

# Astral Apostle

## - Chapter 161: Rejecting and Improving the Formula (1) |

### Chapter 161: Rejecting and Improving the Formula (1)

The Empire Workshop was divided into different research institutes according to their functions. The main research on mutant blood potions and mutant beast equipment was carried out in the Imperial Hunter Base.

In the Empire's Furnace District, there was also a branch of the Empire Workshop. Most of the things here were conventional products, such as potions used by ordinary people, ordinary equipment, and weapons.

It was rumored that there was another research institute located in a more secret area, closed off to the public to study more confidential technology. However, even those only remained as rumors, never to be proven.

Zhou Jing made many turns in the city and finally arrived at the area leading to the Empire's research institutes. At the entrance, he was stopped by a guard to ask about his intentions.

After learning that this person was another pharmacist who wished to apply to join the workshop, the guard's expression remained unchanged as he reported it skillfully.

Soon, a small old man in a workshop uniform walked out and sized up Bill's amiable appearance.

"You're the one who wants to join the workshop? Young man, what's your name? What sort of direction do you pursue? What formulas do you know?"

The little old man did not exchange pleasantries and directly threw out a series of questions as if it was an interview.

"My name is Bill. I know more than ten formulas, most of which are ordinary potions, including two hunter potions..." Zhou Jing introduced himself.

The little old man nodded and did not show anything outwardly except asking again,

"You're so young. You haven't been a pharmacist for many years, right? Who taught you?"

“In the beginning, I learned from the local doctors in my hometown and occasionally made medicine for the villagers. I accumulated a lot of experience. Some time ago, I came to the capital and communicated with my peers before deciding to come to the Empire Workshop to seek a position. I hope to have a stable job and be able to focus on research...” Zhou Jing replied.

Honestly speaking, if he replied that he had only been a pharmacist for a month, he would definitely be rejected. Therefore, he still had to do some artistic processing. At the very least, he had to increase his “duration of learning.”

“Hmm...” The little old man shook his head and said, “Your conditions are relatively ordinary. It’s not enough to join the workshop. We only accept elites. ”

Zhou Jing was not surprised. He asked, “Can you let me make a bottle of medicine to show my skills?”

“There’s no need for that.” The little old man shook his head again. “If your level is high, we will know. Since you haven’t been in the capital for long, you should familiarize yourself with this place first.”

With that, the little old man turned around and returned to the workshop. He did not want to continue wasting his breath on Zhou Jing.

In reality, he came out to deal with Zhou Jing because he wanted to send him away. He couldn’t even be bothered to tell Zhou Jing his name.

Every year, many foreign craftsmen would come to apply to join the Empire Workshop. This was a common occurrence.

There were too many craftsmen who wanted to join the workshop no matter what. Every year, there would be a large number of candidates, so the workshop would basically reject unfamiliar craftsmen who took the initiative to come to their door. It was very rare for them to accept such unknown outsiders... unless they were famous in the industry, to begin with.

The biggest source of newcomers in the workshop every year was actually the students nurtured internally and the apprentices brought by the members of the various workshops. This was because the Empire knew the character and abilities of the various workshop members very well, so they felt more at ease using them.

The normal way for an outsider to join a workshop was actually to find a workshop member and go under their tutelage. He would be in a favorable position and become “related” to the Empire’s workshop. Foreigners were naturally at a disadvantage, but this was only natural.

In the eyes of the little old man, “Bill” was just another young man who had come to try his luck. He was no different from anyone else. After confirming that the conditions were average, he decided to reject him. There was no need to test his actual skills.

Seeing this, the guard came up to chase him away. He was not rude and only advised, “Alright, the workshop won’t recruit people casually. Don’t loiter around here anymore. Go back.”

Zhou Jing was not surprised. It was also one of the expected outcomes that he had failed to join the workshop.

Even though the level of civilization was quite primitive, the Empire Workshop was, in a sense, akin to the National Academy of Sciences. One could not enter as they pleased. After all, as long as one wanted to learn pharmacology, they could learn some superficial knowledge, unlike the Mutant Beast Hunters, which had a high barrier of entry.

He took out a few silver coins from his pocket and quietly stuffed them into the hands of the guards. He said amiably, “Brothers, I want to ask, how can I join the workshop?”

The guards’ eyes lit up.

This person was good. He was sensible and capable.

The guards silently put away the silver coins and started chatting.

They had been guarding the door of the Empire Workshop all year round, so they naturally knew a lot of things.

“I see many people like you every year. You guys feel that you have some standards, so you wish to join the workshop. It’s not that easy.”

“Not counting those apprentices, there are 13 people who were accepted to the workshop this year. It sounds like a lot, right? But there are even more who were rejected, at least 200.”

“The workshop only recruits elites to the outside world, but what is considered an elite? Of course, it’s being famous in a field. And how did this fame come about? Do you think these 13 people relied on their own standards to make a name for themselves? Hehe, it’s all because there are people talking about the news from the outside world within. The more people in the workshop hear about it, the more famous those people are.”

The guards chatted happily. If one took a mental picture of them in this state with a cigarette in their hands, they would definitely mistake them as security guards in their main world chatting idly during work.

Zhou Jing sank deep in thought.

Outsiders needed fame to join the workshop, and the most feasible way for ordinary people was to get to know some members of the workshop, build a good relationship with them, mix in their social circle, and flatter each other. Then, through word of mouth, more members of the workshop would know about him.

As long as his own skill level was not too low, he would be able to obtain an internal recommendation when the time was right.

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*“Social culture is indeed human nature. Where there are relationships, there will be a social circle. It’s impossible to put an end to it.”*

Zhou Jing pursed his lips.

Perhaps there would be workshop members who would turn this kind of internal recommendation into an industry to earn money.

Although he did not lack money and had the Eloquence attribute, he did not like this method. It was troublesome, and he had to listen to others and flatter them.

If he had the time to welcome and send people back, he might as well study more skills and techniques. At least there would be output if he invested.

*“It’s better to get some real evidence.”*

Zhou Jing stroked his chin.

If he could make a name for himself in the pharmacology field in the capital, the workshop would even take the initiative to invite him to join. This way, not only would he be able to increase his daily benefits, but he would also be valued.

After bidding farewell to the guards and returning to his residence, Zhou Jing began to think of a plan.

“If I want to make a name for myself, firstly, I have to be innovative in terms of techniques and skills, and secondly, I have to gain the recognition of more people. In other words, I need a market... I have the [Apothecary] talent, and the success rate and quality of my potions are higher. I also have the [Item Analysis Function]. Perhaps I can improve the formulas?”

Zhou Jing's eyes darted around as he took out a notebook and wrote down a dozen formulas he knew.

“Other pharmacists need to constantly make mistakes and fail time and time again. Furthermore, they might not necessarily succeed in the end. However, my analysis function allows me to grasp the smallest changes in the material when making it. I can also directly obtain the nature of the herbs and directly discover the parts that conflict or fuse with each other...”

This feeling was like while others had to fumble their way around when making potions, he was just constantly popping bubbles to indicate what to put in and how much to put in. He could adjust the results at any time...

(TL Note: Imagine those children games where they just need to select the correct stuff to put in.)

As long as he had knowledge of enough herbs, the hints would be more detailed. He could get a lot more arrangements this way.

“This support function is indeed divine.”

Zhou Jing was delighted. If he only relied on the [Pharmacology] skill, he would have to advance quite a few more levels before he could attempt to improve a formula.

In the next few days, Zhou Jing went to the market to buy a large number of herbs and stored them at home to study a new formula in seclusion.

He put his main focus on three formulas, which were the healing potion and the energy potion, as well as the hunter potion that reduced pain.

To gain fame quickly, he had to open up the market. The two universal potions he had deliberately chosen were the products ordinary people needed most.

The Royal Capital was very big, and there would always be people who fell sick. No-one turned down healing potions. For the sake of their health, they naturally had to buy high-quality ones.

As for the Energy Potion, if one drank a bottle of it, they would be full of energy. Many of them were from the wealthy class and liked to use it when “talking about love.”

As for the Hunter Potion, it was to attract the attention of the hunters. Although the market for hunters was not big, it was more “authoritative.” After all, it was closely related to the workshop, so it was easier for his fame to spread to the workshop that way.

*“With Jason bringing the goods, as long as I create a high-quality hunter potion, I’ll be able to attract the attention of all the empire’s hunters.”*? Zhou Jing chuckled to himself.

...

After experimenting for a few days, Zhou Jing finally changed the formula of the three potions. He added some catalytic ingredients to increase the effectiveness of the potions by more than 30%.

The optimization of the formula not only improved the quality but also gave the three potions new effects through his process of adding supplementary herbs.

The healing potion would boost one’s immune system, the energy potion would reduce the side effects, increase the user’s sensitivity, and the pain-reducing potion would increase the physical recovery ability of its user.

However, a better effect required more herbs. As a result, the cost would increase. This was inevitable.

But he did not lose out at all.

This was because the success rate of a normal pharmacist was very important. Even a pharmacist who was a few levels higher than him could not guarantee a 100% success rate.

Moreover, if the quantity was controlled well, it could achieve a perfect effect and produce a “strong” potion that was better than ordinary potions. However, ordinary pharmacists might not be able to produce a “strong” potion even after ten tries... Although they also had measuring tools, there were also individual differences in the age, quality, nutrition, environment, and so on for the same type of herbs. It was difficult to judge carefully. Even if they could control the amount added every time, there would be subtle differences.

However, through the item analysis function, Zhou Jing had completely figured out the optimal ratio of ingredients for every formula. He almost maintained zero errors, and he could also directly discover the details of the individual differences of each herb and calculate a more suitable portion.

Not only was the success rate of making the potion close to 100%, but it could also guarantee that the chances of making a “strong” potion would reach more than 50%.

Although the cost of the formula increased, there was almost no loss or failure. Instead, there was more profit to be made.

After using a week of projection and placement to make Bill repeat his work and prepare a large stock of potions, Zhou Jing went out to the streets to inspect the location and prepare to rent a shop.

The residents of the capital rarely bought potions that were sold privately. Only by purchasing them through a shop could they be at ease.

Improving the formula, manufacturing inventory, and renting a shop all required money. The 300 silver coins he had borrowed back then had already been spent. Zhou Jing asked Jason for another 400 silver coins as funds.

Jason, who was a hunter, rarely had any use for money. He could use it to support the Third Apostle, Bill, in his entrepreneurship.

As he had sufficient funds, he did not need to find a dilapidated and remote place. Instead, he rented a shop on a busy street in the Furnace District at a high price.

After hiring two coolies to clean up the shop, Zhou Jing placed the potions on the shelves.

He restrained his desire to raise the price and set the standard price for the medicine.

Although setting a high price could attract attention, the residents of this world had a simple intuition. Their needs were very solid, and they only consumed things that they could afford. They did not subscribe to hunger or luxury marketing back in his own world.

He had studied the market and discovered that the mainstream fighting style of the potioning industry was to have good quality and low prices. There was no market for good and expensive things.

Only the hunters were generous with money and bought the good ones.

However, to gain fame and avoid being seen as breaking the industry's rules, Zhou Jing decided to act normal.

After tidying up the house, Zhou Jing clapped his hands and looked at the orderly pharmacy. He nodded in satisfaction and was a little excited.

"I can start a business now... I hope it can sell well."

...

A new potion shop quietly opened on the Furnace District's bustling street. The wooden sign read "Bill's Apothecary."

As the location was very good, many nearby residents noticed it on the first day of opening. They entered the shop curiously and realized that the shop only sold three types of potions, and the proportion of strong potions was very large.

Although the customer flow was not small, everyone only came in to take a walk. No one bought any potions for the time being.

The residents of the capital were naturally worried about the newly opened pharmacy. They were waiting to see what would happen. It was normal for pharmacies that did not have a good reputation for having no business.

The owner of the shop was a rather amiable young man. He was quite warm and spoke nicely. Thus, the capital city residents were willing to chat with him.

However, being young meant that they were inexperienced. Furthermore, this was a foreigner and not a familiar face in the pharmacology scene, so everyone did not dare to buy it. They were all waiting for the first candidate.

This situation of only looking and not buying continued for several days.

Until the fifth day, when the turning point appeared.

A hunter with a powerful aura became the first consumer to buy a bottle of strong pain-reduction potion.

The next day, the surrounding residents were surprised to see dozens of hunters coming to the Furnace District. With excited expressions, they headed straight for Bill's Apothecary.

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Dozens of hunters surged to the door of Bill's Pharmacy. Only a dozen hunters went in while the others waited outside quietly.

Zhou Jing pretended to look at the ledger with only one line of words. When he saw Jason leading a group of hunters, he immediately smiled and sounded surprised.

"You're here again. Why did you bring so many people? Is there a problem with the medicine potion?"

"No, your potion is very effective. It's even better than the mass-produced products produced by the Empire Workshop." Jason read the prepared words in the tone of a stick.



“Really?” Zhou Jing looked pleasantly surprised.

“That’s right. This is the best pain-reduction potion I’ve ever drunk. I came here this time to buy some more.” Cole echoed from the side, then sized up Zhou Jing in surprise.

He still remembered this guy who came to borrow money from Jason. At this moment, he couldn’t help but look at him in a different light. “I didn’t expect you to have such skills.”

“Of course. If I didn’t know pharmacology, how could I have saved Jason back then?” Zhou Jing answered fluently.

Jason nodded. “Yes. At that time, I realized that he was a good pharmacist, so I suggested that he come to the capital.”

They spoke in tandem to smooth things over.

“I see.” Cole understood and believed it.

The other hunters in the shop looked around curiously at the potions on the shelves.

Yesterday, Jason had only bought a bottle of Hunter Potion and given it to a few hunters. Not everyone had drunk it. Most of the people who came today were skeptical about Zhou Jing’s standards.

However, in the base yesterday, Jason and the hunters who had drunk it was full of praise. They were full of admiration for the potions here and agreed to come and buy them the next day.

Because Jason was high-profile, many hunters reluctantly believed him. They decided to give it a try and came over to take a look... In any case, they were full of energy and usually had nothing to do. They could come over and take a walk around the Royal Capital to kill some time.

Dozens of hunters were in groups, and the king did not dare to ignore them. At this moment, more than ten royal guards were following closely outside the door.

In the Royal City of Tarn, the relationship between the empire’s hunters and the royal guards was fine—unlike the conflict between the hunters and the lord’s guards in White Plains Town. This was partly because of the easygoing nature of the Hunters, but both parties still liked to tease each other and cause minor inconveniences from time to time.

Zhou Jing took the chance and introduced the potion’s effects to everyone.

Hunters had always been straightforward when it came to giving money. Since they were here to spend, they all bought all the pain reduction potions. Some even bought more than one bottle.

There were even hunters who secretly bought a few bottles of energy potions.

The group of ruffians naturally did not have the mood to keep. So, after buying the potions, the hunters did not stay any longer and scattered in all directions.

Some went to find women or men, drink at the tavern, and gamble. All of them went to have fun.

On the surface, the royal city guards who came to monitor the situation said that they were splitting up to track them down. In fact, they were just taking advantage of the situation. Some people would appear a few streets away and hang out with the hunters they knew.

The shelves of the potion shop were swept clean. There was a large amount of Hunter's Potion missing, but there were dozens of new records in the account book.

"I earned 207 silver coins this time... The hunter's potion is really a profitable business."

Zhou Jing shook his jingling money bag excitedly.

Universal potions were targeted at the public, so the price would not be too high. However, hunters were an extremely profitable group to target. Ordinary hunter potions were sold for about three silver coins. Strong potions were usually three times the price of ordinary potions, far above the cost price.

If not for Jason, who could be considered as someone higher up in the mid ranks within the Imperial Hunters, it would have been too troublesome to open up the market.

He had deliberately asked Jason to come over to buy a potion and distribute it to others. He wanted to use Jason's connections and reputation to bring in the first batch of hunter customers.

The moment these hunters discovered that the potion was extremely effective, they would bring more customers along and make his business famous. His reputation would then completely spread among the hunters... Of course, Jason still needed to continue adding fuel to the fire.

From this wave of customers that Jason brought, Zhou Jing had collected nearly half of the sum he spent on learning pharmaceutical knowledge, potion making, and renting the apothecary shop. It was really a huge profit.

Zhou Jing was calculating the accounts excitedly when the residents of the capital saw that the hunter had left. Only then did they walk into the shop curiously. As soon as they entered, they could not wait to ask about the situation.

“Boss, are those hunters here to buy potions from you?”

“Don’t tell me he drank too much and caused you trouble?”

Hearing this, Zhou Jing put on a smug expression and shouted,

“Those honorable hunters felt that the medicine I made was excellent and bought dozens of bottles of medicine from me. Did you see how happy they were when they went out with the medicine? Even the hunters said that it was good. Do you want some?”

Everyone looked at each other, tempted.

This was a potion that the hunter had personally certified. Even the hunter had especially entered the city to buy it. It must be something good. They could probably rest assured...

Thinking of this, many of the surrounding residents decided to believe in Zhou Jing’s standards and buy a bottle of medicine to try.

When dozens of hunters entered the city together, they attracted attention on the way. Many people from other districts followed them curiously. Seeing that the hunters were here to purchase potions, they also entered Bill’s Apothecary with interest and bought some potions.

Most of them were not sick at the moment, so they mainly purchased Energy Potions.

The price of the universal medicine was not high, but no matter how small a mosquito was, it was still meat. There was still a good profit, so Zhou Jing would not reject anyone.

## **Chapter 164: An Unimaginable Path (2)**

Due to the hunters’ effect, the apothecary suddenly became lively, breaking the silence of the past few days.

In the next few days, the rumors became more and more mysterious.

At first, it was just an interesting story of “dozens of hunters buying medicine together.” Later on, it gradually became “The Empire’s Hunters officially certified the products of Bill’s Apothecary to be excellent.”

Many things were happening in the capital daily, but this rumor had recently become a hot topic. It was not only because the residents were watching the show but also because Zhou Jing had secretly spent money to find children on the streets to walk around and shout about it.

Zhou Jing knew the effect of the very well. He even made up a simple but memorable advertising slogan and taught it to the children to hype up his “brand.”

— “Bill’s Apothecary, given the Hunter’s stamp of approval!”

This catchphrase was demonically addictive, making the citizens inexplicably remember the name “Bill’s Apothecary.”

As the news spread, many residents of the capital came over. The pharmacy was no longer deserted, and there were endless customers.

The repeat customer effect also erupted. Customers who had previously bought potions also visited for the second time.

These repeat customers were basically here for the Energy Potion. This was the most popular potion so far.

There was nothing special about it. It was just that “delicious”!

After all, food and sex were natural. In this world that lacked entertainment, exchanging human body fluids was the greatest source of happiness.

And a potion that could amplify this sensory stimulation was akin to a nuclear-level existence.

Although it was a little different from what Zhou Jing had expected, the reputation of the pharmacy had indeed been established among the people at an unprecedented speed.

However, a consensus was formed in the hearts of the capital’s residents in half a month.

This was the capital’s No.1 Aphrodisiac Apothecary!

With an invincible momentum, he swept through the entire capital’s aphrodisiac industry!

Zhou Jing did not expect that Apostle #003's most troublesome life goal, "Building a City Monopoly Industry," would be the first to be close to success.

This was really an unimaginable path.

The business was booming, and a large number of customers came to ask for potions every day. His door's threshold was almost broken from all the feet stepping on it.

Not only did the commoners buy it, but many of the tribe's blood relatives and court officials had also heard of it. They secretly sent people to purchase energy potions and specially instructed them not to tell anyone.

As there were a lot of customers every day, there was now a team of guards specifically patrolling the area to maintain order.

Zhou Jing was quite tactful and gave the guards a few Energy Potions for free. These guards were deeply touched. Not only did they help him maintain order, but they also helped him attract customers. Even more, guards became loyal customers of the apothecary as a result.

There was a large amount of demand every day. Zhou Jing's production alone could not keep up, so he was running out of energy potions every day.

In the high-intensity potion production, his Pharmacology knowledge increased rapidly, and he quickly reached Lv5, the stage of Instinct.

At this stage, he was already considered an elite pharmacist. Coupled with his [Apothecary] talent and [Item Analysis Function], his level of potion-making was already comparable to a master.

However, this third apostle, Bill, had also become famous in the capital in a subtle way...

People called him an aphrodisiac master!

Zhou Jing didn't mind at all. It didn't matter if he was infamous. A bad name was still a name.

However, he also heard some bad rumors. It seemed that some of his peers despised him as a person who made "aphrodisiacs" and expressed their disdain on many occasions.

It would probably be difficult to enter the Empire Workshop with such a reputation.

However, Zhou Jing did not care. What he was really betting on was the Hunter Potion. The Hunter Group was the true authority. He was just waiting for someone to see

through his appearance and see his astonishing ability to improve the formula and make medicine.

Meanwhile, his apothecary was making a lot of money every day. Zhou Jing made a lot of money, but it also brought trouble. Many merchants in the capital were jealous of this profitable potion. They came to seek cooperation, and some even wanted to buy the formula.

Zhou Jing rejected all of them. He was not really doing this to earn money.

Although he had gained fame, the superficial and unpresentable reputation of an aphrodisiac master was not enough to become a protective talisman for him.

Money moved people's hearts. As a "foreigner," he was naturally targeted.

...

At night, in a dark alley somewhere, five masked men leaned against the shadows and chatted softly.

"I've already asked around. Bill, the one who makes aphrodisiacs, will take this path home every day. When he comes over, we'll tie him up and ask him for the formula for that potion." The leader played with a dagger, his tone sinister.

Someone was worried. "What if Bill's Energy Potion isn't just because the formula has changed, but because it was made well?"

"Impossible. I've asked another pharmacist. He says that Bill must have changed the formula," the leader replied flatly. After thinking for a moment, he said coldly, "But that's not important. Let's capture him and go to a city further away. We'll let him make potions for us and earn a fortune!"

Everyone nodded excitedly.

They were a local street gang in the capital. They lived in the dirty and messy shantytown and usually roamed around the various districts to commit petty crimes, such as stealing, burglary, and robbing passersby. They often struggled to survive.

This time, they took the risk to sneak into the well-disciplined Furnace District to commit this crime.

The business of Bill's Apothecary was booming, and the boss was just a foreigner, a weak pharmacist...

They felt that if they did not take action, it would be a waste of an opportunity and potential to live a carefree life.

“I heard that this Bill has a good relationship with a certain hunter. Will that be a problem?” Someone couldn’t help but ask when he thought of this.

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“What are you afraid of? After this, we’ll go out and lie low. It’s useless for him to know anyone.”

The leader did not care much about this.

At this moment, a figure walked over from a distance, followed by a dog. It was precisely Zhou Jing.

“Coming, He’s coming!”

The small group perked up and immediately held their breaths, waiting for their target to approach.

One step, two steps, two steps... Zhou Jing gradually approached the alley.

“Go!”

The leader’s eyes flashed as he drew his dagger and rushed out.

Without another word, he reached out to cover Zhou Jing’s mouth and aimed the dagger at his neck.

“Behave yourself, don’t... Pfft!”

Before the leader could finish speaking, a fist appeared in front of him.

Peng!

His nose broke, spewing as if he had opened a sauce shop. The sour and spicy sauce... no, pain, exploded in his skull.

“Ah!” The leader screamed in pain and squatted down while holding his bleeding nose.

However, the next moment, his gaze met Little Black #1.

Little Black #1 tilted his head and fell into deep thought.

*Isn't squatting down and spreading his legs welcoming me to go in for a tasting?*

Head-on!

“Ahhh—”

A scream tore through the night sky!

His accomplice had just rushed out of the alley when he saw a tragic scene.

The leader's nose was broken and filled with blood. He had fallen to the ground and was torn apart by a hyena-dog creature. Blood splattered everywhere, and half of the leader's treasures were pulled out...

“Hiss...”

The few accomplices subconsciously gasped. They felt the same way, and their lower bodies involuntarily clenched as though they were feeling the phantom pain.

At this moment, dense footsteps suddenly sounded in the surrounding alley. More than ten guards rushed out, and without a word, they pressed the stunned crooks to the ground and tied them up skillfully.

The captain of the guards walked up to Zhou Jing and looked at the kidnappers' leader, who was holding his crotch and howling in pain. He could not help but shiver.

The pain of a man resonated too much with him.

“Brother Bill, leave this group to us.”

“Thank you, everyone. Come to my shop tomorrow. I'll treat everyone to a batch of Energy Potions as thanks.”

“Hehe.” The guard captain rubbed his hands together with a face full of smiles.

Only then did Zhou Jing kick Little Black #1 to stop it from chewing. What it did indeed looked quite painful to bear.

He glanced at the group of enemies and secretly rolled his eyes.

This was already the sixth wave of kidnappers he had encountered recently. There were too many people who wanted to catch him and make a fortune.

Thus, Zhou Jing deliberately built a good relationship with the guards. Every time he returned home, he would get them to escort him. The reward was an Energy Potion, and he would occasionally treat them to a meal. The guards naturally did not mind earning some extra money before the curfew patrol.



After all, he was a weak pharmacist now. He could not just kill all the kidnappers and pretend like nothing had happened.

*"I'm considered a nobody now and haven't been recognized. When I enter the Empire Workshop and have an official identity as my protection, this situation shouldn't happen again."* Zhou Jing calculated.

...

Imperial Hunter Base, workshop.

A routine meeting was being held. The participants were all the heads of the various departments of the workshop, reporting the recent output and consumption.

The higher-ups of the workshop looked at the ledger list and quickly discovered an abnormality. They were a little puzzled. "Why have we stocked up on so many pain-reduction potions recently? Aren't these very commonly used potions? Why aren't there any hunters coming to get them?"

With that, everyone looked at the person in charge of the Hunter's Potion Department.

The person in charge shook his head helplessly. "I've asked around. The hunters have recently gone to an apothecary in the capital to buy this potion. No one wants the potion produced by our workshop."

"There's such a thing?" The higher-ups of the workshop were a little stunned.

They were a workshop specially used by the Empire's hunters. Logically speaking, all the resources used by the hunters were provided by them, and the quality was always the most guaranteed.

This was especially true for the hunter's potions. They were a gathering of elites here, and their products were outstanding. There was no need for hunters to buy it from other places.

Now that the hunter had chosen someone else not of his own workshop, it was as if he had been outdone. It showed that the workshop had failed in its duty.

The higher-ups of the workshop were a little embarrassed.

"Tell me about the situation."

The person-in-charge had already expected this and immediately replied,

“Some time ago, a pharmacist named Bill appeared in the capital. He opened a shop and only sold three types of potions. One was a pain-reduction Hunter potion, but the hunters all said it was good.

“However, his main focus is an aphrodisiac. It’s a modified formula for the Energy Potion that can make people’s senses more sensitive. I used... Ahem, I’ve studied it. The effect is very good, so it’s been popular in the capital recently, so his business is quite good.”

“An aphrodisiac?” The Head’s mouth twitched.

*“Good lord, our professional Hunter Workshop and the Empire’s research institute is actually inferior to an aphrodisiac maker?”*

*“How is this a slap in my face? This is slapping the Royal Family’s butt!”*

His expression was complicated as he answered, “Then have you studied his pain-reduction potion?”

The person in charge immediately perked up and nodded.

“His pain-reduction potion has improved on the original formula, and his level of production is very high. I went to his potion shop personally and found that he has a lot of strong potions in his shop. It’s very likely that he has very advanced potion-making skills.”

“So this is a powerful pharmacist.” The eyes of the higher-up in the workshop lit up. He thought for a moment and said, “How about this? Send someone to investigate and see his level. If possible, invite him to join the Empire Workshop.”

The others who had not spoken were stunned.

“But he’s an aphrodisiac maker. His reputation...” Someone could not help but question.

However, the rest of the higher-ups in the workshop waved their hands and smiled.

“It’s not important that he makes aphrodisiacs. This is just the business path that he chose. Reality has proven that it’s indeed profitable. Don’t be blinded by this appearance.

What was really important was that he could improve the formula of the hunter’s potion and even obtain the recognition of the hunters... Every hunter has drunk countless potions in his life. The level of the pharmacist who can make the hunter praise him must not be bad. *“We can’t let go of such talent!”*

Everyone looked at each other. Although they felt a little uncomfortable, they did not object.

The higher-ups of the workshop nodded and heaved a sigh of relief.

...It was too embarrassing to be inferior to a commoner who made aphrodisiacs. It was better to “recruit” this person as one of their own!

## Chapter 166: Entering the Sweatshop (1)

As Zhou Jing’s daily production was limited, it was difficult to obtain even a single potion. Every day before opening, there would be people lining up outside. Even Zhou Jing had to greet the crowd before he could squeeze in.

On this day, Bill’s Apothecary was open for business as usual. As usual, the door was surrounded by customers.

Zhou Jing sat behind the counter and collected the money for the sale of potions one by one.

At this moment, it was the turn of a well-dressed man with a mustache. He was holding a pain-reduction potion in his hand.

This person looked at Zhou Jing’s young face and suddenly asked,

“Did you learn the new formula from someone else, or did you improve the hunter’s potion formula yourself?”

Zhou Jing didn’t even raise his head, “It doesn’t matter what I say; it’s which one you believe.”

Mustache paused, then laughed. “Guess I’m not the first to ask.”

Only then did Zhou Jing look up and shrug, “Usually, when I say that I modified it, others will show an expression of doubt to me. After all, I’m so young. However, if I say that I learned it from others, they will think that it has to be the case.”

Mustache nodded. When he saw how young Zhou Jing was, his first reaction was the same. In the workshop, many pharmacists had the same thoughts about him as well.

However, at this moment, like the upper echelons of the workshop, he believed that Zhou Jing had modified these three potions himself.

It was actually not difficult to get a new formula because he just had to throw in different herbs. It was just that he could not grasp the final product so easily. The real difficulty was in improving the already existing formula. The difficulty was in the designated research and development goal. One needed to increase the original effect, reduce the side effects, and so on. They had to be very particular about what herbs to exchange for and how to deal with the materials. There were too many combinations and factors involved.

At this moment, the people in the queue behind became anxious.

“What are you talking about? Are you still buying?”

“There are so many people waiting. Can you hurry up!”

“Don’t try to pull strings and bargain. We don’t have the time to wait for you. If you don’t have money, go away!”

Hearing this, Mustache coughed awkwardly and stopped asking curiously. He straightened his back and suddenly spoke in a serious tone,

“I’m the expert pharmacist, Sura, certified by the Empire Workshop, and I specialize in hunter potions. I’m here to invite you on behalf of the workshop... Bill, do you want to join the Empire Workshop?”

As soon as he finished speaking, the noisy shop fell silent.

The anxious customers all looked at this person in surprise. Their tempers instantly improved, and they did not dare to act rashly.

An expert pharmacist certified by the empire was not an ordinary person. He had a powerful background!

The public’s evaluation of the pharmacists, blacksmiths and other craftsmen was very vague, but the Empire Workshop had a certification system for pharmacists themselves, divided across four levels. It started off with apprentices who had yet to graduate, to the most common standard, pharmacists. Most of the members of the workshop were at this level this standard level.

Only by reaching a certain level of skill in a certain field and making innovative achievements, such as improving formulas, developing new technologies, and so on, would one be qualified to be certified as an expert... It could be understood as possessing one or more patents with a certain value.

As for the top-notch masters, they had to produce groundbreaking results. The requirements were even harsher than the expert level, and they had to be conferred and

certified by the empire personally. At this level, even the blood relatives and court ministers of the tribe would treat them with respect and warmly befriend them.

However, although everyone present respected him, they could not help but reveal strange expressions.

Even an expert pharmacist was moved by the aphrodisiac.

The Empire Workshop had invited Bill to join them. Could it be that they wanted to expand their business and enter the aphrodisiac industry?

Zhou Jing's eyes flickered as he said, "If I join the Empire Workshop, what will I be in charge of researching?"

"The hunter's potion, of course. You're very talented at this."

The mustached Sura quickly replied. He did not want others to misunderstand that the workshop was now dabbling into aphrodisiacs. He could not afford to lose face.

Zhou Jing pondered for a moment and revealed a troubled expression, "But the formulas I know are limited..."

"That's not a problem," Sura immediately replied. "When you enter the workshop, there will be manufacturing missions and research missions. The workshop will teach you some formulas that you haven't learned before for free. If you want to learn a certain formula freely, you can accumulate merits and exchange for the knowledge you want to learn."

*"... Please tell me the truth. Was this style of contribution designed by a life form from an alternate dimension?"*

Zhou Jing thought about it, but his expression did not change. He pretended to think and said, "I have no objections. It's my honor to join the workshop... but I have a small condition. I don't want benefits, but I have some ideas about the future research direction."

"Do tell." Sura replied curiously.

"I'm not really interested in universal potions or hunter potions. Actually, I'm very interested in the blood potion instead. If I want to study this direction in the future, I wonder if I can change my research path after I enter the workshop?"

"As long as you prove that you are good enough in a field, the workshop will not restrict your research route. Everything can all be applied for. If you want to study the blood potion, then accumulate more merits and learn the relevant knowledge yourself." Sura agreed readily.

This kind of thing was very common in the workshop. The importance of each field varied, so the more critical the project, the more important it was. There were different benefits and treatments, so naturally, many people wanted to jump to better fields. There was also competition within the workshop.

*As long as you do not apply to study aphrodisiacs, everything is fine...*

“Then I’m very happy to join the workshop.”

Zhou Jing immediately stood up and smiled warmly as he shook hands with Sura.

## **Chapter 167: Entering the Sweatshop (2)**

This was his original goal. At this moment, he finally attracted the people from the workshop. He heaved a sigh of relief and was secretly excited.

“Alright, come with me to the workshop. We’ll go through some procedures.” Sura smiled.

Zhou Jing nodded and turned his head to instruct the guards at the side, “Brother, help me give a shout-out outside, I won’t be receiving any new guests today. Let them disperse.”

The guards’ attitude became much more respectful when Zhou Jing became a workshop member. They listened to his instructions and went out to persuade the others to leave.

Zhou Jing quickly settled the bill for the customers still in the shop. Then, he took a wooden sign and wrote down the slogan “Closed for the day.” Then, he hung it at the door, locked it, and left with Sura in front of everyone.

The residents waiting outside looked at each other and had no choice but to leave. The news of Bill joining the Empire’s workshop spread like wildfire.

...

Zhou Jing and Sura chatted as they walked, talking about the situation in the workshop.

Although he had used Jason to investigate, the information he had come into contact with as a hunter and a craftsman was naturally different.

Soon, he learned the general situation inside the workshop from Sura.

The workshop members did not possess the privilege to remain there for life. There was an assessment system in the Empire's workshop, and each workshop member had a key performance indicator to follow. Their merits would be deducted if they could not complete the annual manufacturing and research missions. Once their merits were deducted to an intolerable extent, they would be fired by the workshop.

Only experts and master craftsmen in various fields did not need to complete the hard indicators and could enjoy the benefit of being a member for the rest of their lives.

Although he had recently become "famous" in the capital and had modified a hunter's potion, he could only skip the apprentice level and start from the standard level after entering the Empire Workshop.

*"No wonder the Empire Workshop didn't test my standards. As long as I don't complete the quota and my merits are deducted, I would automatically have to leave."* Zhou Jing understood.

In addition to completing their indicators, there were several other ways to obtain merits. For example, taking the initiative to take on more manufacturing or research and development missions or making innovative contributions.

Therefore, the internal structure of the workshop was not completely based on seniority. There was still vitality and competition, especially for the hunter-related projects. They had to prioritize satisfying the needs of the hunters, so there was no room for carelessness.

*"This kind of environment that relies on meritocracy is quite suitable for me. At the very least, I can stand out if I have the ability. I don't have to mingle in the social circle every day. At most, there will only be some experts and master craftsmen who would hold onto their positions without doing anything. Such people should be in the minority..."*

Zhou Jing blinked as his mind spun.

Apostle No.3's ability and the characteristics of an apostle workaholic, would easily beat all his his competitors in minutes.

It was decided then. F\*\*k all of them up!

It was a pity that his life goal was not to be a technical worker. This profession did not sound too good... However, he should accumulate his skills first. It would not affect earning money.

Zhou Jing suddenly thought of something, "By the way, after joining the workshop, do I have to hand over the new formula?"

When Sura heard this, he immediately knew what Zhou Jing was worried about. He smiled and said, "Of course, the workshop is recommended. Don't worry, the workshop will compensate you."

Zhou Jing asked carefully and roughly understood the situation.

The Terra Empire wanted to collect all kinds of formulas, and they would not let go of the new formulas developed by the workshop members.

However, to motivate the craftsmen and prevent them from dawdling and not innovating, the Empire Workshop did not follow the method of employees handing over their hard work for free. Instead, they respected the craftsmen's "intellectual property rights." They did not just write off that the results of the employees belonged to the workshop just because they were utilizing their production materials... although many lords did so.

The Empire Workshop would pay for the new formula and open it up for learning internally. Then, when others applied to learn this new formula, the founder would also receive merits and monetary rewards.

However, on the sales side, in the primitive era of the Terra Empire, there was no such thing as a sales cut.

Overall, handing over the formula meant there was a possibility of giving up the monopoly. There might be a loss in money, but in exchange, he would gain more knowledge and a higher status in the workshop.

What the Imperial Workshop valued was Zhou Jing's improved pain-reduction potion formula, as well as his own ability. As for whether or not they would hand over the aphrodisiac formula, the workshop did not insist... Although this was very profitable, as the "country's brand," they still had to take care of their reputation.

*"In that case, I'll keep the Energy Potion formula for myself. This business has the potential to develop into a monopoly. It can be used to complete my life objective."*? Zhou Jing's eyes darted around.

They chatted as they walked. They did not go straight to the Imperial Hunter Base but instead proceeded to the Workshop branch in Furnace District. In fact, this was the headquarters. It was only because the research projects here were all conventional products. Thus they did not seem important.

However, it was located in the capital, so it stored all the files of the workshop members. Anyone who joined would have to register here.

The two of them came to the door and informed the guards of their purpose. Soon, someone came out to welcome them. At first glance, the person looked familiar.



Zhou Jing took a closer look and was immediately amused. It was the little old man who had rejected him last time.

The little old man came up to Sura and greeted him. When he turned around and saw Zhou Jing, he was stunned as he too felt that the latter looked familiar.

“Who is this...?”

Seeing this, Zhou Jing couldn't help but remind him kindly, “It's me, Bill. We've met before. I came to apply to join the workshop, but you rejected me.”

“Ah, it's you...”

The little old man vaguely remembered. Suddenly, his eyes widened in surprise.

“You're that aphrodisiac master, Bill? I thought you only had the same name... What are you doing here? Don't tell me you're here to apply to join again? Your conditions are still not good enough.”

By the side, Sura roughly understood the situation as he listened in. This kind of thing was too common, so he could only cough and remind him, “The Empire Workshop at the Hunter's base has decided to invite Bill to join us. We're here to register our files. Please bring us there.”

“The workshop invited him?!”

The little old man was stunned.

*Has the Imperial Hunter Workshop fallen to this extent?*

No, that was impossible. Since the workshop had taken the initiative to invite him, it must mean that this person had a special talent. He knew this very well.

Thinking of this, the little old man was immediately embarrassed.

He thought that Zhou Jing had made a name for himself in the capital with the aphrodisiac. He thought Zhou Jing overestimated himself, applying to the workshop once again.

He had always scoffed at such crooked methods. *Did they think they could join the workshop just like that? Dream on!*

He didn't expect the workshop to have taken the initiative to invite him to join... How embarrassing. He actually misunderstood.

Zhou Jing grinned, “Then can I go in this time?”

“Oh, oh, please come in!” The little old man seemed to have woken up from a dream. His face turned red as he quickly made his way.

Zhou Jing chuckled and walked into the workshop. He was only teasing the old man. After all, the other party was doing things by the book, so he would not be angry over it.

There were no advanced identity checks in this era. He followed Sura and quickly registered his file.

Sura and Zhou Jing then left the city and headed for the Empire’s Hunter Workshop.

After successfully entering the familiar Imperial Hunter base, Zhou Jing felt as if he had returned home. Along the way, he saw a group of hunters he knew wrestling and fighting on the training ground. There was even Jason, who was hugging a hunter and throwing him around.

Sensing Zhou Jing, Jason looked over from afar. After confirming that Zhou Jing did not call him, he did not come forward and continued to trample on his opponent.

Zhou Jing retracted his gaze and entered the Empire Workshop with Sura. This was the first time he had entered the manufacturing area, which was equivalent to the “backend kitchen.” This place was not open to hunters.

The potion area and the forging area were separated. A large number of craftsmen were working in full swing. It was filled with the clamor of boiling medicine, hammering, and shouting. It was as lively as a market.

Further, there was also a beast prison with a group of anesthetized mutated beasts. On a workbench that looked like an assembly line, a large group of technicians dressed like chefs were using various bloodstained tools similar to torture tools to skillfully process the materials of various mutated beasts.

Sura laughed when he saw this.

“This is the core area of the Empire Workshop. Although it’s a little noisy, you’ll like it here after you get used to it.”

“Is, is that so...”

Zhou Jing looked at this rather déjà vu scene, and the corners of his mouth twitched slightly.

Good lord, he had entered a sweatshop.

(TL Note: A sweatshop refers to a factory in which employees work for long hours at low wages and under unhealthy conditions.)

## Chapter 168: Picked Up A Treasure (1)

The Empire's workshop at the Hunter's base mainly focused on three technical routes. The processing of mutant beast equipment, the production of blood potions, and the production of hunter potions.

In the internal management structure of the workshop, there were three Governing Officers at the highest level. They were one main boss and two deputy bosses. The two deputy bosses were in charge of the technical aspects, promoted internally by the craftsmen. The main boss was in charge of the administrative and executive aspects. He was a minister from the Royal Court who led the place on behalf of the Empire.

The three technical routes each had a Managing Director. Below them were the Directors of the development teams in each route, followed by the team leads of the individual development teams, which were divided into different types of products. In addition, each product group would have its own craftsmen and apprentices. The workshop's words for the various positions in their workshop were naturally different, but this was a definition that Zhou Jing had made according to his own understanding. To him, it was more intuitive.

Sura was one of the Directors responsible for the hunter potion route. Under his arrangements, Zhou Jing got to know his colleagues and was then assigned to a development team that included the production of pain-reduction potions. He officially joined the Empire Workshop.

Many of his colleagues were curious about this famous "Aphrodisiac Apothecary." So when he passed by, they would always look at him with a judging eye.

Sura instructed the development team lead to help Zhou Jing integrate before leaving, leaving Zhou Jing and the guy staring at each other.

The team leader's attitude was neither cold nor warm. Their dislike was obvious. However, because the workshop had decided he could not object, he could only take in a new team member and throw the target mission to Zhou Jing. He casually introduced the work area and workflow before throwing him aside.

The pharmacists from the development team did not welcome Zhou Jing's arrival. No one wanted to get to know him. After a simple greeting, they ended the conversation and ignored Zhou Jing. Their original small circle tacitly ostracized Zhou Jing, a newcomer.

On the one hand, it was because Bill was young. On the other hand, it was because of his reputation as an aphrodisiac pharmacist. Many felt that it pulled down their status, so their first impression was naturally not good.

Zhou Jing did not care at all.

This was nothing. Zhou Jing would screw them over with his skills. These people would only dislike him even more.

Zhou Jing read his mission list carefully before he curled his lips, "That's it?"

The annual quota was mainly for the production of missions. The potions produced were determined by the responsibility of each development team. A development team could apply for more workload, which would be distributed to the craftsmen in the group. Therefore, the mission indicators of the various workshop members were different.

His mission this year was to create 300 bottles of pain-reduction potions and 200 bottles of injury-suppression potions... He had yet to learn the latter, so the workshop directly gave him the formula.

"I only need to make 500 bottles of potions a year... Is this a place for retirement?"

If one were to split it evenly, the workload would be less than two bottles a day. This seemed quite efficient.

Zhou Jing could make 20 to 30 bottles of medicine in a day, and this was after considering the time he had to look after the shop. If he made them 24 hours a day, he would be able to complete the quota needed for the mission in 10 days.

*"This place looks like it's operating in full swing, but I didn't expect it to be so leisurely. When I came in, I saw those hardworking craftsmen. Could it be that all of them are pretending to work hard but are actually slacking?"*

Zhou Jing complained in his heart.

After pondering for a while, he roughly understood what was going on.

It was not that everyone was idle, but that their development team was idle. Their team lead probably never applied for a larger workload, leading his team to slack off yearly.

In addition, the various herbs and materials provided by the Terra Empire were limited in supply. Therefore, they were provided to the various development teams only according to the mission indicators.

Moreover, although Hunter Potions were also consumables, they were only used during hunting Mutant Beasts. Therefore, the consumption rate was not high, so there was no need to accumulate too much of them. Moreover, there were many styles. When the hunters were dispatched, they had their own choices. This reduced the need for all kinds of potions. In the end, they were made according to needs, and the annual quota was the pathetic quantity stated.

Zhou Jing couldn't help but think of Jason's third enhancement, on how he went to claim a blood potion and found that no one was interested in it. After witnessing the inside workings of the workshop, he understood the situation.

The workload at the Empire's workshop at the Hunter's base was not heavy at all. What was really important was the development of the new formulas.

However, it was not easy to develop a new formula. It was estimated that such an indicator mission would not fall on ordinary craftsmen unless they applied for it themselves.

*"So as a newcomer to the workshop, I only need to be in charge of the most basic production indicators... Heh, looks like you're not making things difficult for me."*

As the craftsman could apply for missions on his own, it was very difficult to make someone be a complete benchwarmer. Even if the team lead did not like him much, he would not deliberately make things difficult for him by increasing or decreasing the number of missions he had to take. After all, the lead would be responsible if anything went wrong.

A place like this... He really liked it!

As long as he applied to increase his job scope, he would be able to obtain the materials needed. This was simply a treasure ground for craftsmen to practice.

No wonder those craftsmen were all so busy. They had probably taken the initiative to apply for new quotas — to use the nation's resources to improve their skills. Who would not be willing!

*"I have to abuse this to the maximum!"*

Zhou Jing's eyes lit up. Without another word, he went to the administrative department to ask about the rules.

The first thing to do was to accept a mission. If one did not have the formula for this product, the workshop would directly provide the formula.

However, everyone could only accept three missions at most simultaneously. They could only accept more after they completed the previous three. This was to prevent anyone from accepting a large number of missions at the same time and failing to complete them in the end.

If they didn't complete enough missions, their merits would be deducted, and they would be kicked out of the workshop. Therefore, even with such generous conditions, most of the craftsmen did not dare to accept it casually.

The workshop's production missions had basically all been distributed, leaving only some missions for research and development of formulas and improving existing formulas. As for the task of improving the potion formula, there was a huge backlog, and almost no one cared about it... because it was too difficult.

Zhou Jing's eyes, however, turned red at such a large quantity available, and he wanted to complete all these missions.

However, after some thought, he did not immediately accept the mission to improve the mutant blood potions. Instead, he accepted another mission to improve the formula of the hunter's potion, filling up his Key Performance Indicators alongside his other two basic production missions.

He was not blindly confident just because of the [Item Analysis Function]. For the sake of caution, he decided to first complete a few simple missions to accumulate merits in exchange for the basic knowledge of the blood potion. He would first study the differences between blood potion technology and ordinary potionology.

Only then would he clearly understand the difficulty of improving the formula of the mutant blood potions. He could then accept the missions and obtain the relevant formulas... After all, only those who had the ability to complete them could continue to use them.

As for the ordinary missions, they were not difficult for him. He did not even need much time.

The factor that prevented the other craftsmen from crazily accepting the formulas was their learning ability.

Just knowing the formula was not enough. One had to be proficient in the production process. It would take a month or two for a normal craftsman to go from rusty to proficient in a new formula, allowing the success rate of the potion production to stabilize at a passable level. A more complicated formula would take even longer.

However, this was not a problem for the third apostle, Bill. If he sped up his training, he would even be able to master it in two to three days. Coupled with his talent and support functions, his success rate in making potions was almost 100%. The chances of making strengthened potions were many times higher than that of those skilled craftsmen.

Zhou Jing blinked rapidly.

"There's only one problem to worry about now... If I learn too much, I won't be silenced, right?"

...

After entering the Empire Workshop, the third apostle, Bill, was finally on the right track. He stayed in the workshop for the next few months to complete missions.

He had hired someone to take care of his apothecary in the capital. Occasionally, he would take some time to make some energy potions to replenish his supplies. In total, he had already earned thousands of silver coins.

After farming missions for several months, Zhou Jing completely displayed Bill's talent in pharmacology. He completed more than ten missions and improved a large number of hunter potion formulas, becoming the most well-known person in the workshop.

The other colleagues were shocked. They had never seen a pharmacist with such exaggerated efficiency. Improving the formula was as easy as improving a cooking recipe for him!

In just a few months, this newcomer's results were comparable to the years of work of an entire development team—he was a genius!

Originally, many craftsmen looked down on a pharmacist who chose to sell aphrodisiacs. They were quite dissatisfied with the decision of the upper echelons of the workshop to invite Zhou Jing to join them. They were shocked to discover that the upper echelons had good foresight.

This unusual situation made many craftsmen think that Zhou Jing must have done something behind the scenes to get such results. However, no matter how they investigated, they realized in despair... This was really his natural talent.

Even the few publicly acknowledged workaholics in the workshop did not dare to have any thoughts of competing against such inhuman work efficiency.

They would not win, not at all!

The workshop's backlog decreased one by one every few days, and a sense of anxiety spread among the craftsmen.

*If this continued, all the missions would be completed by this newcomer? Then where would they go to accept new missions? Would they really have to slack off and retire?*

*Don't, Brother Bill. Please stop. Leave us some missions!*

Most of the craftsmen became extremely anxious because of Zhou Jing. They were originally carefree, but now, they had no choice but to speed up their work, wanting to snatch the few remaining missions.

However, the higher-ups of the workshop were overjoyed.

Back then, when they invited Zhou Jing to join, they thought highly of him, but they weren't desperate to hire him. It was just to recruit talents from outside as usual and integrate them into the workshop system to contribute to the empire.

However, they did not expect to hit the jackpot this time!

This time, they had really picked up a treasure!

The higher-ups of the workshop were amazed by Zhou Jing. They were even urgently discussing whether they should promote him to the Expert level... It was extremely rare for a craftsman who had only joined the workshop for a few months to receive such an honor.

However, before the higher-ups of the workshop could finish discussing, Zhou Jing had learned much about the blood potion through his accumulated merits. He felt that he had accumulated enough and finally carried out his plan to move his attention toward the blood potion route.

## **Chapter 169: Alarmed (1)**

[Skill: Pharmacology]

[Level: Lv6 – Unique]

[Skill: [Herbal Knowledge]]

[Level: Lv7 – Expert]

[Skill: Mutant Blood Potion Technique]

[Level: Lv4 – Proficient]

“With such a level in pharmacology, there should be no problem.”

In front of the pharmaceutical table, Zhou Jing looked at the attributes of Apostle No. 3 on the interface and secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

He had been grinding missions in the workshop for the past few months, using the resources provided by the Empire to practice. The skills related to potion quickly rose to a new level through repeated practice.

Among them, the technique of the Mutant Blood Potion was a new skill not included in the “Pharmacology” category. Zhou Jing had used the merits he had accumulated to exchange for the knowledge of the Mutant Blood Potion that was available in the



workshop. He had studied it to Lv4 but had yet to actually make a bottle of the Mutant Blood Potion.

After several months of repetitive labor, even though Zhou Jing was mentally prepared, he could not take it anymore. Entering a sweatshop was indeed not a job that ordinary people could do.

Fortunately, there was a placement mode. During those times, the apostle was even more engrossed in his work than when he projected himself. The apostles in the placement basically had no need for entertainment. Other than eating, drinking, and sleeping, they would fulfill Zhou Jing's plan every minute. This was the real reason his workshop colleagues had to vomit blood in despair.

After the [Mutant Blood Potion Technique] was upgraded to the "Proficient" level, Zhou Jing took action. Under the strange gazes of his colleagues, he took a mission to improve the formula of the Mutant Blood Potion.

A list of formulas and two bottles of samples was on the pharmaceutical table.

"This Sword-Tailed Eagle Potion has a total of five synthesis formulas. The last improvement was 11 years ago..."

Zhou Jing looked at the formula for the specie on the list carefully, muttering softly to himself.

The Sword-tailed Eagle was a low-risk beast that could even be bred. Although it was low-risk, the advantage was that one had enough materials to practice. If it were a non-breeding beast, there would not be many materials available as well. Therefore, Zhou Jing had specially chosen this potion to improve it.

The main ingredients of the blood potion were divided into two components: main materials and additional materials. The former was naturally the different organs of the mutant beast, while the latter was miscellaneous items like herbs, ore powder, and so on. Therefore, the blood potion made from the same type of mutant beast through different formulas would also affect the quality of the final product. The main point of improvement was to increase the effect and success rate of the potion.

Which part of the mutant beast to collect, what ingredients to use, what method to handle it... The process of making the mutant blood potion was much more complicated than making ordinary potions, and it would be very difficult to improve.

The technical aspect was only one aspect. The most difficult aspect was actually the detection.

Even the Empire's Workshop, which had mastered the "core technology" behind such an advanced potion, only had a rather simple testing method. They could only roughly determine the quality of the potion, and the accuracy was not high.

It was even harder to analyze the specific parameters of the blood potion... This was because there were only so many people who used the blood potion every year. Thus, samples were quite hard to come by, unlike other potions that could be drunk casually.

Even if they improved a potion formula, it would take a long time to observe and verify it. Without enough samples, it was difficult to determine if the new formula was better or worse—this was also the reason why most people were unwilling to improve the potion.

The various mutant blood potions nowadays used the best formulas that had been verified over time. Many of them were legacies from the tribal era and had not been improved for a long time. It was difficult to delve into proper study for them as a result.

However...

Zhou Jing's eyes rolled as he picked up a bottle of Sword-tailed Eagle Potion. The item analysis function immediately popped up with detailed information.

The ratio of the ingredients to the potion immediately appeared. Not only that but the quality of the potion was also displayed.

For example, the probability of success of using it and the various characteristics one could inherit after taking it was displayed.

*"I don't need to drink it. I don't even need a sample. I can test the final effect of a bottle of medicine just with my bare hands. I can see the improvement progress directly and know if the experiment is successful or not. I don't have to be like other pharmacists who are like headless flies."*

Zhou Jing played with the potion, his eyes flickering.

Such an ability was completely equivalent to being a human quality detector!

For Jason's next enhancement, he could use this ability to screen out the best potion without relying on luck.

In the Empire's Workshop, which lacked the means to detect mutant blood potions, such people were definitely a special talent which they were lacking. The importance of being able to ascertain the quality of a potion was so paramount that its mere presence would be able to suppress the efforts of all the other craftsmen.

*"This move of mine can be slightly revealed. Others don't know about my support function and will only treat it as my talent..."*

*My current level is enough to support such a shocking performance. This is a shortcut to obtaining the Empire's favor. This will allow me to skip grades quickly and become an important workshop member. I'll be closer to more confidential knowledge and contact the core of power faster."*

Zhou Jing had already thought of this. After carefully thinking about it, he felt the plan was quite feasible.

His plan for the Bill had begun with a steady climb in status. He would gradually come into contact with the core of the Empire's power and use the information he had to gain benefits, such as finding out more about this world.

At the same time, he would also learn the most valuable mutant blood potion in the Mutant World. In the future, he would produce and sell it himself to create better potions for Jason and the apostles who might take the mutant blood route in the future.

He might even be able to lure out the hidden lifeforms from another dimension.

Bill had lived in the Mutant World for about half a year, and his actions were quite high-profile. Although he did not reveal the words and knowledge of the main world, Zhou Jing felt that a technological talent who was in the limelight would more or less attract the attention of the lifeforms in the alternate dimension.

This matter had always been on his mind.

Zhou Jing had always wanted to know more about lifeforms from other dimensions, but he had no way of doing so. Therefore, he could only lure people to come and contact him. He was thinking of using his identity as an to communicate with the lifeforms from other dimensions and obtain information.

## **Chapter 170: Alarmed (2)**

Even if he couldn't get information... at least he could use it as bait to find traces of this group of people and let Jason find someone to cut them down.

"Speaking of which, it's been half a year. Why haven't I seen anyone who looks like a lifeform from an alternate dimension? There has to be someone like that in the capital, right? Isn't that Roman related to this group of people..."

Zhou Jing was a little puzzled. He usually paid attention to the residents of the capital, but he did not find any clues about them.

*Are they that good at hiding? Are they all moles?*

It seemed that if he wanted to obtain information, he could only think of a way to approach Roman, the only one in the know.

...

After researching for about five days, Zhou Jing finally came up with a new version of the Sword Tail Eagle Potion formula and steadily made a few bottles of the finished products.

Through the item analysis function, the enhancement success rate of the new formula was 5% higher than the original formula, and the enhancement effect had increased by 10%.

It didn't seem like much, but for a mature blood potion formula, it was already a huge improvement.

The formula could still be optimized, but there was no need to put in so much effort.

Zhou Jing took the new formula and planned to submit it.

However, just as he walked out of the pharmaceutical room, someone stopped him.

“Bill!”

Zhou Jing turned around and saw that it was Sura who had invited him previously.

“Are you looking for me?”

Sura smiled as he approached. “I have good news for you. The higher-ups of the workshop have decided to certify you as an expert pharmacist. They'll promote you to one rank up, and you can form your own team of craftsmen.”

This was his promotion to a team lead.

As far as he knew, many craftsmen had worked for more than ten years, but they had never become expert pharmacists. He had done it in just a few months... This would probably make them hate him even more.

Zhou Jing nodded and said with a smile, fluently replying in the dialect of the capital, “Please thank them for me.”

“This is all your ability. I didn't expect you to be so good.”

Sura's attitude was friendly towards him.

He was already an expert pharmacist and had long obtained a permanent position. He would not be sent packing because he was considered lacking as compared to someone else.

Moreover, Zhou Jing belonged to his team. The more involved he was, the more he himself would benefit. As a leader, he liked to have capable employees who worked hard.

“Are you free now? Can you come with me to meet the Governing Officers?” Sulla asked.

“Wait a while. I’ll hand in the new formula first.” Zhou Jing waved the note in his hand.

Hearing this, Sura got curious. ‘What is the hunter’s potion you made this time?’

“It’s not a hunter potion, but the Sword-Tailed Eagle blood potion,” Zhou Jing said truthfully.

Sura froze, his eyes suddenly opening wide.

“Wait a moment, I remember that you only accepted this mission five days ago?!”

“You seem to be paying a lot of attention to me...” Zhou Jing blinked.

*What bullsh\*t, who in the workshop is not paying attention to you now...*

Sura cried out with an expression of shock, “You improved the blood potion?”

His voice was rather loud, and it immediately attracted the attention of the nearby craftsmen. They all looked at him in surprise.

“What’s so strange about that? It’s not like no one has successfully modified it before.” Zhou Jing raised his eyebrows.

“No... you...”

Sura was so overwhelmed with disbelief that he was no longer coherent.

*Yes, you are right that there were many people in history who had improved the Mutant Blood Potion... but it had only been five days!*

Although this Bill had already proven the efficiency of improving the hunter’s potion, the blood potion was another route altogether... Speaking of which, he had only started learning about the blood potion a few months ago!

“Wait a moment, I’ll inform the Officers!”

With that, Sura hurried away.

Zhou Jing had no objections, or rather, he did not even have time to make any.

After waiting for a while, he saw a group of higher-ups running over anxiously.

“Bill, you really improved the blood potion? Where’s the formula? Show me!”

One of the officers spoke eagerly.

Zhou Jing did not mind. He handed over the formula. The higher-ups of the workshop immediately gathered their heads together to scrutinize the formula.

“Can this formula... be used?”

The Head of the Officers was a court minister and was half a layman. He could not understand at all, so he could only ask his deputies, who were craftsmen.

“I don’t know. We haven’t tested it yet.” The deputy boss told the truth and couldn’t help but say, “But it looks like it will work. The combination of various ingredients is a new idea. Perhaps it can have an effect... But it’s so complicated. Was five days enough for this?”

As soon as he finished speaking, they could not help but look at Zhou Jing suspiciously.

*To be able to change such a complicated formula in five days, did you change it randomly?*

*Could it be that he felt that the effect of the blood potion was difficult to measure, so he casually came up with a new formula to deal with the mission?*

Sensing their distrust, Zhou Jing took out a few finished products and stuffed them into everyone’s hands.

“I’ve already tested it. The effect is definitely better than the original formula. If you’re worried, you can find someone to try it.”

“Of course we will go and test... but how did you do it? Why are you so sure?” One of the Deputy Bosses couldn’t help but ask when he saw how confident Zhou Jing was.

“I just need to take a sip to know if it’s good.” Zhou Jing shrugged.

“What?!”

The few of them were instantly dumbfounded.

*Which mutant potion maker would personally taste their own work? That was too dangerous— did he just want to die?*

*You're too hardcore!*

“You successfully enhanced?”

Seeing that Zhou Jing was still alive and kicking, they were all shocked and subconsciously made such a guess.

“What are you guys thinking? Why would I swallow it?”

Zhou Jing rolled his eyes. Then, he picked up a bottle of finished product and took a sip in front of them. He rinsed his mouth with it as though he was sampling wine before he spat it out.

“Here, this is enough.”

“... Is this considered a test?”

The others looked confused.

You really see all sorts of things as you get older. Was this useful?

“Did I not mention it? As long as my tongue tastes herbs or potions, I can estimate the general situation, such as the composition, the ratio of materials, and so on.” Zhou Jing deliberately revealed a surprised expression and pretended to lay his cards on the table.

The first reaction from the group of higher-ups was disbelief.

*What sort of godly myth are you talking about here?*

However, when they thought of the results of Zhou Jing's work over the past few months, they could not help but waver.

Perhaps it was precisely because he had such a special talent that Bill could go against common sense and improve various formulas with terrifying efficiency. Otherwise, it was difficult to explain how this person could perform so astonishingly at such a young age.

*Did we solve the case behind his successes then?*

Such an unprecedented talent... The higher-ups of the workshop looked at each other and saw surprise in each other's eyes.

To think they actually discovered such a talented person. God has blessed the Empire!

The higher-ups of the workshop couldn't wait any longer. They pulled Zhou Jing for a test, giving him a large pile of potions to taste and evaluate. Then, they looked at him expectantly.

After he accurately described the ingredients and proportions of the various potions, the higher-ups of the workshop finally believed that Zhou Jing had such talent. They were overjoyed.

Looking at their excited expressions, Zhou Jing smiled to himself.

He had spread the bait. Now it was up to fate if he could catch a fish.

...

Somewhere in the royal palace.

A middle-aged man wearing a crown listened patiently to the report from the Empire Hunter Workshop. The content of the report was regarding Bill.

Becky-Tarn. The current Monarch of the Terra Empire, the second King of the Royal Family. It had been more than ten years since he took over the throne.

He had a square face, thick eyebrows, and a firm appearance. He was tall and sturdy, and he exuded a dignified aura, causing the higher-ups of the workshop to subconsciously lower their voices.

After hearing about Bill, Becky tapped his fingers on the arm of the chair and said slowly:

“Get ready. I want to see this person personally.”

Hearing this, the Governing Officers of the workshop was stunned. He could not help but speak out,

“Isn't this a little inappropriate... I mean, although Bill is talented, he's just an outsider who has just joined the workshop. He even has a track record of selling aphro... ahem, energy potions. If you see him, the king's reputation might...”

At this moment, Becky interrupted him in an unquestionable tone.

“It's a blessing for the Empire to have such a talent. There's nothing inappropriate about it.”

If one was just an outstanding pharmacist, he would be valued, but he would not have such an honor.



However, the “talent” that Zhou Jing deliberately revealed made up for an extremely important part of the research on the Mutant Blood Potion. There was no one in the entire empire who could replace him. In fact, there had never been such a talented person in history.

If what he said was true, then this person’s existence would bring immeasurable convenience to the research of the Empire’s mutant blood potion!

Such benefits alarmed even the king, and he became intensely curious about Bill.

...

“There’s actually such a talent?”

At the same time, somewhere in the palace of the capital, Roman heard about Bill’s situation from his subordinate’s report. He immediately remembered this name, and his eyes lit up.

This person’s talent was outstanding, and his future achievements might be limitless. The royal family of Tarn must have heard the news.

Perhaps he should get to know this person while he was still young. At the very least, he should get acquainted so that the other party would know of his existence.

*If possible, it would be best to rope in this guy called Bill... It seemed that he had made a fortune in aphrodisiacs. Perhaps he liked money?*

Roman’s eyes flickered.

## **Chapter 171: Attribute Breaking 100 (1)**

After deliberately revealing his item analysis talent, things changed significantly.

As the news spread, soon, the entire workshop knew about Zhou Jing’s “talent.”

Over the past few days, Zhou Jing could feel the complicated gazes of the other craftsmen. They were no longer looking for someone who screwed them over but at an unattainable existence.

Many craftsmen had also vaguely heard rumors that the workshop had decided to let Zhou Jing take on a special position in the future and become the only person appointed by the workshop to test potions.

In the future, all the potions created by others would be handed over to Zhou Jing to taste and measure. This meant that he was no longer just a craftsman, but the “important research equipment” of the Empire Workshop, which was above everyone else.

As long as he did not lose this talent, Bill would always have such a special status.

This was no longer a matter of envy or jealousy. The unreachable gap in talent made one lose the will to chase after him. It was as if Bill had suddenly turned from a hated Competitive King who screwed them over into a story told by a bystander.

Zhou Jing did not pay too much attention to the thoughts of his colleagues in the workshop. After revealing his “talent,” he submitted the Sword-Tailed Eagle Potion and also accepted another mission to improve the blood potion. He continued to farm missions and obtain more recipes for free.

After a few days, Zhou Jing was once again visited by the higher-ups of the workshop. They said that they wanted to bring him to see someone.

“Who wants to see me?”

Zhou Jing put down the herbs he was grinding and turned to look at them, his tone curious.

The Governing Officer forced a smile. “The King wants to see you.”

The King! Zhou Jing’s eyes lit up.

His hard work had finally attracted the attention of the top echelons of this world.

However, it was actually the Terra King... Not only did he catch a fish, but it was a humongous one!

After using three Apostles to travel back and forth in the Mutant World for more than a year, he finally met the ruler of the country.

Upon coming into contact with the core of authority, he would finally step into a new level...

For a moment, many thoughts flashed through Zhou Jing’s mind. He deliberately put on a terrified and honored expression, like a commoner meeting the ruler of a country for the first time.

“What should I do when I meet the King?”

“Don’t be afraid. Just talk normally. The King just wants to know more about you.”

The higher-ups of the workshop took turns to comfort him. After seeing that Zhou Jing had “calmed down,” they brought him along.

The group walked out of the workshop and arrived at the main house of the Imperial Hunter Base. At this moment, there were a large number of guards guarding this place, as well as many strong Mutant Blood Warriors standing guard. They were all Royal Guardians as well as the Palace Guards.

On the training ground opposite the main house, many hunters were sitting, standing, or squatting. They looked at this side from afar without any unnecessary movements.

The two sides were separated by the street. It was not a confrontation, but it was clear that there were two sides.

Zhou Jing saw Jason’s figure in the crowd of people on the training ground. However, he deliberately looked away and followed the higher-ups of the workshop into the main house without looking back, leaving only his back view to the people outside.

There were already many people standing in the room, many of them clad in the guards’ attire. Zhou Jing immediately saw the person sitting on the main seat. It was a middle-aged man with a crown on his head.

*“This is the King?”*

Zhou Jing’s heart stirred. After sizing up the king, he subconsciously looked around and realized that there were a few personal guards standing beside the king. They were all wearing the same steel armor and were covered in the royal family’s emblems. Their armors were quite exquisite.

One of them was quite eye-catching. She was the only female among the guards. She had long, curly lake-green hair that was tied up behind her head, looking like she was in her thirties or forties. Her skin was fair, and she still had her charm. Her appearance seemed to resemble the King as well.

Before he walked in, the female guard had been staring at a short man not far away. It was Commander Keriber of the Imperial Hunters. He was also present for this meeting.

While he was observing, the Officer beside him quickly stepped forward and bowed to the king.

“Your Majesty, this is Bill... Bill, this is the King of the Terra Empire, from the glorious bloodline of Tarn, His Majesty Becky·Tarn!”

“Uh, hello, King?”

Zhou Jing pretended to be flustered and imitated the Head of the workshop, performing a clumsy bow.

Seeing this, Becky smiled and stood up from his seat. He extended his palm in welcome, and as he calmly spoke,

“There’s no need to be so reserved. Please sit down, Bill.”

The attendants came up to serve them, and everyone took their seats.

There were no other court officials present, but the workshop Head still introduced a few important figures to Zhou Jing. Everyone nodded at Zhou Jing.

Soon, he reached the introduction of the two people Zhou Jing had noticed before.

“... This is the commander of the Imperial Hunters, Kleiber. He is one of only two Fifth Enhancers of the Empire.”

Keriber smiled and said kindly to Zhou Jing, “It’s our first time meeting. Let’s interact more in the future.”

*“I’m afraid we’re old acquaintances... but that’s with Jason’s identity.”*

Now that it was Bill’s identity, it was the first time they had met. Naturally, the other party could not recognize his true appearance.

Zhou Jing smiled to himself and pretended to greet him.

The Head then looked at the female guard from before and coughed, “This is the captain of the royal guards, Irene Tarn. She is another Fifth Enhancement Mutant Blood Warrior in the Empire.”

Zhou Jing’s eyes flickered.

It was indeed her.

Throughout his days here, Zhou Jing had asked around and discovered that the other Fifth Enhancement Warrior the Empire had was of this name. This signified that the person was from the Tarn family... He just didn’t know if he was the King’s elder or younger sister.

## **Chapter 172: Attribute Breaking 100 (1)**

Irene gave him a small nod but said nothing.

However, Zhou Jing took the initiative to say, "Hello, Commander Irene."

"Hmm." Irene's tone was calm, and her charming face was expressionless and rather cold.

After receiving a response, Zhou Jing quietly opened the interface and used his detection.

The next moment, Irene's attributes appeared on the interface.

[Attributes: Physical Fitness 80 (Second Order Max), Resistance 70, Perception 50, Spirit 22, Energy 15]

*"The total value of all her attributes is higher than that of Keriber, but the her resistance is lower than his."*? Zhou Jing did a simple calculation.

The two strongest people in the entire Terra Empire were in this room.

*"I wonder who will win if they fight... My vote goes to Keriber."*

Zhou Jing detected the King—he was not an ordinary person. He was actually at First Enhancement.

After a brief introduction, Becky spoke. "Bill, I've heard about your talents. When did you realize you had them?"

"A long time ago, when I was a child—"

Zhou Jing composed himself and said what he had long prepared.

This time, the king came to meet him personally. On the one hand, it was to get to know talented people, and on the other hand, it was also to observe. Most of the time, Becky asked questions, and Zhou Jing answered.

Fortunately, he did not choose a surname this time. He could deal with others using a surname, but not the king.

He told them that he came from a village that had been destroyed by the mutant beasts. This village Carole from a rumor that Jason had heard during his journey. Because the villagers had either died or dispersed, it was difficult to verify his identity.

At the moment, no one present suspected anything. This kind of background was not uncommon.

While the king was observing him, Zhou Jing was also observing the King. Becky was not the amiable type. He was full of energy and dignity yet did not make people feel

pressured. However, he was a very imposing person, making people involuntarily sit upright in front of him.

Although the other party was only the ruler of a primitive country, this was the first time Zhou Jing felt the aura of a superior being... He was just an ordinary person in the main world. Other than watching the news of the leaders of the various countries on television, he had never come into contact with such a powerful figure in his life.

In addition, Zhou Jing was also observing if there were any lifeforms from other dimensions among the people present. Unfortunately, he did not discover that unique aura. Either there was no one there, or they were hiding too well.

After chatting for more than ten minutes, Becky roughly understood Zhou Jing's "situation." He stopped asking questions and changed the topic.

"Your talent is a gift from nature. It has extraordinary meaning. Don't waste your talent."

"I've always been happy to serve the Empire." Zhou Jing tactfully expressed his stance.

Becky nodded. "Well... maybe in a few days, the Empire will need you to participate in some important research. Before that, I want you to focus on the blood potion. If you need anything, just let me know."

*"Is this a hint for me to stop making the Energy Potion?"* Zhou Jing's heart stirred.

He didn't know the important research the king wanted. He thought it might be the more confidential "advanced technology" that the workshop had mentioned.

"What research is it?" Zhou Jing asked directly.

Becky pondered for a moment, then said slowly:

"It's fine to tell you now. The Empire has been thinking of ways to research a few new blood potions. One is a compound potion that can fuse the strengthening of various mutant beasts into a bottle of potion.

"The second would be a special blood potion. It would allow the hunters to inherit the special abilities of certain mutated beasts, such as breathing fire, releasing electricity, and so on.

"The third type is the gentle Mutant Blood Potion. The effects of the current Mutant Blood Enhancement are very good, but it's too easy to die. Every year, a large number of hunter apprentices die in vain even after painstakingly training for the potion. Perhaps we can try to weaken the effects of the potion and split a single enhancement into multiple enhancements, decreasing the mortality rate and allowing ordinary people to use it safely. This way, although the hunters will become weaker, their numbers will

increase unprecedentedly. No one will die suddenly again, and we might not have to be afraid of the threat of mutant beasts in the future.”

As he spoke, an emotional expression appeared on Becky’s face, as if he was pitying those who had died violently because of the blood potion.

Hearing this, Keriber couldn’t help but sigh. “That’s right. In order to become a hunter, too many good young men endured periods of loneliness and pain. They train hard year after year, but in the end, they didn’t step onto the battlefield to fight against the mutated beasts and died in vain. After years of training and anticipation, they could only die in exchange. Every time I see their corpses, I feel extremely heartbroken.”

Zhou Jing nodded silently.

Although he did not know if it was sincere, he still respected people with ideals.

Although the goal was still to obtain benefits, there was nothing bad about using the special advantage of an apostle to do something that could change the world.

Becky didn’t continue. He instead turned to Irene and said, “Choose two powerful and reliable guards and follow Bill. In the future, follow his orders and protect his safety.”

“Got it.” Irene nodded.

Zhou Jing blinked.

*“Did he just assign me a guard?”*

This was the first time he had received such treatment.

As for whether it was surveillance, he did not know... It would probably be difficult to meet up with Jason again after this.

However, now that Bill was on the right track, he did not have to interact with Jason frequently in the future.

After the meeting ended, King Becky gave Zhou Jing a few more words of encouragement before leaving with the guards.

## **Chapter 173: Attribute Breaking 100 (3)**

“Bill, work hard in the future. Don’t disappoint the King.”

The head patted Zhou Jing’s shoulder with a smile.

The other higher-ups of the workshop also smiled warmly at him.

They were also proud to have unearthed a talent like Bill.

After today, Bill would receive the attention of the King. As long as nothing went wrong in the future, he would definitely rise to the top. Naturally, they would not let their relationship with him cool down.

Zhou Jing thanked him formally as he thought about Bill's next move.

It was imperative to join this "core technology" research team.

Not only was it to learn, but if he could really develop a new blood potion, the impact would be huge. It would affect the entire Empire.

Perhaps he wouldn't even have to clear his life objectives anymore. The Information State Particles he could gain would explode and directly transform Bill into an Eternal Apostle. This was another "clearing route."

As for the scheme of the tribes to regain their independence, he still had to find an opportunity to tell the royal family. Currently, Zhou Jing had a good impression of the Empire and was more inclined toward it.

However, this matter was not suitable for him to speak as Bill. Perhaps after Bill stabilized his current status and made research results, he could think of a way to introduce Jason to the royal family and make Jason speak about it.

At the same time, he could use the status of one apostle to increase the status of the other apostle, mutually benefitting each other.

Just as Zhou Jing was deep in thought, Keriber walked up and greeted him with a smile.

"Bill, it's up to you from now on. I hope the hunters will get to use the new potion you developed."

"I'll work hard." Zhou Jing nodded. "By the way, do you have any plans to go for a sixth enhancement? If there are any results in the future, I can give it straight to you."

"I'm an old bag of bones, so I won't continue to enhance anymore." Keriber smiled and shook his head. Suddenly, he asked curiously, "By the way, I heard that you have a good relationship with one of our hunters."

"Jason? Yes, he and I are old friends. When I first came to the capital, he helped me a lot."

Zhou Jing nodded and spoke as if it was a serious matter.



“Jason often talked about you as well. He said that you were a talent and always remembered how you saved him back then.”

*“No, I’m sure I never said that...”*

Zhou Jing could not expose the other party’s social flattery, so he could only smile.

“You can come and find him more often in the future.”

Keriber patted Zhou Jing on the shoulder.

“I will.” Zhou Jing changed the topic and asked curiously, “By the way, you and Irene both have five enhancements. May I ask who’s stronger?”

“Hard to say. In strength and defense, I’m better. In speed and perception, Irene is better.”

Keriber did not seem to want to compare against her.

“Alright, I’ll be in the base. If you encounter anything, just look for me.” He smiled at Zhou Jing and ended the conversation there.

Zhou Jing looked at his departing figure thoughtfully.

He realized that when facing an “intellectual” like him, Keriber was not as bold as he had been with the hunters. He remained polite and courteous.

*“Looks like there’s still a difference in identity. They respect me, but I’m not one of them.”*?Zhou Jing thought to himself.

...

After the meeting with the King, two royal guards accepted the order the next day and became his bodyguards. They followed him wherever he went.

Zhou Jing got to know them and realized that both of them were at the Second Enhancement, which was enough to show the importance the Royal Family gave him.

However, he was still working in the Hunter Workshop and had yet to be called to join the research of “core technology.”

On the third day after getting the two guards, an uninvited guest personally came to the workshop to seek an audience with Zhou Jing.

Zhou Jing walked into the reception room of the workshop and saw a fat, unfamiliar man.

“May I know who you are?”

Zhou Jing asked curiously.

Hearing this, the fatty stood up unhurriedly and stretched out his large hand filled with gem rings towards Zhou Jing, revealing a rather amiable smile.

“Hello, I’m the king’s Privy Chancellor, Roman.”

*“This guy’s Roman?!”*

Zhou Jing perked up.

After spending so much time in the capital, he finally saw this ambitious person behind the scenes!

He shook hands with him and subconsciously used the interface to detect his attributes.

In the next second, the interface displayed a message that left him speechless.

[Attributes: Physical Fitness 24, Resistance 68, Perception 90, Spirit 96, Energy 108]

Zhou Jing: (°—° ”)

## **Chapter 174: Roman, You Will Be My Big Brother From Now On! (1)**

Looking at the attributes displayed on the interface, Zhou Jing’s emotions boiled.

“What happened to you?”

Roman held Zhou Jing’s hand and keenly sensed that Zhou Jing had stiffened for a moment just now. He could not help but feel a little strange.

“Cough, I’m fine. I’m just a little curious. Why would an important minister like you want to see me?”

Zhou Jing pretended to retract his hand naturally and suppressed his twitching lips.

“Hehe, it’s nothing special. I just want to get to know Master Bill.” Roman laughed softly.

“I can’t be called a Master yet.”

Roman said slowly, "With your skills, you'll become a potion master sooner or later. No doubts you at this point."

They sat down again. Roman guided the conversation, but he did not talk about anything serious. Instead, he only engaged in idle chatter with Zhou Jing.

Roman was a little fat, but he possessed an inexplicable bearing when he spoke. Apart from making people feel close to him, they could not help but value him and respect him... Compared to King Becky, he seemed a real big shot.

The king's Privy Chancellor was an extremely high-ranking official in the palace of the Terra Empire. He was one of the people who had the privilege of sitting in the King's Imperial Council. Not only did that position grant him great authority, but it was also an official post of great weight as well.

Roman was very knowledgeable and was quite talkative. From his casual conversation, Zhou Jing learned many interesting things about this world.

The other party seemed to purely have the goal of making friends. After chatting for about half an hour, he stood up and put down this sentence as he prepared to leave.

"In the future, if you encounter any problems in the capital, you can look for me. For example, regarding business matters. Your apothecary has quite good business prospects. If you have any thoughts of expanding your business, I'll be happy to help."

"Okay, okay. I'll remember it."

Zhou Jing hurriedly nodded and watched Roman's back disappear from his sight. Only then did his tense nerves relax.

If he did not know Roman's strength, he might have been deceived by Roman's amiable appearance and thought that he was just an ordinary person.

But Roman's Perception and Spirit had both reached 90 points, and his Energy had even exceeded 100 points... His attributes were insane. Even a Fifth Enhancement Mutant Blood Warrior couldn't defeat him!

On the surface, Keriber and Irene were the strongest people in the empire. Few people knew that there was a hidden big shot like Roman in the shadows.

*"What's wrong with this person?"*

Zhou Jing's face twitched as he stared at the message from the system.

He had thought that the most difficult thing to do was to come into contact with the other party, who had high authority. He thought that the other party was an ordinary person who could be easily crushed once they made contact.

At this moment, he realized that he was wrong. This guy was basically a tiger pretending to be a pig!

He wondered if it was too late to change his allegiance to Roman's side...

So far, he had only met the other party once and had yet to go against him. It was completely not too late to "abandon the darkness and join the light"!

Zhou Jing shook his head and threw away these nonsensical thoughts. Doubts and curiosity surfaced in his heart.

*"Roman's attribute distribution is completely different from that of a Mutant Blood Warrior. It's also different from Buzz Cut. Could it be a new superpower route? If so, where did he obtain his power? He's already so powerful, but he's hiding in the palace and pretending to be an ordinary person. What's his true identity?"*

Zhou Jing could not help but think of the plan that Lutt had revealed. Roman had led the way in colluding with the various tribal lords to create independence, but with his strength, Zhou Jing couldn't understand why he needed to do this or his motives?

It could have been for ambition. That seemed reasonable.

*"Fortunately, I know the other party's background. Otherwise, if I were to act rashly, I'm afraid I would end up screwing myself."*

Zhou Jing heaved a sigh of relief.

This proved that his plan to lure the snake out of its hole had worked. He used Bill's "talent" to lure the other party over to make friends.

He had gained a lot. At least he knew the other party's background. Meanwhile, Roman was still in the dark and did not know that he had been exposed. This was his advantage.

Zhou Jing recalled the information that Lutt had revealed, and his mind spun as he thought of the possibilities.

Roman's power might be related to a lifeform from another dimension. In fact, he might even be a lifeform from another dimension.

It was not impossible for someone who knew the local situation to pretend to be a native of this world.

*“If there are lifeforms from other dimensions in this world. It’s possible for them to bring about any sort of change.”*

Zhou Jing muttered in his heart. He felt that he still had to be careful. Even when he behaved in an unrestrained manner, he also had to be wary. This was a famous example of a coward’s second nature.

But the more he thought about it, the more excited he got.

The more secrets that were hidden from him, the happier he was.

Roman’s attributes could be due to a new super system. This represented a totally new superpower route. After mixing around for so long, he finally saw a clue to a new path he could take for his apostles.

If he had dealt with Roman more, he might be able to figure out what kind of power the man possessed.

Compared to causing trouble, obtaining a new superpower route was more important to the main body.

If there was a chance, he could let one of his s step onto this path and turn the new superpower system into a route that he could cultivate instead of just being a musclehead.

*“Roman and the imperial family are secretly on opposite sides. Sooner or later, conflict will break out. At that time, Roman will tear off all pretenses and break all ties with the Empire. I can only take one side... But I have more than one apostle. Why can’t I bet on both?”*

Zhou Jing’s eyes lit up as he made a decision.

*“Not to mention anything else, I, Zhou Jing, whole heartedly announce that from today onwards, Roman will be my good brother!”*

If he couldn’t win, he would join!

...

Roman naturally did not know what Zhou Jing was thinking. At this moment, he was sitting in the carriage returning to the palace, his eyes closed as he recalled the meeting just now.

“Bill... I don’t think he’s that simple. Let’s interact more and see.”

Roman muttered to himself, his eyes changing.

No matter what, leaving such a talent to the Royal Family was a loss.

However, now was not the time. When they were more familiar with each other and the time was ripe, he might be able to take the other party under his wing and make him his own.

Simply roping him in was not enough to move a future potion master who was given an important position by the royal family. Perhaps he had to put on a show and involve this person in an incident to move him, poach him from the Royal Family, and make this person submit to him...

Speaking of which, during the exchange just now, he could feel that this Bill seemed to have a good impression of him... Perhaps it was not difficult to subdue this person.

Roman began to calculate.

...

In the blink of an eye, more than half a month had passed.

After meeting the King and Roman, life seemed to have become peaceful. The higher-ups of the workshop did not disturb him anymore as well. He could take leisurely farm missions and chat with the two guards every day.

However, Zhou Jing knew that this was only on the surface. The Royal Family was still secretly observing. The moment their inspection of him ended, he would not be able to stay idle anymore. He would definitely be given a heavy responsibility.

In the past half a month, Zhou Jing had already undergone a placement and another projection. Apart from learning a few more blood potion formulas from the workshop missions, he also went to the mutant beast farm to get a low-risk mutant beast.

In principle, the Empire did not allow private beasts to be raised unless the owner was a hunter. However, they still had to report it.

However, Zhou Jing's reason was that he needed to study the habits of mutated beasts for a long time. Because he had the special care of the King, in the end, he obtained a special permit to rear a small mutated beast that was almost tamed.

Coincidentally, he had also studied the potion of this mutant beast. The mutant beast he had obtained from the farm was precisely the Sword-Tailed Eagle.

The pet given to him by the breeding field was naturally not a second-rate product but a carefully nurtured mutant beast with excellent quality.

Zhou Jing also officially transferred the only slot for the pet function to the new Sword-tailed Eagle.

The original Little Black #1 was, however, not released back to the wild. Although it had lost his pet bonus, he still kept it... To have a dog that would take out the enemy's vital points at critical moments was more or less a combat power.

Zhou Jing had already changed to a more luxurious room in the workshop. At this moment, he was in his room, playing with a small eagle standing on the table.

It was a small eagle with grayish-black feathers. Its yellow beak had a splotch of white at the tip, and its feathers resembled arrows. The most conspicuous thing was its tail feathers, which were shaped like a short silvery sword.

At this moment, the sword-tailed eagle was tilting its head to look at Zhou Jing, blinking occasionally.

"Bringing an eagle is so cool. Not only can it peck people, but it can also fly into the sky to scout. Where's the swag in bringing a hyena?"

Zhou Jing looked at the handsome appearance of the Sword-tailed Eagle and couldn't help but kick the dog lying under the table.

Little Black #1 was apparently used to it, as it yawned and turned around, facing its butt towards Zhou Jing.

Zhou Jing ignored it and turned on the pet function to look at his current pet.

[Pet: Sword-Tailed Eagle]

[Talent: Flying, Eagle Eye, Iron Tail]

[Advantages: Wings, tail feathers, beak, eagle claws, vision, speed]

[Skills: Flying Lv4, Tail Slash Lv4, Peck Lv3, Claw Lv3]

[Cultivation Potential: Medium]

[Cultivation Growth: 0]

[Rapport: 12/100]

[Training Level: 0/10]

[Total combat power: First Order]

*“Its potential is not bad. The upper limit of the training level is twice as high as the hyena. Although it hasn’t been trained yet and its overall combat strength is still at First Order, there is a difference between even the First Orders.. The Sword-tailed Eagle is a mutated beast and has the advantage of flight. It won’t be a problem for him to kill dozens of black-spotted hyenas at the same tier.”*

Zhou Jing was quite satisfied. He took out a medicine bottle from the box beside him and poured the milky yellow sticky liquid into a wooden bowl. Then, he brought it to the sword-tailed eagle.

The Sword-Tailed Eagle looked at it curiously for a while before it seemed to smell something and lowered its head to drink.

[Your pet is consuming some kind of potion. Cultivation +2]

[+3 Pet Growth Points]

A stream of information appeared. The Sword-tailed Eagle only had to drink the potion to increase its cultivation.

Zhou Jing’s lips curled up when he received the notification.

Over the past few days, he had not forgotten to develop his drug-based beast cultivation mode. With his greatly improved pharmacology skills and support function, he created a nutritional potion that was very beneficial to his pets. A meal could increase their nutrition by leaps and bounds.

This kind of nutritional potion could replace regular food. Unfortunately, it could not eat it all in a day. Otherwise, it would easily burst... Zhou Jing had already tested it on Little Black #1.

He also gave this nutrient potion a name. It was called the Beast Cultivating Potion. However, he did not give the workshop the formula patent.

“I have to give you a name. In the future, I’ll call you Little Sword... I won’t add a serial number. I feel that you will definitely live longer than this dead dog.” Zhou Jing stroked the head of the Sword-tailed Eagle with his thumb.

The Sword-Tailed eagle tilted its head. It was unsure if the eagle understood what he was saying.

Little Black #1 pricked up its ears at its name but did not care.

*— I’m going to die of laughter. After so much cruelty, do you think I’m still as weak as before? This doggy grandpa can even send you on the road to the afterlife now!*



...

A few days later, before this projection cycle ended, Zhou Jing finally received a transfer order from the Royal Family.

The transfer order required him to leave the Imperial Hunter Workshop and head to a secret location to enter a secret workshop to truly participate in the development of the new blood potion.

This time, the research progress of the Terra Empire's secrets and the new blood potion... was finally open to him.

*"I wonder if I can solve the problem of the new blood potion. If I succeed, this apostle No.3, Bill, might be recorded in history in this world, and I will also obtain a new Eternal Apostle..."*

Zhou Jing calmed himself down and packed his luggage, bringing his eagle and dog with him. In the evening, he followed the two guards onto the carriage that was especially waiting at the entrance of the hunter's encampment. They headed to an unfamiliar destination.

At the same time, in the hunter's base.

Jason, who had just mastered the last Hunter's Breathing Technique, seemed to sense something. He slowly raised his head and looked in the direction Zhou Jing had left.

## **Chapter 175: First Kill of a Fatal-Risk (1)**

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The wind raged.

In the steep mountain range surrounded by clouds, a blue-black flying dragon with a wingspan of more than ten meters circled around the mountainside. From time to time, it would flap its wings and dive down, like blue lightning striking down from the sky.

Its head connected to its sinuous neck bit at the few figures that were agilely jumping like apes halfway up the mountain, but it always missed. Its mouth full of sharp teeth could only crush the mountain rocks with a bang.

The huge dragon rushed past with the wind. The few figures hurriedly grabbed onto the rocks tightly and lowered their heads to resist the subsequent wind pressure. Their clothes fluttered in the wind, but their bodies seemed to be embedded in the mountain wall and could never be blown down.

Cole watched as the flying dragon circled around and turned around to charge at the hunter team again. He shouted out,

“Jace, it’s time. It’s up to you!”

The wind tore his voice apart as the flying dragon approached again. Cole and the other hunters hurriedly dodged the flying dragon’s dive.

The flying dragon’s attack missed again, and it flew along the mountain wall as usual. However, at this moment, its body suddenly sank as a heavy object landed on its back.

Where it wasn’t paying attention, Jason’s figure fell from a higher cliff and jumped onto the dragon’s back. His timing was extremely precise. If he was faster or slower, he would directly pass the dragon and fall off the cliff.

Jason’s eyes were bright as he moved. Zhou Jing had personally descended onto this apostle.

Stepping on the dragon’s back, Zhou Jing changed the frequency of his breathing and switched to a new Hunter’s Breathing Technique. His muscles instantly swelled up, and using the momentum of his fall, the two blades in his hands stabbed into the dragon’s scaly back.

Splat!

.....

He could feel the feedback from the blade. It had directly broken through the sturdy dragon scales and pierced into the tough flesh, stuck in the gap of the dragon spine.

The wind pressure engulfed him, pushing against his eyes. Zhou Jing lowered his body, bent his waist, and contracted his abdomen. He held the two blades and nailed them firmly to the dragon’s back as if he was controlling the wild dragon currently struggling in pain.

Sizzle—

Electric currents suddenly surged on the dragon’s body. Blue and white lightning chains were activated, jumping along the spines as if they were lightning rods. In an instant, they struck Zhou Jing, who was on the dragon’s back.

Crackle crackle crackle!

There was the crisp sound of an electric shock, but the expected effect did not appear. Zhou Jing’s body trembled slightly, but he stood bathed in the electric light as if he was not injured or even sent flying.

“Your electricity... is too weak!”

Zhou Jing's eyes flickered with lightning as he released the bioelectricity in his own body. Then, he switched to another Hunter's Breathing Technique and suddenly entered a high-speed state. The two blades in his hands spun like the wind, bringing him along the dragon's back to the base of the dragon's neck.

The two blades stabbed out repeatedly, quickly finding the spine. Zhou Jing cut it off without hesitation.

A furious and miserable dragon roar resounded through the sky, but the flying dragon's body fell uncontrollably towards the forest range.

Pi la pi la... The flying dragon crashed through the canopy of branches, breaking trees along the way before crashing to the ground.

Boom!

A huge crater formed in the ground. The flying dragon lay within it, struggling with all its might. It could not stand up again, only stirring up the soil and dirt around it.

Thick blood kept flowing out of the dragon's mouth. Blood sprayed out from the wound on the dragon's back, soaking the soil and dyeing the surroundings scarlet.

Dozens of meters away, there was another small pit. Zhou Jing, who was covered in branches and leaves, crawled up and could not help but vomit a mouthful of blood. He felt as if someone had beaten his organs heavily, as if they were about to crumble together.

The dull pain of falling from a high altitude tore at his nerves. If not for the fact that he had already expected such a situation to happen, he would have already fallen apart.

Even so, he was still seriously injured.

Zhou Jing wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth and strode to the half-paralyzed flying dragon with his saber. Without a word, he pierced through the other party's scarlet dragon eyes and into its brain, finally stopping the dragon's death throes.

“Phew... Phew, I finally killed this dragon.”

Zhou Jing took more than 10 steps back to create a safe distance before sitting on the ground, panting heavily and sweating profusely.

Not long after, Cole and the others rushed down the mountain and immediately surrounded them.

“Jace, are you okay?”

“If you stop asking such nonsense, I’ll be fine.”

Zhou Jing replied angrily as he coughed out another mouthful of blood.

Cole patted his shoulder, then looked at the huge dragon corpse and heaved a sigh of relief. “After chasing this Cloud Spine Dragon for half a month and fighting three to four times, we’ve finally eliminated this threat.”

The Cloud Spine Dragon was a Fatal-risk beast. It could fly in the sky and often circle in the clouds. In addition, it could control a certain amount of electric current. Because it would rarely land in battle, it was very difficult to deal with.

Cole’s hunter team had been chasing after this particular dragon for many days. Most of the time, they were covered in dust and had moot to show for their efforts. It was only today that they had dealt with their target. It was all thanks to Jace.

Because Jace possessed electric resistance, he was in charge of carrying out the dangerous mission of riding on the Cloud Spine Dragon. If the other hunters in the team jumped onto the dragon, they would be blown away by the electric current in minutes and unable to stand at all.

Zhou Jing propped himself up with the blade and felt his injuries. Although they were not light, with his current physique and Resistance, he was still far from death.

A new achievement popped up on the interface: [First Kill of a Mutant Beast – Fatal Risk]. It gave him 2,000 Astral Points, a coupon each for Physical Fitness and Resistance increase (Small), and a coupon each for Physical Fitness and Resistance increase (Slight).

The progress of the [True Mutant Beast Killer] milestone also smoothly increased to 4/5.

“I’m still missing the final Mutant Beast King before I can complete this milestone.”

Zhou Jing rubbed his aching chest and muttered to himself.

It had been more than a month since Bill was chosen to study the new blood potion. He was buried in research on core technology in a secret empire workshop at the moment.

The development of the new blood potion was more complicated than Zhou Jing had expected. Even with Bill’s talent and support functions, there were no results for a while, and the progress was slow.

However, this was only what he felt. In the eyes of others, since Bill's participation in the research, the new blood potion had been progressing without any hitches. With some sort of advancement, it was already a pleasant surprise.

Because Bill would not be able to settle it, for the time being, Zhou Jing placed himself on Jason during this projection cycle.

Jason's synchronization rate was already very high, so his intelligence during the placement cycles was quite reliable. However, since this was the first time he was hunting a fatal-risk mutant beast, Zhou Jing decided to personally participate. He followed the team and chased after a Cloud Spine Dragon that had attacked the village for food.

This place was not close to the capital, and there were no workshop members following them. The hunter could only deal with the Cloud Spine Dragon's corpse themselves.

Zhou Jing followed his companions and collected the most valuable materials. Then, he cut down the tree and made a simple large cart to load the entire dragon corpse on.

According to the habit of hunting in the wild, everyone would first send the corpse to the nearest city workshop for emergency treatment. If the situation was good, they would then transport the dragon corpse back to the capital.

The group packed up their spoils of war before pulling the handcart along.

As a hero and an injured person, Zhou Jing was asked to sit on the cart and rest.

His head was resting on his arm as he watched Cole and the others pulling the carriage. His thoughts gradually drifted away.

Over the past few months, Zhou Jing had mainly used Bill's body for projection. Jason was mainly put on placement, but his cultivation did not fall behind. He had already learned most of the 18 Hunter Breathing Techniques accumulated by the Empire's Hunters.

He had mastered a total of 15 Hunter Breathing Techniques to at least Lv4 Proficient. It was only three of the techniques that had limited improvements and were not very useful that were left at Lv4.

Other than the [Hunter's Breath Forging] that he had first learned from Barong, the other attributes of the breathing technique did not increase much towards his attributes. Most of them were basically techniques to be used in combat. There were even some breathing techniques that did not increase attributes even after reaching the proficient stage. Overall, the more than 10 breathing techniques that he had learned later had increased his Physical Fitness by 5 points, Resistance by 3 points, and Perception by 2 points.

The biggest change was still his actual combat strength. Although he could only use one Hunter's Breathing Technique at a time, he had already greatly shortened the time needed to switch to another technique.

When faced with different situations, he could quickly switch to the corresponding breathing. It was equivalent to quickly receiving bonuses for all kinds of actions, raising the relevant attributes to their peak state.

When he was hunting the Cloud Spine Dragon, he had used three types of hunter breathing techniques in a row. When he jumped into the dragon, he increased his dynamic vision and reaction speed. When he fixed himself on the dragon's back, he increased his strength. Finally, he used the breathing technique of acceleration to quickly give his prey a fatal blow.

"In my current state, I can almost undergo my fourth enhancement when I return."

Zhou Jing lay on the cart and casually looked at the sky through the gaps in the canopy. He was slowly calculating in his heart.

As long as the effect this time was similar to his Third Enhancement, his physical attributes would be able to reach the limit of the Second Order. His single attribute would reach a level comparable to a Fifth Enhancement Mutant Blood Warrior.

This way, his combat strength would be close to or even reach Keriber's level, officially becoming one of the top combat forces of this world's hunters.

However, now that he had discovered Roman's background, he knew that five enhancements might not mean that he was the strongest in the world. There might be someone stronger hiding somewhere.

Furthermore, it was impossible to know a person's specific abilities just by looking at their attributes. Zhou Jing also did not know what kind of superpower system Roman was using.

The only advantage he had was that his mutant blood strengthened his physique, which far exceeded Roman's. In terms of hand-to-hand combat, he had an 80% advantage.

*"If I launch a sneak attack, it might not be so difficult to kill Roman..."*

Zhou Jing grumbled to himself.

Although he had decided to bet on both sides, he could not be completely unguarded. He had to always be mentally prepared that he could become enemies with them one day.

Besides... Roman was Bill's good brother. What did he have to do with Jason?

Zhou Jing sat on the rickety cart and let his imagination run wild.

After a few hours, they finally reached the main road.

After walking along the main road for a long time, they finally arrived at a city late at night. The entire city looked as if it was built on a mountain.

“We’re here. This is Deep Rock City, a fortress city. We can go in and rest.”

Cole picked up the stone and threw it at Zhou Jing.

“We’re finally here. My waist is almost stiff from sleeping.” Zhou Jing smacked his lips.

“Then why don’t you come down and pull the cart?”

Cole replied in an annoyed tone.

“I’m a seriously injured person. Do you have to do this?”

Zhou Jing replied casually. With a backflip, he easily got up, looking at Deep Rock City.

Deep Rock City was brightly lit at night. Even from afar, the light could be seen clearly.

“As expected of a big city. It’s still so bright at this late hour. Even the capital city isn’t so prosperous...”

Cole subconsciously praised the city, but his voice suddenly became softer and softer.

Everyone was silent for a while.

Then, someone spoke carefully.

“... Is the city on fire?”

## **Chapter 176: Sons of Mutant Blood (1)**

The flames in Deep Rock City pierced the night.

Some of them realized that something was wrong and hastened their pace.

As they got closer, the sounds of burning, crying, and footsteps in the city became clearer.

When Zhou Jing and the others arrived at the entrance of Deep Rock City, they discovered that the city gate had been broken from the inside out. The incomplete corpses of the guards were everywhere.

Looking through the door, he saw that the houses on both sides of the street were on fire. The heat waves from the flames even reached their faces.

“What’s going on? Did the mutated beasts attack the city?” Cole was surprised.

Zhou Jing squatted down to check the corpses of the guards. His eyes suddenly narrowed, “It’s a wound caused by a weapon, not an attack by a mutant beast.”

“It’s actually man-made? Could there be a riot in Deep Rock City?” The captain of the hunter team turned vigilant.

At that moment, there was a flurry of footsteps in the distance from the burning street.

A group of civilians ran over from afar in a sorry state. They were like a temporary group that had gathered to escape from the city.

When they discovered Zhou Jing and the others in front of the city gate, the group of civilians seemed to have seen something terrifying. They panicked and were about to scatter.

Cole and the other hunters immediately went forward and caught a few of the ashen-faced civilians.

“What happened here?”

.....

A few civilians trembled and responded.

“I-I don’t know. I just want to escape!”

“So many people are dead. The entire city is in chaos!”

“A group of hunters went crazy and killed everyone they saw. They even lit fires everywhere!”

Zhou Jing also came over. As he listened to his companions interrogate these civilians, he roughly understood the current situation.

At this moment, in Deep Rock City, a group of thugs suspected to be Mutant Beast Hunters was looting the city. They were on a killing spree and set the city on fire.



Number unknown, origin unknown, strength unknown...

“If I’m not wrong, a group of bandits that have undergone the Mutant Blood Enhancement. One of them pretended to be a freelance hunter and entered the city, breaking the city gate from the inside and letting the others enter the city to burn, kill, and plunder.” Cole gritted his teeth.

Among the supernatural beings who had undergone the enhancement of the Mutant Blood, there were Mutant Beast Hunters who were noble and dedicated, mercenaries who were pragmatic and sought wealth, and naturally, there were also villains who relied on their strength to commit evil.

Although the threat of mutant beasts was the biggest problem of the Terra Empire, and they were united against the outside world, it could not prevent the villains with power from doing whatever they wanted. There were still bandits, but the frequency was not high, and the scale was not large. It was usually a rare sight.

“I actually bumped into such a thing.” Zhou Jing raised his eyebrows and turned to look at Cole, “Has this happened before?”

“At most, they’ll just rob the village, this is the first time I’ve seen them attacking a fortress. They’re too arrogant. They don’t even care about the Empire... Let’s go and stop this group of people.”

Everyone asked for directions and drew their weapons in unison. They temporarily abandoned their spoils of war and headed straight for the lord’s castle.

If the town still had the ability to resist, the troops would most likely gather in the castle.

As an Imperial Hunter, it was their duty to protect the town. Although it was not a mutated beast attack, since they had encountered such an evil incident, he could not sit back and do nothing.

Zhou Jing did not have any objections. He held his two blades and quickly followed everyone.

...

Meanwhile, in the lord’s castle.

Hundreds of guards’ bodies were strewn on the ground, and blood stained the castle hall.

The Lord of Deep Rock City leaned against the wall, his face full of panic and fear.

Two Mutant Blood Guards covered in blood stood protectively in front of him. They were panting heavily as they looked at the scene in front of them nervously and desperately. They were the only guards left alive with the Lord.

At this moment, there were more than ten villains around him. They were all Mutant Blood Warriors with different weapons and armor. The only thing they had in common was that they were covered in the blood of the guards. At this moment, they were staring at the Lord with ill intentions.

“W-Who are you guys?”

The Lord of Deep Rock City’s voice trembled as he spoke.

Hearing this, a leader walked out from the group of villains. He had rough, messy hair and a fierce face, carrying with him a two-handed scimitar. The man coldly snapped,

“The dead don’t need to know so much.”

After saying that, the messy-haired man ignored the lord and looked at the two nervous mutated blood guards with admiration in his eyes.

“Brothers, I’ll give you a chance to live. Join us.”

The two Mutant Blood Guards gripped their weapons, not trusting them at all.

Seeing this, the messy-haired man took two steps forward and continued solemnly,

“Ask your hearts. You’ve survived the near-death enhancement of your blood and finally obtained extraordinary strength. In the end, you have to listen to the orders of mortals and sacrifice your lives for them. Are you willing to die here?”

“Don’t come any closer!” The two Mutant Blood Guards shouted angrily, nervously pointing their weapons at the disheveled man.

The messy-haired man stopped but ignored the enemy’s shining blade.

“Why should you listen to the orders of mortals? Why can’t the person giving the orders be someone stronger? When this weak mortal instructed you to run around, didn’t you fantasize for a moment about smashing his head?”

The two guards only gripped their weapons tighter, their lips pursed in silence.

The messy-haired man suddenly opened his arms and said loudly, “They are afraid of us. They won’t give us what you want. They want to tame us and use order to restrain our power. When morality and law ban your desire, you should take it by force!”

Nothing in this world should be able to restrain us. All the power and wealth in this world should belong to powerhouses like us. Mortals should be servants... We should be able to do everything we want!"

*What kind of insane scripture was this man raving about?!*

## **Chapter 177: Sons of Mutant Blood (2)**

The Lord of Deep Rock City widened his eyes as this thought subconsciously sprang up in his mind.

However, he realized that when the other ten or so villains heard these words, their faces revealed a matter-of-fact and fanatical expression.

The messy-haired man looked at the two trembling Mutant Blood Guards and slowly said.

"We have the same power, so I'll give you a chance—kill the person behind you, release the shackles in your hearts, and become one of us. From now on, we'll be brothers!"

The Lord of Deep Rock City could not help but refute, "Don't believe him. He just wants to..."

However, before he could finish his sentence, a cold light suddenly flashed past.

The Lord suddenly covered his neck as blood seeped out from between his fingers.

He looked at the guard on the right in horror. It was this person who had slit his neck without a word.

"You..."

Before he could finish, the other guard turned and stabbed the lord in the stomach.

The Lord fell to the ground with a plop. He covered his bleeding wound and glared at the two guards.

"The Empire will not let you off..."

Peng!

His head exploded like a watermelon as one of the guards kicked it.

“Well done, my brother!”

Messy Hair clapped in relief.

The two Mutant Blood Guards looked at him expressionlessly, but they did not lower their weapons. They were still on guard.

The two of them could understand the situation. If more than ten villains attacked together, they would only end up being hacked to death. They would not even be able to drag someone down with them.

They only wanted to live. Since the other party had given them a chance, even if it wasn't noble, it was better than fighting to the death.

However, Messy Hair did not care about their vigilance. He suddenly turned his head and exposed his back to the two of them. He laughed at his other companions.

“Put away your weapons and welcome our new brothers!”

The dozen or so villains did as they were told, and the murderous aura instantly dissipated, leaving only the pungent smell of blood.

Only then did Messy Hair turn around and press down on the palms of the guards, pressing the weapons back into their sheaths. Then, he wrapped his arms around their shoulders and said in a heroic tone,

“Tonight, this city is our carnival. You can vent your desires however you want. Experience the omnipotence brought about by power. After tonight, you will understand how cowardly and narrow-minded you were in the past. The joy of just taking what you want by force is better than anything else in the world.”

The two Mutant Blood Guards were at a loss. However, when they saw the arrogant smiles of the many villains, it was as if a heartstring had been touched. Their dark desires were like ferocious beasts that had been released, walking out of their cages.

Finally, one of them could not help but ask.

“Who are you people?”

Messy Hair patted their shoulders as he chuckled,

“I'm Dorton. As for us, we're all Mutant Blood Warriors. You can call us... The Sons of Mutant Blood!”

Sons of Mutant Blood...

The two of them chewed on the name in their hearts.

At this moment, two villains suddenly rushed in from outside the castle carrying a corpse as they shouted,

“Dorton, some of our brothers who were plundering outside were killed!”

Dorton stopped smiling. He immediately barked out in a deep voice,

“Who did it?”

“I don’t know. We rushed over when we heard the sound of battle. When we arrived, we only found the corpses of our brothers.”

With that, the two villains placed the corpse on the ground.

Dorton leaned over to take a look and was suddenly stunned.

This corpse was not killed by a weapon. It was pierced through by more than ten earth spikes. At first glance, it looked like the person had fallen into a trap, but upon closer inspection, it did not seem like it.

Dorton could not understand how it was done, so he only shook his head and said coldly,

“It seems that there’s not only the group of hunters we captured in the city. There are also other forces. Gather everyone and find them!”

With that, he strode out of the castle, the other villains following behind.

The two Mutant Blood Guards hesitated for a moment before finally choosing to blend in.

...

In another corner of Deep Rock City.

A plainly dressed man was walking through the burning streets. He looked like an ordinary refugee.

There was a bloody rag wrapped around his head as if it had been torn from someone else. It was used as a simple hood to cover his face.

This person was panting as he ran forward, cursing softly.

“Damn it, Deep Rock City was supposed to be such a safe fortress, but there’s actually a riot. If I had known earlier, I wouldn’t have lived in seclusion here. It’s not reliable at all.”

The man crossed the alley and turned into the main road.

At this moment, a villain happened to turn out of the alley opposite, tying his belt as he walked. In the alley behind him lay a naked woman, her eyes glazed over and her neck sporting bruise marks. She had been brutally strangled to death.

The man and the villain discovered each other across the street and stopped in their tracks.

“Kid, are you lost?”

The villain revealed a sinister smile. He took off the flail hanging from his waist and swung it in his hand as he walked towards the man who was like a lamb waiting to be slaughtered.

The man took a step back and did not look at the approaching villain. Instead, his gaze was focused on the ground behind the villain.

His pupils trembled slightly, and earthen yellow ripples bloomed in his eyes.

An invisible force quietly shot out, attached to the ground, and seeped in.

The villain did not notice anything and continued to slowly approach the man.

At this moment, the ground suddenly cracked.

Peng!

The soil spurted out and quickly turned into more than ten small earth spikes in midair. In a flash, they hit the villain’s unguarded back.

Pu pu pu—

The earth spikes stabbed into his body!

## **Chapter 178: Sons of Mutant Blood (3)**

The villain’s body trembled violently, and his eyes widened in disbelief as he looked at the tip of the spike that pierced through his chest.

“Who is it?!”

The villain jerked his head back, but there was no one behind him.

At this moment, the former reached out and grabbed at the air.

“Recital Spirit of Earth!”

A sharp stone pillar suddenly rose from between the villain’s legs.

Tshh!

The villain could not dodge in time. He was directly pierced by the stone pillar. It entered his lower body and came out of his mouth. His bloodshot eyes instantly lost their luster.

Swish swish....

In the next moment, the stone pillar collapsed and turned into mud.

The villain’s corpse also fell to the ground. Blood gushed out like a fountain. He could not be more dead.

“Fortunately, this guy didn’t rush over directly...”

The yellow light in the man’s eyes faded as he took a deep breath. He did not dare to delay and hurriedly left, afraid that the accomplices of the villain would arrive.

...

When Zhou Jing and the others arrived at the Lord’s castle, it was already empty. Only the corpses on the ground proved that a tragic battle had happened here.

“None of them survived?”

The group carefully walked in and searched around. Finally, they stopped in front of a headless corpse. From the clothes, this person should have been the Lord.

Cole squatted down to check the wound and frowned, “Oh no, this person is the Lord of Deep Rock City. Looks like he’s dead.”

“Do you even need to confirm if he’s dead?” Zhou Jing rolled his eyes.

Cole had nothing to retort. He turned his head to observe the traces of battle around him before he concluded, “Looking at the traces of destruction, there were probably more than ten Mutant Blood Warriors who fought here previously. I wonder where they are now.”

“The Lord is dead, and the army is almost destroyed, but we didn’t see a single enemy’s corpse on the way. Perhaps the enemies are all Mutant Blood Warriors. To be able to destroy the city to this extent, there are probably no less than 20 enemies.” The team leader’s tone was solemn.

“Where did the hunters of Deep Rock City go? Why does it seem like no one stopped them?”

“Maybe they were all killed... Think about it. These guys are acting as hunters to coordinate their attacks on the inside and outside. They will definitely use their identities to easily deal with the most troublesome hunters in the town.”

“That’s bad. We don’t have any allies. Can we stop this group of thugs with just the few of us?”

The members of the hunter team were worried.

Zhou Jing lowered his head to observe. He suddenly realized that one of the corpses had died in a different way. It was covered in spikes, and it was not dressed like a guard.

“Come and take a look. This might be the corpse of an enemy.”

Everyone immediately came over to observe this abnormal corpse.

“It should be the enemy... Why did he die so strangely? Could he have fallen into a trap?” Cole was puzzled.

“Hard to say.”

Zhou Jing pulled out the spikes one by one and found that they were of different shapes and sizes. If it was a trap, it would be a little too crude.

“Do any of you know this enemy?”

“Never seen him before.” Everyone shook their heads.

Zhou Jing pondered for a while and suddenly thought of the tribal independence plan. He quickly asked, “By the way, is the Lord of Deep Rock City a tribal lord or a lord appointed by the empire?”

“I know this. He’s part of the appointed faction,” Cole replied.

Since he was appointed, then there was no tribe as a foundation in the local area... Zhou Jing scratched his head. He was not sure if it was an accident caused by the tribal independence plan, but he felt that it did not seem like it.



After all, even if the tribes wanted independence, they did not need to burn the homes of others.

At this moment, the team leader spoke in a deep voice.

“The Lord’s castle has already fallen. We won’t be able to find any help. If we rashly search for the enemy, we will also suffer. Let’s go to the Hunter Tavern and the workshop to take a look first. Try to find the surviving hunters and guards in the town and gather our troops.”

Everyone nodded and hurriedly left the silent castle.

## **Chapter 179: Familiar Face (1)**

Zhou Jing and the others rushed to the workshop first. The inventory here had been looted, and all kinds of blood potions and mutant beast equipment were gone.

Even the craftsmen had disappeared. The entire workshop was empty, but there were not even many corpses lying around.

“They were probably all kidnapped.”

Everyone looked around.

Since these thugs were Mutant Blood Warriors, they would most likely capture the craftsmen and force them to work.

Cole said solemnly, “This group of thugs is still wreaking havoc in the city. This means that they have a temporary place to hold prisoners.”

“That’s for sure. They attacked the fortress city. They wouldn’t have just taken the spoils. Therefore, there must be a temporary gathering point in the city, and they’ve most likely prepared a beast convoy to accept the spoils. They would first ransack the city and move the spoils of war together into one place before finally returning with a full load.”

Zhou Jing did not think much about it and quickly came to a conclusion.

There was not much to discover at the workshop, so the group hurried to the Hunter Tavern.

The tavern was a mess. There were broken tables and chairs all over the floor. It was obvious that there had been a battle, but there was not a single corpse of a hunter could be found.

“Looks like the hunters were also taken away. These thugs actually didn’t kill anyone.” Cole was shocked.

“Maybe they plan to persuade the hunters to join them like captured craftsmen?” Zhou Jing guessed.

“This is too...” Cole didn’t know what to say.

In his opinion, if he wanted to plunder a town, the first thing he had to do was to deal with the hunters in the city.

If the hunters were left alive, even if they were imprisoned, it would be an unstable factor. These people would become trouble at any time, so it was better to silence them from the start.

Not only did they not kill the hunters, but they also wanted to persuade them to join them... These thugs were either idiots, extremely confident or both.

Zhou Jing observed the traces of the battle in the tavern. He stroked his chin and analyzed out loud.

“This is a fortress city, so there will be many hunters. Even if most of them are active outside, there will usually be at least 10 to 20 hunters in the town... Therefore, the damage caused by the battle can’t be so small. It’s impossible for this group of thugs to easily subdue many hunters. They must have used some methods. I guess they poisoned the hunters to make them lose their combat strength.”

“If the hunters are alive, we still have a considerable number of helpers.” Cole was delighted.

“It’s hard to say. Just because they’re alive doesn’t mean that they have combat strength. The hunters should be imprisoned in their temporary stronghold by those saboteurs and guarded by someone... Look there!”

Zhou Jing said casually as he looked around. He suddenly realized that there were spots of blood extending along the road.

Everyone saw it too, and their eyes lit up.

This should be the blood left behind by a hunter who resisted and was injured.

“Follow the blood trail. We should be able to find the location of the prison.”

The group immediately moved.

...

Somewhere in Deep Rock City, in a small bunker.

This was originally one of the barracks where the guards were stationed. At this moment, the garrison had been completely wiped out and occupied by the Sons of Mutant Blood as a temporary stronghold.

The fire did not spread here. The bunker was filled with people, hoarding a large number of resources obtained from plundering. There were seven Sons of Mutant Blood bandits guarding this place.

Zhou Jing and the others followed the blood trail and soon found this place. They hid behind a building in the distance and stuck their heads out to observe the bunker, memorizing the appearance and location of the bandits.

“This is most likely the stronghold of the bandits. There don’t seem to be many people left behind. They probably think that after subduing most of the hunters, they no longer have the strength to resist in the city, so they sent the main force out to plunder, right?” Cole lowered his voice.

“This is good news. How should we attack?” The leader of the hunter team asked for everyone’s opinion.

“Take the advantage while the bandits are not around. Let’s go up and kill them.”

Zhou Jing did not hesitate.

Although they were all Mutant Blood Warriors, their team was made up of the elites of the Empire’s hunters.

He and the team leader had both undergone three enhancements, and there was also Cole, an elite who had undergone two enhancements. With similar numbers, there was nothing to be afraid of.

There was a high chance that a group of bandits would not be very powerful. Most of them would only be enhanced once... The seven of them were enough to defend against the town hunters who had escaped, but they were far from being a match for their elite hunter team.

Everyone thought about it and had no objections.

Since they were not facing the enemy’s main force, there was no need to think too much. This was a good time to weaken the enemy’s overall strength.

The group took out their weapons and dispersed from their positions. They took a deep breath and suddenly rushed out.

As soon as they stepped onto the empty street, they were noticed by the seven bandits.

The seven of them immediately revealed shocked expressions and hurriedly threw flying knives, javelins, axes, and other things at Zhou Jing and the others.

Zhou Jing was the fastest. He rushed to the front, easily dodging the flying weapons. In the blink of an eye, he arrived in front of a bandit.

The enemy was about to attack, but before he could raise his weapon, two extremely fast cold lights circled around his neck.

Splat!

The bandit spewed blood as he fell to the ground, unable to fight back.

Zhou Jing did not stop moving. His two blades dragged out two trails of light, and he killed two more people in the blink of an eye. His opponents did not even have time to defend before falling with wide open eyes.

The bandits that were only enhanced once could not keep up with Zhou Jing's speed. So all of them were basically insta-gibbed. For those who tried to parry, their necks had been sliced through even before they could get their weapons up.

At the same time, in a certain room in the bunker, more than ten hunters were lying on the ground, tied up tightly. They were all in a weakened state, cursing and swearing.

"That guy called Dorton actually pretended to be a hunter. I believed in him, but I didn't expect him to be a bandit!"

"That dog even put a paralyzing potion in the wine when we weren't paying attention. How despicable. My entire body is still numb."

## **Chapter 180: Familiar Face (2)**

"Damn it, to think I didn't die in the mouth of the mutant beasts, but actually am going to die in the hands of a group of bandits."

The hunters were filled with grief and indignation.

They were originally drinking as usual in the Hunter Tavern, but they did not expect to be plotted against and poisoned.

The paralyzing medicine used by the enemy was used to capture mutated beasts alive. It could paralyze those mutated beasts for half a day. The bandits added a bit to all the

alcohol, which was why everyone was easily knocked down without any chance to fight back.

Now that the effects of the medicine were intensifying, everyone's bodies were numb, and they could barely move.

The chains that they could usually break easily could not even be broken at this moment. A dozen hunters could only lie there obediently.

At this moment, Weber, who was in the crowd, said in a deep voice, "Don't be disheartened. Think of a way to escape. For some reason, these bandits haven't killed us yet, but they can change their minds and take our lives at any time."

After leaving White Plains Town, he traveled everywhere and became a freelance hunter. Recently, he had just settled down in Deep Rock City. He did not expect to be involved in such a storm and secretly cursed his bad luck.

Soon, someone replied helplessly, "We don't have any strength at all. We can't escape at all. I hope that there are other hunters in the city who haven't been plotted against like us."

Now, everyone could only hope that someone was not in the tavern when the incident happened.

But even so, no one had high hopes.

Even if there were still hunters in the city who had not been hit, there would not be too many of them. They would not be a match for the bandits at all. It was still uncertain if they would be willing to take the risk to save them.

Even if they rescued them, the effects of the medicine would still be in effect. They would not be able to muster any combat strength even if they managed to escape. They would only be a burden and would not be able to organize a counterattack, with no help at being able to stop the bandits at all. At most, they would be able to escape and let the city fall.

Weber was depressed and helpless, but there was nothing he could do.

This feeling of not having his life in his hands was too unsettling.

At this moment, faint sounds of battle and screams came from outside.

Weber's expression changed, and he said solemnly, "Did you hear that?"

"There seems to be a fight outside?"

Everyone hurriedly listened, but soon all the sounds died down.

After a while, the door suddenly opened with a bang.

Zhou Jing strode in with his teammates, carrying a bandit whose face was covered in blood.

“Hunter Brothers, we’re here to save you.” Cole loudly announced his identity.

The hunters were overjoyed. They hurriedly twisted on the ground like earthworms, signaling the newcomers to untie them.

Cole and the others quickly broke the chains of the hunters and helped everyone sit up.

At this moment, many hunters saw their faces clearly and realized that they were unfamiliar faces. They could not help but be stunned.

“You’re not hunters from Deep Rock City?”

“Yes, we’re Imperial Hunters. We went out to hunt a fatal-risk mutant beast and happened to pass by Deep Rock City before discovering the changes here.”

Cole answered and briefly explained the entire situation.

“Fortunately, you guys came. Otherwise, we would be doomed.”

Many hunters were overjoyed and subconsciously sized up the few of them.

Weber’s gaze swept across everyone. Only now did he see Zhou Jing’s appearance clearly. He was suddenly left stunned.

*Why does this guy... look so much like Jason?*

At the same time, Zhou Jing also discovered this familiar face. His heart skipped a beat, but he maintained his composure and pretended not to recognize the latter.

Before Weber could ask in detail, Zhou Jing took the initiative to ask, “How is your situation? Can all of you still fight?”

Hearing this, many hunters revealed bitter expressions and shook their heads.

“We were plotted against and ingested a paralysis potion. The effects of the potion have yet to wear off, so we can’t help you.”

Cole couldn’t help but frown, “This is bad...”

They had come to save the town's hunters so that they could help fight against the bandits. However, the hunters had lost their combat strength. Not only would they not be able to help, but they would also have to divert their attention to protect them.

The few of them had just captured a survivor and obtained information—this group of bandits called themselves the Sons of the Mutant Blood. There were nearly 40 members in the group, and all of them were Mutant Blood Warriors. With their current team lineup, it would probably be difficult to deal with them.

In particular, the leader of the Sons of Mutant Blood, Dorton, had actually enhanced thrice. He was the backbone of this group of bandits.

Nearly 40 Mutant Blood Warriors were already a force to be reckoned with. A group of this size could pose a threat to most cities. It was precise because Dorton had the strength of three enhancements that he could gather so many Mutant Blood Warriors and suppress everyone.

From the captives he captured, he learned that this Dorton had not always been a bandit. He was once a proper hunter. Later on, he encountered something, and his temperament changed drastically. In the end, he embarked on the path of crime.

As for the other gang members, many of them were recruited during the plundering process. They captured this group of hunters but did not kill them because they wanted to persuade them to join and strengthen the gang.

“From what this survivor said, their plan is to plunder for the entire night. The night is still long, so we still have a lot of time... While the bulk of the Sons of Mutant Blood are still plundering outside, take the hunters and move first. Also, we should also release those workshop craftsmen.”

Zhou Jing turned to the crowd and said firmly.

“What about you?” The team leader didn't mind Zhou Jing giving the orders. He just widened his eyes and asked.

“I'll go scout and see if I can find some enemies to kill. At the same time, I'll stop the enemy's main force from returning so quickly and create time for you.”

“...Okay, be careful.”

The team leader thought about it and did not object.

He was not too worried about Zhou Jing. Although they had both undergone three enhancements, he had sparred with Zhou Jing many times in the past few months, but he had never been able to win. He knew that Zhou Jing's strength was above his, but the other party was just too lazy to lead the team.

Zhou Jing nodded and casually threw down the bandits before turning to leave the bunker.

Weber watched Zhou Jing leave. He opened his mouth, but no words came out.

His heart was filled with bewilderment. He did not understand why he would see someone so similar to Jason.

Weber could only be certain that this person was definitely not Jason because Jason was already dead—he had watched him be buried.

Such similarity only proved that this person might be related to Jason by blood...

But now was not the time to talk about this. Weber did not immediately ask the question in his heart. He decided to find an opportunity to ask in private... if he could survive tonight.

...

Dorton's group searched Deep Rock City and did not find any other resistance teams. However, they found the corpse of another accomplice who had been killed by the earth spikes. It was as if he had been pierced through and died miserably.

"Who did this? How dare they kill my brother!"

Dorton's eyes blazed with anger as he looked over his accomplice's body.

He did not know the exact process of the battle, but in his opinion, a normal battle would not be such a tragic death. This was definitely revenge from an enemy.

"Continue searching. I want this guy to taste the same way of death!"

Dorton stood up, his face ashen.

However, his companions behind him had a different opinion.

"Boss, let's go back to the stronghold first and put away our gains."

During the search just now, everyone had also plundered quite a bit. At this moment, everyone was filled with spoils of war. They only wanted to go back and store them before coming out to continue plundering.

Dorton looked back and saw that everyone had the same intention. He could only suppress the anger in his heart and nod, "Alright, then we'll return to the stronghold first and put down the things in our hands before chasing after this enemy. At the same time, let the others not roam alone again."



More than ten bandits immediately returned to the stronghold.

Along the way, the bandits who received the news also came over to meet up. The team quickly grew to more than 20 people.

As they walked, the group of people suddenly stopped and looked ahead in surprise.

At the end of the street where the fire was spreading, a figure holding two sabers slowly approached through the smoke. He was faintly discernible, blocking their way forward.

Zhou Jing walked out of the smoke and stood in front of the twenty-odd people. He glanced at everyone excitedly before pointing his blade at all the enemies.

“I’ve finally found you guys. Come, accompany me on this dance of death.”