

# A World Worth Protecting

## Chapter 4: Ethereal Dao College

While Wang Baole had fainted out of anger and sadness, the red hot-air cruiser in the real world continued crossing the sky rapidly. It was quickly approaching Ethereal City's protectorate.

Chaos ensued in the main hull of the vessel.

"The Alchemy faculty wants Wang Baole!"

"Don't even think about snatching him from my Combat faculty. He's mine!"

Nearly all the teachers were flushed with excitement. They would bang the table at times while arguing incessantly about which faculty Wang Baole would join after he entered the Dao College.

All of this stemmed from Wang Baole's self-sacrifice. The shock he had left with them was just too great. His bloody, mangled body had moved all of them. Plus, the words he had said were like bolts of lightning that shook their very core, especially his last sentence. It had made their hearts palpitate intensely.

"I live and die as part of Ethereal Dao College!"

This sentence effused bravery and loyalty. He was the kind of student that every faculty in the Dao College yearned for; therefore, how could they concede him to the others?

As the debate continued, a thin, middle-aged teacher with a goatee took out a jade card with reddened eyes when he realized that he was unable to recruit Wang Baole on his own.

He injected his spirit powers into it and roared, "My Dharmic Armament faculty uses its mandate that can only be used once every five years.

We mandate that Wang Baole is to be a specially-recruited student of the Dharmic Armament faculty. None of you will snatch him from me!”

The moment he said those words, the jade card in his hands shimmered immediately. Instantly, the back of the crystal with Wang Baole’s name on it had the additional words ‘Dharmic Armament faculty’ on it.

This scene alarmed everyone. The mandate was just too precious. Typically, teachers would monitor the students after their matriculation before approving their enrollment into their respective faculties. Only a select few would be offered an olive branch by the faculty members.

Regardless, it was a choice that went both ways except... every faculty had one mandate that they could use once every five years. It could be used to mandate that a particular student would become a member of their faculty. Furthermore, it came with extravagant treatment and resources. The student would also gain special privileges that far exceeded their peers. It was like handing an important position to the student.

As a result of these perks, such a mandate was typically given to students with special backgrounds or those who excelled flawlessly. It was extremely precious.

Although Wang Baole was excellent, the others had hesitated to use their mandates on him. They could not help but shake their heads with a wry smile.

Upon seeing his colleagues’ expressions, Goatee felt that he had made the right decision. He believed that with Wang Baole’s character, his loyalty to the Dharmic Armament faculty would definitely be one of committed devotion after they nurtured him properly.

No matter how talented one was, it was still possible for them to commit acts of betrayal. The only ones who could not be bought with money were those with a righteous character and absolute loyalty. Only such disciples would step forward bravely at critical moments, making them worth every cent spent nurturing them! Goatee immediately became

contented when he thought of this. He looked at the still-frowning old physician, who was staring at Wang Baole's information in deep thought.

"Chancellor, our Dharmic Armament faculty has mandated that Wang Baole is ours. You have to be impartial about this."

The old physician lowered his head and continued reading the dossier record as he spoke nonchalantly. "Don't worry. He is yours, but I hope you do not regret it."

The Ethereal Dao College had detailed information about every matriculated student starting from when they were young. There was a subtle keenness in his eyes as he said those words while reading the information.

"Chancellor, you..." Goatee was taken aback when he heard that. The other teachers were perplexed as well.

"He once attempted to lose weight for a month. He fasted and exercised vigorously, but not only did his weight not decrease, it increased. Such an impossible situation that does not happen to ordinary people happened to him." The old physician sneered. He then flipped through the physical characteristics of every student in the Hallucination Nexus. His eyes landed on Wang Baole's weight changes after the test began.

The old physician raised his head and said firmly, "If I'm not wrong, this Wang Baole has known for a while now that it is a virtual world. He knew that it was an exam and was cheating!"

"That's impossible!" Goatee drew a gasp as he held his chest. He felt faint.

"We will know if he's been cheating by testing him." The old physician looked at Wang Baole through the crystal screen. His right hand rose to control the nexus as it suddenly stirred.

In the Hallucination Nexus, the students had just survived the calamity, but before they could rejoice, they suddenly heard an earth-shaking roar from the forest in front of them. It swept toward them like a storm.

Towering trees were destroyed from the sound waves and were blasted apart. The ground also quaked as a huge bear about a hundred feet tall crawled up from the ground and roared.

Most of its body appeared to be rotting, but its eyes had a ghostly fire, as though it had an undying body. It effused a suppressive might that left everyone trembling to the core. It was the overlord of the woods; its presence caused the woodland animals and birds to tremble in fear.

“That’s... that’s impossible. Heavens, that is an... Ancient Boor Specter Bear!”

“It’s... an Ancient Boor Specter Bear, a powerful being whose strength is equal to the perfected Ancient Martial realm, capable of tearing apart an expert at the second level of the Ancient Martial realm!”

Liu Daobin instantly turned limp, and Bunny, Du Min, and the rest revealed looks of extreme horror. Even the red-dressed youth had a drastic change in expression.

Most terrifying of all, the Ancient Boor Specter Bear charged straight for them after roaring. Every step it took shook the ground as it exuded an imposing might.

“Run, quick!” It was unknown who shouted as everyone began scattering on instinct. Even the color in the red-dressed youth’s face drained as he gave up the thought of putting up a fight. He quickly retreated.

Wang Baole was only jolted awake from his unconsciousness. When he saw the savage bear, his eyes lit up. His already weak body began heaving up and down rapidly.

*There are actually more bonus points!*

In his excitement, Wang Baole struggled to crawl toward the gigantic bear.

“Schoolmates, quickly leave. Ignore me. I’ll help you stall for time!” Wang Baole said as he barely managed to pick up a rock to throw at the approaching bear.

“Bear, eat me! As long as I, Wang Baole, am alive, I will absolutely not allow you to harm my schoolmates!” Wang Baole roared. The escaping students once again felt so touched that words could not describe it. Many of the girls even wept for him.

Inside the cruiser’s main hull, the old physician sneered when he saw the gigantic bear’s massive body charge at Wang Baole, about to rip him apart alive.

“See that? The excitement in the punk’s eyes. Have you ever seen anyone with such an expression while at death’s doorstep? It’s as though he’s afraid he won’t die.”

The other teachers all had strange expressions when they looked at Wang Baole. Wang Baole really looked heroic if they looked at him normally, but if they observed him with suspicion, the flaws in his act became apparent.

“This punk is way too shameless!”

“It would have been fine if he cheated, but he is acting way too out of line!”

The teachers in the main hull could not bear to continue watching. As for Goatee, he was clenching his teeth, feeling deep regret as his heart seemed to bleed. He was just short of beating his chest and stamping his feet.

“Heavens, my mandate!”

Finally, the old physician waved his right hand once again. Immediately, every image in the crystal shattered and dissipated.

“Alright, we will be landing in the Dao College soon. That’s the end of the test!”

The final scene Wang Baole saw was the moment the Hallucination Nexus collapsed. The gigantic bear had covered the sky, and following that, it turned turbid along with the world, before turning completely black.

When he regained consciousness again, he felt his body jolt. It felt like a force was pushing him forward. He opened his eyes, realizing that he was back in the cruiser's Spirit Cultivation Chamber. He even heard the exclamations of the people around him.

"This... Weren't we in the Pond Cloud Rainforest? Why are we here?"

"Was I dreaming or were all of us dreaming?"

Wang Baole blinked as he immediately feigned a blank look as he screamed!

"Quickly leave, all of you. Don't bother about me. Bear, I'll fight it out with you!"

His voice was just too loud. Due to his act of courage in the nexus, it was difficult not to win the attention of others. He immediately attracted many looks when he shouted. The students around him were even more agitated.

"It's Brother Wang Baole!"

"What a great pal!"

"Wang Baole, you are the boss from now on!"

Du Min and Bunny were looking at him too. Having survived the calamity, the way they looked at Wang Baole was no longer the same, especially Bunny, whose eyes were brimming with tears. If she was not wearing the Magnetic Spirit attire and sitting a distance away, she might have leaped into his arms.

All of this left Wang Baole extremely pleased with himself. Just as he considered how he should receive the adoration of everyone, he heard a stern voice reverberate throughout the Spirit Cultivation Chamber.

“All students, we have arrived above the Dao College. Everything that just happened was part of our Ethereal Dao College’s freshman test. Your results will contribute to your overall grade... Finally, I would like to welcome you to Ethereal Dao College!”

Perhaps the stern voice managed to calm their hearts or perhaps it was the fact that they were close to the Dao College, but all the students inside the Spirit Cultivation Chamber collected themselves and psyched themselves up as they turned to look outside the windows.

Although Wang Baole felt a little wistful, he could not conceal his feelings of anticipation. When he looked down at the ground beneath him through a window, he immediately saw a massive lake. The lake looked like a mirror that paved the ground. It was extremely beautiful as it reflected the colors in the sky.

There were three islands in the lake aligned parallel to one another. There were many boats sailing between the islands. As they approached, one could even see buildings with an air of antiquity on the islands as well as numerous people.

In the periphery of the islands, it looked like there were tens of thousands of people, constituting a tiny city.

“Our Ethereal Dao College is a renowned college that was established in A.D. 2348. It experienced the Federation Era and participated in the battle of the beasts. It also ushered in the Spirit Inception Era and changed its teachings to the Dao. It has more than seven centuries of history and has nurtured countless elites and heroes. It has contributed significantly to the progress of mankind. Even the previous Federation President graduated from Ethereal Dao College.

“The lake you see is called the Green Forest Lake. As the saying goes, years as a green forest pass by happily, the happiness within matches that of a youth!

“As for the three islands, they are the Heaven Traversal Island, core to the Dao College, the Upper Academy Island for Dao disciples, and the Lower Academy Island for students like you. Of those who inherit our Ethereal Dao College’s legacy, there is the guiding principle to change the world and bring world peace!”

The stern voice resounded in the Spirit Cultivation Chamber. It was filled with pride as it spread through the hearts of everyone. Everyone, including Wang Baole, could not help but feel stirred by Ethereal Dao College’s presence and heritage.

As the Lower Academy Island beneath them rapidly increased in size, they could see more than ten towering mountain peaks on the biggest mountains. They looked like sharp swords that aimed for the skies.

Every mountain peak had countless buildings. There were huge words on them, which were especially clear, even when seen from the sky.

Dharmic Armament Faculty, Alchemy Faculty, Combat Faculty, Array Runes Faculty...

Before they were able to take note of everything, they felt a sudden jerk following a great boom. The cruiser had traversed five thousand kilometers from Phoenix City to land straight in the Lower Academy Island of Ethereal Dao College!

They had arrived at Ethereal Dao College!