

Worth 631

Chapter 631: A Call for Help!

The vast battleship—formed from three disks that seemed to hold within them three worlds—had risen from the Sea of Fire inside the sword body, charged forward with the force of a mighty sword, and sped towards the sword handle. On the main Vast Expanse Dao Palace island, Li Wuchen and Zhou Mei's wedding ceremony continued.

Following Wang Baole's and Feng Qiuran's blessings, the cultivators from the Dao Palace and the Federation had all begun cheering loudly. The Dao Palace was a sea of joyous celebration. Those who had not attended the ceremony could also hear laughter from the public square on the main peak.

Everything seemed so perfect at that moment. The Hyacinthus Tree swayed slightly in the breeze as the Vast Expanse Dao Palace basked in peace and happiness.

The Federation cultivators had partially assimilated themselves with the Dao Palace. The establishment of the Spirit Internet and the introduction of a financial credit system, as well as numerous other new initiatives, had allowed the Vast Expanse Dao Palace disciples to grow used to the ways of the Federation. Their attitudes towards the Federation cultivators had also changed drastically.

Wang Baole's status also played an important role. Save for exceptional situations, his authority was unshakable in the highly regulated and stringent Dao Palace.

If the current situation were to continue, within a decade, numerous intermarriages would have taken place, and the next generation would be born. The assimilation would have been completed, and the Federation and the Dao Palace would have been completely inseparable by then. The agreement between Feng Qiuran and Li Xingwen would have been realized.

The alliance would have allowed the Federation civilization to develop adequately and speed up the latter's progress. The Federation civilization would have been able to advance further...

This was what the Federation had hoped for, and what Wang Baole had hoped to achieve as well. That was why Wang Baole's blessings for Li Wuchen and Zhou Mei's union had been sincere, and his smile hopeful. Of course, there was still regret on his part.

He was also a young man who was still unmarried and without a partner. His gaze swept uncontrollably across the crowd and landed on Zhao Yameng.

Zhao Yameng was smiling, her eyes bright with joy and blessing for the newly wedded couple. There seemed to be a hint of envy on her face as well. She seemed to sense Wang Baole's eyes on her. Zhao Yameng pushed locks of her hair—loosened by the slight breeze—behind her ear as her bright eyes met Wang Baole's.

Zhao Yameng smiled as their eyes met. Wang Baole didn't know why his heart started racing suddenly. He instinctively rubbed his tummy...

The sudden gesture instantly broke the spell, rendering Zhao Yameng speechless. Wang Baole seemed embarrassed as well. He was just about to approach Zhao Yameng to say a few words to her when Zhou

Mei and Li Wuchen, who had been exchanging drinks with the crowd, suddenly appeared before Wang Baole.

“Dean...” Zhou Mei had drunk quite a bit, so her cheeks were flushed as she stared at Wang Baole with respect and deference. There was also gratitude. She bowed and then presented a wine cup to Wang Baole.

Li Wuchen stood at one side. His feelings towards Wang Baole remained mixed, but he was similarly grateful to Wang Baole for his decisiveness and support for their love. He took a deep breath and filled the cup to the brim.

Wang Baole stopped in his tracks and looked at the couple in front of him before his eyes fell on Zhou Mei. Memories of her being a young girl from the Dao Mountain Mist Academy appeared in his mind. He turned towards Li Wuchen, heart filled with congratulatory joy and comfort. He took the wine cup, then said teasingly, “Mei’er, you can address me as your master.”

Zhou Mei lifted her head and looked at Wang Baole with excitement bright in her eyes. She had long considered Wang Baole as her master. In fact, she wasn’t the only one. The original batch of students who had been taught personally by Wang Baole all felt the same way. Even the batches after who hadn’t received lessons from Wang Baole continued to look up to him. This was true of every pupil who had graduated from the Dao Mountain Mist Academy since Wang Baole’s deanship.

She took a deep breath excitedly and greeted Wang Baole once again.

“Greetings to Master!”

The Federation and the Dao Palace witnessed Zhou Mei greet Wang Baole, and the greeting changed the way they saw her. The Dao Palace placed great importance on tradition. Zhou Mei addressing Wang Baole as master meant that her status and identity in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace had now been transformed.

In fact, she would now be considered as a personal disciple in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. She would also be known as Wang Baole’s first personal disciple!

This was extremely important!

Wang Baole smiled at Li Wuchen amidst the crowd’s shock and envy. Li Wuchen knew what this meant to Zhou Mei, and even though his feelings towards Wang Baole were still mixed and tainted with their past conflicts, these soon vanished as he looked back at Wang Baole. He took a deep breath, then mirrored Zhou Mei’s deep bow.

Wang Baole smiled. He drank the wine and placed his cup down. He was about to speak when suddenly... something happened!

The clear skies that had been conjured up by array formations transformed as a deafening thunder erupted in the skies above the Dao Palace!

Boom!

The thunder shook the heavens and earth. Wang Baole shook as well, and alarm colored Feng Qiuran's face. The disciples around them widened their eyes. Confusion colored their faces as uneasiness began to unfurl inside them. They had a bad feeling about this.

"What's that noise?"

"What happened?"

Shouts of shock and alarm rang out. The heavens began to warp and distort, and a series of thunderous booms, each one louder than the previous one, erupted. The lands quaked, the Dao Palace shook, and the Sea of Fire boiled!

The skies and the lands had transformed. The winds howled, and the clouds rolled back.

The Dao Palace descended into shock as they witnessed the sight. Many cultivators who hadn't attended the wedding ceremony hastily flew out from their cave abodes and stared at what was happening around them in shock. Mie Liezi appeared as well, and there was incredulity in his eyes as he turned abruptly towards the sword body and stared!

Wang Baole's breathing quickened. He could sense that something wasn't right as he looked around. Suddenly... a tornado appeared in the skies out of nowhere. It seemed to have come from the sword body, whipping up waves in the Sea of Fire as it blew past, creating a series of explosions in its wake. The loud thunderous explosions erupted in the distance and drew nearer as the tornado swept away everything in its path, stirring a storm in the Sea of Fire and creating a fury of noises that struck terror into everyone's hearts!

Alarm colored everyone's faces. Before they could do anything, the voice of someone very, very old, came echoing from the distance. It seemed to have traveled with the winds as it swept past the Dao Palace!

"Save me... save me..."

The voice rang throughout the entire Dao Palace. Feng Qiuran, who had been alarmed by the sight before her, heard it. She suddenly shook violently. She had a look on her face that no one had ever seen before. It seemed as if she was on the verge of a mental breakdown as she cried out in shock!

"Father?"

Feng Qiuran knew that voice all too well. It was her father, an elder of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace who had died in battle while the ancient greenish-bronze sword had been traveling through space. He had perished in the fight against the Never-Ending Clan!

"Uncle Master?" Mie Liezi recognized the voice as well. Shock surged through him as he turned and looked at Feng Qiuran. They saw the look of disbelief and shock mirrored in each other's eyes.

Feng Qiuran's breathing quickened. Without any hesitation, she dashed out and raced in the direction in which the voice had come from.

"Elder Feng, please wait!" Mie Liezi and Feng Qiuran might have their differences, but his loyalty towards the Dao Palace was undisputed. Feng Qiuran had just acted irrationally. He couldn't stop her in time though. He gritted his teeth and decided to follow her!

Daoist You Ran had also appeared with a solemn look on his face. He too went after the two elders, charging towards the distance!

Everything happened too quickly. Before the crowd could recover from their shock and react, the three Soul Conduit realm cultivators had disappeared into the horizon.

A myriad of emotions flashed across Wang Baole's face. Sect Lord Xu, the giant tree, and the other cultivators of the Dao Palace and the Federation shared the same experience. Everyone had the same feeling... something big was about to happen!

At the border separating the sword body and the sword handle, thunderous explosions continued to rise to the skies. The vast battleship finally broke free from the barrier. Half of its body appeared on the side of the sword handle as a crack appeared in the barrier. It didn't shatter immediately, but sounds of its cracking hinted at its eventual and soon-to-happen collapse.

The battleship chose to stop its advancement at that moment. It stopped, hovering within the barrier, straddling between the sword body and the sword handle. A raspy, weak, and old voice continued to travel out from inside the battleship.

"Save me... save me..."

The voice echoed in the air. The crack in the barrier created tornadoes in the sky around the battleship. The tornadoes began to travel further into the sword handle...

Chapter 632: A First Look!

The entire Dao Palace descended into an uproar. Fear and uneasiness weighed down on everyone's hearts as the three Soul Conduit realm elders left.

Li Wuchen and Zhou Mei's wedding ceremony ended abruptly. While the rest of the Dao Palace was swimming in anxiety and fear, Wang Baole summoned Zhao Yameng, Sect Lord Xu, and the giant tree to discuss what had just happened.

They concluded that Sect Lord Xu and the giant tree were to prepare for the worst. They were to evacuate everyone using the teleportation array formation that Sect Lord Xu had secretly set up should the situation call for it.

They had to carry out the preparations in secret while being prepared to evacuate at any moment. Sect Lord Xu, as well as the giant tree and Zhao Yameng, who had just found out about the second teleportation array formation, all treated the matter with extreme care.

The three left with their hearts heavy and their minds plagued with worry after the meeting. Wang Baole stood alone in the highest tower of his palace, gazing into the distant sky and Sea of Fire. His heart was heavy too.

It might have been just a singular cry for help, but it had been clear—perhaps even to Feng Qiuran—that something hadn't been right. However, sometimes, emotions triumphed over reason. That had been why Feng Qiuran had chosen to journey out and investigate the matter.

Wang Baole understood why she had done that, which was precisely why he had a bad feeling about this. The premonition grew stronger, and a strong wind began to rise, whipping at Wang Baole's clothes as he shut his eyes.

"There's a storm coming..." he murmured to himself. He looked down at the bottom of the mountain, at the cultivators bustling around in the Dao Palace and at the world around him. After a long while, Wang Baole sat down and began his cultivation.

The high officials' autobiographies had mentioned before that no matter what the future held, one could only try to seize the present moment.

Time passed steadily as Wang Baole continued his cultivation, and the sect continued its discussion. In that manner, five days went by.

On the fifth day, as the sun began to set, the thing that worried Wang Baole the most didn't happen. Feng Qiuran and the other two elders returned, their spirits low and a myriad of emotions on their faces.

Wang Baole received an invitation as soon as the elders returned to the sect, so he went to Feng Qiuran's palace. The three Soul Conduit realm cultivators were already inside, silently waiting.

Daoist You Ran nodded and smiled at Wang Baole. Mie Liezi, who usually greeted him with an icy look or avoided him altogether, had a look of bewilderment in his eyes. He wasn't his usual fierce self.

Feng Qiuran had a lost look on her face, and no one knew what she was thinking.

Wang Baole observed the expressions on their faces as the gears in his head spun furiously. He didn't speak and simply sat on the fourth chair in the grand hall, turning his eyes towards Feng Qiuran.

After a long while, Feng Qiuran shut her eyes, and the hall descended into silence. A long bout of silence passed... Feng Qiuran suddenly opened her eyes. They were bright with determination. It was then that Mie Liezi suddenly spoke.

"We must save him!"

"It doesn't matter if this is a trap. As long as there's a chance that Uncle Master is still alive, we can't ignore this. We must do something!"

Wang Baole kept quiet as he listened to Mie Liezi. Feng Qiuran trembled, then started to speak. Bitterness colored her words.

"We've identified the source. It's an Never-Ending Clan battleship. We kept our distance and didn't perform a close inspection, but we know that there were fewer than ten ships of such scale and size during the last galactic battle. We don't know what lies inside the battleship or why it has reappeared. We don't even know what the remnants of the Never-Ending Clan are planning... To enter the battleship would be to risk the fate of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace!" Feng Qiuran shook her head as she spoke. Her heart ached, and she wanted to save her father as well, but she couldn't put the Dao Palace at risk. That was why she planned to enter the battleship alone.

"The Vast Expanse Dao Palace has fallen to a state where there's nothing left for us to lose. But if we can't even save our own elders, what point is there for our continued existence? Mere hope?"

“If that’s the case, I, Mie Liezi, would rather go down in a fight!” Mie Liezi argued. There was determination in his eyes. He saw Feng Qiuran prepared to retort and immediately turned towards Daoist You Ran and Wang Baole.

“What do you think?”

Daoist You Ran contemplated for a moment, then nodded.

“I agree with Mie Liezi’s suggestion. The battleship’s appearance is suspicious. However, even if there are surviving Never-Ending Clan members after the war, their level of cultivation shouldn’t be very high. Otherwise, they wouldn’t choose to reappear now. I believe we should strike!”

Upon hearing Daoist You Ran’s words, Mie Liezi turned and stared at Wang Baole. Feng Qiuran did the same. They waited for Wang Baole’s reply.

Wang Baole thought silently. Both Mie Liezi and Daoist You Ran had reached an agreement on this matter. Feng Qiuran might say otherwise, but this matter concerned her father. Her views on the matter required no vocalization on her part.

They might have given him a choice, but Wang Baole knew that he had only one option he could choose.

Wang Baole maintained his silence, and a decision was made. All Nascent Soul realm cultivators and a great majority of Core Formation realm cultivators from the Vast Expanse Dao Palace would participate in the mission. They would be split into three teams, led by the three Soul Conduit realm cultivators, in a mission to infiltrate and investigate the battleship!

The size of the battleship demanded such a big group of people to search the ship. That would enable them to conduct a swift rescue. The three Soul Conduit realm cultivators also informed the entire Dao Palace about the cries of help, as well as the appearance of the battleship at the border between the sword body and the sword handle. The news sent the entire sect into an uproar.

The Dao Palace prepared sufficiently for the mission. They activated the array formation that kept its treasures under lock and key and retrieved a few Explosive Teleportation Talismans. Everyone was also given a Teleportation Talisman, which could be used anytime to teleport away.

The prices of several Dharmic treasures and pills were also lowered so that everyone could stock up on both quickly.

Finally, Mie Liezi announced that they would leave in seven days. Everyone participating in the mission went into short-term seclusion in order to maintain their condition at peak performance.

Seven days passed. The Dao Palace bustled with commotion as an array formation was activated. Hundreds of cultivators flew into the sky, transforming into rainbows that charged furiously towards the battleship!

Amongst them were the personal disciples of Feng Qiuran and Daoist You Ran. However, there were also familiar faces absent in the crowd, such as Dugu Lin, Zhuo Yifan, the giant tree, and Sect Lord Xu. The Sect Lord was the only Nascent Soul realm cultivator who wasn’t participating in the mission. Wang Baole had fought hard for him to stay out of the mission. The only other Federation cultivators joining Wang Baole on the mission were Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao.

They had to take part because they had acquired official Dao Palace discipleships. Their names had been recorded in the Dao Plate, and they were able to establish resonance with the ancient greenish-bronze sword's array formation. They were the contact points between the cultivators inside and outside the battleship once the mission party boarded the ship.

If Wang Baole and the others had been traveling on their own for this mission, they would have required multiple teleportations in order to cover the distance. The time required would be immense. However, with the entire Dao Palace activated and with array formations supporting the mission, everyone's speed was augmented to an incredible degree. It took them a mere two days before they saw... the enormous battleship straddling the border!

Wang Baole was shaken to the core at the sight of the battleship, left gasping. It was enormous. The three disks that formed the body of the battleship were like planets, and they each seemed to harbor a world.

Power emanated from the battleship. The Core Formation realm cultivators shook, fear instinctively rising inside them.

Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao were similarly affected. However, they had the protection of their Dao Palace discipleship status. They were better able to acclimate themselves to being inside the ancient greenish-bronze sword's array formation as compared to the others. Even so, their faces still looked slightly pale.

The Nascent Soul realm cultivators weren't faring much better. Only the three Soul Conduit realm cultivators and Wang Baole seemed unaffected. The Soul Conduit realm cultivators were powerful enough and already on the verge of a breakthrough to the next level of cultivation. Wang Baole, on the other hand, was an adopted disciple. He was able to fight against the suppressive force after his cultivation was augmented by the array formation.

"As planned, we will split three-ways here and attempt to infiltrate the battleship. Our priority is rescue, but should things go south, activate your Teleportation Talisman immediately and evacuate!" Feng Qiuran took a deep breath and gazed at everyone. She outlined the details of the mission solemnly. Wang Baole nodded, and the group began to divide into their smaller teams.

They were split into their respective factions, with the three cultivators from the Federation joining Feng Qiuran's team. After the teams had been split, they were ready to move. Before the teams dashed off in their separate directions, Daoist You Ran reminded everyone solemnly.

"Everyone should be mentally prepared. Technically speaking, the talismans should work inside the battleship, but we can't guarantee that they will. Based on what I've found out in the past few days, it is challenging to enter an Never-Ending Clan battleship. There were accounts of intruders who successfully entered but then were teleported out again.

"This is the Never-Ending Clan battleship's defense mechanism. That's why should you fail and be teleported out, gather here first. We will regroup and discuss how to proceed next."

Chapter 633: I Can't Get In!

Everyone nodded after listening to Daoist You Ran and immediately split ways. Wang Baole, Zhao Yameng, and Kong Dao followed Feng Qiuran and raced towards one of the three disks.

Wang Baole slowed down slightly so that Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao could keep pace with him. In his opinion, he was simply carrying out his obligations to the sect and to Feng Qiuran by taking part in this mission. It wasn't truly part of his responsibilities. What he was concerned for were Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao.

"Yameng, Kong Dao, stay close to me. If anything goes wrong... we'll leave immediately!" Wang Baole knew his priorities. He communicated via his voice transmission ring, through the designated, region-restricted Federation channel. There was no worry of anyone else listening in on them.

Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao were of the same view as well. The three of them exchanged looks. They didn't say a single word, but it was clear that they intended to advance as a team and leave together.

The team traveled amidst anxiety and wariness, approaching their targeted disk steadily. The disk had looked extremely impressive from afar. Now that they were nearer it, it looked vast and infinite, stretching for miles into the horizon without an end in sight. It was impossible to take it all in with one's eyes.

The disk's appearance became more distinct as they approached. They couldn't discern the landscape. The surface appeared liquid-like, and there were ripples, making them feel as if they were approaching a vast ocean.

The suppressive force emanating from the disk intensified as the group drew nearer. Despite the defensive barrier of their array formation and Feng Qiuran unleashing her cultivation to shield everyone, the Core Formation realm cultivators' heads began to buzz as the group approached the disk. Their minds began to turn fuzzy. Only the Nascent Soul realm cultivators managed to barely retain clear minds. Wang Baole, with his impressive cultivation and unique status, managed to keep clear-headed as well. However, his breathing began to quicken, and his heart had started racing uncontrollably.

Fortunately, they didn't have to suffer this for long. Under Feng Qiuran's protection, the team picked up speed and finally got within a thousand feet of the disk's water-like surface. A sharp light flashed across Feng Qiuran's eyes as the Nascent Soul realm cultivators unleashed their cultivation. Everyone joined forces and gathered together, transforming into a shooting star that charged straight at the disk.

They arrived almost instantly. Just as they were about to collide with the disk's surface, Feng Qiuran pulled out an ancient talisman without hesitation. It was a talisman that had been created by the true Vast Expanse Dao Palace, used to slice open a battleship's outer surface and enter the battleship — an Explosive Teleportation Talisman!

A thunderous boom resounded in the air as the talisman exploded. Ripples broke the surface of the disk, and a near-imperceptible opening was revealed. Feng Qiuran and the others activated their cultivation simultaneously and unleashed a sudden burst of speed, dashing straight towards the opening!

In the blink of an eye, they arrived at the opening. They were just about to slip through and enter the world within the disk when suddenly, the rising energies of teleportation exploded before their eyes, sweeping outwards and sending everyone's heads buzzing.

Wang Baole felt that too. He was only one step away from entering the world within the disk and could even smell the flowers inside that world. Regardless, they had failed. Everyone began to disappear in the teleportation storm, only to reappear... in the skies a hundred thousand feet away from the battleship!

“What’s going on?”

“I thought we got in!”

“It’s true that the battleship is being protected by a defense mechanism that teleports all intruders away!”

The expressions on Zhao Yameng’s and Kong Dao’s faces were dark. Many cultivators around them began to whisper furiously to one another. Feng Qiuran grimaced, and as she gazed at the battleship, a myriad of emotions burned bright in her eyes. Wang Baole, on the other hand, let loose a sigh of relief secretly.

He hadn’t approved of gathering such a large party of people to infiltrate the battleship, but Mie Liezi and Daoist You Ran had both agreed to the idea. Feng Qiuran had also wished it so, and Wang Baole had been unable to voice his disagreement.

This isn’t bad either. Elder Feng Qiuran should know deep in her heart that her father is likely dead. She couldn’t help but hope. Wang Baole sighed. He lifted his head and studied the battleship before him. He could see the light from teleportations appearing nearby. Mie Liezi’s and Daoist You Ran’s factions had both been teleported away.

Everyone had a dark look on their faces. After some discussion amongst the four elders, they decided to make another attempt. It ended once again with their teleportation. They weren’t able to enter the battleship. It was then that Mie Liezi came up with an idea.

“We have to make use of the power from the ancient greenish-bronze sword’s array formation to create interference in order to resist being teleported away and successfully infiltrate the battleship. I propose that we return to the Dao Palace first and gather the strength of the three factions. We need to make preparations to ensure nothing goes wrong the next time!”

Wang Baole agreed readily with Mie Liezi’s proposal. After a moment of silence, Daoist You Ran nodded in agreement as well. Feng Qiuran seemed to release a sigh of relief. Her spirits seemed low, but she agreed with their decision as well. The party comprised of hundreds of people, who had come charging fiercely, decided to leave without achieving anything.

Those left guarding the Dao Palace, including Federation cultivators, were surprised by their return. Nothing much had changed in the Dao Palace since their return, except for the appearance of the battleship and their initial failure at infiltration weighing down more heavily on them.

Life still had to go on. The appearance of a battleship wasn’t going to drastically transform the lives of those in the Dao Palace within such a short period of time. A few days later, the Dao Palace discovered that the battleship had returned to the sword body and hadn’t continued its departure. Wang Baole and Feng Qiuran expressed their suspicions and uneasiness during discussions. However, a great many of the Dao Palace disciples had let loose a sigh of relief upon receiving the news.

The assimilation between the Federation and the Dao Palace continued. After a few days of peace and quiet, Wang Baole returned to his cultivation. It didn't last though. Jin Duoming came visiting one night.

Jin Duoming smiled wryly as he cupped his fists and greeted Wang Baole.

"Baole, I know something huge happened a while ago, and I can sense that we have been growing apart. I'm here to discuss something openly with you.

"I, Jin Duoming, really have no wish to fight for the Federation presidency with you. I don't care that it's the mission that Duan Muque, that old man, has tasked me with. I know what I want. I want to play a part in the assimilation between the Federation and the Dao Palace. I also want to establish a Trilunaris Corporation that is independent of my family clan!"

"Baole, will you help me?" Jin Duoming sounded sincere. His eyes were clear and honest, without secrets, as he stared at Wang Baole.

Wang Baole rubbed his forehead. He had been thinking a lot after the battleship's appearance. He hadn't really grown apart from Jin Duoming; they had continued to keep in touch throughout the years. He spent some time easing Jin Duoming's mind, then asked.

"I'll help where I can. You mentioned you ran into some trouble?"

"It's nothing difficult, Baole. I know that what I'm about to ask may result in some misunderstanding, but... I'll just speak my mind. I wish to exchange a portion of my shares in the Spirit Internet for a portion of your shares in the game." Jin Duoming ducked his head sheepishly as he said that.

Wang Baole rubbed at his forehead again. This wasn't a problem at all, in his opinion. However, it also wasn't something he could unilaterally decide. After some thought, Wang Baole said tactfully, "Duoming, you should discuss this with Xie Haiyang."

"Baole, I've gone looking for Xie Haiyang. I went to his cave abode, but there was no one there. His cave abode was empty as well. I heard that he disappeared the same day the battleship appeared. He hasn't returned yet..." Jin Duoming sighed and said with great exasperation.

"He's gone, and his cave abode is empty? He's gone missing again?" Wang Baole froze. He immediately pulled out his voice transmission ring and sent a voice transmission to Xie Haiyang. It was like a rock sinking into the ocean—there was no reply.

Jin Duoming saw that, and an imperceptible light flickered in his eyes. He lowered his head and sighed.

"Yes, this fellow keeps disappearing. This is the second time he's gone missing."

Wang Baole's head began to throb slightly. He couldn't help but wonder at the strange timing of Xie Haiyang's disappearance. This seemed like something he should look into. He comforted Jin Duoming again.

"Duoming, you don't have to worry about this. Xie Haiyang's a guy filled with mysteries. Maybe he just has something he needs to attend to. I'll go look for him. You'll have your answer soon. How about that?"

Jin Duoming smiled wryly and nodded. He chatted with Wang Baole for a while longer, then left.

Having sent Jin Duoming off, Wang Baole sat back down in his palace, and a crease appeared on his forehead. As he wondered about Xie Haiyang's disappearance, he suddenly lifted his head and looked outside, in the direction that Jin Duoming had left. Suspicion gradually colored his eyes. After some thought, he realized that his suspicions were a result of what Jin Duoming had said about Xie Haiyang.

"He's gone, and his cave abode is empty? He's gone missing again?"

"Yes, this fellow keeps disappearing. This is the second time he's gone missing."

The exchange played in Wang Baole's mind, and the crease in his forehead deepened. Assuming that Jin Duoming wasn't aware that Xie Haiyang had done a disappearing act before, he should have been surprised upon hearing what Wang Baole had said. He should have questioned Wang Baole about Xie Haiyang's habit of disappearing.

But from Jin Duoming's reply, Wang Baole could sense that he seemed to know that Xie Haiyang had done a disappearing act before.

Something wasn't right there. Jin Duoming shouldn't know about Xie Haiyang's stay in the Ethereal Dao College. He had asked about Xie Haiyang before, but Wang Baole hadn't revealed such information to him then. Even if Jin Duoming had decided to do a background check on Xie Haiyang, there wasn't much of a chance of him finding out the truth. They were on the ancient greenish-bronze sword, not in the Federation.

Besides, he had warned Jin Duoming not to offend Xie Haiyang. Wang Baole still remembered the expression Jin Duoming had on his face. Based on his understanding of Jin Duoming's character, Jin Duoming had taken that advice to heart. He was a smart guy, so he wouldn't have gone ahead and investigated Xie Haiyang secretly. There was a high likelihood that Jin Duoming had always assumed that Xie Haiyang was a native disciple of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

Wang Baole began to suspect something was going on. But then, Jin Duoming might have also done some asking around. Wang Baole wasn't the only person who was from the Ethereal Dao College.

Maybe I'm being too paranoid. Wang Baole rubbed his forehead and decided to set this matter aside. He thought about Xie Haiyang's disappearance again, and an indescribable irritation rose inside him. He instinctively called out for Little Missy, but she didn't reply.

Is she asleep again? Wang Baole rose to his feet. The skies had darkened. The strange irritable feeling began to grow stronger inside him, so he pulled out the jade slip containing the game Descend. He intended to enter and play the game for a while to rid himself of this bizarre irritation he was feeling.

However, no matter how many times he tried, it was as if the game server had crashed. He... couldn't log on!

Chapter 634: A Floral Scent!

I can't log on? Wang Baole shook. His breathing stopped as a thought surfaced in his mind.

Xie Haiyang, that fellow. Did he just grab everything and run away? Wang Baole began to panic. He took out his voice transmission ring and tried contacting Xie Haiyang again, but he received no reply. Simmering with frustration, Wang Baole sat down and began to think.

Xie Haiyang doesn't seem like the type to resort to such despicable tricks... Wang Baole thought. Finally, he sighed and turned on the Federation communication channel on his voice transmission ring. The Federation cultivators were talking about the battleship. After a long moment, Wang Baole shook his head and set aside his worries about Xie Haiyang. He shut his eyes and began to meditate.

However, it didn't take long before Wang Baole suddenly opened his eyes. There was a strange, contemplative light in his eyes. Even though he had decided to stop thinking about Xie Haiyang, somewhere inside him was a voice telling him that something... was very wrong!

"Jin Duoming suddenly paying a house visit, Xie Haiyang being uncontactable, and me not being able to log on to the game..." Wang Baole muttered. The three things seemed to be related to one another, but he couldn't tell what the problem was. He was no longer in the mood for cultivation. Wang Baole had a feeling that... he wouldn't be able to rest easy if he didn't figure this out.

He mused silently, recalling his interactions with Jin Duoming and Xie Haiyang. Then, his eyes widened. His breathing quickened as he remembered asking if the game would suddenly crash. Xie Haiyang had answered him then.

"The game won't crash unless you're dreaming!"

Those words were like bolts of lightning exploding inside Wang Baole's head. He began to tremble, and waves of emotions surged inside him.

A terrible light flickered in Wang Baole's eyes, and he was silent for a long while. Then, his right hand reached into his clothes and began rummaging. He pulled out the mask in which Little Missy resided.

He could feel the mask in his hands, but he couldn't see it at all. Wang Baole's face darkened instantly. There seemed to be something in the air, a whiff of something floral.

That floral scent again... Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. He remembered the first time he had smelled that, it was the instant he had been teleported away by the battleship.

He sat there silently. The voice transmission jade slip in his storage bag started vibrating suddenly. He lowered his head, narrowed his eyes, and pulled out the jade slip. As his Spirit Qi flowed into the jade slip, he heard Feng Qiuran's tired voice.

"Baole, come to the cave abode, I have something very important to tell you."

Wang Baole's face was devoid of emotions as he shut his eyes. After a long while, he finally opened them again. There were no signs of anything having gone wrong shown on his face. He rose to his feet, left his palace, and headed straight for Feng Qiuran's cave abode. He observed his surroundings along the way. There were numerous Dao Palace disciples and Federation cultivators running about. Everyone—Sect Lord Xu, the giant tree, and all the rest—were all acting normally. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

There are no loopholes...

There was a slightly lost look in Wang Baole's eyes as he finally arrived at the entrance of Feng Qiuran's cave abode. He stopped and stood there, staring at the gates.

"Baole, come in." The gates slid open slowly as soon as Wang Baole arrived. Feng Qiuran's raspy voice rang out. She sounded tired, both physically and emotionally. Even her voice sounded weak and sorrowful. It was as if she had lost all hope.

"Still no loopholes..." Wang Baole muttered to himself as he listened to Feng Qiuran's voice and sensed her listlessness. He didn't enter the cave abode immediately. Instead, he stood outside and pulled out the mask again. It was still invisible. Wang Baole took a deep breath and knew that the mask had been why he had managed to discover that he had been in an illusion during the Ethereal Dao College's preliminary trial. The mask was invisible now because an illusion had no way of materializing it.

Am I in an illusion now... Wang Baole looked to his sides, then to the skies, and finally to the ground. He observed everything around him. The immense realness of his surroundings led him into another bout of silence. However, the mask's invisibility was clear proof that everything was an illusion.

If that were the case, Wang Baole could now reasonably guess the reasons behind Jin Duoming's house visit and Xie Haiyang's disappearance.

If this were truly an illusion, perhaps it means that the illusion isn't able to conjure Xie Haiyang either. That was why Jin Duoming had paid me a visit under the guise of buying shares. His true purpose was to let me know that Xie Haiyang had disappeared. Once I believed him, this would have erased the final loophole. Wang Baole sighed. He might have viewed a single incident as a coincidence, but Jin Duoming's strange behavior had been followed by Xie Haiyang's disappearance, his own inability to log on to the game, and finally the mask's invisibility.

A determined look appeared in Wang Baole's eyes as he thought through the series of incidents that had occurred.

"Who cares if it's a dream or an illusion, I just have to dispel it!" As he muttered to himself, Wang Baole lifted his head and stared at the cave abode before him. As Feng Qiuran's questioning voice rang out from the cave abode, Wang Baole raised his right hand abruptly and unleashed his full cultivation at the cave abode. The Thearch Armor appeared instantly on him. His aura rose to the skies, and he sent his fist flying forward!

The punch unleashed the full power of the Flame Snatch Thearch Armor and Wang Baole's will. It contained the determination to break through all barriers, summoning a tornado that swept into the cave abode, howling. Feng Qiuran's cave abode quaked and began to show signs of caving in. Feng Qiuran darted out, her steps stumbling as if she had yet to recover from serious injury. Her face was alit with shock and fury, and she yelled at Wang Baole as soon as she appeared.

"Wang Baole, what are you doing? Have you been hit with the Never-Ending Clan's bewitchment as well, like Mie Liezi?"

bewitchment? Wang Baole's face darkened. He charged at Feng Qiuran, his right hand tightened into a fist. A Divine Armament's power erupted from his armor's right arm—the melded arm of the Dao Disciple. A power that even Wang Baole found terrifying exploded from his arm. It transformed into a

huge, illusory skeletal hand that emanated death and destruction. It seemed capable of destroying everything in its path—even the great abyss. The skeletal hand made a grab at Feng Qiuran!

Alarm flashed across Feng Qiuran's face. There was fury and incomprehension in her eyes as she raised her right hand. Her Soul Conduit realm cultivation rose to the skies, forming an incredible power that seemed to blanket the entire world. It surged towards Wang Baole, and it was clear that her power vastly surpassed Wang Baole's. However, her seemingly serious injuries disallowed her from maintaining her strong show of strength. She didn't seem to want to kill Wang Baole. Having held him down with her power, she shouted yet again.

“Wang Baole, fight against the Never-Ending Clan's bewitchment! Wake up!”

Wang Baole shook at the display of Feng Qiuran's power and her words. His hair flew, and his clothes whipped in the strong winds. His body was prickling with pain. Everything felt so real, and uncertainty ate at him, but the thought of the mask's invisibility, as well as Jin Duoming's and Xie Haiyang's bizarre behaviors, made Wang Baole's eyes flash with an icy glint. He roared, and his illusory skeletal arm slammed down on Feng Qiuran!

A thunderous boom resonated in the air. Feng Qiuran's smile was laced with pain. She had been injured too heavily. The cultivation that she had unleashed earlier dissipated, and her earlier attack seemed to have worsened her injury. When Wang Baole's Divine Armament came slamming down, she was swept aside like paper. She shook violently and spat out a mouthful of blood. As she fell to the ground, she looked at Wang Baole with bitterness in her eyes. Her voice was weak and faint as she murmured.

“Mie Liezi's been enchanted, and now you as well... Wang Baole, please, come to your senses. This is reality, it's not an illusion!”

“So, an bewitchment...” Wang Baole fell silent. He looked at the fallen Feng Qiuran and could tell that his easy victory had been because Feng Qiuran had already been seriously injured. She had urged him to wake up. Everything seemed so logical and reasonable.

There was a reason for her injury. She had mentioned it. It was because... Mie Liezi had also suffered the Never-Ending Clan's bewitchment like he was. He had suspected that everything had been an illusion.

“This is the Never-Ending Clan's bewitchment. Can you smell a strange floral scent? That's a symptom. It means that you've fallen to an bewitchment before the teleportation!” Feng Qiuran's breathing grew uneven. Her eyes were bright with anxiety, and she seemed desperate to convince Wang Baole that this wasn't an illusion.

Chapter 635: Parting the Clouds!

Many cultivators in the Dao Palace had noticed the commotion and rushed over. They kept a distance, but Wang Baole could see the shock and disbelief on their faces as well as hear their heavy breathing.

“Baole, you...”

“Wang Baole, what are you doing?”

Wang Baole didn't turn around as he listened to the gasps of shock. He could hear the approaching footsteps of Sect Lord Xu, Zhao Yameng, and the others. He stared at the weakened Feng Qiuran silently, then slowly narrowed his eyes. Then, he suddenly raised his right hand and pointed lightning-quick. A lash of wind whipped out and pierced through Feng Qiuran's forehead.

Feng Qiuran froze, and her eyes widened as bitterness, and a whole array of emotions, shone in her eyes. She stared unblinkingly at Wang Baole before finally dying!

"Has it been dispelled..." Wang Baole muttered to himself as he stared at Feng Qiuran's corpse. He turned and saw the looks of shock and disbelief coloring the faces of the Dao Palace and Federation cultivators around him.

"Wang Baole, you've gone mad!"

"Baole!"

"He killed Elder Feng Qiuran!"

Gasps of shock exploded in the crowd. Some looked bewildered, others were shaking, and some went mad. The situation seemed like it was about to spiral out of control. It was then that Sect Lord Xu suddenly unleashed his cultivation and roared.

"Federation cultivators, I command you to protect Elder Wang Baole. We are to leave this place now!"

As his words rang out, the lost and bewildered Federation cultivators shook. Despite the mixed feelings clear on their faces, they swiftly followed Sect Lord Xu and raced towards Wang Baole, with the intention of surrounding him in a protective circle.

The Dao Palace cultivators went mad. There was no way they would allow that to happen. They immediately tried to stop the Federation cultivators, and battle broke out between the two sides. Death and destruction spread like wildfire. As sounds of battling rose to the skies, numerous Nascent Soul realm cultivators could be seen charging towards them from the distance, fury and alarm in their eyes.

"Baole, I believe you had a reason for doing whatever you just did, but this isn't the time to think. Hurry, get to the teleportation array formation. We need to leave this place and return to the Federation!" Sect Lord Xu shouted at Wang Baole frantically. Both Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao were pale in the face. Regardless, they immediately came to Wang Baole.

They reached his side and held him up as he stared in confusion at Feng Qiuran's corpse. Then, they began to pull him along as they raced towards the teleportation array formation.

The sounds of battling, of howling, of deafening explosions, and the light from spells, flooded the Dao Palace. Wang Baole remained quiet as Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao escorted him towards the teleportation array formation. They were about to reach the array formation when Wang Baole suddenly rooted himself to the ground and muttered.

"I believe..."

"What are you muttering? Baole, quick, enter the teleportation array formation!" Zhao Yameng said frantically. She tried to pull Wang Baole into the teleportation array formation, but he wouldn't budge.

She froze and turned back. What she saw wasn't a bewildered-looking Wang Baole. Instead, the confusion in his eyes had faded away and was replaced instead with a fierce determination!

"I said that I believe in Little Missy. I believe in my own judgment, and in my own instincts!" Wang Baole said quietly. Having experienced a Dark Dream, he had done some reading up on the subject. He knew that if this were indeed a dream or an illusion, he would have to locate its source in order to dispel it.

Only by locating the source and destroying it could he then dispel this illusion. What he had learned in his Dark Dream taught him that such sources were often hidden in a living entity.

The first candidate he had thought of was Feng Qiuran. She was a familiar face and had a high level of cultivation. There had been a great chance of her being the source of the illusion. However, nothing had changed after her death.

I'm right... I just haven't found the source! Everything seems frighteningly real. Such a level of realism can only be done... by gathering everyone's memories. That is the only way for there to be no loopholes or flaws revealed when I converse with anyone!

In that case, everyone's memories, including mine, are the basis of this illusion. But... they are only memories. None of these people are real. They may possess the original person's memories, but they won't have their reasoning and their instincts. Wang Baole suddenly turned and looked at Zhao Yameng, who was looking at him with anxiety in her eyes.

"Yameng, you are well-versed in teleportation array formations. Help me perform a calculation. Let's assume that the number of Federation cultivators that we are sending back is a prime number. When taking into account the capabilities of each Federation cultivator as an individual and as a whole, as well as the Dao Palace cultivators' determination to stop us, how many teleportations and how many groups of cultivators should we split them up into in order to send back as many cultivators as possible? Is there any way to send back more cultivators? In addition, what is this prime number that you have assumed?"

Wang Baole's sudden question stumped Zhao Yameng. Nervousness flashed across her eyes as she retorted hastily.

"This is no time to joke around. Baole, what are you doing? Quick, enter the teleportation array formation!"

"Yameng, please help perform the calculations?" Wang Baole stared at Zhao Yameng and implored softly.

"Baole, the most important thing now is to leave..." Kong Dao said hurriedly as well. Before he was done speaking, Wang Baole sighed. He had seen the flash of fear in Zhao Yameng's eyes and had his answer. He raised his right hand, and Zhao Yameng shook instantly as a bloody cut appeared on her neck. Blood spurted out. She stared at Wang Baole, confused, then collapsed to the ground.

Kong Dao was stunned at the scene that had just unfolded before him. His breathing quickened as he staggered backwards. There was confusion and disbelief in his eyes as he stared dumbly at Wang Baole. It was as if he was looking at a complete stranger.

“Kong Dao, I’ll just call you Kong Dao now. Can you do me a favor? Ambush that person,” Wang Baole said, then casually pointed at a Dao Palace Core Formation realm cultivator engaged in battle in the distance.

“I...” Kong Dao stumbled backwards. His breathing grew uneven. He might not realize it, but his eyes were wild and frantic. Wang Baole sighed with relief.

Fortunately, everything isn’t real. He sighed, then waved his right hand. His blade flashed, leaving a gaping hole in Kong Dao’s chest. Kong Dao’s dead body fell to the ground as Wang Baole muttered to himself again.

“Still not dispelled? The source of the bewitchment... isn’t on Feng Qiuran or anyone close to me. Where... could it possibly be?” Wang Baole stood next to the teleportation array formation. An indescribable frustration and sense of danger ate at him. He knew that if he didn’t dispel the bewitchment soon, he might not... have a chance to do so.

His eyes swept across the battling masses. He saw Zhuo Yifan, Li Yi, and Jin Duoming. Finally, his eyes landed on the top of the mountain... on the Hyacinthus Tree!

Wang Baole shook violently as soon as his eyes landed on the tree. He could smell the strange floral scent again. His gut was telling him, in fact, there was a voice shouting inside him and trying to tell him that the source of it all... was that tree!

He didn’t hesitate. Wang Baole dashed towards the Hyacinthus Tree. Everyone around him—Sect Lord Xu, Zhuo Yifan, the Federation cultivators, and the Dao Palace disciples—all turned towards him simultaneously and stared unblinkingly at him. They rushed out and tried to stop him!

But it was too late!

Wang Baole unleashed his Flame Snatch Thearch Armor. His cultivation surged inside him as a Divine Armament’s aura emanated from his arm—stronger than it had ever been. It rose to the skies. Hovering in mid-air, Wang Baole’s body seemed to have melded perfectly with the Divine Armament. They were like a shooting star, dashing across the heavens and slashing at the Hyacinthus Tree.

The blow landed, and a pained shriek rang out. The Hyacinthus Tree shook violently and toppled. The skies thundered, and the world was transformed. The cultivators from the Federation and the Dao Palace turned into mere shades, then faded away as if wiped out of existence. The Sea of Fire around the Dao Palace roared and caved in. It was as if a veil had been lifted by a strong wind following the cave-in, exposing the countless corpses lying all around him!

In the distance, blood pooled together and formed a vast river that flowed into the horizon, with no end in sight. Former islands, upon the lifting of the veil, revealed their true form!

They were mountains formed from countless piles of corpses!

The piles of corpses stretched into the distance. Countless huge, red flowers could be seen on those corpses, some in blossom, others not. A familiar floral scent enveloped the entire world.

The skies had transformed as well. They were no longer the skies of the Dao Palace. An enormous sun hung in the heavens. Upon a closer look, one could see that this sun was actually the corpse of a gigantic

beast. The light it gave off was a false warmth that transformed into a dim glow of death as soon as it landed on anything.

This wasn't the Vast Expanse Dao Palace!

This was the battleship of the Never-Ending Clan!

Chapter 636: The Demonic Green Poria Flower!

The Hyacinthus Tree's destruction seemed to unveil the layer of illusion. Even though Wang Baole had been mentally prepared for the reveal, he was still shocked by the sight before him.

He had thought that this was going to be the case, but he still couldn't calm himself down!

"So... I didn't return to the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. Instead, I entered the battleship!" Wang Baole muttered. Ten steps ahead of him... was a gigantic red flower!

It towered a hundred feet tall and had buds like pillars that blossomed skyward. Its huge petals gave off a strange, eerie light. There was a strange fragrance that filled this world. It was a scent... that Wang Baole was familiar with. He had smelled it the moment he had boarded the battleship and while deep in the illusion.

The scent was clearly what had drawn him into an illusion. Numerous fruits hung under the gigantic red flower. Each one was the size of a person. Cracks lined the fruits, and within the cracks grew rows of sharp teeth. It was a terrifying sight.

Viscous fluids dripped from the cracks, hissing as they landed on the ground. The fruit nearest Wang Baole had clearly dried up and died.

That wasn't all. As Wang Baole lifted his head and looked at the flowers around him, he saw a dim demonic glow lighting the sky and the land filled with corpses and flowers. Familiar figures stood before the flowers around him!

He saw Feng Qiuran, Zhao Yameng, Kong Dao, and many others who had entered the battleship together. Some of them stood before a fruit hanging under each flower, some were walking towards a flower, and some were crawling into the fruit.

A few people were clearly missing. Wang Baole realized where they had gone when he saw a few fruits hanging ripe and heavy under some flowers. They had been swallowed whole by the fruits.

The expressions on Feng Qiuran's and the others' faces varied. Some had a silly grin on their faces, others a look of confusion. Some looked agitated, others furious. Some were obviously struggling... There were also a few who had pulled out the innards from the corpses on the ground and stuffed them into their mouths; they looked like they were in heaven, as if they had just tasted ambrosia.

The heavens were colored with a demonic light, and the land was littered with red flowers in full bloom. The sight before Wang Baole shocked him to the core. His breathing quickened as he raced towards Zhao Yameng!

Zhao Yameng was blushing, her eyes dreamy. She was about to be swallowed whole by the fruit before her and already had half an arm extended into the fruit. It was as if there was someone inside the fruit that Wang Baole couldn't see who was holding hands with her and was trying to pull her into his arms!

She was about to step right into the fruit. It was then that Wang Baole arrived next to her and grabbed her arm. He yanked fiercely, and a shriek that seemed to tear at the soul escaped from the fruit. It sounded mad with fury and was clearly unwilling to part with its prey. A force erupted inside the fruit and merged with its violent lust. The fruit swelled up and tried to swallow Wang Baole whole!

Wang Baole retaliated with a punch from his Flame Snatch Thearch Armor. The fruit shook violently, and a scream rang out from within. It exploded upon contact, its juices splattering everywhere. Wang Baole pulled Zhao Yameng away. However, there were no signs of Zhao Yameng awakening from her illusion. Wang Baole grew frantic. He raised his right hand and pointed at her forehead.

“Wake up!”

His voice was like thunder, booming in the air. It seemed to reach Zhao Yameng as well, causing her to tremble. Her eyes became clear, and as she saw Wang Baole, she murmured.

“Baole, I had a dream. I dreamed that we were...” Her words trailed off as Zhao Yameng's head finally cleared, and she noticed her surroundings. Her pupils contracted instantly, and alarm and shock colored her face.

Upon seeing Zhao Yameng recover her senses, Wang Baole sighed with relief. There was no time to comfort her though. He turned and dashed towards the rest. It was then that the gigantic flower before Feng Qiuran started trembling. That lasted a few moments before it collapsed. Its petals were ripped apart, its stem and fruits exploded. A powerful Spirit Qi, one that belonged to a Soul Conduit realm cultivator, erupted from Feng Qiuran's person.

“The Green Poria dream realm!” Feng Qiuran had a dark look on her face. As her eyes slowly opened, she saw Wang Baole and a slightly weakened Zhao Yameng. The latter had clearly just been rescued from her illusion. As for the former... Feng Qiuran was caught by surprise. She had known that Wang Baole wasn't someone to be trifled with, but she hadn't expected him to be the first person to break free from his illusion.

Wang Baole watched Feng Qiuran break free from the illusion and finally was able to set his mind at ease. They looked at each other. There was no need for words to be exchanged. They dashed out and began to rescue the others. There were still a few Nascent Soul realm cultivators who were trapped in the dream realm. However, they had clearly sensed something was amiss and were fighting against the illusion. It was clear from the expressions on their faces.

Many of them would perish without help, but some might have been able to free themselves without help. With Feng Qiuran and Wang Baole's help, they would awaken more quickly from the dream realm.

It didn't take long for the two, as well as those rescued, to free the cultivators who hadn't been swallowed whole. They had all been trapped in their individual, drastically different illusions. Everyone had been shocked when they had awakened. They had stared at one another with a myriad of emotions in their eyes. No one had wanted to speak about what they had dreamed of. The heaviness in their

hearts and the fear they had towards this strange place didn't fade away with their release from their illusions.

They had seen a few companions who had been swallowed alive by the fruits, or at least, the bare bones that had been left behind after they had sliced those fruits open. Everyone had descended into silence then.

Wang Baole himself was in low spirits. It had been a dangerous and strange experience since their entering this battleship. Everyone was deeply worried about their current situation.

"Baole, guard these people for me. I'll go destroy the Demonic Green Poria Flowers in the area!" Feng Qiuran had a dark look on her face. Their first entry into the battleship had been fraught with danger. Her concern about her father led to her uneasiness as well. She was just about to rise to the sky and inspect the area.

However, as soon as Feng Qiuran said that and Wang Baole nodded his head solemnly, the dozens of demonic flowers around them suddenly shook and let loose a series of loud explosions. In that instant, they seemed to use up all their vitality and expelled whatever floral scent that was housed within them!

The floral scent appeared in a gaseous state when seen from afar. Up close though, it was crimson red pollen that formed a blood-colored mist and spread outwards, blanketing the surrounding area spanning thousands of feet!

The flowers dried up as soon as they expelled the pollen. Within the blink of an eye, they withered and fell to the ground. The mist that had been formed from their pollen, on the other hand, had been unleashed and was spreading further outwards, instigating a sudden transformation!

The pollen fell on the corpses piled across the thousands of feet of land. These corpses began to twitch. Waves of mindless howling sounded in the air as hordes of dead bodies began to crawl to their feet. Some of them were human-shaped, the others beasts. There were also some species that Wang Baole had never come across before. They had all gotten to their feet and were now charging towards Wang Baole and the surviving cultivators!

The aura of death followed these creatures, the air all around them reeking of it. The skies became drained of all color as the winds howled and the clouds boiled. Fortunately, even though the dead numbered many, most of them had died a long time ago. What remained of them was pure instinct. Core Formation realm cultivators might find them a challenge, but Nascent Soul realm cultivators didn't find these creatures particularly difficult to slay or avoid.

A Soul Conduit realm cultivator would find these easy targets. As the corpses charged towards them, a flash of hard light flickered in an anxious Feng Qiuran's eyes. She raised her right hand and slammed it hard onto the ground!

Heaven and earth thundered as a gigantic illusory hand spanning thousands of feet appeared above their heads and slammed down onto the ground. Winds howled wildly while everyone's hair and clothes whipped wildly in the air. As everyone stood, shocked, the gigantic hand passed through their bodies without harming them and landed on the ground!

A deafening boom resonated in the air, and the earth thundered as the palm hit it. All of the corpses charging towards them disintegrated immediately and turned to dust!

The illusory hand vanished, and the area regained calm once more. Everyone gasped. Even Wang Baole stopped breathing for a second. There was a solemn look in his eyes when he turned towards Feng Qiuran. Feng Qiuran had never displayed such power in the past. That had been why many had viewed her as less powerful than Mie Liezi.

However, she had just now shown a power befitting her status!

“The red flowers are called Demonic Green Poria Flowers. Their fragrance can imprison one in an illusion,” Feng Qiuran said slowly. She raised her right hand and made a grab through the air, plucking strands of pistils from the withered flowers and placing them before everyone.

“Hold on to this. It can help fight against the illusory power of the demonic flowers.”

Chapter 637: Pulling a Log!

Wang Baole took the pistils quietly. He understood Feng Qiuran’s desperation to save her father and Mie Liezi’s devotion to the sect. Both of them would risk everything to save an elder of the sect. He also understood Daoist You Ran’s loyalty to the sect. However, he continued to remain wary of the latter. Daoist You Ran had been the one who had mentioned the battleship’s defense mechanism. That had been part of the reason why everyone had so easily fallen into an illusion.

Regardless, even though he might understand their motivations, he still disapproved of this mission. It might not have been so bad if there had been fewer people involved. However, this mission comprised of all the sect’s Nascent Soul realm cultivators and a great portion of their Core Formation realm cultivators. These hundreds of cultivators formed the remaining elite fighting force of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

If something were to happen to them, it would create a lasting impact on the Vast Expanse Dao Palace that the latter might never recover from. The Federation wouldn’t be affected in the short term, but it would also suffer the consequences in the long run.

Regardless, he was an outsider who was in no place to disagree with their decision. He could only exclude Federation cultivators from participating in this mission. Zhao Yameng’s and Kong Dao’s statuses in the sect were different though, and they had no choice but to join the mission.

That was why Wang Baole knew that his main responsibility was to ensure their safety while finding Feng Qiuran’s father was a secondary concern. He sighed secretly. He went to Kong Dao and Zhao Yameng. They hadn’t suffered any injury, but the series of dangers they had just survived had shaken them. However, neither Kong Dao nor Zhao Yameng were weaklings. They quickly set aside their fears, their eyes once again shining with a fierce intensity.

“Kong Dao, try activating your Teleportation Talisman,” Wang Baole said quietly after he walked near the two.

Kong Dao shook his head.

“I tried earlier... it didn't work.”

Wang Baole wasn't the only one who had thoughts of leaving. There were a few amongst them who shared the same thoughts. Even though Feng Qiuran was with them, they had tried activating the teleportation talisman secretly. The teleportation had failed though, which further dampened their spirits.

When Feng Qiuran realized what was going on, bitterness flooded her heart as she sighed secretly. Then, with a solemn look, she bowed deeply towards everyone.

“Perhaps I've made the wrong move this time... but please believe me. I will do all I can to lead everyone out!”

Feng Qiuran's character didn't allow her to be as forceful as Mie Liezi. However, as a woman, her malleable character and lack of temper were to her advantage.

As she bowed towards everyone and made her promise, her eyes filled with apology, everyone also returned the bow silently. They had all chosen to believe her. That was because they knew her character. They knew that Feng Qiuran... wasn't someone who would leave them to die in times of danger.

“Elder Feng, there is no need for an apology. As Dao Palace cultivators, it's our obligation to save our elder. Besides, we have chosen the path of cultivation. Why should we now fear death? If we did, we shouldn't have chosen this path in the first place!” Chi Lin said with his raspy voice as he stood amidst the crowd. His eyes were fierce as they scanned the crowd.

“Since teleportation is out of the question, we have only one option left to us, and that is to advance!”

“Elder Feng, we don't have the rights to access many of the records concerning the Never-Ending Clan. Since you know of this Demonic Green Poria Flower, do you also know of anything else that is strange that we should look out for on the battleship?” As the Nascent Soul realm cultivators began to speak up, the Core Formation realm cultivators began to quieten down. Wang Baole lifted his head and looked at Feng Qiuran.

Feng Qiuran took a deep breath and pushed aside her anxieties. She knew that she couldn't afford to panic. If she did, she would really be leading everyone to their deaths. She would become a sinner of the Dao Palace.

“I, Mie Liezi, and You Ran have made an error in our judgment. Now that I've seen the corpses and the Demonic Green Poria Flowers, I'm reminded of something that I've heard of before... a special Never-Ending Clan battleship!

“This special battleship appears no different from other Never-Ending Clan battleships. However, its function is different. They are known as Sacrificial Palaces!

“Sacrificial Palaces are essentially sacrificial altars. Every time the Never-Ending Clan conquers a galaxy, they would capture hordes of cultivators and throw their corpses into the Sacrificial Palaces. These cultivators' blood, flesh, and vitality are sacrificed to the battleships and used to aid Never-Ending Clan members' healing!

"I suspect that this battleship is a Sacrificial Palace. The bodies here belong to cultivators from numerous cultivations that were destroyed by this battleship!

"If that is indeed the case, then there should be a minor sacrificial altar in each world contained within each disk. These three minor sacrificial altars should be connected to one another on another lower level, where the main sacrificial altar is located!"

"If we want to leave this place, we'll have to enter the main sacrificial altar... where we can then unlock the exit and find a way out!" Feng Qiuran shared her analysis honestly. The crowd fell silent.

Wang Baole sighed secretly. He pulled out some Dharmic treasures and pills from his storage bag, alongside a few puppets, and handed them over to Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao.

He knew that the journey ahead of them... would be extremely difficult.

Feng Qiuran didn't look at the other cultivators. Instead, she looked around them. Besides the thousands of feet around them that had been cleared of Demonic Green Poria Flowers, this land of corpses was still littered with countless demonic flowers.

Fortunately, most of the flowers in the distance were all flower buds, unlike the flowers that had been in full bloom and had surrounded them earlier.

"Let's all rest for a while. We shall move in thirty minutes!" After a long moment, Feng Qiuran retracted her gaze and spoke softly. Chi Lin and the others sat down. They all began to activate their cultivation in silence, ensuring that they remained in peak condition. They had also put away the Demonic Green Poria Flower's pistils.

Time passed steadily. The end of the thirty-minute break soon arrived. Most of them had recovered their strength and were prepared to continue the mission. It was then that... the ground started to tremble!

The trembling wasn't violent. Regardless, it still sent alarm flashing across everyone's faces. They got to their feet, the looks on their faces solemn. The trembling intensified as loud stomping sounded in the distance. It sounded like a giant was making its way towards them!

Next was a loud panting, like the howling of a furious wind. It was punctuated by loud clanking. Alarm colored the faces of Wang Baole, Feng Qiuran, as well as the Nascent Soul realm cultivators. There was no need for words. Many of them instantly took to the skies and stared in the direction the commotion was coming from.

They kept looking. Then, suddenly, their eyes widened, and a few of them even gasped out loud.

"That is..."

"What is that?"

The commotion in the distance grew louder. The winds grew wilder, and their howling fiercer. A towering figure that seemed to connect the sky and the land... gradually appeared in their sight!

At first, they could only hear it. Then, they saw its silhouette. Next, the silhouette grew distinct, and an image imprinted clearly in the eyes of Wang Baole and the other cultivators. It was a gigantic, monstrous beast that was beyond description!

It was similar to the Diamond Ape but clearly many times larger. Its body was covered in a messy layer of fur, with patches of black bone exposed to the air. A reeking stench of something rotting accompanied its approach.

Heavy chains weighed it down and pierced through its body. They bound it to a huge wooden log that hung suspended in mid-air behind the beast!

The log... was hundreds of thousands of feet thick. An ordinary cultivator would appear as an ant before the log. However, next to the beast, the log's size was made less obvious!

What was most shocking about the log wasn't its width but its length... It seemed to go on forever. The beast was bound to one end of the log while the other end of the log couldn't be seen at all. The suspended log of wood seemed to stretch all the way back into the distant sky. It was as if it were connected to the other end of the world!

This enormous beast was like a mule, dragging the log behind it, one step at a time, moving forward with great difficulty!

If it were to slow down even one bit, the chains on the beast would suddenly shine with the light of a rune, which would then transform into numerous fine strands, whipping at the beast and drawing cries of pain from it. The beast was forced to advance without slowing down or stopping under the threat of the whipping.

It didn't seem to notice or care about Wang Baole and the other cultivators. The sounds of clanking and stomping resonated in the air. The sounds of panting gradually drew near. Tens of thousands of feet away from them, the towering figure of a monster trudged forward, one step at a time, dragging behind it a wooden log. Then, it gradually retreated into the distance!

Every step it landed on the ground sent the earth shaking. Every step it lifted off the ground stirred up storms. The entire world thundered and the winds howled as it came and then departed!

Chapter 638: A Mass Attack!

"What was that!" Wang Baole muttered to himself as everyone around him gasped. Feng Qiuran was shaken as well. The power that had emanated from the beast had been overwhelming and had blanketed the entire world.

What had been incredible was how such a powerful beast had been chained up like a slave and made to serve as a mule, dragging the log forward!

The sight had shaken everyone to the core. They stared at the other end of the log, which stretched into the horizon without an end in sight. They couldn't help but guess where it led to.

"The other end of the log must lead to... the minor sacrificial altar of this world!" Feng Qiuran said suddenly. The look on her face changed immediately. Everyone grew solemn then as well.

What made their expressions darken was what they had seen as the gigantic beast trudged past them. Its heavy steps had shaken the earth. The red flowers that were not yet in bloom had trembled. As they continued to shake, some of these flowers had begun to show signs of blossoming!

The sight of that had alarmed everyone. One could easily imagine the hordes of corpses that would rise from the ground with such a great number of Demonic Green Poria Flowers suddenly blossoming!

“We have to go now!” Alarm flashed across Feng Qiuran’s face as she lifted her right hand and waved. A sudden surge of power lifted everyone off the ground and began to push them away.

There was no need for her warning. The Nascent Soul realm cultivators around her had all begun to panic and dash off. Wang Baole did the same. He made use of the push from Feng Qiuran and dragged Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao along as he dashed off.

It was still too late!

Perhaps it might be more accurate to say that they had lost their window of opportunity of leaving this place the moment the beast had appeared. The land had stopped quaking, but loud bangs began to ring out incessantly in the air!

Each bang was the sound of a Demonic Green Poria Flower bursting into full bloom. Each flower bud was the size of a fist, and they were exploding from a fist into an outstretched palm. It was a shocking sight. From afar, it looked as if countless palms were waving at them in the distance!

All of the demonic flowers that were in their line of vision bloomed in that instant. Vast clouds of pollen spewed into the air, forming crimson mists that gathered and then... blanketed the skies!

All around them—to their left and their right, before and behind them, in the distance—they were surrounded by a sea of flowers and crimson mists!

The corpses that were caught in the radius of the crimson mist began to twitch. Furious howls rang out in the air as the dead bodies began to crawl to their feet. Their eyes were burning with red flames as they roared and charged at the cultivators!

Amongst the horde were beasts missing half their bodies and humans missing limbs. There were skeletons bare of flesh and blood. There were also those whose bodies looked seemingly intact and gave off an evil, black aura!

There were even many man-sized bugs gathered in dark masses, charging towards them as they roared!

The stench of death hovered in the air and blanketed the area. It was like death’s cape, sweeping the air and covering everything as it harvested the blood and flesh of the living!

Feng Qiuran might be at the Soul Conduit realm, but if she were to be trapped within the attacking hordes of these living dead, she would soon exhaust herself trying to fight her way out and eventually perish!

She was still a living, breathing being. These corpses, on the other hand, were dead. Their howls resonated in the air as crimson mist enveloped the sky and furious roars thundered. There was no time for anyone to think, as the nearest corpse had already lunged at them.

The sounds of battling immediately rang out. Feng Qiuran formed a rapid series of hand seals, summoning a tornado that surged outwards. The rest realized the danger they were in and gathered together. With Feng Qiuran in the lead, they unleashed their attacks while charging ahead!

Wang Baole flanked the team on the right, and behind him were Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao. The latter needed no protection from Wang Baole. Zhao Yameng, especially, was in her element as her array formations found their use in large-scale battles. With a series of hand seals, she unleashed wave after wave of array formations. With every ninth array formation, the accumulated array formations would trigger an explosive attack, wiping out vast legions of corpses and creating a backlash that damaged numerous other enemies.

Kong Dao was equally lethal. His beast-like instincts were fully unleashed in battle. The violent streak hidden deep inside him revealed itself as he deftly avoided lethal blows and retaliated viciously in kind.

Wang Baole, having witnessed his friends holding their own in the fight, stopped worrying. With a series of hand seals, he summoned a sea of lightning bolts, an explosion of electricity that generated wave upon wave of electricity that then surged outwards and wiped out hordes of corpses.

His Flame Snatch Thearch Armor was a weapon more suitable for a one-on-one battle. In the face of the mass of enemies, the first thing Wang Baole thought of using was the Dark Art. However, he soon realized that the Dark Art was useless in such a battle. They had no souls. In fact, the corpses had been transformed into some kind of flesh-and-blood puppets!

His lightning bolts had become the most effective weapon he possessed. He also unleashed armies of flying swords, which shot out from his storage bracelet and dashed about in the air. It was literally raining swords.

The rest had also unleashed their own powerful spells and techniques. Feng Qiuran continued to forge a path open for them, charging ahead amidst the battle. However, there were simply too many beasts and too many corpses. They surged forward, no end in sight. Flying beasts appeared in the skies, and in the distance, they could see zombies in black robes!

One might say there weren't many of these black-robed zombies, but there were still hundreds of them! Every one of them was cloaked in a black fog that shone with lethal-looking runes. The fog shot towards the cultivators, roaring!

Each blow landed with an explosion. Its power was so great that it was as if they were receiving a blow from a Nascent Soul realm cultivator!

They weren't the most dangerous thing the cultivators faced. The greatest danger was being trapped in a fight without an escape. As the pollen continued to spread further, it might awaken more dangerous corpses or draw more corpses to them!

Feng Qiuran began to panic. She pulled out a ruler and waved it in the air as her voice rang out.

"A thousand feet!"

As soon as she said that, the land within a thousand feet from her began to shake. An invisible power seemed to have gathered itself out of nowhere and crushed all corpses within the thousand-foot radius. They instantly turned to dust!

The attack was incredibly powerful but of little help. There were simply too many corpses. The thousand feet of space cleared was flooded instantly with new corpses. Black fog began crowding in menacingly.

Chi Lin and the others attacked as well, and their attacks gave Feng Qiuran time to prepare her next round of attack. After a few moments, an icy glint flickered in Feng Qiuran's eyes as she roared.

"Ten thousand feet!"

Zhao Yameng's eyes flashed as soon as Feng Qiuran unleashed her attack. With a series of hand seals, she unleashed ninety-nine array runes, creating an array formation that spanned ten thousand feet in all directions!

The attack from Feng Qiuran's ruler exploded the exact moment the array formation appeared!

Boom, boom, boom!

The lands shook, and the heavens seemed drained of all color as everything within ten thousand feet turned to dust. The power within the ruler seemed to have been augmented by some other source of power. It surged outwards, sending aftershocks of the attack another twenty thousand feet into the distance!

The aftershocks might not have been as powerful as the original attack, growing weaker the further it went, but they were sufficient in wiping out the corpses!

The battlefield was instantly cleared of all enemies. However, they didn't have to go far before another army of corpses appeared on the horizon!

Because of the earlier battle, everyone had come to realize the power of Zhao Yameng's array formations. Wang Baole had been surprised as well. He had known all along how incredible Zhao Yameng's array formations were, but he had no idea that they could augment the power of a Soul Conduit realm cultivator!

Amidst her panic, Feng Qiuran realized the power of Zhao Yameng's array formations. Her eyes flashed. She appeared next to Zhao Yameng in the next moment, having the intention of keeping her by her side. Wang Baole appeared next to Zhao Yameng at the same time. He stood next to her and stared at Feng Qiuran.

"Baole, I will ensure Zhao Yameng's safety. I swear it on my life!"

She spoke bluntly without mincing her words. Wang Baole stared at Zhao Yameng silently. He wasn't in the position to make a decision for her. Zhao Yameng only considered it for a few moments before smiling gently at Wang Baole. Then, she nodded and followed Feng Qiuran. They rose to the skies with the intention of replicating the earlier attack in the air.

A sudden, indescribable worry unfurled inside Wang Baole as he watched the two rise to the skies. He was about to say something when... suddenly, the ground began to shake violently!

The land before them caved in, and a hundred-foot long, partially-rotting python emerged from the ground and charged out, flinging mud and shattered rock into the sky as it collided with the group of cultivators!

Wang Baole had no time to consider the worry he had felt earlier amidst the deafening sounds of battle. He sped away with the rest to avoid the attack. Behind them, the ground collapsed once again as another giant python flew out!

Patches of land around them began to cave in, one after another. A third, fourth, and fifth python emerged... More than forty giant pythons charged out, roaring, at the group of cultivators. Black fire spewed out from their gaping maws!

Chapter 639: Separation!

A few Core Formation realm cultivators hadn't managed to dodge the giant pythons' charging and were instantly swallowed alive. Muffled screams of pain were drowned amidst the corpses' furious howling. The group of cultivators had no choice but to scatter under the attacks of the giant pythons.

Wang Baole did just that as he retreated hastily. A giant python came charging at him from his right, roaring. It seemed like he was going to be swallowed alive. But Wang Baole's strength was akin to that of a Nascent Soul realm cultivator. The Flame Snatch Thearch Armor appeared on him instantly, and his eyes flashed with an icy cold glint as he surged forward instead of retreating, charging straight into the giant python!

The deafening sound of a collision rang out in the air as Wang Baole's Divine Armament arm pierced through the giant python's body upon their collision. He slid around the giant python, then leaped into the air. The giant python's head fell to the ground with a deafening thud.

The python's body continued to wriggle despite the loss of its head, thrashing at Wang Baole. Wang Baole formed a series of hand seals. His tri-colored flying sword came dashing through the air, slicing the python into multiple chunks. Then, the sword came flying back, buzzing as it circled Wang Baole and slashed apart the corpses that came charging at him.

Wang Baole paid no attention to the corpses around him. Instead, he looked around him with a dark expression on his face.

The giant pythons had separated the battlefield into multiple, smaller battlefields. Battle cries continued to rise into the air. Many of the pythons had already been slain by other Nascent Soul realm cultivators. However, there were still some wreaking havoc on the field, and more than a dozen cultivators had since perished.

A fish-scale armor had appeared on Kong Dao. It seemed to have augmented his speed and gifted him semi-transparency. Kong Dao dashed about on the battlefield, fighting alongside a Nascent Soul realm cultivator and slaying another giant python!

We can't keep this up forever. No one's going to make their way out of this alive if we don't do something! Wang Baole's breathing quickened slightly. He approached a few Core Formation realm cultivators and, with a wave of his hand, put down a giant python. Then, he lifted his head abruptly to the sky and stared.

In the skies above, Feng Qiuran and Zhao Yameng were currently surrounded by countless winged beasts. The pair shone with a dazzling light that continued to grow even more blinding. Feng Qiuran

suddenly raised the ruler in her hand into the air. Her eyes shone with an intense light as she yelled, “A hundred thousand feet!”

Feng Qiuran’s right hand forcibly slammed the ruler downwards, towards the ground. Zhao Yameng formed a series of hand seals at the same time, unleashing the power of nine hundred and ninety-nine array runes that she had accumulated earlier!

The heavens rumbled, and the earth quaked. Winds howled, and the clouds rolled back. Within a hundred thousand feet of Feng Qiuran, all corpses and beasts, including pythons and black-robed zombies alike, shook violently. It was as if a sudden incredible force had descended from the heavens and crushed everything in sight!

Within the hundred thousand feet of land, explosions rumbled, and everything turned to dust. Everything living was wiped out. Zhao Yameng’s array formation intensified the attack and pushed the shock waves further outwards, reaching nearly three hundred thousand feet. It was as if a gigantic hand had reached out from the cracks in the earth and wiped out everything!

The monsters in the sky were Feng Qiuran’s and Zhao Yameng’s primary targets. The area of attack spread much further in the air!

“Quick, go!” The lands rumbled, and everything turned to dust. Feng Qiuran grabbed Zhao Yameng and raced off into the distance as she shouted frantically.

The rest needed no reminder from Feng Qiuran. They had witnessed their attack earlier, and everyone had been on high alert and ready to run. With the sudden opening presented, as well as the appearance of the next horde of enemies in the horizon hundreds of thousands of feet away—already charging towards them—they dashed out immediately and sped off.

Wang Baole did the same. He leaped into the air and pulled Kong Dao along with him. The group was about to make use of the cleared battlefield to make an escape when suddenly, another rumbling roar rang out from the caved-in ground, where the dozens of giant pythons had emerged.

The ground sank further in before it erupted. A huge crevice appeared in the earth, and a fierce howl, striking terror in everyone’s hearts, rang out from its depths.

The howling was accompanied by the sound of chains clanking. An enormous black hound, partially decomposed, charged out from the crevice rapidly. It appeared in mid-air in the next instant and snapped its jaws shut, catching and gobbling up a Nascent Soul realm and three other Core Formation realm cultivators instantly!

Horror and alarm flashed across everyone’s faces. Their nightmare had just begun. Similar crevices started to appear in the ground. Black hounds dashed out, howling furiously and leaping into the air!

Fortunately, they were all chained to the ground and couldn’t run too far. Regardless, they numbered in the dozens and posed a significant threat, especially... due to their unique physique. Spells were useless against them. It was like throwing a pebble into the vast ocean—they weren’t affected at all. Only physical attacks inflicted on the flesh affected them!

“Nascent Soul realm cultivators, spread out. Core Formation realm cultivators, gather around me. We’ll make a run for it and assemble at the end of the wooden log!” Feng Qiuran’s face was pale as she

barked out her order hastily. She wanted to attack, but she could sense a horrifying power rumbling deep underground. It was moving rapidly and headed their way!

They had but thirty seconds before it emerged above ground!

With danger so close at hand, she had no time to map out a detailed plan. She raised her right hand, and with a wave, she gathered a few Core Formation realm cultivators around her. Afterwards, she led Zhao Yameng and the others into the distance!

Chi Lin and the other Nascent Soul realm cultivators, whose faces were pale, had all spread out. Wang Baole had done the same. He had intended to follow Feng Qiuran, but just as he made a move, the ground below him began to rumble. A black hound roared and charged at him, blocking his path and intending to swallow him whole!

A vicious glint flashed across Wang Baole's eyes. The Flame Snatch Thearch Armor was activated immediately, and incredible power gathered in his Divine Armament arm. He unleashed a sudden punch towards the black hound!

The blow whipped up a tornado and landed squarely on the hound's head, causing a loud boom to erupt in the air. The hound whined in pain and stumbled back, while Wang Baole shook from the backlash of the blow. His armor creaked, and he was sent flying backwards from the force of his punch, like a puppet cut from its strings.

As he was flung backwards, the skies were once again crowded with newly amassed corpses. The fearsome creatures were slaughtered before they could draw near by flying swords that had appeared around Wang Baole. Wang Baole's breathing quickened as he steadied himself. He looked around and saw only torn and maimed limbs of several Dao Palace cultivators. Chi Lin and the others had long scattered to the winds.

The corpses had all separated and gone after the cultivators.

We shouldn't have come to this damned place! Wang Baole ground his teeth. He retreated without hesitation, chose a random direction, and started running. Just as he was about to dash off, the ground a hundred thousand feet away from him began to rumble. An enormous, partially decomposed, Kun Peng heaved from the ground, as if breaking the surface of the ocean, and leaped into the air!

The beast emanated a black Qi. Waves of energy surged from its decomposing form, striking fear in Wang Baole's heart. His cultivation began to grow unstable. It was a sensation that he had experienced before when he had crossed paths with a Star Fang Beast. He knew that the monster before him was at least... at the Planet realm!

The Planet realm! Wang Baole's scalp went numb. He saw the chains on the Kun Peng, which were like those that were on the black hounds. There were more chains though. There was no time for further thought. He fled hastily without turning his head back.

He unleashed everything he had on him. His Dharmic Armament bell enveloped his Thearch Armor while his tri-colored flying sword flew protective circles around him. After boosting his defenses, he let loose a sudden burst of speed, transforming into a shooting star that dashed across the heavens, smashing through winged beasts that dared stand in his path!

Death and dust were left in his wake as he smashed his way through mindlessly. Wang Baole's senses had heightened to the extremes. He swerved in another direction as soon as he sensed something amiss. He managed to survive several dangerous encounters that way. The pollen's effect might have been wearing off after all this time, as the corpses had started to stiffen. Soon, most of them slowed down to a complete standstill. Wang Baole finally made his way out of the crimson mist and the land of the living dead!

He was panting, his clothes drenched in sweat. He quickly pulled out a few pills and swallowed them whole. Then, he turned back and stared at the battlefield behind him, residual terror still lingering in his eyes.

The Kun Peng was chained, so it can't come after me now that I'm so far away. Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao are with Feng Qiuran. They should be safe. Wang Baole's heart was still racing. However, he knew that there was no use in panicking. He took a few gulps of air, shoved down the unease inside him, and looked around him with a grave expression on his face. His gaze settled on a direction. The land looked sparse and empty of threats, so he began running in that direction.

What's most important now is locating the direction of the other end of the wooden log, where the sacrificial altar is located...

Chapter 640: A Summoning!

The skies were dark. Even though the huge beast's corpse in the sky continued to shine like the sun, it seemed to struggle to light up the entire land. Wang Baole saw the lands before him dimly lit while others in the distance were in complete darkness.

However, a cultivator could see clearly as long as he allowed spirit energy to flow to his eyes. The Demonic Green Poria Flowers scattered across the lands helped too. Their red flowers gave off a faint light that cast a dim glow on the lands around it.

The sight before him would look drastically different without the endless piles of corpses. Their presence filled the world with an aura of endless death.

Wang Baole might be a Dark Child, but he hadn't grown so accustomed to such scenes of death. The Dark Sect might rule over death, but its responsibility was the ferrying of souls. The corpses in this world that had died eons ago were no different from blood-and-flesh puppets.

The power that controlled these puppets was something that Wang Baole hadn't seen before. He was confused and lost, and at the same time, in awe of what he had seen in this world.

"The Never-Ending Clan might be terrorizing the galaxies, but one cannot deny that they are a powerful entity. That is what gives them the power to run wild and not have to answer to anyone else!" Wang Baole muttered to himself. He didn't slow down as he raced forward in the air, holding the pistils of the Demonic Green Poria Flower close to his chest. Its strange power ensured that he didn't fall prey to further illusions during his journey.

The demonic flowers seemed less prone to sudden blossoming without any sudden agitation as well. This meant that Wang Baole's journey after fleeing the crimson mist had remained relatively smooth and danger-free.

However, what he saw continued to shock him to an ever greater degree. The corpses on this land spanned countless species, and most of them seemed to belong to creatures that Wang Baole had never seen or heard of.

He saw creatures with animal bodies and human heads, corpses formed from rocks, enormous bodies covered with horns, as well as many other bizarre-looking corpses. There were those with two heads as well as those whose bodies resembled five fingers and had no eyes.

There were also corpses the shape of enormous cubes that seemed like they had been pieced together. It didn't seem possible that these entities could have been alive and living in any way in the past. But as far as Wang Baole could tell, they were corpses.

The sights shook Wang Baole to the core. Then, he discovered familiar-looking corpses, such as... the natives from the Black Wind Planet, tiny black men with their large feet.

The aura that continued to emanate from those corpses even after their deaths remained terrifying. Wang Baole instinctively knew that he shouldn't stray too near. He might trigger an accidental backlash if he came into contact with them!

Wang Baole passed the corpses of the Black Wind Planet natives. Thirty minutes passed before he paused in mid-air and lowered his gaze. There was a strange look on his face. He stared at the ground, at the corpse resting atop a pile of other corpses.

Save its slightly elongated ears and extremely slim build, the corpse looked almost like a human. Its death didn't diminish its extraordinary beauty. Wang Baole had only come across such a species in the game Descend.

"That game..." Wang Baole muttered. He might have stared too long at the corpse, as the finger of the slender figure on the mountain of corpses began to twitch. Wang Baole immediately turned wary. He didn't hesitate and immediately picked up speed and dashed off.

As he faded into the distance, the finger finally stilled. The lands remained quiet and peaceful.

I can't linger too long anywhere. Everything here seems really strange! Wang Baole took a deep breath. He looked around him as he advanced forward, trying to determine which way to go. He knew that the quickest and simplest way to find the sacrificial altar was to locate the enormous beast that they had seen earlier.

He would then be able to follow the beast and find the sacrificial altar.

Time passed steadily. Days went by. Wang Baole continued his flight across this world filled with corpses, searching without rest. However, he saw only more corpses. The enormous beast was nowhere to be found. Then, one day, while Wang Baole sped through the skies, feeling slightly anxious, his pupils suddenly contracted!

A strange feeling surged inside him, and his Dark Fire began to stir uncontrollably. It surged outwards and appeared outside his body, transforming into black, icy flames!

“Hmm?” Something flashed in Wang Baole’s eyes. He could sense a force tugging at him and the Dark Fire inside his body. It was resonating with his Dark Fire!

It felt familiar. It was... the aura of the Dark Sect!

Could there be Dark Sect members hiding here? Wang Baole’s breathing quickened slightly. He extended his senses and began surveying the area carefully. He tilted his head to the right. The familiar aura, belonging to the Dark Sect, was coming from that direction!

Wang Baole fell into deep thought. Then, he whipped out Little Missy’s mask. Even though Little Missy hadn’t responded to his calls the entire time he had been here, the mask still served as an important item that allowed Wang Baole to discern reality from illusion!

The mask showed no inklings of turning invisible at the moment. Wang Baole inspected the pistils, then looked around him. His mind finally set at ease that this wasn’t yet another illusion, he pondered for some time before switching directions and dashing off in the direction the Dark Sect aura was coming from!

He maintained a regular speed while remaining wary of his surroundings. Thirty minutes passed. The nagging sense of familiarity intensified, and the Dark Fire inside Wang Baole began to stir with a seeming hunger, which erupted from his body without stop. From afar, Wang Baole’s body could no longer be seen. Instead, one could only see a fiery ball of black fire. It was then that Wang Baole finally... reached the place where the Dark Sect aura had originated from!

It was... a city resting at the bottom of a mountain!

This was the first city that Wang Baole had come across in this world. It wasn’t a large city, its size only that of Ethereal City. However, it was still an impressive sight in the land filled with corpses!

After all, he had seen nothing but corpses and demonic flowers along the way. There had been no other architecture. The city’s mere presence spoke of something extremely important. Wang Baole’s breathing grew uneven at the thought of it.

He was confident that... the presence of the city meant that there had been lifeforms present here!

That was why it didn’t matter that the city was nothing but ruins now, with most of its buildings damaged and partially collapsed. Wang Baole’s spirits still soared at the sight of it. His eyes began to widen as he approached the city. He flew forward and hovered above the city ruins. Gazing downwards, his head began to buzz loudly. There was a silent implosion inside his head.

This place... Wang Baole was shaken. Waves of emotions roared inside him as the Dark Fires outside his body wavered violently.

From where he stood... he saw not only the city ruins... but something else as well!

The city hadn’t been built on land, it had been built on a huge skull. One could imagine how large the skull must be. The skull wasn’t resting on a mountain but connected to an arm!

Perhaps it might be more accurate to call it one half of a humerus. It was as if a giant had sat there in meditation sometime in the past and had received a slash diagonally downwards from one shoulder, cleaving the giant's body into two halves. One half of its body had clearly turned to dust, which was why what had remained was the other collapsed half!

Wang Baole's breathing froze as he gazed at the sight before him silently. He could sense the Dark Sect aura emanating from the bones. Wisps of a similar aura rose from the city resting above the bones as well.

The sight sent Wang Baole into a long bout of silence. He descended slowly and landed on the top of the skull. He stood inside the city, looking at everything around him. The realization had come upon him a moment ago. It wasn't as he had expected. He had thought someone had built a city here.

Instead... the city had been a part of this giant. Perhaps the city had rested atop its head when the giant had still been alive!

The city's architectural style reminded Wang Baole of his Dark Dream. He could tell clearly that it hailed from a period similar to what he had experienced in the Dark Dream.

"Survivors after the fall of the Dark Sect, maybe..." Wang Baole muttered to himself, a myriad of emotions flashing across his eyes.