

Worth 671

Chapter 671: The Dao Disciple's Palace!

Wang Baole regained consciousness.

When Wang Baole woke up again, he was lying outside the first palace. He stared at the sky, slightly dazed. He had one question in his mind. Why was he constantly passing out after his battle with Daoist You Ran?

How many times has it been... Wang Baole sighed as he climbed to his feet. His eyes widened suddenly. With a casual press of his right palm against the ground, he felt a sudden burst of energy erupting from his physical body. It shook the earth and shoved him upwards.

Wang Baole gulped as he hovered in mid-air. He hadn't assessed his cultivation since he had awoken. He lowered his head and examined himself now, and excitement and joy quickly filled his eyes.

There's no change to my cultivation. It's still at the perfected Core Formation realm. But my physical body... has reached the Nascent Soul realm! Wang Baole had read the books found in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace and knew very well that a cultivator's prowess in battle came from four places: his cultivation, his mystic techniques, his Dharmic treasures, and finally... the strength of his physical body!

These four aspects complemented one another. Any breakthrough in any of the four would significantly improve one's performance on the battlefield. However, compared to one's mystic techniques or Dharmic treasures, the improvement of one's cultivation and physical body were essential and, indeed, the key to one's power.

The latter, especially... Physical strength might be viewed as a simple thing to achieve, but unless one inherited a unique bloodline, the challenges faced in strengthening one's physical body were similar to that of increasing one's level of cultivation. Both got increasingly difficult as one advanced in level.

In addition, a cultivator had limited time and resources. Only extremely powerful cultivators who had reached a plateau in their level of cultivation would steer their focus towards training their physical bodies. Few people would acquire such a terrifyingly powerful physical body like Wang Baole did while they were only at the Nascent Soul realm.

Finally... I've reached the Nascent Soul realm! Wang Baole burst out into laughter after experiencing the power in his body. He vanished suddenly and reappeared a thousand feet away.

He hadn't teleported. This was the speed a physical body at the Nascent Soul realm could unleash. It allowed him to replicate something that resembled teleportation. He raised his right hand and tightened it into a fist. He could feel a fearsome power gathering in his fist even though he hadn't activated his cultivation. His excitement intensified.

Even though he still wouldn't be a match for Daoist You Ran, based on Daoist You Ran's performance in their last fight, Wang Baole was certain that he wouldn't end up in as terrible a state as before.

To think that I managed to acquire a Nascent Soul realm physical body just by entering the first palace... Wang Baole took a deep breath as he stared at the first palace. He noticed that the red glow

rising above the palace had dimmed considerably, and frost had begun to creep back around the palace. It seemed that it was going to be sealed again. Wang Baole sighed with regret.

Even though the trial he had just undergone seemed pretty simple and straightforward, Wang Baole still shivered when he remembered the pain he had experienced in the Ten Thousand Spirit Blood Pool. The constant drilling of the Blood Qi and the mental backlash from the countless dead beasts had inflicted great pain on Wang Baole. He felt as if he had really died tens of thousands of times.

It's a pity I didn't last as long as I wanted. Else... based on the scale of the Ten Thousand Spirit Blood Pool, I might have reached the Soul Conduit realm or even the Spirit Immortal realm. In fact... it might even be possible to acquire a Planet realm physical body!

Maybe that's for the best. I should be able to find my way back here after I've become more powerful. I can try to absorb the nutrients in the lake then and attain another breakthrough! Wang Baole licked his lips. He had gotten addicted to such breakthroughs. His heart was filled with anticipation. After a moment, his eyes turned towards the other two palaces encased in ice.

I wonder if I can enter the other two palaces... Wang Baole's eyes flashed at the thought. He walked over for a closer look. The ice encasing both palaces showed no signs of melting, and the earlier icy voice didn't make a reappearance.

Does this mean I'm not qualified to enter? Wang Baole scratched his head. He had discovered how the rules worked, but he wasn't prepared to just leave. He made a few rounds around the palaces. Then, his eyes landed on the palace on the right. The light in his eyes grew brighter and warmer as he examined the palace.

The palace on the right was the same size as the one on the left. However, the carvings decorating it were significantly more complex and detailed. It was clear that the access rights required for one to enter that palace were greater than those granted to an adopted disciple.

Wang Baole's heart itched at that thought. After a long while, he finally clenched his jaw, then raised his right hand abruptly. He unleashed his full cultivation, as well as the full power of his physical body, and sent his fist flying into the ice encasing the palace on the right.

"Shatter!"

Wang Baole roared. A hurricane filled with destructive force gathered in his raised right fist. Its power surpassed that of Wang Baole's Flame Snatch Thearch Armor!

The blow landed on the ice, but it was like sinking a pebble into the vast ocean. A muted thud sounded, and the ice remained undamaged. There wasn't even the slightest crack on it.

Wang Baole panicked. He was about to throw another punch when a purple lightning bolt suddenly appeared in the ice after the latter had absorbed the force of his first punch. The bolt of lightning snaked through the ice, appeared before Wang Baole in the next moment, and exploded in his face.

There was an explosive roar as Wang Baole shuddered and stumbled back from the force of the explosion. He was pushed back a thousand feet before he finally caught his balance. His breathing uneven, he lifted his head and stared. The palace and the ice around it remained untouched, and the purple lightning bolt had long dissipated. The only thing that remained was the fear pumping through

Wang Baole's veins. That had been a warning. If he continued attacking the palace, he wasn't going to get another warning. He would be placing his life on the line.

That's hardly charitable! Wang Baole eyed the palace on the right, resentment building up inside him. Chances were, the palace hadn't allowed him entry because his rank or his level of cultivation wasn't high enough.

If I were a Dao Disciple... Wang Baole stood there, contemplating. Then, a strange light flickered in his eyes as an idea popped into his head.

I might not be a Dao Disciple, but I have an arm that might have belonged to one... At that thought, Wang Baole took a deep breath before pulling out the skeletal Divine Armament arm from his storage bag. He held it in his hand, unleashed his full cultivation, and allowed his cultivation to surge into the broken limb. The Divine Armament arm began shining with a blinding light, exuding incredible power.

As soon as the fearsome power erupted from the Divine Armament arm, the palace on the right began to tremble under Wang Baole's nervous gaze. The tremors went on for a short while, then stopped completely.

Maybe the energy released from the arm isn't powerful enough? Wang Baole frowned. He thought for a bit and concluded that it hadn't been powerful enough. In addition, his connection with the skeletal arm wasn't as perfect as he would like.

Determination colored Wang Baole's eyes. He gave up the idea of injecting more cultivation into the arm. Instead, he sat down. He was going to make a new Thearch Armor based on the traditional refinement method!

That wasn't difficult at all. The challenge lay in unleashing the Thearch Armor inheritance's true power. He had to fuse the Thearch Armor with the Flame Snatch technique in order to do so. That had been the results of Wang Baole's study, to combine the two in a complementary way that augmented their strengths.

The Flame Snatch technique required a vast quantity of vitality, though. This would prove difficult to acquire at this point in time. However, he was confident of his success if he were only to remake a new Thearch Armor. Having learned from his past experience, it took Wang Baole only two weeks before illusory, blood-colored meridians began to emerge from his body.

That was the first layer of the Thearch Armor. Its strength and power could hardly compare to the first Thearch Armor he had before, but it would serve its purpose of fusing the skeletal arm with the armor.

The meridians wormed inside the skeletal Divine Armament arm under Wang Baole's commands. Without any hesitation, he unleashed his cultivation again. His spirit energy flowed through the meridians and entered the Divine Armament arm.

Waves of spirit energy began to emanate from the arm as its power was once again activated!

At that instant... the palace on the right started shaking again, and the same icy voice pierced the air again!

“As a Dao Disciple, you are qualified to shoulder the responsibility of rebuilding the Dao Palace. You may access the second Spiritual Palace for a chance to achieve phenomenal breakthroughs in your cultivation!”

Chapter 672: Forbidden!

I did it! Excitement filled Wang Baole when he heard those words. His heart started racing. The exhilaration that he felt at that moment surpassed what he felt when he had unlocked the first palace. After all, he gained entry to the first palace based on his credentials. His entry to the second palace, on the other hand...

It was because of my hard work! Wang Baole jutted his chin out proudly as he watched the ice encasing the second palace shatter and fall to the ground. Then, a blue light burst from the palace and rose to the heavens!

Waves of energy rippled in the air, and the earth trembled. Its tremors were fiercer than when the first palace had been unlocked. Despite his Nascent Soul realm physical body, Wang Baole was still forced to retreat thousands of feet away. He waited for the series of shock waves, powerful as a tsunami, to flood the area and slowly dissipate. Then, quieting the excitement in his heart, he began to approach rapidly.

He soon reached the front of the palace and eyed the crack between the doors and the blue light spilling from the opening. Grinning happily, and filled with excitement and anticipation, Wang Baole took a step in.

A familiar sensation washed over him. When his vision cleared, he saw himself standing in a familiar spot, in an area similar to that of the first palace. The statues and the interior architecture were all familiar sights. Only this time, the bead was emanating a blue light.

Below the bead sat a figure. He wasn't the elder from the first palace. This time, it was a middle-aged man with an expressionless face.

He glanced over at Wang Baole. It didn't give Wang Baole the same feeling as when the other elder had looked at him, he didn't feel like he was being seen through. Instead, an instinctive terror unfurled inside him. The man before him seemed to possess terrifying, unimaginable power. Wang Baole's breathing quickened, and he hurriedly lowered his head in greeting.

“Senior, greetings, I'm Disciple Wang Baole!”

The man didn't speak, he only stared coldly at Wang Baole. Wang Baole had no idea if he was looking at him or if he was looking through him, at the skeletal Divine Armament arm that Wang Baole had put away. His silence made Wang Baole nervous. As his imagination ran wild with panic, the middle-aged man suddenly spoke.

“This palace... allows one to overcome all barriers to one's breakthrough in cultivation. If you are able to pass the trial with your current level of cultivation, you may make full use of the palace to reach the Nascent Soul realm!”

“The Vast Expanse Dao Palace has in its records nine hundred and thirty-eight different varieties of Nascent Souls, which have been collected through the ages. Should you pass the trial, you may select one from a range of souls determined by the results of your trial!” the man said coldly, his face devoid of any emotion. His voice was different from the one Wang Baole had heard outside, but they were similar in their lack of emotion and their robotic quality.

Wang Baole had realized earlier that the middle-aged man was also an illusion, like the elder in the first palace. Despite his knowledge of Dharmic Armaments, he wasn’t able to discern how these three palaces were being operated, but he could somewhat tell that both the elder and the middle-aged man were likely Artifact Spirits.

The middle-aged man’s words continued to resonate in the air amidst Wang Baole’s contemplation.

“The souls you will be given a choice of are dependent on your performance and luck. If you manage to endure the force of my spirit energy for ten counts, you will be qualified to select any soul that is not the ten most powerful souls in our records!

“If you last for twenty counts, you will be able to choose any of the ten most powerful Nascent Souls. Sixty counts, and you will have the right to decide if you wish to attempt... to master the only legendary Nascent Soul the Vast Expanse Dao Palace possesses—the Stellar Nascent Soul!”

The Stellar Nascent Soul? Wang Baole’s eyes widened when he heard that. He suddenly recalled what he had read up on about Nascent Souls during his time at the Dao Palace.

There were many different types of Nascent Souls to be found in the Dao Palace. The Nascent Soul realm was also considered an important stage that divided the great realms. The evolution from core to Nascent Soul was akin to the formation of a second life. It would drastically transform a cultivator.

The key to this transformation was the quality of one’s Nascent Soul!

The better the quality, the greater the impact to and transformation of a cultivator. Wang Baole learned from his initial research that if one were to exclude a cultivator’s mystic techniques and Dharmic treasures and look solely at the cultivator’s cultivation when considering his battle prowess, one could set said level of cultivation as a basic unit. The quality of one’s Nascent Soul would determine how many times this basic unit was multiplied to determine how powerful this cultivator was in battle.

The consequent power that was going to be unleashed in battle would, of course, differ depending on the number of times this basic unit was multiplied. The difference in a Nascent Soul’s quality could result in a vast difference in power!

A Nascent Soul’s quality dictated how well it would fuse with nomological laws. That, in turn, determined one’s strength in battle and consequently, one’s future in the world of cultivation. Most importantly... Wang Baole remembered the Dao Palace mentioning something in their records!

There were five extremely rare types of Nascent Souls that were found across the countless civilizations in the universe. They were deemed legends. The original Vast Expanse Dao Palace had gotten its hands on one of them through sheer luck. However, records in the current Vast Expanse Dao Palace stated that this legendary Nascent Soul had been lost!

Wang Baole had asked Little Missy about that Nascent Soul, but she had told him not to be overly ambitious. It was clear to Wang Baole that she knew nothing about the Nascent Soul.

That was why Wang Baole had been overcome with excitement when he had heard the middle-aged man mention the legendary Nascent Soul, the Stellar Nascent Soul. He burst out into excited laughter before the man could finish speaking.

“I choose the Stellar Nascent Soul!” Wang Baole’s eyes shone brightly. He was afraid of the potential repercussions that he might have to deal with for cheating his way in. To prevent any unhappy repercussions, he immediately started reciting the sutra in his head after declaring his choice!

He had made up his mind, he wasn’t going to rely on his own hard work this time. His firm belief was that he had worked hard to get to where he was now. Everything he had now had been the result of his own blood, sweat, and tears. The occasional reliance on external help wasn’t against his principles.

Wang Baole recited the sutra excitedly. The skies began to thunder, and the palace began to shake as a presence that came from the deepest part of the universe descended upon them, sending the entire ancient sword quaking. It landed inside the palace and weighed heavily down on the middle-aged man!

The middle-aged man’s eyes widened. He didn’t fight back or struggle. He shut his eyes, extended his senses, then opened his eyes again. There was a strange look on his face as he looked at Wang Baole and nodded.

“You pass!”

Wang Baole had been fraught with anxiety until he heard those words. Excitement overwhelmed him. He was about to say something when the middle-aged man gave him a deep, unfathomable look.

“I should have expected this from someone who entered with a Dao Disciple’s aura. I admire your courage. To think that you actually dared to select the legendary Nascent Soul, the forbidden art that almost no one has managed to master!”

“What?” Wang Baole, who had been bouncing with excitement, was stunned to hear those words. He gasped at the mention of “forbidden art”. He had a bad feeling about this. Before he could question the man in detail, the latter lifted his right hand and pointed at Wang Baole!

“You will get what you wished for. Proceed with your breakthrough!” the man said, not giving Wang Baole any chance for regret or argument. Starlight shot out from his finger and darted into Wang Baole’s forehead!

Wang Baole felt an explosion in his head, and his vision blurred. He felt as if his feet had left the ground and he was being swept upwards by the starlight, towards the heavens!

He shot through the skies and into space. Around him was an unfamiliar patch of space, an illusion. Stars sparkled brightly around him. Before he could regain some clarity in his mind, vast amounts of information about how to refine the Stellar Nascent Soul suddenly flooded his brain!

Information about the Nascent Soul surged into his head, and his understanding of this Nascent Soul grew clearer. As his knowledge about the Nascent Soul grew, the waves of emotions inside him surged. He couldn’t control his tragic scream in the end.

"I don't want to practice this anymore! I made a mistake... I was wrong, really really wrong about this. I don't want to learn this anymore. Little Missy, Senior Brother, save me..."

The Stellar Nascent Soul, one of the five great legends of the entire universe, had been acquired by the Vast Expanse Dao Palace through luck. The Dao Palace had realized how extreme the cultivation method of the soul was and labeled it a forbidden art!

The theory required having the cultivator extract his Golden Core and initiate a collision with a planet that had been melded with a powerful Planet realm cultivator. Failure would result in the destruction of the core and the cultivator's death. Success would result in the birth of a Stellar Nascent Soul.

Chapter 673: The Stellar Nascent Soul!

What kind of stupid legend is this? Choosing this Nascent Soul is pure suicide! Wang Baole gnashed his teeth and whined secretly. Tons of information about the Stellar Nascent Soul flooded his brain, gradually expanding his understanding about the Planet realm.

Based on what Wang Baole had first studied in the Dark Sect's records, the Planet realm was the first great realm at the perfected stage that a cultivator could achieve. It was the first ultimate stage, after the Nascent Soul, Soul Conduit, and Spirit Immortal realms.

Cultivators at this realm were unimaginably powerful in both spirit and flesh. After organizing the information that he had obtained during his time at the Dark Sect and what he learned about the Stellar Nascent Soul, Wang Baole was able to piece together a somewhat comprehensive picture about this perfected realm.

The Planet realm was named as such because all Spirit Immortal realm cultivators who wished to achieve a breakthrough in cultivation and enter this first perfected realm had to meld with an actual planet in space!

One might even call it a devouring of a planet. The cultivator was to turn the planet into a part of him. The planet would rest inside his body and become the Dao Foundation through which the cultivator may ascend to the stars. Legends spoke of many civilizations calling this step the Ascent!

That was why every powerful Planet realm cultivator could be considered an actual planet!

The process of devouring and melding with a star was extremely challenging, and failure would result in death. It was a vast chasm that a cultivator had to bridge in his journey of cultivation!

In addition... the size of the planet, its caliber, and any other unique qualities it might possess—including its hidden stores of energy—determined how powerful the Planet realm cultivator would be. A strong Planet realm cultivator could have their way in the universe. They could challenge an Eternal Star realm cultivator and remain glorious in defeat. A weak Planet realm cultivator would only be able to bully weaker cultivators at cultivation realms lower than theirs. They would find cultivators at the same realm to be difficult opponents.

As these thoughts flooded Wang Baole's brain, he was on the verge of tears. He knew that he couldn't blame anyone else for his current predicament. His own talent and genius had landed him in such

trouble. They had inspired the Dao Disciple's Palace to jealousy and led it to increase the difficulty of his attempt to break through to the Nascent Soul realm.

Regret filled his heart, but there was nothing he could do about that now. Trapped in a starless abyss, he felt waves of spirit energy ripple around him. In the distance, the abyss stretched on forever. An overpowering, destructive force, which seemed capable of wiping everything out and made his scalp prickle and his entire body shudder involuntarily, approached rapidly. Wang Baole's breathing quickened, the veins in his eyes filled with blood, and his face contorted into a gruesome expression.

"Enlightened!" Wang Baole howled the first word to the sutra, only to be dumbfounded in the next moment. For reasons unknown, the sutra, which had come up useful as a lifesaver on many occasions, didn't respond to his call!

What's going on? Wang Baole's eyes went wide with confusion. Perhaps it only worked if he chanted it in his head. He did exactly that, hurriedly, even going to the extent of chanting the next few words that followed. However, the familiar aura that had always descended from the deepest part of the universe didn't make its appearance.

Is he ignoring me?

There wasn't enough time for him to think. Wang Baole trembled as the waves of spirit energy around him intensified as the destructive force approached. A stabbing pain spread throughout his body as a glowing sphere of light appeared in the distant darkness before him!

It grew in size, and within a few seconds, Wang Baole heard a deafening rumbling. It sounded like the collapse of stars.

If someone were to stand atop an elevated spot and look over, they would see an enormous ball of fire headed Wang Baole's way!

It wasn't just a mere ball of fire... it was a planet. It wasn't huge compared to other planets, but still significantly large—as big as the moon. Compared to the planet, Wang Baole was but an ant—a speck of dust!

It was still quite a distance away. Nevertheless, the waves of spirit energy around Wang Baole were vibrating violently. Wang Baole shuddered. An alarming sense of danger and death loomed over him, rushing through every part of his body like a tsunami.

It doesn't seem like a drill! Wang Baole panicked. His eyes were red. He had no time to think further. From what he had just learned, he knew that he had only once chance. He was either going to attain a breakthrough, or he was... going to die!

There was no way out. The only way was forward!

"Stellar my ass! Do you know how many bizarre entities I have inside my body? Do you think I'm afraid of you?" Wang Baole yelled. He raised his right hand and smacked himself hard on the chest. The devouring seed stirred, the green lotus resting inside the devouring seed swayed, and countless lightning bolts sparked to life as Wang Baole's Lightning Core popped out from his mouth!

Dazzling lightning bolts darted about in the air like silver serpents. The Lightning Core unleashed its full power as it attempted to hold its ground against the force of the charging planet. It was like a grasshopper trying to stop a horse cart. The Lightning Core was no match for the planet at all and began to show signs of shattering as soon as the planet drew near.

Agony surged through Wang Baole's body. With a dark look on his face, he raised his right hand and smacked his chest again without hesitation. With a loud boom, an aura more powerful than the Lightning Core erupted from his body. A sudden chill flooded the area, and black flames swiftly surrounded Wang Baole!

They were Dark Fires!

Wang Baole spat out his second core... the Dark Core!

Waves of spirit energy rose to the skies as his Dark Core joined his Lightning Core to fight back against the planet. It still wasn't enough, but at least they managed to slow the planet down slightly!

Regardless, slowing the planet down wasn't going to help at all. The starlit space before Wang Baole was now enveloped in the light emanating from the approaching, roaring ball of fire that was a planet. He seemed unable to see anything else. There was only the planet headed his way, a sea of fire that stretched on forever into the distance, rushing at him!

The force rushing towards Wang Baole was overwhelming. The Lightning Core began to crack, his Dark Core showed signs of melting, and even his Heart Core was devoured instantly. It seemed like the end for him. Wang Baole was on the edge of unconsciousness. His very life was about to be consumed by the burning, shining planet. It was then that he raised his right hand again and hit his chest, hard.

"If you guys don't make an appearance soon, we're all going to die!" Wang Baole howled. He could feel his life fading. The devouring seed inside his body was the first that failed to withstand the planet's power. It emerged, emanating an incredible power as it transformed into a vortex that then tried to resist the planet's charge. The planet slowed down once again.

Wang Baole's green lotus materialized next, swaying in the air and emanating endless vitality. It joined forces with the vortex to hold the planet back!

He wasn't done yet. At that critical moment, as if it were dragged out like an unwilling hostage, the scabbard resting inside Wang Baole's body materialized. Numerous sharp strands of hexes flew towards the planet!

The planet finally slowed down to a crawl. A stalemate seemed to have been reached. Each moment passed in the stalemate felt like an eternity to Wang Baole.

As the weight of the planet pressed down on Wang Baole, his body shook. His Lightning Core continued to crack while his Dark Core continued to melt. The disintegration of his physical body brought along intense pain, which tortured his mind. As the immense pressure continued, an energy of rebirth began to flow out of his disintegrating cores and envelope him!

It resembled a small flame, weak and faint, and also a star in the midst of formation. The spirit energy it radiated was startling. It was as if a god was being born!

It was... one of the five legendary Nascent Souls, the Stellar Nascent Soul!

The Stellar Nascent Soul continued to absorb the energy given off by Wang Baole's three cores and the planet, and it continued to grow stronger. It was then that, suddenly, the abyss shuddered. An external power seemed to have realized what was going on and was about to stop the Stellar Nascent Soul from being born!

The powerful external force shook the abyss, distorting the fabric of this constructed world with its invasion. It materialized as a large illusory arm covered with red scales. The hand reached out for Wang Baole, meaning to destroy his body and soul and stop the Stellar Nascent Soul from being born!

It was then that... an icy snort suddenly resonated in the air. It was like hearing countless people snorting all at the same time. The sound was deafening!

"Who's the fool who dares stand in the path of my junior brother's breakthrough?"

A sudden glint that seemed capable of cleaving the heavens in two descended rapidly. It swept towards the red arm that was reaching for Wang Baole!

The sword fell!

The arm was chopped off!

Chapter 674: Senior Brother, Are You There?

With a single sweep of the blade, the arm was sliced clean through!

A blade's glint rushed past. The crimson-scaled arm that had been reaching for Wang Baole was chopped off at the wrist. The palm disintegrated, transforming into streams of illusory fresh blood that started to rush back towards the broken arm.

It was clear that wasn't going to happen. The blade that had sliced through the arm shone again, and an overpowering force descended like an invisible hand, sweeping at the blood that intended to return to the arm.

The blood changed the direction of its charge instantly, rushing towards Wang Baole. The remnant will of its original owner had been wiped clean, and it now belonged to no one. It emanated a strange power and seemed to have been transformed into some form of blood supplement. It collided with Wang Baole's Lightning Core, Dark Core, and his physical body, and entered all three smoothly!

Wang Baole shook at the sudden intrusion. He had struggled to maintain a stalemate with the planet earlier and had expended all his energy doing that. But his foggy, exhausted mind felt as if it had just been given a dose of some powerful pills. His mind cleared instantly. The sudden transformation was startling, but he had no time to think too deeply about it. The blood that had suddenly surged through his body was unimaginably rich with vitality.

His Lightning Core and Dark Core, nourished by this unexpectedly rich source, appeared to transform into a vast ocean that flooded his mind. A huge drum was sounding inside his head. He trembled at the

sudden descent of luck upon him. Bolstered by the flood of vitality, he roared and directed it all towards achieving a breakthrough.

“Break through!”

His body began to give off a bright light as the beginnings of a Stellar Nascent Soul were slowly forming inside his body. Soon, the power of a Stellar Nascent Soul erupted from his person. He seemed to have transformed into a star at that instant, and his Spirit Qi only continued to grow more powerful.

Thunderous booms continued to resonate in his head, roars that rose to the heavens!

He could feel power growing inside him. His breathing quickened, and he gave it his best shot as he unleashed everything he had in him—his cultivation, his physical power, his Lightning Core, and his Dark Core—and attempted to breakthrough!

Wang Baole looked like a star that was about to be born. The light emanating from his body, and the halo around him, continued to grow in size and brightness. Soon, the planet before him began to tremble. The stalemate was about to be broken. The power of Wang Baole’s star was about to be unleashed fully. A star was about to be born!

Everything might seem like it was taking place in slow motion, but in reality, the entire sequence of events—from Chen Qing’s first blow to Wang Baole’s absorption of the blood and finally to the eruption of a star’s aura—took place within the blink of an eye. Just as the power of his star was about to be fully unleashed...

A howl filled with pain and fury pierced through the starlit space. It was a sound that inspired fear and awe. Wang Baole’s spirit energy immediately showed signs of instability.

“Why are you still here after delivering the goods. Are you planning to stay for dinner?” Chen Qing’s cold voice resonated through the air almost simultaneously. It was followed by the glint of a blade, appearing suddenly and vanishing the next instant. A pained scream rang out.

“Get lost. Make another sound, and I’ll kill you!” Chen Qing snorted and then said coldly as the pained cry resonated in the air.

The abyss trembled, and the patch of universe that they were in seemed to shake. It was then that the screaming suddenly stopped. Despite its anger and resentment, it dared not make another sound. It had no choice but to leave.

The maimed arm disappeared alongside the presence. It was as if the unknown entity had never been there. Immediately after, things began running again in this patch of the universe.

With no one holding him back, Wang Baole let loose a fierce howl that rippled through space. The light gathering outside his body flared and surged outwards. It was blinding and seemed to go on for miles. The ball of light was shining brightly like the sun and the birth of a star at the same time. Cracking sounds, like pieces of eggshell breaking off, echoed in space.

“I said, break through!” Wang Baole roared. His cultivation erupted instantly, breaking through the perfected Core Formation realm and entering the Nascent Soul realm!

A star's power rose to the heavens the moment he entered the Nascent Soul realm. One could almost see a tiny person inside the glaring sphere of light stretching all four limbs. That was the Nascent Soul!

One of the five great legendary Nascent Souls, a forbidden art, the Stellar Nascent Soul!

A sense of unprecedented power grew inside Wang Baole. He felt as if he had the power to master the stars and to travel through space. Wang Baole's breathing quickened. He could see a familiar figure in the distance. There was a gourd in his hand, and he raised it at Wang Baole, like a greeting.

"Senior Brother..." Wang Baole's eyes widened as he murmured. The familiar figure didn't wait for him to speak further. With a flap of his sleeve, the planet before Wang Baole, as well as the abyss, began to tremble. Their forms blurred before Wang Baole's eyes, then shattered into pieces!

An incredible force rushed at Wang Baole, swept him away, and pulled him downwards into what seemed like an endless fall. Then, it vanished.

Before it disappeared completely, Chen Qing's voice rang out inside Wang Baole's fuzzy head.

"My dear junior brother, you don't have much time left. I'll... be coming to take you away soon."

The abyss faded, bringing with it Wang Baole. Everything faded to black. Chen Qing lifted the gourd to his lips and took a sip. He seemed pleased as he turned and started singing.

"When the heavens and earth separate, the cycle of fate stops..."

"Knowing what happened in the past, the one who suffers now is..."

"Knowing what's to come in the future, the one who is working hard now is..."

It was an ancient song that sounded older when he sang it. Just as he was about to fade into the darkness, he suddenly froze. He turned his head, as if he had just noticed something, and stared into the distance.

His eyes seemed to travel through space as they landed on the Solar System and the ancient sword inside the galaxy. He stared for a long while before suddenly laughing.

Such arrogance when it's just a mere Star-Seeding Dao. So be it. It'll serve as a supplement for my junior brother when it matures. Not bad at all. Chen Qing smiled, then turned and walked away, fading into the darkness.

On the sword tip of the ancient sword, where the three great palaces were found, Wang Baole reappeared outside the Dao Disciple's Palace amidst a blinding light. He immediately lifted his head and stared around him, his breathing quickening.

"Senior Brother..." Wang Baole murmured, then fell silent. He recalled everything that had happened since they had set off for the battleship. He began to realize the things that hadn't made sense after some careful thinking. His final battle with Daoist You Ran, especially, made him realize something.

As Wang Baole was deep in thought, he had no idea about the shock that Little Missy was experiencing inside the mask. In fact, shock was too mild a word for what she was feeling right now.

This little fatty... he actually managed to cultivate a Stellar Nascent Soul!

My father told me that only madmen would choose to cultivate this Nascent Soul. This awful fatty... Little Missy was going mad. It wasn't due to jealousy, it was due to the words she had said previously that she now remembered. The feeling of her words holding some sort of power that turned mere words into reality overcame her again. As long as she said something was beyond his reach, he would somehow achieve it. Little Missy was beginning to feel slightly terrified.

"What's so amazing about him, anyway? He simply has a really powerful senior brother!" Little Missy finally murmured, almost fearfully, to herself after some time.

After some time, once Wang Baole finally made sense of things, he finally took a deep breath. The series of events led him to an important discovery.

So, Senior Brother enjoys spying. He's been watching all this while! At that thought, Wang Baole surveyed his surroundings again. His eyes fell on the third palace. He blinked, then coughed suddenly.

"Senior Brother, won't you help out your handsome little junior brother and unlock the third palace for him?" Wang Baole said, then waited with great anticipation. Nothing happened. He thought for a bit, then spoke again, the expression on his face wide-eyed and ready to please.

"My dearest senior brother, this is your dearest, most precious junior brother, Wang Baole, who's been living a lonesome, hard life for years. Senior Brother, your cultivation is beyond parallel and your swordsmanship amazing. Please help me unlock the third palace.

"Senior Brother, stop with the tests. Just unlock the third palace.

"Senior Brother, I'm getting angry!

"Senior Brother... are you still there?"

Chapter 675: Present As Long As The Star Is!

Wang Baole scratched his head, then looked around. Despite how hard he had pleaded, there was still no reply from his senior brother, who clearly enjoyed spying on him. He couldn't help but wonder if the senior brother he had the fortune to stumble upon had left...

No way. Is he really gone? Wang Baole blinked. He tried shouting for his senior brother a few more times and received no reply. He sighed. His senior brother was likely gone. Even if he was still around, it wasn't likely that he was going to make an appearance before Wang Baole.

"So be it. I, Wang Baole, have always relied on my own abilities. It must be my fate. I'm not destined to take shortcuts and rely on others," Wang Baole muttered and tried to console himself. He ignored the soft snort that Little Missy made when she heard that.

Wang Baole had reached a point where he could now ignore the scornful words that Little Missy said that he felt were clearly spoken out of envy. Besides, he was an optimist by nature. He might have sighed at his current predicament, but he moved on quickly, growing excited after assessing his current level of cultivation.

The Nascent Soul realm! Wang Baole's heart burned, and excitement colored his eyes. He realized how much more powerful he was now compared to when he had been at the Core Formation realm. The difference was unimaginable. This only intensified the excitement he was feeling.

I should learn my lesson, though, and not be too full of myself. I should only declare my choice after hearing everything the other party has to say. Wang Baole recalled everything that had happened in the Dao Disciple's Palace, then concluded seriously. He didn't start thinking about how to get into the third palace. Instead, he sat down, crossed his legs, and began to stabilize his cultivation.

The devouring seed, the green lotus, and the scabbard had all returned to his body. There was now a tiny person on the green lotus though. A translucent, tiny person, with starlight emanating from its tiny body. He was built... like a tiny fat person. He looked exactly like Wang Baole and was sitting on the green lotus with a serious look on his face.

His scabbard had shrunk considerably. It circled his Nascent Soul, emanating a fearsome aura. His devouring seed radiated a similar light. It was rotating in time with his breathing.

It was as if he was the center of everything. All living things were but an audience to his majesty!

His heart raced wildly. It was as if he had just been crowned as ruler of all living things. As his cultivation stabilized, he began to organize and go through the information on the Stellar Nascent Soul that had flooded his brain.

A long time passed before Wang Baole finally opened his eyes. The excitement in his eyes didn't fade with the gradual stabilization of his cultivation. Instead, it intensified. He had gained new knowledge as he went through the volumes of information in his head, and his heart raced at the new discoveries.

Is the Stellar Nascent Soul... really that powerful? Wang Baole's breathing quickened. He was still in a state of disbelief, despite having repeatedly gone through the information in his head. The Stellar Nascent Soul had been labeled as a forbidden art not simply because of how difficult it was to master, but also because of how powerful it was!

The Stellar Nascent Soul was born from a collision with a planet. As a result, it possessed a certain quality that other Nascent Souls lacked. It might be more accurate to call it an intrinsic property.

Because of this intrinsic property... the closer in proximity a cultivator was to a planet, the more powerful he would become. His strength was influenced by the planets. In fact, one might argue that the owner of a Stellar Nascent Soul could absorb the incredible powers of a planet... In conclusion, a cultivator with a Stellar Nascent Soul was a terrifying opponent in battle as long as there was a planet in the vicinity.

In fact... the boost in power increased with the size and uniqueness of the planet. Based on the information that Wang Baole had received... there was no limit to how much one's power could be augmented. The only limiting factor was the size of a planet, as there was a limit to how big a planet could get!

Theoretically speaking, if there existed an infinitely big and indestructible planet, Wang Baole would be near invincible as long as he stayed within its vicinity.

This was the power granted by one of the five legendary Nascent Souls, the forbidden art... the Stellar Nascent Soul!

Incredible! Wang Baole's heart raced wildly, and his breathing grew uneven. He almost couldn't believe his luck. It took him some time to come to terms with how powerful he had suddenly become. He lifted his face skyward and burst out laughing, his spirits soaring. The hardships he had suffered were all worth it.

"The heavens are indeed fair. The world might be filled with people who have gained plenty without working hard for it, or who have landed themselves in accidental fortunes out of sheer luck, but... the fates would never deny a man the reward he had toiled and sweated hard for!"

Little Missy noticed the smug look on Wang Baole's face and heard words that rendered her speechless. A sense of exasperation and powerlessness fell over her. She sighed.

"As long as you're happy..."

Wang Baole ignored Little Missy's sarcastic comments and got to his feet. He puffed his chest out and placed his hands behind his back. Brimming with pride and arrogance, he glanced sideways at the last sealed palace. The look in his eyes turned sharp. The aura of a powerful cultivator erupted from his person moments later, rumbling.

It was an aura that surpassed that of a Core Formation realm cultivator. It belonged to a cultivator at the Nascent Soul realm. A storm howled around him, and starlight sparkled, fading in and out inside the storm. The strength of this howling spirit energy grew as Wang Baole unleashed his full cultivation. His Spirit Qi intensified and finally materialized as an illusory shadow of Wang Baole's Nascent Soul.

The appearance of this mere illusion sent the heavens and earth quaking. Fierce winds started howling as the storm around Wang Baole gained strength. An intense light flashed in Wang Baole's eyes. He yelled, then charged forward with a sudden burst of speed.

He broke the sound barrier instantly, forming afterimages of his person in his wake as he headed straight for the third palace. Upon approaching, he roared and sent his fist flying while unleashing the Divine Armament arm.

"Shatter!"

A deafening thunder rippled through the air. Then... following it, a cry of pain. Wang Baole was flung backwards, his body curled outwards as he flew through the air and crashed into the ground. The land shook upon impact, a crater forming from his crash.

Silence descended. Wang Baole took a while before he finally crawled out of the crater. He looked in a sorry state. He stared miserably at the third palace, which was unaffected by his earlier blow. He rotated his aching wrists and sighed.

I was too full of myself...

Wang Baole rubbed his wrists and stared at the third palace resentfully. It would be a great loss if he simply left. His gains from the last two palaces had been too attractive. The prize to be won from entering the third palace was likely as or more attractive.

How do I get myself inside... I'm not qualified enough... A considering look appeared in Wang Baole's eyes. He had been able to enter the first palace because he had been qualified, while he had managed to get into the second palace by making use of the bones of Li Wuchen's previous incarnation.

So, even a Dao Disciple isn't qualified to enter the palace. Only someone whose rank is higher than a Dao Disciple's can meet the requirements for entry? Wang Baole thought. Based on his understanding of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, only an elder was higher in rank than a Dao Disciple. But it was obvious that possessing an ordinary elder's rank wasn't going to get him through the doors. What he needed was a Grand Elder or even a Grand Supreme Elder, that would be perfect.

Where am I to find such things? Wang Baole sighed, exasperated. He had half a mind to give up. Then, something flickered in his eyes, and they started to shine fiercely. The gears in his head began spinning furiously as countless images flooded his brain. The last image that lingered was that of a gigantic corpse lying in a sea of blood, emanating incredible power, invulnerable even to the spatial tears around it!

That was what Wang Baole had seen the first time he had used the Immortal Platform, the sight that had sent him reeling back with shock. He suspected then that the corpse must have belonged to someone really important.

Wang Baole's heart stuttered at the thought of the corpse. He soon came to a decision.

I'll find the corpse and retrieve a bit of its flesh. It'd be better if I could get its blood as well. The aura emanating from that might be able to help me unlock the third palace! At that thought, Wang Baole turned around and immediately rushed off in search of the Immortal Platform!

The Vast Expanse Dao Palace on the ancient sword was vast, and numerous Immortal Platforms could be found in the region. Some might have been destroyed when the heavens and earth had collapsed, but many more still existed in the sword tip. Wang Baole soon located one after a brief search. After some shameless pleading from Wang Baole, a resigned Little Missy taught him how to operate the Immortal Platform. It didn't take long before the Immortal Platform began to tremble. Smoke rose to the skies as Wang Baole melded with the smoke and rose to the heavens!

He remembered vaguely where the corpse had been found. Now that he could operate the Immortal Platform with greater control, it didn't take him very long—only half a day—before the smoke that he was traveling in arrived at... a sea of blood!

Blood Qi rose from the sea of blood below him, red lightning bolts streaked the skies as thunder roared, and a gigantic corpse floated in the middle of the sea of blood, awe-inspiring and imposing like a god.

It might be dead, but its powerful aura still remained. It was powerful and far-reaching, casting an oppressive weight over the spatial tears and distortions around it!

Chapter 676: Dragonfly-ing Into Danger

Wang Baole could feel its power despite being hidden in the smoke. The corpse was like a terrifying, huge gaping mouth that could swallow him whole.

It was a feeling he hadn't felt as strongly when he had first passed the corpse, when he hadn't yet reached the Nascent Soul realm. Things were different now. He was hovering above the corpse in mid-air instead of just passing by quickly. His level of cultivation had increased, and his spiritual senses had grown sharper. He could sense everything more clearly now.

I feel intense danger... Wang Baole fell silent. He was hesitant about what he was planning to do. Then, he thought about the gains that awaited him in the third palace and gritted his teeth.

"Sometimes, you have to be hard on yourself in order to gain certain rare opportunities. You may even have to risk your own life. Of course, we should always have backup plans in place so that we have a chance to escape unharmed, should the situation call for that," Wang Baole muttered to himself. His eyes shone fiercely, and he suddenly started reciting.

"Enlightened..."

As soon as the first word was uttered, a familiar presence that seemed to come from the deepest parts of the universe descended. The spirit energy emanating from the corpse seemed to freeze momentarily, allowing Wang Baole to release a sigh of relief.

I thought it didn't work anymore. So it still works... Wang Baole stared skyward sheepishly, then stopped his incantation. With a series of hand seals, he separated from the flying smoke and shifted away, ready to approach the corpse in the sea of blood. It was then that the corpse suddenly shuddered!

Hair suddenly appeared on the body—on its exposed skin and the skin hidden beneath its tattered clothes. Despite having died, the hair on the body didn't shrivel and fall away. It survived, in some strange and bizarre condition, having undergone some form of evolution. It was as if the hair possessed a mind of its own.

The hair was dark green in color and as thick as a person's arm. It grew swiftly. In the blink of an eye, the ends of the hairs split open, like gaping mouths, transforming the hairs into green snakes attached to the corpse!

There were countless of them, clustered together and swaying in the breeze. It was a terrifying sight to behold. The snakes turned their eyes towards Wang Baole. He could feel an intense danger rushing over him, hear alarm bells blaring loudly in his head, and feel every muscle in his body trembling. Every cell in his body was screaming. Even his Nascent Soul opened its piercing eyes.

The snakes hissed loudly. Then, hundreds of snakes lifted their serpentine bodies and transformed into a massive green blur that charged at Wang Baole, ready to devour him.

They looked like the release of hundreds of arrows. Numerous other hissing snakes followed behind the first wave of snakes. In the distance were several larger green pythons. They tore their way out of a tattered Daoist robe, fearsome-looking and utterly terrifying.

Wang Baole's eyes flashed as danger rushed at him. He raised his right hand, then pressed it against the ground as he roared.

"Enlightened..."

The same powerful presence from space descended once again, enveloping the entire region. The green snakes shrieked and retreated immediately. Their bodies trembled and cowered on the ground. They dared not move a single inch forward.

Wang Baole perked up when he saw how effective the sutra was. Without hesitation, he crossed the skies and appeared above the corpse, right where its identity token was located. To play it safe, he shouted again.

“Prisoner of the Dao of heaven...”

A silent explosion seemed to have erupted inside the minds of the green snakes. Many of them shriveled and died, and a few started foaming at the mouth. Even the larger ones in the distance cowered. As for the ones around Wang Baole, they fled instantly, leaving him standing alone in the area.

He knew how dangerous this place was, so he continued reciting parts of the sutra sheepishly and yet without any hesitation. After shouting out the second line of the sutra, he swiftly knelt down and grabbed the identity token on the corpse.

The corpse was huge, which meant that the identity token was strangely huge as well. However, as soon as Wang Baole touched it, a bright light erupted from the identity token. It seemed to recognize Wang Baole and grant him permission to take the identity token. The bright light shrunk rapidly to the size of a human palm within the blink of an eye. Wang Baole grabbed it and stuffed it into his storage bag without taking a second look.

Everything happened very quickly. Wang Baole’s breathing came in quick huffs and pants, and there were still alarm bells ringing in his head. The danger he felt didn’t disappear with his chanting of the sutra and the subsequent cowering of the green snakes. Instead, it seemed to have intensified. Wang Baole was about to make his escape when his eyes suddenly landed on the corpse’s skin. He clenched his jaw.

It’s a struggle trying to get down here. Since I’m already here... I should get some blood... the identity token alone might not be enough. He knew that what lay before him was a corpse and that the chances of it having any blood left in it were slim, but based on what he could assess from the color of the corpse’s skin, Wang Baole was hopeful. Thoughts churned in his head as he raised both his hands.

With his left, he grabbed at the edge of the sea of blood, while his right formed a series of hand seals. An incomplete Flame Snatch Thearch Armor appeared and, along with it, the Divine Armament arm. The armor’s meridians entwined with the arm as the latter unleashed the power of a Divine Armament, which charged towards and drilled into the corpse’s skin!

Droplets from the Blood Sea the size of one’s fist were caught inside Wang Baole’s left hand then put away. Meanwhile, the Divine Armament arm on his right hand landed a blow on the corpse’s skin.

Wang Baole might have had a Divine Armament and attained a breakthrough in his cultivation, but the corpse had clearly been extremely powerful in its past life. Its skin remained extremely hard after its death. Despite Wang Baole’s efforts, he only managed to inflict minute cracks in the skin. There was no way he was getting blood from those cracks.

He would have to unleash his full cultivation repeatedly and spend some time on this to even have a chance of succeeding. But he didn't have the luxury of time. Ripples appeared in the sea of blood around the corpse. Something under the waters seemed to be approaching rapidly. The sense of danger that Wang Baole had been feeling grew more intense as the unknown entity approached.

Wang Baole began to panic. He looked around him, eyes sweeping across the landscape before he suddenly flashed. He shifted away and reappeared in another spot thousands of feet away. This was the corpse's chest. A huge, gaping wound, clearly fatal and extremely gruesome, appeared before Wang Baole.

He immediately knelt down and pressed his right palm over the wound. His eyes shone intensely, and his Nascent Soul had the same bright look in its eyes. With a series of hand seals, he unleashed the full power of his devouring seed, causing an overpowering suction force to erupt from his arm.

It surged out from Wang Baole's palm, went into the corpse through the wound, and spread throughout the corpse. It didn't take long before Wang Baole sensed tiny slivers of blood gathering into droplets of blood.

It was then that the corpse suddenly shuddered, and the green snakes began to stir again. At the same time, the ripples in the surrounding sea of blood grew into waves. The creature in the waters was angry.

The sea erupted in the next moment. Rising to the heavens were two enormous wings that resembled a cicada's. They sliced through the surface of the sea. Two halves of a pair of huge wings, which looked like sails, were peering out from the water. The patterns on the wings resembled runes as well as an imprisoned demon sealed within. Its face was contorted into a gruesome expression that looked nothing but evil. Two large bulging eyes floated to the surface of the sea, appearing right between the wings.

A sudden sense of danger, indescribable and overwhelming, exploded inside Wang Baole's head as soon as the creature appeared. A fierce light flashed across Wang Baole's eyes. The devouring seed continued churning in his right hand as he raised his left hand and pointed at the sea of blood.

"All sentient beings must endure immeasurable calamities!"

Boom!

The pressure weighing down from the heavens intensified. Wang Baole's repeated use of the sutra had taught him that the terrifying presence summoned by his sutra would appear more powerful as he continued his incantation. He never went beyond the first two lines since he was fearful of what would happen if he did. This was an emergency, though, which was why he had panicked and spoken the third line.

The suppressive force over them intensified. The creature that had emerged from the sea of blood trembled, as if pinned down by an enormous, invisible hand. It stopped its ascent momentarily.

It was then that the devouring seed was finally done with its work. A drop of dark red blood, encircled by trails of blood, appeared in the middle of Wang Baole's palm!

Its appearance was like a catalyst, and the creature in the water suddenly roared and charged out of the sea. The sea of blood erupted, and something huge appeared above the sea.

It looked like... a dragonfly, except many, many times bigger. It was blood-red all over and a terrifying sight!

Its eyes, filled with violence and madness, stared straight at Wang Baole!

Chapter 677: I Said, Unlock!

Wang Baole's pupils contracted the moment the blood-colored dragonfly revealed itself. Without hesitation, he grabbed the drop of dark red blood and disappeared.

Two crimson blades of wind slashed through the air where Wang Baole had been from opposing directions, tearing up the air itself. It formed a huge bloody cross in the sky.

Wang Baole's scalp prickled when he saw that the next time he reappeared a distance away. He could feel the power emanating from the dragonfly. It was greater than that of a Nascent Soul realm cultivator and might be at the Soul Conduit realm, or even higher.

What a huge beast! The thought flashed across his mind. The dragonfly had risen, thundering, from the sea of blood the second it had attacked. Wang Baole had no idea where the deafening sound resonating in the air was coming from—its mouth or its gigantic flapping wings. The beast charged straight at Wang Baole.

It reappeared almost right before Wang Baole's eyes in the next instant, prepared to rip Wang Baole apart and devour him. Wang Baole would never have been able to avoid the attack prior to his reaching the Nascent Soul realm. He wouldn't even have been able to see the dragonfly move. It would've been instant death for him. He had his Stellar Nascent Soul now, though. The sun, which was in the vicinity, might not be a planet and hence was unable to provide him any boost in power, but he had still just received a considerable boost to his cultivation through his breakthrough. He shifted immediately and managed to dodge the incoming charge.

Regardless, the dragonfly was still much more powerful than he was. During his successful evasion, a lock of Wang Baole's hair somehow still got caught in the attack. The stray locks of hair were sliced off and went drifting in the wind.

Wang Baole's heart raced. He raised his right hand then quickly muttered the sutra in his head again.

It only takes a thought to leave the deep prison!

That was the fourth line of the sutra!

And this was what he shouted to the beast.

"Insolent beast!"

The heavens and earth rumbled as the mysterious consciousness descended upon them once again, thundering. The power it was displaying had grown. It was like an enormous, invisible hand, exerting immense pressure over everything as it surged down from the heavens and pressed heavily on the dragonfly that was charging towards Wang Baole.

It had no physical form. Nevertheless, the dragonfly released a scream of terror and immediately retreated, cowering in fear. Wang Baole saw how well the sutra had worked and knew this was his chance, his narrow window of opportunity to escape death. He moved quickly away again, reappearing somewhere considerably further away. He then unleashed his full speed with the intention to leave the sea of blood.

The dragonfly appeared to be furious upon sensing Wang Baole's attempt to escape. Violence colored its eyes, and its wings flapped furiously. Wang Baole had no idea what was going through its head. It howled again, then, with another fierce flap of its wings, fought back against the immense terror gripping its mind and went after Wang Baole again.

What a stubborn creature! Wang Baole panicked. There was no time to think. He turned around and yelled out loud, no longer in the mood to maintain appearances—thinking the sutra in his head while saying something else out loud.

"Await..."

This was the beginning of the last line that he had been taught. It was comprised of five words. Wang Baole uttered only the first. He was of the mind to utter the remaining four... but something stopped him from doing so at the last moment. He didn't dare do it.

The mysterious power exploded when he said that one word, reaching heights previously unscaled. It was like a tsunami, pulling everything under and holding them down. The entire region began to quake violently.

The dragonfly was gripped by sheer terror. It shrieked and retreated desperately, transforming into a blur of red shadow that sent waves splashing as it fled back into the sea.

It trembled violently underwater, stirring waves across the surface of the sea. Its bulging eyes remained above water, staring fearfully at Wang Baole.

It was a reassuring sight. With no one else in the area, Wang Baole didn't feel the need to maintain the appearance of being some extremely powerful cultivator any longer. He unleashed his full speed and dashed away into the distance.

The dragonfly seemed torn. It couldn't free itself from its terror though. It watched Wang Baole fade into the distance and abandoned all thoughts of pursuit.

After a long while, when peace and calm finally settled in the area again, the dragonfly flew out of the sea. It circled the corpse once, then howled as it flapped its wings wildly, as if voicing its anger. The space around it was torn apart immediately. The green snakes on the corpse trembled fearfully. It wasn't done yet. With another flap of its wings, the sea of blood started rippling violently. Blood rose to the sky, twisting and contorting, turning into the shape of a person.

It was red in color and looked exactly like Wang Baole.

The dragonfly roared at the sight. It charged forward and sliced off an arm and a leg with its wing. Then, it opened its mouth and sank its teeth into half of the body formed from blood. The assault continued until the body was maimed and mutilated beyond recognition. That was when the dragonfly snorted, finally appeased. It replicated a couple more of those bodies that looked exactly like Wang Baole and

repeated the process. Having vented its anger and become satisfied, it returned to the sea of blood and disappeared without a trace.

Wang Baole couldn't bear witness to the scene. If he could, he would feel a chill over his entire body. There was no way he would try to anger the dragonfly again. It was clearly petty and the sort to hold grudges.

Wang Baole had teleported multiple times by this point and found himself an Immortal Platform. He used the traveling smoke and got himself back to the sword tip.

This might have been a challenge to others, but Wang Baole possessed the knowledge to operate the Immortal Platform and had just come from the sword tip—he knew which parts were safe for travel. It didn't take him long to return to the spot where the three palaces were located.

Wang Baole stood before the third palace and stared at the thick sheet of ice encasing it with anticipation. He didn't have to guess. It was obvious that whatever reward was laying within it was greater than what he had gained from the last two palaces. He didn't wait. He took a deep breath and raised his right hand. Then, he pulled out the identity token and shouted.

"I said, unlock!"

As his voice echoed in the air, the third palace began to rumble. An invisible power seemed to have permeated the air, one which resonated with the identity token in Wang Baole's hand. The ice encasing the palace started to shake and seemed on the verge of shattering.

Wang Baole grew excited. He waited with anticipation. As time passed, he realized that apart from the shaking and quaking, nothing else was happening. The ice shook, but it didn't shatter. It was as if... something was still missing.

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. His left hand formed a series of hand seals, and his Flame Snatch Thearch Armor began to churn with power. He had self-destructed his first armor and had only managed to restore it to its first level.

That was enough.

Illusory meridians danced in the air and spread from Wang Baole's left hand to his entire body. Wang Baole's entire body was soon encased in the red Flame Snatch Thearch Armor. He took a deep breath and took out the drop of dark red blood.

The tremors of the third palace intensified instantly. Wang Baole's eyes shone brightly as he infused the blood into his armor. He unleashed his full power, and the aura of the blood's owner erupted suddenly. Wang Baole raised his right hand, thrust the identity token into the air, and shouted again.

"I said, unlock!"

As his words resonated in the air, a thundering explosion erupted from the third palace. The ice sealing it shattered and fell to the ground, and an immense power surged from the palace and enveloped Wang Baole and the area around him. It seemed to voice its permission. As Wang Baole took a few nervous breaths, a voice rang out.

“As an elder, you are qualified to shoulder the responsibility of defending the Dao Palace. You may access the third Spiritual Palace for a chance to achieve phenomenal breakthroughs in your cultivation!”

It was a voice like thunder that filled the skies. The doors of the third palace slid open, revealing a sliver of the mysterious and unfathomable sight that lay beyond those doors!

Wang Baole was beside himself with excitement. After the first and second palaces, he already knew what to do. He dashed straight into the palace with a single step.

He entered the palace instantly!

Chapter 678: Many Thanks to the Patriarch!

Pitch blackness transformed into an eerie darkness, then into gradual clarity after Wang Baole stepped into the palace. Wang Baole froze. He felt his hair stand. He stood, immobile, as his instincts told him to retreat.

The inside of the third palace was completely different from that of the former two palaces. There was no one inside testing his qualification. The space was also wider.

Those weren't the only things that caused Wang Baole's heart rate to pick up. There was also a huge pool in the palace spanning a thousand feet. It was filled with milky white water that resembled something dairy. It gave off a strange fragrance that tempted one to drink a sip from the pool.

A thin, wispy mist enveloped the space. Waves of spirit energy rippled in the area, enveloping the entire palace, and a strange weight seemed to hang in the air.

The source of this pressure was the milky white pool in the middle of the palace!

Eleven lotus leaves gathered in the pond. There were people sitting atop ten of those leaves, and only the eleventh leaf was empty.

That made ten people in total!

There were men and women amongst the ten people. Through the mist, Wang Baole could see that they were all thin and skeletal, unmoving as they sat there. The aura of death emanated from these ten figures. They were like... corpses!

Their clothes looked similar to the clothes the corpse in the middle of the sea of blood wore. They were likely Vast Expanse Dao Palace elders of similar high ranking. Each one of them emanated power equally strong as well. Wang Baole began to tremble, and the tremors intensified as the corpses' auras continued to affect him.

What's going on with this palace? It's not simply different from the other two palaces, it also has so many corpses hiding in it! Wang Baole's teeth chattered with fear. His breathing stopped momentarily, and he could hear his heart beating loudly in his ears. The corpses' auras and the atmosphere were giving him the creeps, making him feel incredibly uncomfortable.

He had half a mind to leave, but his body stuttered to a momentary stop after taking a step back. His eyes narrowed, then widened suddenly.

There's Spirit Qi in the mist. It's incredibly rich too... He hadn't noticed that because of how nervous he had felt earlier. Now, he tried to relax part of his body and attempted to absorb a slight bit of the mist surrounding him. His body shuddered.

The mist flowed inside him and spread throughout his body instantly. Comfort and a sense of fullness that he had never experienced before settled inside Wang Baole. He felt eased and nourished.

This Spirit Qi... is different from the Spirit Qi found in the Federation and the Dao Palace. It seems to be more dynamic and of better quality! Wang Baole licked his lips. He stared at the pool obscured by the mist and its milky white waters. He had no idea what the water was formed from, but it was obvious that it was some transformational liquid. There was Spirit Qi in the mist that had risen from the water, so the water itself must be extraordinary.

Wang Baole was slightly concerned about the corpses in the pool though. It didn't take him long before he cast his worries aside and walked into the mist. It might seem like a reckless action, but he had exercised full caution while doing so. He didn't step directly into the pool. Instead, he sat down outside, in the mist, and attempted to absorb the Spirit Qi within.

Vast quantities of Spirit Qi entered his body. It began to emit sounds of cracking as an incredibly comfortable feeling spread throughout his body. It felt like being massaged by countless tiny hands, causing his exhaustion to melt away. Even his spirit felt comforted. He almost couldn't stop a moan from escaping his lips. Fortunately, he caught himself in time and reined himself in, preventing himself from making any strange noises.

As his entire body relaxed and continued being nourished, his hair started to grow. His skin, flesh, and blood, as well as his bones, were transformed. He had resembled parched earth after his recent breakthrough to the Nascent Soul realm. Now, it was as if rain had suddenly descended and nourished him. He was completely revitalized!

He could feel his body growing stronger as vitality rushed inside him and nourished his body. His cultivation seemed to grow more powerful as well.

The excitement inside Wang Baole intensified as half an hour passed. His eyes shone brightly when he discovered that his cultivation had increased considerably.

This must be some legendary, powerful spirit liquid. What a waste leaving it here. The elders' corpses can't absorb it anyway... Wang Baole blinked. He stood up suddenly and cupped his fists towards the pool before him.

"Your humble disciple has intruded upon your rest rudely today. I was forced to do so and humbly request that the esteemed Patriarchs do not fault my intrusion. The Vast Expanse Dao Palace is currently in an upheaval. I had no choice but to seek a breakthrough here and try to save the Dao Palace from danger with my increased cultivation!"

"I seek your permission to bring the spirit liquid in this pool away with me so that it might help the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. Please give me a sign if you do not permit this." Wang Baole had a serious

expression on his face. He cupped his fists again and bowed after speaking, waiting there silently and obediently for a reply.

A dozen or so seconds passed. Wang Baole blinked and lifted his head, the expression on his face serious. He even looked slightly touched as he spoke again.

“The esteemed Patriarchs are indeed righteous and just. I thank you for not objecting to my request!”

He felt incredibly consoled. In his opinion, there was nothing wrong with him absorbing some of the Spirit Qi here. After all, he was an adopted disciple of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace and had Little Missy with him. This was like home to him. Besides, it wasn’t as if he hadn’t asked first.

The Patriarchs didn’t object to my request. It means they approve of me. Wang Baole ignored the fact that they were unable to voice their objections and grew increasingly assured of his actions. He lifted his head and puffed his chest outward, then took a few steps forward, all the while continuing to absorb the Spirit Qi in the air. He kept absorbing Spirit Qi while advancing, stopping once in a while to digest the Spirit Qi he had absorbed. Four hours passed. The mist in the air had grown significantly thinner. Nourished by the Spirit Qi he had absorbed, Wang Baole’s cultivation continued to grow after its initial stabilization. He was reaching the peak of the early-stage Nascent Soul realm.

He steadily approached the pool as he continued advancing while absorbing Spirit Qi. Finally, he stood before the pool, excitement bright in his eyes. He stared at the water, hesitating for a moment before he muttered a few words of comfort to himself. Then, he formed a series of hand seals and pointed, retrieving a drop of milky liquid from the pool.

The droplet exuded an enticing fragrance, almost tempting Wang Baole to swallow it. He was quite the clean freak though and stopped himself from doing so. The devouring seed inside his body started to churn, causing an explosive suction force to erupt from his body, which traveled down to his finger and began sucking. The droplet of water vanished immediately. It turned into a white mist that entered Wang Baole’s finger and flowed through his entire body.

There was an explosion in Wang Baole’s head. He shut his eyes. An incredible, unimaginably rich Spirit Qi erupted inside his body, flooding it like a tsunami. His Nascent Soul opened its eyes then. It sucked a breath in and began to absorb the Spirit Qi. A long while later, Wang Baole opened his eyes, which were filled with intense excitement.

Jackpot! He licked his lips. He assessed the increase in his level of cultivation and confirmed that the liquid had no adverse effect on his body. Then, without any hesitation, Wang Baole immediately took a step forward and sat on the edge of the pool. He unleashed the full power of his devouring seed.

A deafening rumbling resounded in his head, like a series of explosive thunder. Vast quantities of liquid rose from the pool and transformed into mist. They entered Wang Baole’s body through his pores, and he shuddered. His Nascent Soul was working overtime as it absorbed Spirit Qi hungrily. Waves of spirit energy rose and ebbed inside Wang Baole, growing stronger with the passing of time.

Blessed with the sudden and rich nourishment, his cultivation rose and reached the peak of the early-stage Nascent Soul realm!

"I can still go on. Come on!" Wang Baole's breathing quickened as he muttered to himself. He directed the devouring seed towards another round of mad absorption. His Nascent Soul emerged from his body and hovered above his head, forming a series of hand seals and drawing more liquid from the pool, increasing the rate of absorption.

Mist rose and enveloped Wang Baole in a thick blanket of Spirit Qi as he continued absorbing it, spiraling around him and seemingly transforming into an enormous vortex, the center of which sat Wang Baole. He sat, oblivious... as one of the dried corpses on the lotus leaves in the middle of the pool suddenly stirred. Its eyelashes fluttered, and its eyes were on the verge of opening.

Chapter 679: Three Options!

Spirit Qi enveloped the area like a thick fog. Wang Baole was busy absorbing the Spirit Qi and at a pivotal stage, trying to reach another milestone in his cultivation. He had no idea that one of the corpses was about to wake.

This was a good thing. Anyone else in his place would be frightened out of their skin if they were to see the corpse open its eyes. If they were lucky, this would only cause a disruption in their cultivation. If they weren't... it might cause their Spirit Qi to spiral out of control.

The corpse hadn't completely awakened, it had merely fluttered its eyelashes before it resumed its slumber. Wang Baole was undisturbed as he continued sucking the Spirit Qi in the air madly and his cultivation crept towards the next breakthrough!

He intended to continue until his cultivation reached the mid-stage Nascent Soul realm. This would be considerably challenging for a typical cultivator who hadn't mastered his cultivation technique. Plenty of preparation would be required before he could embark on such an endeavor as well. Cultivation techniques were extremely important, regardless of which cultivation realm one was at. But Wang Baole had a Stellar Nascent Soul. This was where it showed itself to be uniquely different.

Even without mastering any prerequisite cultivation techniques, he could push his cultivation towards greater heights just through the pure absorption of Spirit Qi. Because he didn't have any Nascent Soul realm cultivation techniques under his belt, any breakthrough in cultivation he experienced now couldn't be considered a true breakthrough. However, once he mastered the prerequisite cultivation techniques, he would be able to consolidate the gains in cultivation he had achieved without any adverse effects.

Wang Baole had no lack of cultivation techniques. His memories of the Dark Dream, the divine powers he had acquired in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, and the gains he had gotten from the Eye of Infinite Techniques meant that he had a very clear idea of how to proceed now that he was at the Nascent Soul realm.

There was no need to trouble Little Missy with questions. He had seven to eight plans formulated in his head, and each had their own pros and cons. He didn't make up his mind immediately since there were so many options to choose from. He wanted to study them in greater detail after he returned to the Federation. He would make up his mind after a careful assessment.

A Nascent Soul realm cultivation technique could dictate a cultivator's future. The plans he had formulated all had incredible potential, and they could be grouped into three categories.

The first plan placed a focus on the cultivation of his physical body, with his Spirit Qi holding a secondary, supplementary role. He would be able to physically carve out mountains from the earth and split the lands for rivers to flow through. He would be able to pluck stars out of the sky. If he chose this path, he would have three cultivation techniques to choose from. All of them were attractive options.

The next plan would have him focusing on his divine powers. Through that, his awareness of and sensitivity to the universe's nomological laws would grow exponentially, which would speed up his cultivation progress. He could transform mere beans into soldiers, summon storms and command the winds. His unique Stellar Nascent Soul meant that he would vastly surpass other cultivators at the same realm in terms of power, perhaps to the extent of overwhelming them with his commanding presence. There were also three cultivation techniques he could pick if he decided on this path. He would need to study them in more detail.

The last plan caused Wang Baole the most hesitation. It didn't focus on physical strength or one's sensitivity to the nomological laws. It only focused on one thing... killing!

He would kill his way to the top. Should he pick this path, he would become a symbol of massacre and violence in the realm of the Nascent Souls. He would be the grim reaper of all living things!

There was only one cultivation technique he could learn if he picked this path. It was... the Demonic Eye Art!

It would allow him to form a seemingly tangible white eye that hovered around him and became the physical manifestation of his cultivation technique. Its cultivation method was completely different from that required by other cultivation techniques. Its cultivator needed to do only one thing, and that was... to kill!

Each kill allowed him to create an eye, which would boost his level of cultivation. That, in essence, was the demonic eye.

One could imagine the exponential increase in cultivation the cultivator would experience after massacring countless. He would be able to summon countless eyes. He would be surrounded by countless eyes!

Each demonic eye had the ability to dispel spells and exuded an overpowering aura. The destructive force created from a demonic eye's self-destruction would be the equivalent of blowing up the person who had been killed to create the demonic eye in the first place.

This was a cultivation technique that was created for killing others. The more one killed, the more powerful one became, and the crazier one got!

It wasn't found in the Eye of Infinite Techniques or in any of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace's records. Even Little Missy hadn't heard of it. This was something that Wang Baole had read in the Dark Sect's records in his Dark Dream.

Wang Baole remembered distinctly reading about this in the Dark Sect's records. It was a lost mystic art that had originated from an extinct, ancient cultivation civilization. Only records of the Nascent Soul

realm level of this mystic art survived. Anything beyond that had been lost. That was why it had been labeled as incomplete despite its incredible power.

Let's not think about that first... Wang Baole took a deep breath and set those thoughts aside. He focused on absorbing the spirit liquid in the pool. No matter which path he chose in the end, what mattered now was the absorption of the Spirit Qi in the pool and his reaching the mid-stage Nascent Soul realm. This would allow him to establish a sturdy foundation for whichever path he chose next.

With that thought in mind, the devouring seed inside Wang Baole increased its suction force. The tiny, fat Nascent Soul above his head pressed its tiny, fat hands together. They moved swiftly, a blur of movements as they formed a series of hand seals. He started sucking in vast quantities of spirit liquid like a gigantic whale. The spirit liquid continued its series of explosive eruptions inside his body, transforming into Spirit Qi that pushed his level of cultivation higher.

Within ten minutes, Wang Baole's body started emitting sounds of cracking again. It was a sign that he had swallowed more than his body could bear. The Spirit Qi housed inside him had exceeded the limits of what an early-stage Nascent Soul realm cultivator could bear as well. He was now holding as much Spirit Qi as a mid-stage Nascent Soul realm cultivator.

His Nascent Soul was no longer a tiny fatty. It was a chubby, fleshy sphere. One could hardly tell that it was a Nascent Soul...

Wang Baole felt himself reach both his physical and spiritual limits. He couldn't catch his breath. However, he wasn't willing to just stop there.

It took me so much effort to get in here. I can't just leave with that bit of Spirit Qi! Wang Baole opened his eyes and stared at the pool before him. The bit that he had absorbed wasn't even one-thousandth of the pool's total volume. Determination flashed in his eyes. He wasn't going to go easy on himself now.

Who cares if I get fat. I'm going to keep on draining the thing! He shouted inwardly then took a deep breath. The devouring seed inside his body unleashed its full force again. An alarming volume of Spirit Qi surged into him once again, rushing through his body like a tsunami.

With his Nascent Soul and physical body at their limits, Wang Baole resorted to a familiar technique... he converted the Spirit Qi into spirit fat and stored the latter in his body.

This might prove to be problematic for others, but it was a simple enough feat for Wang Baole, who had his devouring seed. He could continue absorbing Spirit Qi until his body exploded.

Wang Baole's body ballooned. The waves of spirit energy emanating from his body grew increasingly powerful. Other Nascent Soul realm cultivators would have found it a shocking sight. The aura that he was exuding now would terrorize any ordinary Nascent Soul realm cultivator.

Half an hour passed. Even breathing became increasingly difficult. He now looked almost like his Nascent Soul, a chubby, fleshy sphere, except bigger. His handsome face was nowhere in sight. People who knew him well wouldn't be able to recognize him at first sight. His will was willing, but his flesh weak. He had no choice but to stop.

I have to stop now. If I keep this up, I won't even be able to get into the air... Wang Baole opened his eyes with difficulty. He stared at his tummy, then at the pool. He gritted his teeth and sucked in a bit more Spirit Qi. Then, he finally forced himself to stop. He pulled out the puppets inside his storage bag.

I might be done, but I still have my puppets! Determination flashed in his eyes. With a series of hand seals, he got the puppets into the pool and activated their Spirit Kernels. They became receptacles of the spirit liquid in the pool.

He pulled out numerous bottles next, both big and small, and began filling them with spirit liquid. Even after doing that, there was still too much spirit liquid left untouched. Wang Baole was faced with a dilemma and sank into deep thought. In the distance, on the lotus leaf, a corpse's eyelids suddenly twitched. It was the same corpse whose eyelashes had fluttered earlier. Its eyes opened narrowly, revealing faint white light within.

Wang Baole suddenly smacked his tummy then.

How could I have forgotten the Thearch Armor! Wang Baole perked up instantly and hurriedly formed a series of hand seals. Streams of crimson meridians immediately emerged from his body and snaked around him, transforming into a red armor. Wang Baole immediately unleashed the Flame Snatch!

The Flame Snatch was a technique that relied on devouring, while the Thearch Armor was an external vessel. They made a perfect match now, in the third palace, as they unleashed their combined powers. Vast quantities of spirit liquid rushed into the armor, transforming it drastically. More red meridians began to form and intertwine with one another in a thick blanket of meridians. The armor grew larger and taller. It was a gruesome sight to behold.

The Spirit Qi brought the armor back from its former damaged state into a fully restored one. Its second stage of evolution, a skeletal structure, reappeared. Streaks of white could be seen amidst the mesh of red. They grew greater in number, exceeding its original number during Wang Baole and Daoist You Ran's battle, growing thicker and finally transforming into bone!

Chapter 680: Li Wuchen Is a Jerk!

Sitting cross-legged in the middle of the pool, Wang Baole resembled an overweight war god, fearsome like a beast and emanating blood lust!

On his right armored hand was the skeletal Divine Armament arm, whose power grew as it continued to be nourished by Spirit Qi. It had melded perfectly with Wang Baole's armor. The power that it was exuding had far surpassed that of a Nascent Soul realm cultivator and was now at the Soul Conduit realm.

One might imagine the power that Wang Baole was capable of displaying should he unleash his full power. Should he meet Daoist You Ran again, he would no longer have to rely on tricks to match the latter in battle!

The water level in the pool finally seemed to have dipped slightly. The Flame Snatch Thearch Armor had gradually reached its limits, and absorbing any more spirit energy might just make it explode. That being said, Wang Baole thought he could still attempt to do so. Just as he was about to continue...

The corpse sitting atop the distant lotus leaf, whose eyes had been opened a sliver... opened its eyes fully. They were filled with confusion, haziness, and a white light. The corpse raised its right hand and flicked its finger lightly, and seemingly instinctively.

An indescribable force exploded before Wang Baole. He reeled back, dazed. Before he could react to the unexpected attack, his body was flung backward. He was thrown out of the pool, through the doors of the palace, and straight outside.

"What's going on?" Wang Baole's surprised shout continued to resonate in the halls before slowly fading away. The white light in the corpse's eyes dissipated at the same time, revealing a hint of clarity.

It seemed as if it had only truly awakened then. The corpse surveyed its surroundings, seemingly dazed. It frowned a moment later after sensing the spirit energy around it.

"Li Wuchen's aura... No, there's an outsider as well..." it muttered, then lowered its head and looked into the pool. After a long moment of silence, it shook his head.

"I've always suspected that rascal Li Wuchen was up to no good. I was right. What a greedy fellow!" it muttered. Perhaps due to its recent awakening or serious injuries, which kept it from leaving, it didn't do anything else after that. It only shut its eyes and resumed its deep slumber.

As for Wang Baole, it was as if he had been chased out of the palace with an explosive, forceful attack. He couldn't stop his body from being flung outwards, no matter how hard he tried. In the end, he ended up fifty thousand meters away from the palace, his head spinning and vision a blur.

His body crashed into a mountain with a loud thud. It took him a while before he staggered out of the hole he had created in the side of the mountain. His hair was a mess, and he looked in a sorry state.

He didn't suffer any serious injuries, but everywhere hurt. He grimaced and huffed angrily.

What a miser. Didn't I ask for permission to take the water from the pool? No one objected then... Besides, I wasn't planning to take everything. I only absorbed a little bit. Wang Baole recalled what happened in the palace and guessed correctly at what had occurred. Prior to his being driven out, he had seen one of the figures on the lotus leaves raise its hand. Those Dao Palace elders in the palace were likely... still alive.

Wang Baole sighed and struggled to his feet. He stared at the top of his tummy, then turned his neck with some difficulty and looked around him. He was somewhere between the sword tip and the sword body. He stared in the direction of the palace longingly but decided to abandon all ideas after giving it some thought.

"So be it. So what if the palace doesn't want me around? There'll be some other place that welcomes my presence. I'm not hanging around here any longer. Back to the Federation, and my presidency!" Wang Baole muttered. He thought about the contributions he had made to the Federation and how he had destroyed Daoist You Ran, eliminating a threat to the Federation. That was an immense achievement. He had sent back so many cultivation techniques to the Federation as well. Little Duanmu had to make him the next president. It would be completely unreasonable if he didn't.

Wang Baole grew excited at that thought. Becoming the Federation President was something he had dreamed about his entire life. It had seemed a distant dream then, but now, it was something that was

within reach. Wang Baole perked up instantly. Even his pain faded away. He forgot the frustration and regret he had felt earlier and took to the air in search of an Immortal Platform.

However, he had grown too fat. Spirit fat was particularly dense, as well, and therefore added greatly to his weight. The spirit fat Wang Baole had on him had never exceeded one-tenth of what he had now. At the moment, his weight had reached startling heights. He looked like a mountain of flesh from afar.

Any ordinary person who came across him would be terrified at first. They would think that they had just encountered some fearsome beast.

Wang Baole had only just ascended to the sky in high spirits when, in the next moment, he almost tumbled to the ground and landed on his head. He felt as if he were carrying a huge mountain on his back. It took him a great deal of effort before he righted himself. By then, he was covered in cold sweat.

This won't do. I can't go back to the Federation now. I should return to the main Vast Expanse Dao Palace island and try to lose some weight first... Wang Baole breathed deeply. His weight was both a source of joy and grief. He recalled his family history of overweight ancestors and their premature deaths... He might be a cultivator now, but he was still concerned.

Having made up his mind, Wang Baole unleashed his full cultivation, pulled himself up, and dashed into the distance. He soon found an Immortal Platform. He transformed himself into a huge, bulging traveling mist, and began his journey across the sword body!

Wang Baole was unaware of Daoist You Ran's resurrection at that moment. He was oblivious to the Star-Seeding Dao cultivator's presence inside the Never-Ending Clan battleship. To his knowledge, Daoist You Ran was dead, and the threat of war had been averted.

That was why he had spent so much time in the three palaces, working hard for his breakthroughs in cultivation. That was why he had no idea... that the Federation was currently engaged in a war with Vast Expanse Dao Palace cultivators who were under the Never-Ending Clan's control!

The war had broken out one month ago!

Thankfully, Zhao Yameng had alerted the Federation in time. In addition, Duan Muque and Li Xingwen, as well as the other upper echelons of the Federation, had always treated the Vast Expanse Dao Palace as a potential threat and had planned accordingly. As a result, even though the war was taking a toll on the Federation, the fight that the Federation was putting up genuinely shocked Daoist You Ran and the Vast Expanse Dao Palace.

It shouldn't be surprising, though. The one thing that the Federation was skilled in was strategy and ambush. Their wisdom in war and tactics, the culmination of countless people's ideas and wisdom, was their strength!

The Hundred Seedling Plan was but a part of their setup. If that succeeded, they would see peaceful assimilation and coexistence. If it failed, however... they still had the Greater Mercury Array Formation and Anti-Spirit Bombs ready for deployment at any time.

In fact, the Federation had run through numerous battle simulations. They had modified the simulations based on the information that Wang Baole and the others had transmitted back to the Federation.

Preparations for a potential war for their civilization's survival had been set in place many years ago, and three lines of defense had been set up!

The first line of defense was Mercury!

The second line of defense, Venus!

The third, Mars!

Should all three lines of defense fall, Earth would lose all hope of survival.

No matter how flawless the Federation's plans were, there was always the risk of accidents occurring. The plan had numerous Anti-Spirit Bombs buried underground on Mercury, the Federation's first line of defense. Mercury would be blown up as soon as the Federation sensed something was amiss. It would be a serious blow to the Vast Expanse Dao Palace that would also destroy the teleportation array formation.

But Duan Muque had made a mistake. He had planned to wait for the Vast Expanse Dao Palace's military to arrive and to trigger the planet's explosion upon their arrival. He didn't only wish to destroy the teleportation array formation, he also wanted to deal a serious blow to the invading forces.

However, the Vast Expanse Dao Palace's military had arrived too swiftly for him to take action. The power emanating from the Never-Ending Clan battleship had overpowered Mercury's self-destruction. The Federation's plan had failed. They could only abandon their first line of defense and retreat to Venus, their second line of defense.

The Federation had many years of preparation though. Even though the Anti-Spirit Bombs had been overpowered during the attempt to blow up Mercury, the power that had been unleashed during their explosions had still managed to damage the Never-Ending Clan battleship and shock Daoist You Ran and the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. The damage had been exacerbated by its prior damage and the destruction that had been caused by Wang Baole. The Vast Expanse Dao Palace had to spend some time repairing the battleship.

A brief window of uncertainty had thus emerged in the war!