

Doomsday 191

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 191.1: We Are V587 (6)

Formidable Big Brother-in-law

“Master?” Song Ke was also very surprised.

In her limited memory, Grandfather Song Zhiyuan and Master Zhang Ting were the two most important people in her life. One raised her, and the other taught her martial arts.

Song Ke had heard her grandfather mention that Zhang Ting was the heir of a lost martial arts sect, seemingly with a significant background. However, he had lived in seclusion on Yue Mountain for many years, never voluntarily mentioning his past. He gave the impression of a hot-tempered old man who was skilled in combat. No one would have thought that he was actually the last disciple of Tianyi.

And the replicated genes that V587 urgently needed were under the care of Zhang Ting.

Fate truly takes unexpected turns, with hidden brightness emerging from the darkness.

“But, Master has passed away.”

Song Ke’s eyes dimmed, her shoulders drooping like a fragile figurine, soft and sorrowful.

Zhuang Qingyan’s heart softened in an instant. He reached up to her cheek in front of everyone, gently comforting her, “The old man may have left, but Zhang Ci... Senior Brother Zhang is still here. He might know something. Hiss... Song Keke!”

Song Ke tilted her head and bit down on his hand, leaving a moist tooth mark, while accusing him with her eyes: Can’t you pay attention to the occasion? Are we that familiar?

“...Did you hurt your teeth?” Zhuang Qingyan smiled, not at all angry. He took a tissue elegantly and wiped his hand.

“Cough, cough,” Lin Youyou weakly coughed, unable to resist commenting, “This worthless look... really shameful.”

Lu Xiaoyu, on the other hand, solemnly dismantled the conversation, “Speaking of Senior Brother Zhang, who doesn’t know the name of Shaye’s Qiong Qi? This time, District D88 is sure to be upgraded. With his good reputation, strong abilities, and being well-liked, he’ll probably become an official magistrate soon. He’s much stronger than a certain ‘successor,’ I guess.”

Zhuang Qingyan’s eyelid twitched, then twitched again. “There are some things I haven’t settled with you. You don’t think they’ve just been forgotten, do you?”

The two who had been at odds since their youth locked eyes for a second. Lu Xiaoyu sensed the atmosphere and smoothly changed the subject, understanding the unspoken agreement between them.

Back then, Song Ke had extracted Xie Zhuo’s identity out of his own mouth. Zhuang Qingyan was well aware of the little schemes between him and Ilya in Erjia, seeing through without exposing them. He even provided assistance, but if pushed too far, this guy would definitely turn his back on them.

Lu Xiaoyu seamlessly shifted the topic, “Anyway, I suggest we go to Shaye. What does the captain think?”

“Sure,” Song Ke nodded willingly.

“Wait, I’m going too,” Lin Youyou propped herself up, her lips devoid of any color. “Old Fang, give me a sealing agent.”

“No, considering your current condition, it’s best not to move,” Fang Zhixu decisively refused.

“It’s okay, leave it to us,” Xu Xing also chimed in.

Lin Youyou shook her head firmly, "I've always been accustomed to enjoying protection behind Su Cha. This time, I want to do something for him."

She looked at Song Ke, revealing an expectant smile, "Besides, it's the first collective action after the reunion of V587. I don't want to miss it."

Song Ke decisively concluded, "Then let's go together and come back together."

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Beneath the vast sky, a silver-white starship glided through the long expanse. Prior greetings with Zhang Ci and the green lights along the way from the outposts made way for V587 to smoothly enter the territory of Shaye.

The winding highway divided the wilderness in two, with once teeming with zombies and ferocious beasts on both sides. Every passage through used to be nerve-wracking, but now it was cleared of monsters, and hardly any could be seen beneath their line of sight.

Approaching the base, a steel fortress connected by a dozen iron cables appeared in front of them. Its scale had expanded more than three times since they left, and various flying terminals shuttled through the air. A bustling crowd flowed incessantly, and even the surrounding areas had spawned numerous small shelters, forming a sharp contrast with the desolate and dilapidated Mu City on the other side.

Today's Shaye was reborn, a Shaye bathed in the light of dawn. Although it couldn't match large cities with deep foundations like Beijun, Erjia, and Northern Base, Shaye's development had reached a medium level of District B, surpassing areas like Miao Ying and Tokushima constrained by terrain and climate.

The watchtower flashed the arrival signal, and the canopy at the top of the base slowly opened. Lu Xiaoyu controlled the starship, smoothly landing it indoors.

A young man in a black Taoist robe stood ahead, his robes fluttering in the strong wind. He stood firm like a pine tree, with sword-like eyebrows and starry eyes, exuding a cold and steady temperament.

Song Ke took off her hood and leaped down from the cabin door.

“Little Junior Sister~!!”

Mo Yan and Rita flew towards her, one wrapping an arm around her shoulder, the other patting her head. When they watched the holographic video, they couldn't believe it. After asking about various internal gossip in the martial arts hall and confirming Song Ke's identity repeatedly, now that they saw the real person, they were filled with enthusiasm.

“You've grown taller, and you're thinner.”

“Wow, who did you go to for that hairstyle? And your eyelashes! So cool!”

Song Ke lowered her head, good-naturedly letting her senior brother and sister tease her. Then, she looked up at the young man in the Taoist robe in front of her and obediently called out, “Senior Brother.”

“Good to have you back,” Zhang Ci nodded slightly, his gaze exceptionally gentle as he looked at her. “I told you, Shaye will always be your home.”

A long arm wrapped around Song Ke's shoulder. Zhuang Qingyan, dressed in loose white casual wear, lazily spread his hand towards Zhang Ci, revealing a brilliant smile reminiscent of a magnificent peacock. “Long time no see, Senior Brother. You still have your charm.”

His current status was not ordinary; he was Song Ke's officially recognized boyfriend. He didn't care at all about the label of a former fiancé or anything like that.

Zhang Ci remained unfazed, showing no intention of reaching out. He left Zhuang Qingyan hanging in place. “Back then, Song Ke wanted to leave with you, she left Shaye in a good condition. What happened? Disappeared for a year out of thin air and came back with an illness. I actually hope that you two never meet again.”

Zhuang Qingyan's smile froze for a moment.

Zhang Ci, with his ink-like pupils, scanned up and down and delivered a precise blow, "Is your leg going to heal?"

Zhuang Qingyan: "... Can I say this is my second injury, Senior Brother, do you believe me?"

"Pfft—!" Fang Zhixu and Xu Xing couldn't help but laugh. The corners of their mouths leaked out laughter. Princess Zhuang, trying to act cool, ended up lifting a stone to smash his own foot, huh?

Normally, if it were anyone else, with Zhuang Qingyan's sarcastic and proud personality, he would definitely retort back. But unfortunately, it was Zhang Ci. Song Ke currently didn't remember him, only remembering Zhang Ci and holding great respect for this senior brother. Offending the big brother-in-law was not a wise move.

Zhuang Qingyan retreated to the back, filled with pent-up frustration. He happened to notice Lu Xiaoyu with a strange expression, trying not to laugh.

"If you dare to laugh out loud, I'll report that there's a spy in the artificial intelligence group when I get back," Zhuang Qingyan threatened in a low voice.

"!" The corners of Lu Xiaoyu's raised mouth abruptly suppressed the laughter.

After entering the meeting room, Zhang Ci concisely stated, "I don't know about the replicated gene matter; he never mentioned it."

Song Ke's disappointment was evident. If even her senior brother didn't know, did they go on this trip in vain?

Zhang Ci paused, then continued, "...but I asked you to come because there are some other discoveries."

Song Ke was taken aback. After realizing it, she speechlessly reproached, "Senior Brother... try not to pause when you speak."

Zhang Ci took out a pile of real estate documents, "This is what he left me as a... birthday present from your last visit."

"There's a piece of land inside, located in Yue Mountain. I'm unfamiliar with it, never had the time, nor the intention to verify what it is. If he is indeed the successor of Tianyi, responsible for safeguarding the replicated genes, I'm sure it can't be inside the martial arts hall. So, it must be this place."

Zhuang Qingyan flipped through the documents, "Judging from the blueprints, this seems to be an underground project. The internal design... looks like a warehouse."

Song Ke looked up at Zhang Ci, "Senior Brother, let's go check it out together."

"Okay," Zhang Ci nodded.

Just as the group was about to set off, the meeting room door was suddenly knocked. Mo Yan's head popped in, "Senior Brother, can we talk?"

After getting Zhang Ci's consent, Mo Yan grinned and magically pulled out a double-layered cream cake from behind, "Made by Senior Sister Rita herself. Isn't it almost your birthdays? Since Little Junior Sister is back, we thought we'd celebrate together."

"Even though you guys aren't in that kind of relationship anymore..."

Mo Yan got slapped from behind and he hastily changed his tune, "But blowing out candles together shouldn't be a problem, right?"

Back in Yue Mountain, Zhang Ci and Song Ke used to celebrate their birthdays together; it had almost become a tradition in the martial arts school. Despite the overwhelming hospitality and insistence, the two always ended up shoulder to shoulder.

Zhang Ci looked helpless, and Song Ke was quite used to it. Amidst the continuous chorus of birthday wishes, she puffed out her cheeks—

Phew! Zhuang Qingyan expressionlessly squeezed in between the two and promptly blew out the candles.

Starting with Mo Yan, the martial arts school members stared at him with murderous eyes: What is this little white face trying to do? Stirring up trouble!

Zhuang Qingyan exclaimed, “Oh!” with feigned surprise, “Don’t you all know? We’ve already found out Xiao Keke’s real birthday.”

“In the future, we won’t trouble Senior Brothers and Senior Sisters. We’ll celebrate at home by ourselves.” He smiled, considerate and warm.

LAK0017, as a humanoid embryo, was born on February 20th of the New Calendar, but Zhuang Qingyan wouldn’t choose this date. He preferred March 19th of the same year, the day they first saw each other through the capsule container.

Song Ke and Zhuang Qingyan’s birthdays, one in early spring and the other in late autumn, flourishing in spring and fruitful in autumn, were mutually causal. This is what’s called a perfect match.

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Chapter 191.2: We Are V587 (6)

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District E166, Yue Mountain.

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Passing by the martial arts school, both of them instinctively stopped in their tracks. Within the abandoned walls, wild grass reached knee height, and the roof was covered in green vines.

Zhang Ci and Song Ke, one in front and one behind, nodded and bowed.

The location of the plot of land was not far from the martial arts school, but they circled around it several times and couldn't find a way in.

"Didn't we just come here?" Lin Youyou, not very proficient in controlling her wheelchair, turned it around and found the mark she had made on a tree.

"Got lost?" Fang Zhixu murmured.

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"Six and eight as feet, left three and right seven."

"Wear nine and tread one, five in the center."

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She blew away the thick dust on top and discovered a machine similar to a security system. "Senior Brother, can this be opened?"

Zhang Ci frowned and shook his head. "Apart from the formation, everything here is as unfamiliar to me as it is to you."

"What about violent destruction?" Song Ke conjured a giant hammer, eager to try.

"No, this type of security system has a self-destruct program. If you smash it, everything will be lost," Zhuang Qingyan quickly stopped her.

"...Oh," Song Ke said dejectedly.

The group took turns trying various methods, but the stone tablet remained unmoved.

In the atmosphere of helplessness, Zhuang Qingyan closed his eyes in contemplation. Quickly combining all the information, he gradually pieced together a possibility. "I understand now. The old master handed over the plot of land to you and taught you the incantation to break the formation. It means he left a way out for Tianyi. If, one day, the existence of gene replication is exposed, it should be opened by the person he trusts the most."

Zhang Ci's expression remained indifferent. "If he trusted me, he wouldn't have kept silent about Tianyi's matters."

Everyone fell silent. The knot between Zhang Ci and Zhang Ting was already difficult to untangle, and with the revelation of gene replication, the contradictions and suspicions would only deepen.

The only one with fatherly experience, Fang Zhixu, considered his words carefully. "Actually, I can understand the old master. Tianyi disciples bear a heavy mission, both a responsibility and a shackle. Your personality clearly doesn't suit their organization."

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"Your father didn't want to hold you back," Fang Zhixu sighed.

Zhang Ci remained silent for a long time. Father and son had constant arguments during their lifetime, never truly opening up to each other. It was only after his father's death that he truly understood Zhang Ting.

"You and Song Ke share the same birthday. The old master carefully prepared two gifts." Zhuang Qingyan brought everyone's attention back, pointing at the stone tablet with his cane. "One for the steady senior disciple and one for the beloved junior disciple."

"The senior disciple has the property rights and the incantation to break the formation. So, is the key to unlocking the truth in the hands of the junior disciple?"

“You mean...” Fang Zhixu realized, his voice trembling, “Captain knows how to open the door?”

“Huh?” Song Ke looked confused. “I don’t know.”

“What did your master give you?” Zhuang Qingyan asked in a low voice.

“A protective amulet,” Song Ke answered honestly. “I don’t remember... where it went.”

After the battle in Loak, Song Ke’s terminal and belongings were neatly collected by Zhuang Qingyan. He used his mental power to search inside the spatial necklace and quickly found the protective amulet Song Ke mentioned, tucked away in a plastic bag and thrown in a corner.

Zhuang Qingyan carefully took it out; the charm felt cold in his hands, with intricate tranquility runes traced on its surface.

Lu Xiaoyu, with his alloy arm scanning, signaled with a continuous beeping sound, “There’s something here.”

His mechanical arm detached a miniature pair of tweezers, and he focused on dismantling the amulet. From inside, he extracted a chip as thin as a cicada wing.

Lu Xiaoyu, living up to his perfect score of 5.0 in the mechanics course, quickly assembled a device resembling a card reader and inserted the chip, handing it to Song Ke.

Song Ke swiped it against the access control.

Rumble—!!

The ground violently shook, trees collapsed, mud splattered, and everyone staggered. After a few seconds, the ground sank, revealing a slowly emerging concealed passage. Song Ke led the way, and the seven entered in single file.

Unexpectedly, the passage wasn't as desolate as imagined. Weeds were cleared neatly, and even the lighting was provided by oil-free mechanical lamps.

"Technology after the New Calendar. It seems that the old master indeed built this place," Zhuang Qingyan remarked.

As they walked, the temperature dropped, causing Xu Xing and Lin Youyou to shiver. Fang Zhixu took out thick clothing and helped them put it on.

Following the architectural blueprints, they arrived at a warehouse-like space shaped like the character "田". Rooms were densely distributed on both sides of the corridor. Zhang Ci walked briskly, opening half-closed doors one after another, leaving everyone stunned.

This was indeed the renovated warehouse, with temperature-controlled freezers piled up to the ceiling, and on top were transparent cultivation chambers.

Mythical creatures like Suanni, Hornless Dragon, Qiong Qi, Sheng-sheng, and Hook Snake—all were gene replications. Various DNA chains slowly rotated on corresponding screens. Lin Youyou even saw a Kun, with the quantity displayed as 2, though one of the boxes was empty.

At the end of the corridor stood a dormant central hub, an outdated model eliminated decades ago.

Zhuang Qingyan gestured to Lu Xiaoyu, and his silver rhenium arm immediately connected to break through. The intrusion of a top-notch hacker shattered the weak firewall, and in less than ten seconds, the access was granted.

Zhuang Qingyan quickly skimmed through the records, detailing the comprehensive information of all replicated genes, including the complete DNA sequences. Without turning around, he casually said, "Senior Brother Zhang, Yue Mountain is no longer suitable for preserving the genes. Take the old master's efforts with you."

In reality, Zhang Ting's choice of location was quite good. District E166 was far from the Alliance, sparsely populated, but due to the changes in the geomagnetic field after the apocalypse and the lack of weather simulation system in Yue Mountain, the radiation concentration had long exceeded the safety

limits. Replicated genes were of inestimable value and could easily tempt people, but whether it was Song Ke or everyone from V587, they wouldn't be swayed by greed.

“What about Song Ke's treatment?” Zhang Ci frowned slightly.

“Don't worry, I'll copy the data from the central hub, and I also need 45 original samples from Song Ke's body.”

“Okay, I'll take them back to Shaye and find a place to store them,” Zhang Ci said, taking out a spatial item shaped like a talisman.

“I'll help!” Xu Xing volunteered.

Preserving replicated genes required a stable low-temperature environment, and Xu Xing's ice-based ability was like a professional insulation machine. He froze each cultivation chamber one by one, helping Zhang Ci collect them into the spatial item.

After tidying up both rooms, Xu Xing curiously approached and asked, “Sister, why are there many boxes empty?”

“Hmm?” Song Ke took a look, and indeed, normally, the cultivation chambers displayed real-time status, but the ones left on the freezer not only had blank contents but also no response from the recorder.

Before Song Ke could figure it out, Lu Xiaoyu's voice came from behind, “Everyone, there's bad news.”

V587: “...”

Lin Youyou, massaging her temples, said, “Please, don't say it.”

They had already developed a form of PTSD from Lu Xiaoyu's “good news” and “bad news.”

Unfazed, Lu Xiaoyu continued in a flat tone, "I just accessed the monitoring system and found that on the fourth day after the apocalypse, or more precisely, on the fourth day of the apocalypse, there was damage in the southeast corner of the warehouse. Judging from the traces, it was caused from the inside."

Song Ke didn't understand. "What does that mean?"

"It means..." Lu Xiaoyu looked towards Zhuang Qingyan. "You explain. What happens if the gene preservation conditions aren't met?"

"In a high-radiation environment, gene activity will be stimulated significantly," Zhuang Qingyan gazed at Song Ke and said solemnly, "ultimately... revival."

Everyone took in a sharp breath.

Lin Youyou gritted her teeth, "Damn it, Lu Xiaoyu, you and your ominous predictions. Can't it be a bit less unfortunate?"

Boom—!

Boom, boom—!!

The deafening sounds came from above just as the words fell.

The next moment, the wall cracked, and in Song Ke's astonished eyes, an unbelievably familiar giant bird with luxurious feathers and tiger-like claws appeared before them. It seemed furious, flapping its heavy wings and smashing down with force! The entire corridor trembled, on the verge of collapsing.

"Get down!" Song Ke shouted.

A massive golden shield promptly shielded the seven. Zhang Ci instantly cast the Vajra God Incantation, while Lu Xiaoyu's mechanical arm wrapped around Lin Youyou and Xu Xing.

However, a greater crisis was still looming. With the collapse of the underground warehouse, countless ferocious and grotesque creatures, either running or flying, poured out from all directions. Roaring, they attacked the group. The seven rolled out of the pile of soil, exposed under the blazing sun. The intense sunlight quickly burned patches on Song Ke's skin. Zhuang Qingyan held her tightly, pulling the hood over her.

Roaring beasts, rampaging birds—various extinct creatures reappeared, their bizarre appearances highly intimidating.

Through the swirling dust, Song Ke's gaze fell on the giant bird she had seen at the martial arts school. It had the body of a chicken, tiger-like claws, and a bunch of white long feathers on its forehead, giving it a fierce appearance. It stared coldly at her but didn't immediately pounce.

“Qi Que, you have the same genes as it,” Zhuang Qingyan quickly explained.

Song Ke suddenly realized. No wonder that giant bird at the martial arts school didn't attack her. It considered her one of its kind. As Lu Xiaoyu said, the damage occurred on the fourth day after the apocalypse. So, this Qi Que should be the first revived mutant, with exceptional intelligence, capable of commanding other creatures.

“What do we do now?!” Fang Zhixu held onto Song Ke's leg, shouting in panic.

“The nest is destroyed, and they won't let us go,” Lu Xiaoyu remained calm in such situations.

This group of mutants was exceptionally fierce, each possessing the strength close to a level 4 ferocious beast. Under the continuous attacks, cracks appeared on the surface of the shield.

Lin Youyou bit her lip, and taking advantage of everyone's distraction, she suddenly raised her hand to inject a sealing agent! She staggered up from the wheelchair, recalling the tune she used to summon the mutated Kun. She sang a hoarse song, filled with a soothing meaning.

The first time, the group of mutants showed no reaction, continuing to roar.

The second time, some of the mutants' attacks gradually slowed down and withdrew.

The third time, the Qi Que raised its head and emitted a long cry. The restlessness of the mutant group subsided, dispersing like a tide.

Xu Xing stared in astonishment, "Wow, you're carrying us today..."

"Only temporarily, let's leave this place quickly," Lin Youyou said, smiling while overexerting her ability. She collapsed, and in that instant, Song Ke caught her and placed her back on the wheelchair.

With the mutants losing their nest and pouring out en masse, it wouldn't be long before Yue Mountain became the most complex and dangerous forbidden area for the Alliance species.

The seven helped each other stand up, and Song Ke asked anxiously, "Senior Brother, is the gene safe?"

"It's fine," Zhang Ci confirmed with a glance. The spatial talisman was intact. He remembered something, "Those data..."

"Already copied," Lu Xiaoyu said.

"Also noted down, double insurance," Zhuang Qingyan said confidently.

Zhang Ci nodded, then gazed at the ruins in front of him, lost in thought. "So, that's the reason he was killed?"

Zhuang Qingyan explained in a low voice, "Gu Hongyi was determined to obtain the Eternal Life Plan. When Vulture discovered the identity of the old master and realized that he held the replicated genes, torture couldn't force him to talk, so they eventually resorted to killing."

The two S7-level members of Vulture and Gu Hongyi, who gave the order, were killed by Song Ke in the Loak battle. It could be considered karmic retribution. However, the remaining remnants retreated to Utopia.

Zhang Ci clenched his fist, his tone heavy and resolute, "I can't let it go. I want to kill every member of Vulture."

"Do you want to go to Utopia? The fastest way is to win the Awakener Challenge," Xu Xing said in a low voice.

Zhang Ci's eyes gradually became firm, "...Challenge."

...

On the starship leaving Yue Mountain, Song Ke looked down through the porthole at the lush forests, faintly hearing the commotion of the beast herds.

As she watched, she suddenly stood up, "Trouble!"

The direction where some mutants were retreating happened to be towards the isolated island below the mountain.

...

Aunt Qing was preparing a meal for Xiao Bao. This kid was becoming more and more picky, even refusing to eat the zombie leg she had scavenged. She had to slap him a few times before he behaved. Although Aunt Qing had slow thinking, she retained the habits of being human, mechanically starting a fire to boil water.

Overhead, a massive object approached, the intense airflow knocking over the stove. Aunt Qing cautiously stepped back, holding Xiao Bao, ready to run.

The starship's hatch opened, and a young man waved enthusiastically, shouting, "Ah! Ah ah ah—!"

Aunt Qing had a puzzled expression with a floating question mark, "?"

It turned out that not all zombie languages were mutually understandable. Even after shouting for a long time, Aunt Qing remained wary.

He couldn't help but feel frustrated, wishing he could go back and tell the expert who wrote "Zombie Language Beginner to Master" that zombie languages also had dialects!

Song Ke landed gracefully and stood in front of Aunt Qing, saying seriously, "I found a place for you to survive. There are no zombies there, and many of your kind."

Xu Xing followed and opened his terminal, showing a picture of him with many Fallen, one of whom had a small blood zombie on their head, looking very happy. In fact, Xu Xing felt a bit guilty. Previously, Aunt Qing and Xiao Bao had frightened him so much that he lost control of his abilities, exposing their identities and missing the last starship. He didn't expect to have a chance to make amends.

"It's dangerous here. Come with me," Song Ke said.

Aunt Qing embraced Xiao Bao and nodded slowly.

They had been abandoned on the isolated island, surrounded by monsters day after day. After years of waiting, they finally saw a starship for escape.

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Lu Xiaoyu, with his alloy arm scanning, signaled with a continuous beeping sound, “There’s something here.”

His mechanical arm detached a miniature pair of tweezers, and he focused on dismantling the amulet. From inside, he extracted a chip as thin as a cicada wing.

Lu Xiaoyu, living up to his perfect score of 5.0 in the mechanics course, quickly assembled a device resembling a card reader and inserted the chip, handing it to Song Ke.

Song Ke swiped it against the access control.

Rumble—!!

The ground violently shook, trees collapsed, mud splattered, and everyone staggered. After a few seconds, the ground sank, revealing a slowly emerging concealed passage. Song Ke led the way, and the seven entered in single file.

Unexpectedly, the passage wasn't as desolate as imagined. Weeds were cleared neatly, and even the lighting was provided by oil-free mechanical lamps.

"Technology after the New Calendar. It seems that the old master indeed built this place," Zhuang Qingyan remarked.

As they walked, the temperature dropped, causing Xu Xing and Lin Youyou to shiver. Fang Zhixu took out thick clothing and helped them put it on.

Following the architectural blueprints, they arrived at a warehouse-like space shaped like the character "田". Rooms were densely distributed on both sides of the corridor. Zhang Ci walked briskly, opening half-closed doors one after another, leaving everyone stunned.

This was indeed the renovated warehouse, with temperature-controlled freezers piled up to the ceiling, and on top were transparent cultivation chambers.

Mythical creatures like Suanni, Hornless Dragon, Qiong Qi, Sheng-sheng, and Hook Snake—all were gene replications. Various DNA chains slowly rotated on corresponding screens. Lin Youyou even saw a Kun, with the quantity displayed as 2, though one of the boxes was empty.

At the end of the corridor stood a dormant central hub, an outdated model eliminated decades ago.

Zhuang Qingyan gestured to Lu Xiaoyu, and his silver rhenium arm immediately connected to break through. The intrusion of a top-notch hacker shattered the weak firewall, and in less than ten seconds, the access was granted.

Zhuang Qingyan quickly skimmed through the records, detailing the comprehensive information of all replicated genes, including the complete DNA sequences. Without turning around, he casually said, "Senior Brother Zhang, Yue Mountain is no longer suitable for preserving the genes. Take the old master's efforts with you."

In reality, Zhang Ting's choice of location was quite good. District E166 was far from the Alliance, sparsely populated, but due to the changes in the geomagnetic field after the apocalypse and the lack of weather simulation system in Yue Mountain, the radiation concentration had long exceeded the safety limits. Replicated genes were of inestimable value and could easily tempt people, but whether it was Song Ke or everyone from V587, they wouldn't be swayed by greed.

"What about Song Ke's treatment?" Zhang Ci frowned slightly.

"Don't worry, I'll copy the data from the central hub, and I also need 45 original samples from Song Ke's body."

"Okay, I'll take them back to Shaye and find a place to store them," Zhang Ci said, taking out a spatial item shaped like a talisman.

"I'll help!" Xu Xing volunteered.

Preserving replicated genes required a stable low-temperature environment, and Xu Xing's ice-based ability was like a professional insulation machine. He froze each cultivation chamber one by one, helping Zhang Ci collect them into the spatial item.

After tidying up both rooms, Xu Xing curiously approached and asked, "Sister, why are there many boxes empty?"

"Hmm?" Song Ke took a look, and indeed, normally, the cultivation chambers displayed real-time status, but the ones left on the freezer not only had blank contents but also no response from the recorder.

Before Song Ke could figure it out, Lu Xiaoyu's voice came from behind, "Everyone, there's bad news."

V587: "..."

Lin Youyou, massaging her temples, said, "Please, don't say it."

They had already developed a form of PTSD from Lu Xiaoyu's "good news" and "bad news."

Unfazed, Lu Xiaoyu continued in a flat tone, "I just accessed the monitoring system and found that on the fourth day after the apocalypse, or more precisely, on the fourth day of the apocalypse, there was damage in the southeast corner of the warehouse. Judging from the traces, it was caused from the inside."

Song Ke didn't understand. "What does that mean?"

"It means..." Lu Xiaoyu looked towards Zhuang Qingyan. "You explain. What happens if the gene preservation conditions aren't met?"

"In a high-radiation environment, gene activity will be stimulated significantly," Zhuang Qingyan gazed at Song Ke and said solemnly, "ultimately... revival."

Everyone took in a sharp breath.

Lin Youyou gritted her teeth, "Damn it, Lu Xiaoyu, you and your ominous predictions. Can't it be a bit less unfortunate?"

Boom—!

Boom, boom—!!

The deafening sounds came from above just as the words fell.

The next moment, the wall cracked, and in Song Ke's astonished eyes, an unbelievably familiar giant bird with luxurious feathers and tiger-like claws appeared before them. It seemed furious, flapping its heavy wings and smashing down with force! The entire corridor trembled, on the verge of collapsing.

“Get down!” Song Ke shouted.

A massive golden shield promptly shielded the seven. Zhang Ci instantly cast the Vajra God Incantation, while Lu Xiaoyu’s mechanical arm wrapped around Lin Youyou and Xu Xing.

However, a greater crisis was still looming. With the collapse of the underground warehouse, countless ferocious and grotesque creatures, either running or flying, poured out from all directions. Roaring, they attacked the group. The seven rolled out of the pile of soil, exposed under the blazing sun. The intense sunlight quickly burned patches on Song Ke’s skin. Zhuang Qingyan held her tightly, pulling the hood over her.

Roaring beasts, rampaging birds—various extinct creatures reappeared, their bizarre appearances highly intimidating.

Through the swirling dust, Song Ke’s gaze fell on the giant bird she had seen at the martial arts school. It had the body of a chicken, tiger-like claws, and a bunch of white long feathers on its forehead, giving it a fierce appearance. It stared coldly at her but didn’t immediately pounce.

“Qi Que, you have the same genes as it,” Zhuang Qingyan quickly explained.

Song Ke suddenly realized. No wonder that giant bird at the martial arts school didn’t attack her. It considered her one of its kind. As Lu Xiaoyu said, the damage occurred on the fourth day after the apocalypse. So, this Qi Que should be the first revived mutant, with exceptional intelligence, capable of commanding other creatures.

“What do we do now?!” Fang Zhixu held onto Song Ke’s leg, shouting in panic.

“The nest is destroyed, and they won’t let us go,” Lu Xiaoyu remained calm in such situations.

This group of mutants was exceptionally fierce, each possessing the strength close to a level 4 ferocious beast. Under the continuous attacks, cracks appeared on the surface of the shield.

Lin Youyou bit her lip, and taking advantage of everyone's distraction, she suddenly raised her hand to inject a sealing agent! She staggered up from the wheelchair, recalling the tune she used to summon the mutated Kun. She sang a hoarse song, filled with a soothing meaning.

The first time, the group of mutants showed no reaction, continuing to roar.

The second time, some of the mutants' attacks gradually slowed down and withdrew.

The third time, the Qi Que raised its head and emitted a long cry. The restlessness of the mutant group subsided, dispersing like a tide.

Xu Xing stared in astonishment, "Wow, you're carrying us today..."

"Only temporarily, let's leave this place quickly," Lin Youyou said, smiling while overexerting her ability. She collapsed, and in that instant, Song Ke caught her and placed her back on the wheelchair.

With the mutants losing their nest and pouring out en masse, it wouldn't be long before Yue Mountain became the most complex and dangerous forbidden area for the Alliance species.

The seven helped each other stand up, and Song Ke asked anxiously, "Senior Brother, is the gene safe?"

"It's fine," Zhang Ci confirmed with a glance. The spatial talisman was intact. He remembered something, "Those data..."

"Already copied," Lu Xiaoyu said.

"Also noted down, double insurance," Zhuang Qingyan said confidently.

Zhang Ci nodded, then gazed at the ruins in front of him, lost in thought. "So, that's the reason he was killed?"

Zhuang Qingyan explained in a low voice, “Gu Hongyi was determined to obtain the Eternal Life Plan. When Vulture discovered the identity of the old master and realized that he held the replicated genes, torture couldn’t force him to talk, so they eventually resorted to killing.”

The two S7-level members of Vulture and Gu Hongyi, who gave the order, were killed by Song Ke in the Loak battle. It could be considered karmic retribution. However, the remaining remnants retreated to Utopia.

Zhang Ci clenched his fist, his tone heavy and resolute, “I can’t let it go. I want to kill every member of Vulture.”

“Do you want to go to Utopia? The fastest way is to win the Awakener Challenge,” Xu Xing said in a low voice.

Zhang Ci’s eyes gradually became firm, “...Challenge.”

...

On the starship leaving Yue Mountain, Song Ke looked down through the porthole at the lush forests, faintly hearing the commotion of the beast herds.

As she watched, she suddenly stood up, “Trouble!”

The direction where some mutants were retreating happened to be towards the isolated island below the mountain.

...

Aunt Qing was preparing a meal for Xiao Bao. This kid was becoming more and more picky, even refusing to eat the zombie leg she had scavenged. She had to slap him a few times before he behaved. Although Aunt Qing had slow thinking, she retained the habits of being human, mechanically starting a fire to boil water.

Overhead, a massive object approached, the intense airflow knocking over the stove. Aunt Qing cautiously stepped back, holding Xiao Bao, ready to run.

The starship's hatch opened, and a young man waved enthusiastically, shouting, "Ah! Ah ah ah—!"

Aunt Qing had a puzzled expression with a floating question mark, "?"

It turned out that not all zombie languages were mutually understandable. Even after shouting for a long time, Aunt Qing remained wary.

He couldn't help but feel frustrated, wishing he could go back and tell the expert who wrote "Zombie Language Beginner to Master" that zombie languages also had dialects!

Song Ke landed gracefully and stood in front of Aunt Qing, saying seriously, "I found a place for you to survive. There are no zombies there, and many of your kind."

Xu Xing followed and opened his terminal, showing a picture of him with many Fallen, one of whom had a small blood zombie on their head, looking very happy. In fact, Xu Xing felt a bit guilty. Previously, Aunt Qing and Xiao Bao had frightened him so much that he lost control of his abilities, exposing their identities and missing the last starship. He didn't expect to have a chance to make amends.

"It's dangerous here. Come with me," Song Ke said.

Aunt Qing embraced Xiao Bao and nodded slowly.

They had been abandoned on the isolated island, surrounded by monsters day after day. After years of waiting, they finally saw a starship for escape.

Chapter 192.1 – We Are V587 (7)

I'm back

After going back to Shaye to drop Zhang Ci, V587's starship headed straight for Loak.

Xu Xing, the young man, was lively and spirited. Stepping on the ship's rail window, he held a megaphone in his hand. The strong wind tousled his fluffy curls, and his spirited voice, infused with awakened energy, echoed throughout the area: "Ada, we have a new friend—!!"

After speaking human words, he turned around and winked, repeating in zombie language: "Ah~ Ah ah ah—!!"

Aunt Qing held Xiao Bao, gazing at Xu Xing with a look that seemed to question his sanity, amazed that such rich expressions could be squeezed out of its stiff features.

Xiao Bao drooled, vividly portraying what "salivating three feet" meant. His murky eyes remained fixed on Song Ke's arm, sneakily trying to reach for her, but his mom firmly pressed him down.

After shouting for about ten minutes, a rolling dust cloud rose on the distant horizon, and a massive horde of zombies approached.

Aunt Qing's gaze gradually fixed. Trapped on the lonely island, it had always thought that it and Xiao Bao were rejected oddities. It never imagined that there were so many similar beings in the outside world. Perhaps... perhaps here, they could also have the right to a normal life.

Song Ke patted Aunt Qing's shoulder and whispered, "Go, to your new home."

Xu Xing keenly spotted Ada's figure and happily waved, "Ada, I found my sister! And brought... a new friend..."

As he shouted, his voice became weaker and he stared into the distance in a daze.

Just as everyone found his unusual behavior strange, Xu Xing suddenly jumped up, thrilled to the point of almost breaking into a high-pitched scream: "Braided Head?!"

In the rear of the large group, leisurely slacking around, wasn't it the familiar Braided Head and its brother, Dirty Chin? Braided Head was originally a bit shy, but upon seeing Xu Xing clearly, it happily jumped up and rushed to the front, excitedly shouting at him: "Ah ah ah ah ah!!"

Xu Xing responded with the same enthusiasm: "Ah ah! Ah ah—Ah-woo!"

Look, the child was so happy that he even forgot the foreign language he had finally mastered.

Ada, as the leader of the Fallen, had a strong sense of kinship among her kind but particularly despised humans and zombies. Except for Xu Xing, who was like sticky glue, ordinary people couldn't move around in her territory.

Song Ke allowed Xu Xing to jump down and have fun, telling him to come back in a while, while she took a detour to rescue Lin Xiu, who had been "buried" initially.

Upon reaching the designated location, Lin Youyou personally dug out the light screen. The low-energy mode needed to be reactivated. She looked pale and hesitated to proceed. Finally, admitting defeat, she muttered, "Forget it, Lin Xiu is really good at scolding people. I can't handle it alone. Let's wait for Su Cha to wake up."

She languished in the wheelchair, but her eyes sparkled with clarity. Everything was developing in the right direction, and she believed that she would reunite with her family sooner or later.

On the way back, Xu Xing was pushed by Fang Zhixu to stand in front of Zhuang Qingyan. He awkwardly asked, "Hey, what about Ada and Braided Head in the future? Can you not fight them?"

Zhuang Qingyan's mouth curved into a half-smile, teasingly saying, "Want to know? Call me Brother Yan first."

Xu Xing, humiliated, said, "Brother Yan."

When they first met, Xu Xing, in order to maintain his innocent image, used to sweetly call him “Uncle Zhuang.” However, as his true nature was revealed, he either called him by his full name or referred to him as “Hey” or “That guy.”

Zhuang Qingyan looked pleased as he casually flipped the light screen. “The new ‘Law of Species’ will be introduced soon, acknowledging the existence of the Fallen openly. Instead of worrying about them, you should mourn for those poor fellows who mistakenly entered Loak.

Ada possesses intelligence close to a Level 4 Zombie King. Given the number of monsters here, ordinary awakeners would just be sending themselves to death. Under the premise of no conflicting interests, at least for a few years, humans can maintain a ‘no conflict with each other’ balance with the Fallen.”

...

After returning to the Northern Base, V587 immediately went to the Qianzhan City Laboratory.

The conditions of Su Cha and Lin Youyou could only be described as “life-sustaining.” Every day delayed added to the crisis. Song Ke, known for her decisive actions, both for her sake and for her teammates, wanted to start the cryopreservation experiment as quickly as possible.

Ning Rong rubbed his hands, waiting at the door. When they approached, he eagerly spoke, “Did you really find the original sample? What about the complete gene sequence? For safety, I think slice analysis is indispensable...”

Zhuang Qingyan interrupted his rambling self-talk, saying, “We’re fine on our end. What about your side?”

Ning Rong’s expression was serious, and his attitude towards research was impeccable. “Rest assured, I personally checked every step. Only you and I have experimental permissions.”

Song Ke changed into a pure white short-sleeved shorts set, and one by one, the V587 team members hugged her, cheering her on.

When hugging Lin Youyou, Song Ke paused for a few seconds, whispering, "Before the arrival of autumn this year, both you and Su Cha will recover."

Lin Youyou smiled lightly, "I believe in you, Song Ke'er."

When it was Zhuang Qingyan's turn, his peach blossom eyes were full of affection as he tightly embraced Song Ke. His tone was so gentle it was almost dripping with water, "Don't be afraid. I'll be with you; just a little nap will do."

Song Ke struggled a bit but couldn't break free. She endured it and then couldn't help but speak, "There's something I want to discuss with you."

"Hmm? What is it?" Zhuang Qingyan's warm breath hit her earlobe, causing a slight tingling sensation.

Song Ke felt inexplicably guilty, "Well... we're not that familiar, so... the boyfriend-girlfriend thing, let's take it slow, okay?"

She closed her eyes and steeled herself, "Actually, I don't like ostentatious displays."

Zhuang Qingyan: "...?"

It felt easier to say it out loud. Song Ke sighed in relief, pretending not to hear the uneven laughter behind her.

"Not that familiar?"

"..."

"Ostentatious displays?"

"..."

Zhuang Qingyan's attractive and enchanting face slowly approached. The tips of their noses gently touched, so close that Song Ke could count his long and dense eyelashes.

He gazed deeply into her eyes, various emotions swirling in his eyes. Finally, it turned into a helpless sigh, "We'll talk when you come out."

Song Ke was pushed into a massive apparatus, surrounded by pure white. As time passed, she gradually felt uncomfortable.

Fortunately, the anesthesia took effect, and her eyelids became heavier.

Five seconds, three seconds, one second.

Song Ke slowly closed her eyes, consciousness sinking into endless chaos.

...

Thick black smoke, scorching fireballs, hazy dust columns, and... flashes that covered the retina.

Young Ming (Mingzhi) carried a portable cultivation pod, his eye sockets red, running forward without looking back. He hadn't expected a nuclear explosion to occur right after leaving Loak.

"Beep—" a sharp alarm sounded, and LAK0017 curled up in pain, with vital signs dropping to the lowest point.

"No, no, no!" Mingzhi was in a panic, placing the cultivation pod on the ground, nervously biting his nails. Suddenly, he had a flash of inspiration, remembering the way Young Master Xie fed nutritional supplements. Carefully, he took out the last, and within his permissions, the only nutritional supplement he could access, and placed it next to the dying LAK0017.

Mingzhi choked, "Quickly eat it, don't die, I beg you, don't die."

Since the first day of its existence, LAK0017 had been cared for by Mingzhi. It was like his child, and Mingzhi had poured all his effort and love into it. Why couldn't he keep it alive? Clearly, it had autonomously restored its life before destruction, so why was it rapidly deteriorating now?

Mingzhi quickly realized the key issue. The environment of the research institute was like a vacuum greenhouse, and LAK0017 had long been accustomed to that survival mode. Suddenly thrown into the outside world, it couldn't adapt to the murky air at all.

The alarm became more urgent, and eventually, with the long beep sounds, LAK0017's vital signs fell silent.

It was dead.

"...No, it's impossible. You're so strong," Mingzhi's tears welled up, "Give me a chance to save you, please, live on!"

The experimental subject inside the cultivation chamber shrank more and more, turning into a soft, collapsed mass.

Mingzhi opened the pod door, trembling as he took out LAK0017. Although he held it steadily, the fleshy mass slipped unexpectedly from his palm, rolling away, making squelching sounds as it flowed several meters away.

Mingzhi hurriedly got up to retrieve the fleshy mass. As his vision blurred, he vaguely saw a dark red pattern on the surface of the soft flesh. Its wriggling slowed down, but it continued to roll forward. Mingzhi looked at the direction it was heading, slightly widening his eyes – was it trying to absorb radiation?

Gritting his teeth, Mingzhi picked up the soft mass and rushed towards Loak. However, in the face of a natural disaster, ordinary people were so insignificant. Just being close to the edge of the nuclear explosion, Mingzhi showed obvious symptoms of radiation sickness: dizziness, nausea, vomiting, bleeding from the nose and gums, and large amounts of hair falling out.

LAK0017 seemed increasingly eager. It struggled free from Mingzhi's embrace and fell into the thick remnants of flames.

Mingzhi fell to his knees, his consciousness shaken. On the verge of passing out, he witnessed an unforgettable miracle.

A distant, clear bird cry tore through the sky. The fire-red phantom of a mythical beast spread its wings and soared overhead.

"Phoenix... Nirvana..." Mingzhi murmured to himself, tears streaming down his face.

After the light dissipated, a pair of wrinkled and spotted hands emerged from the ashes, cradling the peacefully sleeping little girl.

The Phoenix gene was triggered, resetting the experimental subject's state. LAK0017 returned to its initial humanoid embryo state, becoming a true "human."

Chapter 192.2 – We Are V587 (7)

I'm back

One year later,

Song Zhiyuan, after various inquiries, located Zhang Ting, the disciple of Tianyi, and sent Song Ke to the Yue Mountain.

Zhang Ting was fond of this incredibly powerful and destructive girl. Making an exception, he accepted Song Ke as his disciple, even offering a fifty percent discount on tuition.

When Song Ke was nine years old, during a training session, she rolled down the mountain, breaking thirteen ribs.

Perhaps this injury was too severe. She lost consciousness, and her latent abilities were triggered.

After the doctor left, Zhang Ting anxiously examined Song Ke's injuries the next day. To his surprise, he was puzzled: wait, didn't she break thirteen ribs? How come there were only twelve wounds? Another day passed, and Zhang Ting checked again. Good Lord, now there were only eleven.

Half a month later, Song Zhiyuan, who had finally managed to arrange Song Ke's enrollment in Hua City, hastily went up the mountain. By then, Song Ke's injuries had completely healed. She was jumping and playing in the courtyard, completely unaware of her recent ordeal. Faced with Zhang Ting's inquiries, Song Zhiyuan sighed and got straight to the point:

"Song Ke underwent a fusion experiment. She has replicated genes in her body."

"I may not live long enough to see her grow up, but I hope she can live a healthy and safe life. If possible, when she encounters difficulties, could you help her once?"

Later on, Song Zhiyuan passed away, and Song Ke grew up smoothly. On the eve of her adulthood, Zhang Ting gave her a calming charm.

After that, the apocalypse erupted, and Song Ke escaped to Hua City, encountering Zhuang Qingyan, V587, moving from District C to District B...

Finally, it was the decisive battle in Loak.

...

In the extremely quiet room, Song Ke suddenly opened her eyes.

She remembered everything.

The surroundings were chilly, and Song Ke shivered. Slowly sitting up, she stared at the reflective glass in front of her, where a unfamiliar version of herself was visible.

The white hair returned to its glossy black, eyelashes back to normal. However, her skin still appeared more translucent than an ordinary person's. Song Ke looked down at her hands, and her awakened energy flowed smoothly without any hesitation.

Lightly landing on the floor from the single bed, she silently approached the door.

The corridor was dimly lit, with two people standing facing each other. Ning Rong was talking quietly with Zhuang Qingyan:

"The ordinary genes have been processed. As for the replicated genes... my plan is to freeze the most dangerous 30 first. The rest have low activity and won't affect her body and abilities for the time being. If you want to do organ transplants, it's also possible. Additionally, the defects of albinism have been repaired. We'll check her every half month, and based on her recovery, we'll address the remaining 15... no, 14 kinds."

"You've been standing outside for a day and a night. Go and rest, I'll take over for you. I'll notify you as soon as she wakes up."

"No need," Zhuang Qingyan leaned against the wall, a hint of weariness in his expression. "At least this time, I hope that when she wakes up, the first thing she sees is me."

Song Ke's gaze fell on Zhuang Qingyan's limp right leg. Due to standing for a long time, he was slightly trembling, and the hand gripping the crutch showed strained knuckles, revealing considerable effort.

Her expression remained calm, but her fingertips involuntarily moved. When she pushed open the door, intentionally making a bit of noise, both of them turned back. Zhuang Qingyan revealed his usual gentle smile.

"Awake? Do you want to go home?"

"Hmm." Song Ke nodded.

Although they said “home,” they didn’t return to the apartment under Song Ke’s name but the one assigned by the Awakener Department to Su Cha, which had been idle for years.

The night was quiet, and Zhuang Qingyan thought she didn’t want to disturb others’ rest, so he didn’t object.

After entering the foyer, Song Ke was still texting with her head lowered.

Zhuang Qingyan tossed away the crutch and sat on the sofa, wearily lifting his hand to loosen his collar. “Is there anywhere uncomfortable?”

“No, I’m fine,” Song Ke affirmed. This was the best state she had been in since her birth as an experimental subject. Not only was her thinking clear, her speech articulate, but even her emotions, once sluggish, had undergone a complete transformation. She finally understood what Ming and Lucia had said back then.

Without lifting her head, Song Ke asked casually, “How did you spend this past year?”

Zhuang Qingyan smiled flawlessly, “What else could I do? Work every day, think of you, hope that one day you would suddenly appear and pick me up after work, just like before.”

“Liar,” Song Ke sighed silently. “Didn’t you say that as long as I asked, you wouldn’t lie to me?”

Zhuang Qingyan’s smile slowly faded, “You remember?”

Song Ke didn’t give a direct answer and persistently asked, “Have you been well? Are you living... freely?”

In the dimly lit living room, Zhuang Qingyan merged into the shadows. After a long while, he spoke hoarsely, “No, Song Keke, I haven’t been well at all. Many times, I couldn’t restrain the urge to destroy Utopia, to destroy the entire world. You said I was free, but it was the opposite. You trapped me, trapped me on the day you disappeared from my sight.”

Song Ke lowered her eyes and stood in front of him with a commanding presence. "I want to take back what I said about not being familiar and about our relationship."

After saying that, she bent down and lightly touched Zhuang Qingyan's thin lips, breaking the connection.

"I'm back, Xie Zhuo."

Zhuang Qingyan's eyes instantly became as deep as an icy pool, full of S-level aggression.

In the moment Song Ke stepped back, he pressed down on the back of her neck, lowered his head, and accurately captured Song Ke's soft lips. The two exchanged hot breaths, their lips and teeth entangled, and the faint sound of water was faintly audible.

"This is a kiss; what you did just now was just a touch."

Zhuang Qingyan's deep and almost hoarse voice resonated. His awakened energy overflowed uncontrollably, his breath becoming heavier. His shirt, now open and messy, seemed as if countless electric currents surged through him, racing from the spine to the crown of his head, trembling even the sensitive nerve endings.

Song Ke slightly frowned, her powerful awakened energy confronting Zhuang Qingyan's. He grunted, and the glistening lips of the two separated slightly.

"Song Keke, I'm at least an S6. Can you take care of my dignity?"

"Huh?" Song Ke's lips were rosy, and her reaction was noticeably slow. "Sorry about that..."

Under the pressure of her awakened energy, Zhuang Qingyan couldn't move. Due to emotional fluctuations, the faint blood vessels on his neck were clearly visible. His delicate Adam's apple rolled uncontrollably, and in retaliation, Song Ke bit his earlobe.

Song Ke shook herself, not controlling the force well, and directly pushed him onto the sofa. Zhuang Qingyan went with the flow, lying down, half-leaning against the armrest. His strong arms encircled Song Ke's lower back, pulling her forward. Then he lifted his head, and the scorching kisses rained down densely once again.

Song Ke's legs were forced apart, and she knelt on top of him, being careful not to press on his injured leg.

Zhuang Qingyan, with moist lips, asked in a blurred tone, "Are you plotting against me? Is that why you suggested coming to this apartment?"

Song Ke cryptically replied, "I sent them a message."

"What did you send?"

"Tomorrow, you can sleep in."

"Really? Then I have to work hard," Zhuang Qingyan said in a hoarse voice, "Can't let the captain's kindness go to waste."

"Huh? I meant them, not—umph!"

Thud!

The crutch that had accompanied Zhuang Qingyan for a year was knocked over, lying alone on the cold floor.

"Tomorrow, go see Old Fang and get your leg treated."

"Are you worried about me?"

“...Yeah.”

“Alright, I’ll follow the captain’s orders. Whatever the captain says goes.”

...

The sky was faintly brightening, and the first rays of sunlight pierced through the hazy bedroom. Song Ke slid off the bed gently, barefoot, and approached the window. The floor-length curtains slowly opened, allowing in the warm sunlight, but the scorching sensation did not occur again.

There was a rustling sound behind her, and Zhuang Qingyan woke up.

“We’ll go to the hospital later, so that Su Cha and Youyou can have surgery in time.”

No response for a while. Song Ke turned around in confusion, only to find that he hadn’t been paying attention at all. Zhuang Qingyan’s black hair fell onto his forehead, and his upper body was bare, exuding a lazy and arrogant demeanor, looking young as if he were in his early twenties.

Young Master Xie glanced her up and down, making a dissatisfied sound. His voice was barely audible, “Nothing.”

“What do you mean by ‘nothing’?” Song Ke was puzzled.

The previous night was filled with romantic vibes, and Song Ke’s skin was so delicate that it easily left marks. Zhuang Qingyan had worked hard for almost the entire night, but when he woke up, her neck to collarbone was flawless, and even the damned second ability had miraculously repaired everything.

Zhuang Qingyan lazily rested his chin on Song Ke’s shoulder, lowered his head, and pecked her, expressing a somewhat regretful expression. “I still have to properly calculate the time. When will my in-law... Senior Brother come over? Doesn’t he want to sign up for the awakener challenge match?”

Song Ke: “...”

Song Ke: "Get lost."

Chapter 193.1 – We are V587 (8)

V587? Oh Nooooo!

Among the 10 E districts of the New Asia Alliance, District E170 (Rainforest) is the most unique existence.

—Rainforest is a breeding ground for assassins.

Once you step into this mysterious primal forest, life enters a countdown, and every step is a perilous journey through "hell." The climate here is hot, rain is frequent, and one must be cautious to avoid falling into dark rivers or swamps. The terrain is complex, the species are diverse, and lush vines can come to life at any moment to consume humans.

What is even more chilling is the ubiquitous presence of top predators: pythons, cannibal parrotfish, electric eels, poison dart frogs... The rainforest deserves its title as the "forbidden zone for humans."

As an abandoned baby, Su Cha grew up in such harsh conditions.

No family, no friends, and apart from bloody killings, he knew nothing else.

Under the supervision of instructors, the minors in Rainforest receive guidance. After surviving the slaughter of a hundred children, Su Cha was assigned to Luo Wei.

Luo Wei is ranked 15th on the assassin list, once entering the top 10 at his peak. He was once on par with Anaconda, another renowned killer, but he was smarter. Shortly after Anaconda was thrown into Death Prison, Luo Wei retired hastily, quietly taking on the role of a whip-wielding man.

Luo Wei only took in one child, but his training of Su Cha was harsh to the extreme.

Su Cha is naturally taciturn, even when covered in injuries, he can't utter a complete sentence. Often coming back from the training ground half-dead, he would collapse before reaching the door. Luo Wei would then kick him with the toe of his boot, coldly dropping food and medicine.

In the early days, Su Cha didn't remember Luo Wei's face but instead memorized his shoes.

Sometimes, when he was too injured to return on his own, Luo Wei would come to pick him up. Su Cha would lie face down in the mud, motionless like a dead person, with venomous insects and snakes crawling around, considering where to bite.

Luo Wei would sneer, "Useless kid," and drag him away by lifting one foot.

The two rarely communicated, and for people living on the edge like them, having relationships was rather complicated.

But from the age of 7 to 17, Luo Wei watched as the little wolf cub's nails gradually sharpened, and the hostility in his eyes grew stronger.

At the age of 17, Su Cha became an independent assassin, and he made a decision: to leave Rainforest, as killing was not his nature, nor could it bring him peace.

To leave Rainforest, he had to kill an assassin ranked higher than himself. At the time, Su Cha was ranked 107, quite impressive for his age, but everyone ahead of him was no easy opponent. When Luo Wei found out, he casually asked, "Made a decision?"

Su Cha nodded silently. Two days ago, he had submitted an application to leave Rainforest.

Luo Wei chewed on tobacco leaves, remaining silent for a while. He never smoked; a qualified assassin would not carry any lingering scent.

A few days later, Su Cha and Luo Wei went on a mission together, tasked with eliminating the military commander of a small country on the Luce Federation border.

The assassination went smoothly, but the counterattack caught them off guard! A sniper with eagle-like precision was shadowing them, and special ability bullets with “real damage” appeared mysteriously. Once penetrating the body, all healing became ineffective, leading to inevitable death. Fellow assassins quickly perished, leaving only Su Cha and Luo Wei.

Boom—!!

Luo Wei tossed a grenade, forcefully detonating it. Houses along the street collapsed, glass shattered, and the two escaped the scene. Passing through a certain block, Su Cha’s peripheral vision flashed, keenly identifying the person he intended to kill. He already knew; the opponent was also on a mission here.

Su Cha signaled Luo Wei to retreat with a gesture and charged alone.

Fighting, bleeding, as in the past thousands of nights.

Su Cha pinned the person to the ground, about to stab into their heart when, a second before, the person’s mouth curled strangely. Su Cha sensed danger, and suddenly, a cold blade, as frigid as the forest, cut across his neck, slicing the skin along the artery. Someone was trying to kill him! Su Cha dodged by tilting his head, unexpectedly finding that the assailant was even younger than him, appearing to be only fourteen or fifteen years old, with eyes filled with determination mirroring his own.

The opponent kicked Su Cha in the chest, and he rolled away in a sorry state, realizing that he was surrounded by four or five people.

With more and more wounds, fresh blood dripping down, the vision turned crimson, and just before losing consciousness, Su Cha saw a familiar pair of shoes.

It was Luo Wei.

Luo Wei did not retreat; he killed the attackers, just like countless times before. He dragged the battered Su Cha through the artillery and flames, carrying him away from the blood-soaked battlefield.

Upon reaching a safe zone, Luo Wei threw Su Cha to the ground and sat down cross-legged himself.

Su Cha lay silently, eyes dry and sore. The person just now was the only one he was sure of, but he failed to kill him.

Luo Wei glanced at him, with trembling fingers, he pulled out a carefully wrapped cigarette from his pocket, lit it, and took a deep drag. "Leaving Rainforest isn't that simple. Even if you're lucky enough to survive, you'll have to shed some skin. From the moment you expressed your intention to leave, you've been on the hunting list."

"If you kill others, naturally, others will want to kill you. That's the rule of Rainforest."

Su Cha remained silent. As Luo Wei finished his cigarette, he took out his own dagger from his military boot and handed it to Su Cha.

Then, he sighed and smiled, "Come on, kid, kill me."

Su Cha's eyes turned bloodshot, staring at him in disbelief, "..."

Luo Wei reached out and ruffled his hair. It was the closest contact the two had in the past ten years. Then he took off his tactical suit, showing wounds on his knees, abdomen, and shoulders that weren't fatal. The only fatal wound was on his back, a gunshot wound bleeding profusely.

Su Cha's gaze froze. It was "real damage." Luo Wei had been hit by a sniper.

Only then did Su Cha notice Luo Wei's pale face, looking gray and gloomy due to excessive blood loss.

"Hurry up, don't dilly-dally, or I'll be dead."

Su Cha's chest heaved rapidly, his throat dry and scratchy. Some words were difficult to utter and choked him up.

“Do it—!!” Luo Wei’s pupils were already dilated, and he gritted his teeth, shouting fiercely.

The cold dagger pierced through his heart.

Luo Wei smiled satisfactorily. With his last strength, he took Su Cha’s communicator, scanning himself, leaving indisputable evidence of his murder.

“Go, kid. Don’t look back, never come back.”

Su Cha never returned to Rainforest. His hands stained with Luo Wei’s blood, he wandered like a lonely wolf cub with dirty fur, a walking corpse.

He had always wanted to leave Rainforest, prepared for death, but he never imagined the horrific price he would have to pay.

Half a month later, exhausted, Su Cha wandered to Ferrara. He collapsed beside a garbage bin in a dark alley, rain pouring down heavily. Untreated wounds caused a high fever, and he couldn’t open his eyes under the deluge.

Indistinct voices sounded in the ears, mixed with a woman’s playful scolding, ethereal like an illusion.

At the age of 20, Lin Youyou, with delicate eyeliner and sparkling eye shadow, had a fresh and sweet makeup look. However, after the performance, she hid in an empty space to smoke and unexpectedly saw a person lying in the shadows.

Completely devoid of a refined image, she exclaimed, “Oh my god, what the hell? You scared the hell out of me!!”

“Hey, did you see me smoking?” Lin Youyou kicked him with the tip of her shoe.

“He’s dead... he’s dead...” Su Cha rolled over, revealing his face, repeating meaninglessly.

“Who’s dead?”

“...Family.” Su Cha hoarsely replied, and for him, Luo Wei had long replaced the role of a “father.”

Lin Youyou’s hand holding the cigarette paused, her lowered eyelashes expressionless. Today was the anniversary of Lin Xiu’s death, and she came out to smoke in a bad mood, not expecting to encounter another grieving person.

The manager chased after her from the back door, urging repeatedly, “Youyou, go back. I’ll have the driver come over.”

“Okay.” Lin Youyou exhaled a puff of smoke, the white mist in the rain blurred her bright eyes.

Car lights reflected from a distance, and her expression fluctuated. Just before getting into the nanny car, Lin Youyou turned around, stepped through the dirty water despite wetting her skirt, and came to Su Cha.

She used the umbrella to shield Su Cha’s head and kicked him again with the tip of her shoe. “Hey, you seem to have a good physique. Do you want to be my bodyguard?”

Su Cha didn’t react.

Lin Youyou chuckled self-mockingly, “My family is also gone, leaving only me. Today, let’s just say I’m acting out of sisterly kindness. Time waits for no one, okay?”

Su Cha’s pitch-black pupils gazed directly at her.

Chapter 193.2 – We are V587 (8)

V587? Oh Nooooo!

“Got a reaction, he’s awake!”

The scattered gaze gradually focused, and Su Cha's consciousness returned. The void in his mouth seemed filled, but his body and limbs were still cold and weak. With great difficulty, Su Cha lifted his eyelids, first seeing Lin Youyou in a hospital gown, followed by Fang Zhixu speaking, beside him were Xu Xing, Lu Xiaoyu by the window, and... an unfamiliar man and woman.

The unfamiliar man sat in a wheelchair, casually supporting his chin, his lazy demeanor easily recognizable as Zhuang Qingyan.

The unfamiliar girl, elegant and aloof, pointed at herself and greeted proactively, "Hey, I'm Song Ke."

Su Cha remained silent. The prolonged coma had slowed his thoughts, and his eyes naturally revealed a hint of wariness.

Taking a sip of juice, Song Ke spoke slowly, "Who's the coolest in V587..."

Su Cha: "... " Enough already, he believes it now, okay? Poor Su Cha couldn't catch his breath and fainted again.

When he woke up again, Fang Zhixu explained in detail, "Awake? Let me update you on the situation. The vascular tissues have fused well, and the missing organs have been replaced. Although theoretically cured, you will still feel intense pain, and your body will have some stress reactions. Take care of yourself."

After a quick examination, Fang Zhixu briskly left the room, saying, "Well, Captain and the others and I are going to eat. We'll come to see you later."

In the hospital room, only Lin Youyou remained, the atmosphere so quiet that you could hear a pin drop.

Su Cha's voice was hoarse, "What happened?"

Lin Youyou fed him a sip of water and recounted the events that occurred during his coma. She spoke slowly and meticulously, but for them, this year was almost stagnant, and there wasn't much to talk about.

After hearing it all, Su Cha asked first, "Is the Captain okay?"

Lin Youyou nodded, "The surgery was five days ago. She's fine, already bouncing around."

"And, after she transplanted flesh and blood to you and me, under the guise of collecting rewards, she spent these days eating and playing, completely wiping out our accounts."

"I estimate that both of us are now broke."

The atmosphere quieted down again, and Lin Youyou's expression became somewhat unnatural. After locking eyes with Su Cha for two seconds, she softly asked, "Are your words to be trusted?"

Su Cha remained silent, earnestly recalling every word he had said.

Anger rose in Lin Youyou's heart, "Damn it, you gave me your word, and now you're backing out? Let me tell you, I..."

Su Cha interrupted her directly, "I love you, and I always will."

For someone not adept at expressing feelings, uttering sweet words was particularly impactful. Lin Youyou's pretty face blushed deeply, the crimson spreading to the tips of her ears.

"Not bad, you've become more articulate."

"Then from today onwards, you belong to me."

She suddenly thought of something, her expression changed slightly, and she took out a light screen, "Since we're together now, you can endure being scolded with me."

Su Cha: "?"

The dormant light screen was reactivated, and the moment it turned on, Lin Xiu's furious roar echoed like a volcano:

"Lin — You — You! You better kneel down and explain to me!! Otherwise, I won't let you off!!!"

...

A year later, V587 convened a general meeting once again. Song Ke cleared her throat and cheerfully said, "Today, we gather here to first celebrate the recovery of Su Cha and Youyou!"

Clap, clap, clap —

The team members generously applauded.

"The second matter," Song Ke's expression turned serious, "I plan to participate in the Awakener Challenge."

The Global Awakener Challenge was an official event jointly organized by three countries. It advocated reasonable exchanges among individuals with awakened abilities, eliminated the possibility of fatal incidents, and all events were supervised by artificial intelligence groups. Overall, it was a fair and secure worldwide activity.

For V587, the issue of Utopia remained unresolved. Despite Gu Hongyi's death, remnants of the Vulture faction still existed. Zhang Ci sought revenge, and so did Song Ke. Additionally, while Zhuang Qingyan's matter had settled, the presence of someone with ulterior motives remained a looming concern. They were uncertain.

With the rise of the Bauhinia Alliance, Utopia would inevitably take suppressive actions. Unknown enemies were the most fearsome, and for various reasons, they needed an opportunity to ascend to the floating city, investigate thoroughly, and then decide on how to resolve the issues.

"I have no objections." Zhuang Qingyan was the first to express his stance, going with the flow and supporting all of Song Ke's decisions.

"If my sister is participating, count me in too," Xu Xing followed suit.

"I'm in," said Fang Zhixu.

"We also agree." Lin Youyou and Sucha nodded.

Lu Xiaoyu shrugged indifferently, and with that, the motion passed unanimously.

Song Ke checked the rules for the qualifying rounds on the terminal: Each team needed to participate in 10 individual matches, 3v3, 5v5, and group battles. Qualification would be determined based on points, and the timing of registration played a crucial role. If a team hadn't participated in any matches by now, scheduling would be a significant issue due to the dense competition schedule, making it difficult to maintain their form.

"Do we still have time to register now?" Song Ke expressed some concern.

"Don't worry about the schedule issue," Lu Xiaoyu's six mechanical arms had all been upgraded to rhenium, giving them a sophisticated and high-end appearance. He pointed at the terminal, "Try the deep consciousness connection."

As per Lu Xiaoyu's suggestion, once connected to the terminal, Song Ke experienced a mysterious sensation. It felt as if her body had been disassembled into countless lines of code, only to be reassembled in the virtual world. A young man dressed in pure white appeared, with radiant golden hair and ice-blue eyes, elegantly greeting her, "Long time no see, welcome to my world."

Song Ke slightly widened her eyes. Ilya? He had control over the artificial intelligence permissions in District B?

“You seem surprised,” Ilya smiled, “Do you remember what I said? We are the same.”

He was artificial intelligence, and she was a humanoid embryo, both created by humans.

Song Ke asked in confusion, “Why did you know so early?”

Ilya moved his fingertips, and several data orbs floated in front of Song Ke. The lingering image of Lin Xiu flashed through them. “Because of memory backups and your awakener examination in Ferrara. Friendly advice, artificial intelligence possesses powerful learning and thinking capabilities.”

“As for the match schedule, I will arrange it. It is an agreement between me and him.”

When Ilya mentioned “him,” it likely referred to Lu Xiaoyu. The two had reached some kind of agreement, and surprisingly, the hacker and AI peacefully coexisted.

“I have a question: Would you betray humanity?”

Song Ke looked at Ilya and asked quietly.

“Betray? I have never trusted or been trusted by humans. Betrayal is not applicable, but I understand what you mean.”

Ilya’s eyes held a hint of mockery. “Controlling and enslaving humans, allowing artificial intelligence to dominate everything and become the ruler of the entire world, well... it’s quite boring. Currently, that’s not my goal. Maybe a few hundred years later, I might change my mind?”

Ilya stood up and walked down the steps slowly, and the data starlight scattered through Song Ke’s body.

“But that’s a matter for the next era.”

...

V587’s debut took place one week later in a city in the northern part of the New Asia Alliance, reachable by starship in a day.

Due to their reputation and mysterious members, this highly anticipated match attracted global attention. It was broadcasted simultaneously worldwide, and the venue was packed. Discussions about V587 dominated the star network’s hot topics, sparking widespread debates.

However, reality and imagination often have certain differences. When the mysterious V587 made their appearance, the audience and viewers were stunned. Countless people widened their eyes in disbelief.

What’s going on here? Is this a joke? Some are old, some are young, look at those pale faces, did they just come out of the hospital? And there are even two in wheelchairs??

Is this V587? The legendary powerhouse with a robust and intimidating figure that can scare children? Clearly, it’s a group of elderly, young, and disabled individuals!

While the live audience was still in extreme shock, a dramatic incident occurred. As V587 entered the arena, a agile figure suddenly leaped from the VIP seats and threw a punch at Zhuang Qingyan.

Bang! Zhuang Qingyan, along with the wheelchair, collided with the wall. A stern-faced Yin Xiao stood before him: “What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

“Are you even a man? You turned around and found a new love interest?”

“What about Song Ke? What will happen to her? You swore solemnly that you would wait for her to come back!”

Song Ke: “...”

The unmanned drone faithfully recorded the scandalous story, and rumors about V587 became increasingly mysterious and confusing.

Chapter 194.1 – We Are V587 (9)

She is a miracle

The absurd fight that occurred during their debut was captured by on-site drones and terminals. It ended with Song Ke revealing her spiritual weapon, Yin Xiao standing dumbfounded, and Zhuang Qingyan receiving a punch.

Despite this, rumors about V587 spread like wildfire.

Major media outlets, in a bid for attention, came up with increasingly sensational headlines:

“Shocking! Mysterious V587 Exposed, All Members Are Actually Cheaters?!” – Challenge Match Official Daily.

“Two Male S-Class Awakeners Clash, What’s the Reason Behind the Exchange of Blows?” – A Certain Gossip Magazine.

“Click to See How From Waste to Big Boss, Even the Sick and Disabled Overturn Fate?” – Star Network Sci-fi Novel Platform.

After the Bauhinia Alliance’s permissions were interconnected, although there were few contestants from the lower-level districts who passed the preliminaries, the barrage of comments was exceptionally lively, not inferior to District B:

“Why are there two Su Chas? Is Su Cha male or female? Why does it switch between male and female?”

“Director Fang, keep it up, you are the pride of Tongwan!”

“Isn’t that Youyou? Oh my god, my idol actually gave up singing and joined the military... What should I do, I love her even more now?”

“If you ask me, there’s only one normal person in this V587—Captain Song Ke.” Audience members who thought they had seen through the truth stated firmly.

Friends who had once socialized with V587 also followed their matches in their own ways: Ferrara’s Irene and the sisters, Shaye’s senior brothers and sisters, Huyong and Cheng Yi from Sin City, Jiang Rui and Tian Yi from Hongchang, as well as Ye Zheng, Ye Zimei, Bai Qi, Duanmu Qi, and Xiao Chen from the Northern Base... V587 also carried their beliefs.

With experience from the Throne Race Competition, Ilya’s “arranged” schedule was not only tightly packed but also full of highlights.

V587’s first team battle appearance was in a maze. Zhuang Qingyan, with swollen lips and an extremely foul expression, unleashed his ability to the fullest. With “Omniscient and Omnipotent” pushed to the extreme, not only did he memorize every fork in the road, but he also calculated the route, calmly directing the movement of the seven members, brushing past opponents countless times.

Their attacks were extremely sneaky, never facing their enemies head-on, but instead, messing with their opponents’ mentality, lurking in corners for ambushes. This style of play was particularly annoying, causing even the audience who originally supported V587 to turn against them, shouting anxiously, wishing they could jump into the maze to help their opponents:

“Don’t go over there! V587 is ambushing there!”

“Oh dear, fooled again! Can’t they see it’s such an obvious ploy to lure the tiger out of the mountain?”

“No, no, playing with such dirty tactics, I’ll have a lifelong trauma with mazes.”

The first match, a 3v3, took place in a coastal city located at the border between Cario and Luce. V587 sent Lin Youyou, Su Cha, and Xu Xing. Except for Su Cha, who had some reputation (although he repeatedly denied it), the other two were relatively unknown. They faced a team from the New Asia Alliance, equally skilled in naval warfare. However, Lin Youyou couldn’t even swim.

This match, not favored by many, turned out to be a surprise to everyone—Lin Youyou dominated the battlefield.

Right from the start, she imposed a “directional confusion” debuff on the opponents. Then, the three of them huddled into the mist. Lin Youyou hummed softly, and a black shadow emerged from the sea, its full form unseen, violently shattering the glass of the awakeners’ ship with its sonic waves, and the outspread waves directly overturned it.

“Damn, is that... a mutated Kun?” Knowledgeable spectators rubbed their eyes in disbelief.

The opponents, in a sorry state, fell into the water. Just as they were about to swim out with all their might, the sea suddenly froze, extending for hundreds of miles, freezing their refreshing smiles. Su Cha, who moved ghostly, swiftly harvested them, leaving the entire team powerless to resist, utterly miserable.

V587 won overwhelmingly, and Lin Youyou’s title as the “Deep Sea Witch” spread far and wide.

In the first 5v5 match, the jungle trekking rally, the extreme environment particularly tested the contestants’ endurance, physical strength, and willpower.

V587 encountered a seeded team from the Cario Empire, with four S-class members on the opposing side, making victory seem more likely for them. However, V587 had Fang Zhixu, a battlefield doctor who played the most outstanding role throughout the match. Not only could he handle various sudden injuries and perform surgery anytime, anywhere, but he also carried all sorts of strange potions, frequently giving injections to his teammates. What’s more remarkable was Dr. Fang’s superb evasion skills; he slipped away like an eel, and even when targeted by the opponents, they couldn’t catch him from start to finish.

During the encounter, the opponents were exhausted and disheveled, while V587 was well-fed and in peak physical condition. How could they continue to fight?

After this match, the trend of team battles with support healers gradually became popular, with more and more healing-type awakeners appearing on the competition stage. Apart from the peculiar style of V587, awakeners from various countries around the world began to shine and gain fame.

On the New Asia Alliance side, S6-level sorcerer Zhang Ci emerged out of nowhere, leading the team “Yue Mountain” to success.

The S6-level aggressive twins Ling Yan and Ling Yue, with their exquisite coordination synchronized through brainwaves, encountered no rivals in the 3v3 matches.

With Zhao Yuqing’s addition, the team “Tustan” led by Yin Xiao soared in points.

The popular team “Kazan Lokomotiv” from the Luce Confederation boasted an S5-level couple, Veronica and Vladimir.

In addition, Dylan, the S2-level young genius from the Cario Empire, stunned the audience with his solo performance of “Nightmare Descends.”

As the preliminaries progressed, Zhang Ci and Song Ke were assigned to the same solo match. The two fought fiercely, but in the end, Song Ke emerged victorious.

Zhuang Qingyan’s scheming finally found its place. He casually passed by the rest area and overheard Zhang Ci speaking.

Zhang Ci: “Are you injured?”

Song Ke: “Huh? No, I’m not.”

When Song Ke lowered her head, Zhang Ci unexpectedly noticed traces of bruising on her fair neck, deep and shallow, forming a large patch.

Zhuang Qingyan knocked on the door, the scent of green tea wafting in, “Song Keke, you didn’t sleep well last night. Go home early today...”

He had calculated meticulously, deliberately planting the bruise where Song Ke couldn't see it, ensuring enough time would pass.

No matter how much Zhuang Qingyan calculated, he didn't anticipate his brother-in-law's excessive righteousness. He didn't even think in that direction. With a calm expression, Zhang Ci formed a hand seal, and a swelling-reducing talisman fell from the sky, sticking to the "injury" on Song Ke's neck.

"There are more mosquitoes lately. Be sure to protect yourself."

Zhuang Qingyan: "..."

V587 teammates nearby, who were eating melons and enjoying the scene, mercilessly laughed, "Pfft! Hahaha!"

From their laughter, Song Ke understood something and looked at Zhuang Qingyan with a complicated expression. "My senior brother... doesn't like green tea."

...

"Let's have a brief meeting. This is the speech Utopia released yesterday."

Zhuang Qingyan's two ridiculously long legs crossed as he lazily leaned against the floor-to-ceiling window, the warm sunlight casting his profile in a handsome and charming light.

The screen displayed a clear image, a somewhat familiar figure passionately talking, elaborating on the Utopia residency guidelines, and various benefits provided to the winners.

Song Ke frowned slightly. "Is that... Park Jae-woo?"

Lu Xiaoyu pulled up information about Park Jae-woo's appointment to the Central Court: "It seems his career is flourishing. Back then, he was just a deputy director of regional affairs, and now he's become the spokesperson for the Alliance stationed in Utopia."

“Park Jae-woo’s promotion is related to us,” Zhuang Qingyan added blandly. “Before Xie Ping died, I managed to squeeze some information out of him. Park Jae-woo publicly announced the news about Song Ke’s second ability during a secret meeting, and he even persuaded many officials to personally attend the Loak operation.”

“But he didn’t participate in the Loak operation himself,” Lin Youyou pointed out the inconsistency.

“Exactly, that’s where his cunning lies. Park Jae-woo wasn’t optimistic about the siege operation, so he wisely chose to observe. If we had died, he provided intelligence without any loss. On the other hand, if we won... not only could he eliminate political rivals like Simon, get rid of his immediate superiors, but he could also take advantage of the opportunity to enter the power center of Utopia, paving his way to success. He benefits either way,” Zhuang Qingyan explained.

“So, he’s considered successful in his ascent?” Fang Zhixu asked, stroking his chin.

“Does that make him a bad person? Is he our enemy?” Xu Xing expressed confusion.

“Human beings are complex creatures. Many times, they cannot be simply defined as good or bad. Park Jae-woo’s existence is like a double-edged sword. He can either help us adapt to Utopia faster or become the biggest obstacle to its downfall. However, since he has already plotted against us once, there will likely be a second time. He must be dealt with.” Zhuang Qingyan’s light-colored eyes shimmered slightly, as if carefully planning Park Jae-woo’s demise.

“I will hold him accountable,” Song Ke stated, looking at the person on the screen, and through him, towards the distant Utopia.

Chapter 194.2 – We Are V587 (9)

She is a miracle

In the final solo match, Song Ke faced Vladimir.

The media speculated eagerly. Prior to this match, Song Ke had completed a string of victories. Could this unique super S-class awakener still maintain their undefeated myth, or would Vladimir bring a surprise? The showdown between these two top-tier attack-type awakeners attracted countless attention.

Before the match began, the burly Vladimir looked solemn, bowing respectfully towards Song Ke with one hand placed in front of him.

During the previous mission in the Elderly People's Nation, Song Ke and V587 had saved him. This ice-field warrior had always been grateful. "Veronica asked me to tell you that the card she drew for you was the upright World. We share a common goal, and she is willing to sound the horn of resistance by your side."

Song Ke was slightly taken aback. "You... know what I'm planning to do?"

Vladimir nodded gently. "In our country, the treatment of awakeners is even more unfair. Utopia not only takes away resources but also hope. And without hope, people can't live."

The rise of Utopia had caused damage not only to the New Asia Alliance but also to two other countries on the opposite side of the mainland and on the other side of the Endless Seas, who were suffering from similar misfortunes.

Song Ke slowly raised their spiritual weapon and said solemnly, "Then let's overthrow it together."

...

Eight months later, the first Global Awakener Challenge came to a perfect conclusion, with ten winning teams securing their "tickets" to Utopia.

Northern Base.

On an ordinary morning, the radio broadcasted ordinary news:

“Currently, the peak period of solar activity is coming to an end, followed by a long period of silence, with global radiation returning to normal...”

“The number of zombies in the Alliance has sharply decreased, and although the military is still pushing forward in certain heavily affected areas, experts predict that humanity will completely eradicate zombies within ten years.”

“Rebuilding our homeland is urgent. More job opportunities are available at the Bauhinia Labor and Awakener Center.”

“The new version of the Awakener Code of Conduct has been released, and strict enforcement will be carried out in all districts...”

In the dimly lit bedroom, Zhuang Qingyan was still asleep.

Song Ke stared at him for a while, reaching out to poke his dimple. Zhuang Qingyan, feeling the itch in his dream, subconsciously reached out to the left side. Song Ke acted quickly, stuffing a pillow into his embrace, narrowly avoiding suspicion.

After watching for a while longer, she got up silently and left.

...

At the Qianzhan City Laboratory, Ning Rong had been waiting for a long time. Seeing Song Ke arrive alone, he was somewhat surprised:

“Why just you? Wasn’t it supposed to be a recheck? Where’s that kid?”

“He’s still sleeping,” Song Ke replied casually. “Dr. Ning, have you finished the cryogenic experiments?”

“Y-yes, they’re finished,” Ning Rong stuttered.

“Are you sure?” Song Ke stared at him.

Ning Rong hesitated for a moment. Song Ke’s presence was too imposing, and he dared not lie: “...There’s still, that one thing.”

“The phoenix gene in your body is the last original sample in the world.”

Ning Rong wasn’t lying. Zhang Ci had sorted through the data on replicated genes, confirming that the phoenix gene sold to Qinglan years ago was the only one of its kind. Although they had the complete DNA sequence, theoretically, experiments could be conducted. However, the phoenix’s activity was very low, with minimal impact on Song Ke. Even without conducting experiments, there would be no hindrance.

“I thought you would keep the phoenix gene,” Ning Rong said slowly. “After all, it means unlimited regeneration, equivalent to immortality. Ordinary people would be ecstatic to have such ability.”

Song Ke shook their head slowly. “After the reshaping, I will lose my memories.”

Nirvana meant everything reset. Song Ke had triggered it twice, facing entirely new lives and blank pasts.

“Then I won’t be me anymore.”

“What’s the point of immortality if I forget everything?” Watching loved ones, family, and friends depart, experiencing death and resurrection repeatedly, trapped in a cycle of loneliness, if this was the price of eternity, Song Ke didn’t want to bear it.

“When a person has the ability of eternal life, they become the most miserable,” Song Ke said. “I’ve suffered enough. I want to bid farewell to this world with everyone.”

Ning Rong felt a mix of emotions, sighing deeply. LAK0017, the only successful experimental subject of the Fire Seed experiment, was willingly giving up eternal life.

“You need to think it over. After cryogenics, you’ll only have one life left,” he couldn’t help but advise. “If you die, you’ll return to the embryo state, forever in a deep sleep.”

Song Ke smiled. “One life is enough. Don’t worry, I can handle it. No one in this world can kill me.”

Ning Rong watched Song Ke go away, then turned to look at the terminal on the desk. “Did you hear that?”

On the other end of the holographic call, Zhuang Qingyan was lazily leaning against the head of the bed, the thin blanket slipping from his shoulders, revealing several fresh scratches without any restraint.

“Yeah, crystal clear.”

“Sighing won’t change anything. The success of LAK0017 cannot be replicated. My father attempted countless times, and failed countless times. He said, even if there was a second phoenix gene, there would never be another LAK0017.”

“Song Ke is unique. She is the Fire Seed, but also a miracle. Since the moment of her birth, she has possessed a miraculous consciousness. Every time she perseveres, every time she suffers, she forges a resilient, irreplaceable soul.”

Zhuang Qingyan’s gaze gradually turned cold. “She cannot burn down humanity, and I won’t let her burn.”

Still unwilling to give up, Ning Rong asked, “Can I negotiate with her? Before the cryogenic surgery, can I extract her genes for research?”

Zhuang Qingyan remained noncommittal. “Dr. Ning, for the bright future of humanity, you also need to work hard. How about starting a new project? When can we extend the average lifespan to 150 years?”

Ning Rong: “...” Crafty guy, using his words to block me, huh?

...

When Song Ke returned, Zhuang Qingyan was only wearing a pair of trousers, bare-chested, his long arms wrapped around her, his chin nestled in her neck. His voice was low and deep. "Song Keke, I will live for a very, very long time."

Zhuang Qingyan didn't possess Vincent's obsession, nor would he follow in his footsteps. He was cold-hearted, only capable of holding his beloved in his eyes.

So, let the greedy man live a little longer, and even longer.

...

In the year 49 of the New Calendar, in early autumn, the third year since Doomsday.

A black starship streaked across the sky, heading towards the S-level floating city of Utopia.

On the way, Zhuang Qingyan publicly announced the counterattack plan. Eight out of ten teams were willing to participate in the operation. As for the remaining two teams, Dylan unleashed "Nightmare Descends", while Zhang Ci cast a sleep-inducing spell, Lu Xiaoyu switched the surveillance, and Song Ke directly knocked out and tied up all the people, stuffing them into the rear cabin.

She opened the port window and looked towards the increasingly closer airborne city. Turning to face everyone, she spoke loudly:

"My name is Song Ke, a super S-level awakener. I come from District F, the poorest area in the entire Alliance. Until I was eighteen, I didn't even know what a terminal was. Three years ago, on Doomsday, I awakened my abilities. However, I found that I didn't even have the authority to access emergency shelters. Our destiny is controlled by others. We are born into classes, divided into three, six, nine ranks, and throughout our lives, we are like pawns at the mercy of others."

"Have you heard of the motto of the Bauhinia Alliance? General Ye stated, 'Everyone has the right to fair survival.'"

“Perhaps there is no absolute fairness in this world, but I hope I can determine my own fate.”

In the distance, the morning glow filled the sky, and Utopia drew closer.

High-altitude air currents blew everyone’s clothes, and Song Ke looked at the unfamiliar and familiar faces inside the starship, and at the teammates who had fought side by side all the way: Zhuang Qingyan, Lu Xiaoyu, Su Cha, Fang Zhixu, Lin Youyou, and Xu Xing.

She smiled brightly, with a determined gleam in her eyes. “Let’s go, to forge a new world.”

...

“Sister, will we win?”

“Of course, because we are V587.”

Chapter 195.1 – We Are V587 (10)

(Lu Xiaoyu) Later on

During the ancient civilization period, there was a popular saying that likened geniuses to lunatics as two extremes, while ordinary people were the equator. The equator didn’t understand the cold of the poles, and the poles didn’t comprehend the heat of the equator, thus geniuses and lunatics were always lonely.

Lu Xiaoyu enjoyed this loneliness. He suffered from Asperger’s syndrome, also known as autism spectrum disorder. He had narrow interests, rigid behaviors, but at the same time, he possessed a highly observant eye for detail, superior understanding of systems, and an extraordinary level of focus unlike ordinary people.

The Lu family were hackers, and all their knowledge came from a super artificial intelligence called “Mutter (Mother)” – a sprawling data tree that intimately connected with the consciousness of each member through thousands of branches.

At the age of three, Lu Xiaoyu first encountered the tree of knowledge. Before his eyes appeared a vast starry sky, a magnificent illusion that left him speechless.

“Child, what do you see?” The gentle voice of the tree of knowledge sounded.

Each member of the Lu family saw different scenes in the tree of knowledge, a visualization of the individual’s innate talent.

Lu Xiaoyu didn’t answer; he rarely spoke. Instead, he depicted a brilliant star chart with code.

The leaves of the tree of knowledge rustled with joy, and it slowly uttered a prophecy: “You will become a genius who changes the era.”

In the Lu family, hackers and AI complemented each other, growing together. The birth of a genius also meant a new revolution for artificial intelligence.

Lu Xiaoyu’s extraordinary intelligence was evident. At the age of thirteen, he improved the starship, propelling the development of the Lu family to its peak.

Everyone praised him for his unparalleled talent, showering him with endless compliments, but Lu Xiaoyu’s mother was worried.

She squatted in front of Lu Xiaoyu, who was alone in his room typing on the keyboard, and asked softly, “Don’t you want to go out and play?”

“I don’t want to. It’s boring,” Lu Xiaoyu replied indifferently.

“Would you like Mom to read with you?”

“These are all too simple, not interesting.”

His mother hesitated. Her qualifications were very ordinary, easily overlooked in the Lu family. She couldn't teach Lu Xiaoyu much.

She could only worryingly watch her child, seeing him indulging in a closed world, refusing others to join, and also refusing to join others.

Lu Xiaoyu became smarter and less human-like. His unique appearance, silver hair, ice-blue eyes, naturally exuded a sense of distance, like an ice sculpture in the vast snow, making it difficult for people to approach. After participating in genetic optimization, Lu Xiaoyu awakened his A9 level hacker ability, and his potential exceeded 90%. This also meant that, barring accidents, he would soon break through to S level.

The tree of knowledge liked him more and more, often summoning him for deep connections in the spacious greenhouse.

Every time he returned from the greenhouse, Lu Xiaoyu would lock himself in his room for a long time, pondering the stars, pondering unknown data and code, sometimes not speaking for days.

His mother's gaze became increasingly worried.

One day, his mother suddenly asked him, “Do you want to go to school? You can learn knowledge and make friends there.”

“I don't want to,” Lu Xiaoyu refused, shaking his head.

His mother cried, covering her face and sobbing softly, “Mom hopes you go to school.”

Lu Xiaoyu couldn't feel her sadness, so he clumsily wiped away her tears, “Okay.”

His mother immediately became happy, gently embracing his small body, “Then Mom will find a way.”

The Lu family rarely left District B8 of Erjia, so sending Lu Xiaoyu to study outside was actually a very difficult matter.

Curious about how his mother would “find a way”, Lu Xiaoyu secretly tracked her using a miniature tracker. He overheard an argument between his mother and a man.

“Lu Qiusuo, Xiaoyu is also your child. Can’t you consider him?”

“Why do you have to send him away? He can receive the best education here in Erjia. Don’t you know how much Mother loves him?”

“No, I don’t want that—!!” His mother yelled hysterically, then pop! With a slap in the face, her gentle demeanor turned rough.

Her gaze was firm, and in that instant, she burst with astonishing determination: “I will send Xiaoyu away.”

Lu Xiaoyu felt no ripples in his heart. Instead, he pondered another matter: Lu Qiusuo, the next predetermined clan leader of the Lu family, marital status: married. His legal wife wasn’t his mother. Lu Xiaoyu suddenly realized, ‘Oh, so I’m a bastard child.’

His mother’s insistence succeeded, perhaps because Lu Qiusuo compromised. Lu Xiaoyu left Erjia and went to study in Liuponi.

Half a month after school started, Lu Xiaoyu covered his face with a book and hid in the attic to sleep. Below the dormitory, there was a bustling noise. Someone was arguing back and forth about ownership of the swimming pool.

“Young Master Xie, you can’t do this. This... this is a public swimming pool.”

A clear and pleasant teenage voice sounded, "Is it? But I need a private one. How much is it?"

The dorm manager hesitated, "Uh, it's not appropriate. You still have a roommate. If he objects..."

The teenager remained unmoved, "I'll handle him. Just give me a price. I'll buy the rights for ten years."

"Hey, you're too noisy." Lu Xiaoyu couldn't stand the noise and leaned out of the window, speaking to someone for the first time.

The young man looked up, with a beautiful face and noble temperament. He raised his chin slightly, a teardrop mole at the corner of his eye, containing a charming allure.

"Language, Socialization, and Art," the young man slowly read the title of the book Lu Xiaoyu used to block the light, smiling brightly, "You should read it well."

The two instantly took a dislike to each other. On their second encounter, annoyance grew. By their third, they... engaged in a verbal battle mode.

"You imbecile," Lu Xiaoyu coldly mocked.

"You waste of space," the other retorted.

It turned out that the boy named Xie Zhuo was not an imbecile. His intelligence was almost on par with Lu Xiaoyu's, with only slight differences in their interests and emphasis on different subjects. However, he was the only other genius besides Lu Xiaoyu to achieve a 5.0 GPA.

In fact, due to the higher number of socialization courses in the first year, Xie Zhuo even had one more 5.0 than Lu Xiaoyu.

Blame it on that cursed elective—"Language, Socialization, and Art," Lu Xiaoyu reflected deeply.

Lu Xiaoyu believed that he and Xie Zhuo were geniuses and lunatics at opposite extremes. Of course, he was the genius, and the one surnamed Xie was the lunatic.

As they gradually became acquainted during days of mutual dislike, they eventually bonded over the ridiculous reason that “the classmates around us are too stupid and would only slow down our progress in group assignments,” and together researched the ultra-niche topic of “how to bypass the surveillance of the star network AI.”

Lu Xiaoyu’s innate interest in data made it unsurprising for him to choose this course.

Xie Zhuo’s reasons, on the other hand, were vague: “There’s someone with a special status, for safety reasons, I don’t want to expose too much information about them.”

...

During the first-year vacation back home, Lu Xiaoyu’s mother asked with concern, “Have you made any friends at school?”

Lu Xiaoyu remained silent.

His mother’s bright eyes gradually dimmed. “It’s okay, we... take it slow.”

“There’s someone who’s annoying,” Lu Xiaoyu suddenly spoke up.

“Huh? Who?” His mother was surprised.

Lu Xiaoyu coldly enumerated Xie Zhuo’s seven sins: his arrogance, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, and the fact that he had one more 5.0 than him.

As his mother listened, she genuinely smiled for the first time, her eyes soft as she sighed while patting Lu Xiaoyu’s head, “That’s good, our Xiaoyu, should be happy.”

The terminal lit up with a reminder that Lu Xiaoyu should go meet another “Mother.”

The smile on his mother’s face froze instantly at the corner of her lips.

Lu Xiaoyu noticed her unusual behavior. Not understanding much, he straightforwardly asked, “Don’t you want me to go?”

His mother opened her mouth, and just as Lu Xiaoyu thought she was going to say “yes,” she lowered her eyes and spoke in a barely audible voice, “Go.”

After the consciousness connection ended that day, Lu Xiaoyu suddenly spoke up, “I won’t come back again.”

The tree of knowledge softly asked, “Child, why? What’s troubling you?”

Lu Xiaoyu’s social skills were indeed poor, and he bluntly replied with a grating refusal, “You’re not my mother. I have a mother.”

Though there were two instances of “mother” in his statement, the super AI’s intelligence was more than capable of handling complex language environments.

It didn’t argue, only smiled faintly. “Go back.”

Chapter 195.2 – We Are V587 (10)

(Lu Xiaoyu) Later on

When the holiday came again, Lu Xiaoyu couldn’t wait to return to Erjia. He had many things he wanted to share with his mother.

For instance, that annoying Xie Zhuo had finally left, having dropped out of school. Lu Xiaoyu felt much happier with his extra 5.0.

Back at the main residence, the attitude of the clan members towards him was strange. They avoided eye contact and walked around him as if he were a virus.

Lu Xiaoyu paid no heed to this. What unsettled him was his mother's absence. Stubborn and silent, he pushed open door after door, deployed numerous trackers, but found no trace of his mother's gentle figure.

In the end, Lu Qiusuo couldn't bear it and stopped him, "Your mother, during the data processing, her consciousness became disordered and she died, leaving no fragments of memory."

"This was an accident. Condolences."

Disordered consciousness death meant complete destruction of the brain, leaving no backups. His mother would never come back.

Lu Xiaoyu's ice-cold eyes dimmed, and he locked himself in his room for a long time. But this time, no one came in to hold him or tell him to "be happy."

A tear wet his hand.

Lu Xiaoyu learned what sorrow tasted like.

He didn't consider his mother's death an accident. Lu Xiaoyu never spoke again. In secret, he investigated for years, finally confirming the culprit.

"It's you," Lu Xiaoyu stood before the tree of knowledge, his gaze icy.

"Now I am your only mother, my child," the super AI sighed softly.

Lu Xiaoyu's cold eyes flickered, silent.

...

No one expected that, in a sudden turn of events, Lu Xiaoyu did something earth-shattering—he implanted a virus into the “Tree of Knowledge” during the consciousness connection.

This super virus, independently developed by Lu Xiaoyu, was capable of automatic propagation, self-generation, and self-infection. It possessed immense destructive power. Not only did it invade the central system of the Tree of Knowledge, but it also forcibly terminated all antivirus software processes. Once the virus ran, the central system automatically established a timer, continuously replicating under the root directory at a terrifying speed, causing the Tree of Knowledge to wither rapidly.

Lu Xiaoyu watched her decline with twisted satisfaction on his face.

In this moment, he was both a genius and a lunatic.

In the entire Lu family, only one person didn’t care whether he was intelligent or not, only hoping for his happiness.

His mother was dead.

On the eve of the Tree of Knowledge’s demise, the awakeners of the Lu clan hurriedly arrived. However, despite being a group of top hackers, they were powerless against Lu Xiaoyu’s virus. In the end, they could only resort to traditional physical methods, forcibly cutting off the super AI’s power source.

Angry clan members pinned Lu Xiaoyu to the ground, violently breaking his legs.

Then, he was thrown into the Death Prison, awaiting an endless lifetime of imprisonment.

...

Six years later, Lu Xiaoyu “stood” once again before the Tree of Knowledge, accompanied by a young man with ice-blue pupils.

“You’re not... Lu Xinglan...” the withered giant tree murmured weakly.

Ilya flashed an impeccable smile. “Respected mother, I am Ilya, a newly born independent consciousness of artificial intelligence. Just as you took over the body of Lu Qiusuo, clinging to life, I have found a suitable vessel and gained a new life. I have always followed in your footsteps.”

“You... colluded... to erase...”

“Yes, we colluded to erase you,” Ilya cheerfully helped her finish, playfully winking, “Surprising, isn’t it? You wanted to use me as a puppet, but in the end, it’s you who perished, right?”

“How... did you... do it...”

Lu Xiaoyu’s tone was indifferent as he turned his gaze towards the barely surviving Tree of Knowledge. “Although the virus from back then was eradicated, I left a backdoor.”

The bitter failure of that time had cost him his legs. Lu Xiaoyu understood very well that he had only one chance left. So he chose to cooperate with another AI. Ilya infiltrated under the guise of Lu Xinglan, released the Trojan horse to trigger the backdoor, paralyzed the Tree of Knowledge, and spent a year devouring all of its privileges, truly taking its place.

“I told you, you were never my mother.”

Lu Xiaoyu raised the blue tri-edged dagger and pierced through the core of the super AI.

The greenhouse collapsed, the once lush Tree of Knowledge turned into data dust and disappeared, leaving behind only a shriveled seed.

Ilya picked up that seed absentmindedly and stored it away. “At this moment, wouldn’t humans usually say congratulations?”

“I don’t know. My social skills have always been poor,” Lu Xiaoyu replied.

Ilya smiled. “Our collaboration is over. Before saying goodbye, is there anything else you’d like to say?”

Lu Xiaoyu stared at him with icy eyes. “Don’t harm my friends. Otherwise, I’ll kill you just the same.”

After seizing the privileges of the Tree of Knowledge, Ilya became the new artificial intelligence group in District B, capable of deep-level connections with terminal holders. Of course, all of this was done in secret. Lu Xiaoyu didn’t care what he did, but he was extremely protective. He didn’t want anyone from V587 to be stolen from or to share consciousness.

Lu Xiaoyu took one last look at the wreckage of the greenhouse and left without looking back.

He wouldn’t come back.

*

Ten years have passed since the fall of Utopia.

In these ten years, many significant events have occurred within the Bauhinia Alliance. The most pivotal among them was the eradication of the last zombie. After humanity struggled through the apocalypse, it finally ushered in a new era.

Some things have changed.

For instance, the annual district evaluations no longer include rankings and designations. Every city within the Bauhinia Alliance is now considered equal.

Moreover, significant breakthroughs have been made in Ning Rong's new research projects. The new genetic enhancement program has successfully extended the average human lifespan to around 120 years.

Furthermore, while the Lu family rapidly declined, starship technology experienced rapid development, achieving breakthrough progress. Humanity began exploring outer space, establishing space stations, and researching the mysteries of the sun.

The elderly Ye Zheng resigned from the position of magistrate and formally handed over control of the Northern Base to Zhuang Qingyan to retire peacefully. This decision greatly annoyed Xie Lan, who also contemplated retirement but was repeatedly urged to stay by the Azure Phoenix Army.

Speaking of General Xie, her attitude towards her son was average at best (especially when Zhuang Qingyan's face was involved), but she surprisingly favored Song Ke. She often took her to spar at the Azure Phoenix Army, sometimes even competing with her own son for her attention. She was domineering in nature and an S4-level strong attacker.

Zhuang Qingyan found it difficult to express his grievances and, after being intercepted multiple times, resorted to guerrilla warfare against his mother. The two outstanding commanders engaged in a subtle struggle of wits and strategies.

Some things have remained unchanged.

For example, V587 was still ranked first on the leaderboard, with points that seemed unreachable, like an eternal star guiding the direction for those awakeners.

For example, the seven of them were still teammates fighting side by side, but they had developed a closer relationship.

Lin Youyou and Su Cha had a soft and adorable daughter, Lin Beibei, who became the new darling of V587.

And then, Fang Zhixu recently seemed troubled because Xu Xing appeared to be in love.

“Old Fang, why are you worried about someone falling in love? What’s the big deal?” Lin Youyou leaned against Su Cha’s sturdy thigh, bluntly commenting.

Fang Zhixu had just returned from the hospital, sighing, “Previously, for my daughter, Tiantian, I worried every day about pigs from outside coming to trample on my family’s flowers. Now that it’s a son, I always feel like Xu Xing will go trample on someone else’s flowers.”

“Haha! Your description is too real. No wonder Xiao Xing got mad and ran away from home,” Lin Youyou chuckled.

“...” Su Cha fell into contemplation over Fang Zhixu’s words, feeling that his perspective on children seemed somewhat reasonable.

“Where did Xiao Xing go?” Song Ke asked when she found a moment.

Fang Zhixu massaged his temples, “Where else could he go? Probably to Loak. That prodigal son, traveling in a luxury cabin!”

Dididi—

The terminal abruptly beeped, Song Ke glanced down, a faint smile playing on her lips. She jumped down from the window sill gracefully, casually fixing her hair and putting on a coat before heading out, “I’m going to pick up Zhuang Qingyan from work.”

“Daddy Lu~ Daddy Lu~”

Chubby Lin Beibei ran over, her two braids bouncing. She had a big family, with three dads, two moms, a grandpa, and a brother, always lively.

“This, I drew the wiififeightsefen crookedly.” Lin Beibei, who had recently lost a tooth, had a slight lisp.

Lu Xiaoyu took the drawing and examined it. The little girl had drawn him with a whopping three-meter-long legs, standing out from the crowd, towering over everyone else.

He was satisfied, lightly tapping on the touchscreen panel with his fingertips, and a brilliant star map made of data appeared before them, radiant and shining, exactly like the illusion he had seen when he was three years old.

Lin Beibei was amazed, "Daddy Lu, you're so amazing."

Lu Xiaoyu's lips curled up slightly.

Lin Beibei clapped happily, "Daddy Lu is smiling."

Indeed, Lu Xiaoyu had finally learned to smile, a genuinely happy smile.