at the outer edge.

It was only within the catacombs that the Dark Qi was sufficiently thick enough. Alongside the Dark Qi absorbed by the array formation, he would be able to achieve astonishing progress in his training and cultivation. Staying within his own residence wouldn’t be sufficient by any measure.

However, the former option had an element of danger to it. There were the dangers within the catacombs itself. Even though he was only going to be at its outer edge, he might still encounter Beast Tides. Another danger was in the extensive absorption of Dark Qi. There might be hidden risks in doing

so. Wang Baole wasn't certain what might happen. That was why he had always only relied partially on Dark Qi in the past when he trained. He had placed safety as his top priority.

In other situations, safety should be the top priority. However, Wang Baole no longer had the luxury of time. He took a few hasty breaths, and his eyes shone with determination. He stood and with a single step, left his residence. He raced towards the original Divine Armament Catacombs that had been sealed in the center of the region during the earliest stages of building the new city zone!

The central Divine Armament Catacombs had long been sealed and was under Kong Dao's charge now. On his way there, Wang Baole contacted Kong Dao and informed the latter that he was entering the catacombs.

Kong Dao was initially hesitant. He was concerned about security. However, at Wang Baole's insistence, he activated the entrance to the catacombs. At the same time, he also wanted to arrange for escorts to accompany and protect Wang Baole, but the offer was turned down by Wang Baole.

His cultivation must remain a secret from others. Besides, Wang Baole was quite confident of himself when he decided to train in the catacombs. Firstly, he wasn't going to venture too deep. Secondly, he was the new city's City Lord, meaning he had certain access over the seals and over the array formation. Even if he encountered a Beast Tide, he would still have the power to fight back.

Besides, every other time he had come here, there had been outsiders present. Wang Baole hadn't been able to utilize his Dark Fire. But his intuition told him, that with the Dark Fire… that perhaps he might not meet any danger that he wouldn't be able to resolve.

Wang Baole didn't merely disallow anyone from following him into the catacombs, after he had reached the outer edges, he controlled the array formation and obscured all viewing and recording devices inside. As a result, no one outside would be able to observe what was going on inside.

After that, Wang Baole took a deep breath. With a single leap, he jumped into the catacombs and started his search for an ideal spot for seclusion!

At the exact moment that Wang Baole entered the catacombs, in the starry heavens, a giant black jellyfish was silently approaching the Solar System… It didn't enter immediately but hover outside. Its body quickly turned vaguely transparent, revealing three cultivators suited up in scaly armor inside it. They sat cross-legged in the jellyfish, their eyes shining with a strange light. They stared straight through the jellyfish at the distant Solar System.

"There are indeed signs of civilization here…"

"We're here, but they have yet to discover our presence. I believe this is only a lowly civilization!"

"It doesn't matter whether it's a lowly civilization or not. We should still check if there are any dangers!" The cultivator with a centipede on his face heard what his comrades had said. He held down the rising greed within him and carefully took out a crystal compass. He formed a series of hand seals, and the compass began to give off a dazzling light.

As the light sparkled, an illusory, three-dimensional map began to appear above the compass. It mapped out the Solar System, including the sun and all its planets!

On it showed clearly Earth, Mars, and the moon!

Chapter 439: The Mercury Crisis!

However… within this three-dimensional map, the Earth wasn't blue in color but yellow!

The moon was green!

Mars was yellow in color as well. The other stars were all various shades of green and blue. Only… the Sun and Pluto, which wasn't one of the eight major planets, had unexpected colors.

Pluto was orange!

The Sun was red!

As the colors appeared, the sight instantly shocked the three excited and greedy men inside the black jellyfish. They widened their eyes, which were colored with incredulity and disbelief, before gasping and falling silent.

A long moment later, one of them finally gasped while breathing heavily and quickly.

"What's going on here? Why is it red? My god, red represents an Eternal Star realm…"

"You're wrong. The color red doesn't represent an Eternal Star realm. It simply… suggests the presence of an Eternal Star realm. As for whether the legendary Star realms truly do exist, that is beyond what our instruments can detect." The cultivator with a centipede on his face had doubt in his eyes as well. He spoke slowly, then stared at Pluto.

"Red, orange, yellow, cyan, green, blue, purple… red represents at least the Eternal Star realm. Orange represents the Planet realm, yellow the greater Full Spirit Immortal realm, green the Nascent Soul realm… seems like we've either underestimated this civilization, or there's some great secret hidden here!"

The three stared at one another. Their earlier greed had vanished almost completely. With their capabilities, they might be able to lord over some lowly civilizations, but in the face of this bizarre Solar System, even they felt fearful.

This was simply too bizarre. Based on their combined experiences, they had never heard of such a civilization existing in this part of the universe. This defied all logic. This was because a civilization with an Eternal Star realm should gain relative fame throughout the entire universe.

Secondly… if there really was an Eternal Star realm, even if it were a Planet realm, they wouldn't have been able to approach. They would have been expelled and pushed away a long time ago when they had still been a far distance away. If they had come as close as they had now, they should have been destroyed.

But now, they appeared to be safe. They narrowed their eyes. They seemed deep in thought. It was then that the centipede-faced cultivator suddenly formed a series of hand seals. He pointed at the compass again. The light from the compass shone and dazzled once more.

It seemed to be conducting a more thorough search. The image that was displayed on the compass showed a clearer image of the Sun. It revealed the huge sword stuck on the Sun. It was this sword that was giving off the red light!

“This object!”

“This doesn’t belong to this civilization. This is just too terrifying. To think that there is actually a treasure of the Universe realm here!”

“I finally understand why the cultivation realm in this civilization appears relatively primitive yet bizarre!” When they saw the giant sword, they all gasped. No greed stirred within them for the giant sword though. They knew that even if the ancient elders of the Planet realm were here, they too wouldn’t dare to cause trouble in the face of this giant sword.

Every treasure of the Universe realm had its own will and spirit. Without its express permission, no one may enter!

They began to twitch. They hastily examined Pluto again. Their eyes widened with that second look. They seemed to have discovered within Pluto, another sun.

The energies exuding from the sun sent them gasping. They dared not continue to look at it.

“It’s too dangerous. This place is too dangerous!”

“How do the cultivators here survive? If this had happened in our civilization, it would have collapsed long ago! All these are just disasters waiting to happen!”

The three of them continued to tremble in fear. They looked at the other planets. The energies pulsating subtly on Earth didn’t seem as horrifying as that of Pluto, but that made them hesitant as well. The moon was the same. Even Mars was similar. The remaining planets seemed ordinary. Mercury, especially… seemed extraordinarily vulnerable.

They were torn and fell silent. The three of them looked at one another, and the centipede-faced cultivator gritted his teeth.

“I suspect that this place is so peaceful because there are a few extremely terrifying and awesome powers that are in slumber… did you notice the Stellar Source here is slightly different from those that we’ve encountered before…”

“I think… we should enter this place, quickly dig out the Stellar Source as soon as possible, then leave. With our grand elder’s jade pendant, we should be able to conceal our presence. As long as we’re quick, we should have a high chance of succeeding!” The centipede-faced cultivator pointed at Mercury and said in a hushed tone.

The other two hesitated for a moment before gritting their teeth and nodding. They continued to plan and play out what would happen. There was no hesitation as they steered the black jellyfish and dashed towards the Solar System.

As they traveled, the jellyfish began to turn invisible. Finally, it seemed to have merged with space itself. It was invisible to the naked eye. In fact, without a certain level of cultivation, one wouldn’t be able to sense it even if he tried to.

The black jellyfish approached the Solar System steadily… it passed the starry skies and entered the realm of the Solar System. Once it entered, the jellyfish stopped. It seemed to be observing and waiting.

After half an hour, it realized that no one within the Solar System had discovered and reacted to their presence, and they grew confident in their judgment. Despite the fear racing in their hearts, they couldn't control their rising greed. The two emotions intermingled and formed a certain excitement they hadn't felt for many years. Viciousness and violence appeared on their faces. They steered the black jellyfish and headed straight for Mercury!

Even though Mercury was but a few steps away from the Sun, they continued to inspect the surroundings while racing towards it. They were prepared to react to any possible scenarios. Things might have gone too smoothly however. When the black jellyfish reached the outskirts of Mercury, and as they realized that the civilization in this Solar System hadn't reacted to their presence, they grew bolder.

"Attack!" Outside Mercury, the centipede-faced cultivator spoke solemnly. The black jellyfish immediately showed itself and spat a beam of light at Mercury. As soon as the light appeared, it blanketed the entire planet. The black jellyfish moved and entered Mercury's outer atmosphere, landing on its surface!

Mercury was one of the eight major planets in the Solar System. The Federation had colonized it in the past, but after they had entered the Spirit Inception Era, the Federation had placed a greater importance on Mars instead. That was why the setup on Mercury remained sparse and minimal.

There wasn't even a colony city on this planet. Due to Mercury's proximity to the Sun, the Federation had marked Mercury as a stepping stone in their series of plans to land on the ancient green-bronze sword!

The colonization on Mercury had kicked off due to those plans. However, they still had quite a long way to go. The colonization of Mercury had only begun and was halfway to completion. Despite that, hundreds of thousands of cultivators had gathered on the planet and were continuing the colonization works.

This very day… would be a calamitous day for all cultivators on Mercury. It would incur the greatest wrath the Federation had ever experienced since the beginning of the Spirit Inception Era!

Mercury became a graveyard… near eighty percent of all cultivators died of mysterious causes. They didn't die in battle but from a mysterious virus!

The virus seemed to be transmitted via light and was beyond bizarre. It would result in mass unconsciousness in a split second. Bodies would wither and turn into an energy source that could then be reused.

Such an overwhelming invasion took less than an hour before it ended.

An hour later, when the black jellyfish left, there remained few bodies on Mercury. All of those who had died had become the energy source that would aid the three cultivators in acquiring the Stellar Source.

Almost seventy percent of Mercury's Stellar Source was dug right out of it, while the remaining was embedded too deeply in its core and thus escaped excavation. However, Mercury, with only thirty

percent of its Stellar Source left, wasn't left unscathed. Signs of decomposition and shriveling appeared, and an aura of death spread across the planet. It seemed as if the planet had gone through its full life cycle within that hour and entered the final stages of its life.

It was six hours before the Federation discovered something was amiss on Mercury…

Following the deaths of hordes of cultivators on Mercury and the shriveling of the planet, the remote images of everything that happened were transmitted back to the Federation. Rage and fury erupted in the Federation. It was impossible to hide what had happened as hordes of media agencies immediately started reporting on this matter. The entire Federation was flooded with terror and rage instantly!

"A Mercury massacre!"

"There's a possibility of an extraterrestrial invasion!"

"A virus has spread across Mercury. The means of its transmission are unknown!"

"Mercury… is dying!"

Chapter 440: The Federation Rages!

Compared to the fury of the Federation, the feelings of the general populace were more important. As the media agencies continued to report such news, both true and false information continued to be spread. It resulted in widespread fear and terror throughout the entire Federation, across all the planets, amongst both commonfolk and cultivators.

The scale of this incident was too big. Hundreds of thousands of cultivators on a planet, all dead within two hours. An unknown virus against which they had no resistance. The terror that this had ignited rose like a tsunami, erupting across large parts of the Federation.

There were even voices that were speaking out and attributing this to the ascent of the Spirit Inception Era. They called for people to abandon their cultivation and for them to give up the path of cultivation. They called for a return to the power of technology and science.

Various bizarre incidents like terrorist attacks, numerous so-called sacrificial rituals, and organizations wishing to contact and reach out to the extraterrestrial civilization were triggered. They happened repeatedly across the entire Federation.

There were many more people who, while afraid, were angrier than they were fearful. Talks about investigation and revenge grew more heated. Everything erupted within one night after the tragedy had taken place.

The Federation's response was extremely swift. Duan Muque executed a series of measures before setting up a press conference that would be broadcast to the entire Federation. He invited all media agencies and made an announcement regarding the Mercury tragedy!

"If possible, I wish I didn't have to make this announcement, because none of us wish to see tragedy occur!"

“But tragedy has occurred… this isn’t the fault of the Spirit Inception Era. The only fault… lies in our own weakness!” Duan Muque stood before the entire Federation as he made his proclamation. He had sorrow written on his face, and his voice was heavy.

“Weakness is our sin. I don’t wish to speak pretty words today. I don’t wish to explain or hide. I only want to tell you four things. The first is the truth—what really happened. The second is what the Federation government has done and will be doing in retaliation! The third and fourth, well, you shall find out shortly!

“Firstly, there were two hundred, thirteen thousand, seven hundred, and fifty-six deaths on Mercury! A planet has its own life. Mercury has been robbed of more than half of its life. It is now in the late stages of its life cycle. Perhaps in the near future, our descendants will only be able to read about what Mercury was like in the historical records…

“The cause of death is a virus that was transmitted through light. It is a terrifying virus, but its life span lasts only two hours. The Federation has studied it and has come up with a way to deal with it!

“As for the culprit… we’ve confirmed that it’s an unknown extraterrestrial civilization!”

When the Federation President said this, every resident who was watching the screening grew furious. Even though they had learned that this was indeed true from various media sources, at this moment, many people still wept. The terror in their hearts intensified. There were even signs of a mass mental breakdown in various regions.

Duan Muque paid no attention to all that. His expression and tone of voice remained solemn as he continued speaking.

“Secondly, once we found out about this, the Federation activated the planetary array formation that hasn’t yet been fully constructed. Even though it’s only halfway through completion, it still has the ability to seal and lock down the area. We have also activated the various array formations on the major planets. The Federation army has also been activated, and they are now spread across the entire Solar System and on the hunt. We must… have our vengeance!” Duan Muque shouted his last statement. His aura was no longer solemn at this moment but colored with a tinge of madness and a grim determination!

As soon as his words rang out, they resonated with countless others. The call for vengeance echoed throughout the various regions, and countless Federation residents shouted in unison!

“Thirdly, the Federation isn’t without our Nascent Souls. Previously, the esteemed elder has been away in seclusion, which is why we found it inappropriate to disturb him. Yesterday, he came out from seclusion. He will make a personal trip into space and hunt down the culprits!” At that juncture, the Federation President raised his right hand. An illusory screen appeared behind him. Within the screen reflected the broad expanse of the starlit universe. There was a sword-shaped cruiser speeding through space. Within the cruiser sat an old elder in meditation!

The image of the elder was indistinct and blurred. He was unrecognizable. But where the cruiser passed, a series of ripples in the fabric of space was left in its wake. It was an awesome sight. It was then that the elder opened his eyes. In his eyes was a deep, unfathomable light. His gaze pierced through the screen and stirred everyone in the depths of their souls.

The earlier terror that had risen subsided greatly with the unprecedented appearance of a Nascent Soul, but those earlier feelings of fear were set to rest. The majority of cultivators were roused by the announcement. They knew what a Nascent Soul truly signified. That was why they grew excited. It was as if they had just seen the birth of hope!

“Fourthly, the Federation has successfully invented… an Anti-Spirit Bomb. It is still in its infancy, but its power when exploded… rivals that of a Nascent Soul!”

“We have manufactured our first batch of Anti-Spirit Bombs. There are a thousand of them! If we trigger fifty of such explosions, killing a Nascent Soul will no longer remain an impossible feat! It doesn’t matter how strong the extraterrestrial civilization is, a thousand bombs… are sufficient to wipe them out!” The Federation President declared loudly. There was no video recording of the bombs, but the evidence that he had provided for the previous three announcements was sufficient for the populace to believe in the fourth. With this faith, a great part of their fear fled and faded away.

Duan Muque’s announcement had been an astounding success. The reveal of a Nascent Soul as well as of the Anti-Spirit Bomb had strengthened the public’s confidence.

However, a small minority knew that even if the Anti-Spirit Bomb turned out to be successful, there wouldn’t be many of those around. They wouldn’t number in the thousands and would count themselves lucky to have even a hundred Anti-Spirit Bombs.

Duan Muque didn’t give the populace a chance to react. He swept his large hand aside, and the screen behind him shifted, the silhouette of the Head Senator appearing.

“The Senate will cooperate fully with the Federation to ensure the culprit receives his due punishment. We will fight to the death!”

“The Trilunaris Corporation will contribute its full efforts towards this battle!”

“The Five Generation Sky Clan…”

“The Galactic Dusk Sect…”

“The Plume Manifestation Connate Sect…”

“The four Dao Colleges swear to protect the Federation with its life!”

The silhouette of the Head Senator disappeared and was followed by the representatives of the various political forces. They appeared on the screen, and they were not alone. Behind each one of them were armies of cultivators. Their eyes shone with determination and murder, and they had their desire for vengeance written on their faces.

The entire Federation populace was no longer worried. The Federation officials in the various cities began to comfort their residents and ease their worries. The domestic crisis wasn’t only resolved—the people had gathered and formed strong popular support!

Cries for vengeance and justice became common suddenly. As they spread across the Federation, somewhere in space, a black jellyfish that had merged seamlessly into the dark canvas of space was dashing ahead. It hadn’t yet left the Solar System. It remained and was in the vicinity of Mars, and, judging from where it was headed, it would pass by Mars!

This wasn't because the three cultivators didn't want to leave, but because the lockdown by the Federation had led to their increased prudence. This was especially since, after the lockdown in the Solar System, they sensed the presence of two Nascent Souls seemingly searching for them.

The three cultivators became more careful. After all, this patch of the universe contained many entities that terrified them. The rewards they had reaped on Mercury gave them great satisfaction though. They had made up their mind. Their top priority now was to leave as soon as they could.

"With the elder's jade pendant helping to conceal our presence, I'm thinking maybe we can do this another time… then break out of the array formation and leave!"

"That's a bit risky…"

The three of them talked for a while and reached a consensus. They decided not to go ahead with the idea. Suddenly, the black jellyfish that had been speeding ahead shuddered violently. It seemed to be sending out a certain emotion, causing the three of them widened their eyes. The cultivator with a centipede on his face hastily pulled out the compass, performing a series of hand seals.

The compass light dazzled suddenly, and an image of Mars appeared. It was amplified countless times until it was revealed that resting deep underground in Mars was a sea of shadow!

Even though they couldn't see its true form in detail, they could still sense through the compass and feel the extraordinary spirit energies given out from within this shadow!

"It's a Dark Artifact, my god. It's actually a Dark Artifact! No wonder the Sea Glutton reacted that way!"

"How is that possible! This is a Dark Artifact. Legends speak of only a few surviving Dark Artifacts in the entire universe. The legends say that a person who wields a Dark Artifact has power over the cycle of life, death, and rebirth!"

Their breathing quickened, and they felt torn. A long moment later, they looked at one another. They knew that they wouldn't be able to rest well at night if they simply left like that. They gritted their teeth and came to a decision.

"Let's go take a look. If there's a chance of taking it, we'll take it. If there's no chance, we'll immediately leave and inform the elders. We'll call for our clansmen to destroy this civilization and take everything they've got!" The red eyes of the three men turned even redder. They steered the black jellyfish in another direction and headed straight for Mars!