

## Worth 471

### Chapter 471: Baole Is a Good Kid

Wang Baole didn't wait for the Martian Colony Governor to reply. He happily sent another voice transmission to the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College. However, no one picked up his call. Wang Baole was already experienced with such matters, so he left a message.

"Sect Lord, I, Wang Baole, didn't disappoint your expectations. After months of seclusion, I've reached a breakthrough in my cultivation without any difficulty. I've entered... the Core Formation realm!"

Wang Baole was simply overcome with excitement. He hurriedly left the Federation President another message. He felt that his reaching the Core Formation realm was an important milestone. The entire Federation should be celebrating, and he should be receiving congratulatory gifts from important people. That was the only respectable way to treat a Primary Rank Three Noble.

As Wang Baole was sending messages to the Governor and the others, the Governor was sitting inside her office in the Martian Colony City. On her desk was a jade slip. It exuded a strange light that enveloped her entire person.

The same thing was happening to the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College, as well as the other three Sect Lords of the other three Dao Colleges. Similarly, to the Head Senator and a few senators of the Senate, and even the representatives of the other political forces such as the Five Generation Sky Clan and the upper echelons of the military. The various important figures in the Federation were currently sitting in their respective offices, enveloped in the light of identical jade slips.

That was why even though they noticed Wang Baole's voice transmission, they didn't have the time to attend to it. This was because, at this moment, they were conducting a Federation summit via this unique jade slip!

The location of this summit was the Federation Capital on Earth, on the top floor of a towering building whose design was a combination of the sun, moon, and stars. Within this building was an enormous conference room.

Nine statues stood on the sides of the conference room, each statue exuding an intense battle aura. Within the circle of statues was an enormous, oval-shaped, stone table. More than a dozen large chairs lined the table, and projected on each chair was an illusory figure!

There was the Martian Colony Governor, the Sect Lords of the four Dao Colleges, the representative of the Trilunaris Corporation, the Head Senator, as well as Lin You and two other senators. There were also five Elders from the Five Generation Sky Clan, the Grand Elder from the Galactic Dusk Sect, and the Sect Lord of the Plume Manifestation Connate Sect. A great proportion of the most important figures of the entire Federation were in this room.

The Federation President had no projection. He was there in person, seated in the chair in the center of the table. Even though there was a difference in size between his person and the chair, the aura that he exuded formed a Dharma body that was the exact same size as the other attendees. His presence overpowered the rest.

This was the fifth summit. It had been going on for an entire day and was about to reach its end. The main issues they discussed during the summit were the Mercury crisis and the whereabouts of the three extraterrestrial cultivators.

However, no matter how hard the Federation searched, they were unable to locate traces of these three extraterrestrial cultivators. There were many views about this, but no conclusion was reached. The intense defensive measures that the Federation had put in place and the activation of the array formations across the entire Solar System was expending a great deal of energy. To the Federation, which was only in the dawn of its cultivation civilization, the longer they kept this up, the more challenges they would face maintaining the status quo.

They finally reached a consensus as the summit neared its end. It was then that Federation President Duan Muque. Everyone around him stopped their discussion and raised their heads to look at Duan Muque.

“Senior Mo Gaozi has already searched the entire Solar System, and the Federation array formation has been activated this whole time. Despite that, we haven’t found any clues. Based on Senior Mo Gaozi’s assessment... the three extraterrestrial cultivators have either perished or have left the Solar System through means that are unknown to us,” Duan Muque said, his low voice ringing out in the conference room.

“The chances of them perishing are low, but it’s still possible. After all, within this Solar System exists things that we cannot comprehend... some strange mysterious powers!

“The possibility of them having escaped the Solar System is greater. If that is the case, that means that... we might be facing greater threats in the future!”

“Regardless, there’s no reason to keep the Solar System array formation activated. However, as a lesson from the Mercury crisis, the greater array formations for the respective planets should be activated fully at all times!” As Duan Muque said that, his expression remained unchanged. His thoughts were indiscernible. Those around him seemed deep in thought, but no one said a word.

He glanced at everyone, then laughed suddenly. He knew that even if certain things remained unspoken, they would still be heard by those sat there. After all, they were all experienced strategists.

It might seem that Duan Muque was prepared to deactivate the greater array formation and lower the threat level. However, he had also secretly spoken to Senior Mo Gaozi, who had harbored goodwill all these years. They planned to use such a method to lure the three extraterrestrial cultivators out. They planned to wait for them to reappear. As a result, Mo Gaozi’s search wouldn’t end yet.

However, even though he believed that the Federation wouldn’t have traitors who would betray the entire species, he still decided to be cautious and guard against the possibility of someone in their midst colluding with the extraterrestrial cultivators. He hadn’t shared the full details of his plans. He had, in fact, secretly put in place greater preventive measures.

Having spoken his piece, Duan Muque was about to get up and end the summit. It was then that an extremely handsome middle-aged man from the Five Generation Sky Clan laughed suddenly.

“Comrade Duan Muque, since the important matters have been decided, and the Solar System array formation will be deactivated, then it means that everything will be returning to normal. Should we then talk about the matter of promoting the city status of the new Martian city?” The person who had spoken was the head of the Chen family in the Five Generation Sky Clan—Chen Mu’s father!

As soon as he said that, the other clan leaders in the Five Generation Sky Clan nodded. The head of the Zhuo family, especially, said with a smile.

“The new Martian city is an extremely important asset, but its current scale is unable to support the excavation of the Divine Armament. There are also unknown security issues regarding its defenses. I support the proposal to promote its status to a special regional city!”

After the Five Generation Sky Clan representatives spoke in succession, the grand elder from the Galactic Dusk Sect also smiled faintly and nodded.

“The Galactic Dusk Sect extends their support for this matter!”

Soon, the Sect Lord of the Plume Manifestation Connate Sect also touched his chin. He stared at the Five Generation Sky Clan, then at the four Dao Colleges. He supported the proposal as well.

The Trilunaris Corporation didn’t speak, and the Senate was the same. Lin You had a slight frown on his forehead, narrowing his eyes as he glanced towards the Ethereal Dao College.

The expression of the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord seemed slightly strange in his eyes. He kept lowering his head as if he was reading something... As for the other three Dao Colleges, the Sect Lord from the White Deer Dao College, especially, snorted but didn’t say anything. The matter about promoting the status of the new Martian city had been set in stone. The various political forces had reached a consensus. They had divided the various posts in the special regional city amongst themselves as well. If not for the appearance of the extraterrestrial cultivators, this matter would have been a done deal.

Even the Governor of the Martian Colony was expressionless. However, no one had noticed that she had lowered her head earlier. She seemed to have taken a look at her voice transmission ring.

Finally, with the support of the great majority, the promotion of the new Martian city’s status was decided. Duan Muque didn’t stop the motion. He simply concealed the faint devious look in his Dharma body’s eyes.

“Since the matter of the special regional city has been decided, the next matter would be to decide the City Lord of the new special regional city.” The Martian Colony Governor, who hadn’t said a single word earlier, suddenly spoke.

“The candidate must be level-headed and have a Core Formation realm cultivation. This is unfortunate for Wang Baole. He is a good kid, but he is not at the Core Formation realm.” The Zhuo family head from the Five Generation Sky Clan shook his head and sighed.

“We might be old, but we still have to support the Federation and give the next generation enough time to grow into their talents and powers. Especially Wang Baole, who has shown such potential. We cannot take up his precious time, which can be better spent on cultivation!”

As these people spoke hypocritical words, the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College suddenly slammed his fist on the table and roared.

“Wang Baole has made undeniable and great contributions to the Federation and to Mars. He built the new Martian city from scratch. I propose that the Federation set a precedent and allow Wang Baole to become the City Lord of the special regional city!”

“There’s no need for such agitation, Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College. I agree that Wang Baole is indeed exemplary, but rules are rules, how could we simply amend them like that? If Wang Baole’s cultivation was at the Core Formation realm, I would support him as well, but the Martian special regional city is closely tied with the Divine Armament. This is no joking matter. Sect Lord, you shouldn’t allow your personal feelings to affect decisions regarding the welfare of the Federation!” the Chen family head of the Five Generation Sky Clan said coolly. The pitch of his voice wasn’t high. However, the harshness of his tone rang clearly through his words.

“You...” The Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord’s face darkened and then paled, then darkened again as he tightened his fists. He had nothing to say to that.

“I can understand what the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord is feeling. Wang Baole is indeed the best candidate, but his cultivation doesn’t meet the requirements. Besides, based on Federation laws, the City Lord of a special regional city would have to join the Senate. He would also have to be at least a Secondary Rank Two Noble. One of the requirements of a Secondary Rank Two Noble is a Core Formation realm cultivation!” The grand elder of the Galactic Dusk Sect sitting at one side shook his head and sighed.

“That’s the principle of the matter...”

The Five Generation Sky Clan, the Galactic Dusk Sect, and the other supporters started to sigh. Those from the Five Generation Sky Clan were especially hypocritical in their expressions of pity.

Just as they were about to declare that they had reached a consensus on whom the new City Lord was to be, suddenly, the Martian City Governor, who had been standing at one side, said coolly, with no expression on her face.

“I just received news. As you’ve all agreed, the best person for the job, who unfortunately lacked sufficient cultivation, is Wang Baole. He just ended his seclusion. He... has reached the Core Formation realm!”

## **Chapter 472: The President’s Autobiography**

“He’s... reached the Core Formation realm...”

Those words were like a slight breeze passing by the ears of the group discussing the best and most suitable candidate to take over supervision of the Martian special regional city. It stirred gentle ripples, and the discussion about potential City Lord candidates continued for a few more moments...

Finally, the voices faded. The various important figures gradually froze, then abruptly turned towards the expressionless Martian Colony Governor. There was a moment... when the entire hall descended into a deathly silence.

It was during this silence that the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord coughed. The sound of his cough echoed in the quiet halls. His voice, which the rest found annoying then, drifted amongst the group.

“I’ve also just received the news. Now that Wang Baole, whom everyone has agreed is the best choice for City Lord of the special regional city, has reached the Core Formation realm, I thank all my Fellow Daoists present for your recommending him to the post. I shouldn’t be displaying such favoritism, but for the good of the Federation, and since everyone here approves of and believes so strongly in this disciple of my sect, as a Sect Lord, I naturally am not in a position to decline or refuse the recommendation!”

“Esteemed President, on behalf of the Ethereal Dao College and the four great Dao Colleges, I recommend that Wang Baole take over as City Lord of the Martian special regional city. In addition, given his contributions to the Federation and to Mars, I believe he should be promoted to a Secondary Rank Two Noble!” the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord said suddenly. As his words rang out, a late-stage Core Formation realm cultivation erupted from his person. It was like a hurricane that spun inside the great halls. His words were filled with an... overpowering aura that he hadn’t had earlier!

This was because he wasn’t only speaking for the Ethereal Dao College but also the four great Dao Colleges. His words meant that the other three Dao Colleges couldn’t refute him if the alliance of the four Dao Colleges was to remain strong. Regardless of their internal conflicts and in-fighting, they had to present a united front in such summits!

Should there be any opposing voices amongst the four Dao Colleges, it would create a tremendous adverse impact on the four great Dao Colleges. There would even be a fracture in the alliance between the Ethereal Dao College and the other Dao Colleges!

In addition, what the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord had said was indeed true. Regardless of anything else... Wang Baole was a member of the four Dao Colleges. That was why the Sect Lords of the other three Dao Colleges, after staring at the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord, didn’t challenge his words. A strange feeling began to rise within them. The Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord at this moment was different from the familiar Sect Lord that they had known. He had changed.

The Sect Lord of the White Deer Dao College was silent for a few moments. He might dislike Wang Baole, but he spoke immediately as well.

“I, too, recommend Wang Baole to be promoted to a Secondary Rank Two Noble and take over as City Lord of the special regional city!”

His recommendation was followed by the recommendations of the other two Dao Colleges. Lin You smiled lightly and became the first senator to support the proposal!

Witnessing Lin You’s declaration of support, the remaining members of the Senate looked at one another, then at the Head Senator.

There was no expression on the Head Senator's face. However, he glanced towards Lin You, then smiled slightly. He nodded and said, "This is a great outcome!"

The expressions on the representatives of the Five Generation Sky Clan, the Galactic Dusk Sect, and the Plume Manifestation Connate Sect changed then. The Head Senator's words carried great weight, which was why they began to frown. The few clan leaders of the Five Generation Sky Clan felt an indescribable resentment surface within them. They were frustrated beyond measure. Wang Baole had picked the best time for his breakthrough to happen!

They still had to maintain their reputation, so there was no way they could go back on what they had just said. They were thinking about how to address this matter, perhaps using another approach after first setting this matter aside for later discussion, when the representative from the Trilunaris Corporation suddenly laughed. He was an elder who hadn't participated in the discussion earlier. He was the younger brother of Master Jin, who was the head of the Trilunaris Corporation.

"The Trilunaris Corporation will increase its investments in the special regional city!"

As soon as he said that, the pressure on the Five Generation Sky Clan and gang grew. The Trilunaris Corporation might not have explicitly made a stand, but the fact that the elder hadn't mentioned increasing their investments earlier and had only done so now showed very clearly where they stood. There was no need to put that in words.

The Martian Colony Governor didn't say anything. However, they knew that she need not say anything. Her position on the matter had been made clear the moment she had announced that Wang Baole had reached the Core Formation realm.

This was the same with the military. They didn't state their position on the matter, but the seeming smiles on their faces seemed to hide deep, unfathomable meaning!

The sudden turn of the tables caught the Five Generation Sky Clan by surprise. The final blow came... from Federation President Duan Muque!

Duan Muque didn't give the Five Generation Sky Clan a chance to speak and simply waved his hand.

"Credit must be rewarded, and an able man must be put to good use!"

"I've said before that the Federation needs a hundred Wang Baoles. Today, I'm amending my statement. The Federation needs ten thousand Wang Baoles!"

"Declare to the people of the Federation that Wang Baole will be given the title of a Secondary Rank Two Noble and promoted... to the City Lord of the Martian special regional city. He will also join the Senate as its eighteenth senator!" Federation President Duan Muque announced decisively before he rose to his feet and ended the summit.

The pupils of the various clan leaders of the Five Generation Sky Clan contracted. They sensed something was amiss. Duan Muque had decided too quickly on the matter. They looked at one another, deep in thought. The other political forces also had considering looks on their faces, and they all carried their thoughts with them as they left.

Their projected forms soon disappeared in the great conference halls. Finally, Duan Muque rose to his feet and walked across the vast halls, towards the door.

His back was akin to a sharp sword. With every step he took, the spirit energy exuding from his person rippled. It was as if he was holding his cultivation back!

*Soon... the time for a breakthrough is near... it's just a pity that I'm still one step behind the old guy.* Duan Muque shook his head and smiled. He had seen the considering looks in the eyes of those who had left, but he paid them no heed. He believed that they would soon find out.

There were three reasons that Duan Muque had made such a decisive decision. The first was that he had great expectations of Wang Baole, though not to the extent that he would give him a hand up. The second was that... the current Federation needed a hero!

After the Mercury tragedy, the people of the Federation hadn't yet recovered from their sorrow and worry. The Federation needed to reshape its image in the eyes of its people. It needed to have a hero that everyone knew!

This hero would draw the attention of the people and rouse them into uniting. Wang Baole's image didn't really match what he had been looking for. He might come from a family background that would invite no complaints, and he might have climbed to the top, step by step, in the eyes of the people. However, he hadn't done enough to warrant Duan Muque picking him in the end.

If there had only been these two reasons, Duan Muque might have delayed this matter and used it as a bargaining chip. He would wait for both sides to make their bids, then as he re-calibrated the balanced relationships amongst the various political forces, he would reap as much as he could from this selection of the Martian special regional city's City Lord.

However, with the addition of the third reason, everything would change. The third reason formed the basis for everything. With the third reason, he had to reassess the importance of the first two reasons. Without the third reason... nothing would have happened!

This third reason was... the Grand Supreme Elder of the Ethereal Dao College—the former Federation President who had led the Federation in the way of founding the cultivation era, the former most powerful person in the Federation—Li Xingwen, was about to achieve a breakthrough from the Core Formation realm and enter the Nascent Soul realm!

The Ethereal Dao College might have been able to hide this from others, but they couldn't hide this from Duan Muque, who was also about to achieve his own breakthrough. He had long since felt, indistinctly, a fearsome presence within the Ethereal Dao College that was unnoticed by others and that seemed about to rise towering into the skies!

It was because of this that the Ethereal Dao College Sect Lord had a basis for his newfound confidence. It was the basis of the overpowering sense of authority exuding from his person!

"The construction of the teleportation array formation can be sped up..." Duan Muque said softly as he walked into the distance.

The summit ended, and the announcement of Wang Baole's appointment was made. Wang Baole, having returned to the new Martian city and realizing that nothing had changed since his disappearance, finally heard the news that he was waiting for!

Wang Baole burst out into happy and loud laughter when he received the news. He was beyond excited. He could feel the distance separating him from the Federation President's office closing with every step he took. It had been such an unreachable goal, but now it was almost within reach!

*From now on, I'm going to start on my autobiography. When it's done, I'll use it to tell the future generations how the legendary Federation President Wang Baole relied on his own hard work and perseverance, worked diligently, step by step, without relying on anyone else, relying only on his own sweat and tears, to become the fated son of Lady Fortune!*

*I've even thought of a name. It'll be called the President's Autobiography!* Wang Baole laughed maniacally. He felt that he had reached a peak in his life.

As Wang Baole basked in a joy that was beyond words, the media agencies across the entire Federation began simultaneously promoting Wang Baole like crazy. Every city on every Federation planet in the Solar System flashed the poster of Wang Baole on all available projection screens immediately.

An excited voice was accompanied by grand music as it declared Wang Baole's appointment!

The youngest Core Formation realm cultivator in the whole of Federation history!

The youngest Secondary Rank Two Noble who was a City Lord!

The youngest member of the Senate!

All of a sudden, Wang Baole's name spread across the entire Federation. He became a household name. There was no one who didn't know his name. He became... the new rising star of the Federation!

### **Chapter 473: A Glorious Homecoming**

As the various media outlets and the Spirit Internet continued to promote Wang Baole in every city on every planet of the entire Federation, stories about his childhood began to surface as those who knew the stories began sharing said stories.

"I'm the ex-husband of City Lord Wang Baole's elementary school teacher. I could tell since he was a young kid that he had the potential to be a hero. He studied hard in class and loved to help out the weaker female students. This is clearly the trait of the exemplary! He even actively got the other students together to lose weight. What a great kid. He did that to strengthen their bodies so that they might contribute to the prosperity of the Federation!"

"I'm City Lord Wang Baole's good friend. I sat behind him in class for three years. He was an inspiration to me those three years. He had a great impact on my life. It was Wang Baole who taught me to never stop improving myself!"

“This is all in the past, but City Lord Wang Baole once courted me. I didn’t want to affect his future, that was why I silently wept as I turned him down. But now, I just want to say, Wang Baole, I’m here in Phoenix City waiting for you!”

All sorts of tidbits began to be revealed through the media outlets and drew great interest from the populace. Contradictory opinions surfaced as well. There were those who said that Wang Baole was a pervert. There were some who said that since he had been a kid, Wang Baole had enjoyed making friends with the powerful for his personal gains. There were also those who said that he had been a bully when he had been in school...

Such news was drowned out by the sea of compliments when they first surfaced, hardly making a ripple. A host on the Spirit Internet also contributed greatly to this series of promotions.

“Old friends, do you still remember me, Little Daoist? I graduated from the Ethereal Dao College and had a series of close interactions with the City Lord Wang Baole. I even reported many exclusive news stories then. Today, please stay tuned to my channel as I bring you into the inner world of City Lord Wang Baole, and as we get to know the City Lord!” Little Daoist, who had been a host at the Ethereal Dao College, seized this opportunity and returned to college again. He revisited many places on campus and, with great exaggeration, reported what could be seen as exclusive information about Wang Baole’s student life on campus. It was a hit.

Such an explosive promotion fulfilled what the Federation set out to achieve, which was to distract the citizens’ attention. The Mercury incident sank to the depths of the people’s minds. It no longer hovered near the surface, before their eyes and at the top of their heads.

Wang Baole also found out through the Spirit Internet and countless voice transmissions that the Federation was carrying out widespread promotion regarding him. He became excited, spending most of his time every day logged on to the Spirit Internet and reading articles about himself. He would pat his tummy as he snacked, and his mood would soar to the heavens.

Perhaps it was because he had been in too good a mood and had overeaten, or that he hadn’t been exercising, or because Li Wan’er’s cultivation was nearing a breakthrough and she had gone into seclusion—resulting in her being unable to help him exercise—but Wang Baole felt a change in sensation as he patted his tummy. Based on his rich experience in losing weight, he could tell that... he had gained weight again.

The thought of being fat was akin to being hit by a Nascent Soul realm cultivator with all his strength. Wang Baole shuddered immediately. He wanted to throw aside the half-eaten drumstick in his hand. However, after some thought, he stood before the mirror and carefully examined himself and his figure, which still seemed somewhat slim. He was torn.

*This is my last drumstick today. After finishing it, I’ll start to lose weight tomorrow!* Wang Baole gritted his teeth. It was as if he had a deep grudge against the drumstick. He finished it within two to three mouthfuls. After that, he sat down forcefully and took a deep breath, a look of determination in his eyes.

*As the most handsome man in the whole of the Federation, I have to maintain my image. Such stress...* Wang Baole lowered his head and stared at his tummy. He realized that he had let go of himself

too much in the past few days. Even though the new city had risen to become a special regional city and his workload had increased considerably, he had experienced a few city expansions previously and had also resolved the problem of the Beast Tides from the catacombs. Everything was going according to plan.

Jin Duoming and the others also received a promotion in their ranks and appointments, causing the level of their authority to grow. As long as everything went according to plan, he would be left with plenty of leisure time.

*I can't let myself relax...* Wang Baole rubbed at his forehead. He thought for a while then decided to make a trip back to earth. He had the intention when he had returned. However, because of Li Wan'er's seclusion and the recent promotion in status for the city, Wang Baole had decided to supervise the city administration for some time first.

*My Lightning Dao is only at the Foundation Establishment realm level. I need to return to the Ethereal Dao College to select a new mystic art at the Core Formation realm... It's a pity that the mystic arts inside the Dark Dream all had something to do with Dark Qi. Even those that have nothing to do with Dark Qi can only be practiced when I reach the Spirit Immortal realm... They're looking down on the Core Formation realm.* Wang Baole sighed.

Even though it was important to return to the college and pick up his next mystic art, if that had been the only matter, Wang Baole wouldn't have needed to make a personal visit. He had been speaking to his parents via transmissions every now and then, but it had been some time since they had last met.

That was why Wang Baole was thinking about returning to Earth and visiting his parents, and he would make a trip to the college and pick up his next mystic art while he was there. He had another thing that he was considering as well. Wang Baole was wondering if his parents should continue to stay in Phoenix City and if that was still appropriate.

Even though it would be difficult for his aging parents to leave their hometown—with the rise in his cultivation and status, and with his increased knowledge and understanding of this world—Wang Baole knew that while the Federation might appear to be safe, there were still possibilities of catastrophes like the Mercury incident happening again.

Besides, even if the Federation administration seemed to be relatively stable, Wang Baole knew that there were many who envied him, held a grudge against him, or had conflicting interests.

Wang Baole wasn't confident of the safety that the Phoenix City could provide. His heart wouldn't be set at ease even if the Ethereal Dao College sent people to protect his parents secretly.

*I'll discuss it with mom. It'll be best if they could move to Ethereal City. It'll be safer for them that way.* Wang Baole made up his mind. He would return and discuss it with his mother. As for what his father thought, he wouldn't put too much weight on that. Based on his understanding, since the neighboring aunts had started addressing him as Old Wang, his status in their family had fallen to an extreme low.

*I pity dad. The world is harsh. Old Li, Old Liu, and Old Zhang next door are all fine, but once they mention Old Wang next door...* Wang Baole shook his head and sighed. He submitted a request to the Martian Colony Governor, then gathered Kong Dao, Jin Duoming, Lin Tianhao and the others for instruction.

Soon, that day in the evening, his subordinates saw him off as he boarded a celestial cruiser that belonged to the Martian special regional city and left the planet.

As an important Secondary Rank Two Noble, every move that Wang Baole made needed to be reported to the Federation. The Federation immediately got hold of his calendar. The Martian military even arranged for a protection detail of four cruisers to accompany him on this trip.

The four cruisers circled the main cruiser as they dashed through space. As they passed the moon, three cruisers that belonged to the lunar base joined the fleet under Federation orders. Eight cruisers sped towards Earth.

As they continued to approach, Wang Baole, standing inside the main cruiser, first kicked the donkey that was licking the floorboard with a contemplative look—as if it wanted to take a bit out of the floor—then gazed outside the window. As the blue planet approached, thoughts of home and homesickness began to show in his eyes.

He recalled when he had first left many years ago. He had only just reached the Foundation Establishment realm and had only been a Secondary Rank Five Noble. He had carried his dreams aboard a cruiser to Mars, entered the education sector, and braved countless trials to arrive at where he was now.

Now, he was a Secondary Rank Two Noble. His cultivation had achieved a breakthrough, and he had entered the Core Formation realm. His status and rank of now and many years ago seemed worlds apart.

*I'm going home!* Wang Baole took a deep breath. The cruiser that he was in was surrounded by seven other escorting cruisers as they raced towards Earth. Soon, they entered the Earth's great array formation and were pulled in, entering the atmosphere before speeding towards the spaceport in the Federation Capital!

The Federation had made arrangements for a reception party for him at the sky port, a grand reception with over a hundred people. They looked, smiling, as the cruisers landed—the rumbling roars of the engines resounded in the port. The first to get out were the hundred-odd combat cultivators who had been inside the seven escort cruisers and had guarded Wang Baole during the journey to Earth. They raced out of the cruisers and secured the area. After ensuring that everything was safe and secure, the doors of the main cruiser opened gradually.

As soon as it opened, Wang Baole, who had just smoothed his attire and put on a serious expression, slowly walked out. The donkey followed behind him, clearly excited. It kept looking around, as everything on Earth was new to its eyes.

“City Lord Wang, welcome back to Earth!” As soon as Wang Baole appeared, those in the reception party immediately bowed and greeted Wang Baole!

Leading them was a middle-aged man with a cultivation at the Core Formation realm. There was warmth in his smile as he cupped his fists and saluted Wang Baole.

## **Chapter 474: Going Home**

Even though Wang Baole didn't know the other man's exact rank and office, he had been working in the Federation administration for such a long time. He was long used to the social etiquette required of him at such events. After stepping off the cruiser, he first stood and returned a bow to those who had greeted him. Then, he cupped his fists and saluted the middle-aged man with a smile on his face.

The leading middle-aged man saw his reciprocal bow and smiled lightly. He had heard Wang Baole's name many times. Now that he was finally meeting him, he could tell from this small detail that Wang Baole was someone who knew how to conduct himself and play the crowd.

He liked such people. Even though they were more complicated, they suited the current Federation climate. As a smile surfaced on Wang Baole's face, he too laughed aloud. He took a few quick steps forward and approached Wang Baole. Wang Baole got to know who he was after a brief cordial exchange.

He was also a Secondary Rank Two Noble. However, unlike Wang Baole, who had been sent into space as an ambassador to colonize new lands, he was the head secretary of the Federation President's office. He was akin to the capital city's chief minister, and the loyal subordinate to the Federation President.

His reception was an expression of the Federation President's attitude towards Wang Baole. After realizing who he was, Wang Baole also realized what his presence meant. His smile widened as they chatted merrily. After clarifying why Wang Baole was heading towards Phoenix City, the middle-aged man immediately made arrangements for a cruiser to send him over.

"Even though we are tasked with protecting the whole of humanity and the Federation, we are still cultivators at heart. We are unable to travel through space, that's why we use cruisers, but now that I'm back on my home planet, there's no need for cruisers. I'll simply fly there." Wang Baole smiled as he turned down the offer tactfully. The middle-aged man gave his answer some thought and didn't insist further.

Wang Baole instructed the Combat cultivators who had escorted him back to Earth to await further orders in the capital city. He then bade farewell to the head secretary. With a single step and a wave of his hand, a flying sword flew out from his storage bracelet. He lifted one foot and got onto the flying sword before it dashed through the sky like a sudden rainbow arc and sped into the heavens.

The reception party gazed from the grounds beneath as Wang Baole stood on his flying sword. With the wind in his face, his hair stirred. Despite his rotund figure, he still appeared as if he were an immortal wandering the lands, ethereal and without a tinge of the earthly desires and needs that ruled the ordinary folk. In that manner, he disappeared gradually into the distance.

"We cultivators should be just like that!" the head secretary of the Federation President's office smiled and said. His words resounded in the air, and envy colored everyone's eyes when they heard what he had said.

After all, only a Core Formation realm cultivator could travel the skies via long-distance flight. A Foundation Establishment realm cultivator might be able to do the same for short distances, but once the journey lengthened, they would find it difficult to sustain such a mode of travel.

"I wonder when we'll get to be just like City Lord Wang Baole, traveling between cities on a flying sword!" The crowd sighed and slowly dispersed. As for Wang Baole, he was currently on his flying sword and had just left the parameters of the capital city—speeding towards Phoenix City.

His mood was merry, and his spirits high. He hadn't chosen to travel on a cruiser because he felt that, as he was already a Core Formation realm cultivator, it would be beneath his status to still take the cruiser.

*Core Formation realm cultivators should be flying. That's the only method that befits their status.* Wang Baole was brimming with happiness and pleasure. He increased his speed against the incoming winds.

He stirred a series of rumbling as he shot through the air, causing the beasts on land to freeze as they listened to the thunderous booms resounding above their heads. The Core Formation realm cultivation that Wang Baole exuded drove the Ancient Martial realm and True Breath realm beasts cowering, too frightened to lift their heads from the ground.

When he passed some of the smaller cities, the people in the cities also heard the loud thundering in the sky. When they looked up, they saw an indistinct figure dashing across the heavens like a bolt of lightning.

Gasps rose to the air. In the Federation, it was common to see a cultivator at the Ancient Martial realm. True Breath realm cultivators were also regular sightings. One might even cross paths with a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator. Core Formation realm cultivators though... were all important figures and numbered in the few. Rarely could anyone see one in person.

Wang Baole's flight via flying sword naturally drew too much attention during his journey back home. Even though there were many who didn't know Wang Baole's actual level of cultivation and didn't get a clear look of him, the Foundation Establishment realm cultivators inside the cities could still clearly sense the overpowering authority that exuded from the fleeting figure passing over their cities! It was a power that made them quake in their boots!

"A Core Formation realm cultivator!"

"There's a Core Formation realm senior flying past on his sword!"

Gasps of shock resounded in the air. As Wang Baole flew faster and faster, like a lightning bolt snaking through the air, he even managed to glimpse a few long-distance passenger cruisers as he passed them by. As he overtook them, he would catch the shocked looks in the passengers' eyes.

News began to appear on the Spirit Internet and even on some media outlets.

It didn't take too long before Wang Baole began to regret his decision... He had imagined a flight via flying sword being an incredibly enjoyable experience. However, when he finally did it—especially over such a long distance—Wang Baole got to know what it meant to have violent winds lashing him in the face, and what it meant to feel extreme, piercing cold.

The faster he flew, the stronger the winds got, and the stronger the resistance became. The idea of having the wind in one's face might seem somewhat poetic, but after a while, the winds became a chill that pierced deep into one's bones. If he were to activate his cultivation now as a protective barrier, he would be expending even more Spirit Qi.

Wang Baole muttered to himself, then decided to give up halfway on the plan to fly the entire way home. Compared to showing off his abilities, he felt that comfort was of greater priority. He corrected his earlier mistaken views that had arisen due to his just reaching the Core Formation realm and becoming a Secondary Rank Two Noble, and hurriedly pulled out his cruiser. Sat comfortably inside, he pulled out a bag of snacks and began snacking as he steered the cruiser towards Phoenix City.

While there was a considerable distance separating Phoenix City and the capital city, with the augmentation of Wang Baole's cultivation, the cruiser's speed increased considerably. The entire journey took but two hours, and Phoenix City soon came within sight.

There were hundreds of people waiting for him outside the city, but Wang Baole wasn't surprised to see that. Having read the high officials' autobiographies, he knew that as a Secondary Rank Two Noble, and having just returned to the Phoenix City, the City Lord would have to receive him personally. If not, it would mean that something had gone wrong somewhere.

When Wang Baole's cruiser landed outside Phoenix City, he was warmly received by the city officials, who were led by Liu Daobin's father. Liu Daobin's father was leading the reception party because he had been promoted to the City Lord of Phoenix City.

Naturally, this had a lot to do with Liu Daobin, who was Wang Baole's trusted subordinate, and Liu Daobin's appointment on Mars.

After a round of warm reception, Liu Daobin's father, aware that Wang Baole had returned to reunite with his parents, didn't take up too much of Wang Baole's time. He had ensured that the reception was brief while sufficiently expressing their attitude regarding Wang Baole's return.

Wang Baole was pleased as well, as he was also unwilling to spend too much time here. His heart was already looking forward to home, and he quickly withdrew from the group and headed home.

The area that his home was located had changed, and it was no longer the same as what he had remembered. There were many more unfamiliar faces around him, most of them at the True Breath realm, though he saw three Foundation Establishment realm cultivators. They appeared from around a corner, dressed in the robes of the Ethereal Dao College. They cupped their fists and saluted Wang Baole.

They were the disciples charged with protecting Wang Baole's family by the Ethereal Dao College. There were also city guards surrounding the residential area, which was clearly very well protected.

Wang Baole nodded. He cupped his fists and saluted the guards before walking towards his home. As soon as he approached, he could hear his father's voice, and the unhappiness in it, resounding inside their house.

"What's wrong with me receiving my own son? That Little Liu, he's too fixated on formalities. The moment I expressed my intention of receiving my own son, he had a look of panic on his face. He went on about how they can do it, and how he was worried that Baole might come to the wrong conclusions if I went!"

"Stop that. He has a difficult job as well. Besides, you're only the head of an archeology team. For a City Lord to show you so much respect whenever he sees you, what else do you want?" The voice of Wang

Baole's mother rang out as well. The tone of voice seemed normal, but as soon as she spoke, his father didn't say another word.

Wang Baole's face split into a wide grin when he heard his parents' conversation. At that moment, he forgot that he was a Secondary Rank Two Noble, that he was the City Lord of a special regional city, and that he was a Core Formation realm cultivator. He had returned to who he had been as he pushed the door open and shouted.

"Mom, Dad, I'm home!"

As the door was flung open, the first thing that appeared before Wang Baole was a couch. His father sat on the couch, his arms crossed, while his mother wore an apron and had just placed a plate of pig's trotters on the dining table. They turned their heads and saw Wang Baole at the door.

"You little rascal, why did you greet your mom before your dad?" Wang Baole's father was delighted at the sight of his son. He was about to get to his feet when he sensed that something was wrong. He straightened his face and asked as he glared.

However, as soon as he glared at Wang Baole, Wang Baole's mother immediately glared at him.

"Quick, get the food in the pot out!" Wang Baole's mother ignored her husband and walked in front of Wang Baole, pinched his round face with pain in her eyes.

"Baole, is the food on Mars not to your taste? Look how thin you've gotten. Your old mother almost didn't recognize you..."

#### **Chapter 475: A Partner**

Wang Baole watched as his mother came up to him and was about to pinch his cheeks. He sucked in a deep breath of air in fear and hastily suppressed the cultivation inside his body. He relaxed the muscles on his face so that his mother wouldn't receive any backlash from pinching his cheeks. It was somewhat challenging, but he was truly worried that his current cultivation and physical body might cause harm to his parents.

Fortunately, Wang Baole's reflexes were quick. As his cultivation was suppressed and the muscles on his face relaxed, his mother pinched his cheeks without noticing anything amiss. The aching and pain in her eyes sent warmth unfurling inside Wang Baole.

This was a warmth that couldn't be felt on Mars. Even when he had his friends with him, the feeling he had then wouldn't be able to compare with this current heat. He grinned and patted his tummy.

"Mom, look, there's so much meat on this tummy. Don't worry, I won't lose weight."

"Your tummy's grown smaller!" Wang Baole's mother sighed. She pulled Wang Baole onto the couch and began to interrogate him about his life on Mars, asking for all the details. Love filled her eyes, and Wang Baole felt a great warmth and began to relax.

"A girlfriend? Of course! Mom, let me tell you. I have so many girlfriends. Too many, in fact. They're so troublesome."

“Someone to take care of me? Mom, I’m a Secondary Rank Two Noble now. There are plenty of people waiting to kiss my ass and do things for me. I even have my own guards. Don’t worry.”

“Ah, mom, I realized when I arrived that you look younger now. Where did you get these clothes from? They look really fashionable!” Wang Baole unleashed his skills at changing the topic and instantly shifted his mother’s attention away. He saw how effective it was and began to pile on more compliments.

In the end, Wang Baole’s mother laughed and scoldingly smacked Wang Baole on the head. The love in her eyes brightened. She didn’t even spare a glance at her husband, who had been taking the dishes out from the kitchen. Wang Baole could only sigh and feel sympathy for his father.

Soon, all the dishes were placed on the dining table. The family of three finally sat down together to have their first reunion meal after years of separation. Wang Baole led the conversation, and the atmosphere was warmed by his mother’s endless laughter, which was punctuated by the dissatisfied snorts from his father.

The topic of conversation soon turned from Wang Baole to grandchildren. Wang Baole’s mother seemed anxious about this particular topic.

“Baole, you say you have so many girlfriends. Why didn’t you bring one home this round? You should settle down quickly... No, you follow me tomorrow, I’m bringing you matchmaking. I think Deputy City Lord Xu’s daughter is quite a good match. She’s especially friendly whenever I see her and seems the sort to bear sons!”

Wang Baole was stunned when he heard that. He had always thought matchmaking to be such an embarrassing thing, especially for someone like him. He was the most handsome person in the entire Federation. What need did he have for matchmaking?

“Nonsense!” Before Wang Baole could speak, his father placed his chopsticks down and lifted his jaw. He said solemnly, “Baole is a senator now, and the City Lord of a special regional city. How can we joke around with his marriage?”

“Old Wang, you’ve become quite impressive. You dare to raise your voice at me now? A mere leader of an archeology team who’s basking in the glory of my son, how dare you pretend to be a somebody in front of me?” Wang Baole’s mother was always kind and loving to Wang Baole, but when speaking to her husband, she was extremely stern and fierce. At present, her eyes were popping out as she glared. Wang Baole’s father shuddered and dared not talk back, only lowering his head and muttering.

“That’s my son too.”

“Shut up and eat!”

Wang Baole’s eyes squinted as he smiled at the sight. He was overcome with emotion. Suddenly, he felt as if he had changed. In the past, he hadn’t had any special feelings when he visited home. This time though, he could feel a reluctance to leave them when the time came.

He suddenly wondered if he had been too busy working towards his ambition and had neglected the old folks at home...

He did frequently speak to his parents. He had also gotten people to send over pills to them quite a few times. Even though his parents lacked the talents for cultivation, with the aid of these pills, they had managed to reach the peak of the Ancient Martial realm.

To a certain degree, this could also increase their lifespan.

But Wang Baole was suddenly very afraid. He feared the cruel passing of time as he continued his cultivation. One day... perhaps he might enter seclusion, only to leave it and find the entire world changed, and the people he had known gone.

“Little Missy, are there pills or rare natural ingredients in this world that can increase the lifespan of an ordinary person?” Wang Baole asked quietly in his head.

Since Little Missy had said she was going to return to slumber in the Dark Artifact, she hadn’t said a single word. When Wang Baole had first left the Dark Artifact and tried reaching out to her, she hadn’t responded. Now though, Little Missy’s voice echoed softly in his head. It was colored with slight sorrow and nostalgia, as well as a certain empathy.

“Yes!”

Wang Baole breathed in deeply. He smiled. As long as they existed, he would find a way to get his hands on them. This would make his worries go away. He looked at his parents, then said as he laughed.

“Mom, why don’t we move? Let’s move next to the Ethereal Dao College in Ethereal City!”

Wang Baole’s father heard that and was about to say something when Wang Baole’s mother snorted. He hurriedly lowered his head and continued eating rice. He followed exactly what his wife had said and only ate rice, not even touching the other dishes...

“Baole, I planned to discuss this with you even if you didn’t raise this matter. It no longer feels as comfortable staying in Phoenix City. Moving away sounds like a good idea.” Wang Baole’s mother thought for awhile, then nodded her agreement. She didn’t ask the exact reason, as she was already aware. Her son was so exemplary and held such a high ranking post. As parents, there were times such as this when all they needed to do was not cause their children any trouble.

Since their son said they should move, then they would move!

She also considered the matter of matchmaking. There would be more potential daughters-in-law to choose from in such a big city such as Ethereal City. She would have so many more options as compared to Phoenix City.

They finished a heartwarming dinner. Night descended. Wang Baole returned to his small bedroom and lay on his small bed, gazing at the moon outside. He smiled and didn’t meditate or train, simply allowing himself to relax and shut his eyes. Then, he dreamed, something he hadn’t done for a very long time.

Time passed. On the fifth day, after his parents had dealt with everything, the entire family boarded Wang Baole’s cruiser and moved away.

Despite how reluctant Liu Daobin’s father was to see them go, he knew that with Wang Baole’s current status and cultivation, it was no longer appropriate for his parents to continue living in the city. Setting aside all other concerns, their safety would pose a problem. Phoenix City was, after all, a small city. It

couldn't compare with Ethereal City, which was next to the Ethereal Dao College. It was nearly a stronghold and almost impenetrable.

Because of Wang Baole's status, his parents would receive a great deal of protection in Ethereal City. They wouldn't experience any hardship for the rest of their lives.

Having understood that, Wang Baole's old parents pushed down the reluctance they felt at leaving. They boarded the cruiser with their son as they were sent off by a crowd of people. The cruiser rose and sped, roaring towards Ethereal City!

Wang Baole allowed the cruiser to fly at a leisurely pace. On the one hand, this was to ensure that his parents wouldn't experience any discomfort during the journey. On the other, while his father was part of an archeology team and often left the city and ventured outside, his mother had never traveled to such far places in her entire life. Wang Baole intended to make use of this chance to bring his parents around for a tour.

With Wang Baole's cultivation and status, while not entirely invincible, he still had the ability to protect his parents from coming to harm on Earth. The sorrow of departure dissipated from the elderly couple's hearts as the scenery of this earth flashed across their eyes. They flew over mountain ranges and landed on a peak laden with snow. They melted the snow and brewed tea, stared at the layers of clouds in the heavens, and gazed at the blue lakes beneath the snow mountains!

They moved past patches of forests. They saw birds and sniffed flowers in the deepest parts of the thick forests. They watched as what should have been vicious, fearsome beasts turn into obedient little puppies, showing their bellies and seeking their favor.

They leaped over vast deserts and drank from the clear waters in the oasis within the deserts.

The cruiser led the family of three speeding under the blue skies, weaving through clouds, and flying over mountains and forests. A life that belonged to a cultivator was unveiled, fractionally, before Wang Baole's parents.

*Mom, when I was a kid, I said that I would bring you and dad to travel the world...* Wang Baole looked at his parents' happy, smiling faces, and watched as they took photos of every place they had visited. He stood on the cruiser, happiness filling his heart. This was a bliss that surpassed the happiness of being promoted to a Secondary Rank Two Noble.

#### **Chapter 476: Settling Down in Ethereal City**

This was the first time Wang Baole had brought his parents on such a long trip after he had come of age. They went over mountains and crossed rivers. They traveled through forests and crossed the vast deserts.

It didn't matter if it was a dangerous place filled with ferocious beasts, a barren, deserted land, or somewhere with atrocious weather that no ordinary human dared venture. Excluding the few forbidden areas on Earth, with Wang Baole's current Core Formation realm cultivation, he would be able to bring his parents along and travel through the places without any difficulty.

The Nascent Soul realm was the highest cultivation realm that had been attained by anyone in the present Federation. Having entered the Core Formation realm... one would be identified as one of the most powerful cultivators in the Federation.

Besides, after being promoted to the Secondary Rank Two Noble, Wang Baole was able to access confidential information that only Secondary Rank Two Nobles and above were privy to. He read some documents about the Great Earth Array Formation. The documents stated clearly that... Secondary Rank Two Nobles and above had limited access to the Great Earth Array Formation. Even though the access was considerably limited, to even hold such access rights would ensure that few who were of lower ranks would dare to offend and cause him trouble.

The trouble-free vacation went on for more than a month, and Wang Baole could feel that his parents were beginning to tire, not physically but mentally. That was when he ended the vacation and brought them to... Ethereal City!

Ethereal City surpassed Phoenix City vastly. It was a grand spectacle that stood on the great lands. The size of the city and its population, as well as the number of powerful cultivators in the city and what it signified to Earth, placed Ethereal City comfortably in the top five of the seventeen main cities on Earth!

With the Ethereal Dao College right next to the city, its defenses were strengthened considerably as well. Furthermore, it sat in the center of the Federation's southwestern region, and its influence and power blanketed the entire region like a wide web. It was akin to the leading power in the southwestern region.

That was why huge hordes of cultivators and ordinary folk came to Ethereal City every day. They either transited here, came seeking work, or to do business. As a result, the city was constantly bustling with life and noise. In the day, it was crowded with vehicles and pedestrians, while at night, it shone and dazzled with neon lights.

Consequently, the price of things in Ethereal City was higher than those in Phoenix City. Land, especially, was extremely valuable, as there was a greater demand than supply.

After all, Ethereal City was the regional city of the southwestern region. It had been the center of economic and political activity through both eras of peace and unrest. Many rich and wealthy people gathered in Ethereal City, and countless resources and wealth unknown to the public had also been invested or placed inside the city.

No one walking on the streets of Ethereal City should be underestimated, as a seemingly dull-looking character might surprisingly be hiding hordes of wealth. This was a common occurrence.

The various superiorities gave Ethereal City residents a sense of superiority when facing outsiders. Additionally, Ethereal City's status and wealth often shocked the majority of visitors who were visiting the city for the first time. Awed by the majesty and grandeur of the great city, they couldn't help feeling inferior.

Wang Baole's parents were ordinary folk who had lived their entire lives in Phoenix City. Even though Wang Baole's father had been to Ethereal City in the past for work, this trip was different. They were going to settle down here. As the cruiser approached the city, he began to feel a myriad of emotions, and Wang Baole's mother felt the same.

“This city is too big... it’s not as nice as our Phoenix City...”

“It’s too big, and there are too many people. People won’t be as friendly...”

“Baole, I heard that the folks in these great cities often ostracize outsiders...” Such thoughts hadn’t passed Wang Baole’s mother’s mind during their journey here. However, as they approached, she was clearly feeling slightly hesitant, so she began to nag.

Wang Baole stood patiently by his mother’s side with a smile on his face. After comforting her, she finally seemed to calm down slightly. It was clear that she still had many concerns though. It didn’t matter that she knew how amazing her son was, or that she didn’t know what exactly she was worried about, she simply felt that everything happening now was surreal and unbelievable.

Wang Baole understood how she felt. After some thought, he sent a voice transmission to Lin You when the cruiser approached Ethereal City’s aerial port.

Lin You was in his residence, looking at the ancient tree before him when he received Wang Baole’s voice transmission. He had a Spirit Stone in his hand. He wasn’t cultivating though, only thinking about some matters concerning the Senate. He had a habit. He liked to touch the smooth surface of a Spirit Stone while he was thinking. This was something he had cultivated during the Beast War.

Lin You set his thoughts aside after receiving Wang Baole’s voice transmission. He turned his voice transmission ring on, looked at it, then laughed. He had high expectations of Wang Baole, and Lin Tianhao was working extremely well with Wang Baole now. Besides, Lin You and Wang Baole currently shared a similar status. He placed great importance on Wang Baole’s moving his family to his city, so he immediately made arrangements.

As a result, when Wang Baole’s cruiser landed in Ethereal City’s aerial port, he saw Lin You and his escorts waiting there to personally welcome his arrival. As soon as Wang Baole got out, he immediately cupped his fists and saluted Lin You as a junior would his senior. Lin You simply laughed, stepped forward, and gave Wang Baole a pat!

They shared few meetings with each other but had been communicating quite frequently. They didn’t feel awkward or unfamiliar with each other at all as they chatted merrily. Lin You was also extremely cordial to Wang Baole’s parents.

After learning that the man before them was the city lord of Ethereal City, Wang Baole’s parents instinctively felt slightly nervous. Lin You sensed their nervousness. His smiles were kind, and he behaved like an ordinary person, like a neighbor who was friendly and not disinclined towards the occasional teasing.

“Brother Wang, Lady Wang, after settling down, please help me say a few good words to your son, Baole. It’s really quite embarrassing, but my only son, that useless child, is now working for Baole.”

Wang Baole’s parents burst out into laughter as soon as they heard that. They knew that Lin You was joking. He was trying to put them at ease. At the same time, he was trying to remind them that Wang Baole was no longer just a typical, ordinary person. He was trying to strengthen their faith in him.

Wang Baole was extremely touched by the scene, and he bowed towards Lin You again.

Lin You had made comprehensive arrangements. After receiving Wang Baole's family, he brought them to the inner city area near the City Lord's residences. He lent a considerably-sized house to Wang Baole.

It was a loan in principle, but a gift in practice.

The residence's land area was vast. It had a lawn and gardens, as well as three pavilions. The place was elegantly decorated and quiet. Such quiet spots in the bustling city were worth a fortune. In addition, it was situated in the inner city area, and this set Wang Baole's heart at ease with regard to any safety and defense concerns.

Lin You had also made arrangements for servants. However, Wang Baole's parents weren't used to having servants. After Wang Baole tactfully turned down the offer, Lin You took his leave.

Even after Lin You left with his men, Wang Baole's parents continued to stare at the huge residence. They felt as if they were in a dream. Pride for their son unfurled in their hearts once again.

Lin You had made further arrangements. A few days later, after a discussion with Wang Baole's family, the city's archeology department welcomed an additional supervisor. It was Wang Baole's father!

A new position with considerable authority was created concurrently in the city's education department. The person appointed to the post was Wang Baole's mother!

Lin You believed that the best way to assimilate into a new city wasn't to go around announcing who Wang Baole was and having countless hordes of sycophants gathering around the family. It was to create a place for Wang Baole's parents within the Ethereal City's administrative system. This would allow them to form their own social circles.

There was no need to flaunt or intentionally hide who they were. Let nature run its course. After all, regardless of what happened, and regardless of any trouble that Wang Baole's parents might encounter, as long as it was something Wang Baole and Lin You could resolve, it wasn't an insurmountable problem!

The elderly couple started work in their new workplaces. They got familiar with their new environment and began to have something to fill their time with. Gradually, the family settled down in Ethereal City.

Wang Baole's father concentrated on work. In comparison, Wang Baole's mother had prioritized Wang Baole's marriage. She spent most of her time assessing potential partners for her son.

Wang Baole started to consider whether he should make a trip back to Ethereal Dao College now. He had to get his new Core Formation realm cultivation technique and settle some other matters.

A few days later, Wang Baole left his house in the morning. He transformed into an arc of rainbow and raced towards... the Ethereal Dao College!

### **Chapter 477: Breaking Into the Alchemy Pavilion!**

Wang Baole was one of the most exemplary figures amongst the disciples who had ever graduated from Ethereal Dao College. If he had informed the college officially of his return, the college would have prepared a grand ceremony to welcome his return.

He might have been interested in having that when he had just been promoted to Secondary Rank Two Noble. Now, after some time had passed, such interest had wavered. In fact, he thought it troublesome instead. That was why he didn't notify the college officially about his return. He had only sent the Sect Lord a voice transmission before he dashed off and stepped into the college campus.

Wang Baole paused in mid-air when he passed the Lower Academy Island. He lowered his head and glanced at the students in the Lower Academy Island, spending a slightly longer time looking at those from the Dharmic Armament faculty. He couldn't help but laugh as memories of the past surfaced in his mind. Then, he turned and once again sped towards the Upper Academy Island.

The Upper Academy Island's array formation didn't stop Wang Baole from entering. He was a disciple of the Ethereal Dao College, after all. After passing the array formation without difficulty, Wang Baole didn't immediately look for the Sect Lord. His head turned abruptly towards the Alchemy Pavilion's mountain peak suspended in mid-air!

Besides getting a new cultivation technique, there was another important thing that he had planned to do when he returned to the college. It was something that he had felt unhappy about while he was on Mars, and had thought about getting done one day. It was about... Bunny's seclusion!

*She's probably turned into an old bunny, staying in seclusion all that time. The Alchemy Pavilion must be doing this on purpose. They know about me and Bunny. That's why they're targeting Bunny!* Wang Baole snorted. He had made up his mind. He was going to get an explanation out of Bunny's master. That old fellow must be the reason Bunny was always away in seclusion. Wang Baole was extremely displeased.

As soon as he dashed out from the array formation, he headed straight for the Alchemy Pavilion.

Even though he was moving extremely quickly, there were still a few out of the many disciples on the Upper Academy Island who saw the fleeting figure of Wang Baole. Others might not have been so visible, but Wang Baole was famous now. Besides... he was extremely easy to recognize.

Someone soon gasped.

"I think I just saw... Eldest Senior Brother Wang Baole?"

"I saw him too! It should be Senior Brother Wang. But why isn't he headed for the Dharmic Armament Pavilion but towards the Alchemy Pavilion?"

"Heavens, our eldest senior brother is back?"

Gasps rang out in the air, and someone even posted excitedly about it on the Spirit Internet. There was no doubt that Wang Baole had become a legend in the eyes of the disciples of the Ethereal Dao College, and increasingly more disciples began to address him as Eldest Senior Brother.

More people on the Upper Academy Island realized what was going on, and more disciples began appearing in the open, trying excitedly to locate Wang Baole. Wang Baole had arrived outside the Alchemy Pavilion and was about to break in when the Alchemy Pavilion's array formation unleashed its power in an attempt to stop him.

Every pavilion on the Upper Academy Island had its own separate array formation. Unless permission was granted, those who didn't belong to said pavilion wouldn't be allowed to enter. The array formation

simply served as an obstruction though, not having the ability to attack. These were college disciples, after all.

The array formation proved a great obstacle to a True Breath realm cultivator. Even a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator would find it a challenge. But to a Core Formation realm cultivator... it was practically nonexistent.

As soon as Wang Baole entered the array formation and it was activated, a tremendous boom sounded. Wang Baole snorted. The Alchemy Pavilion's array formation began to distort. It was unable to hold Wang Baole back, and he marched straight into the pavilion!

As he took a forceful step in, alarms began to ring. They resounded throughout the entire Alchemy Pavilion, shocking its disciples and Elders.

"There's an intruder in the Alchemy Pavilion!"

"He wasn't stopped by the array formations!"

"Who is it? What guts, daring to barge into the Upper Academy Island!"

Alarmed, hordes of disciples rushed out of their cave abodes. A few Foundation Establishment realm Elders flew out furiously as well. They intended to punish the intruder. However, the disciples were soon stunned to see a familiar figure step out from the warped and distorted array formation.

"Eldest Senior Brother Baole?"

"It's Eldest Senior Brother Wang Baole!"

The Alchemy Pavilion's disciples gasped. They immediately forgot the fact that he had barged in and bowed at Wang Baole eagerly. Awe and adoration shone in their eyes.

There were a few disciples who had entered the Alchemy Pavilion after Wang Baole had graduated who were equally excited but still ventured to ask the person next to them uncertainly.

"Erm... what are we going to do about Eldest Senior Brother barging through our array formation?"

He was answered by those standing beside him, who looked at him with contempt in their eyes. They reprimanded him as they corrected what he had said.

"Have you turned stupid from refining too many pills? How is Eldest Senior Brother entering the Alchemy Pavilion a break-in? He's entering his own house. He just didn't knock first."

That sounded surprisingly reasonable. The newly admitted disciples immediately sensed that they were the ones who had misunderstood the situation. They agreed instantly and stopped thinking about the supposed intrusion.

The few Foundation Establishment realm Elders were at a loss. Their heads throbbed, but they said nothing about Wang Baole breaking in by force. Instead, they cupped their fists and saluted Wang Baole.

Wang Baole was pleased to find his junior brothers so understanding. He stood in mid-air, cupped his fists, and saluted the disciples of the Alchemy Pavilion around him.

“My fellow junior brothers and sisters, I understand that my sudden appearance might have interrupted your cultivation. I hope you don’t mind.” Wang Baole’s voice was warm as it rang in the air. The disciples around him became even more excited and began speaking amongst themselves.

“Senior Brother Baole is simply too friendly. He’s a prodigy but still speaks so kindly to us. I heard he doesn’t have a girlfriend yet... Senior Brother Baole, I love you!”

“This is because Senior Brother Baole treats all of us like his junior brothers and sisters. He only shows his fearsome side to outsiders. We’re family!”

“That’s right. Senior Brother Baole, we don’t mind. Besides, you’re not being rude. It’s like coming back home. You just didn’t knock first. Anyway, who knocks on every door in their own house?”

“I’ve long found that array formation a sore sight. Senior Brother Baole’s done a great job!”

More and more disciples of the Alchemy Pavilion appeared amidst the growing cheers, and soon, the entire pavilion was in an uproar. The liveliness and cheer drew the attention of the disciples of other pavilions who were passing by. Upon the sight, they stopped and gathered outside, trying to catch what was going on inside.

After cupping his fists and saluting everyone, Wang Baole took a deep breath and spoke again.

“Fellow disciples, there is a reason why I’m here today. When I was still a student on the Lower Academy Island, I had a close female friend called Bunny... no, that’s not right, her name is Zhou Xiaoya. Since she became the disciple of an immoral master, she was forced into seclusion. We have not seen each other’s face for years. Tell me, isn’t this completely unreasonable?”

Wang Baole’s words rang out loudly in the air, and because the disciples around him adored him, they naturally sided with him. They began to grow unhappy after this matter, and a few disciples turned and started yelling at the Alchemy Pavilion.

“Hand over Senior Sister Xiaoya!”

The disciples of the Alchemy Pavilion were all up in arms and ready to revolt. The sight of it cheered Wang Baole up as well. He felt that they were all his wonderful junior brothers and sisters. He turned towards the Alchemy Pavilion’s mountain peak and shouted.

“Old man, you better hand over my Bunny right this moment. I’m going to count to three. If you don’t hand her over, I’ll fight my way up.”

Wang Baole’s voice was like thunder. It boomed and resounded in the air. On the mountain peak, a group of Elders were fretting and staring at an old man who was pacing in front of them and sighing.

This old man was Zhou Xiaoya’s master. He had been one of the four Elders of the Alchemy Pavilion. Now, he was the Grand Elder of the Alchemy Pavilion.

“Grand Elder, please say something.”

“Yes, this Wang Baole is at the Core Formation realm now. He fought his way through. He’s a rare vicious character!”

“Grand Elder, you are at fault too. Xiaoya, that girl, might be quite gifted, but you shouldn’t be tearing a couple apart. Why did you force her into seclusion? She’s forever in seclusion. Even I can’t stand this anymore.” The other Elders began to protest fervently. Wang Baole had already started counting down outside...

“Three, two...”

As he counted, the Alchemy Pavilion’s Grand Elder stomped his foot. He hollered at the Elders gathered around him.

“You can’t blame this on me. I’m doing as the Grand Supreme Elder asked. What else can I do?”

When the Grand Elder said that, Wang Baole had just counted to three. He took a step forward. Lightning crashed, and thunder boomed, shaking the heavens and earth. He transformed into a bolt of lightning, dashing straight for the mountain peak. It appeared that he was about the break-in.

It was then that the voice of an old man rang out between the heavens and earth. It formed an invisible barrier that was like a seal, and it fell all around Wang Baole and caged him in!

“Little fatty, let’s see you try and break through this barrier. I’ll give you an answer if you manage to do that!”

#### **Chapter 478: Advance Without Retreat!**

Wang Baole would have glared if someone else had said that. He hated it when anyone called him fat and felt that he needed to correct the person’s aesthetics by punching this person who had no idea what he or she was talking about.

After all, he was the slimmest and most handsome person in the entire Federation!

But... if the person saying this was an old man who was both strong-boned and had an ethereal air to him, who had a sharp intelligent glint in his eyes while giving off an impression of having a rather bad temper, then Wang Baole felt that it wouldn’t be that embarrassing if he played the coward once in a while.

After all, no matter how great the old man was at pretending to be peaceful, Wang Baole could still distinctly sense the fearsome temper hidden deep inside him and the scorching heat he was exuding.

In addition... Wang Baole saw that the Grand Elder and Elders of the Alchemy Pavilion cupped their fists and saluted the old man respectfully when he had appeared. He even saw the Sect Lord and Deputy Sect Lords, as well as the other Grand Elders, appear in mid-air. They cupped their fists and saluted the old man as well. Wang Baole immediately realized... who he was!

He was the former Federation President, the Grand Supreme Elder of the Ethereal Dao College, Li Xingwen!

*He doesn’t really look like the statue in the capital city...* Wang Baole blinked as he stared at the barrier around him. The Grand Supreme Elder was a short distance away from him, hovering in mid-air. He couldn’t really sense the Grand Supreme Elder’s exact level of cultivation through the barrier. However,

he could vaguely sense an awesome spirit energy exuding from the old man. It was as terrifying as a hurricane.

*I'm just here to find Bunny... how is the Grand Supreme Elder involved in this... and he's sealed me in. Is he trying to test how powerful I am?* Wang Baole sighed. His fighting spirit was roused though. He wanted to test too, the difference in power between himself and a perfected Core Formation realm cultivator.

At that thought, and due to the anticipatory and encouraging looks given by the Sect Lord and the Grand Elder of the Dharmic Armament Pavilion, Wang Baole took a deep breath. A flare of lightning erupted in his eyes.

The light exploded and transformed into countless lightning bolts that wandered all over Wang Baole. Countless lightning bolts appeared in the air around him as well, and their crackling sounds resounded in the air. The seal that had been invisible to the eye began to show its form under the electrical disturbance.

It looked like a translucent box!

*Since you want to test me... then, I'll show you everything I've got!* Decisiveness flashed across Wang Baole's eyes. He trusted the Ethereal Dao College; it was his sect. That was why he didn't only intend to activate his Lightning Core but was also going to activate his Dark Core Lotus. He was going to unleash the full power of his dual Cores!

His external Lightning Core, his internal Dark Core, and the power of his physical form were all activated at the same moment. From afar, one could see a black light shining in Wang Baole's eyes. A chill seemed to be spreading out from his person at the same time, and beyond this chill were bolts of lightning crashing and thundering. A strong, powerful spirit energy continued to grow stronger and more powerful inside him, and cracks began to appear on the translucent box!

He hadn't even attacked yet, but the box was already showing signs of not being able to withstand his power!

Shock flashed across everyone's eyes as they witnessed the sight. The Sect Lord, the Deputy Sect Lords, and the respective Grand Elders, especially, widened their eyes. Their faces were colored with incredulity. Even the Grand Supreme Elder seemed slightly surprised. His eyes began to shine brightly, colored with approval and joy.

"Interesting. Seems like an early-stage Core Formation realm seal isn't sufficient to assess your actual strength. In that case... we'll strengthen it!" As he said that, Li Xingwen's right hand formed a series of hand seals. Then, he pointed at the box. Instantly, the box-shaped seal shone. It seemed to grow sturdier, and the earlier cracks sealed shut immediately.

Almost as soon as the box's cracks were healed close, Wang Baole raised his head abruptly, letting loose a low roar that sounded like thunder. He could feel his body, which used to have a constitution that surpassed his cultivation, struggling to support the full activation of both his Cores. He had no time to worry now though. He raised his right hand and tightened it into a fist. He didn't unleash any divine power or pretty trick, he simply held it before the barrier in front of him and... punched!

This single punch encapsulated the Supernova technique. It unleashed the full power of Wang Baole's physical form as well as the full, dual-Core cultivation of his Dark Core and Lightning Core. It could be said to be the strongest and most powerful punch that Wang Baole was capable of without using any mystic art!

An aura seemed to form around Wang Baole as he unleashed the punch. It was an aura... that spoke of relentless advance, that promised to blow everything in his path to pieces!

It was similar to when he had been in the Mystic Luna Realm, what he had unleashed then during those life-or-death situations. He had killed his way to survival and hadn't spared a single glance at those he had left dead.

It was similar to when he had been in the fight for the New Mars Region, in that last battle, when he had been faced with countless Beast Tides. He had stood alone amongst the monsters, as everything had fallen apart around him. He had advanced fearlessly!

His experiences over the years seemed to merge and fuse together at this moment, during the Grand Supreme Elder's test. They flowed into his fist, which unleashed... a punch... that carried his will!

Wang Baole yelled. His punch landed, and the strengthened seal that could hold a mid-stage Core Formation realm cultivator shuddered and warped violently, unable to withstand the attack. It cracked and broke upon the fist's impact, shattering into pieces!

From afar, it seemed as if Wang Baole's punch had broken through a mirror as countless semi-transparent shards were flung into the air. An incredible wave of spirit energy, like a furious tidal wave, surged outward. It rumbled and roared, rousing strong winds in the air.

The scene sent the Sect Lord, the Deputy Sect Lords, and the Grand Elders reeling back in shock. They stared at Wang Baole with incredulity and shock.

It was clear that... in their minds, they saw Wang Baole as someone who had just reached the Core Formation realm. He had not yet even began to practice any Core Formation realm techniques. As a Core Formation realm cultivator, this should be when he was at his weakest.

But... at what should have been considered his weakest moment, Wang Baole had unleashed a strength that had stunned everyone. One could imagine how much more powerful he would become after he had grown accustomed to his current cultivation and was in possession of a Core Formation realm technique.

Amidst the crowd's shocked stares, Wang Baole walked out of the surging energy waves. His long hair was loose and flowing in the wind, and lightning bolts snaked around his body. He was like a god of war, standing in a pool of lightning, in mid-air. He lifted his face skyward and looked up at Grand Supreme Elder Li Xingwen. He could feel the beginnings of self-satisfaction surfacing inside him. He was about to say something when he froze suddenly, his eyes widening.

His senses had been muted when he had been inside the box-shaped seal. Now that he had freed himself, when he looked at the Grand Supreme Elder again, he could immediately sense an awesome, terrifying spirit energy exuding from the Grand Supreme Elder. It was completely different from that of a Core Formation realm cultivator!

Wang Baole wasn't unfamiliar with such a spirit energy. It was identical to the spirit energies of the three extraterrestrial cultivator... the spirit energy of a Nascent Soul realm cultivator!

It seemed incomplete at the moment and appeared to still be growing rapidly. However, he was definitely not mistaken. He could indistinctly sense the Grand Supreme Elder's core dissolving and reforming inside his body. He was going to ascend to the Nascent Soul realm any day now!

Wang Baole blinked. His courage shriveled instantly, and he immediately put on an expression of complete obedience and respect, cupping his fists and saluting the Grand Supreme Elder.

"Your disciple Wang Baole greets the Grand Supreme Elder. I don't know why, but I felt an immediate familial closeness when I saw you, esteemed Grand Supreme Elder. It's almost as if I'm reminded of my grandfather... Baole wishes Grandfather Grand Supreme Elder, long life and everlasting fortune!" Everyone had a strange look on their faces when they heard what Wang Baole said. Grand Supreme Elder Li Xingwen simply had what seemed like a smile on his face. He clearly saw through Wang Baole's earlier aborted attempt at showing off. He might not know exactly what Wang Baole had planned to say, but they were likely arrogant words of a brash and overconfident youth.

Of course, he knew why Wang Baole had swallowed those words back down and shown his belly instead. However, he was growing increasingly fond of this Wang Baole. The kid had made some accomplishments while he had been in the college, which was why he had found the kid all right. Then, he had battled with his own disciple, which was when he realized he wasn't bad and had thought about having him as his own disciple.

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He had been monitoring Wang Baole since his deployment to Mars, watching him grow in strength and advance to his current position. Wang Baole's exemplary performance during this brief period won his overwhelming approval. The outcome of his test today made him happier still. He liked Wang Baole's personality.

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"This kid has many secrets. I believe he only revealed them because he's back with us. Based on his crafty character, he would have kept a tight lid on his secrets when he was outside. That's why... nothing that's happened today can be leaked to the outside world. I need you to handle this. Of course, it's not a problem even if there's a leak. I'd like to know who dares mess around with my people in the Ethereal Dao College when I'm around." Li Xingwen instructed the Sect Lord next to him, his tone extremely arrogant. The Sect Lord agreed respectfully. Then, Li Xingwen turned and looked at Wang Baole again, his eyes filled with unconcealed approval and praise.

"You rascal, follow me!" Having said that, Li Xingwen turned and marched straight into the halls of the Alchemy Pavilion.

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#### **Chapter 479: My Last Name Is Zhao!**

Wang Baole answered obediently and hurriedly followed closely behind the Grand Supreme Elder, entering the great halls of the Alchemy Pavilion. There was no one there. After the Grand Supreme Elder stepped into the halls, he turned and looked at Wang Baole.

He still had that smile that wasn't quite a smile on his face. Wang Baole's hair began to stand, and he tried to put on a more docile smile. He blinked and attempted to show what he thought was his adorable side.

The Grand Supreme Elder remained silent but continued to smile. Wang Baole began to grow nervous. He felt that the Grand Supreme Elder was like an old fox. He couldn't tell what the other was thinking and wondered if he should switch tactics. At that thought, Wang Baole smiled openly and scratched his head. He tried to appear thick-headed and continued to trade stares with the Grand Supreme Elder.

"Baole, your cultivation is quite impressive." The Grand Supreme Elder observed how Wang Baole switched personalities within a short span of time before he placed his hands behind his back and spoke coolly.

"Your humble disciple's current achievements are partly due to my own blood, sweat, and tears, but most importantly, it is due to the grooming and teachings of the sect." Wang Baole took a deep breath immediately when he heard that and put on the face of a loyal subject.

"You can stop the boot-licking. It's true that our teachings are useful, but we've groomed and taught so many people. I don't see everyone with your achievements." Li Xingwen was secretly pleased with Wang

Baole's attitude. However, he knew that Wang Baole's current accomplishments had more to do with the opportunities he had come across.

"Baole, I would've gotten you to make a trip down to the college even if you hadn't done so. There are some things... that you have a right to decide for yourself now, with your current cultivation." Li Xingwen eyed Wang Baole and spoke slowly. There was a meaningful look in his eyes.

Wang Baole saw the expression on the Grand Supreme Elder's face. His eyes narrowed slightly and didn't speak.

"The Federation Seedlings Initiative was of extreme importance. No one was supposed to be allowed to drop out of it. However, neither Duan Muque or I expect you to have a breakthrough in your cultivation and step into the Core Formation realm before the initiative was rolled out."

"Because of that, you now have the right to choose. Are you going to continue to participate in the Federation Seedlings Initiative... or are you going to drop out?" Li Xingwen didn't continue speaking. He waited, instead, for Wang Baole's reply.

A frown began to appear on Wang Baole's forehead. He couldn't make heads or tails of what the Grand Supreme Elder was saying. The information he had was incomplete, so he found it difficult to answer the other. It was clear that the Grand Supreme Elder had done this deliberately.

*Is it another trial?* Wang Baole secretly sighed as he rubbed at his forehead. He started to analyze what was going on by first recalling what he had read and found out about the Federation Seedlings Initiative.

Based on what he had learned then, the Federation Seedlings Initiative was part of the overall Operation Sword Sun. It was meant to support the latter. Everything was meant to prepare for the Federation's eventual landing on the ancient greenish-bronze sword.

When seen in that light, the message in Li Xingwen's words became clear...

*Since the Federation Seedlings Initiative has to do with the ancient greenish-bronze sword landing, does dropping out of the initiative mean that I give up my chances of entering the ancient greenish-bronze sword?* Wang Baole pondered. He believed that there must be risks involved in Operation Sword Sun, that was why the Grand Supreme Elder had asked him that question.

Li Xingwen waited patiently as Wang Baole deliberated. When he saw a discreet look of realization appear in Wang Baole's eyes, he smiled lightly.

"You've thought it through?"

"How dangerous is it?" Wang Baole didn't answer the question, asking a question of his own instead. There was a strange light in his eyes when he looked at the Grand Supreme Elder.

Li Xingwen once again showed his approval of Wang Baole when he heard Wang Baole's reply and saw the light in his eyes. He enjoyed speaking to intelligent people, and he liked this straightforward young person. So he said slowly, "Are you afraid of death?"

"Is there anything in it for me?"

The approval in Li Xingwen's eyes intensified when he heard Wang Baole's question. He burst out into laughter as he lifted his right hand and pointed his finger at Wang Baole repeatedly. Finally, he swept his sleeve aside.

"There's plenty. It can advance your cultivation tremendously. It can gift you with countless unimaginable opportunities. It can let you come into contact with a cultivation civilization that is different from that of the Federation. It can allow you to... trace the origins of the Federation's cultivation civilization. In addition, if you manage to accomplish something, it can give you a promotion in Noble. Becoming the future Federation President will become something within the realm of possibility!" Li Xingwen hadn't planned to include the last part of his speech, but he saw how unmoved Wang Baole had been the whole time, that was why he had added the last part about becoming the Federation President.

As he expected, the look on Wang Baole's face began to shift after he said the last few sentences, his eyes glowing with an intense light.

"Everything your humble disciple has now has been given by the sect. As long as the sect requires it of me, I will climb mountains and cross oceans without any complaints!" Wang Baole smacked his chest and declared loudly. He appeared completely selfless, as if he was doing everything for the sect.

Li Xingwen was rendered speechless at Wang Baole's ability to make such proclamations, regardless of the occasion. Dumbstruck, he laughed.

"Alright. In that case, you will continue to be a part of the Federation Seedlings Initiative. I believe you will soon find out the reason that this initiative was developed, so I'll not say too much at this juncture.

"As for Zhou Xiaoya... there's no need for you to be angry at the Grand Elder of the Alchemy Pavilion. Zhou Xiaoya's proficiency at refining standard pills is mediocre, but her soul has certain unique elements. That's why she has displayed great results when refining the Enlightenment Pills that are unique to my bloodline."

"Because of that, I've taught her a cultivation technique. It emphasizes gaining enlightenment, which is why she needs to be away in seclusion for long periods of time. Once she's gained enlightenment, I'll take her in as my personal disciple!" Li Xingwen explained Zhou Xiaoya's situation. It might have been fine if he hadn't done so, but once he had, Wang Baole immediately sucked in his breath.

"Enlightenment?" Wang Baole held no goodwill towards the Dao Enlightenment faculty. He had thought those from that faculty were all nut jobs when he had been on the Lower Academy Island. From what the Grand Supreme Elder had just told him, Bunny had somehow indirectly become one of the Dao Enlightenment faculty.

"Why, do you have complaints?" Li Xingwen glared.

Wang Baole sighed as he felt Li Xingwen's terrifying cultivation. He replied resentfully, "Such a fine girl in her youth, who's been misled and is now wasting her life away in a secret chamber in seclusion. Even if she's to achieve enlightenment like Li Wuchen, she's still not going to be able to put up much of a fight..."

“Rubbish. My Dao Enlightenment faculty is invincible. Just you wait, once Zhou Xiaoya gains enlightenment, she’ll crush you like an ant!” Li Xingwen snorted. Even though he didn’t think that was really possible, he had to stand up for the Dao Enlightenment faculty after seeing the dismissive attitude Wang Baole had towards it.

“As long as you’re happy... but a person shouldn’t be in seclusion all the time. Shouldn’t there be some sort of work-life balance...” Wang Baole sighed and looked at the Grand Supreme Elder.

“Fine, fine. I’ll make some arrangements later and give Zhou Xiaoya a few days off.” Li Xingwen coughed. He did feel that he might have been too harsh and cruel. To have a girl in the prime of her youth locked away in seclusion every day... he agreed with a wave of his hand. With that, Li Xingwen prepared to end the conversation and leave.

“Wait, dear Grandfather Grand Supreme Elder, there’s still something else. I mean... I’m already at the Core Formation realm, but I still don’t have an equivalent cultivation technique. Does the esteemed Grand Supreme Elder, my dear grandfather, have some amazing cultivation technique that you can share with me?” Wang Baole said hastily, his eyes shining with anticipation.

“I’ve already gotten someone to prepare the full set of Core Formation realm cultivation techniques that the Ethereal Dao College has. Go look for Little Zhao, he’ll explain to you in detail. Also, you should remain in the college during this period. Don’t return to Mars first. Stay for another two weeks... I’m going to create an opportunity for the disciples of our sect!” Li Xingwen laughed arrogantly before he strolled out of the halls and vanished.

Wang Baole blinked. He could vaguely guess what the Grand Supreme Elder was referring to. He was slightly excited and looked forward to it. Then, he wondered about the Little Zhao that the Grand Supreme Elder had spoken of. After a great deal of thinking, he still couldn’t figure out who this person was.

Curious, Wang Baole pulled out his voice transmission ring and sent a voice transmission to the Sect Lord of the Ethereal Dao College.

“Sect Lord, the Grand Supreme Elder told me to find Little Zhao for my mystic art. Who is that? I thought about it for a day, but no one comes to mind.”

There was dead silence on the other side of the voice transmission ring. Then, a long moment later, the Sect Lord’s ghostly voice drifted over.

“My last name is Zhao!”

#### **Chapter 480: The First!?**

Wang Baole felt slightly embarrassed as he held onto his voice transmission ring. After muttering a few words, he left the great halls of the Alchemy Pavilion hurriedly and headed for the Sect Lord’s pavilion located on the mountain peak of the Upper Academy Island.

When he arrived, he saw the Sect Lord deep in meditation. He observed the look on the Sect Lord's face. He wisely didn't mention the name "Little Zhao" and instead, sat beside the Sect Lord. He began to ask about the matter of his Core Formation realm cultivation technique.

"Baole, the Ethereal Dao College has seventy-nine complete cultivation techniques for the Core Formation realm cultivator. They are divided into grades A to D accordingly. There are seven Grade As, nineteen Grade Bs..." The Sect Lord gave Wang Baole a look, then pulled out a jade slip and handed it over.

Wang Baole's eyes brightened as he took it hastily and began reading.

The jade slip didn't document the detailed cultivation process of the various techniques, but briefly listed the pros and cons of each technique. It had information on complete techniques and incomplete techniques with missing information.

After a while, Wang Baole began to frown slightly. The seventy-nine complete techniques seemed extremely ordinary. Even the seven Grade A techniques didn't seem very impressive. They couldn't compare with his Dark Art, nor could they compare with the Lightning Dao: First Volume.

There were two that seemed all right, but the first, the Way of the Mist, seemed to focus more on speed and the ethereal. It was the principal cultivation technique of the Ethereal Dao College and was the technique that a majority of the Core Formation realm Elders practiced.

It didn't seem to suit Wang Baole though. Firstly, his was a Lightning Core. Secondly, he had developed his unique fighting style since he had begun his cultivation. It was an overpowering style that was at odds with the inherent essence of the Way of the Mist.

The other technique was the Art of Enlightenment that had partly been created by the Grand Supreme Elder. Wang Baole immediately disregarded it after a glance. He had no intention of becoming one of the Dao Enlightenment faculty.

As a result, he was faced with a challenge in his choice. There were a few good options amongst the incomplete techniques, but they were missing information and wouldn't be the most ideal choice.

The techniques that Wang Baole had read about in the Dark Dream had all been related to the Dark Art. Those that had nothing to do with the Dark Art were all techniques meant for the Spirit Immortal realm and beyond. Wang Baole began to frown.

"Sect Lord, I practiced the Lightning Dao: First Volume when I was at the Foundation Establishment realm. Isn't there a Lightning Dao: Second Volume?" Wang Baole didn't continue with his second question... if there had not been one, why had they allowed him to practice the first chapter?

"The Lightning Dao was acquired from a shard found within the college's Lightning Domain. Of course we have the second chapter." The expression on the Sect Lord's face remained unchanged. He pulled out another jade slip from his storage bracelet and handed it over to Wang Baole. Inside the jade slip was the Lightning Dao: Second Volume.

Wang Baole read through it, and doubt appeared on his face. He raised his head and looked at the Sect Lord. Since they did have the Lightning Dao: Second Volume and it seemed like a pretty impressive technique, he didn't understand why the Sect Lord hadn't given this to him at first.

The Sect Lord could sense Wang Baole's doubts. He shook his head and sighed.

"Baole, we originally planned for you to master the Lightning Dao: First Volume, and then, when you reached the Core Formation realm, you could have continued with the Lightning Dao: Second Volume. Even though we don't have the last chapter, we believed that, should you one day reach the Nascent Soul realm... it wouldn't be difficult for you to relearn another technique.

"However, no one expected that you would reach the Core Formation realm so quickly and show such power. That's why... even though the Lightning Dao: Second Volume is a powerful technique, it isn't the best one for you. In fact, it might even affect and hinder the progress of your cultivation and your fighting capabilities!

"That was why I hesitated and didn't immediately hand this to you."

Wang Baole had a contemplative look on his face after he listened to what the Sect Lord said. He placed the jade slip containing the Lightning Dao: Second Volume down and turned towards the Sect Lord. He must have discussed this with the Grand Supreme Elder before speaking to him. They must have come to a decision regarding his cultivation technique.

"The cultivation techniques of the Ethereal Dao College can be considered the best in the Federation. But that's only in the Federation. Based on our assessment, if we are to compare them with the techniques of the great cultivation civilizations, they might be seen... as obsolete and outdated!"

"The techniques with true value are the incomplete ones. But it is difficult to unleash their true worth..." The Sect Lord smiled when he saw that Wang Baole remained calm and wasn't flustered or agitated.

"However, as one of the Federation Seedlings, in the near future, you might have the chance to acquire... a cultivation technique that surpasses those found in the Federation!" At that juncture, the Sect Lord lifted his right hand and pointed vaguely at the sky.

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes immediately and lifted his head. Outside, in the sky, piercing through the midday sun, was the soul-shaking ancient greenish-bronze sword!

A clearer picture began to form in Wang Baole's mind as he consolidated what the Sect Lord was talking about with what the Grand Supreme Elder had said earlier. This meant that... the Federation Seedlings Initiative was about to formally commence. Operation Sword Sun and the endeavor to land on the ancient greenish-bronze sword was about to be rolled out as well!

The Federation had been able to advance to a cultivation civilization just from acquiring the shards of the ancient greenish-bronze sword's hilt. The resources and cultivation techniques that could be found on the ancient greenish-bronze sword itself would present unimaginable opportunities for any cultivator of the Federation!

"You can hold on to the Lightning Dao: Second Volume first. If possible... I'd still wish for you to practice a technique that befits a true prodigy. At least you won't lose out to the young ones from the countless civilizations in the universe!" the Sect Lord said earnestly. He stared at Wang Baole hopefully. There were some things that he wasn't saying, and that the Grand Supreme Elder hadn't said as well. Regardless, the whole Ethereal Dao College had reached the same consensus.

Wang Baole was going to be the rising hope of the Ethereal Dao College. He was going to follow in Li Xingwen's footsteps and become one of the future pillars of the Ethereal Dao College.

Wang Baole might not have known about this common understanding that the upper echelons had arrived at, but he had been able to get an inkling of what was happening during this visit. After some careful consideration, he kept the Lightning Dao: Second Volume and bade the Sect Lord farewell. Just as he was about to leave, the Sect Lord said casually, "Baole, I'm not sure if the Grand Supreme Elder has told you this, but don't return to Mars first. Stay in the sect... this is because he is reaching a breakthrough!

"He will be the first person on Earth to attain a breakthrough from the Core Formation realm and enter the Nascent Soul realm. When that happens, representatives from all the political forces will be here. Based on his assessment, at the moment of his breakthrough, an alarming amount of Spirit Qi will be drawn to him. This will be an opportunity for all our disciples.

"Especially for those of us at the Core Formation realm. This is a chance for us to draw lessons from the experience and gain enlightenment!"

Wang Baole's pupils contracted when he heard that. He wasn't surprised to hear that the Grand Supreme Elder was approaching a breakthrough in his cultivation. He had already seen signs of that. But he had been surprised when the Sect Lord said that he would be the first person to enter the Nascent Soul realm.

"The first?" Wang Baole asked immediately. He distinctly remembered what had happened after the Mercury tragedy. Even though he had been away in seclusion, he had tuned in to the Federation President's speech and had heard about the Nascent Soul realm elder who had been searching the Solar System for the extraterrestrial cultivators.

"That's right. The first... Earthling!" The Sect Lord gave Wang Baole a meaningful look. It was as if he had certain concerns about divulging more details while on Earth. He didn't elaborate.

The hints he was giving were extremely explicit. Wang Baole wouldn't have been able to become a Secondary Rank Two Noble in such a short period of time if he couldn't even discern the implicit message. Almost instantly, his eyes flashed. He came to an answer that didn't really surprise him that much.

*This Nascent Soul realm cultivator might have come from... the ancient green-bronze sword!* Wang Baole narrowed his eyes as he pondered. After a moment, he cupped his fists and saluted the Sect Lord. Then, he turned and left.

Wang Baole took a walk in the campus after leaving the pavilion. He had a faint smile on his face and would greet his junior brothers and sisters as he passed them by. Any other time, he might have teased them a little as well, but he had something on his mind today. He might not have learned much during this trip back, but he was still able to gather quite a number of clues.

*This Nascent Soul realm cultivator from the ancient green-bronze sword probably harbors no ill will towards us. Else, with the Federation's current capabilities, it would be difficult for us to fight back against him...*

*It's still very interesting though. There was no news after the Federation announced the Federation Seedlings Initiative. Now, just after there's been a breakthrough in Master Zhao's Anti-Spirit Bomb research and when the Grand Supreme Elder is about to attain a breakthrough in his cultivation...*

*Only now, do they have the intention of activating the Federation Seedlings Initiative...* Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. He might have some clues, but it would be challenging to pin down exactly what was going on if he thought this through normally. However, if he used what he had learned from the high officials' autobiographies, then suddenly... everything seemed to make much more sense.

As Wang Baole continued to immerse in his thoughts, he suddenly heard a roar filled with excitement and agitation rumbling from a distance away. Countless gasps of awe and surprise rang out and interrupted Wang Baole's thoughts.

Wang Baole recognized the familiar roar. He lifted his head and immediately saw a giant winged Diamond Ape bursting out from the clouds in the sky and charging towards him.

"Diamy!" Wang Baole laughed out loud, seeming happily surprised. He took a step and leaped into the air, flying towards the Diamond Ape.