

A World Worth Protecting

Chapter 8: Wit and Counterattack!

Inside the Spirit Stones Hall, Zou Yunhai's voice remained as calm as ever. It was as if he was not delivering a lecture to students but simply expressing his understanding of Dharmic Armaments.

A casual comment of his would leave the students enlightened, making them see the light. However, the need to pay close attention was extremely demanding on these newly matriculated students. They could only first write down whatever was said.

It developed to the point of them not being able to keep up with their note-writing. Many students began to murmur quietly as a way to relax. Wang Baole finally understood why the Dharmic Armament faculty only had three main halls. Just this hall that taught Spirit Stone refinement techniques had enough content to make it impossible to fully understand everything simply from attending a few classes.

He was somewhat exhausted, and Liu Daobin had finally snapped back to attention. He looked at Wang Baole and could not help but whisper, "Wang Baole, you are in trouble. I heard that several teachers have proposed to have you expelled."

His eyes were filled with pity, but when he saw Wang Baole's tiny bag, his face could not help but twitch.

"Which teacher said that?" Wang Baole was somewhat peeved. Although he had made up his mind and was prepared, he still felt annoyed.

Liu Daobin patted Wang Baole's shoulder and sighed inwardly. He reminded himself to use Wang Baole as a warning for himself. Just as he was about to console him, two people suddenly walked in from the hall's main entrance.

The two were obviously senior students. They wore black Daoist robes, unlike the other students. They had stern expressions, and the moment they appeared, all the senior students in the hall turned alert and attentive.

“What happened? Even people from the College Discipline Department have come!”

“It’s actually them. There is always bloodshed wherever they appear.”

Even though the freshmen did not know the duo’s identity, they came to a certain level of realization from hearing the discussions of the senior students and noticing the duo’s austerity.

Wang Baole’s heart skipped a beat.

Zou Yunhai knitted his brows together as he looked at the two black-robed students. The duo politely greeted him by cupping their fists before handing him a jade slip.

After Zou Yunhai finished reading with knitted brows, he looked up and scanned the students. Finally, his eyes landed on Wang Baole.

Immediately, all the students in the hall traced his gaze with different looks on their faces. They received their answer. They knew about Wang Baole’s situation. It seemed that the Lower Academy had taken notice and was here to punish him.

Even though Wang Baole already had a countermeasure to deal with the situation, he still felt somewhat nervous due to the environment he was in. Especially with the two black-robed students looking at him keenly. They were clearly not there for a friendly chat.

“Wang Baole, come with us,” one of the two members of the College Discipline Department said coldly.

But before Wang Baole stood up, Zou Yunhai grunted coldly.

“Enough, that can wait until class is over. Leave for now.”

The two College Discipline Department students paused when they heard that. They did not dare offend the teacher and could only tersely assent with their heads bowed. They retreated to the hall's entrance to wait. The lesson continued as Zou Yunhai ignored them.

Wang Baole felt relieved and looked at Zou Yunhai with gratitude. Although he already had a countermeasure, having more time was always better. It gave him time to perfect and clarify his thought processes. He closed his eyes and calmed himself.

Many of the students gloated for the remainder of the lesson, but that was still not everyone. Most students felt that the matter did not involve themselves and continued jotting down notes.

Liu Daobin sighed inwardly. He was unsure how to comfort Wang Baole. He knew that once Wang Baole was expelled, they would be people from two completely different worlds. Even if they bumped into each other in the future, it would still be an extremely regretful situation.

Time passed, and four hours later, Zou Yunhai finished his lesson and left. All the students instantly looked at Wang Baole. The cold gazes of the two black-robed students from the College Discipline Department also landed on Wang Baole.

“Do you want us to invite you?”

Wang Baole opened his eyes. He had a calm look on his face. The feeling he exuded felt different from the usual one. He walked down without a word, followed the two senior students, and left the hall.

With his departure, the hall immediately broke out into a cacophonous discussion.

“Is this Wang Baole really getting expelled?”

“Could it be anything else? Didn't you see the College Discipline Department? I've never seen anyone taken away by them who's ended up fine!”

Amid the discussions, many people ran out and followed. They wanted to watch the entire process. After all, this matter would cause great repercussions considering Wang Baole's specially-recruited status.

It even went beyond the confines of the Dharmic Armament faculty. Students from other faculties also paid attention to the matter after learning that Wang Baole had been taken away.

Wang Baole ignored the crowd following behind. He had an unprecedented calm about him along the way as he followed the two senior students from the College Discipline Department. They went straight to the Dharmic Armament faculty's mountaintop.

The two senior students walking ahead were sneering inwardly. They had taken away quite a sizable number of people over the years. There was no lack of people, like Wang Baole, who acted strong-willed. They would be impressed if Wang Baole could maintain his composure when he left the College Discipline Department.

The entire journey happened silently. The number of people that followed behind increased. Only when they arrived at a building on the mountaintop did the two senior students halt. They made way and gestured for Wang Baole to enter alone.

Wang Baole took a deep breath as he looked at the closed doors of the building. It was impossible not to be nervous, but he knew that he had to survive this ordeal. He gritted his teeth, and pushing open the door, he strode straight in.

The moment he entered the building, Wang Baole immediately felt dozens of pairs of eyes bearing down on him. In front of him sat dozens of teachers. Some were middle-aged, and others were elderly. All of them had stern expressions, but there were a few looking disappointed.

The old physician and Goatee were also among the teachers. In contrast to the old physician's calmness, Goatee appeared conflicted and did not seem to have the heart to continue.

Among them there was one who was clearly chairing the investigation. It was a thin middle-aged man. He wore a black Daoist robe, and his eyes shimmered. He had thin lips, and his body emanated an obvious frosty air. It made the building's temperature a lot colder than the outside.

Not all the people were teachers of the Dharmic Armament faculty. However, as Wang Baole was the Dharmic Armament faculty's specially-recruited student, the hearing regarding Wang Baole's cheating was held on Dharmic Armament Peak.

Noticing that Wang Baole had entered, the black-robed chairman spoke slowly with a cold tone. "Wang Baole!"

Wang Baole took a deep breath and went forward to cup his fist while speaking in a deep voice. "Yes, sir!"

"According to our investigations, you engaged in the consequential and vile act of cheating during the district test. According to the college's rules, the punishment should be in the form of immediate expulsion. As you are a specially-recruited student, we have summoned you here for a hearing!"

After the black-robed middle-aged man finished his piece, he turned to look at his colleagues, not giving Wang Baole so much as a chance to explain himself.

"My fellow colleagues, we can begin. I personally suggest that the punishment meted out to Wang Baole should be to revoke his privileges as a special recruit and have him expelled. The four Dao Colleges will be informed to never admit him again!"

His words seemed categorical and extremely cold as they resounded through the room. Wang Baole's expression changed. He wondered why a person he was meeting for the first time would be filled with such malice despite not having a grudge with him. His suggestion was practically ending any future that awaited him.

There was a brief silence before another teacher spoke coldly.

“He should be expelled. Such a despicable and shameless person has no right to be admitted into a Dao College!”

“That’s right. I suggest that he be expelled, too!”

“Although the punishment is somewhat harsh, we are being irresponsible toward the Federation if we leave such acts unchecked!”

Teachers offered their views one after another. Wang Baole was a person of no importance to them. Since the black-robed man had set the tone of the hearing, there was no reason for them to refute him.

Wang Baole breathed slowly as he listened to the teachers. He did not move as though he had fallen into a daze. However, his hands were clenched. As for Goatee, he shook his head and sighed.

“The revoking of his status as a special recruit would be sufficient. Nobody is perfect. There’s no need for such a harsh punishment.”

However, he did not receive the support of the crowd. Soon, other teachers spoke, and expulsion became the main agenda that was discussed in the room.

Only the old physician remained silent. The black-robed man did not seem interested in asking for the old physician’s opinion. He stood up and was about to announce the outcome when Wang Baole raised his head suddenly, his eyes filled with anger and sadness.

“Teachers, please give me a chance to speak!”

The black-robed man frowned. The reason he had been so harsh was that he had planned on recommending someone else as the Dharmic Armament faculty’s specially-recruited student. Yet, before he could make his recommendation, the title had been snatched by Wang Baole. He grunted coldly and was about to ignore him, but it was at that moment when the old physician spoke.

“Go ahead.”

With him saying so, the black-robed man could only acquiesce as he looked at Wang Baole.

Wang Baole took a deep breath, his body nearly trembling. “Teachers, I did know that everything in the test was fake, but what did you expect me to do?”

“Could I have told all the students that the so-called test was, in fact, fake? Could I have?” His final sentence was nearly delivered with a roar.

Without waiting for the teachers’ response, Wang Baole appeared like he was in a fervent state as he continued in his elevated emotions.

“Once I reveal the truth to them, I would have wasted all the efforts already made by the school to administer the test. When that happened, I would have crossed the school. Tell me, what should I have done?”

“In moments of danger, I saw my fellow schoolmates injured, some bleeding. And yet, I couldn’t tell them everything was fake. All I could do was save them. Was I wrong in saving them? Tell me, what should I have done!”

The veins on Wang Baole’s forehead protruded. His entire body was quivering like he was in a fit. He appeared to be venting all the anger in his eyes.

“Is saving people wrong? Should I not have saved them? Despite me knowing that everything was fake, I had to consider if I was cheating, thinking about the pros and cons of my actions. Do I have to act indifferent as I watch my fellow schoolmates cry, be injured, or even be killed? Could I even be considered human if that’s what I did!” Wang Baole was nearly shouting at the top of his lungs. All his emotions were fully expressed, his voice echoing through the room.

All the teachers were stunned.

“All you saw was me acting. But I wish to ask each and every one of you, if you were in my shoes, what would you have done? Would you have

turned a blind eye to the deaths or would you have rescued the people like I did?”

“I’m a student of Ethereal Dao College. I don’t claim to be capable of changing the world and bringing world peace, but I, Wang Baole, am an upright man!”

Wang Baole’s eyes were welling in tears. He raised his right hand and pounded his chest, producing loud thuds. Every word he said sounded extremely earnest. Many teachers were visibly moved.

The finale was most impactful with Wang Baole laughing out tragically.

“If sacrificing myself to protect others is considered a crime, I admit to it!”

“If being intelligent and sharp is considered a crime, I admit to it!”

“If that is the case, I, your humble student, Wang Baole, am willing to receive any punishment meted out to me!”

Wang Baole’s voice boomed loud and clear as he suddenly bowed toward all the teachers!

The entire room fell silent. All the teachers drew a gasp as the looks on their faces changed constantly. They looked at Wang Baole in a daze. Every sentence he said contained righteousness and logic, shaking them to their very core.

The teachers like Goatee, who had seen Wang Baole’s acting, felt moved, but they had a nagging feeling that something was amiss.

As for the black-robed man, he squinted and glared at Wang Baole. He wanted to say something but found no words. Although he felt that Wang Baole’s statements were flawed, they were tightly bound with righteousness. He was very familiar with such techniques, one commonly espoused by high officials. However, it was rarely seen among students.

The feeling that denying Wang Baole's words meant that he was denying righteousness left him at a loss for words. When he looked at his colleagues, he knew that Wang Baole had survived. He sighed. The puny figure that he believed he could easily squash had suddenly transformed into a prickly porcupine.

The old physician gave a deep, meaningful smile as he closed his eyes.

Soon, Wang Baole walked out of the building. There were thousands of people surrounding it. Many of them were envious of his status as a specially-recruited student; others were gloating at his misfortune. They were planning to see Wang Baole make a fool of himself when a mighty voice boomed from inside the building, resounding throughout the Dharmic Armament faculty!

“According to the college's investigations, the student, Wang Baole, did not violate any rules in the freshmen test. He will retain his status as a specially-recruited student!”