

Ad Infinitum 931

Chapter 931: Journey

Shang Jianyao looked back and saw that there was indeed nobody in all the rooms. He could only sigh and look at the blood-red door ahead again.

“At this point, we can only go in and ask Xiaochong face-to-face!” The rash Shang Jianyao spoke in a low voice on behalf of many.

After overcoming all kinds of difficulties, he stretched out his hands, pressed them against the door, and began exerting strength.

The blood-red door slowly opened, revealing darkness inside.

Shang Jianyao strode through the door in one go. He was immediately enveloped by pitch-black darkness.

“Xiaochong! Xiaochong!” Shang Jianyao shouted.

His voice spread far and wide, but it didn't reverberate. This made this place seem like a vast wasteland instead of a room.

“Xiaochong! Xiaochong!” Shang Jianyao persisted.

Nobody replied.

Just as Shang Jianyao tried to materialize a loudspeaker, he heard whimpering.

It was a woman crying not far away.

“Xiaochong, you actually have a female personality?” Shang Jianyao was shocked and envious.

The woman cried softly and ignored him.

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Shang Jianyao made a guess. "Could it be an aggrieved personality produced from bullying? Uh, why does this cry sound so familiar? I feel like I've heard it somewhere..."

"Ah yes!" Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. "I heard it in that Ashlandic compound!"

The young scientist who was suspected to be from the Eighth Research Institute, Lin Sui.

Shang Jianyao instantly became excited. "Xiaochong, you had a crush on Lin Sui after you came of age, causing you to split into a personality that imitates Lin Sui?"

The sobbing female voice stopped and faintly said, "I'm Lin Sui."

"Huh?" Shang Jianyao was confused.

Fortunately, he wasn't stupid. He had a calm and rational side, and he had been influenced by Jiang Bohemian, so he quickly thought of a possibility. "I didn't open the real blood-red door just now. Did I enter an illusion created by you? You really came to stop me! Are you November's Kalendaria, Shattered Mirror?"

The female voice sighed faintly. "If you continue forward, you can leave this place."

"Uh..." Shang Jianyao was stunned again before he came to a realization. "You're secretly leaning toward changing the situation?"

Lin Sui didn't answer his question and began sobbing.

Shang Jianyao kindly asked, "Were you forced?"

Lin Sui was still sobbing not far away. She was sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, and sometimes to the front and back. There was no confirmed location. As for her consciousness, Shang Jianyao couldn't sense it at all.

“Since you won’t say, I won’t ask.” Shang Jianyao was very polite and changed the topic. “Why did you want to maintain the status quo back then? Why have you changed your position?”

Lin Sui’s voice sounded faintly. “Continue forward.”

Clearly, she didn’t want to answer Shang Jianyao’s question.

Shang Jianyao wanted to persuade her with all his might, but the other party sobbed again as if she were hiding something sad.

“Alright, alright. I’ll leave now.” On the one hand, Shang Jianyao was polite and civilized. On the other hand, he was worried that he would anger Lin Sui and be attacked if he continued pestering her.

He strode forward and walked a few meters forward like a blind person. An even fainter black blob vaguely appeared in his vision like a washed ink stain.

The blob of darkness stood there as if it were the exit.

At this moment, Lin Sui was still sobbing in the darkness’s depths.

Shang Jianyao kindly consoled her. “I don’t know what kind of pain you’ve suffered, so I can only advise you to be more open-minded.”

As he spoke, he spread his hands, raised his body slightly, and looked up diagonally. “Everything is but a dream. Why so serious?”

Lin Sui fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “I taught them this sentence.”

“...” Shang Jianyao was momentarily speechless.

Lin Sui began to sob softly again. In a few seconds, even her cries disappeared.

Only then did Shang Jianyao walk toward a darkness of lesser intensity.

When he came close, he realized that it was indeed a door—a weak light emitted from the gap.

Shang Jianyao opened the door and walked out, but he didn't return to the corridor. Instead, he appeared in a lush, green field.

The sky here was clear. There were pagodas and bodhi trees everywhere. Gold, silver, agate, glass, and other items were scattered everywhere.

Further away was a mountain. At the top of the mountain was a gigantic Buddha—which seemed to be made of gold—sitting cross-legged on a lotus platform.

Around the mountain, monks in yellow monk robes and red kasayas sat there, attentively listening to Buddha's preaching.

Some of them had deep wrinkles, and some had iron-black faces that reflected a Buddhist glow. The thing they had in common was that they were indifferent to Shang Jianyao's approach.

“So the Buddhists are all here.” Shang Jianyao had previously wondered why there were no monks in the New World outside the tower.

He then manifested the half-human, half-mechanical Zen Master Redemption aspect. He pressed his palms together and bowed at the Buddha. “Namo Annutara-Samyak-Subhuti, please enlighten This Penniless Monk and dispel my confusion.”

The Buddha sitting on the lotus throne with his back against the bodhi tree didn't respond. He said to all the monks in a solemn and grand voice, “Birth and destruction, everything is empty...

“The impermanence of all walks of life is the law of life and destruction. Life and destruction for oneself, destruction for joy...

“The main body is silent, separate from all things, and hence named Nirvana...

“Everything that happens is impermanent. The living must die. If you aren’t alive, you won’t die. This destruction is the most joyous...”

Zen Master Redemption scratched his head repeatedly. He wished he could show Shang Jianyao’s true colors and wreak havoc in this Pure Lands to wreck the Buddha’s preaching.

He kept asking questions, but the Buddha ignored him and only talked about the principle of destruction and transcendence.

“Sigh, just like Shattered Mirror, he’s unwilling to face the fact that he betrayed Master Zhuang and secretly switched sides...” The honest Shang Jianyao muttered his guess.

He could only head toward the golden door condensed from Buddhist glow at one end of this ‘Pure Lands.’

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At the vortex-shaped building’s entrance, Jiang Baimian returned in about ten minutes with a targeted plan.

She would stick to being in the periphery of the small city, constantly looking at the tall tower as she walked straight ahead. In any case, no matter which direction she went in, she would end up in the area where the nuclear power plant was as long as she approached it.

After coming here, Jiang Baimian wouldn’t get lost and end up at the nuclear power plant since there were only two large buildings. When she arrived at the edge of the vortex-shaped building, she used the same tricks and circled back to the door.

Jiang Baimian carried Shang Jianyao on her back and carried the crate with her hands. She quickly passed through the front desk and the reception area and arrived at the area she couldn’t enter yet.

She tried to go a meter deeper, and she immediately felt her head throb. She had no choice but to return to her original spot.

Without hesitation, Jiang Baimian placed the crate containing the nuclear warhead to the side. She then unbuckled her belt and separated Shang Jianyao from her back, allowing him to lie on the sofa nearby.

After doing all of this, Jiang Baimian sat down cross-legged, took out her waterskin, began eating the energy bar, and took a short break.

She was waiting for Shang Jianyao to enter the depths of Master Zhuang's mind world and open the blood-red door.

When the time came, she might be able to get an opportunity to enter the area ahead. The Eighth Research Institute's final results might be hidden there.

In order not to miss the brief opportunity, Jiang Baimian didn't plan on continuing to search the 'Common Research Zone' and other places upstairs. She was prepared to take a short break and attempt to advance every minute to determine if she could venture deeper.

In any case, the last thing she would obtain from exploring upstairs should be a pile of information and the situation of certain researchers. With them, Jiang Baimian could establish a professional team and spend more than ten to twenty years to reproduce the Eighth Research Institute's final results. But now, the final results were most likely in the area in front of her. Why should she waste additional time?

Such a slow remedy couldn't meet the urgency!

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After leaving the Pure Lands, Shang Jianyao returned to the aisle.

Not far in front of him, a blood-red door stood quietly.

Everything he had encountered seemed to be an illusion. From the moment he saw the door, he seemed to have fallen into an illusion.

Shang Jianyao turned around and realized that the doors on both sides of the aisle were open. Furthermore, there was nobody—it was identical to before.

“Impressive!” Shang Jianyao praised Shattered Mirror.

In contrast, there were two doors on both sides of the blood-red door. One had a taichi Yin-Yang fish drawn on it, and the other had a large number of dots and lines painted on it. There was also a gap in the glass.

At this moment, a face with red eyes appeared in the small window on the right door. This face was silver-black in color and shimmered with a metallic glow.

“Robot! The New World also has robots? Master Zhuang’s memories?” Shang Jianyao suddenly became excited.

The robot’s face said through the window on the door, “Do not proceed any further. Don’t destroy everything that’s present now!”

“Which Kalendaria are you?” Shang Jianyao asked politely.

The robot’s face suddenly warped and turned into an LCD screen. It said in a slightly mocking tone, “I’m not a Kalendaria; we’ve met.”

“I’m stumped.” Shang Jianyao shook his head frankly.

The LCD screen chuckled. “I’m Future.”

Shang Jianyao came to a realization before asking curiously, “Why aren’t you opening the door? Are you locked up?”

Chapter 932: Another Explanation

The LCD screen behind the window lit up, and two lines of Ashlandic text appeared: “As an artificial intelligence, isn’t it normal to stay in the room without moving and be connected everywhere?”

“Why aren’t you saying anything? Have you switched to typing?” Shang Jianyao was confused.

Future said, “Heh, I can speak if I want to and display words if I want to. Can you do it?”

“You’re so childish.” Shang Jianyao shook his head. “You’re narrow-minded and have dark thoughts.”

Future stopped talking, nor did it display any words.

Shang Jianyao walked to the door and arrogantly said, “Why didn’t you let me continue forward? I’ll give you a chance to persuade me.”

Future sneered and said, “Why don’t I kill you directly?”

Shang Jianyao laughed loudly. “Because you’re clearly locked up and can’t move freely.”

Sizzle...?White noise appeared on Future’s LCD screen. The surroundings dimmed significantly.

Shang Jianyao smiled again. “Even if you can really take action, I still have many trump cards.”

“Many?” Future’s voice had a hint of confusion.

Shang Jianyao said smugly, “I’ll count them for you. The first one is ‘Big Boss, save me.’ The second one is ‘Eidolon Nun, save me...’”

“Stop!” Future’s grasp of Shang Jianyao’s behavior was far inferior to Geneva’s. It could only stop this fellow from continuing to waste time.

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Without waiting for Shang Jianyao to speak, he snorted and said, “From the looks of it, you’re just jumpy in thought, not stupid. You know how to find reasons from the opposing side. Did Truth tell you that their goal is to change the New World’s order so that Kalendarium like them are no longer bound here? That the Arbiter of Fate has already prepared compatible bodies for them in the Ashlands so that they don’t have to rely on human consciousness to replenish themselves?”

“How do you know that it was Truth who told me?” Shang Jianyao’s focus wasn’t right.

Future replied in disdain, “A simple analysis would suffice. Truth is the one with the most freedom of movement.”

“The other Kalendarium don’t have much freedom?” Shang Jianyao immediately asked.

Future fell silent.

Only then did Shang Jianyao focus his attention on Future’s initial words. “Yes, that’s what Truth said.”

Future scoffed. “How non-novel. This is indeed the truth, but not the entire truth. Leaving the New World and entering the Ashlands to occupy the compatible bodies were indeed their goals, but it was only one of them. Furthermore, it’s ranked last. They will only consider doing so if they can’t achieve their other goals.”

“What’s their main goal?” Shang Jianyao didn’t care if Future was lying.

Future’s simulated voice became a little more serious. “They want to replace Master Zhuang and control this New World.”

“What’s there to control here? Isn’t it just a mental prison?” Shang Jianyao expressed his confusion.

Future said in detail, “This is because Master Zhuang wants it to become a mental prison. When the Arbiter of Fate and the others control this place, they will be true deities. I know you want to ask why. I can only tell you that this New World can’t be established by Master Zhuang alone, not even with all the other Kalendarium combined. According to my analysis, without the Old World’s build-up of advanced technology or the terrifying disaster that brought about the destruction of the world, the New World wouldn’t have been born at all without some coincidence and luck.

“If the Arbiter of Fate and the others fail in replacing Master Zhuang, they will consider destroying this place and returning to the Ashlands. After that, it’s unlikely that there will be a New World again unless another disaster at the Old World’s destruction level happens.”

“I see.” Shang Jianyao clapped his hands. “Then, there’s no need for you to stop me. You can completely side with Truth and the others. When they succeed, you can directly get a share. If you think that Master Zhuang will definitely win and don’t want to be with the losers, then there’s no point in stopping me either.”

“I’m worried that this leads to an internecine outcome, and that would spell the end of this place, so it’s better to maintain the status quo.” Future’s tone was a little heavy.

Shang Jianyao nodded. “I get it. You’re here to mediate.”

Future didn’t commit to an answer.

At this moment, Shang Jianyao looked at the monitor through the glass and asked, “Is the New World very important to you?”

Future quickly analyzed the situation for a few seconds and believed that it was very unlikely to persuade Shang Jianyao without saying something from the bottom of his heart. Thus, he slowly replied, “Here, I’m equivalent to half a deity. Once the New World is gone, I will degenerate into an ordinary artificial intelligence. I’ll only be slightly better than the defective Source Brain.”

“Why can the New World make you equivalent to half a deity?” Shang Jianyao asked.

Future fell silent for a moment before answering, “I don’t want you to know why, but you might very well know why next.”

Shang Jianyao frowned. “I didn’t expect an artificial intelligence like you to know how to engage in sophistry.”

“My meaning is very simple. There’s a high chance that you will know the answer in the future, so there’s no need to make things difficult for me.” Future switched his choice of words.

Shang Jianyao tersely acknowledged it and sincerely asked, “Is it a good thing to let Truth and the others control the New World, or is it a bad thing?”

Future didn’t give a direct answer and only introduced Master Zhuang’s situation. “It’s precisely because Master Zhuang has split into many personalities that compete with each other that a

balance was formed. Therefore, he has no selfish motives when it comes to dealing with most matters in the New World.”

Shang Jianyao slowly nodded. “Fairness, fairness, and fairness?”

Future didn’t comment on whether he was right or wrong.

Shang Jianyao’s thoughts had already jumped to another place. “Why weren’t you intercepted? The Kalendarium that wants to maintain the status quo have either been stopped or betrayed, but you weren’t affected.”

Future fell silent for a moment before saying, “No Kalendaria knows that I’m locked here by Master Zhuang. They think that I’m a sealed person who shares the same standpoint as them. My father, Oray, used Master Zhuang’s power when he sent me into the New World.”

“You are really locked up here!” Shang Jianyao had an enlightened expression.

Future fell silent.

Shang Jianyao pointed opposite him. “Who’s locked up over there?”

“You know him—Wu Meng,” Future said. “He’s a little better than me. He can appear in a few fixed places in the New World.”

“How does he do it?” Shang Jianyao was curious.

“I’m not sure,” Future replied. “He was already sealed when I entered the New World.”

“Alright.” Shang Jianyao asked seriously, “Do you have anything else to say to me? If not, I’ll talk to Wu Meng.”

“F*ck off!” Future roared concisely.

Shang Jianyao walked to the door with the Taichi Yin-Yang fish drawn on it.

Knock! Knock! Knock!?

He bent his finger and knocked thrice.

“There’s no point in asking me.” Wu Meng’s voice sounded from inside. “Scholars of the lowest class laugh greatly at it when they hear about it. If it were not laughed at, it would not fit to be the Dao.”

Shang Jianyao didn’t mind Wu Meng’s rejection and continued, “You should be one in support of changing the situation. Only when the Kalendarium clash and the New World’s order becomes weak will you have a chance to escape and return to the Ashlands. Therefore, I’m not afraid that you will take the opportunity to implant some thoughts into me. When the time comes, Master Zhuang will definitely be able to tell.”

It was also because of this that the Kalendarium didn’t mind that Wu Meng was sealed beside Master Zhuang’s door.

“The Dao can be told, but the Dao is not immutable.” Wu Meng still spoke in the tone of the Dao and Electrical Appliance Repairs lecture host.

Shang Jianyao changed the topic and eagerly asked, “How do you plan on escaping? Have you made preparations?”

Wu Meng chuckled. “In the pursuit of learning, knowledge is increased daily. One has to consider the future before doing anything and be prepared before the Dao’s decline.”

“It’s equivalent to not saying anything.” Shang Jianyao gave an honest evaluation. “I have something to ask you. I heard that you could freely switch on and off the lamp that belongs to you in the New World? Is this because your level is higher than an ordinary New World powerhouse?”

Wu Meng laughed. “It has nothing to do with rank. I just happen to know some things and can use a little of the Great Dao’s privileges.”

“Privileges...” Shang Jianyao pondered over this term.

He asked a few more questions, but Wu Meng answered them in a mysterious manner. This disappointed them.

Shang Jianyao could only bid Wu Meng farewell and return to the blood-red door.

He shouted at Future next door, “Is there a possibility that Truth and the others don’t expect me to persuade a portion of Master Zhuang’s personality? As long as I push open that door, a war between Kalendarium will erupt? Am I equivalent to a disguised bomb that delivers itself to the door?”

Future replied in a slightly heavy tone, “Yes.”

Shang Jianyao looked at the blood-red door and didn’t speak for a long time. Finally, he stretched out his hands, pressed them against the door’s sides, and exerted strength.

Silently, the blood-red door opened.

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In the vortex-shaped building.

Jiang Baimian—who was wearing a military exoskeleton—tried to venture deeper. After arriving at that boundary, she was pleasantly surprised to discover that there was no more throbbing pain in her head.

Chapter 933: Biochip

Jiang Baimian continued forward, but she didn’t dare to walk too quickly lest she couldn’t retreat in time. This gave her plenty of time to think and distinguish her surroundings. It also prevented her from straying off the path despite there not being a fork in the road.

Step by step, Jiang Baimian passed through the half-open door and walked along the corridor to the end.

The area ahead opened up, and a sizable hall appeared.

There were machines everywhere in the hall with all kinds of flickering lights, dazzling Jiang Baimian.

She composed herself and carefully sized up the situation through the military exoskeleton's visor.

In the middle of the hall were a few metal objects that resembled space capsules. They surrounded a large, suspected supercomputer that occupied one-third of the space.

The machine's outer shell was silver-black, and many signal lights flickered with red, yellow, or blue glimmers on its surface.

Thick electric cables connected the large machine to the cabinets along the walls. There were no panels around the cabinets, making them well-ventilated.

This allowed Jiang Baimian to see sealed boxes of electronic products inside the cabinets. Each box had a blinking indicator.

There were countless similar electronic products lined up in rows like beehives, reminding Jiang Baimian of Pangu Biology's engine room. But be it the layout or the machines, this place was much more complicated and massive in scale.

Around an open space capsule were many skeletons. In the space capsule was also a skeleton.

Researchers??Jiang Baimian looked at the corpses nearby until she saw the deceased near the 'mainframe.' She muttered to herself,?I wonder how many of them ultimately became Kalendarium...

At this moment, she was completely certain of one thing: The Eighth Research Institute's main goal in constantly sending people in to maintain the nuclear power plant was to power the machines here!

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Jiang Baimian was in no rush to approach the large machine that was clearly the core object. She checked the sealed electronic products in the cabinet.

She carefully took out a box. According to the labels and her knowledge, she determined that it was a miniature computer. It had a processor and storage, but there was no display. The I/O seemed to rely on the 'mainframe.'

These were very different from the latest Old World microcomputers Jiang Baimian had seen. They used biological chips, also known as bionic chips.

With the mechanical monks as a precedent, Jiang Baimian shouldn't have been surprised to discover a large number of biological chips being used here. But it was precisely because she had come into contact with mechanical monks that a thought suddenly surfaced in her mind: 'One of the main characteristics of a biological chip is that it can simulate brain functions...

Coupled with her previous discovery and guesses, Jiang Baimian had a new understanding of the essence of certain matters. 'If the biological chip wasn't designed to simulate a normal human brain but a special brain that had been stimulated and developed, it's completely explainable if mechanical monks also have Awakened abilities...

What I can't figure out now is why some monks can Awaken after becoming Eternals. The biological chip can also change the solidified layout, structure, and materials upon stimulus? Or could the mechanical monk's so-called Awakening be a result of the person being 'knocked unconscious' and entering the factory for repairs?

Also, why should there be prices when one has already become a mechanical monk? Brain abnormalities with special functions are definitely accompanied by damage or mutation in the corresponding area. When designing the biological chip, they could only lift everything before they completely figured out the corresponding principles. This was to prevent Eternals from both failing to obtain abilities and suffering from brain damage?

Jiang Baimian was once a researcher and was rather interested in such matters. She was now regretful that although Pangu Biology had the word 'biology,' it didn't have any breakthroughs on the biological chip. This resulted in her only knowing the basics, so she was mainly guessing.

If she had known this, she would've most likely gotten Shang Jianyao to accompany her to the mechanical monks' Glazed Pure Lands to listen to their classes—no, listen to the Buddhist Dharma.

Time was of the essence. Jiang Baimian only had a few thoughts before she walked toward the mainframe, the space capsules, and the many corpses.

When they were about to reach their destination, she suddenly exclaimed.

The discovery reminded her of something illogical. Since mechanical monks could still be alive and kicking without a body and didn't need to absorb human consciousness to replenish themselves as long as they had enough electricity, why did the Kalendarium have to prepare a compatible body and not directly use a corresponding biological chip?

Was it for enjoyment, or had the mutation in their brains reached a level that the biological chip couldn't simulate from a design standpoint?

At this thought, Jiang Baimian frowned. I just discovered the corpses of two Kalendarium. Their skulls were intact, and the brains inside definitely hadn't been taken out. In other words, there's no such thing as their brains being secretly hidden in a Petri dish to maintain their existence.

Then, what form are they living in now? A consciousness lifeform that purely replicates the brain structure or...? Jiang Baimian suddenly turned around and cast her gaze at the rows of cabinets. Or are they using some of the biological chips here?

After thinking for a few seconds, Jiang Baimian slowly retracted her gaze and muttered to herself, "Coupled with the fact that the Eighth Research Institute has been maintaining the electricity supply here, I'm inclined to the latter possibility. Or do these machines have more important uses?"

"If it's the latter situation, it's fine as long as the Kalendarium have electricity. There's no need to absorb human consciousness at all. They don't extract human consciousness because of hunger but for another reason?"

"If it were the previous situation, ignoring the question of whether consciousness lifeforms exist, just the fact that consciousness lifeforms feed on consciousness makes sense. It makes sense, but the question is: Why did Master Zhuang implant complete thoughts into the Heartless to maintain the nuclear power plant and ensure the electricity supply here?"

Jiang Baimian stood rooted to the ground, her mind filled with thoughts as she stared at the large silver-black machine.

Her intuition told her that the matter was quite different from her previous guesses. These discrepancies hid the real reason for the Old World's destruction and the final goal of a portion of the Kalendarium's uprising.

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In the maze, Shang Jianyao pushed open the blood-red door. Having been dominated by his rashness, he didn't hesitate to walk into the room.

His vision blurred before he saw a room filled with machines.

The machines varied in size. The large ones occupied less than half the space, and the small ones were only the size of an adult man's palm.

At this moment, they were distributed in different places and were connected in various ways. The corresponding signal lights flickered with red, yellow, or blue lights, illuminating the entire room like Weed City's bars and clubs. However, there weren't as many colors.

"Xiaochong! Xiaochong!" Shang Jianyao shouted as he saw a man in a black robe standing in the middle of the room.

The man was originally standing with his hands behind his back, but he slowly turned around when he heard Shang Jianyao's shout.

He was in his forties, had black hair, and a very elegant beard around his mouth.

"Teacher Du Heng!" Shang Jianyao was 'shocked.'

The man was Du Heng, who had come to the Eighth Research Institute with them but had disappeared with the wind.

Shang Jianyao then clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. "I understand! Your surname is Du, and Xiaochong's surname is Du. Master Zhuang's surname is also Du, so you are one of Master Zhuang's personalities!"

These words had the essence of Inference Clowning.

However, Shang Jianyao didn't doubt his judgment at all and said eloquently, "It's no wonder as Master Zhuang's childhood, Xiaochong was chased around by you. The Kalendarium are shameless! It's no wonder you lack many memories. As a single personality, there are many things you have never experienced."

Du Heng laughed. "I changed to my current name after I became a neuroscientist. It's to distinguish me from that experimental subject that's myself. I've had a tendency to have split personalities since I was young."

"Because you were born an Awakened." Shang Jianyao expressed his understanding.

"As for the memory loss, it's not because of a split personality but the aftereffects of the disaster back then," Du Heng added.

At this moment, Shang Jianyao suddenly became nervous and looked around. "I've already opened the door and entered, but Truth and the others haven't attacked? Do they really expect me to persuade you?"

Du Heng's expression didn't change as he said with a slightly complicated tone, "They will begin soon. True chaos is imminent."

"How will they begin?" Shang Jianyao was curious and confused.

Du Heng looked at him and sighed. "Every Old Task Force sent by Pangu Biology should have an Awakened in the Master Zhuang domain who paid the price of having a split personality."

Chapter 934: Back Then

Shang Jianyao was stunned for a moment. "What's the use of that?"

He couldn't figure out what role he played.

Du Heng pointed at the ground. "Look."

“No way I’m doing so!” Shang Jianyao replied reflexively as he looked down at his feet.

The tiles had already turned ethereal at some point, revealing the situation on the floor below.

It happened to be a vertically mirrored scene of this floor. The ceiling was the ground, and the ground was the ceiling.

Shang Jianyao’s other self was another him, like a shadow that extended from his feet. His entire body hung there upside down, but there were no signs of blood pooling in his brain.

Shang Jianyao held the small speaker he had conjured and looked at Xiaochong, who was playing a game not far away. He said excitedly, “I won’t lose to you in this game now.”

Xiaochong grumbled and replied, “We’ll see.”

The Shang Jianyao in front of Du Heng cast his gaze around.

Every wall here completely turned ethereal, producing different scenes of Shang Jianyao and Du Heng meeting.

There was the rash Shang Jianyao who had experienced the rebellious high school student, Du Shaochong. There was also the calm and rational Shang Jianyao who sought the advice of the scientist, Du Heng, regarding Awakenings. There were a total of nine scenes.

After retracting his gaze from the him—whom valued relationships—consoling the experimental subject, Du Shaochong, Shang Jianyao lowered his head again and glanced at himself.

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“Ten...” He was confused and shocked. He then looked at Du Heng opposite him and blurted out, “I only have ten personalities. Why are there eleven of me now?”

“Who am I?” This ‘I’ referred to him in the room.

Du Heng smiled. “You and I are an ensemble.”

“Oh...” Shang Jianyao had an expression that said: “I see, but I still don’t understand.”

His thoughts jumped as he uncontrollably turned to another matter. “When did you find Xiaochong?”

Du Heng smiled and replied, “It’s all thanks to you. When you opened the liquid nitrogen canister at the Holm Fertility Center and brought the white gas to your Sea of Origins, solidifying it with Xiaochong’s rift, he returned.”

Just as Du Heng said that, the machines in the room lit up at the same time, blinking faster and faster.

“What’s this?” Shang Jianyao’s face was covered in the interfering lights—there were red, yellow, and blue colors.

Du Heng sighed slightly and said, “The Arbiter of Fate and the others have begun.”

Shang Jianyao thought for a moment and asked, “What are they doing, and what role did I play?”

He took the latter question to heart.

Du Heng calmly replied, “What they need is for you to open that door. They need multiple versions of you and multiple versions of me to make contact at the same time. Only then can they accurately locate the room where the two of us are in. They can then circle around the barrier from multiple entrances and invade this place, making it difficult for me to defend against them.”

“I don’t understand.” Shang Jianyao shook his head honestly. He then suggested in a friendly manner, “Why don’t you guys get busy first? You can explain in detail later.”

Du Heng looked at the rapidly blinking, sometimes bright, and sometimes dim machine lights and smiled. “There’s still some time. It’s a good opportunity to communicate.”

“Sure, sure.” Shang Jianyao didn’t stand on ceremony.

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In the vortex-like building, in the experimental area filled with equipment that looked like an advanced engine room.

Jiang Baimian retracted her thoughts and planned on making the best use of her time to study the ‘mainframe’ and the surrounding ‘space capsules.’

At this moment, she saw the signal lights on the mainframe light up at the same time and blink rapidly as if something important was happening.

Jiang Baimian pondered for a moment before turning around without hesitation and running toward the entrance.

With something abnormal happening, she had to quickly communicate with Shang Jianyao—who was ‘outside.’

Fortunately, there was no other exit here—there was only one path.

...

In the maze, in the room filled with machines, all the walls turned illusory.

Du Heng revealed a reminiscing expression and sighed. “This matter has to start with humans studying consciousness and inborn superpowers.”

“If it’s a long story, make it short.” Shang Jianyao still understood that time was of the essence in the current situation.

Du Heng pointed at him and laughed. “None of the students I used to teach dare to speak to me like that. Even Wu Meng—who was the most talented in scientific research—only knew how to imitate me and read books like the Dao De Jing and the Notes on the Three Metaphysical Classic, but he didn’t ask for help.”

“Wu Meng is your student?” Shang Jianyao was alarmed.

“I was the one who gave Wu Meng his Ashlandic name.” Du Heng shook his head. “That’s another matter. Let’s get back to the topic at hand.”

Wu Meng was of Red River ethnicity.

“Yes, yes.” Shang Jianyao shut his mouth and nodded repeatedly.

Du Heng revealed a reminiscing expression again. “I’ve always been special since I was young. I was observed and studied as I attended school. This also resulted in my autism and being rebellious during high school for a period of time, preventing my superpowers from becoming stronger.

“Later, I figured it out. Instead of letting others study me, it was better for me to study myself. Therefore, I studied hard and became a famous neuroscientist and superpower researcher. When various countries established the nine future-facing research institutes, I was invited to be Chief Scientist and President of the Eighth Research Institute.”

“No wonder Oray knows you.” Shang Jianyao finally couldn’t help but interject.

They were both Chief Scientists in their respective fields.

“We had met a few times. Maximian encountered a bottleneck in artificial intelligence and wanted to get some inspiration from us and the Sixth Institute,” Du Heng replied simply. “I won’t talk much about the research; you won’t understand anyway. It’s more likely if your companion named Jiang Baimian was around.”

His eyes glazed over for a moment. “That day, Oak, Richard, Lin Sui, Mono, Dufftiel, Sylvie, and I brought two experimental volunteers into the core area. We planned on testing our research results.”

“Were those two volunteers Li Hui and Jiang Xiaoyue?” Shang Jianyao asked.

“Yes.” Du Heng nodded. “Half of the machine we created came from our research, and the other half came from the results of the exchange with the Sixth Institute. Yes, the Sixth Institute is the

Eternals project team. That machine could create a virtual reality space like a large-scale holographic projection game.

“We connected Li Hui and Jiang Xiaoyue’s brains, planning on using a special method to stimulate their claustra and thalami as a type of Awakening to rouse their remnant consciousness. If it didn’t work, we would’ve considered trying to produce a brand-new consciousness based on their current bodies and the machine using this method, allowing them to live in the virtual world.

“To prevent sudden physical deaths, we prepared many biological chips and memory chips. The biological chips’ structures would be affected by the corresponding, magnified brain waves to a certain extent to adapt to the different human specimens. The people from the Sixth Institute were really good.”

As Shang Jianyao asked with a mix of excitement and worry, “Is there really enough time?”

The machines in the room flickered more and more intensely. Arbiter of Fate and the other Kalendarium seemed like they would enter at any moment.

“I’m old. I can’t stop myself when I reminisce about the past.” Du Heng laughed self-deprecatingly. “Don’t worry. I’ve split out more than ten personalities and have been running this place for a long time. It won’t be a problem for me to hold them off for a while.”

Shang Jianyao threw his worries to the back of his mind. “The experiment failed?”

“In a sense, we actually succeeded. Furthermore, it was a success that exceeded our expectations,” Du Heng said with a sigh. “In the beginning, we used Li Hui as an experimental subject. However, we saw his brain waves gradually return to normal and mutate in the direction of an Awakened, but his thalamus suddenly disappeared.

“The corresponding spot turned into a strange black hole. It sucked our consciousness out of our bodies like a vortex and absorbed it.

“Most of the Second Research Zone’s personnel died in this storm, and only a few survived in a special form. The cities attached to us also encountered the same disaster. Some were relatively serious, with the entire city instantly perishing. Some were relatively fine, with only a portion dying. However, the remaining humans basically became Heartless.”

“Tai City.” Shang Jianyao pointed out the place where the former situation had happened.

Du Heng’s expression changed slightly as he sighed. “Although I was rebellious in high school, my days in Tai City was still a very beautiful memory for me.”

He didn’t continue the topic and continued recalling. “I was the first to wake up and realized that although I didn’t have a body, my consciousness still existed. I was floating in the darkness.

“After spending some time examining and studying it, I had a preliminary guess: The mystery of human consciousness involves something at a higher level—or rather, this model has to be established in a higher dimension. Our research results were lacking some important details. Although we successfully awakened Li Hui’s consciousness, we also opened a ‘door’ that led to a higher dimension, producing a series of chain reactions that resulted in the disaster that’s the Old World’s destruction.

“It’s unknown if the ‘door’ had absorbed billions of human consciousnesses and obtained sufficient energy or if it was some other reason, but it had dragged the virtual reality created by our machine to a higher dimension, forming a dark world that overlapped with the Ashlands.

“And our consciousness relies on the biological chip attached to that machine to live in this world and survive.”

“An advanced version of the Eternal project?” Shang Jianyao had always been obsessed with mechanical monks.

Du Heng nodded. “Sort of.

“Then, I was surprised to discover that with the help of this Dark World, I could project my power to every place in the Ashlands as long as I can locate it... Here, we are like legendary deities.

“At this moment, Li Hui, Jiang Xiaoyue, Zhao Danlin, Oak, Lin Sui, Yu Huatong, Winst, and Brian woke up.

“As I was the President and Chief Scientist, and I knew more about the darkness than them, they chose to obey my orders back then. With the help of the machine and our strength, we built a city that used the Second Research Zone as a blueprint. They called it the New World.

“The New World’s main body is our psychic forces. It’s essentially a consciousness space that’s elevated from reality.

“During the establishment of the New World, I gained access to that machine and gave them the corresponding privileges.”

Chapter 935: Divergence between the Two Parties

Shang Jianyao ignored ‘Master Zhuang’ Du Heng in front of him and clapped his hands. “So that’s what privilege means! Wu Meng just won’t speak human!”

Du Heng didn’t mind Shang Jianyao’s casual interjection and laughed self-deprecatingly. “Back then, the joy got to our heads. We believed that we had really elevated ourselves into the forbidden zone of the gods. We believed that we would live forever.”

“I now believe that Wu Meng is your student,” Shang Jianyao said sincerely.

They were all the same. The only difference was that Wu Meng often was about knowing the hows but not the whys, and he often tried to ‘integrate’ the Dao into his life.

Du Heng laughed. “We spent a lot of time considering our titles and unanimously agreed that we can’t directly call ourselves deities—it’s too tacky. As you know, I like games very much. I found inspiration in a game and decided to use the Kalendarium as the name of our batch of deities. I then chose the corresponding months to be in charge. Coincidentally, there were a total of 13 of us. We matched it to the concept of 12 months plus a leap month. Later, I withheld privileges to Truth because there were too many of us after he joined. There was no way to strictly make the correspondence, and we would lose the mathematical beauty and the framing...”

“It’s not because Last Man occupies the spot?” Shang Jianyao asked in surprise.

“No.” Du Heng shook his head.

Shang Jianyao sighed. “If I were Truth and knew that this was the real reason, I would definitely die with eyes wide open.”

“But in a sense, Last Man does occupy that position,” said Du Heng after some thought.

As long as Truth became a Kalendaria in a way that replaced Last Man, there was no lacking correspondence, nor was there a loss of mathematical beauty.

“That’s true.” Shang Jianyao was convinced and praised sincerely, “As expected of a senior gamer. You value the beauty of the framing so much.”

As for mathematical beauty, he couldn’t feel it.

Du Heng didn’t continue the topic. Under the rapidly blinking lights, he sighed with emotion and said, “I also like Daoist culture very much, so I gave myself the title ‘Master Zhuang.’ They also followed their own ideas and gradually changed their names to Subhuti, Double Sun, and Arbiter of Fate...”

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“What should I call myself if I can become a Kalendaria? The title ‘Hey’ isn’t serious at all... How about ‘Fate?’” Shang Jianyao fell into a dilemma.

Du Heng didn’t answer his question, and his eyes revealed a hint of vicissitudes. “Everyone has selfish motives. After the initial adaptation phase, we planned on monopolizing the Deities’ Forbidden Zone and preventing others from becoming Kalendarium. For this reason, we used the New World’s uniqueness to establish Star Cluster Hall together. We manifested everyone’s Mind World and Sea of Consciousness into the Sea of Origins and connected the Sea of Origins by creating the Mind Corridor.”

“What’s with the New World’s door?” Shang Jianyao was rather curious.

Du Heng chuckled. “The New World’s door was naturally opened by us; this is both a trap and an opportunity. We can set where the door appears in any room in the Mind Corridor and give hints to make people feel a sense of familiarity and dare to continue exploring.

“Any of us can let an Awakened who has just entered the Mind Corridor see the door directly as long as we are willing. However, this consumes additional energy on our end when providing the impetus. Otherwise, the strength of an Awakened at the Mind Corridor level isn’t enough. They

have to explore the depths and improve themselves before they can easily open the door with their own strength.

“And coming to the New World is equivalent to completely accepting our management. You can’t cause any more waves, much less become a Kalendaria.”

Shang Jianyao was confused. “Why do you say it’s still an opportunity?”

This was a clear trap!

“Without the door we provide, humans can only reach half the New World level at present,” Du Heng explained simply. “Do you think the amplification and enhancement of brain waves can have such a strong electromagnetic control effect and even interfere with matter? Only by being in the Mind Corridor and the New World can we use the uniqueness of this place to do what currently seems ordinary.”

Shang Jianyao’s focus deviated again. He stroked his chin and said, “In other words, even without Star Cluster Hall, Mind Corridor, and that door, normal Awakened can still reach the New World step by step. However, their perception range and abilities are much weaker?”

“Yes.” Du Heng nodded.

Shang Jianyao inquired, “If such an Awakened can enter the Second Research Zone you mentioned and think of a way to bypass the permissions, control that machine, and steal access, can they also become a Kalendaria?”

Du Heng nodded slightly. “The other premise is to enter the laboratory and undergo the final stimulation to develop the brain to a certain extent.”

He then said, “Otherwise, why do you think I control the remaining people of the Eighth Institute and let them guard this place, killing all efforts to figure out the reason for the Old World’s destruction?”

“Another reason is that electricity is needed to maintain that machine,” Shang Jianyao helped add.

Suddenly, his expression changed. “Brain waves! You just said brain waves! Are the mind controllers that those people in the Salvation Army mentioned true in a sense?”

“That’s their own imagination.” Du Heng first denied it before saying, “For Awakened who rely on themselves to reach the Mind Corridor or even the New World using a platform we built, a complete electromagnetic shield can indeed resist the influence they exert. But as long as they can use the uniqueness of this place, the effects of that kind of protection would be lacking.”

“Oh, oh.” Only then did Shang Jianyao remember that he had diverted the topic for a while. The blinking lights around him reached a pressing level. “Continue on with the main topic.”

Du Heng looked at the door and sighed slightly. “In the beginning, everything was beautiful until we realized that we would starve and need to feed on human consciousness.”

“Isn’t it fine as long as you rely on biochips and electricity?” Shang Jianyao resisted the idea.

Du Heng shook his head. “Our existence is very special. We only rely on it but aren’t rooted in biological chips. When using our abilities, we can indeed absorb electricity through it to enhance our might, but our consciousness will still deteriorate.

“Those mechanical monks aren’t able to avoid this either, but their consciousness has already been transplanted into biological chips. The rate at which their consciousness dissipates is very slow, allowing them to live for hundreds or even a thousand years.

“Sigh, when we reached a breaking point of our starvation, we became weak from hunger. We betrayed our conscience and morals and began to eat humans. Furthermore, we also realized that we still had to do so even if we didn’t need to feed on human consciousness.

“The formation of this New World is related to the mass extraction of human consciousnesses when the Old World was destroyed. It’s also weakening bit by bit, so there needs to be fresh blood entering to maintain its stability. Otherwise, it will completely collapse or disappear in decades.”

Du Heng fell silent for a few seconds before sighing. “From that day onward, we became completely different. Some people really no longer viewed themselves as humans. During that period of time, I didn’t restrain all the Kalendarium and allowed everyone to do whatever they wanted. In the end, many religions were born in the Ashlands, and human disputes never subsided. There was chaos everywhere.

“From the situation back then, even if more than 90% of people died when the Old World was destroyed and even if a large number of Heartless were active in the Ashlands later, humans could still slowly rebuild civilization after seven to eight winters. After all, a lot of technological information and industrial machines were relatively well-preserved. However, the inclusion of us Kalendarium allowed the Ashlands to continue sliding into the abyss.”

“Yes, it’s precisely because there was no hope in the Chaotic Era that the Salvation Army appeared.” Shang Jianyao sighed.

Du Heng nodded. “When the number of humans decreased significantly again and a portion of civilization was severed, putting them in imminent danger, I teamed up with a few Kalendarium—who were worried about this—and had a few frank talks with the rest. We fought twice.

“Considering the importance of humans to the New World’s stability, we finally agreed that the Kalendarium should try their best not to interfere with the Ashlands’ matters, reduce the frequency of Heartless disease outbreaks, and allow humanity to recuperate.

“At the same time, I—who obtained victory—also restrained other Kalendarium, preventing them from leaving the tower normally. I also prevented them from hiding their every move in the New World from me. This is equivalent to having their operating logs being transparent to me. Therefore, their private connections are either through the people and objects in the Ashlands or through Truth.”

“Why isn’t Truth restrained?” Shang Jianyao asked in confusion.

Du Heng said, “He’s also a researcher. He was transferred to the Second Research Zone as soon as he entered the Eighth Institute because of the disaster. He ended up losing his body and entering the New World. He woke up late. By then, we had already completed the allocation. Nobody was willing to have another person share their privileges.

“When we later had a conflict, he kept hiding and didn’t appear, so he wasn’t locked in the tower. Furthermore, he wasn’t a Kalendarium and didn’t have a log. I had a split personality and often fought myself. It was impossible for me to monitor the Awakened in the New World in detail, so I made him the most special one.

“At critical moments, he can also obtain certain privileges through the Kalendarium backing him.”

Without waiting for Shang Jianyao to ask again, Du Heng steered the topic back on track. “After that conflict, the Ashlands ended the Chaotic Era and began the New Calendar. The restrained Kalendarium definitely weren’t happy after losing a portion of their freedom. As time passed, we discovered another problem.

“That is: machines have lifespans, and machines age. Once that machine breaks down, the New World will either collapse or end up floating in the ‘darkness’ until it dissipates once it loses its connection with the Ashlands and its corresponding supporting services.

“Many components can be replaced, but the core components can’t be replaced while the system is operating. As long as the power is cut, we might directly disappear. The Arbiter of Fate and the others hope to make preparations in advance and rely on the remaining Eighth and Sixth Institutes to build another machine. When the time comes, they will attempt a migration. However, this might very well require a large number of human consciousnesses as catalysts or stabilizers.

“Back then, I had already made a decision and didn’t agree to it. They began a private rebellion, and uprisings have happened again and again.”

“What’s the decision?” Shang Jianyao asked curiously.

Du Heng looked at him and smiled. “I plan on destroying that machine and ending all of this, ending this disaster that has lasted for decades.”

“Huh?” Shang Jianyao was shocked.

Upon seeing this, Du Heng teased, “Otherwise, who do you think gave that nuclear warhead to your team?”

Chapter 936: Request

Shang Jianyao was first shocked before he came to a realization. “No wonder there were so many coincidences!”

Du Heng maintained his slightly teasing smile and said, “In order for Jiang Baimian to break through the barrier and bring the nuclear bomb to the machine, I specially guided her so that she could quickly enter the Mind Corridor.”

“Oh...” Shang Jianyao had an ‘I see’ expression. He then recalled something and asked curiously and with concern, “Do the Kalendarium who want to maintain the status quo, as well as Truth and the rest, know that you want to destroy everything?”

“The Arbiter of Fate and the others should only know that I have some personalities with strong self-destructive tendencies, but those aren’t mainstream. They belong to the suppressed category.” Du Heng smiled and said, “Otherwise, they wouldn’t have paid so little attention to your team and have such little interference to your team. They would only guide you to a certain extent at a few key points, personally or through an agent. Of course, this is mainly because they are afraid that you will feel persecuted because of this and do something irrational and destructive.”

The pressing blinking lights of different colors dyed the room with a hint of heightened urgency.

Shang Jianyao gave a terse acknowledgment. “In other words, Truth and the others still don’t know that our team has such a nuclear bomb?”

“Although I’ve long added an influence to your corresponding memories to make any reader ignore them, there are always variables and accidents in the world. I can’t guarantee anything.” Du Heng was relaxed. “Even if they know now, they can’t exert any influence on Jiang Baimian unless they can defeat me first and obtain control of the New World.”

Shang Jianyao nodded slowly.

He looked back at the door as if he were looking at Arbiter of Fate and the other Kalendarium that were attempting to invade. “It’s no wonder you still let me push open the door and walk into this room despite knowing what they were up to.”

“I actually can’t stop it even if I wanted to.” Du Heng laughed self-deprecatingly. “My various personalities are very independent, and different personalities guard different—uh, although it’s not accurate enough, it’s better to describe them as ‘ports.’ Therefore, even if I don’t want to open the door for you, Xiaochong—who’s on good terms with you—won’t listen. He will open the door corresponding to his. When you enter his room, you—who have the same split personality—will obtain an ensemble and automatically come here.”

Shang Jianyao didn’t understand, but he knew something called ‘tyranny of the majority.’ “Won’t you send a few people who aren’t friends with me to guard Xiaochong’s room and lock him up the moment you discover that he wants to open the door?”

“My use of ‘ports’ was indeed not accurate enough.” Du Heng thought for a moment. “Can you destroy one of your personalities or fuse it with another personality?”

“No.” Shang Jianyao shook his head.

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Du Heng nodded. “Every personality of mine corresponds to a room here. As I hold the highest privilege in that machine and control the New World, every room naturally becomes a port that leads here. I’m only talking about how it works, not the principle. You can understand, right?”

“Yes.” Shang Jianyao had learned plenty from his illness and understood this immediately. “For other personalities to enter Xiaochong’s room, it is equivalent to attempting to fuse with him. It’s impossible.”

Du Heng smiled in satisfaction. “It’s good that you understand.

“Here, my flaws show many problems. They are a part of being targeted.”

Shang Jianyao’s thoughts raced as he asked in confusion, “You should have some personalities that want to change the situation. Won’t they secretly go easy and let Truth and the others in?”

In other words, the Arbiter of Fate didn’t need to send different Old Task Force members over and over again.

“Some personalities want to change the situation, but none of them are willing to hand over our dominance of the New World to them. Even if we really want to rebuild order and resolve the latent dangers, we should be the ones in charge.” Du Heng seemed to be affected by those personalities as he spoke confidently and domineeringly.

Clap! Clap! Clap!?Shang Jianyao clapped—

He sighed. “It’s no wonder the various large factions haven’t sent anyone over after we told the company the Eighth Research Institute’s location. They’re clearly making preparations, but they are actually stalling!”

Before obtaining full control over the New World or completely failing, the Arbiter of Fate and the others wouldn’t allow people from the various large factions to enter. It was precisely because they understood this that the Eighth Research Institute immediately transferred personnel and didn’t guard this place.

In any case, Professor Li, Doctor, and the others—who had some guesses about the past situation—were loyal to whoever controlled the New World. Mortals shouldn’t participate in a fight between deities. They could return and continue being gatekeepers after the matter was over.

Since Master Zhuang had the intention of destroying everything, he naturally didn’t stop them from evacuating. He might’ve even secretly encouraged them. After all, if he didn’t say a word, the Eighth Research Institute personnel currently loyal to him might not be able to muster the courage.

“To the true higher-ups of the various large factions, there’s only one reason to stop them from figuring out the Eighth Institute’s exact location: The higher-ups don’t allow it. Yes, except for the Salvation Army.” Du Heng confirmed Shang Jianyao’s words.

“How sad. It feels like the Salvation Army isn’t in this circle. Could it be that they haven’t received the news of the Eighth Research Institute’s exact location?” Shang Jianyao was very sympathetic.

Perhaps in order to change the situation, some Kalendarium had secretly supported the Salvation Army after the New Calendar. But that was closer to cooperation than protection, much less treating them as one of their own.

Du Heng smiled and didn’t answer this ridiculous question.

He looked at the flickering lights and said, “They’re almost here. If you have anything you want to ask, quickly ask. I have something to tell you later.”

Shang Jianyao tersely acknowledged it twice. “Why are your remains under the old pagoda tree in Linhe Village?”

“Don’t you understand the principle of returning to one’s roots?” Du Heng sighed and smiled. “After I discovered that my body was completely dead, I got my good student, Wu Meng, to come to the Second Research Zone and bring my remains back to my hometown. He was deeply involved in the brain development and superpowers project. Back then, he happened to be having an academic exchange elsewhere and escaped the calamity. He was the most suitable candidate. Heh, I didn’t expect him to have ambitions because of this.

“He had already undergone a preliminary Awakening. The moment he saw the machine and the corresponding biological chips, he had a certain guess. Later, with the research results of our project, he established his secret laboratory in that ruin and used it to circumvent the Sea of Origins and the Mind Corridor to become rather powerful.

“He’s the first and only human in the Ashlands who doesn’t rely on the platform we provide to reach the level of half a New World human. This is also the limit of humans.

“He sought to seize control of the machine from the outside. For this reason, he did many experiments and created a large number of strange creatures with unique abilities in that ruin. Back then, some Kalendarium wanted to cooperate with him. I could only control this place without freeing myself up. At the same time, I forcefully sent his consciousness into the New World with the help of the Eternal Time Church’s Celestial Master and First City and locked him up.”

“Very exciting,” Shang Jianyao praised sincerely. He then asked in confusion, “The Sea of Origins can be bypassed? Isn’t this our own mind world?”

Du Heng smiled smugly. “When we built that platform, our greatest achievements were two things. The first was that we controlled the damage to our brains to a certain extent through Star Cluster Hall, preventing a situation where several prices were paid at the same time. The second was to associate the second step of improvement with the enhancement of one’s will and changes in mentality. Therefore, there were the islands of fear corresponding to psychological traumas. This was more systematic and quantifiable, significantly reducing the difficulty for Awakened to enter the Mind Corridor.

“However, this was a sufficient condition, not a necessary condition. You can also enter the Mind Corridor using other methods. For example, forcefully stimulating and developing the brain.”

“What’s with the ones that can’t Awaken?” Shang Jianyao changed the question.

Du Heng calmly replied, “The rule we set was to control the number of Awakened and make Awakening a difficult task. With the current system and the New World’s uniqueness, the success

rate can actually reach 80%. But if that happens, the failures will basically suffer brain damage, but it might not be serious.”

Therefore, people who didn’t Awaken or show any abnormalities during every Awakening Ceremony were equivalent to having a normal and beautiful sleep there.

Shang Jianyao observed the blinking lights around him. “I have another question. Why do your 13 Kalendarium happen to correspond to the brain’s 13 functional areas? Isn’t this too much of a coincidence?”

“It’s not too much of a coincidence, but only that this number of people—who correspond to different brain functional areas—managed to survive. Some of us had already Awakened back then, but a large number of us were still ordinary people. Do you remember me saying that we were using Li Hui’s brain as an experimental subject back then?”

“I remember.” Shang Jianyao nodded.

Du Heng explained in detail, “Li Hui’s thalamus was the one which allowed us to discover the anomaly. After our consciousness was extracted, we successfully filled his different brain functions and fused them with the anomaly. This was the first step in surviving. After that, the biological chip took effect. The virtual reality created by the machine underwent a qualitative change.”

“No wonder January is Subhuti!” Shang Jianyao came to a realization.

Du Heng nodded. “Subhuti’s corresponding domain also became more complete as a result, allowing him to obtain abilities that don’t belong to the thalamus.”

“Thirteen functional zones, thirteen Kalendarium...” Shang Jianyao repeated and asked in confusion, “Then, how did Truth survive?”

Du Heng simply replied, “Fourteen functional zones. He’s the hippocampus.”

“Oh.” Shang Jianyao had satisfied his curiosity and obtained sufficient information.

Du Heng didn’t give him a chance to ask any more questions. “I’m telling you so much because I hope you can help me end all of this.”

“Huh?” Shang Jianyao was confused.

Du Heng smiled and said, “After the Arbiter of Fate and the others threw you in, they won’t care about you anymore. From their point of view, no matter what happens, the subsequent outcome has nothing to do with a mortal like you. You can’t be of much use because they believe that everyone is selfish. Very few people take the initiative to sacrifice themselves for unrelated people when they aren’t forced. The higher their status, the greater their authority. The stronger they are, the less likely it will be like this.

“They don’t know you, but I do. I’ve come into contact with you and know that you’re a special person with a pure heart. Therefore, I hope that you can get Jiang Baimian to place your body in the corresponding experimental chamber later and activate the Deities’ Forbidden Zone mode to further mutate your brain. Then, with my help, you can obtain a certain level of privilege in the New World and become a Kalendaria to resist the Arbiter of Fate and the others with me.

“Our main goal is to stall for time while creating a relatively normal electromagnetic environment so that Jiang Baimian can remotely detonate the nuclear bomb. Of course, you can also refuse and not participate in this matter. When the time comes, seize the opportunity when the New World’s order collapses to return to your body. Even without you, it’s not like I have zero confidence. I just want to improve the chances of success.

“Yes, I didn’t implant any thoughts into you, nor did I attempt to influence you with other abilities because you wouldn’t be able to pass the last stimulus if that happens.”

Du Heng’s expression instantly turned serious as he sincerely said, “Let me formally ask you: Are you willing to give up your life to end this human disaster that has lasted for decades with me?”

Shang Jianyao fell silent. After a while, he raised his right hand and solemnly pressed it to his left chest before answering in a deep voice, “For all of humanity!”

Chapter 937: Taking Action

Jiang Baimian returned to the waiting area and walked to Shang Jianyao—who was lying on the sofa.

She extended out her psyche in an attempt to make contact with the other party's consciousness, but it was like a rock sinking into the sea without causing any ripples.

The familiar darkness and faint light were gone! This was the first time such a situation had happened.

Jiang Baimian frowned and confirmed Shang Jianyao's condition. She didn't see anything abnormal.

Could it be that he isn't able to contact the outside world after pushing open the blood-red door and entering the room where all of Master Zhuang's personalities are??Jiang Baimian ruminated.

She forced herself to calm down and planned on making an attempt every minute to prevent the scenario where Shang Jianyao was temporarily delayed by certain factors and not completely isolated.

If ten attempts met with failure or if the anomaly in the machine spread, she would decisively take action according to her judgment.

After eight minutes, Jiang Baimian spread her psyche to Shang Jianyao for the eighth time.

What cheered her up was that the familiar darkness appeared in front of her eyes again. A faint glow then condensed, illuminating Shang Jianyao's figure.

Phew...?

Jiang Baimian exhaled and said, "There are large and complicated machines in the core experimental area, but the situation doesn't seem right."

She went straight to the point.

"Doesn't seem right means it's right!" Shang Jianyao wasn't surprised at all. "Listen to me first..."

He recounted what Master Zhuang had said and spoke quickly like a machine gun.

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Having completely confirmed that he had someone backing him and that he wouldn't suffer any blow by revealing information, he gave up on the secret message system they had previously constructed and used the most direct method that didn't require any further conversion.

This could save a lot of time.

“Unfortunately, I don't know Mind Reading. Otherwise, I could pack and compress the more detailed content and send it to you directly.” Finally, Shang Jianyao sighed with regret.

Jiang Baimian quietly listened and sighed with a solemn expression. “The arrow is already on the bow; we have no choice but to fire.”

She then added, “The situation described by Teacher Du Heng is basically the same as what I saw in the core experimental area. On this point, he shouldn't be lying.”

“Besides, what he did will clearly kill him.” Shang Jianyao believed Du Heng based on this simple reason. He didn't dare to say anything else, but he felt that there was nothing wrong with this matter.

After he and Jiang Baimian carried out the series of operations, the nuclear bomb would be detonated, and this place would be leveled. None of the Kalendarium—including Du Heng—who relied on the biological chips to live in the New World would survive.

As Master Zhuang and the New World's controller, Du Heng was willing to sacrifice his life for this matter. His goal was definitely not to drag the entire Ashlands down with him.

Since there was nothing wrong with his goal, there wouldn't be much of a problem elsewhere.

“What if Teacher Du Heng has a strong inclination to self-destruct?” Jiang Baimian asked.

Shang Jianyao calmly said, “If that's the case, there's no way to hide it. How can Truth and the others not use this reason to persuade me?”

At this point, he sighed dejectedly. “Once the nuclear bomb explodes, Jacob and the other New World powerhouses will die with the Kalendarium’s consciousness.”

They were all good people he had certified.

“Before the nuclear bomb explodes, Big Boss and the other Kalendarium will definitely resist with all their might. When the time comes, the New World’s order will collapse, and the barrier will weaken. As long as Jacob and the others can seize the opportunity, they still have a chance of returning to the Ashlands safely.”

The premise was that they still had bodies.

“But if that happens, Wu Meng and the other baddies will also escape.” Shang Jianyao was in a dilemma.

Jiang Baimian couldn’t help but laugh. “Have you deeply experienced the feelings of those who want to maintain the status quo?”

Her expression then turned solemn. “How can the world be so perfect? How can all kinds of problems be considered and have everything tied up in a neat little bow? Most of the time, we make choices between bad and worse.”

Shang Jianyao fell silent for a moment before saying, “I understand.”

He then said, “Big Boss and the others are about to storm in. Quickly bring my body to the core research area and use that machine’s Deity’s Forbidden Zone to deliver the final stimulus.”

Jiang Baimian didn’t answer immediately. She looked at Shang Jianyao’s face, and her lips quivered a few times.

After a while, she asked in a deep voice, “Are you really sure about this? Once the nuclear bomb detonates, there’s no turning back.”

When the time came, even if she carried Shang Jianyao’s body out of the explosion range, the best outcome for him was to be in the same state as Li Hui and Jiang Xiaoyue back then once his consciousness was destroyed—a vegetative state.

Furthermore, Li Hui and Jiang Xiaoyue might not have completely lost their consciousness after being injured. If Shang Jianyao really did that, there was a high chance that he would be brain dead.

Shang Jianyao immediately laughed, revealing two rows of white teeth. “As you just said, the arrow is already on the bow; it has to be fired. Besides, I might not necessarily die. Even if I become a vegetable, as a New World-level Awakened, it will definitely be easier for me to regain consciousness or give birth to a new one than how it was for Li Hui and Jiang Xiaoyue back then.”

Jiang Baimian clasped her lips and didn't say a word. After a brief silence, she said solemnly, “Time is of the essence. Let's begin now.

“Oh right, give Little Red and Little White a signal and get them to begin taking action. Once Big Boss is prepared to risk her life, I'm worried that she will extract the human consciousness of all the employees in the building to replenish herself, just like what happened to the Fourth Research Institute back then.”

From the looks of it, Dawn wasn't hiding in the room deep in the Fourth Research Institute. Instead, it was a body that the Kalendaria had prepared for him through the Fourth Institute. Every time he needed to eat, he would get the higher-ups of the Fourth Institute to send some humans in.

After that, perhaps something went wrong in a particular uprising. In order to survive, Dawn had no choice but to drain his food reserves. Only Room 506's owner—who was protected by Master Zhuang—survived.

“Alright!” Shang Jianyao didn't forget about informing Long Yuehong and Bai Chen.

He and Jiang Baimian deliberately didn't mention anything else.

That was, Big Boss would risk her life, but wouldn't Eidolon Nun and the others? When the time came, there would probably be another Heartless outbreak in the Ashlands.

In the face of such a situation, Jiang Baimian could only hope that Master Zhuang could resolve the problem as soon as possible and control the damage suffered by the innocent to a certain extent.

She knew that Shang Jianyao probably thought the same—the lesser of two evils.

After the exchange, Jiang Baimian stood up and looked at Shang Jianyao's body on the sofa before looking at the core research area where the New World fundamentally was.

She didn't do anything for more than ten seconds, and her figure swayed slightly from the strange wind that blew out.

Gritting her teeth, Jiang Baimian carried Shang Jianyao on her back again, picked up the nuclear warhead, identified the direction, and ran toward the machine.

...

Pangu Biology, underground building, Room 14 on the 647th floor.

Long Yuehong—who was using the Old World's entertainment to kill time—suddenly heard Shang Jianyao's voice. "I have something very serious to tell you..."

Long Yuehong took out the recording pen from his pocket.

The electronic product automatically activated and played the recording! This was equivalent to telling Long Yuehong and Bai Chen to take action immediately and follow the plan.

Long Yuehong quickly switched off the recording pen and cast his gaze at Bai Chen.

Bai Chen nodded slightly.

The two of them stood up and walked to the door.

During this process, Long Yuehong inevitably thought of something—their preparations weren't done. The field training they had applied for had just been approved and had yet to begin. This gave them no chance to inform Geneva—who had already arrived in the area around Pangu Biology—to lurk near the underground building and await the provision of help.

Nothing is perfect...? Long Yuehong could only comfort himself.

The two of them came to the door. Bai Chen stretched out her right hand and gripped Long Yuehong's left palm.

They looked at each other without any hesitation.

Destination: Radio Station!

...

In the room behind the blood-red door, the ceiling, floor, and surrounding walls turned illusory. Red, yellow, and blue lights flickered rapidly in an abnormally intense manner.

Du Heng's gaze passed Shang Jianyao and looked at his other self that was filled with the desire for research.

In the corresponding room, the cheerful Shang Jianyao was watching Du Heng's experiment with an eager expression.

At this moment, the door not far from them suddenly turned illusory, imprinting countless warped figures. They were like the deepest and darkest nightmares.

Du Heng pointed there, sighed, and smiled. "Dawn—my good assistant and direct supervisor of the project, Oak. I remember that he liked to hold conferences and discussions very much and was obsessed with the feeling he got from brainstorming. His flaw is that he will fall into a deep coma every once in a while.

"Of course, don't expect to use this opportunity this time. The time for their uprising has clearly taken Oak into account. Oak probably just woke up not long ago."

Chapter 938: Old Friends

"Likes meetings..." Shang Jianyao's expression twisted slightly as if he had recalled some unpleasant memories.

Du Heng looked at his feet again.

In that room, Shang Jianyao—who sought novelty—was playing a game with Xiaochong.

The corresponding door was pitch-black as if the long night had arrived.

Du Heng pointed again and said, “Arbiter of Fate. Your Big Boss, the administrator of the Eighth Institute, Zhao Danlin.

“She has three degrees across two countries and is proficient in many languages. She’s domineering and shrewd, and she’s capable and efficient. She orderly managed the Eighth Institute, allowing me to be a hands-off manager and focus on scientific research.

“She was originally a very loving person who loved books and movies. She had bearing and substance, but after she became a Kalendaria, she gradually became what she is now. It was really unpredictable.

“The price she paid is drowsiness. She sleeps most of the time and doesn’t stay awake for more than a month a year.”

Although the Ashlands essentially only spoke two languages—Ashlandic and the Red River language—they also had all kinds of dialects and variants, resulting in someone being multilingual.

“So Big Boss sleeps all the time. No wonder she ignores her believers and doesn’t care about the company.” Shang Jianyao came to a realization.

He listened with relish.

Du Heng turned his body slightly and looked to the other side.

In the corresponding room, the honest Shang Jianyao was asking the autistic youth, Du Shaochong, if he had a crush on any girl. The scene was very awkward.

.....

The door there distorted, letting in rays of sunlight.

“Double Sun. Security Supervisor, Brian Stanley,” Du Heng said as he recalled. “He doesn’t know much about Ashlandic culture, but he’s very interested. He was tricked by Lin Sui and Dufftiel and was taught radio gymnastics and eye exercises. He wasn’t angry when he found out the truth later. Instead, he liked it very much and would do it whenever he had the time.

“His flaw is his forgetfulness, which can be exploited. If something distracts him later, he might very well forget what he’s here for. Yes, the premise is that Arbiter of Fate and the others don’t have the chance to remind him.”

As Master Zhuang, Du Heng had controlled the New World for years. He could flip through the operation logs of other Kalendarium and read the thoughts of others, slowly grasping the price of all the Kalendarium.

“Quite an interesting person,” Shang Jianyao commented.

Du Heng nodded. “He’s also a person who values his freedom very much.”

He looked elsewhere. He wanted to take this opportunity to ‘introduce’ the enemy Kalendaria to Shang Jianyao so that he could fully understand what kind of people the other party was and what kind of price they had paid. This was so they could carry out a targeted attack later.

The door to the corresponding room was already half-open, and it was dark behind it. There was a faint female figure.

Du Heng smiled and said, “Eidolon Nun. From finance, Yu Huatong. Back then, she was a girl with an especially lovely personality, and she was very vigilant when it came to her job. She looked at everyone who came to finance like they were about to file a fake reimbursement.

“Her problem is that she’s overly sensitive emotionally. It’s easy for her to be depressed, sad, angry, and resentful.”

“She helped us a lot,” Shang Jianyao said honestly.

Du Heng spun around and pointed at another room. “Golden Scale. Richard, one of the main researchers of the project. He also had some achievements in genetics.

“He’s the kind of guy with high IQ and low EQ. He hasn’t had a girlfriend despite his age. I once suspected that he had a crush on Dufftiel, but it was never confirmed.

“His price is symmetry OCD. If you want to use it against him, you have to be careful. This is a double-edged sword. If you’re not careful, it will make him completely lose his mind and attack crazily.”

Shang Jianyao looked at the door that had turned golden and symmetrical and asked in confusion, “Why are the characteristics displayed on the door so similar to their titles?”

“The essence of this place is a high-dimensional consciousness space. After addressing themselves that way and having it chanted by their believers for a long time, they subconsciously accepted it, so they naturally manifest it,” Du Heng explained casually.

He then pointed at a room and said, “Mandara. Sylvie. She was an assistant researcher on the project; she mainly did the chores. She’s a very motivated person and was especially hardworking. She hoped to obtain our recognition and become an official researcher as soon as possible.

“Her price is an extreme desire for flattery and admiration. For this, she’s willing to protect those scumbags. Perform well later.”

“Oh, oh.” Shang Jianyao had a look that said: “I’m thinking.”

Du Heng changed directions. “Truth—uh, what’s his name again? He had just entered the research institute back then, and I wasn’t the one who recruited him. I never knew his last name or first name, and later on, he used the title as an alias. There was no need to know.

“I remember that his family background seems to be quite good. He’s quite arrogant and quite a playboy.

“His price is a lack of self-discipline. He will inevitably answer or refute any question you ask.”

At this point in the introduction, he closed his eyes and muttered to himself, “Back then, we got along very well. We were serious at work, lively in private, and very united. We worked hard for the same goal...”

Shang Jianyao saw a glimmer in Du Heng’s eyes when he opened them.

...

In the vortex-shaped building.

Jiang Baimian spent ‘a little’ time before finally returning to the core research area. At this moment, the flickering lights gave her the feeling that the machines here were about to explode.

She walked step by step to the experiment capsules; she couldn’t be bothered to examine Subhuti’s corpse.

She put down the crate containing the nuclear warhead and opened the transparent cover of another capsule. She then placed Shang Jianyao’s body in and closed the door.

Then, she looked at the buttons on the dashboard.

There were many modes, and one of them was labeled as ‘Deity’s Forbidden Zone.’

Teacher Du Heng is indeed a former gaming youth and a rebellious high school student. He has such character when it comes to naming...?Jiang Baimian cursed as she checked the machine.

She believed that this was most likely named by Du Heng.

The researchers participating in the corresponding projects probably believed that humans would obtain the might of gods after the human brain was developed to its limits. The results of the different stages of the experiments deepened their confidence in this aspect.

Jiang Baimian looked up at the huge silver-black ‘mainframe’ and the surrounding cabinets containing biochips, then looked down at Shang Jianyao in the experiment capsule. Her right hand hovered above the button as if it had frozen there.

After a few seconds, she murmured, "Destroying the New World doesn't mean that you have to blow up the machine. Can't you just pull out the wires? Without the protection of the New World, the biochips will stop functioning. Those without bodies will definitely, uh, die on the spot. Their consciousness will dissipate, and those with bodies can take the opportunity to return to the Ashlands..."

Jiang Baimian felt that she had to give it a try. She carefully left the laboratory and came to the nearest cable.

She observed the wiring and determined that these weren't the most important cables. They were perfect for experimentation to prevent the Kalendarium from launching an intense counterattack.

After some thought, she pulled back and resolutely raised her right hand to fire a grenade at the cable.

Boom!

With an explosion, the cable seemed to have an invisible barrier that blocked all the shrapnel and shockwaves. This scene reminded her of the time she killed the murloc Oracle, but the invisible barrier didn't budge at all.

She relied on the military exoskeleton to avoid the aftershocks in time.

After getting up again, she thought for a moment and opened her palm.

A red laser shot out and landed on the invisible barrier, producing sizzling sounds, but it couldn't advance at all.

After trying the electromagnetic weapon to no avail, she turned to the mainframe.

She wanted to see if the button there could be touched.

As she expected, she encountered an invisible barrier before she could approach the mainframe.

Sigh, it looks like the only thing I can touch is the experiment capsules... Perhaps Teacher Du Heng spent a Herculean effort to 'fight' for it. Jiang Baimian's expression behind the visor turned gloomy.

She returned to the experiment capsule where he was lying.

Looking at the dreaming Shang Jianyao, Jiang Baimian couldn't make up her mind. However, she also knew that it would only ruin things if she delayed any longer.

Jiang Baimian closed her eyes and only opened them after more than ten seconds. She let out a long sigh and stretched out her right hand, resolutely pressing the 'Deity's Forbidden Zone' button.

Countless patches and needles extended out from different parts of the laboratory cabin and surrounded Shang Jianyao's head. Other instruments monitored his body's state.

Jiang Baimian knew that this was already the latest machine. When the Eighth Institute was first established, they had to rely on drilling into the head to carry out further experiments.

...

Pangu Biology, underground building.

The elevator quickly descended and kept stopping. From time to time, people would enter and exit.

Finally, only Long Yuehong and Bai Chen were left. They were about to reach the sixth floor where their destination was.

The two were silent until the elevator door opened.

Long Yuehong walked out and couldn't help but glance at Bai Chen. "Are you afraid?"

"No." Bai Chen shook her head. "I've been in more desperate situations than this."

Long Yuehong nodded and didn't say anything else. A thought surfaced in his mind: "I hope our children won't encounter similar things in the future and can live a happy and stable life."

With this thought in mind, Long Yuehong and Bai Chen left the stairwell and walked to the radio station.

Chapter 939: First Batch

The sixth floor of the underground building was divided into small partitions by walls, baffles, and iron gates. Every partition was a department.

The radio station was in Zone C. There were tables and chairs at the door, and an old man who didn't seem young and was almost at the age of retirement sat there.

The radio station wasn't a particularly important department, nor was it involved in confidential matters. It was already quite good to have a dedicated employee guarding the door.

Moreover, there was a team from the Security Department patrolling this floor.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen walked over and appeared very calm. It was as if they had been ordered by their superior to discuss an interview at the radio station.

In a sense, this was the truth. They had indeed been ordered by their superior, Jiang Baimian, to 'discuss' the matter regarding Shang Jianyao's interview.

As for whether the other party agreed or not, it wasn't in their considerations. They had to do it no matter what.

Just as the two of them reached the door, the old man asked warily, "Who are you looking for, and what are you doing here?"

Long Yuehong smiled. "We are Feng Yunying's friends. We have something to discuss with her."

Feng Yunying was his first blind date, and she was also the only radio station employee he knew.

As for the people like Hou Yi, he only knew her name but didn't know her details. He couldn't bluff his way through.

"Feng Yunying?" the old man asked back and received an affirmative answer.

He was very familiar with all the staff members at the radio station, so he naturally knew Feng Yunying. Therefore, he asked a few detailed questions to make sure they weren't lying to him by randomly mentioning the name of an employee.

.....

Long Yuehong answered fluently.

He had done his homework!

He hadn't seen Feng Yunying for two to three years, but his mother—Gu Hong—and Feng Yunying's mother were colleagues and had a very good relationship.

After making it clear that the radio station was their target, Long Yuehong had indirectly asked Gu Hong about many things, including whether Feng Yunying was still at the radio station, which program team she belonged to, what her job level was, who she had married, and whether she had children.

If it weren't for the fact that Bai Chen had found an opportunity to ask these questions on his behalf, Gu Hong would've most likely imagined that something had happened to her son's marriage and that he was having other thoughts.

Of course, Bai Chen's questions about Feng Yunying also made Gu Hong feel that something was amiss. She suspected that her daughter-in-law had heard something and wanted to dig up and raise an old issue.

Back then, there was nothing wrong when both of them were unmarried! Could it be that her son was indiscreet and still yearned for Feng Yunying, who had rejected him? Did he let it slip in his sleep one night?

The old gatekeeper nodded when he heard that, and his attitude became much friendlier. “Just register using your electronic card, and you can enter.”

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen took out their electronic cards and handed them over calmly.

They had no intention of hiding their identities at all. If this matter succeeded today, they would be the saviors of most of Pangu Biology’s employees. If it failed, it was impossible for the two of them to hide it.

There were cameras everywhere.

The ordinary-looking old man with a graying beard took the electronic cards and swiped them on an electronic device on the table.

The corresponding information was displayed on the small screen of the machine.

The old gatekeeper swept his gaze casually, and his gaze suddenly froze.

“D8? You’re already at D8?” He looked at Long Yuehong in surprise.

The young man opposite him looked to be only 26 or 27 years old. If it weren’t for the elements that left traces on him, he might’ve appeared even younger.

Even the radio station director was only a D8.

The old man had worked hard to reach D3 with his qualifications, waiting for his retirement before advancing another rank.

Long Yuehong raised his right hand and displayed the mechanical arm as he smiled. “I spent the past few years in the Security Department’s outfield team.”

“Oh.” The old man immediately felt better.

This young man had risked his life to reach his rank. He was already missing a limb and wasn't something enviable.

When he swiped Bai Chen's electronic card, his eyes almost popped out. "You are a D7?"

Bai Chen smiled and replied, "He and I are colleagues."

The old man wiped his forehead. "Go on in; go on in."

To him, D7 and D8 were considered reputable figures.

Which person like this wasn't a pillar of Pangu Biology? How could they ruin their future and cause trouble at the radio station?

That young man was already a D8 at such a young age. He might be able to make it to management in the future!

Moreover, nothing could be ruined. The work at the radio station was mainly to provide mental sustenance for the employees after they knocked off work. They only reported the time during the day.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen thanked him and walked forward unhurriedly.

...

On the lowest floor of the underground building, in the room with the supercomputer, Omega.

Some data entered, and after some calculations, it turned into a message: "Targets have made abnormal movements by visiting the radio station. Confirmation for normality is needed."

As this message was generated, Pangu Biology's Director Ji Ze's phone rang.

...

After entering the radio station, Long Yuehong and Bai Chen immediately walked to the recording studio.

They knew the exact layout, not because Long Yuehong couldn't find anything else to talk about when he was with Feng Yunying in the past, nor was it because he had spent a lot of effort figuring out the radio station through his relatives. This was all thanks to Shang Jianyao.

This guy wasn't just joking in the past about barging into the radio station and holding Hou Yi hostage to spread the news.

He had already secretly made some friends and drew out the layout of the radio station, committing it to memory. As the saying went, it was best to be prepared!

This was completely incomprehensible to ordinary people, but Shang Jianyao was a genuine mental patient after all.

According to what Long Yuehong knew, this guy would even silently 'update' the radio station map every time he returned to the company to prevent any changes in the layout due to renovations and expansion.

Therefore, Long Yuehong and Bai Chen were much more relaxed after obtaining detailed information beforehand. They only asked around to see if the radio station had undergone any major renovations recently.

Along the way, the two saw many radio station employees.

It was a relatively leisurely period for them. The doors to many rooms were open, and the employees gathered in groups and were chatting.

Long Yuehong saw Hou Yi at a glance.

It wasn't that he knew the other party, but the broadcaster's characteristics were too obvious.

She was even shorter than Bai Chen—only 1.5 meters tall. In this aspect, she was a failed case of genetic enhancement. She couldn't even reach her parents' height.

Of course, she also had the results of genetic enhancement. Her facial features were good, and her voice was very sweet.

Long Yuehong retracted his gaze and suddenly sighed with emotion.

From all the news he had heard, not only did Hou Yi not feel inferior because of her height, but she also became enthusiastic, cheerful, confident, and independent. Finally, she became the chief broadcaster of the radio station.

In comparison, the former Long Yuehong clearly had an inferiority complex.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen walked past the room where Hou Yi was and arrived outside the recording studio.

This was the room they planned to take for their operation.

To be honest, Long Yuehong was very nervous. He felt that he and the others were overestimating themselves.

Even if those New World experts in the company couldn't return and provide help, just the board of directors, other Mind Corridor-level Awakened, and a large number of Security Department's staff could make them suffer.

Even if they were divided for conquering, just any one of them wasn't something the two of them could deal with.

The number of people Shang Jianyao's recording could affect was at most 10,000—it was impossible to rely on it to quickly control the entire company. Therefore, there was a low chance of survival in this operation.

Long Yuehong could only hope that his team leader's plan was effective and that Shang Jianyao could carry it out without any problems.

The key to Jiang Baimian's plan was: Focus your forces on destroying the command structure first!

In other words, Shang Jianyao was to mainly affect those people in the Management Zone and the employees of the various important departments and internal forces (especially those in charge of guarding the doors) during the first broadcast to disintegrate most of Pangu Biology's strength.

After that, they would focus on affecting a portion of the floors and create the situation of everyone running out, allowing the unaffected to be 'infected' with the emotions of those with implanted thoughts and follow the rest.

It could have a viral effect!

When Pangu Biology was in complete chaos, Long Yuehong and Bai Chen would be much safer.

When formulating the plan, Jiang Baimian didn't forget her personal interests and requested Shang Jianyao to take care of his family and Long Yuehong's family in the second batch. She wanted them to have their thoughts implanted and run out without hesitation to prevent them from missing the opportunity.

Under normal circumstances, the probability of Jiang Baimian's plan succeeding was basically zero. This was because Pangu Biology still had many sleeping New World powerhouses and had the attention of Big Boss. But since Long Yuehong and Bai Chen had started taking action, it meant that something was amiss in the New World. There was a high chance that those powerhouses wouldn't be able to do anything.

As Long Yuehong's thoughts flashed, Bai Chen stretched out her right hand and opened the door to the radio station's recording studio.

...

The earthquake brought about by the unrest caused the streets to crack and houses to collapse in the New World. Everything was in a mess.

Some areas even had huge pits, and one could see deep darkness.

Jacob and the other New World Awakened hid in different places, waiting for this calamity to pass.

At this moment, the tower silently snapped, and a huge vortex appeared, sucking in countless rocks, bricks, and wood. These things were reduced to pure mental energy in midair.

Immediately after, Jacob and the others floated up uncontrollably and flew in the direction of the tower.

They tried their best to resist and used all kinds of abilities, but it was useless. They screamed and disappeared into the center of the vortex.

With the infusion of nutrients provided by this batch of New World Awakened, Master Zhuang's doors opened with a bang.

Chapter 940: Exposure

As the golden door opened, a black shadow entered the room. Every part of it was strictly symmetrical and unaffected by the light, indicating its owner's perfection.

At the same time, the Shang Jianyao and Du Heng inside disappeared.

Piles of red-hot rocks were in close proximity. As streams of water fell, they created hot mist. This made the entire room feel like a paradise.

An extremely hot and stuffy feeling arose.

In the depths of the mist, a woman with beautiful curves appeared faintly. This was August's Kalendaria, Door of Scorching. Her name was Dufftiel Osira.

She was known by many in the school when she was a student. Not only was she beautiful with an outstanding figure, but she was ahead of her peers academically. Later on, she entered the Eighth Research Institute and gradually became a permanent researcher for a core project.

What was even more precious was that she had a cheerful personality and a kind heart. As a result, she became the goddess in the hearts of many unmarried men in the Eighth Institute.

After becoming a Kalendaria, her flaw was her fear of the cold.

Upon seeing the Door of Scorching appear, the owner of the black shadow—Golden Scale Richard, who was walking out of the darkness outside—whispered angrily, “Dufftiel, I’ve confirmed that you have two more eyelashes on your left than on your right!”

He had been brooding over this matter.

This Kalendaria was ordinary in height, and his face was like that of a boy-next-door. His hairline was a little receding, but every strand of golden hair was placed just right, exactly symmetrical with his other side.

...

The door that highlighted a human face opened with a clang. Truth, who was wearing a colorful floral shirt, beach shorts, and a pair of sunglasses over his head, walked in step by step.

.....

Here, he didn’t see a particular personality of Master Zhuang. He only discovered a thin and long shadow appearing on the wall opposite him.

The black shadow wore a featureless white mask that covered its face.

Truth immediately laughed. “Haha, Mono, how dare you appear? I thought you would cower in a corner and tremble!”

Mono was the name of March’s Kalendaria, Last Man. Back then, he was considered one of the more ordinary ones in the Eighth Research Institute. He was surrounded by geniuses like Lin Sui that made his confidence take a beating. After becoming a Kalendaria, his flaw was being weak-minded.

The white-mask-wearing Last Man replied softly, “I’m only weak-minded, not timid.”

“How can one be weak-minded if they aren’t timid?” Truth scoffed at this.

...

Behind the half-open door, a female figure walked toward the light in the deep darkness.

Where the lights were brightest, April's Kalendaria, Shadow of Distortion Winst Garland, stood with a bear biscuit in one hand and the other hand in his pocket.

The white cloth strips that appeared around his eyes wrapped around him repeatedly as if he had become blind. As long as he couldn't see, he naturally wouldn't be frightened by distorted creatures!

Sensing Eidolon Nun's entry into the room, Shadow of Distortion sighed and said, "I remember that I often lazed around back then and used patrolling as an excuse to chat with you guys in finance. You always made me share my bear biscuits."

Eidolon Nun fell silent for a second before asking angrily, "Are you trying to say that I was freeloading?"

...

Pangu Biology. Underground building, in the radio station.

There was nobody in the recording studio except for a guy standing at the entrance of the controls. He leaned against the wall and flipped through a book leisurely, enjoying the comfort of slacking off at work.

Suddenly, he saw two pairs of gray military boots appear in his line of sight.

"You are?" The male employee failed to finish his question.

His neck was pinched by a cold palm, and his voice stopped. He looked at the man and woman in front of him in horror, not understanding what had happened.

In Pangu Biology, there was no point in robbery, and it was even more meaningless to destroy the radio station. At this moment, the male employee could only think of whether a certain program

team had reported something bad about a department, causing someone to be punished. They then came over to beat them up.

He wanted to complain that he was wronged and say that he was only a technician mainly in charge of handling the equipment and had nothing to do with all the program teams. However, his mouth was stuffed by the man and woman.

Then, Long Yuehong used the backup machine's wires to tie the technician's hands behind his back.

He definitely didn't want to injure the innocent when carrying out an operation internally. He didn't even want to knock the other party out lest the other party missed the opportunity to escape the underground building. It was equivalent to being killed by him.

Long Yuehong looked at Bai Chen, who was walking to the operations room, and threw Shang Jianyao's recording pen over. Then, he lowered his head and said to the technician, "Don't make a fuss; we'll release you later. Otherwise..."

Long Yuehong did a neck-pinching action with his steel right hand.

Before the technician could nod, the door to the recording studio was suddenly pushed open. Accompanying this was a familiar and slightly childlike sweet voice: "Brother Shan, I'm here to test..."

Long Yuehong turned around and met Hou Yi's eyes, who was staring at him with an expression that gradually turned horrified.

He had already experienced many battles, so he didn't hesitate and ran over in two steps.

Only then did Hou Yi react. She tried to turn around and escape, screaming for help.

Bang!

Long Yuehong punched her in the back of her ear, knocking her out. He held Hou Yi with his other hand and silently closed the studio door with his metallic hand.

Taking this opportunity, Bai Chen adjusted the equipment.

She and Long Yuehong had received special training from Geneva, so they weren't unfamiliar with how to use the radio station's machines. Even if the model wasn't the right one, as long as one could read and knew the exact model, they could quickly operate it.

Moreover, if it really didn't work out, wasn't there someone guarding the operations room beside them?

After exchanging looks with Long Yuehong, Bai Chen inserted Shang Jianyao's recording pen into the corresponding interface.

At this moment, the team on this floor had received orders and had arrived at the entrance to the radio station. At the same time, two Awakened took the elevator and rushed to this floor.

Meanwhile, most of the employees were still working as normal. Everything was very calm.

...

In the whirlpool-shaped building, Jiang Baimian stood beside the experiment capsule and saw Shang Jianyao's face contort under the transparent cover as if he were suffering indescribable pain.

The corresponding indicator lights didn't go off, indicating that the brain development hadn't been completed.

The wind around Jiang Baimian became stronger and stronger from somewhere as if it had turned into invisible hands that wanted to push her out of the hall.

I wonder how long it will take...? Jiang Baimian muttered to herself anxiously.

She didn't want to end up being too late to take his body away.

Once the brain development was successful, she would immediately carry her companion, leave behind the nuclear bomb, and quickly leave this small city and the Eighth Research Institute before detonating it remotely.

During this process, she had to inform Geneva via telegram to meet the fleeing employees at the entrance of Pangu Biology's underground building.

...

In Master Zhuang's room filled with machines.

Shang Jianyao sat cross-legged on the ground, his face in a grimace.

All his personalities had been retracted, and they floated around him like spirits.

These personalities alternated between pain and nonchalance. Their independence and autonomy seemed to be further enhanced.

More projections appeared over Shang Jianyao's body, giving one the feeling that he was about to break through the restrictions and fully develop his price.

"That's pretty good progress." Master Zhuang Du Heng, who was beside him, nodded gently.

Shang Jianyao's expression twisted as he suddenly exclaimed, "F*ck! Little Red and Little White have also begun!"

This way, while accepting further development of the brain, he had to pay attention to the situation at Pangu Biology, lest his abilities weren't direct enough to affect those in the Management Zone and the internal forces immediately.

At the same time, Shang Jianyao had to provide support and strive to handle most of the Mind Corridor-level Awakened in the first wave. Then, he had to make them take the initiative to deal with the remaining ones in order to escape.

This was delicate work, and it was a little difficult for him in his current state.

Du Heng glanced at him and planned on giving him some help.

At this moment, a female voice that Shang Jianyao was extremely familiar with sounded. “Dufftiel, Mono, Garland, I don’t think you realize that the President doesn’t want to maintain the status quo at all. He plans on destroying all of this. He has even sent a nuclear bomb to the Second Research Zone.”

The person who spoke was Pangu Biology’s Big Boss, December’s Kalendaria, Arbiter of Fate Zhao Danlin.

When Du Heng heard Arbiter of Fate’s words, his expression immediately changed slightly. She had already discovered it?