

Oh My God 551

Chapter 551: You're the Culprit!

They bent their backs and moved through the large number of winding and cramped underground tunnels. They were like a spider's nest.

Sometimes, they heard the footsteps of pursuers in the distance and sometimes nearby. There were a few times when the pursuers were only one wall away from them.

For superhumans, breaking a wall was as easy as tearing a newspaper.

The group could only lay on the ground and use the cold puddles in the underground tunnel to cool down their bodies while they prayed that the pursuers would hurry up and move past them.

There were a few times when A'Ji led them around randomly like some headless chicken and they seemed to have reached a corner, but they were always able to find a bit of hope in the midst of darkness and a crack that they could barely squeeze through.

No one knew how much time had passed, but the trio was gradually able to cast the pursuers behind them.

It was now silent around them. They were dozens of meters underground, which meant that they were approximately eight floors underground.

"Huh? What is this?" A'Ji suddenly pointed at a dark wall.

Meng Chao groped around carefully, and based on the bumps he felt, he found a rusty, hidden door embedded in the wall.

There was a complicated lock that required a password to open it.

But that was not a problem for A'Ji.

Meng Chao used his spirit energy to get rid of the rust on the lock, and A'Ji used two silver threads to fiddle around with it. Soon, he heard a crack from within the hidden door.

A brick came out of the wall beside the door.

Meng Chao pulled on it and noticed that it was connected to a chain.

He tugged at the chain, and the door slowly opened.

It had hid a shelter that was abandoned a long time ago.

Even though it had been left in the dust for decades, the ventilation was pretty good, so they could catch their breaths for a while.

Meng Chao asked A'Ji and Su Mulian to stay outside and listen, then went inside and closed the door.

The soundproofing of the shelter was pretty good. He could carry out interrogation work without a problem.

The trio tossed the unconscious "military adviser" inside.

Meng Chao thought about it and had Su Mulian stay beside him while he asked A'ji to curl up in the damaged refrigerator in the corner.

It was only at this moment that he began carefully inspecting the "military adviser" and became certain that he did not carry anything that would cause any harm to him.

He did not have any barcodes on his nape and no wounds on his armpits, so it was impossible for him to be a former Reaper Squad member.

Judging by his appearance, he was also not a lost person on the bounty list.

Finally, Meng Chao asked Su Mulian, "Could you heal him? You don't need to heal him fully. All he needs to do is answer our questions."

Su Mulian nodded. She pressed her hands gently on the "military adviser"'s temples, and spirit tattoos that looked like branches appeared on the back of her hands. A gentle green light shone around her palms and went into the "military adviser"'s head.

Half a minute later, the "military adviser"'s eyelids fluttered open.

It seemed like he wanted to continue pretending that he was unconscious, but he could not endure the sequelae of his concussion.

With a roll, he shot up from the ground, but he immediately fell down with his hands on the ground and started dry heaving.

After dry heaving for so long that he practically vomited his gallbladder juice out, he turned around and scanned his surroundings warily.

When his gaze landed on Meng Chao, he gave a visible shudder, and when he saw Su Mulian's faint green skin and sharp ears, his pupils shrank swiftly. He could not hide his shock.

Su Mulian was the third most important person in Leprosy Village. Her status was only beneath that of the old village chief and Wild Wolf.

If this person was really part of the middle management or higher management of the gangs in the lair, he should know her, or at least, have the general idea of how Ms. Mulian should look.

"Name, occupation," Meng Chao demanded.

The "military adviser" clenched his teeth and snorted coldly. He did not answer.

Meng Chao sighed.

He took out harvesting blades, lancet knives, various monster materials that contained venom and strong corrosive properties, all sorts of survival tools that had hooks, spikes, chains, and pliers from his military-grade backpack and placed them in a row right in front of the "military adviser".

Meng Chao spoke sincerely and in resignation. "Perhaps we have some misunderstandings between us. You were given this task by someone else, which means that you're not my real target."

“But I’m really short on time, so I won’t waste it to coax answers from you. That’s why what I’m going to do next will make you feel pain worse than death. Please don’t blame me. I’m just forced to do this.

“Fortunately, we have the best doctor here, so no matter what I do to you, she will be able to heal you so that I can beat you up a second time.”

While Meng Chao spoke, he picked up a harvesting knife and quickly sliced the “military adviser”’s hand.

He was in full control when he did this. It was true that “military adviser”’s skin had been cut open and blood was gushing everywhere, but his bones and tendons were not harmed.

Even so, the “military adviser” sucked in a sharp breath.

Meng Chao motioned to Su Mulian. “Heal him.”

Su Mulian frowned a little. It seemed like she was unwilling to go against her nature and help Meng Chao in his interrogation.

But when she thought about the people in Leprosy Village and remembered that the abnormal beast had a scheme that would involve an even larger number of victims, she gritted her teeth and quietly took the “military adviser”’s palm.

Ten seconds later, she let go, and the wound on the back of the “military adviser”’s hand had healed without any medicine.

Aside from the fact that the new flesh was a little tender and there was still blood around it, no signs of the hand being hurt just moments prior could be seen.

The “military adviser”’s eyes went wide. He was shocked by the amazing nature of Su Mulian’s healing abilities.

But a thought struck his mind, and he immediately realized that this amazing healing skill was not a good thing for him right now.

“Look. We can make sure that you remain alive until you tell us everything.”

Meng Chao’s fingers moved around the harvesting knives, lancet knives, venom, acidic materials, and all sorts of strangely-shaped survival tools. It seemed like he was hesitating on which he should use first.

“If I pull out his teeth barehanded, do you have a way for him to get his teeth back inside or grow new ones?” he asked seriously.

Su Mulian shuddered.

The “military adviser” shuddered even more than she did.

“Forget it. If he can’t speak clearly, I might be unable to hear what he’s saying clearly. Let’s start from flesh wounds, okay?” Meng Chao picked up three harvesting knives and twirled them, making them shine with a light that looked like more than one hundred white waterfalls.

“I’m Song Jinbo, manager of Glory Entertainment.”

Song Jinbo's mind had been attacked by Meng Chao's Fear Bomb, and his mental defenses were already in tatters. He could already be considered quite a tough man for breaking down only at this moment.

Golden Tooth, Poison Scorpion, Black Bone, and the other gang names were just the colloquial terms used by people to refer to the organizations.

To make it easier for management and operation purposes, the gangs registered themselves under a legal business or organization so that they could use industrialized methods to operate their gangs.

Glory Entertainment was a company under Golden Tooth. It was in charge of the monster coliseums and gambling sites.

There were a few things that attracted the citizens from the outside world to visit the lair. First, the unique cooking methods of monster meat. Second, one of the oldest professions in the world—sharing “girlfriends”. Third, monster coliseums and illegal gambling sites.

If Song Jinbo was a manager of Glory Entertainment, he was definitely in the middle management or higher management. He might have even had the chance to meet Saber Jin Wanhao directly.

Meng Chao and Su Mulian exchanged a glance. ‘We’re finally seeing hope.’

Meng Chao pondered over his words for a while and said, “Manager Song, you should know that this morning, I received orders from the abnormal beast research department and the secret police to follow the veteran hunters from the mega corporations to enter the lair so that we can investigate the Deification Capsules, right?”

“We have been comrades this morning, so why is it that in less than twenty-four hours, all of you mobilized your forces to kill me? Who gave you the order? Does your gang leader, Saber Jin Wanhao, know about this?”

“Of course I know,” Song Jinbo said stiffly. “My gang leader is the one who personally released the order to kill you without fail.”

“What?” This time, Meng Chao was the one who was shocked. “Saber Jin Wanhao wants to kill me? And Poison Scorpion is saying nothing about it? The other gangs are also responding to it? Aren’t they afraid of the abnormal beast research department and secret police’s reaction to this? That’s impossible!”

Song Jinbo laughed coldly. He then hissed, “Meng Chao, stop pretending. Did you think that you were very discreet when you did all those things? Everyone saw it! Right now, the lair and the world outside has seen your true colors and no one will believe a single thing you say!

“Since I’m not as strong as you, I’m willing to admit defeat. You can kill me or torture me as much as you want, but it’s impossible for me to betray Golden Tooth and the lair!”

He sounded so righteous that Meng Chao was stunned for a long time.

“Wait. Now I’m certain that we have a misunderstanding between us.” Meng Chao frowned. “I’m a passionate citizen of Dragon City. I always do good things, so what are you talking about?”

Song Jinbo cocked his eyebrows and answered with a fierce expression. “You killed Bullet Xue Rui!”

“...” Meng Chao was absolutely flabbergasted.

Bullet Xue Rui was one of the veteran hunters working with an insurance company affiliated to a mega corporation and was part of the hunting squad.

When they were conducting adaptive training outside the lair, Meng Chao had sparred against him and both of them had very high remarks for each other’s ability to calculate bullet trajectories and bullet ricochet trajectories.

When Meng Chao had rushed into Leprosy Village and fought against Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang the first time, Bullet Xue Rui had arrived on time to intimidate the three lost people.

Later, just like Meng Chao, Bullet Xue Rui was lost in the ruins of the super crystal bomb explosion.

After that, Meng Chao had not seen or heard of Bullet Xue Rui.

“Xue Rui is dead?” Meng Chao could not believe it, but he was also furious about it. “But on what grounds are you accusing me of killing Xue Rui?”

Song Jinbo answered coldly, “Your acting skills are indeed good. It’s no wonder why you could lay low for so long without revealing your true colors.

“Unfortunately, Rattlesnake Xiang Wei saw the entire event when you killed Bullet Xue Rui!

“Xiang Wei was near the explosion and thrown off kilter by it. He was then squashed under the reinforced concrete, which made him lose consciousness for a long time.

“Fortunately, he was at the edge of the explosion, so his vital organs were not damaged. He woke up relatively quickly.

“While he was struggling to crawl outside, he heard you shout for help while stuck under debris. You couldn’t move.

“Xiang Wei naturally knew who you were and wanted to go up to help you, but Bullet Xue Rui appeared first and went to drag you out from under the debris.

“But the moment Bullet Xue Rui caught you in his arms, you stabbed his heart! Your entire arm went through his chest!”

Chapter 552: Solid Evidence

Song Jinbo gave off a vivid description, and Meng Chao felt cold sweat break on his skin.

“Bullet Xue Rui’s cries shocked Rattlesnake Xiang Wei. He wanted to stop you, but it was already too late. Besides, his arm was a bloody mess, so it was impossible for him to fight you,” Song Jinbo continued. “He could only endure it and hide in the ruins. He did not even dare to breathe loudly. It was only when you dragged Xue Rui’s mangled corpse into the distance that he dared to climb out.

“Fortunately, he got lucky. He ran out of Leprosy Village without meeting any danger and got to spread this shocking news to all the guys so that we could be on guard against you, you two-faced bastard!”

“...” Meng Chao sucked in a deep breath and calmed his chaotic thoughts. “This is just Xiang Wei’s word; no third person saw this. He could even say that I cut Xue Rui into pieces and ate him.

“Meanwhile, I can say that Rattlesnake Xiang Wei is the abnormal beast’s puppet and intentionally framed a good person. How are you going to tell whether what I said is real or not?”

“Song Jinbo, this concerns the future of the lair and even Dragon City. You can’t just trust Xiang Wei unconditionally because he’s a member of the lair like you, right?”

“We’re not that dumb. We’d naturally not trust the words of a single person.” Song Jinbo sneered at him. “What if aside from Rattlesnake Xiang Wei, we also have Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong testifying against you?”

This time, Meng Chao was really astonished. He cried out in surprise, “What?!”

“Let’s say that Xiang Wei might want to frame you because he’s a member of the lair, but Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong is a veteran hunter from the outside world and the leader of the entire hunting squad. He does not share any economic interest relationships with us. Instead, he’s your temporary commander, so we should be able to believe his words, right?” Song Jinbo said coldly.

Meng Chao could not believe it. “Did Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong see me kill Bullet Xue Rui?”

“He didn’t. Zhou Chong was also heavily injured by the explosion. He lost an arm and a leg, so he practically had no mobility and could only hide in the depths of the ruins to heal his wounds.

“While he was healing himself, he saw you whispering to Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang.

“Zhou Chong said that you fought against Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang in the beginning, but after the explosion, you two were whispering to each other as if you were scheming something. Then, both of you cackled together and split up.

“How are you going to explain this? Are you going to tell me that Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and Rattlesnake Xiang Wei’s eyes were playing tricks on them at the time?”

Meng Chao’s eyelids twitched.

His mind was in a mess.

After the explosion, he had run into Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang, but he had personally killed that heinous criminal who had committed many crimes.

So, how could he possibly have been whispering with Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang and plotting something?

Unfortunately, Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang’s corpse was destroyed under the burning ruins. Perhaps even his ashes had scattered in the wind.

No matter what, Meng Chao could not explain things now.

“Let’s say that Rattlesnake Xiang Wei and Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong were both imagining things, then what about Snake Eye Mo Lan?” Song Jinbo continued. “Did you actually think that you killed Mo Lan? She practices a really unique secret technique that allows her to move her organs at will. Even if

you pierced her chest, you didn't pierce her heart. It was difficult, but she managed to escape from Leprosy Village alive, and that's enough proof for your crimes!"

Snake Eye Mo Lan was also a veteran hunter in the hunter circle. She had fought against Meng Chao during the adaptive training and also went missing during the explosion.

"Even Mo Lan was attacked by 'me'?" Meng Chao was in absolute disbelief.

"If not you, who else?" Song Jinbo retorted. "Snake Eye Mo Lan said that you used the same method as you when you killed Bullet Xue Rui. You pretended to be squashed under debris and cried out for help, attracting the veteran hunters and powerful fighters from the gangs nearby to help you. Then, you killed them one after another.

"In the beginning, Mo Lan had fallen for it and wanted to save you from the ruins, but she has really sharp senses. At a critical moment, she sensed a faint killing intent from you and dodged your fatal strike in time.

"Later, you chased after her through the ruins and hit her vitals a few times. Fortunately, she practices Organ Shift; otherwise, she would have suffered an untimely death.

"In the end, she decided to take a risk. She pretended to be stabbed in the heart and gathered her last bits of spirit energy to blast the pillars in the ruins around her so that the reinforced concrete above you would collapse. She used tons of debris to separate herself from you.

"You thought that she was definitely dead and were in a hurry to kill the other people, so she managed to escape alive.

"So? Rattlesnake Xiang Wei, Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong, and Snake Eye Mo Lan saw you. One of them is a gang member, while the other two are veteran hunters. They have no grudges with you, so there's no way they'd want to frame you out of the blue, right?"

It was only at that moment Meng Chao understood why Rattlesnake Xiang Wei looked so angry when he saw him, as if Meng Chao had killed his father.

His mind raced, and he instantly figured out the Vortex's plan.

"Did you think of another possibility?" Meng Chao said cautiously. "The person Xiang Wei, Zhou Chong, and Mo Lan saw wasn't me but someone pretending to be me? Right now, there is plenty of advanced tech that allow people to take on various disguises that are indistinguishable from the original."

"Of course we thought of that possibility," Song Jinbo said. "But while you can imitate a person's face, it's very difficult to imitate a person's fighting style and fluctuations of their spirit energy magnetic field.

"Snake Eye Mo Lan said that before she entered the lair, she fought against you in adaptive training and got a deep impression of your fighting style. She was 90% sure that the one who tried to lure her in to kill her in the ruins was you!"

"It's not as if you can't imitate fighting styles either..." Meng Chao tried his hardest to defend himself.

A mocking look appeared on Song Jinbo's face. "Then, what about fingerprints, hair fibers, and blood samples?"

“You left behind a lot of traces while you were fighting against Snake Eye Mo Lan. When we checked, we retrieved your fingerprints and blood from her weapon. We even found your hair fibers under her fingernails.

“Enough with it, Meng Chao. We have concrete proof. No matter how you try to defend yourself, it’s impossible for anyone to believe you anymore!”

The temperature in the shelter instantly fell by dozens of degrees Celsius.

Meng Chao felt that he had stepped into a bottomless abyss filled with ice. A cold chill spread from his heels to his throat.

When superhumans drank gene medicine and high-calorie nutritional fluid as well as used medical cabins, they paid attention to the details.

They usually had to make micro adjustments to the gene medicine based on their cultivation realm, blood type, and personal characteristics. They also had to change the pulse frequency of the medical cabin’s spirit energy magnetic field so that they could provide the perfect effects for treatment.

Hence, superhumans were used to writing their physiological parameters into a medical card and handing it over to medical officers when they carried out missions so that they could be prepared for accidents.

This time, the gangs provided logistics support.

Since the mission was pretty dangerous, the gangs had prepared the best medical facilities in advance.

Meng Chao and the other veteran hunters had provided their physiological parameters, the gene medicine they were used to using, and other information to the medical officers.

With this, the gangs were able to compare his fingerprints, blood samples, and hair fibers right away. It helped them find the “culprit”.

“I get it now.” Meng Chao was silent for a while before he sighed. “You think that I’ve been lured over by the abnormal beast and betrayed Dragon City?”

It was no wonder why the commander across the river bank ignored him and why so many gangs attacked him so madly when he crossed the river of trash.

“Isn’t that the case?” Song Jinbo sneered. “You just mentioned that right now, disguise technology is very advanced, and anyone who spends a little effort and has a bit more skills could pretend to be you. That’s true.

“But the more advanced the technology is, the more time is needed to refine it.

“There’s no way anyone can finish putting on a disguise to the point that Xiang Wei, Zhou Chong, and Mo Lan can’t tell that you’re fake and prepare your fingerprints, blood sample, and hair samples in just a few hours.

“While Xiang Wei can’t be considered your teammate, Zhou Chong and Mo Lan are your teammates. One of them even fought against you before, so they’re quite familiar with you.

“But based on what Zhou Chong and Mo Lan said, you only joined the hunting squad spontaneously last night. Before that, no one knew that you would enter the lair!

“So? Could it be that someone managed to predict the future, and before you joined the hunting squad, they decided to pretend to be you just so they could frame you?”

Meng Chao could not say anything to that.

“There’s also something that’s really strange,” Song Jinbo said. “Based on what Zhou Chong and Mo Lan said, the mission was complicated and dangerous. They had to fight fiercely in the lair. Forget about whether they could kill the monsters and robbers for the time being. Even if they really managed to kill their targets, once they injured or killed a large number of innocent citizens, the public backlash would be enough to rip all the members in the squad to shreds.

“They’re permanent employees of various insurance companies and enjoy great benefits and annual wages. They also received a large allowance for this operation, which is why they were willing to defuse this bomb for the secret police and the abnormal beast research department as well as be their scapegoat.

“But what about you?”

“This matter clearly has nothing to do with you. As the youngest Heaven Realm superhuman in Dragon City, you have a bright future ahead of you. There’s no reason for you to look for trouble or march to your own death.

“If you wanted to play hero, you could have joined the pitched battle at the border of Dragon City and killed monsters in a glorious manner so that you could shine brightly. Isn’t this what superhumans your wish to do?”

“So why did you run here for no reason? You even joined Zhou Chong and the others to jump into the bottomless swamp in the lair.”

“Because I’m a virtuous and warm-hearted person. I don’t care about personal gains and only care about doing things that will benefit others. I have no interest in playing the hero and being in the limelight. I only want to contribute to Dragon City’s future in the most dangerous and complicated battlefields!” Meng Chao said grimly.

Chapter 553: Certain Death Strategy

Song Jinbo opened his mouth wide and stayed like that for a long time before he decided to shut his eyes and put on an expression that said “Enough with the nonsense, just kill me”.

“Listen, I know that this is a materialistic era in which people are only interested in money. Words like ‘being passionate about contributing to Dragon City’ aren’t as believable as ‘being lured over by monsters a long time ago and intentionally joining the hunting squad to cause destruction’, but you have to trust me. I was framed!”

Meng Chao grabbed Song Jinbo’s shoulders and shook him fiercely. “Open your eyes wide and think about the loopholes. Rattlesnake Xiang Wei hid in the ruins and accidentally saw me. Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong also hid in the ruins and accidentally saw me. Snake Eye Mo Lan even escaped from me

while I was held back by collapsed ruins and didn't even think about dealing a second blow to her to make sure she's dead, even though I'm a Heaven Realm superhuman?

"And finally, even after these three people saw that I joined the monsters and betrayed Dragon City, they managed to escape from Leprosy Village?"

"Don't you think that it's too much of a coincidence?"

"They were buried in an area filled with smoke and plenty of broken walls and shattered concrete. Just how low are the chances of them escaping from me after seeing me?"

Song Jinbo was slightly stunned. He opened his eyes and began thinking about this seriously.

Meng Chao started rambling like a machine gun, "It's clear that this is a trap. I've been framed by someone.

"But that person isn't just thinking about framing me; it wants to set up the entire lair. If you still refuse to see the truth and let yourselves be fooled by the enemy, in less than twenty-four hours, you'll definitely regret it!

"In any case, I must meet Saber Jin Wanhao, and you must open a green channel for me so that the villagers can move outside!"

Song Jinbo narrowed his eyes. The hesitation that appeared in him a moment ago turned once again into great wariness. "You want the villagers to run out and cause chaos in the lair?"

"You've seen the current situation in Leprosy Village. We're all Dragon Citizens who came from Earth. We must help each other and go through trials together!

"If we still give discriminatory treatment to the villagers at this point in time when we're supposed to fight together and treat them as third-class citizens, it will only add to our misunderstandings and resentment. In the end, we will give the enemy all sorts of chances to break us!

"Don't go thinking that the disasters in Leprosy Village have nothing to do with you or that the villagers will just sit by and accept their death. If you save Leprosy Village, you'll be saving yourselves and Dragon City. You have a big head, can't you figure out this simple thing?"

Song Jinbo fell silent.

"Alright, I won't bother to persuade you. Just take me to Saber Jin Wanhao so that I can persuade him!"

Meng Chao thought for a while and asked, "Also, where are Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and Snake Eye Mo Lan? How many veteran hunters escaped from Leprosy Village? If there's a need for it, I will go meet them and have them confront me. We'll find the loopholes in the enemy's scheme together!"

Song Jinbo was silent for a long time before he hissed, "I won't tell you. I've already told you too many things.

"I might not be a good person and a little scared of death, but I know what will happen to me if I end up as a monster's puppet. The monsters will either use all sorts of strange vermin and methods to eat away

my brain so that I would turn into a human-shaped puppet or be subjected to biochemical technology and become something that is one hundred times more terrifying than the villagers.

“No matter what happens, both of those fates are worse than death.

“So, just kill me! I’ve already accepted my fate the moment I ended up in your hands!”

He gritted his teeth and craned his neck, revealing his thick blood vessels and nerves. They were all pulsating.

Meng Chao could not attack him.

Since Song Jinbo was not a monster’s puppet and seemed pretty loyal to Dragon City, it was impossible for Meng Chao to really interrogate and torture him, even if Su Mulian could heal him perfectly.

He thought about it and picked some adhesive liquid from Sleeping Lizards and other anesthetic materials from the pile of monster materials he brought. He covered Song Jinbo’s mouth and nose, then pressed down on the spot above his neck artery, which cut off oxygen supply to his head and made him fall unconscious again.

Once Meng Chao was certain that Song Jinbo was unconscious, he tapped the door of the refrigerator for A’Ji to crawl out.

Meng Chao, A’Ji, and Su Mulian looked at each other.

Meng Chao scratched his head. “You heard what he said. So? You couldn’t have believed that I killed Bullet Xue Rui and wanted to kill Snake Eye Mo Lan, right?”

Su Mulian and A’Ji looked at each other and quickly shook their heads.

Su Mulian said fearfully, “I trust you, Meng Chao.

“You might have done... a lot of bad things, but you won’t betray Dragon City and join the monsters.”

Even up to this moment, Meng Chao could not figure out why Su Mulian was so scared of him.

That fear was like a brand burned into her DNA, and it came from deep within her.

It made it impossible for him to understand why she chose to believe in him so much despite the fact that she was so scared of him.

However, no matter what, trust was a good thing, especially when they were in such a complicated situation.

A’Ji nodded and stressed his words. “Me too, Big Brother Chao! I trust that you’re a good person!” He paused for a while before he became puzzled again. “But how are we going to explain what Xiang Wei, Zhou Chong, and Mo Lan saw? Could it be that they were all lured to the monsters’ side and are framing you?”

Meng Chao pondered it for a moment. “The chances of that aren’t high. The Deification Capsule’s first appearance was just five days ago, and it’s only yesterday that they decided to spontaneously form a hunting squad consisting of employees from various insurance companies.

“The news about a tactical commando squad formed of experienced, veteran hunters entering the lair to investigate this matter only appeared recently, so it’s impossible for the monster to have dragged Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and Snake Eye Mo Lan to its side in just two short days.

“So, I’m more inclined to believe the possibility that someone pretended to be me and intentionally killed others in front of their eyes as well as chatted happily with Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang. With this method, they could turn me into a bad guy.”

“But what should we do now?” A’Ji could not figure it out. “The hunting squad was only formed hastily yesterday, that’s true, but you only joined spontaneously at midnight. No matter how smart the abnormal beast is, it would have been impossible for it to have predicted that you’d join and prepare everything meticulously in advance.”

“There’s nothing strange about that,” Meng Chao said faintly. “I’m the youngest Heaven Realm superhuman in Dragon City and an internet celebrity with millions of fans. I’m the idol of countless young adults and teenagers, and ever since my debut, I’ve killed countless monsters. I also crushed the enemy’s schemes in Raging Waves, Blessed Paradise, and Noble Descent Hotel. I’ve been a thorn in the monster civilization’s side for quite some time now.

“Fingerprints, blood samples, and hair samples aren’t that difficult to gather, either. I’ve been injured heavily multiple times, and I’ve laid in medical cabins for days. If monsters came up with a way to infiltrate hospitals at one of those times, they could get everything.

“Then, they could split up my fingerprints, hair, and blood samples into several batches so that the abnormal beast who snuck into Dragon City to cause major damage could take them around. If an abnormal beast noticed me while it was fighting against humans, it could frame me in passing. If it succeeded, it would severely damage the image of a ‘hero’ in millions of youngsters’ hearts, which would be killing two birds with one stone.”

“That... makes sense.” A’Ji wiped off cold sweat. “Then what should we do now? All the people in the lair think you’re the monsters’ puppet now. They will definitely not listen to your explanation, and once they find you, they will do everything they can to kill you!”

“Even if they were willing to listen to us, we don’t have much time left,” Su Mulian said. “We only have ten hours left. It’s not easy to prove Meng Chao’s innocence in such a short time and get the gangs’ trust.

“If we go over that time, Wild Wolf will lead most of the villagers to seek shelter outside. Then, both sides will clash against each other. If there are major casualties, Meng Chao’s crime as the monsters’ puppet will become true!”

After that was said, both villagers looked glum. They felt that the situation had descended into chaos that was bound to end in their failure.

“Don’t look so dejected. The situation isn’t as bad as you think it is. On the contrary, I think that the abnormal beast took a narrow path, and it’s gradually showing a fatal weakness.” Meng Chao narrowed his eyes. “Originally, based on the abnormal beast’s plan, all the villagers would have exited the village and engaged the gangs in a major clash.

“Then, the abnormal beast and its puppets would seek to take advantage of the situation and cause further trouble in the disaster that will benefit them.

“During that chaos, even if there were loopholes in how it framed me, no one would have the time to think about it carefully, and just like what Ms. Mulian said, my crime would be set in stone.

“In conclusion, the abnormal beast’s original scheme had a really high fault tolerance rate. No matter how much we struggled, it’d be useless. Having a small loophole in the plan is fine.

“But the abnormal beast didn’t expect that I wouldn’t die in the super crystal bomb’s explosion nor would get killed by Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang. Instead, I crushed its first scheme and obtained Wild Wolf’s trust, so the villagers now stand their ground. I’ve bought us a precious twelve hours!

“Since the two sides are yet to engage in a real clash, the middle management and higher management of the gangs still retain calm minds and clear logical thinking.

“The matter about me joining the monsters is just an extra that the monster casually injected into its scheme. It was never supposed to be important, but now, it was suddenly brought under the spotlight, and it’s naturally sticking out like a sore thumb.

“Trust me, while we’re feeling troubled by this, that really smart abnormal beast must also be feeling troubled, because its scheme has left the trajectory it planned. I’m like a side character that keeps jumping up and down trying to steal the spotlight from it. I’m causing the script it plotted meticulously to go into paradoxical directions, and it’s a mess now.

“I believe that Man-eating Shark and the rest will be able to figure out something strange about this sooner rather than later. They’ll realize that it’s too much of a coincidence that they saw me committing all those crimes at the same time.

“The abnormal beast is now forced into a corner, however, and it shifted the center of its scheme on the ‘fact’ that I ‘joined the monsters a long time ago’. It might seem like it forced me to a dead end, but if we look at it from another angle, as long as I can prove my innocence, I’ll be able to obtain most people’s trust, even Saber Jin Wanhao’s, and break this strategy that is supposed to promise certain death to me!”

Chapter 554: Way To Solve The Problem

A’Ji and Su Mulian looked at each other, and the light of hope shone in their eyes again.

When they looked at Meng Chao, their gazes were filled with surprise.

It seemed like they did not expect that Meng Chao would be able to figure out a method like this when he was in a chaotic situation that would cause normal people to break down.

But after a moment of thought, Meng Chao’s expression changed drastically, and he said, “This is bad. If we look at things based on the newest information, we fell into a trap.”

“Big Brother Chao, what do you mean? What trap?” A’Ji asked.

Meng Chao looked at him with a serious face. “Just now, when Rattlesnake Xiang Wei brought his squad to capture me, there was something weird.

“In the beginning, our guess was that the abnormal beast would not allow me to leave Leprosy Village alive nor get into contact with the gangs so that I’d spread the truth of the village around. That’s why it was doing everything it can to stop me.

“But the premise for this deduction was that we didn’t know that the abnormal beast had the ability to disguise as me and had already destroyed the world’s trust toward me.

“The real situation is that the abnormal beast isn’t afraid of me appearing in the outside world, because there is concrete proof to my crime, and even if I try to defend myself, I won’t be able to.

“On the contrary, when I appear in the outside world, I will even divert the gangs’ attention, making it easier for the abnormal beast to carry out its tricks.

“If that’s the case, the motive behind the abnormal beast’s act of getting the gangs to kill me is very strange.”

A thought struck A’Ji’s mind. “Big Brother Chao, how did you know that the abnormal beast urged the gangs to kill you and it’s not the gangs really trying to kill you, considering you’re the ‘monsters’ puppet?”

“It’s simple. If Saber Jin Wanhao and the other gang leaders personally gave the command, it wouldn’t be Rattlesnake Xiang Wei taking command, since he’s heavily wounded. Instead, aside from Xiang Wei, they would bring other elites who are more powerful than the average superhuman, but there were none like that around.

“That’s why I was able to easily move through the squads alone and even captured someone alive,” Meng Chao said. “In the beginning, I thought that the gangs suffered major losses during the explosion of the Deification Capsule pharmacy and couldn’t send any proper elites, but now that I think about it, this seems to be a trap set by the abnormal beast. It intentionally sent these mooks for them to die so that I could get out of the encirclement!”

“That’s...” Su Mulian said in shock. “Why did the abnormal beast do that?”

“To create chaos,” Meng Chao replied. “Didn’t you notice? The series of schemes the abnormal beast carefully set up are all to create chaos in the lair.

“In the beginning, it placed its hopes on Wild Wolf and Leprosy Village, but by the looks of it now, Wild Wolf and the others will need twelve hours before they would charge out.

“Having no other choice, the abnormal beast decided to take the wheel. But the power it has isn’t enough to cause complete chaos in the lair. That’s why it needs a scapegoat that would divert the gangs’ attention, and that’s me.

“Let me ask you a question. If I had flown into a rage during the fight against the gangs just now, acted more violently, killed Rattlesnake Xiang Wei and the other gang members, and this news got to Saber Jin Wanhao, Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and the others, what would they think?

“Of course, it would be just as Ms. Mulian said. I would have proved that I’m the monsters’ puppet.

“And when the first squad who came after my life suffered heavy casualties and returned disappointed, the gangs would get angry and send a second and third squad after my life. This time, the people who came would be stronger.

“To prevent a repeat of what happened to Rattlesnake Xiang Wei, all the elites in the gangs would join the hunt.

“And if a large number of forces was used to hunt me, the important facilities in the lair would become unguarded. The abnormal beast would then be able to do whatever it wants to them.

“Just like that, when the gangs finally cut me to pieces, the lair would be in a disastrous state because of the abnormal beast, and the situation in Leprosy Village would go completely out of control. At that time, when Wild Wolf led the people out, there would be disasters all over the lair, and the abnormal beast’s scheme would have gotten back on track!”

“How sinister...” A’Ji patted his chest in fear. “Thank goodness you’re calm now, Big Brother Chao. You didn’t kill a single gang member just now. So, the abnormal beast should be out of tricks at the moment, right?”

“No way. Don’t forget that the abnormal beast can perfectly disguise itself as me,” Meng Chao said coldly. “The abnormal beast won’t place all its hopes on me. It will definitely send a puppet to observe the situation in the dark. If I were calm and didn’t kill Rattlesnake Xiang and the other gang members, the puppet would do it for me.

“Think. If Rattlesnake Xiang Wei brought the group underground to chase after me, suddenly ran into an ambush by a large group of wanted criminals and former Reaper Squad members, are got nearly wiped out, while the one person who was lucky enough to escape saw me beheading Rattlesnake Xiang Wei while laughing like a maniac, how big of a ruckus would it cause when he sends this news back to the gangs?”

A’Ji and Su Mulian both sucked in sharp breaths.

“T-Then, aren’t we doomed?!” A’Ji cried out in surprise.

“Don’t panic. Since we already predicted the abnormal beast’s scheme, it means that we have a chance to launch a counterattack.”

Meng Chao narrowed his eyes and said clearly, “When they talk about the existence of a foolproof strategy in chess, they’re talking about a chess game that has not started yet, so none of its pieces have moved. Once a single piece moves, it will definitely reveal ways to break the strategy behind its move.

“Besides, this scheme against me is something the abnormal beast spontaneously came up with. It is naturally filled with loads of loopholes and flaws.

“Right now, I’ve thought of two flaws.

“First, as long as I can capture the person who disguised as me, I will naturally be able to prove my innocence.

“Second, even if that cunning bastard sneaks away, who gave the order for Rattlesnake Xiang Wei and the rest to come and kill me?”

"I mentioned it just now. Rattlesnake Xiang Wei was affected by the explosion. His arm suffered a comminuted fracture, and his vitality magnetic field isn't stable. The mooks that he brought aren't my opponents either. They're all sent to get an early death.

"A gang leader with a clear head and one that sides with humans like any other normal person wouldn't give such a ridiculous order.

"So, whoever sent Rattlesnake Xiang Wei to die is the one who's problematic!

"As long as we can find this problematic person, we can use the clues he provides to find the mastermind controlling him and turn the tables!"

A'Ji clapped his hands and said, "Big Brother Chao, you're too amazing. It's no wonder why so many people on the forums call you Ace Chao!"

"The mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind it. Who is the mastermind and who will have the last laugh? We'll see it at the end!"

Meng Chao cast A'Ji a deep glance and picked up the unconscious Song Jinbo. He said to the duo, "Ms. Mulian, please come with me. A'Ji, stay here and wait for us to come back."

"Huh?" A'Ji's eyes went wide. "Where are you going?"

"Don't ever do the things the enemy wants you to do. Right now, the abnormal beast wants us to fight against Rattlesnake Xiang Wei and his group, or at least, run away in panic so that it will have the chance to frame me. Then, we will go back. Perhaps I will be able to find the person who disguised himself as me and capture him."

Meng Chao shoved open the door to the shelter.

The tunnel was silent, but if they held their breaths and listened, they could hear faint gunshots in the distance.

When Meng Chao placed his palm on the wall, he could also sense slight tremors.

"The people in Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's squad are firing fiercely," Meng Chao mumbled. "Looks like they're already under the abnormal beast's attack. Otherwise, if they were just chasing after the person, there would be no need for them to waste their bullets. We must hurry."

"Wait! Big Brother Chao, I'm going too!" A'Ji cried out, all worked up.

Meng Chao cast him a glance and said, "I'm bringing Song Jinbo over so that he can be my witness and so I can obtain his trust. I'm bringing Ms. Mulian because her amazing healing powers might be able to save Xiang Wei and the others and prove my innocence. Why should I take you along?"

"I... I can do stealth missions!" A'Ji quickly thought about it. "I can hide in corners and hear a lot of secrets. I might even be able to get really important items during the chaos, such as your fingerprints, blood, and hair samples to prove that someone is trying to frame you.

"In any case, if you have one more person with you, you'll have another helper. Big Brother Chao, take me along! I can take care of myself, I won't cause trouble!"

Meng Chao thought about it for a while before he actually agreed to it.

“Fine. Then enough with the nonsense, and let’s go!”

The three of them carried the unconscious Song Jinbo in the direction of gunshots and tremors.

Sounds could be heard especially clearly in the narrow tunnels underground, and the direction where they came from was also very clear.

The trio returned to the path they had taken earlier, and soon, the gunshots became louder. They could even hear the sounds of weapons clashing. They also heard angry shouts and pained screams, along with the sounds of spirit energy ripples and shockwaves clashing with each other.

The entire underground space looked like it had experienced an earthquake. Dust and cracked paint kept falling on their heads, which made it look like the place was filled with smoke.

“Ms. Mulian, I know that you aren’t fond of outsiders, especially gang members, and whenever you heal people, it’s painful for you,” Meng Chao said gravely. “But for the safety of Leprosy Village, I still have to beg you that you do your best to heal the injured gang members later. This is the best way to get rid of misunderstandings and mend rifts. Could you do that?”

“I only see patients. I don’t see any difference between the villagers and gang members,” Su Mulian said airily. “We’re all struggling to live in this brutal world. Be it the villagers, the gang members, the normal citizens outside, or even the superior peerless elites, we all have to suffer and struggle to survive.

“I once swore that I would use the abilities given to me by God to relieve all people of their pain until the day the world ends.

“Compared to the deformed villagers who are plagued by all sorts of complicated diseases, the gang members’ injuries won’t put a lot of burden on me. Don’t worry, I’ll do my best.”

Meng Chao thought that Su Mulian’s oath was a little strange, but they were pressed for time, so he did not have the time to ponder over it.

He grabbed a fistful of stimulative monster bone powder and flicked it into Song Jinbo’s nostrils to wake the “military adviser” of Golden Tooth.

Chapter 555: Ghost In The Mirror

Before Song Jinbo completely woke up, A’Ji snuck away to hide in the darkness.

Song Jinbo bit his tongue so the pain would clear his head faster.

He also heard the constant gunshots and cries for murder not far in distance. He sensed the spirit energy ripples crashing into each other like fierce waves. He did not understand what was going on, and when he looked at Meng Chao, his gaze was filled with puzzlement.

“Rattlesnake Xiang Wei’s pursuers were ambushed by monsters,” Meng Chao explained patiently.

Song Jinbo’s eyes immediately went wide, and his gaze was filled with animosity. It was as if he was saying “Aren’t you the one who lured Xiang Wei and the others into the ambush?”

"I know that you won't believe no matter what I say right now, but you're not blind nor are you deaf. If you're the manager of Glory Entertainment, it means that your brain isn't full of rust. You can see, hear, and think for yourself," Meng Chao said.

"In a moment, I won't have the time to be bothered with you. I can only cast you to the side. If you want to run, you can. But I will give you the reminder once more, and this will be my last reminder to you. The lair... No, all of Dragon City is facing a crisis that will destroy the city, and the key to our victory might not be at the borders of the city, but in front of us. Tell me, do you have a wife and children?"

Song Jinbo said nothing, but his gaze clearly flickered.

"Looks like you do. Then, think of your wife and children. Don't do anything that will bring grief to your close ones while causing joy to your enemies. It'll be too late for regrets when your wife and children end up in the mouths of monsters!"

Once he finished speaking, he tossed Song Jinbo to the side.

Song Jinbo exercised his limbs. When he saw that Meng Chao really did not have the intention to kill him, his eyes roved about, and the puzzlement and hesitation in them grew.

Meng Chao ignored him. He bent his back and moved forward with Su Mulian.

The tunnels ahead of them were interconnected with each other. There were observation holes and embrasures all over the walls, making it look like a killing maze, and it was very suitable for ambushes and chaotic battles.

In truth, when they first began building underground spaces, they planned to use them for military purposes.

Their original expectations were that once the surface was completely occupied by zombies and monsters, humans would have to hide in the shelters underground and use these killing mazes to fight against their stupid enemies.

However, the threat of zombies and monsters grew weaker day by day, and the killing mazes were slowly abandoned. Now, one of them turned into a slaughterhouse for the abnormal beast to ambush humans.

After taking the last corner, the two stepped on wet blood and sticky organs.

What appeared ahead of them was hell.

The tunnel was filled with smoke so thick they could see nothing ahead of them. It was mixed with poisonous gas that could corrode the lungs and pollute blood.

Rattlesnake Xiang Wei and his squad were caught off guard, and when they were ambushed, they instantly broke down.

There were torn limbs all over the ground and many armed men struggling in pain in the smoke and poisonous gas. Everyone was dying.

The pursuers who were still standing were stunned and lost. They could not tell just who was their enemy, and their mental strength indexes plummeted.

They pulled the triggers madly and fired at the smoke in vain. Aside from setting off sparks of their comrades' motorized armor and walls, they did not land any effective damage on their ambushers.

Meng Chao minimized his breathing, heartbeat, and temperature, then started crawling forward to save the injured. He dragged those who could still be saved behind the corner so that Su Mulian could treat them.

Then, he held his breath and slithered forward like a moving shadow into the center of the battlefield.

The corpses all over the ground were a perfect disguise for him.

He shut his eyes and released his spirit energy magnetic field so that he could quietly scan the area around him. The ceiling and wall lights in the underground space as well as the searchlights from both parties were destroyed immediately at the start of the battle, so there was nothing to see with one's eyes.

The ambusher had also thrown in a large amount of smoke bombs and poison bombs.

The flickering lights from the torchlights were like candle flames in the wind and only appeared occasionally. Yet they were the only source of light they had. The visibility of pursuers, ambusher, and Meng Chao was nearly zero.

Meng Chao could only use his spirit energy to make an outline of his enemy and his comrades.

The space in the killing maze was uneven and narrow. The pursuers and the ambusher were entangled in a mess. The best weapons in this case were not the powerful heavy machine guns, but sabers and daggers.

Most people from both parties were wearing airtight protective suits and motorized armor. Those who did not wear at least a poison filtration mask covered their mouths and noses. Even after fighting in confusion for a long time, they could not see each other's faces.

Meng Chao found two fighters whose motorized armor had sprayed emblems of Black Bone and Poison Scorpion. They were on the same side, but one of them had unhesitatingly used a hot saber to pierce the other person's chest armor, pectorals, sternum, and heart.

'Are they killing each other in a panic? No, even though some of these people are wearing the motorized armor and fighting suits of the gangs, these are clearly people from a different side. One of them was panicking, and the other was calm, brutal, and fatal!

'They're the subordinates of the Vortex. These wanted criminals and former Reaper Squad members put on the motorized armor and fighting suits of the gangs, snuck into the crowd, and started murdering people!'

Now, he had to solve a problem.

How did the Vortex's subordinates distinguish between friend and foe?

Communications and the wireless internet in the lair were intercepted and blocked.

It did not matter whether it was the gangs or the puppets of the monsters, no one was able to contact and identify other people.

So, the ambushers who were pretending to be gang members had to have some simple emblem on them, just like how the ambushers in ancient times tied white clothes on their arms to state their identity when they launched ambushes at night.

That way, they would not descend into confusion with their enemies.

Meng Chao searched patiently.

Soon, he noticed a few people with three bright dots that formed a triangle on the chest plates and backs of the motorized armor and fighting suits.

They should have been made with paint mixed with crystal powder. They created a strong reaction with spirit energy ripples at a certain fluctuation.

If he used his eyes to observe, the light was too weak and he could barely see it, but Meng Chao believed that if he gathered spirit energy into his eyes and created a specific shape on his retina, the sparkling dots would become bright and clear.

Also, the people who had the triangle dots on their chests and backs might be few in number, but they were really calm and active. They moved like catfishes with mouths full of teeth and created chaos.

‘Found you! You’re the ones!’

Meng Chao’s pupils shrank swiftly.

The pursuers came to kill him, and the ambushers came to ambush the pursuers.

He instantly located all the ambushers nearby, and in his mind’s eye, he saw the word “prey” at the center of the triangle formed by the three sparkling dots.

When an ambusher pretending to be a gang member targeted a real gang member near Meng Chao who was pretending to be a corpse, Meng Chao jumped up like an alligator lurking in a swamp. He swung his thin Ghost Blade up and drove it fiercely into the most fragile part of the motorized armor—the spot between the legs.

The person was about to scream in pain when Meng Chao locked his throat with his chains.

Electrical arcs and flames tore through the neck guard and tore apart the man’s Adam’s apple and voice box. He could only make gurgling sounds with blood spilling out of his mouth.

The moans were soon drowned out by loud gunshots and screams.

The person fell sideways and became limp.

Meng Chao used Bloody Soul to crudely rip off his neck guard and the armor under his armpit.

Just as he expected, he saw a barcode on the person’s nape—it was the barcode of a Reaper Squad member.

Under the man's armpit, Meng Chao also found the scar left by a minimally invasive surgery.

This was another man who was supposed to have died a long time ago.

'Vortex. I've seen through your tricks!'

Once Meng Chao was certain of his guess, he became confident and stopped hiding. Bloody Soul released a burning red light, and with a momentum that could destroy armies, Meng Chao started fighting against the people with three sparkling dots on their chests and backs.

The ambushers were shocked.

They could not understand why Meng Chao suddenly appeared among them, much less why his saber looked as if it had the All-seeing Eye and always managed to hit their vitals, even though they wore the exact same fighting suits and motorized armor as the real gang members. He didn't injure a single real gang member by accident.

When the ambushers were faced with Meng Chao's frenzied attacks, they did not want to stay to fight him. They retreated unhesitatingly.

They had almost completed their predetermined goal, anyway. The real gang members had suffered major casualties, and most of those who managed to survive had sucked in too much smoke and poisonous gas. They were heavily injured, deaf, and almost blind. They did not know what had happened.

Meng Chao was about to move the casualties to Su Mulian's side when he suddenly heard Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's scream ahead of him.

Meng Chao's pupils shrank into two dots, and he quickly rushed over with his saber. Then, he saw something shocking.

Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's limbs were stiff as he stood deep in the black poisonous fog. His limbs were spread eagle.

A sharp blade that was as red as blood had pierced his chest. Flames gushed out of the blade, and the blade vibrated madly while it tore and shredded his organs.

The astonishing vitality possessed by superhumans saved Rattlesnake Xiang Wei from dying instantly.

When he saw Meng Chao rushing out of the tunnel, his eyes went wide in shock as if he had seen a ghost that should not exist.

Meng Chao also saw a ghost.

It was a ghost that seemed to have crawled out of a mirror.

Behind Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's shoulder was a familiar yet unfamiliar face that slowly took form in the dark.

His lips were curled slightly in a brutal smile. When he saw Meng Chao, he not only wasn't surprised, he even nodded at Meng Chao in a greeting.

His face was Meng Chao's own.

The other Meng Chao used a weapon that was similar to Bloody Soul and thrust it through Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's chest from behind him!

Meng Chao was only stunned for 0.1 seconds before he swung the real Bloody Soul and rushed over.

He was still a step too late.

The person who had disguised himself as Meng Chao used a chain saber that was like Meng Chao's signature weapon to bind Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's neck.

And at that moment, with a vicious yank, he tore Xiang Wei's head off his shoulders!

Chapter 556: The Vortex's True Form!

"Bastard!" Meng Chao roared. His saber moved like a blood-soaked dragon that went straight for the imitator.

The imitator grinned and used his knee to press against Xiang Wei's headless body to send it forward.

Meng Chao did not want to leave behind his own marks on Xiang Wei's body, so he could only dodge sideways.

The imitator curled up behind Xiang Wei's corpse, then sprung forward and bounced away. He swung his saber downward with an unstoppable momentum, and his stance was the exact same as that of Meng Chao.

Meng Chao was prepared for it from the start. Bloody Soul drew a sharp arc in the air. The two sabers clashed briefly, creating a shower of sparks, before separating. The sparks did not disappear even after a long time had passed.

The two men were forced three steps back by each other's momentum. They then placed their sabers horizontally in front of their chests and engaged in a silent stalemate.

It was at this moment that Meng Chao finally saw the other's appearance.

He found that this imitator did not just have the same face, appearance, and gaze. Even his height, shoulder width, arm span, upper-lower body ratio, muscle distribution, and bone distribution were basically the exact same as his.

Meng Chao could not help but suck in a sharp breath.

He had just finished his training in the wild, which had lasted a few months, a few days ago.

In those months, he camped out in the wild. He crawled through forests and crept through the plains all the time. He also often ate the freshest monster flesh as food.

Not only did his fighting strength improve by leaps and bounds because of it, he had also grown up by 3 cm and gained 7.5 kg in weight. His shoulder width and arm span had also become different from before. His muscle distribution had also been adjusted to the point that it was almost perfect for close-quarters combat.

Throughout the training, he worked madly and seldom came into contact with other humans.

If the enemy had copied his appearance based on how he looked at Noble Descent Hotel when he killed the Demonic Abyss Eye, the impersonator would be very different from the current Meng Chao.

Yet it had been just a few days since Meng Chao returned to Dragon City. How could the enemy make a perfect copy of his current self?

It was no wonder why Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and Snake-eye Mo Lan, who were his comrades since the day before and one of whom had even fought against him, could not tell that this Meng Chao was not real!

Meng Chao used his peripheral vision to look at Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's head and body.

It was clear that Xiang Wei was dead, considering his head was separated from his body.

Even if Su Mulian shifted his injuries to her own body, it would be impossible for her to resurrect him.

And based on the bloody wounds on his neck and body, it was clear that they were caused by a chain saber viciously tearing into him.

If Meng Chao had not figured out the scheme in time and let Rattlesnake Xiang Wei be killed by the imitator as well as a few witnesses who "escaped through sheer luck" return to the surface, Meng Chao would never be able to clear his name.

Fortunately, even though he could not stop the imitator from killing Xiang Wei, he managed to catch his tail.

'Next, as long as I can kill or capture this imitator or even keep him around until the main army of the gangs arrives so that they find out that there are two Meng Chaos fighting here, all of the Vortex's schemes will be destroyed!'

Meng Chao's mind raced, and he saw hope.

Bloody Soul's light tore through the smoke in the area and enveloped the imitator.

The imitator did not just imitate Meng Chao's appearance. He also imitated the characteristics of Meng Chao's fighting style, his body constitution, and spirit energy magnetic field until they were no different from the original.

He had also cleared most of his branch meridians and could send his spirit energy to the ends of his nerves and each hair on his body, so he possessed great endurance and would never experience fatigue.

He, too, possessed the upgraded versions of Reckless Bull Force, One Hundred Saber Techniques, Demon Subduing Pole, and other basic skills that Meng Chao was used to.

He also liked using basic skills that had practically no openings to exploit so that he could form unending chain attacks while seldom using killing moves that required a lot of preparation and had long cooldown times.

Just like Meng Chao, he used a heavy saber in his right hand and a light chain saber in his left hand. He moved like a phantom, but had a fierce momentum.

The more they fought against each other, the more shocked Meng Chao became. He felt like he was now in a hell made of mirrors and was fighting against his mirror self in a fight where the victor would never be decided.

However, no matter how well the other person had disguised himself, there was one thing that it could never imitate fully.

Meng Chao had Kindling. He could use contribution points in exchange for healing and strengthening his cells' regeneration speed and power.

Because of it, Meng Chao did not mind being heavily injured with the imitator.

Even if both of them fought and ended up so tired that they lay sprawled on the ground and could not stand, it would be fine.

No one could ever conceal the truth, after all, so when the main fighting forces of the gangs arrived and tied the two Meng Chao's up, then brought them to Saber Jin Wanhao, Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong, and the others, at that time, Meng Chao would see who would be in a more embarrassing situation!

Since one of them did not mind being heavily injured, and the other was in a hurry to run away, Meng Chao's psychological advantage kept accumulating. He gradually gained a winning momentum, and the hand of victory slowly reached out toward him.

In just half a minute, they had exchanged 372 attacks.

Dozens of deep wounds had appeared on their bodies.

Meng Chao's body burned with a bloody-red fire. It was as if he did not know fatigue nor fear pain. The more he fought, the fiercer he became.

And no matter what, the imitator was not the real "Eldest Disciple of the Ultimate Style". His speed and strength clearly fell by a visible amount, and his breathing became quick and disorderly. Slowly, he was unable to keep up with Meng Chao's rapid rhythm.

Whoosh!

Meng Chao fired his chain saber again.

The imitator also threw his chain saber, making it travel like a viper.

The two chain sabers locked with each other and released a piercing flame and electrical arc.

Meng Chao gave a vicious tug to draw them closer to each other.

Then, he released the chain saber without hesitation and grabbed the saber hilt with both hands. Bloody Soul pushed forward with an indomitable momentum and swept horizontally at the imitator like a propeller from an armored airship.

The imitator also swung his red saber.

The two sabers clashed against each other for the 109th time.

At the moment the sabers clashed with each other, Meng Chao's eyes shone with a light that was as bright as a supernova explosion.

There was one skill that the imitator could not possibly master, and it was Fear Bomb that was created with the scenes of the apocalypse at its core!

The imitator's pupils shrank.

His mental defense was not destroyed in one blow because of Meng Chao's Fear Bomb, but he could not help shuddering.

Meng Chao seized this fleeting chance and released all his spirit energy into the Red Radiance Jade crystal marrow that supported Bloody Soul.

Crack!

Bloody Soul instantly grew brighter and turned into a crystalline work of art.

Of course, it was a murderous work of art.

And no matter what, a fake was a fake.

The imitator could carefully create a red saber that looked like Bloody Soul on the outside, but the real Bloody Soul was created from a rare Red Radiance Jade crystal marrow that was found in the depths of the Red Radiance Jade mine.

It was a treasure that could only be discovered by chance.

Humans had had a firm grip over the large Red Radiance Jade mine under Raging Waves, so it was impossible for the imitator to get the same Red Radiance Jade crystal marrow as Meng Chao's.

So, it was impossible for his saber to be as sturdy as Meng Chao's Bloody Soul.

That's why Meng Chao had intentionally taken the stance that made it seem like he was ready to die with the imitator and engaged in the simplest and crudest of clashes. Hence, while the imitator was unaware, he dwindled away the red saber's durability.

With the final slash, he finally broke the fake red saber and used the attack's momentum to pierce the imitator's chest. Then, he lifted the imitator and pinned him against the wall.

It was now all over.

The imitator's eyes protruded, and he stared at his chest in disbelief while he coughed up mouthfuls of blood.

He moved his limbs like a worm to remove the burning Bloody Soul from his chest, but it was impossible.

Rapid footsteps came from the distance. Meng Chao also heard a lot of machinery, so everyone probably came in motorized armor.

With such a major lineup, it was definitely the major fighting force of the gangs.

"You're done for." Meng Chao stared at the person who looked like him.

Even when they were close to each other, he still could not see any flaws in his appearance.

Unfortunately, no matter how good his disguise was, it was useless.

“I don’t care who you are, the game is over. When the major forces from the gangs arrive and see two Meng Chaos, everything will come to light!” Meng Chao said clearly.

The imitator blinked and smiled again.

With quite a lot of effort, he swung his arms as if he wanted to clap and cheer for Meng Chao.

But since he had a heavy saber stuck in his chest, it was difficult for him to clap.

He could only give Meng Chao a thumbs up. He even shook his thumb a little at him.

“You’re good, Meng Chao. You actually managed to destroy my plans repeatedly and even guessed how I would react. It’s no wonder why the White Spirit, Earthquake, and the Demonic Abyss Eye lost to you in the end!”

The imitator’s smile became strange.

His voice also gradually became different from Meng Chao’s.

It was a rustling sound, as if vermin were crawling all over the place. It was a strange sound that caused great discomfort.

The imitator laughed and said, “But I’m different from them. Our game has just started.”

Meng Chao felt his skin crawl.

Judging by the imitator’s tone, he actually placed himself higher than the White Spirit, Earthquake, and the Demonic Abyss Eye.

Could it be that he was an it and a Supernatural Entity?

But if it were really a Supernatural Entity, even if Meng Chao’s return to the past had caused a butterfly effect so the Supernatural Entities had not yet evolved to their final form, it should not have been so easy to kill one of them.

“Wh-Who in the world are you?” Meng Chao asked sternly.

“You can call me Vortex.”

And just as Meng Chao expected, the creature said a name that made him shudder.

The man’s eyes turned into two bottomless vortices.

“As a reward for you being able to force me to this point and make me reveal my real self, I can give you... a small hint about the next stage of the game.” The Vortex smiled in a bizarre fashion. “The person you killed is the youngest and favorite son of Black Bone’s gang leader.

“Black Bone lost a lot of elites during the explosion in Leprosy Village this morning. The gang leader is currently furious, and to make him happy, his beloved son decided to go after your life, but you stabbed

him through the chest and he died a horrible death. Take a guess, with how hot-tempered Black Bone's gang leader is, how is he going to deal with you?"

"Wh-What ?" A bad feeling rose in Meng Chao's heart. "The people I killed are all wanted criminals and former Reaper Squad members!"

"Yes, aside from this one."

Vortex looked down at its pierced chest, then at Bloody Soul, which was stuck in the wall. It was a unique weapon that had no copy in Dragon City and was Meng Chao's signature weapon.

Vortex cackled.

Chapter 557: Crafted Skin

Meng Chao noticed that while cackling the Vortex was starting to sweat a lot.

Its sweat was slightly yellow in color. It was murky and sticky, and it gushed out of thousands of pores at the same time. That amount of sweat surpassed the limit that a normal person would sweat after a fierce fight.

Of course, the Vortex was never a normal human. Instead, it was a biochemical weapon that had been modified using the most advanced genes.

He—It was like a melting wax statue.

The facial features that were originally incredibly similar to Meng Chao's became unclear. They turned into semi-transparent liquid wax that slowly dripped down.

As the liquid wax on the surface fell away, the person who was impaled to the wall by Meng Chao's Bloody Soul became someone else entirely.

It was a young man with a pale and ugly face.

He also looked a little arrogant and wild, but his features were completely distorted due to pain.

His eyes were wide open, and the blood vessels surrounding his pupils had snapped. They were devoured by the pupils that were continuously becoming larger. In the end, his pupils and eyeballs became forever frozen.

And as more liquid wax gushed out, dripped, and fell off the body, his size shrank by 10%.

His bones and muscles twitched, and his height and shoulder width shrank by different degrees. His pectoral muscles, which originally looked like an armor, now looked really thin and shriveled.

At that moment, he no longer looked like Meng Chao.

But if that wasn't enough, Meng Chao also saw a huge tattoo on the body's neck that went down to the chest.

It was two intersecting black bones pierced by a sharp blade—Black Bone's tattoo.

It was even drawn arrogantly with fluorescent paint, which was why the tattoo shone with a really bewitching, neon light in the darkness. It looked like bones burning like will-o'-the-wisp. There was just no way anyone could mistake it.

And there was no need for anyone to have such a conceited-looking tattoo, unless he was someone important in Black Bone.

Meng Chao felt as if his scalp had been infested by an ant's nest. He felt a crawling sensation like never before.

Once the order in Dragon City stabilized and the violent acts among humans slowly decreased, the gangs sought to change their jobs and used more legal and safer ways to get excess benefits.

The nine strongest gangs in Dragon City from the early days had changed a long time ago and set up the Survival Committee in the name of the nine great mega corporations to rule over Dragon City.

Gangs in the lair like Golden Tooth, Poison Scorpion, and Wild Wolves might not be as strong as the mega corporations and held in check by others, so they often did dirty and illegal work, but they also wanted to wash their hands clean and move from being traditional gangs to being mega corporations that had food and beverage, entertainment, trading, pharmaceutical, biochemical modification, and weapons creations companies under them.

Even the Underground Emperor was not someone brutal who murdered people at a whim.

Golden Tooth and Poison Scorpion were both large gangs in the lair, and when they treated important guests from the outside, they abided by the rules of etiquette even more than many of the industries outside. The reason was simple: the gambling sites, wild game restaurants, monster coliseums, and the oldest profession among humans could not be maintained with the tiny bit of spending power in the lair.

If they did not have thousands of citizens to support their business, no matter how powerful the gangs were, they would still starve to death.

However, Black Bone was the abnormality among the gangs.

While most gangs were aiming to change their jobs and become industrialized, corporalized, legalized, and blend into society, Black Bone remained stubborn and wanted to obey the law of the jungle and the rule of the strong, which had existed during the dark era when all order collapsed.

Black Bone was the one gang that did not mind using brute force in Golden Tooth Lair.

It was also the most domineering and unyielding gang.

It was so unyielding that even the manager of Golden Tooth Lair Saber Jin Wanhao found them troublesome.

Black Bone had also gathered fearless fighters, so their strength was second only to Golden Tooth.

Its gang leader's nickname was Phantom Bear, and he was one of the elite of the old generation who had not died yet after fighting for decades in the zombie crisis and the Monster War.

Aside from Saber Jin Wanhao, he did not listen to anyone else in the lair.

And the lair was a chaotic and complicated place. Even if Golden Tooth worked together with Poison Scorpion and the other gangs to suppress Black Bone at full force, all sides would end up heavily injured.

Black Bone also received support from one of the nine great mega corporations—Universe Corporation.

Universe Corporation's rival was Sky Pillar Corporation, which was the earliest corporation to mine ores to refine and create weapons. They were also the strongest in this field.

Universe Corporation was the challenger who popped up later. Because of it, it had to use more extreme and invasive strategies to challenge Sky Pillar Corporation.

Black Bone was Universe Corporation's foot soldier in the lair, and it did not depend on luck to become a domineering force.

Earlier, the Vortex had mentioned that the person Meng Chao killed was Phantom Bear Xiong Wei's favorite son.

It was only at that moment that Meng Chao finally understood what was going on!

He also heard slurping sounds right then.

Then, he saw something unbelievable.

More sticky liquid wax flowed out of the heir of Black Bone. Its speed was getting faster.

The liquid wax originally gathered in a pool at his feet due to gravity, but once more of it blended together, the murky and sticky yellow wax gained a crystalline, semi-transparent quality. It extended its tentacles to the area around it like a mollusca that was alive!

Meng Chao had never met such a strange life form before.

He swung his chain saber and stabbed this creature.

But the creature was like glue. Its body split up before gathering together once more in front of the chain saber. It was not affected in the slightest.

Meng Chao swung his chain saber a second time.

This time, he activated the spirit energy magnetic fields for the flames and electrical arcs.

The burning flames and crackling electrical arcs surged into the creature, but not only did they not destroy the functions of its cells, they seemed to have charged it up, for it began to move even faster than before.

It released a squeaking noise as if it was mocking Meng Chao's vain efforts.

Then, it charged into the darkness of the maze like flowing water.

Based on its formless, shadowless and unfathomable body, it could go through any ventilation pipe, drain, door opening, or crack that was wider than 0.1mm. There was almost nowhere it couldn't get in or flee to.

'This is the Vortex's true self!'

Meng Chao came to a swift realization.

He had clearly joined the hunting squad on a whim yesterday night and his body's current shape had been unknown to everyone right then. Because of this, he was confused about how the enemy was able to create such a believable disguise in just a few hours.

But he knew now. The Vortex's real form was clearly some sort of mollusca that had received advanced biochemical modifications. It could turn itself into whatever living creature it desired.

Of course, since it had no bones, it had limited mass, so it was impossible for it to create a human out of the blue.

That was why it could only attach itself to another human and turn itself into a believable human skin, or rather, it turned itself into "crafted skin" that possessed high intelligence and was incredibly terrifying.

This was its most sinister aspect.

It first devoured the favorite son of Black Bone's gang leader and controlled his body to fight against Meng Chao so that it could lure Meng Chao into killing it.

And just as it wanted, Meng Chao's Bloody Soul stabbed the heir's chest and completely burned his heart!

When Meng Chao saw that the Vortex was about to flee into the darkness, he tossed his chain saber a third time.

This time, he did not throw it at the Vortex. Instead, he threw it at a corpse nearby.

They were on the battlefield between the pursuers and the ambushers.

There were many corpses strewn around Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's corpse.

The pursuers had been caught off guard and ambushed. Many of them did not have the time to fire all of their ammunition.

Meng Chao's chain saber moved like a snake and wrapped itself around a heavy Sam Brown Bell that was stuffed full of hand grenades.

He curled up his little finger, and the Sam Brown Belt soared above the Vortex's head.

Flames and electrical arcs clashed against each other again, igniting all the fuzes of the hand grenades.

BOOOOMMM!

Dozens of fireballs and thousands of shrapnel pieces spinning at high speed went toward the Vortex.

Even if this Supernatural Entity was modified with top biochemical modification technology, it had to obey the most basic laws of biology.

It might be able to change its form and be as unpredictable as it wanted like other viscous liquids, but it had to pay the price of its offense and defense being diminished.

Based on what Meng Chao remembered, the Vortex was not famous for its fighting strength and was not a monster which had a direct hand in damaging Dragon City.

Instead, it was the most mysterious assassin that hid in the shadows.

In this life, it had yet to evolve into its final form, so Meng Chao was certain that it could not possibly be impenetrable to physical attacks.

Just as he expected, a piercing cry came from beneath the dozens of overlapping fireballs.

The mocking smile the Vortex had when everything was in its control and when it was certain that it was victorious finally turned into anger and a pathetic screech.

A strong stench of something burnt rose in the air.

It was as if someone had poured heated oil on a toad.

But of course, since the Vortex was a Supernatural Entity, even if its real body was a mollusca, it could not be destroyed with just dozens of hand grenades.

When Meng Chao wrapped his chain saber around his right arm and rushed over, he saw a charred and miserable looking thing crawling into a pipe above a hidden door of a maintenance room.

To ensure that the imitator died, Meng Chao had engaged in a war of attrition against him at the cost of having both people heavily wounded. Because of it, he did not have the power to blast the entire maintenance pipe and catch the Vortex's tail.

Besides, the Vortex had other subordinates. The monster puppets made up of wanted criminals and former Reaper Squad members had definitely set up fatal traps in the dark.

Meng Chao thought about this for a while before he gave up on the useless chase. He knelt down on the ground to search through the explosion site carefully, and he found some black traces. They came from burned protein.

When the creature did not attach itself to a human body, its offensive and defensive abilities were indeed not strong. It could be damaged by physical attacks, which was something that made Meng Chao release a sigh of relief.

He turned around to search for the Vortex's weapon.

He soon found that a Red Radiance Jade of a pretty good quality was embedded in the red saber. After it was refined through unique methods, it looked no different from a Red Radiance Jade crystal marrow at first glance.

Unfortunately, since it had been overloaded with spirit energy and the saber had snapped in two, the crystal had shattered and become powder.

Chapter 558: Crucial Trust

Meng Chao also found the chain saber that the Vortex had used.

It was another counterfeit. It looked like it had runic symbols carved into it and a crystal embedded in it, and when the imitator swung it, it released really cool lightning effects.

But the crystal was low-grade, and the runic symbols were not very clear. There were a few missing strokes and wrong symbols, which gave it a sense of crudeness.

Sabers with Red Radiance Jade and chain sabers were actually pretty common weapons.

With just these two shattered weapons alone, it would not be enough to prove that someone had been imitating him.

Meng Chao then returned to the wall to investigate the Black Bone heir's corpse.

He had been wary of the other's strength and had not been merciful when he attacked. His saber had been enveloped by unstoppable spirit flames, and when he pierced the heir's body, he also burned his heart, trachea, and lungs.

Just like Rattlesnake Xiang Wei, the Black Bone heir had already stopped breathing. Even if Asclepius himself arrived, he could not be saved.

Meng Chao then carefully compared the Black Bone heir's chest wound with the wound on Rattlesnake Xiang Wei's chest.

The two wounds were not made by simple tears and stabs.

Instead, they had been burnt by flames and electricity, so some of the tissues had already carbonized or even turned into powder.

Unless there was an experienced veteran forensic scientist around who could carry out the most detailed dissection in a lab with a complete set of equipment, it would be difficult to tell that the two fatal wounds did not come from the same weapon.

Right then, however, they did not have the time nor the facilities to slowly investigate the corpses.

Disorderly footsteps came from the distance.

The major forces of the lair had arrived.

Meng Chao quickly sized up the battlefield. His blood, hair, and fingerprints covered the ground and a lot of the corpses.

And forgetting about Rattlesnake Xiang Wei for the moment, the Black Bone heir had really been killed by Meng Chao.

Aside from the fatal wound on his chest, there were also nearly one hundred other wounds of various sizes on his body. All of them were left by Meng Chao.

This showed that before he died, he fought fiercely with his target.

Meng Chao's body was also covered in the Black Bone heir's fingerprints and hair.

And worse still, Meng Chao's skin would probably be found under his fingernails.

This was all perfect, indisputable, and concrete “evidence”.

When Meng Chao returned his gaze to the Black Bone heir’s face and saw how distorted it was from extreme pain, he did not dare to bet that Phantom Bear Xiong Wei would be able to remain calm. Not after learning that his son had died a horrible death.

But even if the man could remain calm, he would tie up Meng Chao and put him under all sorts of restraints that would limit his fighting strength, then throw him into a dark cell. He would never let Meng Chao join the investigation.

This was something Meng Chao could not accept.

There were still ten hours before Leprosy Village went completely out of control.

They were in a critical situation, so he could not allow his and Dragon City’s fate to fall into other people’s hands.

Before the major forces from the gangs arrived, Meng Chao stole eight emergency kits from the corpses on the ground and quietly left the battlefield.

“Let’s go.” He returned to the corner and picked up Su Mulian.

Now that they had been acquainted for half a day, Su Mulian did not seem to be as terrified of him as when she first heard his name.

However, when Meng Chao grabbed her wrist, goosebumps still covered her skin as if the person who grabbed her was a monstrosity that looked like a tiger and had venomous fangs.

But she did not resist or ask any questions. She only followed Meng Chao obediently and retreated into the darkness.

Manager Song Jinbo of Glory Entertainment and Golden Tooth’s military adviser was waiting obediently in the darkness as well.

At that moment, Song Jinbo was scowling, as if he was thinking about something.

“Aren’t you going to run?” Meng Chao asked.

“I already did,” Song Jinbo mumbled. “But when I was hiding in the dark, I heard someone shout that you brought people over to ambush the pursuers and surrounded Rattlesnake Xiang Wei.”

“You didn’t believe it?” Meng Chao asked.

Song Jinbo smiled bitterly. “I don’t know whether I should believe it.

“The time doesn’t match up. Based on those people’s shouts, the fighting started more than ten minutes ago. At that time, you had begun slaughtering the gang members, and a few of the pursuers saw your face clearly.

“The problem is, at that time, you were carrying me while running through the tunnel toward the battlefield.

“How could a person appear at two places at the same time?”

“Good. As expected of a man who managed to become the manager of Glory Entertainment. You’re indeed not some ordinary person. Perhaps you’re the key that will help us unravel the mystery behind the scheme and save the lair,” Meng Chao said. “But we can’t stay here for long. We’ve already stepped into an even more dangerous trap. Let’s go back and discuss what we’ve learned. Then, we’ll be able to figure out how to launch a much fiercer counterattack!”

Song Jinbo hesitated for a moment, then made up his mind. He gritted his teeth and followed Meng Chao. They left the chaotic darkness as fast as they could.

The trio ran for a long time before Su Mulian tugged Meng Chao’s sleeve gently and dragged him to the side.

“Wait. We’re missing one person,” Su Mulian whispered. “Where is A’Ji? That child is still on the battlefield.”

“I know,” Meng Chao replied faintly. “It’s fine. Ignore him.”

“What?” Su Mulian asked in disbelief. Her eyes were wide from surprise. “We brought him out of Leprosy Village, but he’s still a boy. How could we just cast him aside?”

“Since he managed to survive until now, it means he was born lucky.” Meng Chao smiled confidently. “Trust me. I don’t think he’s a regular child. If we let him roam freely on his own for some time, he might come back on his own and bring us a pleasant surprise.”

Su Mulian could not understand what Meng Chao meant, but he did not intend to explain any further.

Even so, Su Mulian decided to believe him unconditionally, just like usual.

The trio walked past multiple twists and turns before they returned to the shelter they had found earlier.

Meng Chao injected four gene medicines into himself and drank a week’s worth of high-calorie nutritional fluid.

Then, he cast two Middle Stage Healing Skills and five Initial Stage Healing Skills.

With Su Mulian’s healing working together with Kindling’s healing, he released a long sigh after five minutes, and some color returned to his cheeks.

He gave a simplified version of the entire event to Song Jinbo. He chose to tell only the most important parts as well as the fact that he saw the Vortex’s real face.

Song Jinbo was first dumbfounded, then shocked.

“If it’s really as you said, then we only have ten hours left before the situation in Leprosy Village worsens to the point of no return!

“And during these precious ten hours, the gangs’ attention has been shifted by the abnormal beast to you, so it’s about to be wasted!

“Phantom Bear Xiong Wei does indeed have a favorite son named Xiong Ying. He has a fluorescent tattoo on his neck, and it shines ridiculously bright in the dark or when he circulates spirit energy.

“Xiong Wei has seven children. His eldest son and second daughter died in battle early on, while the other four children are only of mediocre talents. They will have a hard time taking up the responsibility for the whole gang. But his youngest son showed talent for cultivation since young, and his appearance and personality were very similar to those of his father, so he was loved by Xiong Wei. It was also a reason why he intended to teach him and make him inherit Black Bone.

“If the person you killed is really Xiong Ying, Phantom Bear Xiong Wei will go mad!”

Meng Chao smiled in anguish. “Alright, looks like to the gangs and the outside world, I haven’t just killed Bullet Xue Wei. I’ve also killed Rattlesnake Xiang Wei and Xiong Ying, the heir of Black Bone.

“Worse still, I did indeed kill Xiong Ying. All the clues left on the battlefield will prove that I killed him. This is what you call indisputable evidence!”

Su Mulian looked at Song Jinbo with hopeful eyes. “Thank goodness you’re willing to trust us, Manager Song. Could you explain to everyone that Meng Chao was with us at that time? You could tell them that he couldn’t have possibly had the time to kill Rattlesnake Xiang Wei while Xiong Wei was an accident because of the Vortex’s actions?”

“Of course I would be willing to explain it, but would the furious Black Bone leader believe me?” Song Jinbo asked. “I’m from Golden Tooth. The deceased Xiong Ying is from Black Bone. Black Bone and their supporter, Universe Corporation, are both eager for success and extremely ambitious. They’ve always had a delicate relationship with Golden Tooth.

“The situation right now is really messy, and this matter is just bizarre and odd. If I were Phantom Bear Xiong Wei, I wouldn’t readily believe anything anyone says.

“Forget about Phantom Bear Xiong Wei, I don’t even have the confidence that I’d be able to convince the people from Golden Tooth, because the key isn’t to explain this matter, it’s to explain this matter within ten hours while the abnormal beast continues fanning the flames. The difficulty of the latter is more than ten times higher than the former!”

“That’s right. Manager Song, you’ll definitely be of crucial help, so we can’t send you over to make crude explanations,” Meng Chao said calmly. “The Vortex might seem to have gained the upper hand in the current situation and cornered us, but it’s not as if we don’t have trump cards that will allow us to launch a counterattack.

“Our first trump card is that we gained Manager Song’s trust; he’ll be a key figure. He also understands the situation among the gangs.

“Our second trump card is that I dealt physical damage to the Vortex, which shows that it might be able to change its shape and disguise itself as anyone, but when it’s not attached to anyone, its offensive and defensive abilities are relatively weak.

“The most important thing I learned, however, is that it can’t withstand heat. When it’s burned by flames, the carbonized substances it leaves behind is different from the substances left by normal people when burned.”

In truth, Meng Chao had more trump cards, but those cards were not fully under his control. For example, the “child” who went missing mysteriously.

Meng Chao could only act according to the situation.

Right then, the most important thing was to figure out the situation. “Manager Song, where are Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong, Snake Eye Mo Lan, and the other key witnesses?”

Before, Song Jinbo thought that Meng Chao was on the monsters’ side and refused to speak even when threatened with death.

After that was cleared up, he naturally shared what he knew. “They’re in Lair Clinic, the best medical center in the lair. They’re together with the veteran hunters and elites who managed to escape. They’re being treated and are under observation.”

Chapter 559: Kill On Sight?

Meng Chao thought about it and asked, “You didn’t send them outside to be treated?”

“We couldn’t,” Song Jinbo said. “The super crystal bomb explosion was extremely strong. They might have successfully escaped, but they were heavily injured. Many people’s spines were damaged, and many of them also lost more than 70% of blood. Quite a number of them showed symptoms of severe concussions and cerebral hemorrhages.

“If it weren’t for the astonishing constitution of Heaven Realm superhumans and they were normal people or even Earth Realm superhumans, they would have died a couple of times over.

“Such people couldn’t be transported rashly and go through any bumps. But we couldn’t delay their treatment either, so we raced against time to save them in the lair.

“Besides, it’s also impossible for us to transfer those who only have minor injuries. The lair has been fully locked down. When it comes to people and resources, you can only come in, not out.”

This was within Meng Chao’s expectations.

Nie Chenglong, the vice director of the abnormal beast research department, had told him that if the hunting squad failed, they would temporarily lock down the lair in an attempt to suppress the monster inside, because they were facing an unprecedented lack of fighting power and resources. It was impossible for them to mobilize a lot of fighting power to send into the lair before the pitched battle at the borders of Dragon City came to an end.

If Meng Chao placed himself in the shoes of the highest ranked commander and found out that there were multiple monster hordes around Dragon City accompanied by a large number of Apocalyptic Beasts, he would do the same thing.

But what Meng Chao was concerned about was another thing. “Are the communications between the lair and the outside world smooth? Can you contact the commander outside?”

“They’re not very smooth. Ever since the super crystal bomb explosion, the spirit energy magnetic field within and outside the lair has become really chaotic and complex. Practically all communications suffer from interference or are blocked. We can only send people to the contact points between the lair and the outside world to communicate with them face to face.

“The problem is, we don’t really understand the situation inside the lair, especially the Leprosy Village. Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and Snake Eye Mo Lan’s brain cells and vitality magnetic fields have received huge impacts from the spirit energy tsunami, so they’re feeling a little confused. Aside from having a deep impression that you betrayed Dragon City and joined the monsters, they didn’t provide a lot of valuable information.

“The outside world is also in the dark about this, so they can’t carry out any effective operations. They can only provide a large amount of medical resources and other stuff for relief so that we can store them in our warehouses. It’s all to ensure the daily needs of the lair citizens and get through the most difficult days.”

“This means that you don’t lack medical resources and relief aid for the time being.” Meng Chao sighed in relief. His mind raced, and he suddenly noticed one thing. “Wait, the news of me betraying Dragon City and joining the monsters has already traveled outside?”

“Of course,” Song Jinbo said. “You faced multiple obstacles in this hunting operation. You were led around the nose by the abnormal beast right from the start. In the end, the explosion of the super crystal bomb destroyed most of the mobile forces from the government and the gangs, and they were the ones who ensured control of the lair.

“This is a bizarre scheme. It would have been impossible for the abnormal beast to succeed if there was no traitor working with it.

“Zhou Chong, Mo Lan, and Xiang Wei all ‘saw’ your true colors. This is an important piece of information, so they definitely sent it out at first notice.”

“Then?” Meng Chao asked. “What was the attitude of the outside world once the news traveled out? How are they going to deal with me?”

“They sent a kill on sight order,” Song Jinbo said. “Otherwise, how could I have possibly gone with Rattlesnake Xiang Wei and led a squad to kill you?”

Meng Chao frowned a little.

He felt that things were not that simple.

Even though Zhou Chong, Mo Lan, and Xiang Wei all “saw” him killing people and chatting with Bloody Slaughter Gao Yang, his motive for joining the monsters was just too weak.

He had been enjoying success in Dragon City with the memories from his previous life. Be it his cultivation realm, Superstar, or large organizations like the Broken Star Club and Blue Home, all of them had endless space for development.

It was not impossible for Superstar to become the tenth mega corporation and join the nine great mega corporations.

His current life was different from his previous life. After they won in the northern offense, Dragon City had been on the offense all the time. The might of human civilization was revealed, and things were going great for them.

Why was there a need for him to cast aside his bright future and join the monster civilization when it was about to die the moment it was born?

There was just no reason for it!

Hence, even if Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and Snake Eye Mo Lan gave vivid descriptions, the outside world should take their words with a grain of salt.

After all, Nie Chenglong was still in control of the overall situation outside and Meng Chao was deeply involved with the abnormal beast research department.

The department had also provided secret investments to and bought secret shares from Superstar.

Nie Chenglong also had plans to develop the Broken Star Club into the abnormal beast research department's outside organization through Meng Chao. After all, the club had a few hundred thousand members.

They had a close, mutually beneficial relationship. It was the reason why the abnormal beast research department allocated a high-end apartment to him in their apartment complex for employees at a price that was basically them giving the apartment to him as a gift.

He was bound tightly to the abnormal beast research department, so how could Nie Chenglong have possibly released a kill on sight order without prior investigation?

After all, once Meng Chao died, his status as a traitor would be set in stone, and the reputation of the abnormal beast research department would definitely be affected since after the Noble Descent Hotel ambush, he and Lu Siya became the model superhuman and super newbie that the abnormal beast research department supported!

"Man-eating Shark Zhou Chong and Snake Eye Mo Lan belong to the insurance companies under various mega corporations, so they are in no way connected to the abnormal beast research department. It's impossible for Nie Chenglong to trust them unconditionally, much less rashly give the order to kill me on sight. The more logical order would be to subjugate me, and unless it's absolutely necessary, to not kill me. Otherwise, I'd be unable to give my testimony."

Meng Chao's mind raced, and he asked gravely, "Manager Song, how do you know that the outside world gave the order to kill me on sight? Did you personally hear the commander outside say this?"

Song Jinbo was a little taken aback by this, then shook his head and said, "I didn't. The wireless communications between the lair and the outside world were cut off a long time ago. It's hard for the gangs to receive direct orders from the outside world, but it's what Mr. Jin said.

"Mr. Jin was the one who gave the order to kill you on sight. He offered a high bounty and summoned all the gang members to ensure that we will definitely be able to kill you, so we acted based on our orders."

Mr. Jin was Jin Wanhao.

He was the Saber, the gang leader of Golden Tooth, and the Underground Emperor of Dragon City.

It was said that he was one of the few people in the lair who could speak directly to the outside world in this chaotic situation.

“Manager Song, did you personally hear Saber Jin Wanhao say those things?”

“I didn’t. Our vice gang leader, Red Brows Su Lun, gave us Mr. Jin’s orders,” Song Jinbo replied. “I did hear from Su Lun personally, though, and I definitely saw Mr. Jin’s written order to kill you on sight.”

“Red Brows Su Lun...” Meng Chao said in a contemplative manner. “Then, why didn’t Saber Jin Wanhao personally come out and give you such an important order?”

“I must say, Dragon City is currently in a pitched battle at its borders, which will decide its destiny, but trouble is brewing in the lair and Leprosy Village is in a mess.

“Even a blind man can see just how critical the situation is right now.

“But even after things have progressed to this state, Saber Jin Wanhao hasn’t come out to take control of the situation. Instead, he asked Red Brows Su Lun to send word. Don’t you find it strange?”

“It’s been like this for the past few years,” Song Jinbo said. “Vice Gang Leader Su has long since turned into Mr. Jin’s stand-in.”

Saber Jin Wanhao was the same as Battle God Lei Zongchao. They were both people who belonged to the earliest batch of Earth transmigrators who got into contact with spirit energy, cultivated their cells, and awakened to supernatural abilities.

In their era, there were no scientifically proven cultivation methods, no medicine that could nourish the cells and nurture the body, and they had to fight against enemies that numbered to hundreds of times their number. The environment was so horrible that the superhumans of the current day and age would have a hard time imagining it.

They fought day and night, and every day, they had more than one hundred wounds of varying sizes.

Later, they tried to imitate the Chinese myth of Shennong tasting hundreds of herbs and used all sorts of monster materials that had yet to be processed to cultivate and treat their wounds.

It was common for them to go through spirit energy deviation.

They risked their lives every day and walked on a tightrope above hell. Even a God of War made of metal would be unable to withstand this.

Hence, most of the older generation elites had countless hidden injuries and were suppressing them with their cultivation realms.

The time they spent at the peak of their fighting strength was usually very short.

They were like shooting stars who risked everything for a moment. They drained their lives to shine brighter than anyone and light up the road ahead of Dragon City. Once that moment was over, though, they died fallen on the land.

This was the reason why Battle God Lei Zongchao, the strongest in Dragon City, had been in a state of semi-retirement after he set up the Survival Committee and did not take up any positions inside.

But the Battle God had a transcendent position. Since he was the publicly acknowledged savior, best citizen of the city, and the creator of the Survivor Committee, the nine great mega corporations brought

out many resources to support him and maintain his glorious image of a master of his generation so that he could enjoy his late years.

But Saber Jin Wanhao was not as lucky as Battle God Lei Zongchao.

He might be the Underground Emperor, but he was old and covered in wounds. Yet he still needed to drag along his injury-laden body to fight against the wanted criminals, lost people, and all sorts of evil creatures who snuck into the lair.

“The gangs are naturally not as glorious and righteous as the mega corporations, but in truth, we also maintain the order in Dragon City,” Song Jinbo said. “We’re in charge of maintaining the region that is the most complicated, chaotic, and difficult to manage.

“The lost people who went through spirit energy deviation and became addicted to killing love entering the lair after they committed heinous crimes in the outside world. The world also speaks of the lair as the paradise for crimes and the hotbed of evil, making it sound like we welcome these evil wanted criminals.

“But honestly? The gangs are no different from other companies. Everyone is working for money, so no one likes these people who create chaos and destroy order.

“If they stay put after they run into the lair and keep to themselves, we might turn a blind eye, but if they refuse to change their ways and become restless, we and even Mr. Jin himself don’t show mercy!”

Chapter 560: God of Wealth

Song Jinbo told Meng Chao that over the past few years, Saber Jin Wanhao did a lot of things to maintain the order in the lair. The number of wanted criminals he personally killed was even higher than what the most outstanding adjudicators in the secret police could mention.

The lair was not a shelter for wanted criminals, unlike what the outside world said.

Many of the wanted criminals who committed heinous crimes in the outside world were targeted the moment they entered the lair.

The gangs naturally had their own secret methods. They first obtained their trust, then released bait and set up traps, and finally, made them disappear from the world without a sound.

However, compared to the reputation for killing wanted criminals, Saber Jin Wanhao was more concerned about the practical benefits.

That was why he was willing to let others take the credit in exchange for the mega corporations and the Supernatural Tower agreeing to his status of the Underground Emperor as well as letting him gain a large amount of benefits from the gray industries.

Unfortunately, even if he had reached Deity Realm, he was not a real deity, and it was difficult for him to escape the corrosion of time.

Saber Jin Wanhao had accumulated countless injuries from his days of fighting in the early years, and after he took control of the lair, he still had to face the troubles of society.

The high-intensity fighting had long since destroyed his body, and he was staying alive only with the assistance of spirit energy.

In a fierce fight five years ago, he killed the third ranked wanted criminal on the Supernatural Tower's bounty list. That person was known as Corpse Eating Phantom Ju Xiao, and he agitated the hundreds of hidden injuries in Saber Jin Wanhao's body. They began to wreak havoc within him.

Even though he managed to kill Corpse Eating Phantom, he was heavily injured, and his vitality magnetic field was almost destroyed. His spirit energy became really unstable, and it crashed into his limbs and organs all day long.

To prevent his spirit meridians from drying up, his genes from going out of control, and his cells from combusting, Saber Jin Wanhao turned a cultivation room in the headquarters of Golden Tooth into an advanced medical cabin.

From then on, he seldom came out. He stayed in the room to train and almost never appeared in public.

When it was absolutely necessary for him to show up, he wore a unique, air-tight medical suit that was basically the equivalent of a mobile, wearable medical cabin.

Of course, even while heavily injured, Saber Jin Wanhao still retained his intimidating presence of the Underground Emperor.

Rumors of him being heavily wounded and not having long to live started circulating soon after he built the cabin. A number of ambitious people in Golden Tooth became restless and started coveting the throne of the Underground Emperor.

However, when two of the most arrogant and foolish challengers died an untimely death without even knowing how, people like them learned that even if he only had one breath left, the Underground Emperor was still the Underground Emperor.

There could only be one Underground Emperor in Dragon City, and that was Saber Jin Wanhao!

From then onwards, all the elites in the gangs kept their eyes fixed on Phantom Xiong Wei, the gang leader of Black Bone.

If this older generation elite who was wild and hot-tempered did not dare, did not want, or did not desire to formally challenge Saber Jin Wanhao's power, no one else would dare to have the thought of replacing him.

Phantom Bear Xiong Wei might be arrogant, but he was not stupid.

He managed to survive through the zombie crisis, so he naturally had his own ways of survival. He knew who he should not offend and who was extremely dangerous.

Even though Black Bone was expanding its influence over the years and were showing signs of wanting to challenge Golden Tooth, Phantom Bear Xiong Wei never crossed Saber Jin Wanhao's line. The two sides coexisted peacefully and maintained a delicate balance.

The people in the upper and middle management of Golden Tooth like Song Jinbo gradually became used to Saber Jin Wanhao's style of giving remote commands and seldom appearing in front of them.

Mr. Jin was the spiritual leader of the lair, but the specific tasks in the gang were done by the vice gang leader, Red Brows Su Lun.

“What sort of person is your vice gang leader?” Meng Chao asked with a pensive expression.

“Vice Gang Leader Su... is a uniquely talented person. He’s different from us.”

Song Jinbo told Meng Chao that most of the gang members in the lair were poor people born and bred in the lair. They were hot-tempered, violent, and really good at fighting.

It was difficult for them to turn the gangs into corporations and standardize and legalize their activities so they could become a proper business.

But Red Brows Su Lun did not come from the lair. He was a graduate student from Dragon City University.

Apparently, he had a lot of academic degrees in the fields of finance and psychology. He also had a deep understanding of fields like corporate management and mass media. He had even dabbled in them before.

In the past, Saber Jin Wanhao held an opinion against the majority and hired a professional manager so that Golden Tooth as well as the entire lair could change.

And once Red Brows Su Lun took up the position, he never disappointed.

The original lair had plenty of restaurants, gambling sites, black markets, coliseums, unique entertainment centers, and other hit projects, but the negative impression about the lair had been around for decades. In the eyes of normal citizens, it was an evil hotbed with a bad environment, where the good and bad mixed together, and a place where their safety would be at risk.

Even though plenty of people wanted to seek entertainment in the lair, they usually reconsidered their wishes and, due to their various worries, did not go into the lair in the end.

The gangs had thought about cleaning the environment, restraining their gang members, and upgrading their services to attract tourists, but if they went overboard, they would lose the characteristic of the lair and would become the same as the residential areas outside, which meant that they would also lose the unique nature that made them so attractive.

Red Brows Su Lun suggested a series of reasonable upgrading strategies tailored to the unique nature of the lair.

One of them was to renovate, modify, and add all sorts of valuable services to the gambling sites, coliseums, and entertainment facilities under Golden Tooth.

Then, through a series of business cooperations, alliances, and mutual equity participations, they ensured that the gangs could get a share of the profit, so all the gangs shared the same interests. Through this method, he reduced the conflict between the gangs and increased the tourists’ sense of safety.

At the same time, he paid a large amount of money to install a lot of internet based stations in the lair, which led to all the residents having access to the internet in their homes. He also helped the gangs

provide all sorts of online services so that they could use the newest technology to unveil the mysteries of the lair.

It stirred up the people's curiosity and told the people outside that the lair was not as terrifying as the rumors made it out to be. Instead, it was filled with temptation and excitement that they could not find in the world outside.

Red Brows Su Lun also used the connections he built in the outside world in the past to open up a brand new pool of customer sources for Golden Tooth and the other gangs.

The customers he brought to the coliseums and gambling sites provided a never-ending cash flow.

Hence, even though Red Brows Su Lun was the vice gang leader of Golden Tooth, he had a good reputation among the gangs.

Many people said that he was the lair's God of Wealth.

There might be people who refused to obey Saber Jin Wanhao and Phantom Bear Xiong Wei, but no one would say no to money.

"So, you're saying that Vice Gang Leader Su has great prestige in Golden Tooth Lair?" Meng Chao asked.

"Prestige..." Song Jinbo thought about it. "I would put it this way: There are three people in the gangs with the greatest presence. Everyone has respect for Mr. Jin, fear for Phantom Bear Xiong Wei, and love for Red Brows Su Lun.

"Everyone in the gangs loves Red Brows Su Lun, just like how everyone loves money and crystals."

"Then, who is calling the shots in the lair now? Is it Red Brows Su Lun?"

"Right now, all the leaders of the gangs are gathered together and discuss the matters of the monster invasion in the lair, the Deification Capsules, and the full lockdown," Song Jinbo said. "Vice Gang Leader is very smart and has a lot of plans. He also came from the outside world. His membership in the alumni association of Dragon City University is also something that normal gang members don't have.

"He is the most informed person, and he has the most options available to solve the problem. He is also trusted by Mr. Jin, so it's natural that his words hold the most weight.

"After all, while Phantom Bear Xiong Wei is strong, everyone knows that if we want to solve the current crisis, we can't just fight our way through it.

"Even Xiong Wei himself knows that this isn't the time to rush to the frontlines like fools. He's willing to set aside the competition between the gangs and listen to Vice Gang Leader Su's suggestions for the time being."

"So let me make some conclusions," Meng Chao said with an intense gaze. "Vice Gang Leader Su is Saber Jin Wanhao's messenger. He has a close connection to the outside world, and he's one of the few people who can get information from the world outside as well as send information from the lair to the outside.

“If he had ulterior motives, he could naturally do stuff behind Saber Jin Wanhao and the outside world’s back. He could even create fake orders from Jin Wanhao and the outside world, right?”

Song Jinbo’s heart skipped a beat. “You’re suspecting that our vice gang leader is a traitor?”

“Listen to my next question and judge yourself whether he is a traitor or not,” Meng Chao said. “Who gave the order for you and Rattlesnake Xiang Wei to kill me?”

“It’s Mr. Jin... No, Vice Gang Leader Su said that it’s Mr. Jin’s order,” Song Jinbo said.

Once he finished, he instantly widened his eyes.

“Didn’t you find it strange at that time?” Meng Chao asked. “If I had really betrayed Dragon City, I’d definitely have some monsters’ puppets beside me. How could you possibly kill me with just you and the heavily injured Rattlesnake Xiang Wei? You would just be sent to your deaths if that was the case.”

“Su Lun said that you’re cunning and wary of your surroundings. If we delay matters for even one second, you might figure out what’s going on and run away,” Song Jinbo muttered. “He told us to hold you at any cost and that he would soon send the major forces to reinforce us.”

“That’s right. You had reinforcements, but the commander wasn’t an elite like Phantom Bear Xiong Wei. Instead, it was his favorite son, the heir of Black Bone. Does this sound logical to you?” Meng Chao asked.

“Do you think that if Red Brows Su Lun was loyal to Golden Tooth and the lair and went to the leaders of the gangs through legal channels, they would just send the Black Bone heir as reinforcements?”

“Let me ask you one more question. What is the relationship between Vice Gang Leader Su and the Black Bone heir who died in my hands? Are they business partners, competitors, or enemies?”

“Th-They have a good relationship in private!” Song Jinbo said in a quivering voice. “Xiong Ying and Su Lun didn’t just share similar personalities, but also had fun together, no matter what sort of entertainment it was. They also had a close relationship of economic interest.

“Last year, they invested in an online coliseum and streamed monster fights on a livestreaming platform in the deep web. It offered a donation and online reward service, and they earned loads from it. In truth, they earned even more than the physical coliseum that belongs to Black Bone.

“This business proved Xiong Ying’s abilities and helped him gain even more favor from Xiong Wei, thus solidifying his status as the Black Bone heir.

“Hence, Xiong Ying treated Su Lun as the God of Knowledge. He was ready to pay any cost to make Su Lun join Black Bone, and he showed his sincerity by listening to everything Su Lun said!”