

A World Worth Protecting

Chapter 7: An Entire Population of Miners

As the news of Wang Baole's cheating broke, the shock that everyone felt was as elevated as the pedestal he had been previously placed on. Topics on Wang Baole cropped up again, becoming the hottest topic among the freshmen. Even topics of the older students paled in comparison.

There were even many who directly posted threads on the Spirit Intranet, angrily demanding that punitive action be taken against Wang Baole.

Wang Baole sighed when he saw his worst fears happen as he expected. He sat gloomily in his cave abode and looked around, his heart filled with sorrow.

Wang Baole attempted to console himself. *It's said that when Heaven is about to confer a great office on any man, it first exercises his mind with suffering, and his sinews and bones with toil. Is Heaven testing me?*

He felt that he was facing extremely great trouble. Just a little misstep could doom him. After being gripped by momentary nervousness, his brain began whirling for a solution.

Days later, the various faculties in Ethereal Dao College's Lower Academy Island began the first lectures for freshmen. That day, Wang Baole carried his tiny bag early in the morning as he walked out his cave abode with an austere expression.

What's the big deal? It's nothing. What's there to be afraid of? Wang Baole looked up at the Sword Sun and took a deep breath. His eyes revealed a look of determination. Dressed in his specially-recruited student robes, he headed for the Spirit Stones Hall, one of the three main halls of the Dharmic Armament faculty.

Many students were headed for the hall in groups. All of them were looking forward to classes. They walked briskly while chatting, but when

they saw Wang Baole in his red Daoist robes, they were taken aback. They instantly recognized him, and their expressions changed. The topics they were talking in whispers quickly changed to that of Wang Baole.

“It’s Wang Baole!”

“He actually appeared!”

“Say, how long do you think he can stay in the Dao College? I heard that a teacher has proposed to expel him to serve as a warning to others.”

Although everyone spoke softly, Wang Baole met too many students along the way. Some of the chatter reached his ears. If it were anyone else, they would definitely not have been able to hide their fluster and anxiety; however, as an oddity who had studied high officials’ autobiographies from a young age, Wang Baole made having a thick skin a basic skill. He remained composed as he strode straight toward the hall.

The stone platform that the hall was on spanned a huge area. It was sufficient to hold ten thousand people. Although the construction was simple, it was filled with an ancient air. Eight gigantic stone columns supported the massive Flying Phoenix Pavilion.

The pavilion’s entrance was noisy. Apart from the empty lecture stage, there were countless tables and chairs in a stepped fashion. They were occupied by people, and the most eye-catching thing in the hall was a gigantic stone wall to the right of the lecture stage.

The wall was blue in color, and on it were a hundred names. Every name had a number labeled beside it. Beside first place was the number 90, and for the hundredth place, it was 82. There was a string of smaller numbers behind those numbers.

A huge rock stood upright outside the hall’s entrance. On it was the motto of the Dharmic Armament faculty.

‘Divine armaments shall destroy the myriad Dao if restraintment by Dharmic artifacts and Numinous treasures proves fruitless!’

When Wang Baole approached, he remained composed despite there being bold freshmen and senior students present as he looked at the motto on the rock.

The sentence was domineering. It was a strong, impactful principle that a single Dharma could suppress the myriad Dao. Even though Wang Baole was caught up in his thoughts, he could not help but halt when he saw the words. He was stunned by them.

Wang Baole might have only been interested in the Dharmic Armament faculty in the past, but at that moment, he turned even more inclined toward the Dharmic Armament faculty after reading the sentence.

Trying to expel me? What a joke! I, Wang Baole, have been studying high officials’ autobiographies for ten years. What sort of storms have I not weathered? Wang Baole focused his mind and stepped into the hall, striding straight in.

With his eye-catching red Daoist robes appearing in the hall, he immediately attracted the attention of the students around him. It was unknown whose sharp voice it was that first shouted Wang Baole’s name.

After the shout, innumerable pairs of eyes landed their gazes on Wang Baole instantly. There were more than ten thousand people, and their gazes were all focused on one person. The pressure was enough to turn one limp, especially since there were jeers coming from the crowd.

“Wang Baole, to think you have the shame to attend classes!”

“What specially-recruited student? It’s something obtained purely from cheating! How unjust it is if such a person is not punished!”

“Wang Baole, you are not welcomed here!”

If this were anywhere else, perhaps no one would have said such words so directly. After all, there was no deep vendetta between them. But in the massive hall, with so many people present, the atmosphere easily stirred up emotions. Instantly, there was a buzz that demanded punitive measures against him.

Liu Daobin was also among the group. He felt conflicted, and he sighed inwardly when he looked at Wang Baole. He also felt odd. Despite knowing that Wang Baole had cheated, he still could not wipe the bloody scene from his mind.

If it were me, I'll probably turn and leave. Liu Daobin shook his head as he reflected on the situation. Wang Baole was still standing at the entrance. Suddenly, his eyes widened as he saw Wang Baole very naturally pull out a megaphone from his bag. He placed it by his mouth and widened his eyes before suddenly shouting loudly, "All of you shut up!"

He had shouted to begin with, and through the special amplification of the megaphone, it sounded like thunder. It resounded throughout the hall, drowning out the voices of ten thousand people.

Those who were closer to Wang Baole, who had jeered the loudest, nearly stumbled due to the roar. Instantly, everyone felt their ears buzz as there was complete silence. Some were in a daze. Even in their wildest dreams, they had never expected a student to have a clearly modified megaphone in his bag.

People were there to study. They found it puzzling that anyone would bring a megaphone to school.

It was truly too incredulous. The dramatic turn of events, especially the deafening megaphone's sound, left everyone dumbstruck. Even Liu Daobin was dumbfounded. He could not help but take a few looks at the ridiculous megaphone in Wang Baole's hand.

Wang Baole looked in satisfaction at the scene before him as he stuffed the megaphone into his bag in a composed manner. This was one of the treasures he carried with him all the time. From his reading of the high

officials' autobiographies, he knew very clearly that having a powerful megaphone in a speaking contest was extremely useful.

Wang Baole raised his head and puffed out his chest, walking forward when he saw everyone stunned. He noticed Liu Daobin, who seemed hesitant. After looking at Wang Baole's tiny bag, Liu Daobin waved at him.

This Liu Daobin is quite an interesting fellow. Wang Baole's eyes lit up as he rushed over to take a seat.

Only then did the crowd in the hall recover. Many were infuriated, and just as they wanted to retaliate, a bell rang. A thin, white-haired elder dressed in black Daoist robes slowly walked in.

He had a cold expression, looking like someone that one should stay away from. He naturally suffused a repressive aura, causing the heart of every student in the hall to palpitate. They shut their mouths and quietly looked at the black-robed elder, who had walked onto the lecture stage.

Wang Baole also quickly looked over.

The black-robed elder swept his gaze over the crowd before saying.

"The Dharmic Armament faculty has three main halls. They are the Spirit Stones Hall, the Inscriptions Hall, and the Spirit Kernel Hall. I am one of the five lecturers in the Spirit Stones Hall, Zou Yunhai.

"The stone wall beside me is the Dharmic Armament Roll of the School of Spirit Stones. I wish for all of you to have your names on it one day.

"Class shall begin now! But before we study the refinement of Spirit Stones, I want all of you to understand one principle. Why do we get the entire population to cultivate a Qi nurturing technique when we want to refine Spirit Stones?" As the elder spoke, he nonchalantly clenched his fist. A milky-white stone the size of a fist appeared out of thin air.

This scene left the hearts of many students palpitating once again. Liu Daobin was well-read as he drew a gasp beside Wang Baole. He uttered, "Teacher Zou has a storage Dharmic artifact!"

Wang Baole similarly widened his eyes. Although he had heard of storage Dharmic artifacts, he had never seen one before. No one sold them in the world. Occasionally, he would hear on the news that one had been sold at a major auction. Furthermore, the final price was far beyond his imagination.

None of the students were strangers to the milky-white rock. It was the necessary Empty Stone needed to refine Spirit Stones.

"Thirty-seven years ago, with the Sword of the Cosmos flying over, a new energy source suddenly appeared in this world, and it's none other than Spirit Qi! The concentration of Spirit Qi is extremely rich, but it appeared too suddenly. It did not exist in the past, and according to the Federation's research, if the Spirit Qi continues nourishing the land, it will affect jade in a few centuries, which will result in Spirit Stone mines!"

The black-robed elder spoke calmly. The white rock he held was constantly emitting an increasingly intense halo. One could faintly notice that the elder's surroundings were silently warping. It seemed like invisible Spirit Qi was being controlled by him and guided into the rock.

"However, we are presently in the thirty-seventh year of the Spirit Inception era. We are far from having Spirit Stone mines. To gain Spirit Stones, we need humans to create them. Therefore, various factions have promoted the Qi nurturing technique, making it open to the population. The goal is to make everyone a miner to create Spirit Stones so that it can be used as a currency. It will result in a massive number of Spirit Stones that can supply the whole world with cultivation resources.

"Also, due to how different people have different affinities with Spirit Qi and other various reasons, the Spirit Stone purity each person refines is different. This gives rise to what we call natural endowments. For example, to qualify for the White Deer Dao College, one needs to refine Spirit Stones with a purity of more than seventy percent. As for our

Ethereal Dao College, it's lower, but it still needs at least fifty percent purity!"

His words and the changes to the Empty Stone left the students in the hall speechless. Such an opinion was completely different from what they knew. And the way the elder refined the Spirit Stone in such a composed manner was equally stunning.

The entire population takes on the role of miners... He can refine a Spirit Stone while speaking. Wang Baole's heart was racing as well. He could refine Spirit Stones, too, but he needed to fully focus every time. Just a tiny distraction would result in failure.

The black-robed elder was unconcerned with the students' shock. He calmly refined the Spirit Stone as he continued speaking once again.

"Then here comes a new question. Is there really only one Qi Fostering Art?"

"I can tell you with full certainty that what the population studies is the first volume. Its main use is to strengthen one's physique, allowing Spirit Qi to enter the body. Although it's not possible for them to store it in their bodies, it will quickly dissipate out of their bodies like a draught. But if they hold an Empty Stone, they can use their bodies as a conduit with their minds, allowing them to refine Spirit Stones. Spirit Stones also have grades. Inferior-grade, medial-grade, superior-grade, as well as the Rainbow Spirit Stones that approach perfection!"

"As for the second volume, only Dharmic Armament refiners can gain access to it. This is because the sword hilt fragment that contained the Qi Fostering Art was a description of Dharmic Armament refinement! It's only because the first volume had the additional information pertaining to the refinement of Spirit Stones that it was spread among the population, allowing everyone to cultivate in it."

The black-robed elder spoke at an appropriate speed. Having said that, the Empty Stone in his hand had already turned resplendent. Waving his right hand, the luster dissipated. Ash scattered from the Empty Stone's surface and exposed a much smaller, chestnut-shaped Spirit Stone!

Mist seemed to swirl in it as it shimmered!

“Although the second volume is good, those who cannot refine Spirit Stones with a purity higher than eighty percent are not qualified to study from it. As such, in my class, I will not talk about the second volume. I’ll only be talking about the refinement tricks as recorded in the first volume!”

The hall was silent. Everyone was looking at the Spirit Stone in the elder’s hand. Everything seemed to pale in front of it. With this Spirit Stone as a comparison, they felt as though the Spirit Stones they refined were mere fakes.

He refined a Spirit Stone of at least ninety percent purity while speaking... Other than being a teacher, Teacher Zou must definitely be someone remarkable outside! Wang Baole drew a gasp. The lesson that day seemed to have opened up a brand-new world for him!