

Worth 711

Chapter 711: Chen Mofeng!

The black flame inside Wang Baole's body erupted with sudden violence as he spoke. It spread outward from the Night Immortal King's right shoulder with a mad fervor!

The layer of blue ice encasing the Night Immortal King took on a different color instantly.

The black flame was the Dark Fire!

Daoist You Ran might have had some knowledge of the Dark Sect that had once engaged in fierce battle with the Never-Ending Clan, but his status in the Never-Ending Clan and his level of cultivation meant that he couldn't recognize the Dark Fire instantly. Regardless, he immediately sensed an indescribable danger, causing alarm to color his face.

The black flame spread from Wang Baole outward, and the ice that had encased him began to disappear rapidly!

It didn't melt, it disappeared!

Melting meant that the layer of ice had turned to water upon contact with a fire that had a higher temperature. Disappearing... meant something else entirely!

Temperature was a relative thing. Daoist You Ran's blue ice might appear to be of a low temperature, but should it come into contact with something that was even colder than it was, it would no longer be ice, it would become fire to that colder entity.

The blue ice was disappearing. An observer watching from afar might even think it was evaporating, dissipating into the cosmos, and revealing its sealed prisoners—the Night Immortal King and Wang Baole. As the black flames spread, the blue ice encasing the lunar stronghold began to vanish rapidly as well.

The sight sent Daoist You Ran's pupils contracting.

What is that fire made of? Daoist You Ran's heart raced as he reeled back in shock. The cultivators on the battlefield who witnessed the scene were also collectively shocked. Venus, whose defeat had been inevitable a moment ago, seemed to have glimpsed a sliver of hope!

Wang Baole was secretly sighing though, as his level of cultivation was still too low. If he were powerful enough and had been able to engineer a greater and more explosive display of the Dark Fire, this battle... might just end right there and then.

Resolution flashed across Wang Baole's eyes at that moment—after having uttered those words and given the Federation a sliver of hope. Without hesitation, he reached for the remaining dozens of lotus seeds inside his devouring seed and... crushed them all!

The Night Immortal King shuddered violently as the red glow in his eyes burned with a sudden intensity. They were like two blazing lamps whose light flooded the entire battlefield. A slumbering consciousness

seemed to be struggling fiercely. It was like someone asleep was being shoved at, hard, and was on the verge of waking up!

The purpose of unleashing the Dark Fire and shattering all his lotus seeds was none other than... to awaken the Night Immortal King's true soul!

Wang Baole was going to awaken the Night Immortal King's true soul and unleash the Night Immortal King's true power on the enemy. That was his greatest and last trump card!

The sudden intense danger alarmed Daoist You Ran. A fierce light flashed in his eyes. There was no time to concern himself with Venus at the moment. His hands came together in a flurry of hand seals, and the three disks on the Never-Ending Clan Death Dao Battleship flared with a bright light. Instead of another blast of blue light, they summoned a seal that was identical to the one hovering over Venus. It flew out and appeared right above Wang Baole, releasing the same black flames and attempting to stop Wang Baole and refine him!

"No one will stand in my way!" Daoist You Ran's eyes flashed, and the irregularly shaped shard hidden within shone brightly. He took one step forward and unleashed his full cultivation. Then, like an arrow released from the bow, he charged at Wang Baole!

The realization finally dawned on him. Destroying the Federation was difficult but not impossible. Wang Baole, however, was the greatest unknown in the war. With him around, a slight misstep could result in a completely different outcome for the battle!

"I can't have you live!"

As Daoist You Ran rushed towards Wang Baole, the latter suddenly got to his feet. He stood on the Night Immortal King's shoulder, his eyes glimmering brightly and his arms outstretched. The Dark Fire inside his body surged out again. Along with the flames spread the power of Soul Guidance. Its power combined with that of Wang Baole's lotus and transformed into a force built on the Dark Art, a force that seemed to be calling out for one's soul. Wang Baole said coolly, "Chen Mofeng!"

There was a strange tonality to Wang Baole's voice. It echoed in the cosmos and sent the Night Immortal King shuddering violently. The Night Immortal King let loose a fearsome roar.

"Soul, return!" Wang Baole said. His voice appeared to have power over the soul, as if whatever he said would be done. His hands came together to form a series of hand seals. They fell apart, like the parting of yin and yang, the unbinding of life and death. A slumbering soul was finally... awoken!

The Night Immortal King lifted his head skyward and roared again. His fury echoed across the battlefield, sending fear and shock into everyone's trembling hearts. The roar drowned out Wang Baole's voice, sending waves of spirit energy rippling across the cosmos and surging outward. A terrifying aura erupted from his person!

The appearance of the aura immediately overpowered everyone on the battlefield. Every cultivator, from the Dao Palace and the Federation alike, began to tremble!

Even Daoist You Ran started shuddering violently during his charge. Shocked, he instinctively retreated, fearful to stray too near the Night Immortal King. A red mark suddenly appeared out of nowhere on his forehead. He seemed unaware of its existence. Deep inside the Never-Ending Clan Death Dao Battleship,

a woman sitting atop a cliff began to lift her head slowly. She gazed into the world beyond the battleship, a torrent of emotions coloring her eyes.

At that exact moment, the red glow in the Night Immortal King's eyes dissipated rapidly. Replacing it was a deep ghostly light that grew increasingly distinct and finally transformed into a look of confusion and loss.

The battlefield fell into a dead silence. No one spoke. Feng Qiuran, despite her excitement, found it hard to speak in the overpowering presence of the Night Immortal King. His power weighed down heavily on everyone. No one noticed Li Wuchen then. He was trembling, a seal that was hidden inside his eyes seemed to have shattered, causing memories to surge into his head. There was a look of pity in his eyes when he stared at the Night Immortal King.

"Chen Mofeng..."

Amidst everyone's shock, Chen Mofeng lowered his head and stared at the cursed seals on his skin in confusion. He looked at the chains weighing him down. Then, silently, he turned his head and looked at Wang Baole on his shoulder. It was a look that seemed to see right through Wang Baole. Unfortunately, while he had awoken, his full senses hadn't yet returned to him. He was still lost in confusion.

Wang Baole's face was pale. He stood on Chen Mofeng's shoulder, in the full blast of Chen Mofeng's powerful aura. It was only through the combined forces of his Stellar Nascent Soul, his Thearch Armor, his Dark Fire, and the connection between his green lotus and the Night Immortal King, that he managed to stay on his feet. His eyes met the Night Immortal King's. Wang Baole raised his hands with great difficulty, then cupped his fists and bowed deeply.

"I'm Wang Baole, your humble junior and a disciple of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. Daoist You Ran betrayed the sect and plunged the Dao Palace into danger. I had no choice but to awaken the esteemed elder. I beg you to aid us and kill the traitor Daoist You Ran!"

Chen Mofeng seemed not to have heard Wang Baole at all. He retracted his confused gaze from Wang Baole and swept his eyes across the battlefield. They paused momentarily on Li Wuchen before shifting away and landing on Daoist You Ran. The latter was shuddering, his scalp prickling with fear. Chen Mofeng saw the mark on Daoist You Ran's forehead, which seemed to agitate him. He appeared to be struggling against his own confusion.

Wang Baole grew frantic when Chen Mofeng ignored him after having been awakened. He could feel the power of his shattered lotus seeds fading away rapidly with Chen Mofeng's awakening. They would be gone completely within ten counts. Chen Mofeng would fall back into slumber then. Anxious, he seized upon the struggle in Chen Mofeng's eyes and called out to Chen Mofeng again.

"Please, esteemed elder, help me kill this man!" Wang Baole sent the green lotus inside him swaying violently as he spoke and released his Dark Fire. Chen Mofeng finally shook slightly, and murder flashed across his eyes as he raised his enormous right hand slowly.

The Moon Spirits, Night Immortals, and Moon Gu on the moon quivered at the sight of the raised hand. A mysterious power was pulling at them. They faded away, transforming into spheres of light that sped towards the cosmos.

The lights numbered more than hundreds of thousands. They amassed in the cosmos, as if they had been a part of the Night Immortal King all along, transforming into a river of light that circled to the Night Immortal King's side. As the Night Immortal King's right hand raised itself fully, the river of light reached his upraised hand and transformed into an illusory, translucent finger!

COMMENT

The finger was small compared to the moon, about one-tenth of the satellite's size, but its appearance shocked everyone present. It rushed towards Daoist You Ran in a thundering charge!

Chapter 712: A Past Lover!

Wang Baole sighed a breath of relief when Night Immortal King Chen Mofeng attacked. He had spent all his lotus seeds in order to awaken the Night Immortal King's true soul. That was why... Chen Mofeng's hesitation had Wang Baole worried and anxious...

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes. He had his own assessment of Chen Mofeng's true level of cultivation. Wang Baole sensed that the power contained within Chen Mofeng's illusory finger had surpassed that of a Soul Conduit realm cultivator. In fact, it might even have surpassed that of a Spirit Immortal realm cultivator. He still wasn't as powerful as Wang Baole's senior brother, but the power Wang Baole had felt was similar to the power he had felt during his ascension to the Stellar Nascent Soul realm. It had almost reached the level of a Planet realm cultivator!

Perhaps this was indeed... the power displayed by a Planet realm cultivator!

It wasn't a true measure of Chen Mofeng's real strength though. He was still in a daze and only had a wisp of his original true soul. His physical body and his cultivation were both in a weakened state. Regardless, he still managed to unleash a power that rivaled that of a Planet realm cultivator. One could imagine how powerful Chen Mofeng had truly been at the peak of his strength!

Such a powerful cultivator should have become one of the leaders of the renewed Dao Palace. He should have had a bright future ahead of him. Fate had played its games and ensured that such a choice hadn't been made available to him.

These thoughts flashed across Wang Baole's mind as he stared at Daoist You Ran. The latter's face was colored with alarm, and he was retreating rapidly, trying to evade the gigantic finger. Wang Baole's eyes were filled with murderous intent.

"I've killed you once, I can kill you again. Let's find out if you'll be able to resurrect yourself a second time!" Wang Baole's murderous gaze was tinged with doubt. His suspicions concerned... Daoist You Ran's resurrection.

He had a feeling that... there was a huge secret hidden behind the resurrection!

Daoist You Ran had no idea that he had died previously. In the face of an attack that came from someone who rivaled a Planet realm cultivator, he could only tremble while his scalp prickled with fear.

The looming sense of death and danger was driving him insane. As he retreated, his hands came together to form a series of hand seals. The Never-Ending Clan Death Dao Battleship unleashed a

dazzling light that transformed into an enormous seal. The seal appeared before Daoist You Ran, a shield against the Night Immortal King's attack.

He felt that wasn't enough. Daoist You Ran couldn't care less for Venus at this moment, so he pulled the seal over Venus away. The black flames and mark hovering over Venus vanished and reappeared before him, transforming into a weighty seal that spanned ten thousand feet!

The seal felt ancient and appeared to be at ease in the cosmos while repelling the cosmos at the same time. It was an indescribable, contradictory feeling that gave one the impression that... it was being sealed!

It repelled the cosmos and hence was sealed. The seal allowed it to coexist harmoniously in space!

This was what made the Death Dao Battleship special. Daoist You Ran, who was in grave danger at the moment, had abandoned all his plans and was risking everything. He gathered the full power of the battleship to fight back against the force of Night Immortal King Chen Mofeng's single finger!

The cosmos thundered, the seal glittered, and it froze Chen Mofeng's approaching finger in its tracks. As it held the finger back, Daoist You Ran picked up speed and retreated hastily with the intent to leave the battlefield!

He might have been fast, and the defense he had mounted might have been powerful, but... it still fell short!

Chen Mofeng's finger, which had been formed from all living creatures on the moon, collided loudly with the black seal that Daoist You Ran had unleashed from the Never-Ending Clan Death Dao Battleship.

Thunderous booms erupted in the cosmos and surged outward, stirring violent waves of spirit energy that swept across the battlefield. The Night Immortal King's finger, formed from a multitude of lights, smashed into the black seal like a meteor. The collision destroyed almost half of the finger and shattered the black seal into multiple pieces. The remaining part of the finger shot past the shattered black seal and landed on Daoist You Ran's body.

It didn't matter how fast he retreated, there was no escape. Daoist You Ran watched as the finger and the threat of death rushed at him, madness coloring his eyes. He shouted, "Heavenly Dao!"

The irregularly shaped shard in his eye flared up with an intense light. It materialized and grew in size before Daoist You Ran, then charged towards Chen Mofeng's approaching finger and crashed into the latter.

Explosions boomed in the cosmos yet again. The shard didn't shatter under the incredible force of Chen Mofeng's finger. Regardless, Daoist You Ran's cultivation was clearly not powerful enough to support the resilient shard. The shard might not have been damaged in the collision, but it was easily nudged away by Chen Mofeng's finger and then shoved into Daoist You Ran. The attack still landed on Daoist You Ran.

Daoist You Ran spat out a mouthful of blood, wailing as his six arms came together to form a flurry of hand seals. It seemed to be a mystic technique that allowed him to transfer his injuries. They were

distributed to his limbs. The result of that was... four broken limbs out of six and two destroyed heads out of three. Cracks appeared all over his body, and blood continued to spill from his wounds.

Daoist You Ran had managed to escape death despite a direct blow from the Night Immortal King due to his mystic technique. His eyes exposed his weakened, terrified state. He retreated frantically and tried to widen the distance between him and the finger. He could tell that Chen Mofeng's current state was only temporary and wasn't sustainable for a long period of time. He just needed to survive for a while longer before he was out of critical danger.

That was what happened. After the attack, the unfathomable look in the Night Immortal King's eyes faded away and was swiftly replaced by a red glow. The power of Wang Baole's lotus seeds was waning. He had only a few seconds before the Night Immortal King's true soul fell into slumber again. When that happened, the finger that had been formed from lunar beasts would disappear as well.

Wang Baole was prepared for that. As Daoist You Ran tried to delay their next engagement and distance himself from the Night Immortal King's finger, Wang Baole dashed out. Boosted by the Thearch Armor and with the Divine Armament shining on his arm, he unleashed his full speed and rushed at Dao You Ran like a shooting star.

Alarm flashed across Daoist You Ran's face. Widening the distance between him and the finger took all that he had. Wang Baole's charge came at the most critical moment, so there was no way he could avoid Wang Baole's attack!

"I won't admit defeat!" Madness filled Daoist You Ran's eyes. His true form was still inside the Death Dao Battleship, but his soul was fused with the battle robes. If the latter was wounded, he too would suffer the same injury. The resultant backlash might even destroy his true form!

At that precise moment, on Venus, Duan Muque's eyes were also equally colored by madness. When he had given the order to blow up Mercury, he had misjudged and lost their advantage. Then, when it had come to Venus, he had made a mistake again. Tragedy had almost repeated itself. Now, he had two options before him. The first was to continue waiting. Perhaps the battle would end without the need to blow up the planet. The second option was to seize the opportunity and blow up the planet. They would sacrifice Venus so that the overall war strategy would unfold as planned!

"Even if Daoist You Ran still has a trump card up his sleeve, he would choose to save himself. He has no energy to cause interference for Venus. That's why we should... self-destruct!" A red-eyed Duan Muque roared, his mind made up.

The entire planet shook suddenly as the Anti-Spirit Bombs buried underground were freed of the seal and reactivated. The explosions began. Thunderous booms erupted in the air, the planet quaked. Li Xingwen commandeered the Solar System Array Formation and unleashed the latter's full power for a wide-scale teleportation. In an instant, every Federation cultivator on Venus began to blur and vanish.

They disappeared in batches as the waves of destructive energy within Venus intensified. The Dao Palace cultivators reeled back in shock and alarm. No one bothered to stop the planetary self-destruction. Instead, everyone began to scramble in fear and run—as far as they could.

Daoist You Ran had no energy to bother with Venus either. Even if he did care, there was no way he could do anything about it when he himself was facing grave danger!

Venus was approaching eventual destruction, while Daoist You Ran was frantically trying to escape. Just as Wang Baole was about to reach Daoist You Ran, a sigh suddenly sounded from the Never-Ending Clan Death Dao Battleship behind Daoist You Ran. It belonged to a woman and was tinged with a certain sense of remembrance and a myriad of emotions. The sigh resonated across the battlefield. A similarly illusory, translucent finger appeared before Daoist You Ran. It tipped towards Chen Mofeng's finger and touched it!

There was no loud explosion, no terrifying shock waves. Chen Mofeng's finger disintegrated soundlessly upon collision, separating into numerous white lights that faded away in the cosmos.

Wang Baole's pupils contracted at the sight. He immediately retreated, shock rising within him. The power of his lotus seeds had faded away completely, but Chen Mofeng, who should have fallen back to sleep, suddenly murmured in a low, hoarse voice. This was the first time he had spoken since he had been awakened for battle.

"Zi Yue..."

Chapter 713: Lady, I Swear It Isn't Me!

The expression on Wang Baole's face shifted to alarm when he heard the name spilling from Chen Mofeng's lips. His pupils contracted. It was clear that he was no stranger to that name. In fact, he knew very well what that name meant to the Night Immortal King!

His Dao partner, who extracted his brain, dug out his heart, and destroyed his Dao, is actually on board the Never-Ending Clan battleship now! Wang Baole reeled back from the revelation. Fortunately, the self-destruct mechanism for Venus had been activated. Explosions and destructive waves of spirit energy were thundering nonstop on the planet. The power of the Solar System Array Formation enveloped the battlefield. Wang Baole could feel the invisible waves of teleportation pulling at him. If he wanted, he could teleport away right this instant!

That knowledge calmed Wang Baole considerably. As he continued to retreat, he turned and stared at the finger hovering before Daoist You Ran!

At that precise moment, the finger glimmered, and a woman's form began to materialize. The finger extended into a palm, then an arm, until it finally materialized into a beautiful woman in Daoist robes.

It was as if the cosmos were a painting, and this woman had just stepped out of the painting, gracing the world with her immense beauty!

Her form was still translucent, preventing one from observing her actual features in detail. Regardless, it didn't detract from her beauty. In fact, it was the blurry indistinctness of her form that captivated all who saw her. They appeared to be slightly dazed.

Perhaps it wasn't because of her beauty but her mysterious aura, which seemed capable of affecting all living things.

"You've... finally made an appearance..." Chen Mofeng's mind had fallen into deep slumber rapidly earlier, but the appearance of the second finger and the sigh had been a shock that had jerked him awake. His mind had cleared.

The confusion in his eyes had disappeared when he had spoken. He seemed to display his true thoughts for the first time since he had awakened. They echoed what he had murmured, not pain, not hate, but a deep longing.

The beautiful woman fell silent after hearing Chen Mofeng's murmuring words and looking into his eyes. She stared deeply at Chen Mofeng, an unfathomable look in her eyes. Then, she curtsied and said softly, "My dear husband, it's been so long. You suffered such a great calamity, but you still call out for me. How can your dear wife... not appear before you?"

Hearing his Dao partner's voice for the first time in a very long time might have stirred Chen Mofeng's memories. His vast form trembled. Deep within his clear eyes, a red glow flashed again. The soul that had formed after his death was trying to overpower Chen Mofeng's true soul.

The power of Wang Baole's lotus seeds had long dissipated, making the only thing keeping Chen Mofeng's true soul awake his stubborn longing. Chen Mofeng fought to stay clear-headed. He gazed at Zi Yue, tried to keep the look in his eyes gentle and soft, and said quietly, "Zi Yue... I miss you so much. I don't blame you for what you've done. Come... come home with me."

Chen Mofeng raised his right hand as he spoke, the look on his face gentle and filled with longing and hope. It was the look of blind, foolish love.

Zi Yue gazed back at Chen Mofeng, the color of her eyes deepening into a faint, loving gaze. She replied softly, "My dear husband, your wife misses you very much too. Whenever I start missing you, I'll bring this out..."

As Zi Yue spoke, her right hand rose and swiped through the emptiness before her. A blood-drenched heart appeared in her palm.

It was still pumping, and powerful waves of spirit energy surged from the organ and flooded the cosmos. Chen Mofeng shuddered, his mouth moving with great difficulty.

"Zi Yue, don't..."

"There's this as well..." Seemingly unaware of Chen Mofeng's trembling form, Zi Yue smiled and interrupted his plea. She loosened her grip on his heart and clawed through empty space again. What appeared next was a clump of white. It was... Chen Mofeng's brain!

"My dear husband, look. My longing for you is soothed with them at my side."

"Zi Yue... please stop, I beg you..."

"Let me think. There seems to be another thing that eases my longing for you. Don't fret, let your dear wife search for it..." Zi Yue gazed at Chen Mofeng as his trembling grew stronger and the pain on his face intensified. She was smiling as she spoke.

Her voice was clear and beautiful, like the voice of fairies. It had a certain grace to it. Anyone who heard it would be subconsciously soothed by it. However, if they also saw what she was doing and heard the viciousness in her words, there was no doubt that they would reel back from shock and fear instantly!

Daoist You Ran, especially, shook fiercely as he stared at the woman who had clearly saved his life. He seemed to have seen her somewhere before, but after thinking very hard, he realized he hadn't. The sense of unfamiliarity she exuded was mingled with something familiar. The contradictory feelings shocked Daoist You Ran. In addition, when he stared at the woman, he felt as if he were a servant in the presence of his master. It was a troubling and confusing sensation.

Everyone seemed to be in a state of shock. As for Wang Baole, he was still retreating from the woman. He returned to the lunar stronghold. He stared at Chen Mofeng and Zi Yue, then turned his eyes towards the trembling Daoist You Ran. There was a stormy look on Wang Baole's face as he realized what was going on.

She's trying to agitate Chen Mofeng!

Little Missy mentioned the Star-Seeding Dao before... maybe that has something to do with why Zi Yue didn't kill Chen Mofeng. Her agitating Chen Mofeng might also be because of the Star-Seeding Dao? Wang Baole had no answers. However, he had a feeling that he was on the right track.

This also means... Zi Yue is the reason why Daoist You Ran resurrected! Emotions flickered across Wang Baole's face. The stress he had been feeling spiked instantly.

A Daoist You Ran fused with the Never-Ending Clan Death Dao Battleship was a disastrous threat to the Federation. Who knew... that behind that was an even more powerful entity!

To the Federation, this was like adding oil to fire. Wang Baole knew the details between Chen Mofeng and Zi Yue, which meant that Zi Yue wasn't as much a stranger to him despite her making her first appearance before them.

She's the one who stole Chen Mofeng's Star-Seeding Dao, hid on the Never-Ending Clan battleship, secretly controlled Daoist You Ran, and started this war! A murderous glow colored Wang Baole's eyes, and grim determination settled inside him. He knew that the Federation's odds remained grim despite the successful self-destruction of Venus.

Wang Baole wasn't the only one who realized that. As the destructive waves of spirit energy continued to spread across Venus and thundering explosions continued to grow louder and echo through the cosmos, as the fabric of space around the planet distorted, and as batches of Federation cultivators disappeared and were teleported to safety by the Solar System Array Formation, the remaining cultivators also felt the same!

Duan Muque was one of them. He stood inside the command center at the moment, staring unblinkingly at Zi Yue, who was standing in space before Daoist You Ran. He was unaware of Zi Yue's and the Night Immortal King's past history, but he could tell that something was wrong. He realized that the mastermind behind this war wasn't Daoist You Ran, but... this woman whom the Night Immortal King had called Zi Yue!

Others who had remained were Feng Qiuran and Li Wuchen. They were both silent, their eyes filled with a myriad of emotions.

As batches of Federation cultivators continued to be teleported away, Zi Yue suddenly sighed forlornly.

“I can’t seem to find it!”

“My dear husband, why don’t you help your beloved Yue’er find it?” Zi Yue loosened her hold on the brain and swiped through the air. Instantly, appearing within her palm was an illusory... bell!

The bell was black, and despite its illusory form, it exuded a near-imperceptible aura of a star. It was clearly something extraordinary!

“My dear husband, where is this bell? I’ve eaten your brain and crushed your heart, but I can’t seem to find the bell. It’s all your fault. Why did you seal it before your death? I can’t sense it anywhere. Tell your beloved Yue’er, where is it?” Zi Yue appeared before Chen Mofeng as she spoke. There was a smile on her face, and Chen Mofeng finally couldn’t take it anymore. He raised both his hands, hugged his head, and howled in pain.

“Stop talking, stop talking!”

A red glow erupted in Chen Mofeng’s eyes. His true soul, which had been struggling to stay lucid, was immediately overpowered. The giant spiraled into madness, lifting his hands and reaching for Zi Yue.

“How boring.” Zi Yue shook her head slightly. Before the Night Immortal King’s hands could touch her, she raised her right hand and tapped slightly. A thunderous boom erupted from the Night Immortal King’s body. His armor shattered, and the runes on his body flared and overpowered him like a seal. He screamed in pain and fell, crashing into the lunar stronghold.

Zi Yue turned away from Chen Mofeng, her eyes landing on Wang Baole. There was a beautiful, evil smile on her face.

“You, the guy who has the Saint’s eye. Is what I want with you?”

Wang Baole’s scalp prickled. He shook his head frantically and exclaimed, “Not a chance. The most beautiful, invincible lady in this entire universe, if you’re not convinced, you can verify my words with your spiritual senses!”

Chapter 714: Never Get Too Ahead of Yourself!

“What a sweet talker, no wonder the Saint favors you. It’s alright if you don’t know. Perhaps the Saint does?” Zi Yue hid her smile behind her hand as she spoke, then raised her right hand in an attempt to capture Wang Baole.

It was then that the waves of self-destructive energies generated by Venus reached their peak. A sudden boom thundered. Venus shook, then... blew up!

The force of the explosion was incredible. It surged from the depths of Venus and moved across the entire planet. Beams of piercing, bright light blasted from Venus' core, skewering it and turning it into a sieve!

Terrifying waves of spirit energy accompanied the beams of light. They overflowed and rushed outwards. In their wake, everything was drained dry, shriveled. They disintegrated and turned to dust!

Buildings, mountains, everything. Fortunately, Duan Muque, Feng Qiuran, and the others had chosen to teleport themselves away before the self-destruction of the planet. No Federation cultivator had remained on the planet at the point of its destruction. There were only... Dao Palace cultivators on Venus!

The Dao Palace cultivators were faced with a calamity. Most of them had no means to leave the planet and nowhere to escape. No matter how hard they tried to run or how much earlier they had begun running, there was no way they could outrun their inevitable death.

Many were enveloped by the waves of spirit energy caused by the explosion, their trembling bodies wiped out instantaneously and turned to dust. The entire planet's destruction seemed to have created a temporary black hole, which was devouring everything in sight!

Everything and everyone... except Zi Yue, who seemed not to care a single bit about Venus' self-destruction. Amidst the thundering booms echoing in space, her hand continued stretching towards Wang Baole, intent on capturing him.

Wang Baole's scalp was prickling with numbness. He deeply regretted his decision to not teleport away immediately.

"I'm such an idiot! Why didn't I leave immediately? This is something between the both of them. Why am I poking my nose into their personal affairs?" Wang Baole yelled amidst his panic and fear.

"Zi Yue, you really dare to harm me? My senior brother is the first Divine King of the Never-Ending Clan! Senior Brother, quick, save me!" Wang Baole said, then silently chanted the scripture. The mysterious will descended from the heavens once again and enveloped everything with its awesome aura. Zi Yue smiled faintly.

"Feels powerful. Unfortunately, you've used this trick on my puppet." A ghostly light flickered in Zi Yue's eyes. Her outstretched right hand was now right in front of Wang Baole, reaching for his neck.

Just as she was about to grab him by his neck, an illusory, slender arm stretched out from Wang Baole's body and hit Zi Yue's approaching, outstretched palm in a swift collision.

It was Little Missy!

A loud boom erupted, and Wang Baole shuddered as he felt a fierce wind accompanied by an unimaginable power land on him. If he were a flame, the wind might have extinguished him. The blow was strong enough to crush him completely.

A layer of gentle light flowed from the illusory arm that had extended from his body. It formed a layer of protection against the attack, preventing it from being fatal. The backlash from the blow remained,

however. It shattered Wang Baole's Thearch Armor, and his Stellar Nascent Soul shriveled up and almost collapsed. Blood even spilled from his mouth and burst out from multiple places on his body.

He was flung backwards, like a kite cut from its string. He smashed through numerous buildings that collapsed in his wake and finally crashed into the lunar stronghold.

"Quick, run!" Little Missy's weak voice urged him frantically. Wang Baole bit hard on his tongue and forced himself to stay conscious despite his serious injuries. He allowed the Solar System Array Formation to surround him with the energies of teleportation. The entire moon and himself began to blur. As the glow from the teleportation spell intensified, a flash of ghostly light flickered in Zi Yue's eyes. She stepped forward just as the moon and Wang Baole were about to be teleported away.

Her foot landed, and she passed through the glow of the teleportation and appeared before Wang Baole. Zi Yue's lips tilted upwards into a devilish smile as she observed Wang Baole's shock. Her finger reached out for Wang Baole's forehead.

"Boy, call out for your senior brother, ask him to save you."

Her finger landed on Wang Baole's forehead. It seemed that what awaited Wang Baole in the next moment was the shattering of his bones and the complete destruction of his body and soul. The teleportation would fail, and Little Missy, the lunar stronghold, and the Night Immortal King would be trapped here.

It was at that moment, when Zi Yue's finger and Wang Baole's forehead touched... that her finger suddenly melted away. It was as if her finger were made from snow and Wang Baole was a piece of scorching hot metal!

As her finger melted away, it transformed into tiny sparks of light that entered Wang Baole's body. They were like nutrients that were absorbed by his body without any signs of being repelled by the latter. Wang Baole's injuries healed instantly, and his cultivation received a great boost as well, spiking suddenly!

Everything happened too quickly, within the blink of an eye. Even Zi Yue was stunned momentarily. Strong emotions colored her face, something that hadn't happened for a long time, not since she had obtained the Star-Seeding Dao. She retreated hastily, unleashing her mystic art promptly and cutting all connection between herself and her melting finger. Her heart raced as she withdrew.

Wang Baole was equally stunned, but he didn't have the chance to express his joy. His body, alongside the lunar stronghold, blurred in the teleportation spell, then vanished completely!

Venus' explosion reached the height of intensity then, and waves of destruction continued to surge outwards, finally reaching where Zi Yue was. The entire planet was rapidly transforming into a black hole. The Dao Palace cultivators around her were heavily injured or dead, and their pained cries prior to their deaths were drowned out by the loud explosions caused by a planet's self-destruction.

Daoist You Ran shuddered. All his efforts were for naught. Anxiety wrecked him, but he dared not speak. The woman standing before him inspired such terror and dread in him.

“Useless.” A stormy-faced Zi Yue threw a glance at Daoist You Ran before frowning and turning her eyes towards Venus. She lifted her right hand and pushed it forward against the waves of self-destructive energy sweeping out from the planet.

The terrifying tsunami seemed to freeze momentarily in its tracks. It was as if there was an invisible wall in front of the woman, and not even the energy backlash from an exploding planet could penetrate this wall.

Zi Yue’s right hand clawed through emptiness and plucked a pouch out of nothing. It was made of black cloth and had a strange floral pattern embroidered on it. Terror snaked through Daoist You Ran when he saw the pouch. He could sense the power exuding from it, a power that seemed even more terrifying than the woman before him.

He wasn’t given any time to guess what was inside the pouch. Zi Yue had pulled it open, her actions seemingly cautious. Then, seven black seeds flew out from the opened pouch. With a series of hand seals, Zi Yue guided them towards the exploding Venus.

They entered Venus almost instantly. The waves of self-destructive energy generated by the planet didn’t seem to cause any harm to the seeds. In fact, the energy was being absorbed by the latter. The seeds exuded a golden light. As they entered Venus, they began to grow, twines extending outward and covering the entire planet... All this while, they continued to drain the explosion of its power, transforming the energy into nutrients for themselves!

Daoist You Ran’s scalp prickled as he watched the scene before him. There were more and more twines. Soon, the entire planet was covered in dozens of layers of the twines. Its appearance had transformed radically. The explosion was being contained, as if sealed, with no outlet for release!

Countless bumps began to appear on the twines. They clustered together and finally covered all surfaces of the twines. The bumps wriggled and spasmed, and many broke apart. From within these bumps climbed out... Never-Ending Clan cultivators!

These cultivators flew into the air and gathered before Zi Yue. Their numbers grew. When all the bumps had burst open, and all cultivators had flown out, Zi Yue had before her an army with a hundred thousand cultivators!

However, it was clear that these Never-Ending Clan cultivators had no minds of their own. They were like puppets!

Daoist You Ran’s head buzzed at the sight. He was shaking violently. This was beyond his wildest imagination, he couldn’t understand what was going on!

“Take them and destroy this civilization. Then... capture and bring me that boy!” Zi Yue commanded calmly.

Daoist You Ran’s face was pale. He instinctively lowered his head and accepted his orders. Then, he began reorganizing the surviving cultivators. With the Never-Ending Clan’s Death Dao Battleship at the helm, he led the army of a hundred thousand puppets away and raced towards Mars!

The patch of cosmos finally quietened down following his departure. Zi Yue was the only person left standing there. Her fingers danced through a series of hand seals, as if running through a simulation.

This went on for some time before she suddenly froze. Then, she shut her eyes and fell silent. It was a long time before she opened them again. She lifted her head and gazed into the distant cosmos.

I can only make out the fact that someone incredibly powerful has changed my fate... I've been steering the lives of others and changing their fates, treating them like ants... this whole time, without my knowledge, someone has also been controlling my life and treating me like... what? An ant? Or is that person trying to use me to nourish Wang Baole's cultivation? Zi Yue shuddered. An icy light glimmered fiercely in her eyes.

The first Divine King?

Chapter 715: The Dark Child Returns!

An icy glint flickered in Zi Yue's eyes. At that exact moment, Daoist You Ran was leading a hundred thousand emotionless puppets and the Dao Palace cultivators who had survived the Venusian blast towards Mars. The surviving Dao Palace cultivators were filled with terror and were reluctant to continue the war. Regardless, they hadn't been given a choice. As they charged for Mars, thousands of teleportation array formations on the planet began to shimmer. They had been set up earlier to coordinate with the Solar System Array Formation's mass teleportation.

Batches of cultivators that had been based on Venus appeared amidst the shimmering light. They were all exhausted and injured to varying degrees.

They were immediately surrounded by Martian cultivators, who had been waiting for their arrival. The Martian cultivators rushed forward to help, leading them away from the teleportation array formations. Thousands of medically trained physicians began attending to the cultivators' injuries.

However, there were simply too many incoming Venusian cultivators, making it difficult for the physicians to attend to all of them immediately. The Martian Colony Governor had foreseen that happening and had arranged another tens of thousands of cultivators to assist the physicians and make the appropriate arrangements.

"Internal injury, three out of five organs injured. Quick, send this fellow Daoist to the medical area immediately!"

"Fellow Daoist, your injuries aren't serious, you've just expended too much spirit energy. Someone bring this fellow Daoist to the chambers to rest and heal!"

"Your spirit shows signs of dissipation. Quick, bring three Soul Recovery Pills here!"

The Martian base continued with the post-battle efforts in a swift and organized manner. Appropriate arrangements were quickly made for the cultivators who had been teleported from Venus to the base. Amongst them were Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao. They all came bearing serious injuries and in a weakened state. They didn't leave to attend to their wounds though. Instead, they stood outside the teleportation array formation, waiting anxiously.

They were waiting for Wang Baole, Duan Muque, and Li Xingwen.

Waiting alongside them were... cultivators from the Divine Armament New City, who were led by Liu Daobin!

The development of the Divine Armament New City had progressed rapidly during the years that Wang Baole had been in the Vast Expanse Dao Palace. The city had grown in size, and the number of cultivators based in the city increased exponentially. Various political entities had their eye on the position of city lord, which had been a source of immense trouble for Wang Baole's followers, whom he had left behind to oversee the city.

Liu Daobin had been pushed to the sidelines and almost driven out of the city. Even though Wang Baole had been diligently proving himself and making contributions to the Federation, that didn't dissuade or prevent the various political entities from having their greedy eyes on the city.

Fortunately, he had the support of the Martian Colony Governor and Li Xingwen. That had helped save his position as city lord.

Then, Wang Baole had risen through the ranks in the Dao Palace. His position as their Grand Supreme Elder had sent the entire Federation into an uproar. It was then that the situation had improved. The various political entities had to play their cards more carefully. They hadn't been concerned about offending Wang Baole at first, as no matter how great his contributions had been to the Federation, he had still been part of the system and had to play by their rules. But as soon as he had become the Grand Supreme Elder, the situation changed. Things weren't so simple anymore.

Liu Daobin and Li Wan'er had released sighs of relief then. They had then gradually asserted their authority. After that, the war had broken out, and Wang Baole had gone missing, but at that point, the various political entities had no longer been interested in wrestling for power. They hadn't lost much power during the period of Wang Baole's absence. Then Wang Baole had reappeared and killed a Soul Conduit realm cultivator. The scenes of his battle prowess had excited the stalwarts in the city. They had been overjoyed.

They had seized the opportunity and wrestled full control over the city. Now, they had brought masses of cultivators from the new city to welcome their city lord!

The Martian Colony Governor wasn't at the teleportation array formation. Instead, she was in the center of the Great Martian Array Formation. She and the upper echelons of the Martian City administration had activated the array formation. They were preparing the planetary defenses for an outbreak of war.

A hundred thousand battleships were already stationed outside Mars, and an even greater number of cultivators were standing in formation, awaiting orders. Upon the Martian Colony Governor's command, all military Dharmic Artifacts on the planet were activated instantly. An atmosphere of battle and violence permeated the planet.

The Martian Colony Governor was different from Duan Muque and Li Xingwen. She might be a female cultivator, but her character was strong and unbending, fierce like a scorching fire. If nothing were to spark that fire, peace would reign. Once ignited, it would burn everything in sight.

Her strategy was different from the Venusian battle strategy. The latter had comprised nine lines of defenses in space. It had been reactive and passive in nature. Her strategy, on the other hand... was to

extract the Martian stellar source and use the Anti-Spirit Bombs in coordination with the Great Martian Array Formation and the Solar System Array Formation. Mars would weaken the Dao Palace in waves and finally force Dao Palace cultivators to land on the planet, where the final battle would take place!

“The Solar System Array Formation’s self-destruct module has been modified. We still lack the necessary access rights. Once we obtain those rights, we can initiate five self-destruct cycles instantly!”

“Preparations for the Great Martian Array Formation have been completed. We can perform three rounds of suppression on the entire surface of the planet at any time!”

“All three hundred and seventy thousand self-destruct areas fully set up and ready for activation anytime!”

Status reports kept arriving in the command center. The Martian Colony Governor seemed calm as she lifted her head and gazed into space. A general from the Martian military stood next to her. He seemed to hesitate before speaking in a hushed voice.

“Governor, regarding the access rights to the Solar System Array Formation... Li Xingwen might not grant them to us. He still wants to keep it as a final line of defense for Federation survivors.”

“That fossil!” the governor said coolly. Her Nascent Soul realm cultivation lent her a greater sense of authority and power.

“A battle in space is to our disadvantage! A battle on land is the only way we can maximize our advantage and optimize our strength in Spirit Science. Besides... if the Federation falls, any survivors will be left to wander space. What’s the point in that? Even if one is to escape with his life, he has nothing but a miserable life living under an alien civilization’s roof ahead of him!”

“Even so, this strategy will result in great numbers of casualties...” The general grimaced.

“Most of us come from an ancient eastern civilization on Earth. They have a saying... only the mad man lives!”

“Casualties are unavoidable. Mars is the Federation’s final line of defense. As long as Mars remains standing, the Federation will survive. If we fall... my entire family of three will fight to the death on the battlefield. Let that be our final show of loyalty to the Federation!”

“I’ll handle Li Xingwen and get the access rights from him... give your orders now!”

The general listened to the governor’s strong and resolute words and fell silent. Then, he took a deep breath, obeyed her instructions, and gave the orders immediately. A thunderous boom rippled across Mars instantly. Everything was in place.

As preparations for battle on Mars were ongoing, things at the teleportation array formation were nearing their end. Duan Muque and Li Xingwen appeared, followed by Feng Qiuran and Li Wuchen. The last to appear was Wang Baole!

He came with the moon though, and the teleportation array formation couldn’t contain both of them. Finally, with the aid of Li Xingwen and Duan Muque, the moon appeared next to Mars in the wake of waves of spirit energy rippling through the cosmos.

The Night Immortal King had fallen back into slumber. As for Wang Baole, he had no time to speak to Zhao Yameng, Liu Daobin, or Li Wan'er, who he shared a special relationship with. He noted their wellbeing, nodded, then immediately bade farewell to Li Xingwen and Duan Muque, after which, he raced towards his city!

He had spoken to Duan Muque and Li Xingwen before leaving.

"President, Grand Elder, please buy me more time. I need to get something... it might be the weapon that will turn the tides of this war!" Having said that, Wang Baole had unleashed his full speed and sped away.

Wang Baole had commandeered the Night Immortal King, fought against Daoist You Ran, and faced the mysterious Zi Yue. He had made the greatest contribution to the battle on Venus. His words held an immeasurable weight to Li Xingwen and Duan Muque, as well as all cultivators who had participated in the Venusian battle.

In addition, Mars was like a second home to Wang Baole. He was the epitome of authority and fame in both the new and old cities alike.

That was why his last words before he had departed quickly spread throughout Mars. When Li Xingwen and Duan Muque arrived at the Martian command center, they had met the Martian Colony Governor and informed her of what Wang Baole had said as well.

That might have been why, after a bout of silence, Li Xingwen gritted his teeth and agreed to the Martian Colony Governor's request to blow up the Solar System Array Formation!

It was then that Wang Baole finally arrived at his Divine Armament New City. He gazed at the city, which was many times larger than when he had left. There was familiarity to be found in the change, and that sparked numerous memories that surfaced in his mind and then quickly faded away. He rubbed his forehead and remembered the scene where Zi Yue's finger had turned to dust.

He didn't know what had happened then, but Little Missy seemed to have truly fallen into a deep sleep this time, so Wang Baole's questions received no reply.

He could only set this matter aside for now and race towards the sacrificial altar in the middle of the new city. That... was the entrance to the cave!

A familiar wave of spirit energy surged out from the depths of the cave as soon as he stepped in. The State Preceptor, the burly man, and the young boy appeared before Wang Baole and greeted him.

"Welcome back, esteemed Dark Child!"

Chapter 716: The Martian Battle Begins!

The State Preceptor looked his usual cunning self and the young boy his creepy self as well. Their translucent forms looked as if they might disappear at any moment.

The burly man's greeting had been the loudest. Out of the three Artifact Souls, he was the most loyal.

They hadn't changed a single bit, while Wang Baole was no longer the same Wang Baole. He had been at the Core Formation realm when he had left them. Now, he had returned with his cultivation at the Nascent Soul realm and his battle capabilities rivaling that of a Soul Conduit realm cultivator. In fact, with the combined forces of his Thearch Armor and his Stellar Nascent Soul, killing an early-stage Soul Conduit realm cultivator was almost a cakewalk for him!

His dark demonic eye was another boost to his power. It brought him closer to the level of a late-stage Soul Conduit realm cultivator. At present, even without the Dark Artifact's explicit acknowledgment of him as their master, he could still easily overpower the three Artifact Souls and make them do his bidding.

That was why he hadn't hesitated when the three souls had greeted him. He summoned the Thearch Armor and unleashed the full extent of his cultivation. An incredible power erupted from his person. The three souls had suspected Wang Baole's actual power earlier, but the sudden display left them dumbstruck.

The expression on the State Preceptor's face shifted. The young boy widened his eyes. The burly man, too, stood rooted to the spot. They had sustained great injuries due to the damage to the Dark Artifact. As a result, they hadn't been able to accurately gauge Wang Baole's level of cultivation. The sudden surge of his cultivation that formed an overwhelming blanket of pressure weighing down on them instantly sent them reeling back.

"Come on, get up. How has the Dark Artifact been during my absence?" Wang Baole stored his Thearch Armor and then asked casually.

As the souls recovered from their initial shock, they hastily replied to Wang Baole. Nothing out of the ordinary had happened while he had been gone. However, due to the lack of materials, repairs of the Dark Artifact had progressed with great difficulty.

Wang Baole nodded. With a wave of his right hand, hordes of materials poured out from his storage bag. There was everything. Perhaps not enough of each material required for the Dark Artifact's repairs, but it was almost there.

Small mountains of materials formed out of the varied types of materials. The Spirit Qi in the air thickened instantly. After Wang Baole pulled out the spirit liquid and stellar source, the Spirit Qi in the air almost transformed into liquid form.

Shock rippled through the three souls again, and their eyes widened. That wasn't the end of it... a greater surprise came in the end!

Wang Baole laid out the items he had gathered on the main Vast Expanse star as well as other planets. The souls grew agitated with excitement when they saw the Supreme Fire Ore that he had gotten in the Mi Luo Forest.

"Supreme Fire Ore!"

"My god, the ore will speed up the repairs. In fact, they're a necessary material for repairing the Dark Artifact, a key component that can't be substituted by any other material!"

“A pity that there’s so little of it...” The souls sighed. Wang Baole seemed unfazed when he heard what the State Preceptor had said. He glanced at the latter, then pulled out another storage bracelet. This time, instead of pulling out materials, he pulled out... dozens of storage bags from the storage bracelet. He opened everything, and countless pieces of Supreme Fire Ore flowed out of the bags, piling into a small mountain next to Wang Baole.

The souls staggered with shock. Before they could say anything, Wang Baole hummed in contemplation, then pulled out two beast corpses!

They were the corpses of the Spirit Immortal realm Star Fang Beasts that he had met during his two days in the Mi Luo Forest. His senior brother had forced them to charge each other, and the collision had injured them fatally. Before they had died, they had even saved Wang Baole the trouble of extracting their beast cores by digging the cores out themselves!

“Apply the Dark Artifact’s power on these two Star Fang Beasts and resurrect their corpses. I have something important for them to do. Also... begin the repairs on the Dark Artifact immediately. You have ten days. Ten days... to restore the Dark Artifact to the state... where I can take it out of this cave and lead it into space for battle!” The firm tone of Wang Baole’s voice allowed no room for disagreement. He knew he hadn’t much time left.

The three souls had clearly been sneaking out during his absence, so they were aware of the war between the Federation and the Dao Palace. The State Preceptor had somehow gotten his hands on a receiver that had allowed them to watch the news being broadcast by the Federation. They had been kept abreast of ongoing events outside the cave and knew the severity of the matter at hand. They dared not play the fool, nodding their heads solemnly and immediately going to work.

Wang Baole watched the souls vanish into thin air. He could sense them hard at work repairing the Dark Artifact. He narrowed his eyes. The former Wang Baole wouldn’t have easily allowed the souls to start repairs. That was despite his master using the Dark Dream Mystic Art to get them to acknowledge him as their master in the Dark Dream. The reason being was that the Dark Artifact had been severely damaged, weakening the souls considerably. The restoration of the Dark Artifact would also naturally lead to the three souls’ recovery.

Nothing might come out of that. Alternatively... he might be consumed by these souls. That had been a source of hesitation when Wang Baole had scavenged for materials.

Things had changed. Wang Baole didn’t have the luxury of time now. He couldn’t wait any longer. In addition, he had become more powerful, which had strengthened his resolve and resulted in his decision to make this gamble. Besides, he had done his calculations. He had gathered plenty of materials, but they were still a long way away from fully restoring the Dark Artifact.

We should be able to restore it to fifty percent of its full functionality... my current level of cultivation should be sufficient to activate another function of the Dark Artifact.

Wang Baole narrowed his eyes and extended his spiritual senses. They enveloped the entire Dark Artifact, extending over the Dark Robe, the Dark Sampan, and both the staff and lantern of the Lantern Oar. He relaxed and allowed his mind to maintain a constant state of fusion with these three Dark Artifacts.

That would speed up the souls' repair of the Dark Artifact. In addition, based on what he remembered from the Dark Dream, Wang Baole knew that he should be able to form an avatar of his own consciousness.

That had been beyond his abilities in the past. Now though, Wang Baole felt it was something he should be capable of achieving.

Amidst Wang Baole's furious formation of hand seals, an illusory figure gradually materialized before him. His eyes were shut, and he looked like the exact twin of Wang Baole. What differentiated them was their attire.

The avatar was dressed in black robes. Beneath his feet was a Dark Sampan, in his hand a Dark Staff, at the end of which hung a Dark Lantern. The avatar wasn't exactly an illusion, yet he wasn't real either. He appeared as if formed from a cloud of black mist that exuded a chilly aura in waves. He was like a messenger of death who had descended upon the living world.

His eyes suddenly opened. Twin ghostly lights flickered in those eyes, making Wang Baole's avatar look inhuman. Wang Baole extended his senses and assessed his avatar's level of fighting capability, then sighed.

Next to none. It's a more convenient way of controlling the Dark Artifact though, at least when compared to using my own true form. Wang Baole fell into a bout of contemplation. Then, his avatar suddenly lifted his right hand and raised his Dark Staff. A vortex suddenly appeared where the two Star Fang Beast corpses had been placed, swallowing the two corpses. Vast Dark Qi suddenly appeared out of nowhere and entered the corpses.

The Dark Artifact will be my go-to weapon. Next, I still have to use the power of the Dark Artifact to refine the two beast corpses into puppets. They will become my second go-to weapon. Determination flashed in Wang Baole's eyes. He steered his avatar into maneuvering the Dark Artifact and began refining the beast corpses.

Puppets were another type of Dharmic treasure, and Wang Baole had a talent that surpassed the ordinary cultivator in this particular area. The experiences he had accumulated in his early years had led to his realization that he had a gift when it came to refining puppets.

During his time as the Grand Supreme Elder in the Dao Palace, he had gone through volumes of Dao Palace records and documents. That had helped him in refining Dharmic Armaments and strengthened his overall mastery of puppets.

Besides puppets, I'll also have to refine and enhance some Dharmic Armaments. With a wave of his hand, Wang Baole summoned a huge black bow. It entered the vortex. His hands came together in a flurry of hand seals as he began the urgent business of refining Dharmic Armaments.

While he was busy with refinement, Mars was also busy preparing for war after the mass teleportation had ended. The Martian Colony Governor's instructions were being carried out dutifully. Time... passed steadily.

Seven days went by. There was an inspection of the Solar System Array Formation, an alarm system was set up across the entire planet, and all Dharmic Artifacts were activated. Then, the Martian Colony

Governor gave the orders. The Dharmic Artifacts unleashed their powers simultaneously, transforming into countless beams of light that blasted into the cosmos beyond Mars.

An enormous vortex appeared in space at that exact moment, and the Never-Ending Clan battleship charged out from within!

The Dharmic Artifacts' attacks landed directly on the battleship, but they barely caused a scratch. As the Dharmic Artifacts disintegrated amidst their self-destructive attacks, a figure appeared on the battleship. It was... Daoist You Ran.

"Wang Baole!" There was a stormy look on Daoist You Ran's face, and murder colored his eyes. His right hand rose, then pointed at Mars. The vast fleet of Dao Palace battleships appeared behind him. The remaining survivors of the Dao Palace and a hundred thousand Never-Ending Clan puppets appeared as well and made a charge towards the planet.

The Martian Colony Governor barked out her orders decisively, without any hesitation!

"Deploy the Solar System Array Formation's first wave of offense!"

Chapter 717: The Only Way Is To Fight!

The Martian planet quaked when the Martian Colony Governor barked out her orders, and a wave of spirit energy appeared out of nowhere. It had the planet as its center as it rippled outward, surging into the surrounding cosmos. It was like a swift hurricane that threatened to sweep away everything in its path.

The Martian Colony Governor's strong and decisive character, as well as the unyielding fire hidden deep in her bones, ensured that the battle on Mars would be completely different from the battles on Venus and Mercury. The dramatic difference had caught Daoist You Ran completely by surprise!

He had been aware of the strange capabilities the Solar System Array Formation possessed since the onset of the invasion. He had tried to think of many ways to circumvent it, but it seemed almost impossible to infiltrate Earth unless he destroyed the key planets supporting the array formation.

That had been the reason for the battle on Venus and the battle now against Mars. He had never expected Mars to unleash the Solar System Array Formation's power in such a manner!

It was equivalent to triggering the self-destruct mechanism for the Solar System Array Formation. The difference was instead of doing it once, the destruction was controlled and released in waves. The force of the explosions wouldn't be as strong, but the array formation wouldn't be rendered completely useless. Regardless... its strength would be weakened. If Daoist You Ran had the luxury of time, he could even attempt to weaken the array formation by sacrificing his troops. Eventually, he would be able to get past Mars, barge through the Solar System Array Formation, and enter Earth.

However, Daoist You Ran was caught in a dilemma. It would've been easier on him if he didn't have Zi Yue's orders. He recalled her explicit instruction to capture Wang Baole alive. Then, he eyed the Never-Ending Clan puppets. After a moment of thought, he gritted his teeth and abandoned the idea of

weakening the Solar System Array Formation. If he did choose to do so, he would also be giving Mars more time to strategize and fight back.

“Attack with everything you’ve got!” An icy glint flashed across his eyes as he barked out his orders. The vast fleet of Dao Palace battleships rushed towards Mars and unleashed their full power. The fleet resembled numerous arrows that had been fired from bows, charging towards the Solar System Array Formation’s first offensive wave and colliding head-on with the former.

Numerous battleships disintegrated instantly in the self-destructive wave erupting from the Solar System Array Formation. The cultivators on board were killed instantly, their bodies turned to dust. Many battleships shook under the shock waves and suffered varying degrees of damage.

The Federation battleships and the Dharmic Artifacts on Mars unleashed their attacks then as well. Their attacks were interspersed with the destructive waves of energy from the array formation, forming an offensive barrier that prevented the Dao Palace from advancing.

However, the first wave of offense eventually weakened as the Dao Palace fleet persisted in its advance. Hordes of Dao Palace battleships approached Mars. An icy glint flashed across the Martian Colony Governor’s eyes then. The second and third offensive waves were activated consecutively!

Explosions thundered in the cosmos surrounding Mars, and spheres of light flashed as Dao Palace battleships blew up. Battleships that survived destruction continued to receive damage. When the fourth offensive wave swept across the cosmos, sixth-tenths of Daoist You Ran’s fleet had been decimated!

Countless cultivators perished. Amongst them were Dao Palace survivors, but a majority were Never-Ending Clan puppets. The battleships suffered great damages as well. Daoist You Ran’s fleet had shrunk considerably when compared to the original numbers he had at the beginning of the invasion.

That might seem like a great achievement, but the Federation had paid a great price for it. The Solar System Array Formation had weakened considerably, its power shaved off. The gates protecting the core of the Federation had thinned, its defenses weakened.

Mars had also lost the ability to make use of the Solar System Array Formation for mass teleportation. Unlike the battle on Venus, it was no longer possible to teleport everyone away simultaneously should there be a need for it. The best that it could do was teleportation by batches. Mars was effectively driving itself into a corner.

It was hard to determine whether they had gained more or lost more in this exchange. However, Li Xingwen and Duan Muque had chosen to support the governor’s decision. They didn’t say anything. Instead, they watched closely as the battle unfolded.

“Battleships, fall back, draw them in. Great Martian Array Formation, be on standby. Martian cultivators, await my orders as well!” The Martian Colony Governor narrowed her eyes as she barked out her orders. The Federation battleships defending Mars in space immediately retreated and ceased fire. Dao Palace battleships immediately rushed through the line of defense and entered the airspace above the Martian City. Dao Palace cultivators and Never-Ending Clan puppets rushed out of the battleships in hordes. Their target, the Martian City!

“Kill everything on the planet and find Wang Baole!” The battleship that Daoist You Ran was aboard emerged in a thunderous explosion in the Martian skies. It was a giant that seemed to block out the entire sky, casting a black shadow over the land.

Inside the Martian City, everyone was currently reeling back with shock. Zhao Yameng and Kong Dao were amongst these cultivators. They stared at the enormous battleship in the air, a dark looming entity that obscured the skies. A kind of madness colored their eyes as they swore they would fight to their last breath.

The remaining survivors of the Dao Palace showed hesitation in response to Daoist You Ran’s orders. In comparison, the mindless Never-Ending Clan puppets accepted the orders without protest. They obediently charged out, murder clear in their eyes, and rushed towards the Martian City beneath them.

The Dao Palace cultivators and Never-Ending Clan puppets descended like a storm, falling from the heavens and approaching their target. It was then that...

“Activate the Great Martian Array Formation’s first wave of suppression!” The Martian Colony Governor made a hand seal promptly. The Great Martian Array Formation shuddered violently and released a wave of suppressive force that swept the skies and hit the approaching army.

There wasn’t much lethal force behind the attack. Instead, it was a mental shock wave that sent many Dao Palace cultivators’ heads buzzing. The entity pulling the strings of the Never-Ending Clan puppets was also affected and momentarily rendered motionless.

“We fight now!” As the array formation’s shock wave rippled across the battlefield, the Martian Colony Governor’s declaration thundered in the air. Masses of Federation cultivators charged out, roaring, and Federation battleships appeared in the air, providing aerial support. They seized the momentary pause in the enemy troops’ charge and began... their counterattack!

Casualties on both sides spiked instantly. The figures were alarming. Blood rained down from the skies without ceasing. Broken limbs plunged to the ground. Screams of terror and pain pierced the air. Suicidal self-destruction boomed. Anti-Spirit Bombs exploded while Never-Ending Clan puppets fought fearlessly. Scenes of death and violence repeated themselves on the Martian battlefield.

A battle on land did result in Daoist You Ran and his army’s loss of the aerial advantage. In addition, the waves of suppression unleashed by the Great Martian Array Formation boosted the Federation cultivators’ offensive attacks. Regardless, the difference in power separating the two sides remained. Mie Liezi and two other Soul Conduit realm cultivators decided to join the battle. Daoist You Ran, who had been using the Death Dao Battleship to search for Wang Baole, chose to divide his attention between the search and the battle. Under his command, the Death Dao Battleship unleashed countless runes, which transformed into pillars of light that crashed into the Martian City. Even with the array formation’s defenses, Mars was still at the losing end of the battle!

Half of the city was destroyed in an instant, and black flames spread fiercely and rapidly across the planet, refining both cultivators caught in the fires and the planet itself. Of course, Mars was still fighting back fiercely and holding its ground. Its cultivators had sworn to fight to their last breath. Spirit Science genius Zhao Pinfang’s preparation for the battle had paid off. The Martian retaliation against its enemies was fearsome and terrifying to behold.

Seventeen Stellar Source Spirit Cannons, fueled by the Martian stellar source, were raised above the ground and fired simultaneously. Beams of light blasted into the sky, shocking even Daoist You Ran with their power.

Next came the Anti-Spirit Bombs, a weapon the Dao Palace was intimately familiar with. Amongst these bombs were those with an explosive force as powerful as an attack from a Nascent Soul realm cultivator. Their purpose wasn't to kill, it was... to create chaos and effectively lock down the entire battlefield, preventing Nascent Soul realm enemy cultivators from teleporting!

The Federation had few Nascent Soul realm cultivators. It suffered little in comparison to the enemy if both sides were to lose the ability to teleport. This would be to the Federation's advantage!

Then came the more powerful Anti-Spirit Bombs. They were each as powerful as an attack from a Soul Conduit realm cultivator but were fewer in numbers. Their terrifying power meant their greater importance in the battle. Finally, Zhao Pinfang also had a trump card ready for the Martian battle!

That was... an artificial cosmological entity that resembled a Dyson Sphere!

Countless Dharmic Artifacts rose into the air and surrounded the planet, transforming into an enormous Dyson Sphere. Its function wasn't to drain the planet of its power. Instead... it sucked the waves of spirit energy and Spirit Qi on the battlefield, serving as an offensive weapon while... creating a sealed environment on the battlefield!

It was a barricade around Mars that stopped the flow of Spirit Qi on the planet and prevented any inflow of Spirit Qi!

The Federation had shown all its trump cards in this battle. This was the fiercest counterattack that it was mounting. They still weren't a match for the enemy, but they had effectively dragged out the battle. The seal that prevented any inflow of Spirit Qi to support cultivators' use of mystic techniques meant that firearms came in useful in this battle. That was a further disadvantage to the Dao Palace. The situation worsened as time passed!

Nevertheless, this was a universe ruled by cultivation. The unparalleled significance of individual power was proven as a furious Daoist You Ran abandoned his search for Wang Baole and chose to join the battle. He crushed the Dyson Sphere around the planet effortlessly.

I refuse to believe that you can still manage to escape if I destroy this entire planet, Wang Baole! A murderous glint flashed in Daoist You Ran's eyes. He was ready to unleash his full power and annihilate the planet. It was then that Wang Baole's avatar, hiding deep underground in the belly of the Dark Artifact, lifted his head abruptly. There was a solemn look on the avatar's face.

The repairs of the Dark Artifact weren't complete, but the ninth-grade bow had been fully restored, and the two Star Fang Beast corpses had been successfully refined. The corpses couldn't compare to their living Spirit Immortal realm selves, but they were still at the Soul Conduit realm.

The only way to gain more time to repair the Dark Artifact is to fight! Wang Baole's avatar narrowed his eyes, and a ghostly light erupted from his form. His right hand made a grab through the air, causing the bow to come flying towards him. The two beast corpses opened their eyes and released twin howls.

With Wang Baole in the lead, they made their way through the Dark Artifact and emerged above ground!

Chapter 718: I'm Not Going to Repair It Anymore!

Daoist You Ran hovered in midair, about to attack. He lifted his head the exact moment Wang Baole's avatar dashed out from the cave. Daoist You Ran stared in the direction of the Divine Armament New City. With his level of cultivation, he could easily sense the familiar presence emerging from underground.

"Wang Baole!" Daoist You Ran narrowed his eyes. He hadn't found any traces of Wang Baole earlier, no matter how hard he had searched. He concluded that there must be something hidden on this planet that he was unaware of.

"So what... it doesn't matter at all!" An icy glint flashed in Daoist You Ran's eyes. The scene of Zi Yue planting vines on Venus with a wave of her hand and bringing to life a hundred thousand Never-Ending Clan puppets surfaced in his mind. It was an indelible image, seared deep into his brain. He concluded that she was at least at the Planet realm. At that thought, he sneered, then turned and headed for the city!

As Daoist You Ran raced towards the city, Wang Baole's avatar appeared in midair above the city. However, because his level of cultivation wasn't high enough, he was unable to let his Dark Sampan, his Dark Robe, and his Lantern Oar materialize. In addition, his avatar appeared translucent.

His avatar's battle capabilities weren't on par with those of his true form, which was why Wang Baole wasn't in favor of engaging in battle now if he could help it. He had no choice though. As soon as his avatar appeared above the city, he immediately sensed an overpowering presence rushing towards him from the main Martian City. An icy glint flashed in Wang Baole's eyes.

He didn't hesitate and lifted the enormous black bow in his left hand while his right hand pulled the bowstring back, transforming the shape of the bow into the shape of a full moon. He pointed the bow towards the presence charging at him, then released the bowstring abruptly.

The air around him trembled and splintered in multiple spots. A dazzling light gathered around the bow and, with the release of the bowstring, shot forward. It transformed into a spear that sped into the distance, its blade so sharp it seemed capable of ripping through everything in its path!

The power exuding from the spear was incredible, stirring both the heavens and the earth. It was as if anything that stood in its path would be destroyed instantly, without any fighting chance!

All cultivators in the Divine Armament New City were dumbstruck. However, this wasn't the end of the avatar's preemptive attack!

His eyes flashed as he pulled the bowstring again and released eleven shots at one go!

Explosions like thunder erupted without pause, and cracks began to appear in the space around him. His surrounding sky appeared on the verge of complete collapse. The black bow's power was so great that the heavens themselves couldn't withstand it!

That wasn't far from the truth. The black bow was a ninth-grade Dharmic Artifact. Even though it was damaged when Wang Baole had found it, its power had been restored almost completely after he had repaired it. Wang Baole had added some stellar source as well as Supreme Fire Ore during the repairs. He had also involved his Dark Artifact during the restoration process. The result had been a rebuilding of the original artifact that had made it even more powerful than before!

The black bow's power was enhanced to its full potential. In fact, it might have surpassed its original potential... in addition, Wang Baole wasn't using it in the conventional way. He was sacrificing long-term functionality, gaining maximum destruction from the bow without considering the damage done to the artifact. The destructive power the bow unleashed was beyond what it should have been capable of. Eleven shots... was its limit!

As soon as the eleventh spear shot out from the bow, the artifact turned to dust in Wang Baole's hand.

Eleven arcs of rainbow sped forward like lightning bolts, merging into a dazzling sea of lights. Seemingly locked on to a single target, they surged forward, tearing through the air. They were thundering and filled with violence and power as they continued to race through the heavens and head for... their target, who was similarly racing at extreme, unbelievable speeds and rapidly approaching the city— Daoist You Ran!

The eleven spears made of blinding light appeared before Daoist You Ran instantly. The latter narrowed his eyes, raised his right hand, and flung it forward. A sealed rune appeared before him, growing in size until it spanned a thousand feet long. The seal rushed forward and collided with the eleven spears.

A deafening eruption immediately exploded in the region. The spears' attack seemed to have been stopped. However, waves of black smoke soon began to exude from the spears. They ate away at the seal, intent on consuming the seal and escaping.

Daoist You Ran frowned slightly. He could sense something hidden beneath the power of these eleven spears. It was an aura that struck terror into his heart instinctively.

He couldn't pin down the exact nature of this aura, there was no time for him to do anything like that. He teleported instantly, stepped out of the spears' attack range, and headed for Wang Baole!

"Is that an avatar? That means that your true form should be in the vicinity as well!" Daoist You Ran's voice was laced with ice and hate. As his words echoed in the air, he charged forward, his form a blur as he approached Wang Baole!

Wang Baole's avatar retreated hastily, his hands forming a flurry of hand seals. A beast corpse appeared on either side of him instantly. The eyes of the beast on the right suddenly glowed bright red, and its jaw fell open as it let loose a furious roar. The beast charged forward and lunged at Daoist You Ran!

Green flames enveloped the Star Fang Beast puppet as it dashed out. It was a fire that was different from what the beast would have given off when it had still been alive, and different from the Dark Fire as well. It appeared to be a fire that was born out of the two, one that resembled both and yet neither. Regardless, there was no doubt of its power. The beast transformed into a great sphere of fire as it lunged at its target!

The same happened to the Star Fang Beast puppet on Wang Baole's left. Both Star Fang Beast puppets charged at Daoist You Ran, cornering him from both sides. The collision was almost immediate, and the air boomed with deafening thunder. The joint attack of the twin Star Fang Beast puppets was trouble even for Daoist You Ran. He frowned. The beasts had been at the Spirit Immortal realm prior to their deaths. That meant that their physical forms would be extremely strong and a force to be reckoned with.

That wasn't the only thing that Daoist You Ran had to be wary of. He could avoid their physical attacks by teleportation and continue his pursuit of Wang Baole. However, just as he raised his right hand in a wave and was about to teleport himself away, Wang Baole suddenly formed a hand seal. The two beasts roared, and green flames surged from their bodies. They appeared to be using their own bodies as fuel. The flames transformed into a sea of fire that spread out and enveloped the area!

Two spheres of fire merged together, forming an ocean that enveloped the entire region. It sealed the area and prevented one from teleporting!

Everything happened within an instant. As the flames surged from the beasts' bodies, light flashed across the eyes of Wang Baole's avatar as his eyes formed a series of hand seals. Black flames erupted from his body, fanning outwards and, together with the sea of green fire, trapped Daoist You Ran within!

That wasn't the end of it. As the flames enveloped Daoist You Ran, a low, booming voice thundered, igniting another round of transformation in the sea of fire!

"Seal!"

With that single booming command, the eleven spears, which had been held back by the seal, suddenly released a dazzling light. They pierced the seal, swung in the opposite direction in a swift arc, and unleashed a burst of sudden speed. They appeared almost instantly around Daoist You Ran, hovering beyond the flames, spread out in a circle around him. Then, like spears skewering a caged basket, they descended into the sea of fire, their simultaneous attacks unleashing a thunderous eruption in the sea!

This was all part of Wang Baole's plan. He knew that his avatar wasn't Daoist You Ran's match. That was why he had only one aim from the start of this battle. It involved sacrificing his avatar so that he could seal Daoist You Ran and buy himself more time!

The eleven spears landed, then began spinning furiously, releasing their full power and transforming that into a suppressive force that sent the sea of fire boiling. The sea of fire reached unbelievable temperatures. The surrounding air began to distort, like living creatures contorting in pain as they were burned in the extreme heat!

Wang Baole had planned everything meticulously, and his plan had unfolded smoothly. Too easily. Wang Baole was surprised by the turn of events. His gut told him that something was wrong.

It was then that an enormous arm shot out from the sea of fire and grabbed one of the spears. Covering the arm were countless faces devoid of emotion. It was a terrifying sight to behold. The arm yanked fiercely and shattered the spear!

The spear's destruction thundered in the air, and terrifying laughter emerged from the flames. Another arm, as well as an enormous head, rose from the fire!

It both looked like Daoist You Ran and looked nothing like Daoist You Ran. The two heads and four arms that had been destroyed by the Night Immortal King were fully healed and even appeared stronger than before. Countless faces covered the surface of his arms and heads!

"I knew you would be up to your tricks again. That's why I sacrificed ten thousand Never-Ending Clan puppets before I arrived on this planet. The sacrifice healed my body and brought me to the peak of my physical condition. In fact, it made me stronger than before. I now contain the vitality of ten thousand souls. How... are you going to defeat me now?" Daoist You Ran's voice was filled with triumph as it thundered in the heavens. He dashed out, and in an instant, the spears surrounding him shattered. Waves of fire surged outward and exposed his fearsome form!

At that exact moment, Wang Baole, who was still sitting within the Dark Artifact, finally opened his eyes. They were bright with determination.

"Since there's no time to repair it fully... let's just not do it then!"

Chapter 719: The Birth of the Dark Artifact!

Wang Baole got to his feet as he said that. With a single leap, he entered the abyss and vanished. Outside, the heavens and earth were shifting. Winds howled, and clouds rolled back. Wang Baole appeared in midair, above the Divine Armament New City!

He hadn't summoned his Thearch Armor or his demonic eye, nor did he unleash any of his mystic techniques. He simply floated in the air, a calm expression on his face, the only difference being... the black flames burning in his eyes!

Daoist You Ran, who had freed himself from the earlier dangerous situation, absorbed the flesh and blood of numerous Never-Ending Clan puppets, regained his full strength and received an additional great boost to his power, reeled back in shock at the sight of the black flames!

The feeling that Wang Baole was giving him was extremely strange. He had no Thearch Armor on him, no demonic eye hovering at his back, and his cultivation was clearly only at the Nascent Soul realm; however... as he stood there, black fire lighting up his eyes, he still managed to feel extremely dangerous. Daoist You Ran's blood curled. His body was screaming. It trembled and told him that there was no way... he could defeat this person!

Without Daoist You Ran's support, both sides became more evenly matched on the ground. Mars' preparations and fierce retaliation was one reason. The other was the sudden shift of alliance of one faction of Dao Palace cultivators to the Martian side. Led by Dugu Lin, they joined forces with the Federation cultivators and began targeting Never-Ending Clan puppets.

Their sudden aid and the slogan they began to shout affected many more Dao Palace cultivators. Tired of the battle, they began to doubt their actions. Feng Qiuran's appearance and subsequent commands intensified their indecision... the invading Dao Palace cultivators might not choose to change their alliance, but they began to retreat from battle subconsciously, choosing to stay out of this war.

The upper echelons of the Federation, including the Martian Colony Governor, Li Xingwen, and Duan Muque, continued to observe the fierce battle through the Great Martian Array Formation. They also saw... another battle unfold in midair above the Divine Armament New City!

They saw Wang Baole's avatar clash with Daoist You Ran, how the avatar's efforts went to waste when Daoist You Ran freed himself and revealed himself to be more powerful than before, and they saw the moment... when Wang Baole's true form appeared!

It was as if the key fight in the Martian battle had changed with Wang Baole's appearance. The fight between him and Daoist You Ran became the most important fight. Li Xingwen, Duan Muque, and the Martian Colony Governor observed everything through the Great Martian Array Formation. It was then... that Daoist You Ran struck!

The strange feeling he was getting from Wang Baole and the terror rising within him made him antsy. He couldn't wait any longer. Murderous intent filled his eyes, and he raced towards Wang Baole, an unstoppable force of nature, all the faces on his body roaring as he charged. The power he exuded rose to the heavens, surpassing that of a Soul Conduit realm cultivator at that moment.

He was like a tsunami rushing at a lone raft. He was going to pull Wang Baole under and destroy the latter in both body and soul!

As Daoist You Ran charged towards Wang Baole, Dark Fire flickered in Wang Baole's eyes. He appeared unfazed as he lifted his right hand and pointed towards the ground.

"Dark Sampan, resume your position!"

The earth thundered. Columns of black smoke burst out from underground all around Wang Baole and rose to the skies. They headed for the edge of heaven, rising upwards continuously.

These columns of smoke exuded incredible power. Their sudden eruption enveloped Wang Baole and his surroundings in smoke. It was a sudden barricade that stopped Daoist You Ran outside. Alarm flashed across Daoist You Ran's face, but before he could figure out what had happened, something made him lower his head suddenly and stare at the ground.

The Martian lands shook. Those with a sufficient level of cultivation, who could extend their spiritual senses while ignoring the power exuded from the Dark Artifact, were able to distinctly see what was underground. Buried deep under the Divine Armament New City was an enormous artifact!

It was shaped like a sampan. It appeared to be old and damaged, but its overall shape had been preserved. A closer examination might even allow one to sense how very old the sampan was. Above everything else, it exuded an indescribable power.

The sampan shuddered and triggered quakes under the city and the vast surrounding lands. Columns of smoke continued to erupt from the ground and rise to the heavens, their numbers continuing to increase.

It appeared as if... the Dark Sampan intended to break through the earth and emerge above ground. It was as if it wanted to return to the cosmos!

“That’s...” Daoist You Ran couldn’t see what was happening underground, but he could sense something. It caused his heart to race, and incredulity colored his eyes. It was then... that the ground erupted as if struck by a bolt of lightning. A deafening explosion resonated in the air.

The lands around the Divine Armament New City collapsed. The Dark Sampan dismantled itself and transformed into a thick Dark Qi that rose to the heavens like a sea of black smoke. It surged towards Wang Baole and quickly gathered beneath his feet. In an instant, the smoke transformed into... a black sampan!

It was... one of the three Dharmic Treasures that never left a Dark Child’s side... the Dark Sampan!

Its appearance sent the heavens and earth trembling and Mars shaking. The cosmos rippled. Waves of spirit energy erupted and surged outwards as an immense power rose in the air. Even someone as powerful as Daoist You Ran was alarmed. He howled as he tried his best to hold his ground, but the overpowering presence of the Dark Sampan drove him back.

The power exuded from the Dark Sampan was like a physical force that could squash and kill all living creatures!

It didn’t matter if one didn’t see the descent of the Dark Sampan, every cultivator on Mars reeled from its overpowering presence. It affected cultivators from the Federation as well as Dao Palace cultivators who had chosen not to participate in the battle!

Even the Never-Ending Clan puppets were trembling. They seemed to sense a force weighing down on them and began to display erratic behavior, signs that control over these puppets was waning. Mie Liezi and the other Soul Conduit realm cultivators were similarly affected. The hex that Daoist You Ran had placed over Mie Liezi had shown signs of weakening and instability when the Dark Sampan had appeared. At that precise moment, a hint of clarity had reappeared in his eyes!

The ones who were most affected were those who were watching everything through the Great Martian Array Formation, people like the Martian Colony Governor. Li Xingwen had immediately recognized the Dark Sampan when it had appeared... it was the Martian Divine Armament of mysterious origins!

“I knew it! He had it all along!” Joy and excitement flashed in Li Xingwen’s eyes. This was the first time in the entire war that he had glimpsed hope!

Duan Muque, Li Xingwen, and the Martian Colony Governor were all equally excited. Of course, they immediately guessed that the sampan was the Martian Divine Armament, but there was someone standing next to them who gasped in shock at that exact moment.

“The sampan of the Dark Sect!” The person who exclaimed that was... the greatest contributor to the advancement of Spirit Science in the Federation, a researcher in matters concerning the Dark Sect— Zhao Pinfang!

There wasn’t time to question Zhao Pinfang further on his unexpected words. Li Xingwen and Duan Muque eyed each other and came to an immediate decision. Li Xingwen formed a series of hand seals without hesitation. He activated the Solar System Array Formation, which was currently struggling to keep itself going, connected the visuals captured through the Great Martian Array Formation, and broadcast the battle to the entire Federation!

The Federation needed to stare death in the face. It needed a hero. Above all else, it needed hope!

At this present moment, Wang Baole was the hero. He was their hope. He was fighting for the Federation and for their civilization!

No matter the outcome of this battle, be it victory or defeat... this was a battle everyone had to be aware of. It was something they had to bear witness to with their own eyes!

That was why, in the next instant, every screen on Earth, Mars, and everywhere else within the Solar System—anywhere with Federation cultivators—began to broadcast the battle!

Countless screens in countless homes across the entire Federation were turned on. Be it in their homes or outside on the streets, inside and outside each building, every Federation citizen was watching!

Gasps of shock erupted all across the Federation as Li Xingwen's solemn voice boomed from the screens and across the Federation.

"He is a senator of the Federation Senate, the city lord of the Divine Armament New City, the Grand Supreme Elder of the Vast Expanse Dao Palace, the commander of the moon, and the most powerful cultivator in the Federation!

"His name is... Wang Baole!

"This battle will determine the fate of the Federation and our civilization!"

There was a brief moment of deathly silence. Then, the entire Federation erupted into a cacophony of gasps and shouts. Countless people dashed out of their houses. Countless others lifted their heads and stared at the screens overhead. Countless were struck by alarm and shock. Countless became filled with anxiety and fear...

The entire Federation, the entire world, gathered like they had never done before, in the streets and alleys... this moment in time belonged to Wang Baole!

His parents, his past teachers, his friends, including Du Min and Bunny, his junior brothers and sisters from the Ethereal Dao College—they were all scattered across the Federation at that moment. They were all affected in their own ways as they gazed at Mars!

"Baole!"

"Senior Brother Baole!"

"Fatty..."

"Brother Baole..."

All eyes across the Federation watched. In midair over the Divine Armament New City, atop the Dark Sampan and surrounded by Dark Qi, Wang Baole, who was driving Daoist You Ran into a continual retreat, stood like an entity divorced from this world. He was straddling yin and yang as well as life and death... the Dark Fire flared in his eyes once more. The expression on his face was calm as he raised his right hand and pointed at the land!

"Dark Robe, resume your position!"

Chapter 720: The Advent of the Dark Child!

All eyes were on him!

Standing atop the Dark Sampan, Wang Baole's expression appeared calm. The black flames in his eyes seemed to possess the power to burn everything that existed between this heaven and earth. It appeared to have the power to cleanse the world. Standing atop the Dark Sampan, Wang Baole appeared an overpowering presence, overwhelming everyone's senses, including Daoist You Ran's!

The overwhelming aura that had descended with the Dark Sampan's arrival had sent Daoist You Ran reeling back in alarm. He had retreated instinctively, and his retreat had been witnessed by the entire Federation. That had made the impact of Wang Baole's second utterance even greater!

The lands shook with an intensity that surpassed the first round of quakes. Multiple collapses occurred. Craters were born. The land groaned and thundered. Muffled howls seemed to rise from deep underground, creatures threatening to defy the laws of nature and emerge from the earth!

A greater wave of Dark Qi surged upwards, pouring out of the cracks in the ground, escaping from deep crevices and rising into the air!

They transformed into columns of black smoke, darkening the air around Wang Baole and racing straight for the heavens!

Deafening thunders resonated in the air, and the skies were transformed as winds whipped fiercely and clouds rolled back!

Tall pillars formed of black-colored smoke connected the land to the edge of the sky. It was like the coming of the end times, the advent of a world-ending apocalypse. Daoist You Ran was dumbstruck. His shock intensified as the overwhelming power weighing down on him strengthened!

The heavens continued to be assaulted relentlessly by the columns of black smoke. The swirl of dark and light resembled when the world was first created. An enormous vortex appeared in the sky; it spun rapidly, thundering as it spun, the sounds traveling far into the distance. The black smoke spread outwards and blanketed the entire sky!

Wang Baole's presence loomed like a giant. His right hand, which was pointed towards the land, lifted gradually, towards the vast black vortex spinning in the sky, and pressed upwards.

Lightning gathered and struck the earth in a series of loud explosions. The black vortex in the sky suddenly descended and raced towards Wang Baole, enveloping him. No one could see what was going on inside. Then, it shrank rapidly, and in the next moment, Wang Baole reappeared before everyone again. The black vortex had shrunk and transformed into a black robe that covered him from head to toe!

Feet planted on the Dark Sampan and dressed in a Dark Robe, Wang Baole's new appearance threw everyone into shock. Those with more acute spiritual senses instinctively felt a sense of rising awe. It was as if they were staring the god of death in the face!

It was... an instinct that all living creatures shared, one that arose from their natural fear of death!

The overpowering aura exuded from Wang Baole increased exponentially with the appearance of the Dark Robe. Blood seeped from Daoist You Ran's lips. He knew he was sliding into a dangerous situation. However, no matter how hard he struggled, no matter how much he wanted to fight back, it was useless.

"Nothing but cheap tricks! Wang Baole, who are you exactly?" Daoist You Ran trembled as he roared at Wang Baole. The answer was slowly making itself known to him, but he dared not believe it. It was utterly ridiculous.

No, I can't scare myself like that. This... doesn't look like what the records described. It's missing another...

Before he could complete his own thought in his head, alarm flashed across his face as he continued to draw back. He heard Wang Baole's... next words!

"Lantern Oar... resume your position!"

Wang Baole, dressed in his Dark Robe and standing on the Dark Sampan, allowed his right hand to fall. As he spoke, the entire planet shuddered violently. Shrieks coming from deep beneath the ground emerged above ground and pierced the air. It was as if they had been silenced for an eternity and, after having waited for so long, were finally given release. The result was a full-blown aural eruption!

Dark Qi rose from underground in waves greater than before, thundering in the skies. They didn't head for the space beneath Wang Baole's feet, nor did they transform into a vortex in the heavens. Instead... they rushed before Wang Baole and hovered an arm's length away from him!

An ocean's worth of black smoke suddenly gathered before Wang Baole, growing in volume. Materializing first was a handle that extended and grew in length as the smoke solidified. Finally, it transformed fully into an oar!

That wasn't the end of it. The transformation continued, and a chain appeared at the tip of the oar. From the end of the chain... hung a Dark Lantern giving off a black light!

The overwhelming power in the air intensified, and Daoist You Ran lost all capacity for thought!

Wang Baole, whose face was partially covered by the Black Robe and whose expression was hidden from others, raised his right hand. His fingers tightened around the Lantern Oar in front of him!

With a sweep of his right arm, the Lantern Oar flipped from its horizontal state to an upright standing position. He placed the Lantern Oar on his right. The tip touched the Dark Sampan, knocking loudly against the latter upon contact!

It was a clear, bright sound that thundered across the skies and sent the ground quaking. The world resonated with it, Mars shook, and a ripple surged through the cosmos. An imperceptible, near-inaudible song-like murmur traversed the vast expanse of time and sent ripples across the universe. It spread across the entire Federation through the screens.

It was a shocking sight to behold!

The sound of collision between Lantern Oar and Dark Sampan, the echoes of a song reverberating in space, they were like the chiming of bells that stirred something in the hearts of everyone in the

civilization. They echoed in their heads, and in Daoist You Ran's head. He spat out another mouthful of blood and fell further back instantly. His guesses had turned into reality, everything had fallen into place. Waves of emotions surged inside him, and he was drowning in incredulity and disbelief, his mind on the verge of a mental breakdown. He gasped.

"Dark Child!"

Daoist You Ran's voice was filled with disbelief, which was, in turn, overshadowed by intense horror. He had clearly read about the Dark Sect in the many volumes of records in the Never-Ending Clan. The Dark Sect had existed a long time ago, and while it had existed, it had been empowered by the Heavenly Dao and been an extremely terrifying force. His reading of the records had seared that knowledge deeply into his mind!

Feng Qiuran was shocked as well, and her body trembled. Zhao Yameng and her father, Zhao Pinfang, experienced the same emotions!

Another person who was reeling back with equal shock, who was currently concealed in the abyss... was Zi Yue!

It was all because... of Wang Baole's current appearance. His Black Robe, his Dark Sampan and Lantern Oar, and the black flames that continued to surge from his person. He looked like the very personification of death!

Wang Baole's reaction towards Daoist You Ran's horror and shock was unexpectedly bizarre. He didn't strike immediately. Instead, he lifted his head and stared through his black robes, towards... the stars!

Only half of his face could be seen, his eyes were hidden from the others. No one knew what he was looking at.

"So, it's Pluto..." He shut his eyes as he murmured secretly. A sudden feeling had struck him the moment his hand had tightened around the Lantern Oar and his Dark Artifacts had resumed their rightful positions. He seemed to have lost all capacity for emotions—joy, anger, sorrow. He felt nothing for life and nothing against death.

The emptiness was terrifying and incredibly easy for one to get lost in. It was akin to a small raft being lost in a vast ocean and led adrift by the currents. Fortunately... at that critical moment, something had come rippling across space from Pluto. It had been something akin to a lighthouse, or perhaps an anchor. It had grounded him and guided him towards the light.

"It's like a summon..." Wang Baole muttered to himself. He wouldn't have sensed the summoning under ordinary circumstances. It was a feeling he could only perceive the moment the Dark Artifact was born, as he was fitted with the Dark Robe, his hand gripped around the Lantern Oar, and his feet planted firmly on the Dark Sampan!

Something seemed to be hidden on Pluto, something very important. It felt very old, very ancient, as if it had existed for a very long time.

Wang Baole was silent for a brief moment. Then, he took a deep breath and retracted his gaze. His eyes landed on Daoist You Ran, who was still recovering from shock and was frantically trying to draw back

from Wang Baole. Wang Baole's eyes narrowed slowly. His right hand, which was holding the Lantern Oar, slowly raised upward, then dropped while pointing towards Daoist You Ran!

"Soul, come!"

Daoist You Ran immediately released a terrifying howl. The sudden intense sense of danger pushed all other thoughts out of his head. The faces on his body exploded at the same time, transforming into a terrifying power that permeated the air. His hands moved in a blur, going through a flurry of hand seals as he unleashed every mystic technique he had up his sleeves. He was burning his very life in exchange for great power. It wasn't to fight back but to... escape!

His self-preservation instincts told him that he shouldn't fight, they told him that he should run!

But... there was no use in trying!

As Wang Baole's voice rippled through the air, the face of the burly man appeared over the Dark Sampan, the face of the State Preceptor appeared on his Dark Robe, and the silhouette of the young boy slipped out from the Dark Lantern. The three souls turned towards Daoist You Ran and began to sing!

"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..."