

Chapter 7101

For Helena, abdication was simple,

But for the Nordic royal family, it would essentially mean the end of the dynasty.

Now that the throne was in her hands, there was no one to pass it on to.

If she insisted on abdicating without an heir, there were only two outcomes.

Either the royal family would cease to exist,

And the Nordic royal family would disappear,

Or they would borrow a king from another European constitutional monarchy.

This was common before World War II,

When European royal families were mostly related.

If one's maternal uncle's family was gone, it wasn't uncommon for them to send a young person to inherit the throne.

But now, relations were relatively distant,

And the nationalistic sentiments among the local people were no longer as harmonious as before the war.

There is a general prejudice against other countries,

Making it difficult for the people to accept a member of another country's royal family as their king.

Thinking of this, Helena couldn't help but recall her grandmother's constant emphasis.

The emphasis wasn't that she absolutely had to marry Charlie or anything like that.

The emphasis was that she had to have a child.

She couldn't help but sigh inwardly,

"Grandma was right... No matter what, the royal family needs an heir..."

Seeing her fall silent and look thoughtful,

Maria stepped forward and whispered,

"Does Her Majesty the Queen also want to go to Antarctica with us?"

Helena felt she'd been seen through by the little girl and,

Embarrassed by her mischievous gaze, awkwardly muttered,

"I... I'm not as free as you, going wherever you want."

"The royal family's activities only have a few days' break."

"Soon we'll be attending various events and making friendly visits to different countries again."

She sighed softly, "I'll call again to confirm when would be a good time for you to arrive in Argentina."

Seeing her absent-mindedness,

Maria chuckled and didn't tease her further.

Helena quickly returned from her call and told the group,

"I just checked, the research vessel is currently in Ushuaia, Argentina."

"And is scheduled to depart in five days."

"As long as everyone can reach Ushuaia before departure,"

"There won't be any problems."

Charlie nodded and said,

"Then I'll coordinate the flights and depart directly from Northern Europe."

Jeremiah couldn't help but remind him,

"Mr. Wade, don't forget, the Warriors Den's hideout is on a small island in South America near Antarctica."

"Argentina is a springboard for their global reach."

"If we go directly to Argentina, won't we be walking into a trap?"

Maria smiled and said, "Young Master and I have both tracked a shipping company actually controlled by the Warriors Den and found that they do frequently have flights to and from Buenos Aires."

"But Ushuaia has never been mentioned there."

"Ushuaia is at the southernmost tip of Argentina."

"And also the southernmost point of South America."

"It's two or three thousand kilometers away from Buenos Aires."

"People usually use it as a transit point to go to Antarctica."

"Since the Warriors Den has never used Ushuaia..."

"The fact that they're in Ushuaia proves their hideout isn't near Ushuaia."

"Flying directly to Ushuaia, bypassing Buenos Aires, should be much safer."

Helena said seriously. "Flying from the Arctic Circle to the Antarctic Circle will probably take at least twenty hours."

"Such a long flight is rare, and aviation enthusiasts will definitely be curious about the flight's purpose, even discussing it online."

"So, if Mr. Wade doesn't mind, I'll arrange the flight."

"There's a Nordic research vessel in Ushuaia."

"So we can announce it's an emergency transport of supplies needed for Antarctica to that vessel."

"That would seem more reasonable."

Charlie nodded and said, "Then I'll trouble you to arrange it."

Helena asked, "When do we depart?"

Charlie said, "The sooner the better."

Helena then said, "Let's return to Oslo first thing tomorrow morning."

"I'll have them prepare, and we'll take off tomorrow afternoon."

"Also, I'll have someone prepare a set of Nordic identification for you,"

"Making your entry into Argentina safer."

The following morning, Charlie drove a minivan left behind by the Nordic royal family,

Carrying four women on their journey back to Oslo.

Because Helena's trip to the Arctic was kept secret,

She wasn't escorted by a royal convoy on the return trip.

Helena felt completely safe with Charlie and had no worries about her safety.

Most of the route was sparsely populated,

So the return journey was very smooth,

And they arrived near Oslo City a few hours later.

The international airport in the City is located in the northeast.

Charlie and his group drove south from the north towards Oslo, passing right by the airport.

Chapter 7102

Charlie originally planned to take Helena back to the palace first,

And then take Maria and the other two to the airport.

However, when they were almost at the airport, Helena, sitting in the back seat, said to Charlie,

"Mr. Wade, the staff are already waiting at the airport with the documents for Miss Yun and Miss Song."

"The plane is ready for takeoff."

"I've also arranged for someone to purchase the daily necessities Miss Lin needs,"

"which have been packed and loaded onto the plane."

"Once we arrive, you can take off directly."

Charlie asked her, "Shouldn't we take you back to the palace first?"

"No need to trouble yourself,"

Helena said.

"I can't waste the time of all four of you because of me."

"I can also go to the airport to see you off."

"After you leave, I'll go back with the staff."

Charlie nodded slightly.

This was indeed more reasonable.

Otherwise, he would have to go to Oslo first,

Make a detour, and then return to the airport.

So he said, "Thank you, Helena."

Helena smiled and said, "Mr. Wade, there's no need for such formalities."

"Once you arrive in Antarctica, if you need anything, please contact me immediately."

"And I'll try to coordinate a solution."

Charlie nodded, no longer bothering with Helena,

And drove directly onto the ramp leading to the airport.

As they got closer to the airport,

The previously unobstructed road suddenly became much heavier,

And the speed of the cars steadily decreased.

Charlie found the road ahead completely blocked,

And his car could only slowly slow down until it came to a stop on the highway.

He muttered to himself, "Why is it so congested?"

"Is there some kind of traffic accident?"

Helena leaned over to take a look.

The traffic jam stretched for at least several hundred meters,

And the cause of the congestion was completely unclear from the viewpoint.

So she said to Charlie,

"Mr. Wade, please wait a moment while I ask about the situation."

After saying that, she took out her phone and sent a message.

A moment later, she said with a grim expression,

"Mr. Wade, there are environmentalists protesting ahead."

"They have completely blocked the road to the airport and demanded that no one drive through."

"Some passengers who are in a hurry to catch their flights have already gotten out of their cars and started walking."

Charlie said in surprise,

"Your country also has such extreme environmentalists?"

Helena smiled bitterly, "In recent years, many young extreme environmentalists have emerged in Northern Europe."

"And the most troublesome thing is that many extreme environmentalists from all over the world..."

"Inspired by them, they traveled a long way to join their protest."

"This wasn't their first time blocking roads and staging protests."

"A few days ago, they did it in Oslo, blocking the main thoroughfare for a full 24 hours."

"Police subsequently arrested over a hundred of them,"

"More than sixty of whom were from abroad.

Charlie asked in surprise,

"Won't this also take 24 hours?"

Helena said, "Generally, in these situations, the police can't arrest people directly."

"They have to create a sufficiently large negative impact before making arrests to reduce public pressure."

"I estimate that even if it doesn't take 24 hours,"

"It will at least take several hours, or even a dozen hours."

She sighed helplessly, "The situation in Northern Europe is rather awkward."

"Many people have very strong left-wing views."

"Take global warming, for example."

"The simplest solution they can think of is to protest in the city center, block roads, and force people to walk."

"I suspect the theme this time will be the same."

"There are all sorts of weirdos out there,"

Charlie sighed helplessly.

He glanced at the navigation, which showed that they were still nearly five kilometers away from the airport terminal.

He said, "Five kilometers shouldn't be a problem for us to walk there."

"But as the Queen, won't you be recognized if you walk with us?"

Helena immediately tied her long hair into a bun,

Put on a dark blue bucket hat, completely covering her hair,

And then took out a mask and sunglasses.

She smiled and said, "Look, people are getting off the bus one after another."

"With so many people walking, no one should notice me."

"Besides, once they start, it's unlikely to stop anytime soon."

"We can leave the car here and arrange for someone to come and take it away."

Charlie nodded and said,

"In that case, let's get out and walk!"

Chapter 7103

When Charlie and his group got out of the car,

Many other people were already getting off as well.

Most of those taking this route were heading to the airport to catch their flights.

They had only an hour or two allotted, and some even had less than an hour until their flights.

Getting off now and sprinting towards the airport gave them a chance to reach their destination within an hour,

Waiting in the car risked missing their flights.

Hundreds of people dragged their luggage through the stagnant traffic.

Charlie noticed that many locals seemed unfazed by the situation,

Walking with their heads down, expressionless, seemingly indifferent.

When Charlie reached the end of the congestion,

He saw hundreds of people of various skin colors and ages, ranging from teenagers to those in their fifties and sixties, wearing hoodies with the slogan.

"Stop Global Warming," sitting in the middle of the road, holding various flags and signs.

A few who appeared to be leaders were facing the torrent of traffic,

Passionately shouting something through megaphones.

Interestingly, there was even an East Asian face among them,

And her shouts were the most excited.

Charlie listened carefully and realized the other person was shouting in English:

"You people are all the culprits of global warming!"

"You are the main culprits for the melting of Antarctic and Arctic glaciers!"

Another girl joined in, shouting,

"That's right! Arctic penguin chicks are losing their habitat."

"And it's all your fault, you selfish humans!"

"You drive cars and emit huge amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere,"

"Aren't you ashamed?"

Charlie frowned and asked Maria, "There aren't any penguins in the Arctic, are there?"

Maria smiled and said, "There shouldn't be."

"About a hundred years ago, someone tried to bring penguins from Antarctica to the Arctic."

"But for various reasons, the population failed to survive stably."

Charlie sighed, "People like this are acting as environmental volunteers."

"Aren't they ashamed?"

Maria smiled and said, "Young master, think about it from another perspective."

"Anyone with a sound worldview and sufficient knowledge would never do something so childish."

"That's true."

Charlie shook his head helplessly.

He couldn't quite understand the thought process of the far-left people in the West.

At this moment, a middle-aged man in a suit stepped forward and said,

"Even if you don't allow gasoline cars to pass,"

"At least let electric cars pass, right?"

"I drive a Tesla."

"Even if you think cars cause global warming,"

"That doesn't include electric cars!"

One of the younger men, holding a megaphone, angrily retorted,

"What I hate most are you hypocrites who drive electric cars!"

"Do you think your car won't pollute the atmosphere if it doesn't use gasoline?"

"Power plants burn huge amounts of coal to generate electricity,"

"Emitting astronomical amounts of greenhouse gases!"

"You electric car drivers are all accomplices!"

The middle-aged man, still indignant, retorted,

"You definitely aren't..." "Skiplings!"

"In Scandinavia, at least 98% of our electricity generation is from renewable energy."

"And the vast majority of that electricity is from hydropower."

"How could it possibly emit greenhouse gases?!"

The other person was clearly caught off guard by his statement,

And then retorted defiantly,

"You're just making things up."

"You say renewable energy accounts for 98%,"

"And you really mean it's 98%? Why should I believe you?"

The middle-aged man growled,

"You can check it! Don't you have a phone?"

Chapter 7104

At this moment, a young girl behind the environmentalist quietly checked her phone,

Then leaned over and whispered in his ear,

"Charlie, I just checked, and it's true that renewable energy accounts for 98% of Scandinavia's electricity generation..."

The environmentalist's face flushed slightly,

But he quickly regained his composure and sneered,

"So what? Do you know where your car was made?"

"If I'm not mistaken, your Tesla is very likely made in Germany."

"Tesla's factory construction in Germany has severely disrupted our ecological balance."

"Causing many small animals to lose their homes."

"Moreover, coal-fired power accounts for nearly half of Germany's electricity generation."

"In other words, although you, this hypocrite, are not polluting the air in Northern Europe by driving your Tesla,"

"The German people are polluting their own country's air and harming their own animals in order to build this Tesla!"

"And the culprits are hypocrites like you!"

"I..." The middle-aged man was momentarily speechless with anger,

Then, I angrily questioned,

"Don't you people have any sense of reason?"

"I paid for this car; it wasn't given to me for free by the German people."

"I paid Tesla the full purchase price,"

"Tesla paid the taxes due to the German government."

"And paid the salaries to its German employees."

"Even if the car produced greenhouse gases during its manufacturing process,"

"I still bore the financial costs!"

He then pointed to the man's hoodie and demanded,

"You accuse my car of emitting greenhouse gases during its manufacturing process."

"Then let me ask you, didn't your clothes emit greenhouse gases during their manufacturing process?"

The man was once again rendered speechless,

But the young Asian woman was the first to find a way to respond,

Rushing forward and shouting,

"You hypocrite, you don't understand!"

Instead of addressing their own problems, they maliciously smear us!”

“Do you know that all our clothes are made from recyclable and biodegradable materials?”

“And the raw materials are all recycled from discarded clothing donated by people all over the world.”

“Even if the initial raw materials emitted greenhouse gases during production, the culprit isn’t us.”

“But those who owned them before recycling and reprocessing!”

“And to avoid burdening the planet, we never buy new clothes,”

“Only wear recycled and reused garments!”

“Look at yourself, impeccably dressed in a suit,”

“Looking all respectable—what brand is your suit?”

“Boss or Armani?”

“Do you know how much extra pollution the planet has to bear to produce your clothes?”

Her sudden barrage of criticism not only stunned the other party but also shocked her close ally.

Charlie watched as two environmental protesters whispered among themselves:

“Are the clothes we’re wearing really recycled?”

“They’re so damn dirty, so disgusting...”

The other whispered back,

"Don't listen to her nonsense."

"These clothes were ordered in bulk online by our chairman."

"How could they be recycled and reprocessed?"

"I checked the care labels."

"They're made in Vietnam and are 100% cotton."

"You can rest assured."

The first person asked, "Are you sure?"

"We do receive a lot of donated used clothing from people around the world."

"What if they actually took a batch and reprocessed it?"

The other person laughed and said,

"Don't be silly."

"Being an environmentalist is just a business."

"Those donated clothes, ostensibly for recycling,"

"They are actually packaged up and sold to Africa by our higher-ups."

"There are people in Africa who specialize in buying used clothes from all over the world."

"They buy them by the ton and then distribute them by the kilogram to distributors in various places."

"Those distributors then sort and sort the clothes for normal sale."

"For us, this is a risk-free business."

"We can sell at least several thousand tons a year."

"Otherwise, where do you think we get the money for protests, eating, drinking, and having fun all over Europe?"

"Plus travel and accommodation expenses?"

Chapter 7105

Hearing the explanation, the man breathed a sigh of relief and chuckled,

"Oh, so that's what happened..."

"I thought it was really recycled."

"She is a real liar; she can lie so easily, and her mind works so fast."

The other person nodded and whispered,

"She has only been in the team for less than half a year."

"And she's already in the core layer."

"How do you think she did it?"

"It's all thanks to her silver tongue!"

"This woman can turn black into white and white into green."

"The vice president admires her a lot,"

"And this demonstration is a publicity stunt for her."

"Someone is secretly live-streaming it on YouTube."

"She'll definitely be famous after this."

The man was astonished and said,

"Someone's live-streaming it?"

"Of course,"

The other person said, "We have people live-streaming and filming every event we hold."

"And a professional team is responsible for post-production and editing."

"Moreover, among the people we've cornered,"

"There are our informants who help us film from another perspective."

"Only in this way can we create buzz online."

"You have to remember, although we hold protests offline,"

"We're actually doing it for online audiences."

The person nodded and asked, "What did she do before?"

The other person chuckled and said,

"Well, before she joined us, she was an amateur photographer in China who came from humble beginnings."

"It's said that she couldn't even afford a professional camera."

"So she got a second-hand one."

"She took tens of thousands of photos a year and posted them online,"

"But after several years, she only had two or three thousand followers."

"She didn't have a proper job and couldn't get any commercial work."

"She was the kind of loser who was always struggling to make ends meet."

"Later, when she saw the environmental activist become popular,"

"She wanted to get into this field and become an environmental influencer."

"At first, she held protests in Asia, but nobody paid any attention to her."

"Then she went to the US on a tourist visa to hold protests there,"

"But she's got a screw loose."

"She went to Texas and stopped a pickup truck, almost got shot dead by rednecks,"

"And was so scared that she flew to Europe overnight."

"Unexpectedly, she's thriving there."

The man sighed, adding, "Someone like her only has a future in Europe."

"In America, she'd be dead a long time ago."

Charlie listened to their conversation and thought to himself,

These people didn't seem like serious environmentalists.

They all seemed to have their own selfish motives.

At this moment, the man in the Tesla in the crowd had already lost out to the girl and could only drag his suitcase, intending to walk to the airport.

Watching his disheveled figure, she shouted loudly behind him,

"Sir, the one driving the Tesla, please remember, environmental protection isn't just about talking about it or buying an electric car."

"You need to truly respect nature and have genuine compassion for the animals that have lost their homes and even their lives due to global warming!"

The protesters were captivated by her eloquence and persuasiveness,

Erupting in cheers and applause.

She stood smugly in the crowd.

It was only after joining this group that she discovered her true talent.

Not photography or social media management,

But she labels others and uses her silver tongue to smear them.

She always found the most effective way to attack,

Leaving her opponents defenseless.

Chapter 7106

She had wanted to do this before, but dared not.

Because she had no money, power, or influence,

Attacking others rashly would easily invite retaliation or even attacks on herself.

However, after joining the environmental organization, she not only gained a large group of comrades who could support her,

But more importantly, she also found the moral high ground.

With this double boost, she would not be afraid to confront a Tesla owner here,

Or even to confront Trump in the United States.

Just as she was enjoying the cheers and the joy of victory,

An elderly woman with Asian features walked up to her from the crowd and cautiously said to her,

“Young lady, you...You’re Chinese, right?”

This girl, who is named Evelyn Ji, nodded and asked,

“What’s wrong? Is there something you need?”

The elderly woman breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that she was admitted to being Chinese and pleaded earnestly,

"It's like this, young lady, my flight is taking off in an hour."

"My husband is seriously ill in China and has been hospitalized."

"I have to rush back to see him."

"If I miss this flight, the earliest I can see him is tomorrow."

"So please, please, let my taxi take me to the airport!"

"How can that be!" Evelyn refused firmly."

"Environmental protection is our mission."

"We treat everyone equally, no matter who they are or what the special circumstances are."

"If you're in a hurry to catch your flight, run to the airport."

"We can't give you special treatment!"

The old lady choked up, "I'm eighty years old."

"You want me to run to the airport?"

"Let alone an hour, even two hours might not be enough for me."

"And boarding starts half an hour before takeoff."

"There's no other way to make it except by car..."

Evelyn shrugged. "Then it's not my problem."

"We're working for the benefit of all humanity and animals in the world,"

"For the benefit of the Earth and the world."

"Your personal matters are just a drop in the ocean compared to such a major issue."

"Please try to overcome it."

Then, Evelyn added, "By the way, do you know why we're blocking this particular road when there are so many roads in Oslo City?"

"To tell you the truth, it's because airplanes are also a major source of greenhouse gas emissions."

"Culprits! To save your time, you fly all over the world."

"Emitting huge amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere with every flight!"

The old woman nearly had a heart attack, clutching her chest as she questioned,

"You...you accuse me of flying, but what about you?"

"How did you get to Europe?!"

"Whether you came by plane or ship,"

"You are also a culprit in emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere!"

Evelyn smiled, her expression unchanged, and said,

"I'm sorry, Grandma, I immigrated to Europe with my parents when I was little."

Then, she sighed with shame,

"Of course, you're right."

"Even if I flew when I was little,"

"It's undeniable that I was an accomplice to global warming."

"That's why I've finally realized my mistake and become a volunteer to contribute to global warming efforts and atone for my past mistakes!"

The old woman was once again rendered speechless by her sharp retort,

Unable to refute, she could only stand there helplessly wiping away her tears.

Charlie had originally planned to just walk over and leave,

Not wanting to lower himself to the level of these radicals.

However, after overhearing others talking about Evelyn,

And seeing her show no pity for an old woman and even lie repeatedly,

He felt extremely uncomfortable.

He couldn't help but feel astonished.

Had European society become so surreal?

How could such demons and monsters be able to run rampant in this land?

Blocking hundreds or even thousands of people here,

And yet they couldn't do anything about it?

Chapter 7107

Slightly angry, Charlie immediately said to the people around him,

"Let's go back to the car."

The others were confused.

Just moments ago, Charlie had been thinking of avoiding trouble by walking,

So why the sudden change of heart?

Maria was the first to understand.

She turned to Charlie and asked with a smile,

"Young Master, are you planning to teach them a lesson?"

Charlie nodded and said,

"We need to embarrass them in front of the whole world,"

"Let the world know the true colors of these hypocrites."

Maria reminded him, "Young Master,"

"Many people are filming, and quite a few are live-streaming."

"The whole world might be watching."

"You must be careful."

Charlie nodded and smiled, "Of course,"

“That’s why I said everyone should go back to the car.”

“I have my own ways of dealing with these people.”

The four women, including Helena, were both angry and disgusted by the behavior of these extreme environmentalists.

If they could truly teach them a lesson and disgrace them in front of the world,

It would be a way of doing good.

So everyone immediately returned to the car.

Helena’s phone had already received a push notification from a Nordic news app.

The highway to the capital’s largest airport was blocked,

And countless passengers were stranded.

The impact of this event was quite serious,

Hence, there is a high level of media and public attention.

Helena also realized how absurd environmental protests,

Something she usually took for granted was after experiencing them firsthand.

The Nordic countries are among the world’s most environmentally conscious and clean-energy-focused nations,

Yet these extreme environmentalists still managed to gain a foothold.

The key issue was that the public didn’t dare directly oppose them.

They only dared to reason with them.

However, a truly reasonable person can never win an argument against someone who is only pretending to be reasonable.

Like the Tesla owner from earlier, he was a representative figure of the Nordic elite.

His choice of an electric car, his attire, and speech were all gentlemanly and appropriate.

When arguing with others, he adhered to facts and even used data.

However, this kind of reasonable gentleman simply cannot win against an unreasonable rogue.

Putting aside everything else, a reasonable gentleman is too embarrassed to lie.

On this point alone, he can never win.

She sighed somewhat apologetically to Charlie,

"I'm sorry, Mr. Wade, Europe has indeed become somewhat unhealthy in recent years."

"I will have a good talk with my cabinet members about this and push for the enactment of a law,"

"As soon as possible, that will not allow any extreme environmentalists to demonstrate or protest in a way that affects others."

Charlie said seriously, "Europe's decline can be seen from the continued occurrence of such absurd things."

"All sorts of far-fetched solutions are emerging one after another."

"People and countries are too easily kidnapped and manipulated by these so-called environmentalists."

"It is said that a power plant in Germany with an investment of 3 billion euros was forced to be dismantled for 300 million euros after only six years."

"Your country must not follow in their footsteps."

Helena said helplessly,

"The politicians dare not offend these groups."

"Because they fear losing votes,"

"They don't care whether it's 3 billion euros or 30 billion euros."

"Even if it's wasted, it's the taxpayers' money that's being wasted."

"The taxpayers are the ones paying for it."

"And the ones who want to demolish it are also the taxpayers."

The politicians' attitude boils down to one sentence:

"Whatever makes them happy."

Charlie nodded, his expression serious, and said,

"We can't control what the politicians think,"

"But we must teach them a lesson today."

Helena said, "I'll call the relevant personnel."

"And ask them to send the police over as soon as possible to remove these people."

Helena was, after all, the host from Northern Europe.

This incident had already caused her to lose face in front of Charlie.

If Charlie had to handle it, she would lose even more face.

Chapter 7108

But Charlie had his reasons.

He said, "You should be able to see that they're not afraid of the police at all."

"In fact, you could say they're hoping the police will arrest them,"

"Because that would better highlight their fearlessness and integrity."

"When they come out of the police station,"

"They'll be heroes of the world."

"We can't give them that opportunity."

Charlie paused slightly, then continued,

"Personally, I think the best solution right now is to humiliate them in public,"

"To make them unable to hold their heads up in public from now on,"

"To make them rats wherever they go, hated by everyone."

"That makes sense,"

Helena nodded gently, then asked him,

"So, Mr. Wade, what's a good idea?"

Charlie said, "Split them apart from within."

"Let the dogs bite the dogs."

After saying that, he secretly channeled a few strands of spiritual energy into the bodies of the two people who had just been discussing Evelyn.

Along with this spiritual energy,

A psychological suggestion from Charlie was also transmitted to them.

The psychological suggestion was simple.

The more outrageous and unconventional Evelyn became,

The more uncomfortable they felt,

Even willing to suffer heavy losses themselves to bring her down.

As this powerful suggestion took effect in their minds,

The one who knew Evelyn's background best,

Watching her raise her arms and shout in the crowd,

Gritting his teeth and saying to his junior,

"Damn it, letting such a liar steal the spotlight is worse than killing me!"

The other person nodded emphatically in agreement:

"Everyone's protesting, why is she getting so much attention?"

"I just can't swallow this insult if I don't expose her publicly!"

"You're right!"

The man said coldly.

"We absolutely cannot let her stand up!"

At this moment, Evelyn was unaware that someone in her camp intended to betray her.

She was still immersed in the pleasure of standing on the moral high ground and attacking others,

Unable to extricate herself.

Seeing the old woman sobbing silently with her head down,

She persisted, coldly saying,

"I think the biggest problem with human development to this point is that we like to make others,"

"Or other species, pay the price for our selfish desires."

"If humans could reduce unnecessary travel,"

"Especially unnecessary transoceanic flights,"

"Many birds could escape the risk of being hit by planes,"

"And many animals and plants could minimize the impact of global warming."

"So why not stay home with your spouse instead of running out alone and then rushing back?"

The old woman was heartbroken and cried,

"I'm so old, I didn't want to come to such a far place!"

"It's just that my children all have to work..."

"No one helps them take care of their child."

"So I came here alone to help them..."

Evelyn sneered, saying, "Then why can't they hire a nanny locally?"

"That way, they wouldn't pollute the environment."

"They could create a local job."

"And you could stay in China to take care of your husband."

"Wouldn't that be killing three birds with one stone?"

The old woman choked up, "Their income here isn't high."

"And they still have to pay off their mortgage."

"They simply can't afford a full-time nanny!"

Evelyn said disdainfully, "If you don't have the financial means,"

"Then work hard and earn money."

"Why have children?"

"Having children and then not being able to take care of them is irresponsible to the children, irresponsible to the parents."

"And even more irresponsible to society!"

"Such irresponsible people can't contribute anything to society."

"Staying in Northern Europe with such good welfare benefits,"

"They can only become parasites on Northern European society!"

The old woman clutched her chest, wanting to say something,

But only choked up at the last moment,

So she could only slump to the ground and weep bitterly.

Just as Evelyn was feeling smug, a roar suddenly came from behind:

"Evelyn, I really can't stand it anymore! You've gone too far!"

Chapter 7109

The sudden shout startled Evelyn.

She liked to plan ahead,

So before coming, she had considered many possible contingencies,

But her focus was entirely on the enemy camp—the bystanders who were being surrounded.

She had considered the possibility of being attacked,

Verbally abused, or even encountering someone begging for mercy,

And even the extremely rare chance of running into someone she knew in real life.

She had prepared contingency plans for all of these possibilities.

Even her claim that her clothes were recycled and that she had immigrated to Europe with her parents as a child wasn't impromptu,

It was part of her prepared strategies.

But she hadn't considered what to do if one of her own teammates took a bite out of her.

So, when she saw someone in her own camp actually attacking her,

She panicked and quickly shouted at him,

"Soo-hyun, what nonsense are you talking about?!"

Park Soo-hyun was of Korean descent and had joined the team more than a year earlier than Evelyn.

When Evelyn wanted to join, she sent him a bunch of private messages on Facebook,

Pleading with him until Park Soo-hyun recommended her to the organization.

Moreover, when Evelyn first joined, Park Soo-hyun had personally guided her.

At that time, he felt that Evelyn, like himself, was Asian, and in this predominantly white team, having an Asian face would reduce the probability of being ostracized.

He also thought that if they got along well, they could look after each other, so he took good care of Evelyn.

In order to quickly integrate into the team,

Evelyn initially had a strong desire to curry favor with Park Soo-hyun,

I was actively engaging in an ambiguous relationship with him that was more than friends but less than lovers.

In order to gain Park Soo-hyun's sympathy, support, and help, she even truthfully told him many things about herself.

However, Evelyn was even more shameless and unscrupulous than Park Soo-hyun.

After several operations, she quickly rose to prominence within the team,

Soon, surpassing Park Soo-hyun in status.

From then on, her attitude towards Park Soo-hyun became increasingly cold.

Moreover, while being cold to Park Soo-hyun,

Evelyn began flirting with the team leader, constantly fawning over him with an adoring expression.

This further fueled Park Soo-hyun's resentment.

Park Soo-hyun already harbored hatred.

Even without Charlie's psychological suggestion, he had long disliked Evelyn.

Now, with the added psychological suggestion, this resentment intensified.

Therefore, the more he looked at Evelyn, the more he hated her,

To the point of itching with rage.

He pointed at Evelyn and shouted,

"Evelyn, you're a native-born Chinese. A few months ago, you were just an amateur photographer struggling to make ends meet."

"Barely scraping by with online loans to afford your plane ticket to Europe."

"And you have the nerve to lie in public, claiming you immigrated here as a child!"

"If I'd known you were so hypocritical,"

"I shouldn't have let you join us in the first place!"

Evelyn was startled; her heart leaped into her throat.

A feeling of weightlessness made her legs weak, and cold sweat broke out uncontrollably.

She never expected Park Soo-hyun to suddenly target her,

Especially at a protest, and in front of so many live cameras.

Fortunately, she was quick-witted.

As soon as the people around her cast questioning glances at her, she immediately said with feigned indignation,

"Park Soo-hyun, I've always regarded you as a senior on the path of environmental protection,"

"As a role model for the world's well-being."

"But you only want me to be your girlfriend."

"I've said before that I don't want to consider personal feelings in the short term."

"Even if you've been hurt, there's no need to spread rumors about me at this time, is there?"

"I'm spreading rumors about you?"

Park Soo-hyun retorted angrily,

"You said you immigrated to Europe when you were young."

"Okay, then tell me, which country did you immigrate to?"

Evelyn knew that many people were filming with their phones,

And some had even started live streaming on online platforms.

She could only bite the bullet and say,

"I... I immigrated to Sweden, so what?"

The environmental organization that Evelyn joined was headquartered in Sweden.

This was because most of the team members were Swedish environmental activists.

They had become a de facto environmental group,

And the famous environmental girl was one of the core members of the group's highest level.

As for Evelyn's organization, within this group whose core interests revolve around environmental protection,

It's currently just a small, insignificant team.

To gain a higher status and more influence within the group,

They've begun to frequently organize protests in Europe.

When Evelyn fled the United States, she flew to Sweden,

So she tried to use Sweden as a pretext to deceive them.

Park Soo-hyun scoffed at her lie, coldly saying,

"You say you immigrated to Sweden, so you must have already obtained a Swedish passport."

"Then I want to ask, why are you still carrying a Chinese passport when we enter Northern Europe today?"

"Everyone has their passports with them anyway,"

"Dare you take yours out and show it to everyone?"

Evelyn was at a loss for words and could only look to the team leader,

Pleading for help with her eyes.

The team leader hadn't expected this to happen within the team.

To stabilize the situation and prevent damage to the team's image, he immediately told Park Soo-hyun,

"Park, I'm warning you, don't bring your personal life into the environmental cause."

"If you continue to slander the team for your own selfish desires,"

"I'll kick you out, you black sheep!"

Park Soo-hyun had long lost his ability to make sound judgments.

Seeing that the team leader was also defending Evelyn, he became even angrier.

He ran a few steps and jumped onto the roof of the first Mercedes-Benz,

Shouting at the people who were being surrounded,

"Let me tell you the truth, this environmental organization's protests aren't about environmental protection at all! Global warming?"

"Bullshit!"

"It's all business! Many upstream and downstream companies in the European wind and solar power industries regularly donate to us and provide operating

funds so that we can put pressure on coal-fired power plants and European governments to gradually shut them down.”

“You know what happened in Germany, right?”

“The coal-fired power plants were shut down.”

“And residential electricity prices soared by half.”

“Those involved in wind and solar power are making a fortune!”

“Furthermore, our protests in Northern Europe aren’t about environmental protection.”

“We’re using environmentalism to build influence and attract online followers.”

“We’ll not only call on our followers to donate to the event,”

“But also urge all Europeans to donate their clothes for recycling to prevent environmental pollution!”

“If you search online, you’ll see videos of our protests in other countries and cities.”

“Each time, we provide an address for an environmental website,”

“Claiming to have invested millions of euros to build a green recycling production line,”

“But it’s just a shell company!”

“If you send your old clothes to that address, they won’t be recycled.”

“Instead, they’ll be packaged and exported directly to Africa.”

"Even the shipping costs are borne by African distributors."

"We don't need to invest a single penny."

"We only need to provide manpower to exchange your donated clothes for a large sum of money."

"And all that money goes into our pockets, especially the pockets of those in charge!"

"Furthermore, do you know why we deliberately vandalize world-famous paintings in museums across Europe?"

"To tell you the truth, it's all backed by collectors."

"If we can destroy a masterpiece by a certain master, after media coverage,"

"That master's work will become incredibly popular in the art world."

"And every time we destroy one, there's one less of their surviving works,"

"Which in turn increases the price of the remaining pieces."

"Collectors can simply sit at home and see their collections' value skyrocket!"

Chapter 7110

He then pointed at the team leader and said coldly,

"This is the guy."

"Most of the money earned from each event goes into his own pocket! He..."

"Just a month ago, I bought a 6.2-liter Dodge Challenger, which is practically one of the largest displacement muscle cars available on the market."

"Someone who constantly talks about environmental protection actually bought the largest displacement car—just think how ironic that is!"

Then, he pointed at Evelyn and angrily rebuked her,

"That woman who's a liar, the moment she sat in that Dodge Challenger,"

"She had a fawning smile on her face, looking incredibly happy."

"She even begged me several times to take her drifting."

"I've never seen her criticize that car for being environmentally unfriendly!"

"But today, she's even attacking a Tesla owner,"

"Standing on the high ground of environmental protection and spouting nonsense."

"She's utter trash, the epitome of a scumbag!"

This time, not only was Evelyn's expression gloomy,

But the team leader's expression also became extremely ugly, wishing he could kill Park Soo-hyun to quell his anger.

As the leader of this small team, he usually kept a low profile.

When organizing protests, he generally didn't take the lead himself,

But instead, encouraged radicals like Evelyn, who were eager to climb the ranks,

To be at the forefront and even create sensational moments with extreme behavior.

He, on the other hand, would disguise himself as an inconspicuous rookie on the team, quietly controlling the pace of the event.

Because of this strategy, few outsiders knew his true identity,

Let alone his actual position in the organization.

Therefore, he wasn't worried about being exposed when he made money and bought expensive, high-displacement muscle cars.

But he never expected that there would be a traitor among his own men.

This Park Soo-hyun, like a mad dog, had actually exposed him.

The most terrifying thing was that Park Soo-hyun had revealed their organization's profit model,

Which was tantamount to completely exposing everyone's true colors.

Once this reached Sweden, the Swedish authorities would definitely investigate the whole story,

And the fact that their organization accepted benefits from various interest groups,

And had been reselling second-hand clothing to Africa for a long time, it would be impossible to hide.

Nervous, his first thought was to stop the matter from gaining further attention.

With so many people watching and recording it on so many phones,

The longer it dragged on, the worse the impact would be.

The best solution was to stop the roadblock demonstration immediately and let these people leave.

These were passengers rushing to catch their flights.

Their presence as bystanders was entirely their own doing, blocking their way.

So, as soon as the roadblock stopped, they would definitely hurry to get on their vehicles and leave!

Therefore, he immediately shouted to the members still sitting on the ground,

Looking bewildered, "Make way! Let them leave!"

Several quick-thinking members had already gotten up and run to the side of the road,

While some silly little ones remained sitting cross-legged on the ground, looking around blankly.

The team leader panicked, rushing towards the group and kicking and yelling,

"I told you to get out of the way! Don't you understand?! Get out of here!"

Then he shouted to the onlookers, "Gentlemen, there's a traitor in our team who's deliberately trying to smear us."

"On behalf of the team, I reserve the right to pursue legal action against him."

"But I also urge you to be discerning and not believe his one-sided story!"

"If you maliciously spread unverified and irresponsible rumors online,"

"We also have the right to pursue legal action against you!"

Although the team leader's character was questionable, he understood the core elements of crisis management.

Whether it's a government, a company, or an individual worldwide, when facing a crisis, there are only two steps.

The first step is to determine whether you are right or wrong.

If you are right, then do everything possible to prove yourself to the public,

No matter how difficult the process may be.

If you are wrong, then never be stubborn; always remember the eight-character mantra of Eastern philosophy:

"Turn big problems into small ones, and small problems into nothing."

This simple principle is something many Fortune 500 companies, and even many countries, fail to truly understand.

Some companies and even countries, knowing they've made a mistake, stubbornly persist, even investing enormous human, material, and financial resources to cover up and justify their errors.

This only drags them into a public relations abyss,

With ever-increasing costs and diminishing returns, it has even led to a rapid collapse of their reputation.

However, if they simply reflect sincerely, apologize, and resolve the problem immediately after making a mistake, the losses can be controlled and minimized.

The principle of "turning big problems into small ones, and small problems into nothing" truly embodies the wisdom of ancient Eastern wisdom:

It's crucial to control the situation and prevent it from escalating.

A small incident will eventually be reduced to nothing or become negligible.

But if an incident escalates, the negative consequences will have no upper limit, potentially leading to the collapse of an entire organization.

Just like when a certain brand of refrigerators cut costs on the door closer and was complained about by consumers,

If they had just admitted their mistake and made positive corrections immediately,

They could have solved the problem at a very low cost and gained positive reviews for their proactive attitude.

However, they used the most foolish way of handling it, which ultimately led to the collapse of their brand image and their near disappearance from the market.

The head of this environmental team knew perfectly well that he was in the wrong.

In this situation, the best course of action wasn't to argue and escalate the situation,

But to quickly disperse the crowd and reduce the impact.

And this tactic worked.

Many onlookers, while enjoying the infighting, understood that this was a closed road to the airport,

And many were in a hurry to catch their flights, especially the elderly woman who had been rushing back to China.

Seeing the crowd clearing the way, she quickly returned to her taxi and begged the driver to take her to the airport immediately.

So, the first car drove off, followed by the second and third.

The previously congested road began to loosen.

Some less urgent people, though still wanting to observe, couldn't bear the thought of their cars still parked,

And their level of civility far surpassed that of these extreme environmentalists.

So, they suppressed their urge to watch and quickly got back into their cars and drove away.

Soon, Charlie started the car and drove everyone out of the traffic jam.

Helena said indignantly in the car, "I wonder how this will end."

"If Sweden doesn't hold them accountable and doesn't conduct a thorough investigation, they might get away with it."

Charlie smiled and said, "If you want them to pay the price legally,"

"I think you can talk to the police and, as the Queen, suggest that they take these people back for investigation before they leave the country."

"Demand that the police not just go through the motions, but record their complete statements."

"Then, synchronize this matter from the official level to the Swedish official level."

"That way, Sweden will definitely take it seriously."

"If the media gives it a little push, this could be the beginning of tearing off the hypocritical mask of extreme environmental organizations,"

"And the whole of Europe could benefit from it in the future."

Charlie continued, "Based on what I've seen today,"

"I feel that the European people have suffered under these scoundrels for too long."

"Everyone is afraid to stand up and protest because they're afraid of following in J.K. Rowling's footsteps."

"But this time is different. This time, they've already exposed a corner of their crimes."

"If you can stand firm, stand on the moral high ground, follow the clues, and expose their true colors,"

“You will definitely become a hero in the eyes of the European people.”

The breeding ground for extreme environmentalism is basically only in European countries.

This is because EU countries are relatively developed economies, mostly established capitalist countries, and the long-standing left-leaning ideology of their societies has given these clowns the audacity to act with impunity.

In less developed countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, or even in the Third World,

If these people dared to use extreme methods to advocate for environmental protection, the local population would simply slap them out of the country with a hundred shovels, ensuring they could make a living.

While North America is also developed, its people are known for their fierce nature.

In a country where guns outnumber people, how could they possibly have the chance to bully others?

Before they could even get their pants off, a burst of bullets would be inside them.

Eastern Europe is even less of a concern; even if you paid them, they would never dare set foot there.

That’s why they roam the EU, staging demonstrations in Northern Europe one day, marching in Central Europe the next, and occasionally vandalizing artwork in England and France, or even, out of sheer boredom, dyeing rivers with paint.

Normal people are actually quite disgusted by them, but just like with LGBT people, they dare not speak out.

Occasionally, someone with a sense of justice speaks out, only to be attacked by a mob,

They were publicly humiliated and ridiculed by the actresses they themselves helped make famous.

People yearn for a true hero to step forward and resolve this issue once and for all, but such a person has yet to appear.

And today, with this incident happening and this farce as a prelude, it's absolutely the perfect opportunity for Helena to stand up!

Chapter 7111

The main reason these environmentalists can act with impunity is their so-called advantage of political correctness.

As long as they maintain this,

No matter what they do, others dare not speak out.

Today, they have lost this buff, like an opponent in a game whose invincibility has suddenly become invincible.

Now is the time to seize the opportunity and kill them instantly,

Not giving them a chance to escape.

Otherwise, once they regain their invincibility buff,

Everyone will be helpless against them again.

Charlie's advice to Helena was to seize this rare window and deliver a fatal blow to these people.

If she successfully kills them, she will become the savior of all normal people in Europe.

Helena understood Charlie's meaning.

Without hesitation, she immediately said,

"Okay, Mr. Wade, I will contact the police chief right now and ask them to conduct a thorough investigation!"

"At the same time,"

"I will keep you informed with the Swedish side and follow up on the follow-up."

After saying that, she took out her phone and made a series of calls.

As soon as the call connected, she immediately issued orders for the police to go to the scene,

And take all the protesters to the police station for investigation,

Focusing on Park Soo-hyun and obtaining all his statements.

She then aimed to dismantle the organization from within,

Trying to get others to reveal more secrets.

Meanwhile, online discussions about the incident were heating up.

Europeans had almost all been harassed and interfered with by these so-called environmental volunteers,

And this sudden farce exposed the organization's true colors.

However, everyone knew that knowing their true nature wasn't enough.

The allegations in the video were unverified, and even if true,

They required investigation and a resolution from a country's law enforcement agencies.

Without follow-up action, the matter might simply fade away.

Initially, everyone waited for a statement from the Swedish government,

But the Swedish government remained silent.

Their reasons for silence were simple:

First, they didn't want to get involved.

Second, they were somewhat wary of these extreme environmentalists.

If they angered them, related protests would escalate,

Leaving them in a difficult situation.

In fact, many countries share this mentality,

Which is why these people cause trouble everywhere but rarely face any real punishment.

If they go too far, they might be detained for a couple of days as a formality before being released.

However, Sweden didn't expect the other countries to try a different approach this time.

Just as Charlie and his group boarded their flight to Argentina,

The local police received instructions from Queen Helena to bring all those who participated in the protests back to the station for questioning.

Although Helena is merely a national symbol and has no actual political power,

She is theoretically the highest leader of the country.

Even the prime minister must meet with her regularly for a formality.

If the cabinet were to decide to declare war,

Queen Helena would have to read the declaration of war.

Moreover, her current public approval rating is extremely high.

If the ruling party doesn't maintain a good relationship with her,

And she subtly expresses dissatisfaction with the current government,

It will definitely affect their votes in the next election.

Furthermore, Helena herself has the authority to advise various departments within the country,

So these departments naturally dare not neglect her.

Since Her Majesty the Queen has instructed that these environmentalists be thoroughly investigated,

The police immediately began to go all out.

Chapter 7112

This incident had already garnered significant attention online,

So when the local media learned of their country's police involvement,

They flocked to the police station in charge.

The police chief, acting on Helena's instructions, told the media,

"Her Majesty the Queen is very concerned about this incident."

"She believes it has disrupted the normal lives of the people and violated their legal rights."

"Therefore, she has instructed us to thoroughly investigate this matter."

"And we will keep the public informed of our progress."

This news sent shockwaves throughout the continent.

No one expected that the young, beautiful, and respected Queen would be so concerned,

And even so, they are insistent on a thorough investigation by the police.

This fueled anticipation for future developments.

While Charlie and his group were flying over the Atlantic,

The Nordic police had obtained numerous explosive confessions.

Using Park Soo-hyun as a starting point,

They had also apprehended many young people within the organization,

Those who hadn't earned much money were timid and had fragile psychological defenses.

As a result, the organization's structure and network of interests were clearly revealed.

Park Soo-hyun's understanding of this organization was also incomplete.

Police investigations revealed that almost every protest this organization had staged over the years was backed by a financial sponsor.

If a protest targeted a particular industry,

It was invariably fueled by a competing industry.

If it targeted a specific company, its rivals were always secretly supporting it.

These competitors would even provide the target company with environmental information,

Allowing them to launch targeted and devastating attacks.

Many European companies suffered reputational damage,

Plummeting revenues and even bankruptcy due to their deliberate targeting.

When these statements were presented to Helena,

The head of the police system cautiously said,

"Your Majesty, this content is rather explosive. What are your plans?"

After reviewing it, Helena calmly replied,

"Have the Ministry of Foreign Affairs send this information to Sweden."

"Tell them that I demand that they thoroughly investigate this matter."

"And not let any potential suspects escape justice."

"We must not allow this hypocritical organization to wreak havoc on our country again."

She then instructed him,

"And by the way, make this public,"

"Simultaneously with the media, to put pressure on Sweden."

The official hesitated for a moment, then respectfully said,

"Your Majesty, isn't this a bit too radical?"

"There are far more environmentalists in Europe than just..."

"The hundred or so we've arrested are at least tens of thousands of people."

"Offending them could cause serious trouble in the future."

Helena asked him, "Do you know how many people live in the EU?"

The official replied,

"About four or five hundred million."

Helena nodded calmly and said,

"Even if they make up only one percent of four or five hundred million people,"

"So what?"

"There are still ninety-nine percent of the population who are no different from them."

"We're doing something righteous."

"As long as the majority are on our side,"

"We have nothing to worry about."

Remembering Charlie's words, she said firmly,

"The people of Europe have been tormented by them for too long,"

"And everyone is afraid to speak out against them."

"It's time for this situation of being bullied to change!"

Chapter 7113

Previously, the royal family was mostly a figurehead,

And occasionally a puppet of the ruling government.

The government only called upon the royal family when necessary,

And the royal family had no opportunity to intervene in state affairs at other times.

Moreover, the ruling party and cabinet have always been wary of the royal family,

Giving them superficial respect but preventing them from interfering in national affairs.

However, Helena's influence is extraordinary,

She enjoys an excellent reputation worldwide.

While bringing a perfect international image to the Nordic countries,

She has also brought in a lot of investment.

With such a queen's help, the current Nordic government can alleviate a lot of pressure,

So the government attaches great importance to her and is even willing to let Helena participate in state affairs to a certain extent.

They will seriously consider and try to adopt Helena's suggestions,

This has given Helena a certain degree of so-called real power.

Her suggestions on handling this incident were quickly approved by the Nordic government.

The government is also well aware of the people's hatred of extreme environmentalism,

And their situation of daring to be angry but not daring to speak out.

Now that there is such a good opportunity to take action against them,

Whoever seizes it will be the hero.

Of course, the only slightly unkind aspect of this matter is the need to drag Sweden down.

National-level intervention puts Sweden in a very difficult position.

If Sweden resolves the issue well,

In the eyes of the public, it can only be seen as making amends.

If it fails, it will have to bear the blame.

In contrast, regardless of how Sweden handles the situation,

The Nordic countries can still be seen as heroes.

Therefore, the government simultaneously released all the details of the incident to the media,

Sent this information to Sweden through diplomatic channels,

And publicly stated this to the media.

Helena Bonham Carter, speaking to the media, stated firmly:

"As Queen of the country, I demand that the police severely punish these lawbreakers who disrupt the normal order of society."

"Those who seriously violate the laws should be handed over to the judicial authorities."

"And all others should be deported."

"I also demand that immigration authorities impose a ten-year ban on these individuals from entering the Nordic countries."

"Furthermore, I publicly appeal to the Swedish government,"

"To conduct a thorough investigation into this organization,"

"That uses environmental protection as a pretext to amass wealth,"

"And seriously disrupts the lives of European people and businesses."

"I urge them to uncover every dirty and criminal act and punish them severely."

"I hope the Swedish government can conduct a fair, efficient, and swift investigation."

"And handle this matter openly, fairly, and quickly, eradicating these bad apples from Europe!"

After being reported by major media outlets,

Helena Bonham Carter's video instantly made headlines across Europe,

It became the most popular content on social media and video platforms.

No one expected that Queen Helena Bonham Carter,

Whose influence rivals that of top celebrities, would personally demand that the Nordic government arrest,

These extreme environmentalists even directly demand in the video that the Swedish government severely punish their organization.

It's important to understand that other countries have long been ravaged by these people,

Yet few have actually been arrested.

Even those who are symbolically detained are quickly released after a reprimand,

Without any further legal proceedings.

The fact that over a hundred people were arrested in one go,

And that the judicial process was handled directly by the Nordic authorities is unprecedented.

Helena's tough stance was also backed by impeccable moral principles.

As the queen, she showed no mercy to these lawbreakers disrupting the Nordic order,

Making her a model of benevolence.

Chapter 7114

European citizens were immediately thrilled,

Expressing their support and admiration for Helena online.

In the video, Helena was not only dignified and beautiful,

But her voice, though melodious, carried a powerful authority.

Her unwavering firmness, combined with her flawless beauty,

Instantly amplified her charm to its peak.

Europe has been detached from the world's cultural center for over a century,

And in that time, it has produced almost no national idols.

Yet now, Helena Bonham Carter possesses all the elements of a national idol.

Her appearance is impeccable;

Her status is unparalleled.

Her charm is unmatched;

And most importantly, her humanity shines brightly,

Not only inspiring but also without a single flaw.

The European people love her to the core.

Men, women, and children alike hold her in high esteem.

This positive influence across Europe is unprecedented, even in history.

After all, Europe has never been peaceful; wars have raged for millennia.

An idol in one country might be a monster in another.

It's rare to find someone universally accepted.

Many online even say that the last European queen with such a strong will was Catherine II of Russia in 1762,

Who seized the throne through a coup?

Helena Bonham Carter's prestige has reached new heights.

However, the Swedish government has been put in a very passive position.

When many of this organization's misdeeds were exposed,

Sweden itself bore the blame for inadequate oversight.

Every month, people across Europe would mail hundreds of tons of used clothing to the organization's Swedish headquarters,

With donors even covering the postage.

Once in Sweden, this so-called environmental organization brazenly packaged,

And sold these clothes to Africa, and Swedish authorities remained completely unaware.

Moreover, this wasn't the worst of it.

The most egregious behavior involved demonstrations specifically targeting certain companies with ulterior motives.

Driven by profit, they became unethical accomplices in commercial competition,

Forcing many businesses to suffer losses or even bankruptcy,

And causing countless employees to lose their jobs.

If the evidence were conclusive, many would face imprisonment.

Swedish officials immediately convened an emergency meeting to discuss the current situation and how to handle it.

At the meeting, officials unanimously condemned Helena,

Believing she was clearly using Sweden to climb the social ladder.

After a long period of denunciation,

They finally sat down dejectedly to discuss their next steps.

Initially, the Swedish government turned a blind eye to these individuals because,

Despite their extreme behavior, they were indeed leading figures in European environmentalism before their downfall.

Logically, a country with many such leaders is considered a leader in environmental protection.

In recent years, with the rising global fame of the "Environmental Girl,"

Sweden had become the environmental center of Europe.

Her success meant her homeland would benefit—a win-win situation.

However, the country didn't anticipate the rapid collapse of these pioneers.

The arrest of hundreds has effectively shut down a large environmental movement.

Thrusting the government into the spotlight.

Now, all of Europe awaits a public statement from the Swedish government,

Essentially forcing them to take the fall.

While frustrated, the Swedish government knows it has no choice,

But to publicly announce to the media a thorough investigation of domestic environmental organizations,

Accepting public scrutiny and releasing the results as soon as possible.

At this moment, when Sweden stood firm and accepted the blow,

It was seen by the European public as a huge victory for Helena alone.

As a result, Helena's popularity soared once again, making her a national idol throughout Europe!

Chapter 7115

The overwhelming media coverage and the widespread praise online delighted Helena,

And the entire government.

No one had anticipated that seizing this opportunity would generate such a massive impact.

Online, besides praising Helena's decisiveness and courage,

Many have analyzed her actions since her ascension to the throne.

Looking back on her journey,

People discovered that this young and beautiful queen had taken each step with remarkable composure and determination.

Beautiful, composed, capable, and righteous,

Helena possessed almost all the qualities a royal family aspires to, naturally boosting her popularity.

The mastermind behind all this, Charlie, had quietly landed in Ushuaia,

Argentina's southernmost port city, known as the "end of the world."

After landing at Ushuaia Airport with three beautiful women,

The four smoothly entered the country as Nordic citizens.

The crew of the Nordic research vessel was already waiting outside the airport.

The message he received was that several meteorologists were temporarily traveling on their ship to Antarctica,

To deploy a batch of climate monitoring equipment before returning.

This was because the Nordic research station wasn't a permanent one.

If they announced from the outset that someone was going to stay for the winter,

It would be seen as tantamount to suicide by these researchers.

The message would likely spark discussion among them before Charlie even arrived,

And he wouldn't have time to use psychological suggestion to resolve the issue.

Charlie's Scandinavian identity is Jimmy Lewis.

He and three beautiful women had just exited customs when they saw a middle-aged man holding a sign that read "Jimmy Lewis."

Charlie approached him and said, "Hello, I am Jimmy Lewis."

The man was surprised to see that the meteorological experts were of Asian descent,

And that all four of them were Asian.

He stammered, "You are Mr. Lewis? Then..."

"Then these three must be the other three experts traveling with you, right?"

Scandinavia is not a country with a large immigrant population,

So Asian tourists are ordinary, but Asian immigrants are much rarer.

The meteorological department is not a sector where Asians have a significant advantage.

Like the power sector.

Therefore, the arrival of four Asian meteorological experts was indeed somewhat unbelievable to the staff member who was picking them up.

Charlie smiled and said, "That's right."

"It's the four of us who need to board the ship."

"When does our ship depart?"

The man snapped out of his reverie and explained,

"Mr. Louis, our research vessel is currently waiting in Ushuaia port for refueling and supplies."

"The original departure time was 7:00 AM, three days later,"

"But the Drake Passage has been very rough lately,"

"So we may have to wait here for a couple more days until the waves subside."

He quickly added, "By the way, Mr. Louis, you four can come with me to the dock to board the ship later."

"We've prepared four..."

"The research vessel is large and has good facilities."

"Since we're mainly picking up people this time, there aren't many people on board."

"So it's relatively quiet and comfortable."

Because going to Antarctica involves passing through the Roaring Forties,

Where the winds and waves are among the worst in the world,

Antarctic research vessels from various countries use large-tonnage hulls capable of withstanding even stronger winds and waves,

With displacements generally exceeding 10,000 tons.

These vessels have very ample internal space,

Carrying large amounts of fuel, supplies, and research equipment,

And it can accommodate at least a hundred people.

Since there aren't many people on board this time,

The rooms are naturally very spacious.

Charlie had originally thought it would be better to find a comfortable hotel in Ushuaia for a few days before boarding the ship at the port.

But then he thought, although Victoria's plane had never been to Ushuaia and had always traveled between Buenos Aires and other parts of the world,

This place was not far from Buenos Aires,

It was close to the territory of the Warriors Den.

Chapter 7116

Whether it was him, Maria, or Jeremiah and Ria,

They were all people that the Warriors Den was eager to find,

So it was not appropriate to be too conspicuous.

Moreover, Asian faces were not common here,

And four Asian faces together would be even more eye-catching.

So Charlie agreed to the suggestion.

After collecting all the luggage, the four of them boarded the minibus he had driven and headed straight for Ushuaia Port.

They carried a total of ten suitcases, most of which Maria had asked Helena to prepare.

She knew that Charlie, Jeremiah, and Ria would spend most of their time cultivating,

And that time would pass in the blink of an eye for them,

While she would have to endure several months in the harsh polar night.

Therefore, she naturally prepared more luggage.

March in Ushuaia is autumn, with relatively pleasant temperatures.

Charlie saw many backpackers on the road,

Each was carrying huge, professional-looking backpacks.

Their outdoor gear was mostly brightly colored, adding a unique touch to the streets.

Charlie asked the middle-aged man who picked him up at the airport curiously,

"Are all these backpacker tourists going to Antarctica?"

The middle-aged man smiled and said,

"These backpackers are tourists who just returned from Antarctica and the South Shetland Islands before winter."

"The Antarctic tourist season is from November to March each year."

"Only during these four months are commercial expedition cruise ships going to Antarctica."

"After this season, all commercial expedition cruise ships will not be allowed to enter the Drake Passage."

"It's already late March now, which is almost the last window for returning."

"After these tourists return to Ushuaia,"

"Some will directly leave the country by plane."

Some people choose to stay for a while before leaving.

He then explained to Charlie, "Ushuaia is the most important stepping stone to Antarctica."

"Handling over 90% of Antarctic tourists."

"Therefore, its tourism industry is very developed, accounting for 40% of the local GDP."

"Half of the city's jobs are for the ships and tourists traveling to and from Antarctica,"

"And at least 100,000 people travel to Antarctica from here every year."

He smiled and added, "However, it's not peak tourist season for this small city right now."

"Because Antarctica is about to experience its polar night."

"Ordinary tourists will gradually depart from Antarctica over the next two weeks."

"The evacuation is underway."

"Many professionals from the summer research stations have already begun to leave."

"We need to return from Antarctica by early April."

"So the four of you will only have three days, at most five, to process the equipment."

Charlie asked, "How many days will it take for the ship to reach our research station from Ushuaia?"

The other person thought for a moment and said,

"If it's fast, it might take two and a half days."

"If it's slow, it might take three and a half days."

Charlie then asked, "Are the other research stations around our station summer stations or year-round stations?"

The other person said, "The research station we're going to is close to..."

"In the Antarctic interior, within a radius of tens of kilometers, are almost entirely European research stations."

"All of which are summer stations."

"This is because the closer to the inland areas of Antarctica,"

"The harsher the environment becomes, the more year-round stations are mostly built on the Antarctic Peninsula and surrounding islands."

Charlie felt slightly relieved.

Before coming, he had researched the Antarctic winter climate and knew that Antarctica's climate was peculiar.

After entering the polar night, the winters there become so cold that even air movement is greatly restricted.

Therefore, during the polar night, the Antarctic continent rarely experiences wind or snowfall.

It is almost entirely a long, cold, and clear night.

In contrast, Antarctica in summer is windy and snowy.

Antarctic winter nights are those with temperatures below -80 degrees Celsius,

No wind or snow, a sky full of stars and the aurora borealis, and extreme tranquility.

In such a cold and clear environment, the visibility would certainly not be too bad.

Under the stars and the aurora, the visibility would be at least several kilometers.

If there were other countries' permanent stations nearby,

It would probably not be so convenient for those people to come and go.

If there were only the four of them left within a radius of tens of kilometers,

Then everything would be much simpler.

Chapter 7117

Ushuaia, the port closest to Antarctica, primarily handles the transshipment and resupply of ships bound for Antarctica.

However, the port is relatively small,

With one commercial pier and one oil resupply pier, totaling fewer than ten berths.

During peak season, berths are often insufficient,

Forcing many ships to anchor in nearshore waters and personnel to disembark via ferry.

At this time, the port berths were nearly full,

Mostly with research vessels flying different national flags,

Including those from Northern Europe, China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Australia.

Due to the rough seas in the Drake Passage these past few days,

These research vessels were waiting for their departure window in Ushuaia.

It is said that many cruise ships and research vessels from the Antarctic Peninsula,

The mainland and the archipelago are also waiting for their return window,

As they are rushing to disembark before the last departure window.

Once the last batch of Antarctic tourists and summer research team members has returned to Ushuaia,

This summer's Antarctic tourism season will officially end.

After the recent peak of the evacuation season passes,

Ushuaia Port will see almost no more commercial cruise ships docking for the next six months,

With only cargo ships and research vessels from various countries remaining.

At that time, Ushuaia will enter its true off-season.

There's a little trick about Ushuaia Port:

Because many trips to Antarctica require booking well in advance and are therefore very expensive,

Beyond the reach of most people,

If there are still tickets available before departure,

The price will be drastically reduced.

Therefore, many backpackers, in order to reach Antarctica in the most cost-effective way, don't book cruises in advance,

But instead, fly directly to the city during the Antarctic tourist season and wait for available tickets on ships.

At that time, there were many ships to choose from, and it was relatively easy to find a bargain.

The minibus drove directly to the dock,

Stopping only in front of the Nordic research vessel.

Upon seeing the minibus return, several men immediately disembarked and warmly greeted Charlie and his group.

They were somewhat surprised that all four meteorological experts were Asian,

But their superiors had warned them that the four individuals' identities involved state secrets,

And that they were not allowed to inquire further.

Therefore, although surprised, they all displayed excellent professionalism and did not ask any questions.

One of the men, around fifty years old, stepped forward and said to Charlie,

"Hello, Mr. Louis, I am John Torresson, captain of the Nordic research vessel Iliad."

"You can call me John."

"Welcome to the ship, you all!"

Charlie was somewhat surprised.

He hadn't expected that the only research vessel in the Nordic countries would be named the Iliad?

So it was named after the royal family?

It seemed that the Nordic countries indeed showed more respect for royalty than other constitutional monarchies.

Immediately, he politely shook hands with him and said,

“Hello Captain Torresson, I’ll be troubling you for the next few days.”

John wasn’t quite sure which department Charlie and his “meteorological experts” belonged to in Northern Europe.

When their superiors shared information,

They were specifically instructed not to ask too many questions,

Not to interfere, and to provide them with as much convenience as possible.

Therefore, he even thought that Charlie and his group might be from the military,

But he also had a vague feeling that something was amiss.

Military immigrants were rare.

How could so many Asians arrive all at once?

Charlie noticed the doubt in his eyes and thought that after boarding the ship,

He would find an opportunity to give everyone on board a psychological suggestion to eliminate

Any future troubles, resolve the issue once and for all.

The Iliad was an icebreaking research vessel that had been launched less than five years ago.

It had a displacement of 12,000 tons, a Class III icebreaking capability,

And could navigate through ice layers up to 1.5 meters thick without hindrance.

It could operate in frozen waters year-round, whether in the Arctic or Antarctic.

After boarding, the captain led the four on a tour of the ship's facilities and layout.

The ship was large, with over a dozen laboratories in addition to the engine room and cargo hold at the bottom.

As well as a restaurant, library, gym, and other public facilities.

The four then followed the captain to the crew cabins,

It had over forty rooms of three types: single, double, and quadruple.

Research staff were assigned double or single rooms,

While all crew members except the captain and first mate lived in quadruple rooms.

The main mission of this trip to Antarctica was to transport supplies and evacuate researchers from the research station.

So the entire ship had only about twenty people,

Less than thirty, including Charlie and his group of four.

Charlie and Maria each chose a single room,

While Jeremiah and Ria, who used to share, opted for a double room.

The rooms on the research ship were naturally not as luxurious as those on commercial polar cruise ships,

But they were certainly clean and tidy,

With all the necessary facilities, including a private bathroom,
24-hour hot water, and a shower—more than enough for the four of them.

After helping them settle in, the captain said,

“Please rest a bit, all four of you.”

“Dinner is in an hour. We’ll make an announcement when dinner starts.”

“Just head straight to the restaurant when you hear it.”

Charlie nodded slightly,

Then used a bit of his spiritual energy to give him a mental suggestion,

Instructing him, “Remember to have all the staff come to the restaurant for dinner.”

“I’d like to meet everyone.”

The captain readily agreed, smiling, and said,

“No problem, don’t worry, I’ll call everyone over.”

Charlie nodded and said, “Then you go ahead with your work.”

“See you in the restaurant later.”

“Okay, see you at the restaurant.”

After the captain left, Charlie said to the three ladies,

“After such a long flight, everyone must be a bit tired.”

"Let's go back to our rooms to rest and pack our luggage."

"After all, it will be another four or five days before the ship leaves port,"

"And then another three days of sailing,"

"So it will take at least seven days before we can disembark."

Jeremiah said, "Mr. Wade, I noticed that the crew members on this ship seemed a bit surprised to see us."

"Perhaps the fact that we are four Asian faces is a bit unusual to them."

"Is there any risk involved?"

"Ria and I don't mind, but we are mainly worried about Miss Lin's whereabouts being exposed."

"Since there are surveillance cameras everywhere on this ship."

Chapter 7118

Charlie smiled and said, "I noticed that too, but don't worry."

"I already had the captain call everyone over for dinner."

"I'll give them a mental pep talk so they will do their best to make things convenient for us,"

"And not reveal our whereabouts to anyone."

"As for the surveillance footage, it's simple."

"I'll have their technicians open an interface so our AI model can process all the stored surveillance footage and erase any trace of us."

"That way, there's basically nothing to worry about."

"That's good."

Jeremiah was relieved and smiled.

"Since Mr. Wade has made plans,"

"Then I won't worry about it anymore."

Charlie nodded slightly and smiled.

"After dinner, you two can relax and cultivate in your rooms."

"Or you can come and cultivate with me."

"It's fine if you don't go out for the next few days."

"As for Miss Lin, you can have them deliver your meals to your rooms."

"You can also tell them what you want to eat."

"And they will definitely do their best to accommodate you."

Maria tentatively asked, "If you are also going into seclusion,"

"Can I stay in the same room as you? Otherwise,"

"I always feel uneasy being alone."

Charlie smiled and said, "Of course, no problem."

...

When Charlie and the other three returned to their rooms,

About three thousand kilometers away from Ushuaia, Victoria was sitting cross-legged in her palace.

In front of her were five jade stones of different shapes and sizes.

She continuously circulated her breathing technique,

Absorbing the precious spiritual energy from the five jade stones until all the spiritual energy in the jade stones was absorbed.

These five jade stones were painstakingly collected by the Wu family from all over the world and specially presented to her.

For the past three hundred years,

She has never stopped searching the world for all kinds of rare treasures, spirit stones, and magical artifacts.

In her early years, she reaped considerable rewards,

With a constant stream of valuable items sent to her.

These not only helped her reach the Niwan Palace and strengthen her cultivation,

But also helped her gather and build her own army of cultivators.

However, with increasing modernization, these rare treasures have become increasingly difficult to find.

Many natural treasures that require thousands or even tens of thousands of years to develop have gradually disappeared before reaching maturity due to climate change and human activities.

In the Dharma-ending Age, natural treasures are already rare,

And the vast majority of them perish before reaching maturity, making them even rarer.

In recent years, medicinal materials for refining elixirs have become scarce,

And spirit stones that can directly absorb spiritual energy are even rarer.

However, given Victoria's current cultivation level, even fifty spirit stones,

Let alone five, it might not bring much improvement.

Therefore, a sense of powerlessness in her cultivation gradually grew stronger within her.

She knew that she had entered the final fifth of her life.

If she hadn't consumed the Eternal Green Pill, even if she lived to be a hundred,

She would already be over eighty.

Less than a hundred years remained, a fleeting moment.

If she couldn't capture Maria and obtain her master's ring, she would face certain death.

But even if she captured Maria, what then?

Capturing her didn't guarantee obtaining the ring.

Even if she obtained the ring,

She didn't know if it contained the Hundred Turns Thousand Reincarnation Pill.

If there were only the formula and no pill,

It would be even more troublesome.

Could she gather all the materials to refine the Hundred Turns Thousand Reincarnation Pill?

Even if she found the materials,

Could her cultivation level be sufficient to refine it?

Each additional problem greatly reduced the success rate.

Moreover, behind the Warriors Den was a mysterious enemy,

A ticking time bomb that could explode at any moment.

In conclusion, Victoria was increasingly uncertain about whether she could live to see the next five hundred years.

The thought of that mysterious enemy only fueled her anxiety.

She immediately summoned her most trusted advisor, Revender, and asked,

"How's the investigation in Morocco going?"

"Have you found any clues about that person or those assassins and elite guards?"

Revender replied sheepishly, "Your Majesty,"

"I have dispatched multiple teams to Morocco to investigate."

"But so far we have found no clues."

"Those people seem to have vanished into thin air."

"We haven't found any trace in any of the major ports."

"Border crossings, or along any transportation routes within Morocco."

Victoria angrily crushed a dried-up spirit stone into powder, coldly saying,

"Outrageous! Thousands of people simply vanished into thin air—how can they leave no trace at all?"

"Even a fire..."

"Even if they're burned, at least their ashes will remain!"

Revender sighed. "My lord, our enemy is definitely a powerful organization."

"They not only have powerful cultivators but also formidable modern combat capabilities."

"The close-in weapon systems in Cyprus are the best proof of that."

"Their style of operation is extremely cautious, leaving almost no clues."

"Tracing them will probably take more than a day or two."

Victoria gritted her teeth and asked him again,

"Since the complete overhaul of all the outposts,"

"Have you discovered any trace of the enemy?"

Revender shook his head and said,

"My lord, I have increased the number of sentries and surveillance at each outpost and have been monitoring the situation at each outpost."

"So far, I have not found anything unusual or suspicious personnel approaching."

"I believe that we..."

"The enemy already knows about the Great Bloodline Reshuffle Plan,"

"So they won't risk attacking our base anymore."

Victoria sighed,

"The fact that they've stopped attacking the base proves that our Great Bloodline Reshuffle Plan has been very effective,"

"But it has also cut off the enemy's leads."

"I'm afraid they'll give up now, and then we might never be able to catch them again!"

Revender knelt on one knee, cupped his hands, and said,

"My lord, I dare to say something disrespectful."

Victoria hummed in agreement, "Speak."

Revender said,

"My lord, if the enemy really gives up now,"

"Although we can't undo our losses or avenge these attacks,"

"At least we won't be distracted by them anymore."

"I think the most important thing right now is to capture Maria as soon as possible."

"Everything else can be put aside."

"What do you think?"

Victoria remained silent for a long time before nodding slightly and saying,

"You're right. It's alright to suffer a little loss now."

"Since the other party is also a cultivator, they must have been there for decades or even a hundred years."

"If I can resolve the Hundred Reversals Pill issue,"

"I'll have plenty of opportunities to slowly find them and kill them one by one!"

At this point, her expression turned ferocious, and she growled,

"I, Victoria, have always been proud."

"I can suffer losses, but I will never suffer in silence."

"Anyone who offends me will pay a thousandfold price!"

Then, she coldly said, "Pass on my order."

"All members of the Wu family, as well as all military governors and elite guards, must do everything in their power to find Maria's whereabouts."

"Whoever finds Maria will be rewarded with a hundred years of lifespan and billions in assets."

"Whoever captures Maria will receive an additional hundred years of lifespan for their entire family!"

Chapter 7119

Victoria knew very well that the Wu family members all had their own selfish motives.

The Wu family was divided into five branches,

Each was in charge of one of the Five Military Commands—a structure Victoria herself had established.

This was like five feudal lords.

Although all were subjects of the emperor,

They certainly wouldn't place the emperor's orders above their own personal interests.

Therefore, the Five Military Commands might not truly be searching for Maria with all their might.

For the Five Military Commands,

They genuinely didn't care much about Maria's whereabouts or whether she was alive or dead.

Despite being Victoria's descendants and relying on her for everything,

They knew very well that their current good life was built on the foundation of the Five Military Commands.

As long as the Five Military Commands existed,

Even if Victoria died, the Wu family could still live a life of luxury.

In comparison, Victoria's life posed a greater threat to the Wu family,

Because she acted without regard for cost or consequences,

And the Wu family could easily be swayed by her will.

Maria's concern was for Victoria's life or death,

But if Victoria died, it wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing for the Wu family.

If there were no emperor above the Five Military Commands,

Then each of the Grand Commanders of the Five Military Commands would be an emperor.

Victoria understood this principle as well.

Didn't the Wu family care so much about her life or death?

Fine, then let these family heads taste what it's like to live forever.

Revender also knew Victoria's intention, so he respectfully said,

"This subordinate will convey the Emperor's edict to the five Grand Commanders."

Victoria frowned slightly and said,

"Notify the three elders that I have something to instruct them about."

Revender was surprised, but dared not ask any questions,

And immediately said respectfully,

"Your Majesty, please wait a moment."

"This subordinate will go and inform the three elders."

More than ten minutes later, three elderly men, nearly two hundred years old, arrived together outside Victoria's palace.

The head elder, Brovnen Wu, respectfully said,

"Your Majesty, your subordinates Bolin, Bowen, and Buzzner request an audience."

"Come in,"

Victoria said calmly.

The three Wu immediately pushed open the door and entered,

Approaching Victoria with unhurried steps, bowing respectfully,

"Greetings, Your Majesty!"

Victoria nodded slightly and said,

"I summoned the three elders here today because there are a few matters I wish to discuss with you."

Brovnen immediately replied respectfully,

"Your Majesty, please give your orders!"

Victoria glanced at the three in turn and said,

"I have already had Revendor issue the order."

"Whoever captures Maria in the entire Warriors Den will be rewarded with countless gold and silver."

"And their entire family will be granted a hundred years of lifespan."

"However, given your current strength, unless you find the Eternal Green Pill or help you open your Niwan Palace,"

"I am unable to grant you a hundred years of lifespan."

"Therefore, you three elders need not trouble yourselves with this matter."

The three exchanged glances, unsure of Victoria's meaning.

If she didn't want them to worry about it,

Then why had she summoned them to discuss these matters in the first place?

Moreover, when it came to opening their Niwan Palaces,

The three of them harbored some resentment.

After all, they had been in seclusion for a century,

And if they had just gritted their teeth and persevered for another ten years or so,

They might have opened their Niwan Palaces one after another.

Once their Niwan Palaces were opened,

Their lifespans would exceed two hundred years, or even more than two hundred years.

But all of this was interrupted by Victoria.

Once that momentum was broken,

It wouldn't be a matter of ten years or so to catch up,

Wasting another ten or twenty years would be commonplace.

Chapter 7120

Brovnren reacted faster.

He didn't dare to think too much about it.

He simply stepped forward, knelt on one knee, and cupped his hands, saying,

"Your subordinates have always served Your Majesty without seeking any reward."

"With just a word from Your Majesty,"

"The three of us would go through fire and water without hesitation."

"How could we care about any gains or losses?"

"We humbly request Your Majesty to order that the three of us be allowed to leave the island to search for Maria's whereabouts!"

The other two suddenly realized.

It seemed their long periods of seclusion had dulled their wits.

If they hadn't spoken up or refused when their boss told them she couldn't offer a satisfactory price,

They might have offended her.

The correct approach was to flatter her and immediately declare that they worked for her without expecting money,

And would do the job without any discounts.

So, they quickly echoed,

"We are only willing to serve you."

"Your Majesty, without regard for personal gain."

"We beg Your Majesty to allow us to leave the island!"

Victoria gave a light snort, nodding with a half-smile, and said,

"Your intentions are enough."

"Catching that little fox, Maria, requires skill, not brute force."

"Sending you is a waste of your talents."

Brovnen, quick-witted, immediately guessed that Victoria had other instructions for the three.

So he immediately asked respectfully,

"I wonder if there is anything else we can do to help our wise ruler?"

Victoria went along with it, saying,

"Over the years, the amount of spirit stones and pills consumed in cultivation has been enormous."

"And the loss of rare and precious materials is a bottomless pit."

"I want to seize the time to collect some essential materials to prepare for future needs."

"However, many materials are not available to ordinary people."

"So I hope the three elders can go out and travel to see if they can find anything."

"If you find spirit stones, I will not interfere in principle."

"If you find magic weapons, you can keep them yourself."

"However, those rare alchemy materials are of no use to you."

"Bring them back to me, and after I refine them into pills,"

"I can give you three 50%."

There are many treasures in this world that are difficult for those who do not have the cultivation level to obtain."

"Especially those rare and exotic beasts that ordinary people have never been to or seen."

If one encounters an ancient formation left behind by a cultivator before his death,"

Breaking it might bring a great opportunity.

However, Victoria was inherently suspicious, and given the immense power and influence of the Warriors Den,

She dared not venture out alone to seek opportunities.

Therefore, she planned to send the three elders out to find those opportunities in her stead.

She didn't care much for magical artifacts or spirit stones.

What she truly cared about were the formulas and raw materials for high-grade pills.

She had never taught anyone in the Wu family alchemy,

So even if the three elders obtained the formulas and materials,

They wouldn't be able to refine them.

Therefore, as long as they could find these and bring them back,

She could refine a large quantity of pills.

She knew that if she didn't obtain the Hundred Turns Thousand Reversals Pill soon,

She would inevitably go mad for the next hundred years.

She needed to make the Wu family descendants go mad with her.

Otherwise, the Warriors Den would become estranged from her.

Making the Wu family go mad wasn't difficult.

They already had money and status.

What she could control was their lifespan.

If there were a large quantity of elixirs.

The current leadership of the Wu family could be prevented from changing,

Thus ensuring their unwavering loyalty and allowing them to enjoy decades more of power and peak life.

They would undoubtedly become endlessly addicted.

This is a decades-long plan to nurture a corrupt and powerful force.

Decades later, when the leaders of the Wu family in the Five Armies Commandery are all over a hundred years old,

Their dependence on him will only increase,

Because if anything happens to him, or if he cuts off their elixirs, they will surely die.

In this way, they will face the same predicament as him.

If he cannot survive, he will turn the world upside down.

If they cannot survive, they will certainly be willing to follow him into utter madness!

Chapter 7121

Upon hearing that Victoria had sent the three out to search for rare and precious treasures,

They agreed enthusiastically.

Prolonged seclusion is characterized by initial bursts of energy, followed by decline and eventual exhaustion.

If one were to remain in seclusion until opening the Niwan Palace (a point on the back of the head),

Time would pass in the blink of an eye amidst endless cultivation.

However, being interrupted at the crucial moment makes it extremely difficult to re-engage and regain that state of mind.

The three's seclusion had yielded little progress,

Their impatience grew due to slow progress.

Victoria knew very well that if she were in their shoes,

Being interrupted just as she was about to open her Niwan Palace would likely require killing dozens of people to quell her anger.

Therefore, she decided to release them into the world,

Partly to alleviate their impatience and frustration,

And partly to see if they might encounter any good opportunities.

Victoria's cultivation had long since reached a bottleneck,

And she also longed for some changes.

However, she still had the Warriors Den to manage and couldn't spend a long time in the mortal world seeking opportunities.

Therefore, sending the three elders became the best solution in her mind.

Brovnen had been in a bad mood.

Hearing that Victoria had allowed him to enter the mortal world and move freely,

His mood eased slightly.

After being in seclusion for so long, he hadn't had a few days to breathe fresh air before being confined to this place again,

Which was truly unbearable.

Being able to go out, anywhere, was much better for him than staying in this depressing place.

So he immediately said respectfully to Victoria,

"Your Majesty, I am willing to travel to the ends of the earth to find the rare treasures needed for your cultivation!"

Victoria nodded and said,

"This is also a good opportunity for you to gain a deeper understanding of the world today."

"The social changes over the past hundred years have been unparalleled."

"If you want to understand this world,"

"You must immerse yourself in it and experience it for yourself."

"I will have Revendor prepare communication equipment for you."

"You should each plan your routes and travel for a year."

"If you make any significant discoveries, contact me immediately."

"If I have any tasks that require your help,"

"I will also contact you immediately."

A year is just a blink of an eye if used for secluded cultivation,

But if used for worldly affairs, given the current level of development,

It is more than enough to travel the world.

The three of them have spent most of their lives cultivating,

So they have no time to travel the world.

Now that this opportunity is rare, the three of them readily agreed.

Victoria gave the three of them a few days to prepare and asked Revendor to prepare passports for them to obtain Singaporean identity cards.

Once the passports were ready,

Revendor would escort the three of them away.

The reason for choosing Singaporean citizenship is that the Singaporean passport is one of the most visa-free passports in the world.

Making it relatively easy for the three of them to travel to most places with their Singaporean passports.

Leaving Victoria's palace, Brovnen asked Bowen and Buzzner,

"Bowen, Buzzner, where do you two plan to go?"

Bowen said, "I wanted to go to China."

"But after thinking about it carefully,"

"China is probably the hardest place to find opportunities."

"So I plan to do the opposite and go to America."

Buzzner said, "Then I'll go to China."

"I'll just consider it a trip to see the sights and revisit old places."

"I don't know what the past has left behind."

Brovnen said, "The lord gave us this year not so that we could revisit old places."

"But to try to help her obtain more rare and precious materials."

"If she is pleased, she might reward us with a few Qi-Nourishing Pills,"

"And perhaps the Niwan Palace can be opened smoothly."

Buzzner thought for a moment and then said,

"Then I won't go to China."

"We'll talk about it later."

"I want to go to Gurkha."

"It used to be rich in medicinal materials needed for alchemy."

"Many cultivators went there to seek immortality."

"Maybe I can gain something there."

Chapter 7122

Gurkha was the old name for Nepal during the Qing Dynasty.

Because eight of the world's top ten highest mountains are located,

In part or even entirely, Nepal is home to some rare and precious treasures,

It did attract some cultivators to seek immortality there in the past.

In these remote places, many relics of cultivators have been left behind.

Buzzner felt that the probability of finding alchemy materials there would be greater.

Brovnen nodded and said,

"Since you're going east and west, I'll go north or south."

...

Just as the three elders were actively preparing to enter the world,

The Iliad, anchored in the harbor, reached dinner time.

The captain specifically notified everyone to go to the dining hall,

Explaining that he wanted to introduce the four newly boarded personnel to the entire crew.

The crew felt this was perfectly normal.

Normally, the experts on board would live with everyone for at least ten days,

And getting to know each other would make things much easier later.

So, when Charlie and Lin Wan'er arrived at the dining hall,

All the members of the Iliad research vessel were already gathered there.

These Nordic crew members had combined the ship's tables into a nearly ten-meter-long extra-long table,

Laden with all sorts of food, mainly Nordic seafood and meat dishes,

Including smoked salmon, various sausages, shrimp, and crab.

Captain John, influenced by Charlie's psychological suggestion, was naturally very polite and obedient to him.

He smiled and said to everyone,

"Come, everyone, let's all applaud and welcome Mr. Louis."

"The meteorologist and the three ladies accompanying him are also meteorologists."

He then whispered to Charlie,

"By the way, Mr. Louis,"

"We still don't know how to address these three ladies?"

Charlie smiled slightly, released a bit of spiritual energy, and said to everyone,

"Ladies and gentlemen, we will need your help and care for the next period of time.

Our four of us have rather unusual living habits."

"So please don't bother us or question our behavior."

"If we need any help, please do your best and don't be lazy or try to shirk your duties."

"Treat us as your most honored guests with all your heart, understand?"

The three women couldn't help but laugh upon hearing this.

Who asks for help like that? So impolite!

However, they also knew that Charlie wasn't really asking for help.

He had already subtly influenced them with his words.

Therefore, they could see that the crew members,

Who had initially been somewhat puzzled about the four's identities,

Instantly lost all their doubt and curiosity after hearing Charlie's words.

They all answered in unison,

As if receiving a command, with utmost seriousness,

"Understood!"

Charlie nodded and continued,

"None of you must tell anyone anything about us."

"When you return, you will completely forget that you ever saw the four of us."

"And you will completely forget that we ever boarded this ship."

"Do you all understand?"

"Understood!"

The group answered in unison again.

Charlie was satisfied and completely relieved.

As long as these people, and those currently at the Nordic research station, had given them the psychological suggestion that they wouldn't reveal the four's whereabouts to anyone after they left,

No one would remember that the four of them had spent the Antarctic winter at the research station.

For the next three days, Charlie and his companions waited on the research ship for the window of opportunity to cross the Roaring Forties.

During these days, several more research ships arrived at the port of Ushuaia,

Resulting in the spectacular sight of more than a dozen research ships simultaneously anchored, waiting to enter the Antarctic Circle.

On the fourth night, Captain John Torresson suddenly announced over the intercom:

"Attention all personnel,"

"Port authorities have informed us that the wind and waves in the Drake Passage have subsided."

"Presenting a good window of opportunity."

"We are instructed to prepare immediately and be ready to depart within the next hour!"

Chapter 7123

As soon as the departure window opened,

The waiting ships weighed anchor, lined up,

And sailed out of the dock, embarking on their journey to Antarctica.

Although these research vessels were all heading to Antarctica, their routes differed.

Most went to the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands,

With very few venturing to the harsher Antarctic continent.

Therefore, after sailing only a few dozen nautical miles,

The ships' directions changed, and their tracks scattered.

The Iliad research vessel's first stop was Antarctica.

Upon arrival, they would bring back the staff from that research station,

Then proceed to other research stations on the islands,

Eventually, evacuating all staff back to Ushuaia.

From there, the staff would fly back to Northern Europe,

The research vessel would take nearly a month to return to its home port.

On the second day of their voyage, the research vessel entered the Drake Passage.

The infamous Roaring Forties lived up to their name.

Winds here were generally between force 8 and 10,

And the waves were at least five meters high.

The ship, navigating this strait, appeared as tiny as a small boat in a storm.

Due to the harsh weather and the research vessel's slow speed,

It wasn't until the third day that they had left the Drake Passage,

And the waves outside were growing increasingly larger.

While Charlie, Jeremiah, and Ria were single-mindedly practicing the Great Sun Tathagata Hand Seal,

Maria, in her room, used her delicate body to resist the ship's violent heaving and rocking.

At the same time, her dark eyes were fixed on the deep, almost black, seawater outside the window,

And the waves towering above the cabin,

Her fists clenched tightly in tension.

In her more than three hundred years of life,

Maria had never been to Antarctica.

She harbored boundless anticipation for Antarctica,

Yet dared not forget her reverence for nature.

Seeing the ocean, even higher than the ship, crashing against the portholes with tremendous force, causing the entire vessel to tremble,

She couldn't help but feel a surge of cold tension seize her heart, anxiety tightening her chest with every crash of the waves.

Charlie, feeling the ship's violent heaving, opened his eyes and immediately searched for Maria.

Seeing her gripping a small table fixed to the floor,

Her body barely manages to withstand the raging waves,

He immediately stepped forward, took her hand, and asked,

"Miss Lin, how are you feeling?"

"Are you seasick?"

Maria, caught off guard and feeling her face flush, said somewhat shyly, her voice barely above a whisper,

"Thank you for your concern, young master."

"I'm not seasick, just a little nervous."

"Although I've sailed on many transoceanic ships,"

"I've never seen such storms before..."

Maria had traveled extensively between Europe, America, Japan, and Southeast Asia in recent times,

Naturally crossing oceans by ship,

But almost none of the seas she had sailed had the extreme climate of the Roaring Forties.

Let alone sailing ships or steam-powered iron ships of that era,

Even most modern vessels do not meet the requirements for traversing the Roaring Forties.

Only special vessels capable of withstanding winds and waves of force 10 or higher and possessing polar vessel certificates are permitted to pass through.

Moreover, they must adhere to regulations and can only cross at a time deemed appropriate by the maritime authorities.

Otherwise, they risk capsizing.

Charlie channeled some spiritual energy into her meridians through her pulse points, saying,

“Spiritual energy can help enhance your physical strength.”

“Which will help you cope with the wind and waves.”

“Once we pass the Drake Passage and approach the Antarctic continent,”

“The seas will be calm.”

Maria felt a surge of power within her body,

Her balance and core strength against the wind and waves significantly improved,

And she instantly felt much less uncomfortable than before.

Grateful, she nodded and softly said,

"Young Master, please enter meditation and cultivate."

"Don't worry about me."

Chapter 7124

Charlie smiled and said, "It's rare to come to a place like this."

"So let's enjoy the scenery together."

A hint of joy flashed in Maria's eyes, and she nodded shyly.

At this moment, the Drake Passage was ablaze with dark blue,

Almost blackish waves whipped up by fierce winds.

The entire sea churned violently, like boiling water, with hardly a scenic view.

But Charlie stared blankly at the turbulent sea.

He was prepared to endure the entire Antarctic winter on this trip,

Wondering what kind of adventures awaited him on the mysterious Antarctic continent over the next six months.

Unlike the usual four seasons, those who deal with Antarctica only divide the seasons into summer and winter.

Summer is from November to March,

And winter is from April to October, with the winter being much longer,

Lasting a full seven months.

For the next seven months, there will be no tourists in Antarctica,

And all commercial ships will be completely suspended.

Currently, a small number of research vessels are still traveling to and from Antarctica, but by late April,

All routes to and from the continent will be completely halted,

Even research vessels will be unable to cope with the extreme temperatures at that time.

In other words, by then, people on the Antarctic continent will be unable to leave even if they wanted to,

And shipping will not resume until October.

Half a year has passed in the blink of an eye, and Charlie can't help but worry.

If his family and friends encounter trouble during this time,

He will be unable to help them from his distance in Antarctica.

As for his wife, he is even less able to search for her,

And can only pray that she is safe and sound.

Seeing Charlie's absent-minded expression, Maria asked him with concern,

"Is Young Master worried about things at home?"

Charlie nodded frankly and said,

"My family, friends, and followers are all incapable of protecting themselves against the Warriors Den."

"I only hope that during our time in Antarctica,"

"The Warriors Den will not make any moves or progress."

Maria comforted him, "Right now, the only ones openly present are the Young Master's maternal grandparents' family."

"However, I believe Victoria should be wary and won't act rashly."

Charlie nodded slightly and sighed, "I hope so."

After speaking, he thought of the Wade family again and used the ship's satellite network to send a WeChat message to his grandfather, instructing him:

"Grandpa, I have some matters to attend to recently and cannot leave."

"This year, during the Qing Dynasty..."

"I won't be able to return to Yeling Mountain for the ancestral worship ceremony."

"Please take care of everything, Grandpa. Keep it simple and low-key."

Zhongquan replied, asking,

"Charlie, where are you?"

"Can't you even find time to come back for Qingming?"

Charlie replied, "Grandpa, you don't need to worry about where I am."

"I'll return to China as soon as I finish my business."

Wade Zhongquan said, "Alright, then I'll arrange the ancestral worship ceremony."

"Don't worry, only direct members of the Wade family can participate this year."

"All branch family members are not allowed to join."

Charlie felt relieved and replied,

"Then I'll trouble you, Grandpa."

After sending the message, he saw his grandfather reply,

"We're all family, no need for formalities."

However, he didn't reply and put his phone aside.

Just as he was about to chat with Maria,

His phone suddenly received another WeChat message.

He opened it and saw that it wasn't from his grandfather Zhongquan,

But from Duncan.

He clicked to play the voice message and heard him say nervously,

"Mr. Wade,"

"Our ground network system has just captured the facial features of the three elders of the Warriors Den in Buenos Aires!"

Chapter 7125

Charlie's ground network system, built using vending machines at airports, docks, and train stations,

They had already located the three elders with AI models before their last journey to and return from South America.

This time, they first took a seaplane to the waters near Buenos Aires,

Then, they transferred to a speedboat to reach the shore.

Once they landed, the three headed straight to the airport.

The moment they arrived at the airport VIP terminal,

They were immediately identified by the system.

Neither Victoria nor the three elders realized the potential danger of facial exposure,

Nor did they know that Charlie possessed such a bug-level killer move.

Most ingeniously, all international airports and international ports prohibit facial concealment when passing through customs,

Meaning that unless the target had completely disguised themselves,

It was impossible to escape the ground network system's search.

The three elders' trip into the world this time was not for a specific mission,

But rather, they had a year of free time.

For them, disguising themselves was extremely troublesome,

As they traveled the world, they could not maintain a disguise at all times.

Furthermore, traveling between countries required their faces to match their passports,

So no one was cautious enough to proactively disguise themselves.

Upon hearing this news, Charlie's heart tightened.

Could it be that his conversation with Lin Wan'er had come true?

The simultaneous deployment of the three elders—was the Warriors Den really planning something big?!

Nervous, he immediately told Duncan,

"Detective Li, make sure the ground network system keeps a close eye on them."

"I need to know where they're going next."

Duncan replied, "Don't worry, Mr. Wade."

"Half of the AI model's computing power is currently concentrated in Argentina."

"As long as the three of them appear in the view of any monitoring device on the ground network system,"

"The AI model will immediately identify them."

"We'll see where they go next."

Although Charlie was worried,

He didn't know the three elders' destination yet,

So he could only patiently wait for their next move.

At this moment, in the VIP lounge of Buenos Aires airport,

The three elders sat, each holding a plane ticket.

Bowen held a plane ticket from Buenos Aires to New York,

While Buzzner held a ticket to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

His final destination was Kathmandu, Nepal,

So he had to fly from Rio de Janeiro to Dubai and then transfer to Kathmandu.

As for Elder Brovnen, he held a ticket to Ushuaia.

Faced with the choice between north and south,

He decided to go south.

This was because, over the past two days,

He had done his research with Wu Tianlin's help.

Argentina is close to Antarctica,

A vast expanse of tens of millions of square kilometers,

A forbidden zone for humans where, in winter, there are hardly even a thousand people.

The ice sheet covers over thirteen million square kilometers.

In Bowen and Buzzner's view, Antarctica was an extremely cold place where almost no grass could grow.

What extraordinary treasures could one find there?

It was almost certain that Brovnen's trip would be a waste.

But Brovnen had his own little scheme.

More than a hundred years ago,

He had heard a legend from a senior member of the Boxer Rebellion that he would never forget.

Within the Boxer Rebellion, there were many clergy members called "senior brothers,"

Even the leader, Zhu Hongdeng, was called "Senior Brother Zhu."

Chapter 7126

The main job of these “senior brothers” was to use their religious system to preside over various sacrifices and invocation ceremonies,

Thereby brainwashing and empowering their members,

Making them believe they were invulnerable to weapons—in reality,

It was all a lie.

However, not all senior disciples were mere charlatans.

Brovnen once encountered a senior disciple at the Boxer Rebellion’s southern altar,

A disciple who had one foot in the door of cultivation.

Although he had already attained enlightenment,

He was still required by Victoria to disguise himself as an ordinary peasant rebel and infiltrate the Boxers to gather intelligence.

After an internal ritual to invoke the gods,

This senior disciple, to boost morale, told everyone a story—a story about a special race before the end of the Dharma era.

He said that before the end of the Dharma era, when the world was still in the Bronze Age,

There were numerous cultivators.

The world of cultivators was filled with sects and powerful figures.

Their overall strength was many times greater than that of cultivators at the end of the Dharma era.

Ascension was commonplace.

Almost every sect had a Mahayana cultivator who successfully transcended tribulation and ascended,

Greatly boosts the confidence of other cultivators and strengthens their resolve.

At that time, cultivators were solely focused on cultivation and ascension.

In their eyes, mortals were like uncivilized savages,

So they had no time to concern themselves with worldly affairs.

At that time, until the end of the Dharma era,

Most cultivators lost their path to advancement and perished as their time to live approached.

Because cultivation was so difficult in the Dharma-ending Age,

The older generation of cultivators gradually dwindled,

And the new generation was even fewer,

This results in the swift depletion of the cultivator population's size and strength.

The surviving cultivators, seeking immortality and ascension, began searching for opportunities to survive.

However, immortality and ascension became increasingly difficult,

And many sects, with their last generation dying unwillingly in their pursuit of immortality,

Saw their thousand-year glory vanish completely into the annals of history.

But legend has it that a sect once found the final gate to ascension in the southernmost and coldest place in the world—perhaps the last hope for cultivators in the Dharma-ending Age.

Those who listened to the story with Brovnen at the time didn't believe their senior brother's words, dismissing it as a myth.

In their understanding, the further south one went,

The warmer it became.

The coldest place in the world must be in the far north, not the far south.

The peasants who joined the Boxer Rebellion in those days didn't know what the North or South Pole was.

They had never been abroad, or even more than a thousand kilometers from home.

They only knew that the north was freezing cold and the south was spring-like all year round.

Therefore, such a story contained a huge, counterintuitive flaw in their common sense.

Brovnen was different from others.

He could see through the cultivation level of that senior brother and knew that he was vastly different from those frogs in a well.

Therefore, he always felt that the other party's story might not be just empty talk.

Later, he heard from Western missionaries that there was indeed an extremely cold continent covered by glaciers at the southernmost point of the earth,

And that Western explorers had already set foot on that land many times at that time,

And even began to plan to explore the South Pole.

At that moment, he became even more convinced of the truth of that legend.

At the same moment, he regarded the South Pole as the ultimate goal of cultivation.

In the Dharma-ending Age,

He did not want to repeat the mistakes of Meng Changsheng and Victoria.

He wanted to find the gate of ascension and reach the heavens in one step.

And he never told this story to anyone, not even Victoria.

Now, Victoria had suddenly granted them a brief period of freedom,

And his cultivation was only one step away from opening his Niwan Palace.

In this world, apart from cultivators with higher cultivation levels than him,

The winds, waves, and extreme temperatures of nature could hardly harm him in the slightest.

Therefore, in his view, now was the perfect opportunity to go to Antarctica and explore.

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

Chapter 7127

In the waiting room, Buzzner, who was scheduled to travel to Kathmandu, was the first to be notified that he could board.

A beautiful ground staff member approached him and respectfully said in Chinese,

"Mr. Wu, your plane is ready for boarding."

"We have a car to take you to the gate."

"Would you like to depart now or wait a little longer?"

The three elders of the Wu family had spent a century in seclusion. Though they crammed a lot of common sense about the world afterward,

They couldn't learn foreign languages in a short time.

Fortunately, Revender was considerate of these elders,

He had arranged for a Chinese-speaking staff member to assist them in advance.

Buzzner asked the staff member,

"How long can I wait at most?"

The staff member said, "Currently, your plane has just started notifying business and first class passengers to board."

"Economy class passengers are expected to board in ten minutes."

"We will use the VIP passage from the VIP terminal to go directly to the aircraft jet bridge,"

"So you can wait with your friend for a maximum of twenty minutes."

Buzzner nodded and said,

"Then come pick me up in twenty minutes."

"Okay,"

The staff member said respectfully.

"Mr. Wu, please have a seat."

"I'll be back in twenty minutes."

The staff member turned and left.

Buzzner looked at his boarding pass, which was covered in English and Arabic numerals,

And sighed to the other two elders,

"The world changes so fast!"

"Back then, a trip from Suzhou and Hangzhou to the capital by canal would take three to four months."

"Starting in early March and ending in late June."

"Two thousand li of waterway!"

"Now, it only takes two hours by plane."

Bowen smiled and said, "Back then,"

"We didn't even know the Earth was round."

"Later, Revender told me the Earth is a large sphere,"

"And that even if you go south and north, you'll eventually circle back to the other side."

"I thought that ba5tard was just teasing me."

"If it were true..."

"Earth is a ball, wouldn't people on the other side of the Earth fall off?"

"I only realized it after seeing it with my own eyes on a plane last time."

He then looked at Brovnen and smiled, saying,

"Senior Brother, now that you're going to Antarctica,"

"After you pass that South Pole, will you be able to return to China?"

Brovnen smiled and nodded, saying,

"I scribbled a few lines on a globe."

"Roughly speaking, the Earth looks like a red lantern hanging up."

"The South Pole is at the bottom, like where the tassels are hanging,"

"And the North Pole is at the top,"

"Like the end of the rope hanging the lantern."

"No matter which pole you stand on,"

"As long as you choose the right direction, you can go anywhere."

Bowen gave a thumbs up:

"Senior Brother is truly amazing; he's always more diligent than us."

"Ha," Brovnen waved his hand modestly,

"It's nothing much, I just happened to get a globe from Revender,"

"And I fiddled with it a bit like a toy."

Buzzner, standing beside him, said,

"Senior Brother, the Antarctic you're going to this time,"

"Although not too far away, is said to be the harshest place on Earth, nothing grows there."

"You must be extra careful!"

Brovnen smiled and said, "With the cultivation levels of the three of us,"

"As long as we don't go to the Ten Thousand Mountains or provoke those national armies,"

"We shouldn't encounter any danger anywhere."

Buzzner sighed, "Speaking of armies,"

"The artillery these days is far more advanced than the artillery of the Eight-Nation Alliance back then."

"With our cultivation levels, we could hardly withstand the Red-Clad Warriors of the past..."

"Cannons were easy to use,"

"But modern artillery fire is incredibly cunning and deceptive."

"They say those high-temperature armor-piercing shells can melt even the best steel when they explode."

"No matter how thick your steel is, they can still burn a hole in it."

"Even if we had three heads and six arms, we couldn't withstand that thing."

"Even a wise ruler couldn't, right?"

Brovnen nodded and cautioned, "You must be extra careful this time you enter the world."

"It's said that a certain earl was turned into mincemeat by close-in weapon systems."

"Those things can chase after you,"

"Not only are they lightning fast, but they can also predict your trajectory."

"Before you even arrive, they've already fired dozens or even hundreds of shells towards where you're going."

"There's no way to defend against that."

The two nodded frantically.

In fact, the more the three of them learned about modern society,

The greater their sense of disillusionment became.

Brovnen murmured and sighed softly,

"To be honest, before I went into seclusion, I thought that after I came out, I would be able to roam the world without fear."

"I never expected that in the past hundred years, although our cultivation has improved a lot,"

"The world has improved even more."

"Think about it, a hundred years ago, a cannonball could only destroy a small boat or a house at most."

"But in 1945, 80 years ago, an atomic bomb could destroy a city."

"Fifteen or sixteen years later, a Soviet hydrogen bomb was equivalent to two or three thousand of those nuclear bombs from 1945."

"It is said that this was a castrated version they made because they were afraid that the power would be too great,"

"And the power was only 30% of the original design..."

At this point, Brovnen asked rhetorically,

"Tell me, in the face of such world-destroying weapons, what the hell are cultivators?"

"Even before the end of the Dharma era, if all the cultivators from all the sects were gathered together,"

"After one hydrogen bomb, let alone anyone surviving, having a whole corpse would be a testament to their extraordinary cultivation."

"Yes,"

Bowen said with a chuckle.

"Perhaps those ascended cultivators can also destroy the heavens and the earth,"

"But we were born at the wrong time."

"In this Dharma-ending Age, we'll never be able to cultivate to the point of transcending tribulation and ascending in our lifetime."

Brovnen countered with a question:

"What do you think ascension was before the Dharma-ending Age?"

Bowen replied, "What else could it be?"

"Like the Western Paradise that Buddha spoke of, going directly to another world."

Brovnen then asked another question:

"Where is that other world after ascension?"

Bowen spread his hands: "Who knows?"

"We've never been there. Maybe other planets."

Chapter 7128

Brovnen shook his head: "Modern astronomers have also studied it."

"Not to mention Earth, there's no other place in the entire solar system where humans can survive."

"The nearest star is four light-years away from Earth."

"Even if the world after ascension is there, how many years do you think it would take them to transcend tribulation and ascend from Earth?"

The two looked at each other, bewildered.

Unlike Brovnen, they hadn't crammed on so much modern knowledge,

So they didn't know how to answer this question.

Brovnen said with a serious expression,

"Even if they could travel at the speed of light after ascending, it would still take four years to get there."

"Besides, there's this theory of relativity that some scientists have researched, which states that no object can exceed the speed of light."

Buzzner blurted out, "Scientists study ordinary people, which is definitely not the same as ascending cultivators."

Brovnen nodded and said, "You have your reasons,"

"But let me ask you, if ascension really exists, who is more powerful,"

"The ascended cultivators or Sun Wukong from Journey to the West?"

Buzzner replied without hesitation,

"If Journey to the West is true, then Sun Wukong is definitely more powerful."

"He was already an immortal when he graduated, and later became a Buddha, which is a god."

Brovnen agreed, "That's right. If Sun Wukong is real,"

"Then he is a god or Buddha, even higher than an immortal."

After saying that, he changed the subject and said,

"But have you two considered that even Sun Wukong's somersaults only cover a mere 108,000 li (approximately 54,000 kilometers)?"

"According to the Chinese li of that time, that's about 60,000 kilometers."

"Even if he did one somersault per second, covering 60,000 kilometers each time, that's only about one-fifth the speed of light."

"In other words, even a god like Sun Wukong, who had already become a deity, would take forty or fifty years to complete a single somersault."

"Even cultivators who ascend to immortality on Earth aren't considered to have reached the ranks of immortals."

"So, no matter how strong they are, they can't be stronger than Sun Wukong, who has become a god or Buddha, right?"

"Their speed certainly wouldn't be as fast as Sun Wukong's."

"This ascension journey might take hundreds of years."

"So tell me, is spending hundreds of years on the road a blessing or a torment?"

The two men's heads were spinning from his words.

Bowen rubbed his temples and said, "Senior Brother, you're going too far."

"It's all baseless speculation. How are we supposed to determine its right or wrong?"

"Besides, to be honest, I've never thought about ascension in my life."

"I'd be content if I could eat an elixir of eternal life like the wise ruler and live for another five hundred years."

"Who cares how far Sun Wukong somersaults?"

"Yes,"

Buzzner said with a smile,

"Even wise rulers don't dare to dream of ascension,"

"So we shouldn't even think about it."

"Senior Brother, didn't you yourself say that there's nowhere near Earth where no one can survive?"

"Maybe ascension is just a hoax from the beginning."

As he spoke, he suddenly realized something and said excitedly,

"I think the stories about ascension are just like Sun Wukong's – they're all made up by later generations!"

"As for the so-called Dharma-ending Age,"

"I think that's pure nonsense!"

"It's very likely that Earth has been like this since its birth."

"For thousands of years, cultivators have been hoping to ascend, but no one has been able to fly away."

"Everyone thought about it and realized, 'This isn't right.'"

"Everyone says they can ascend, but why hasn't anyone flown away?"

"So, to comfort themselves, they made up the pretense of the Dharma-ending Age, saying that things are different now than before."

"Now it's the Dharma-ending Age, when even dogs could ascend."

"It's like in the late Qing Dynasty, when the old folks always said that the world was going downhill and that people weren't as good as before."

"I think it's just a load of rubbish to kids."

"Things probably weren't much better back then, maybe even worse than they are now."

"It's just that we weren't born in that era,"

"So judging good or bad is all based on his words."

Bowen's eyes lit up, and he exclaimed,

"Junior Brother is right! The highest level of cultivation is probably just living for a thousand or eight hundred years, like the master of the legendary ruler."

"As for ascension, it's all just the cultivators' own conjectures and wishes."

"Look at scientists now, they're always talking about interstellar travel and interstellar migration, aren't they?"

"But Senior Brother just said that even light takes years to reach the nearest star."

"Humans might not be alive enough to reach it even in ten thousand years."

"Ascension might be the same—just a theoretical height, something we can never achieve in reality."

Brovnen smiled self-deprecatingly and said,

"You're right."

"Ascension is very likely just a pie in the sky that cultivators painted for future generations, a pie we can never eat."

As he said this, Brovnen had his own calculations.

He knew that ascension couldn't be interstellar travel.

Before the Dharma-ending Age, it was impossible for cultivators who had successfully transcended tribulations to act like idiots,"

"Flying all the way from Earth to outer space every now and then, spending tens, hundreds, or even thousands of years traveling through the universe just to reach another world."

"Wouldn't that be utterly insane?"

He preferred to believe that ascension was actually a kind of teleportation mechanism.

Because in his speculation, ascension was more like an invisible imperial examination.

Except, the examination wasn't administered by the visible and tangible imperial court,

But by a group of super cultivators with extraordinary cultivation levels.

Just as the imperial court needed to select new officials through examinations, super cultivators also needed to select new people to replenish the upper echelons with fresh blood.

Therefore, they created the so-called Heavenly Tribulation and Ascension.

It's not that if your cultivation level reaches a certain point, the Heavenly Dao will actually strike you with heavenly lightning to test your destiny.

If there really was such a thing as the Heavenly Dao, it would be overseeing hundreds of billions of galaxies, hundreds of billions of stars, and countless planets throughout the universe.

The Heavenly Dao was too busy to care about some tiny speck on a certain planet.

Why would it specifically send you a bolt of lightning?

Did you really think you were so great?

Brovnen felt that the so-called "heavenly tribulation" was more like your cultivation level just meeting the minimum requirements for selection.

The higher-ups noticed you and gave you a chance to participate in the imperial examination.

The heavenly lightning was probably just that kind of test, nothing more.

It gave you a chance to take the exam; if you could withstand it, it proved you had passed the test from above.

Then, a powerful divine force would open a door and teleport you there, and you would be considered an official.

After that, you would start from the bottom, since there were always higher-ups above you.

Even the imperial examination involved three rounds: the provincial examination, the metropolitan examination, and the palace examination.

The tribulation might just be the first round of the provincial examination for cultivators.

In ancient times, even if you passed all three rounds of the imperial examination and became the top scholar in the final palace examination,

You were only qualified to enter the Hanlin Academy, a mere sixth-rank official.

Once in the Hanlin Academy, you were just a nobody, and you still had to climb the ranks little by little.

Even if you pass the imperial examination with top honors and rise through the ranks to become the prime minister,

The imperial court still holds you firmly in check.

If you're even more capable, and you successfully rebel and become emperor, you're still the ruler of a nation.

But what if your nation is small? What if you're surrounded by powerful enemies?

What if you're unlucky and, after enduring countless trials, become the leader of a country like the Dahomey or Zulu kingdoms of 15th-century Africa?

When the Portuguese colonists arrived, the entire country was seized and forced to grow cotton and sugarcane.

What could an emperor do? Being exiled was considered a blessing from his ancestors.

Anyway, it's all about enduring, no matter where you are.

Once you survive one stage, there's another. The biggest difference is that cultivators have a long enough lifespan to endure, living for thousands of years or even longer—that's a huge attraction in itself.

Of course, if you can't withstand the heavenly tribulation and are reduced to dust or disintegrate into a wandering immortal, that's your own business.

The cruelty of ascension compared to the imperial examination is that you don't get a second chance.

It was precisely because Brovnen had constructed such a logic in his mind that he was more ambitious than Bowen, Buzzner, and even Victoria.

Even Victoria never dared to dream of ascension.

Her thinking was simple: she just wanted to obtain the Hundred Reincarnation Pill and live for another five hundred years.

As for what to do after the second five hundred years, that was a problem to consider in the next stage; thinking about it now was a waste of energy.

But Brovnen felt that if the legends of Antarctica were true,

Ascension might no longer be an unattainable dream. Why not broaden his horizons further?

Chapter 7129

When the airport staff informed Buzzner of his boarding time again,

He stood up, cupped his hands in greeting to Brovnen and Bowen, and said,

“My two senior brothers, I’ll be going now. See you in a year!”

Bowen smiled and said, “Junior brother, I wish you great success!”

Brovnen also politely said, “Junior brother, I wish you great success!”

Buzzner chuckled and said, “Thank you, my senior brothers.”

“I also wish you both great opportunities,”

“And that you will achieve your goals soon!”

After saying this, he turned around and followed the staff out of the VIP lounge.

After seeing him leave, Bowen said to Brovnen,

“Senior Brother, how long do you plan to stay in Antarctica this time?”

“Where will you go next?”

Brovnen casually replied,

“I don’t have any plans, I’ll just see how it goes.”

Bowen laughed and said, “If you ask me, you shouldn’t bother going to Antarctica.”

"Why don't you come with me to America?"

"Ever since Emperor Guangxu ascended the throne, people have always said that America is a paradise on earth."

"A place of extravagance and debauchery."

"Now that we have such a good opportunity,"

"Why not go there and experience it for ourselves?"

"Anyway, the Emperor told us to find our own opportunities,"

"And he didn't say we had to bring back anything to report."

"What do you say?"

Brovnen shook his head and smiled, saying,

"I don't like crowds and noise,"

"So I won't go looking for that discomfort."

Seeing that he refused, Bowen didn't insist, but politely said,

"Then I wish Senior Brother a fruitful trip to Antarctica."

Just then, an airport staff member came up to him and politely said,

"Mr. Wu, you can now board your flight to New York."

Bowen nodded, said goodbye to Brovnen,

And followed the staff member to board the plane.

At this moment, Charlie's Iliad was still navigating through the Roaring Forties.

Duncan sent him a WeChat message:

"One of the three elders has boarded a plane to Rio de Janeiro."

"I checked his ticket information."

"His final destination is Kathmandu, Nepal."

Charlie asked in surprise,

"Are the three of them splitting up?"

"It seems so,"

"It seems so," Duncan said.

"Only one person has boarded so far."

Immediately afterward, Duncan sent another message:

"Mr. Wade, the other one has also set off to board."

"It seems the three of them have different destinations."

Charlie instantly breathed a sigh of relief.

He was most worried that the three of them would end up at the same place.

If all three were going to China,

He would probably have to immediately ask the captain to turn back,

And then rush back to China as quickly as possible.

Now that the three of them were splitting up,

It proved that Victoria didn't intend for them to make any big moves.

Soon, Duncan found out the second person's flight information and said,

"Mr. Wade, the second person is going to New York."

Charlie was a little puzzled,

I don't understand why they would choose these two destinations.

Fortunately, none of his relatives were in these two cities,

So he was almost certain that these two weren't targeting him.

So, he asked Duncan, "Detective Li,"

"Have you figured out the third person's destination?"

"Not yet,"

Duncan said. "He's currently waiting in the VIP lounge."

"We've been keeping an eye on him at the complimentary drink machine in the VIP lounge,"

"But we haven't been able to find out his flight information yet."

Charlie instructed him,

"Then keep a close eye on him and let me know immediately if anything happens."

"Yes, Mr. Wade."

Brown at the airport, after waiting alone for forty minutes,

Finally received his boarding notification.

Chapter 7130

Duncan immediately found out about his flight and then informed Charlie,

“Mr. Wade, the third person, went to Ushuaia.”

“A city in southern Argentina.”

“Ushuaia?”

Charlie was immediately puzzled.

Why did this third elder come to Ushuaia?

Was he tracking him?

Charlie thought about it carefully and felt it was unlikely.

If the Warriors Den had truly found clues about him,

They would also know he had brought Maria, Jeremiah, and Ria—so many important targets.

How could the Warriors Den only send one elder?

All three would have to come together to ensure everything was foolproof.

Therefore, since he ruled out the possibility that the elder was after him,

The only remaining possibility was that he had another purpose in Ushuaia.

Charlie wasn't afraid of going to Ushuaia,

As long as his destination wasn't Antarctica.

If he was also going to Antarctica, theoretically, he didn't need to worry too much,

Because Antarctica was so vast that the chances of encountering him there were extremely small.

Therefore, he instructed Duncan to continue monitoring the three's movements and to inform him immediately of any new developments.

Ten minutes later, Brovnen boarded an Airbus A320.

The first-class cabin of the plane only had eight seats.

After Brovnen sat down, several more Argentinian passengers boarded.

A few minutes later, a young man with a Chinese face sat in the empty seat next to him.

After settling in, the young man respectfully said to him,

"Elder Wu, I am here on orders from Chief Steward Wu to accompany you to Ushuaia."

"It is difficult to go to Antarctica this season."

"And he is worried that your unfamiliarity with the area and the language barrier will affect your trip."

Brovnen was not surprised by this.

Revendor was always reliable and thorough in his work.

He himself did not know any foreign languages,

And it was not the season for going to Antarctica.

Finding a way on his own would not be easy,

And having a helper would save him a lot of trouble.

So he asked the young man,

"Are you from the Left Military Governor's Office?"

"That's right,"

"That's right," the young man replied.

"My name is Siyan Wu,"

"And I serve as the governor of the Left Military Governor's Office,"

"Mainly responsible for all liaison work in Buenos Aires."

Brovnen nodded. "So you're also a member of the Wu family."

"Tell me, does the Left Military Governor's Office have any troops stationed in Ushuaia?"

"No," Siyan explained.

"Ushuaia is geographically remote, has a small population, and an underdeveloped economy."

"So the Left Military Governor's Office hasn't established a presence there."

Brovnen asked, "Isn't this the only route to Antarctica?"

"Doesn't your Left Military Governor's Office have any presence in Antarctica?"

"Antarctica..."

Siyan said awkwardly, "Antarctica is a rather special place."

"It doesn't belong to any one country."

"It's just closer to Argentina."

"Many countries have signed the Antarctic Treaty."

"Which only allows national-level scientific research projects and professional polar travel."

"Moreover, they have very strict requirements for personnel entering and leaving the area."

"Apart from scientific researchers from various countries, only commercial tour groups can go there."

"In addition, the regulations are strict, making it difficult for us to reasonably establish any plans there."

"Therefore, we have almost no involvement in Antarctica."

Brovnen nodded slightly in satisfaction.

To him, the fewer people in Antarctica, the better the signal.

This proved that most parts of Antarctica had not been touched by modern humans,

This greatly increased his chances of finding opportunities.

So he asked Siyan,

"What's the most convenient way for me to get into Antarctica now?"

Siyan said, "The only way now is to take a research vessel."

"But the management of research vessels is very strict."

"Forcibly boarding the ship will definitely attract a lot of attention."

"So, my suggestion is that I find out about the research vessel's situation and departure time first."

"Then I will rent a boat in advance to take you out to sea."

"When the research vessel gets close,"

"You can find a way to board it at sea, which is the safest option."

Chapter 7131

Upon hearing Siyan's explanation of Revendor's arrangements,

Brovnen frowned slightly and asked,

"Why can't we board the ship directly at the dock?"

"Why find a way at sea?"

Siyan could only patiently explain,

"Elder, currently in Ushuaia, only research vessels from various countries are waiting to enter the Antarctic Circle."

"There are no commercial ships."

"Moreover, those capable of exploring Antarctica are mostly countries with strong economies and national power."

"If you rashly board any ship, you might be detected and locked onto,"

"Which would be a risk for you."

Brovnen said calmly, "That's simple."

"I've already planned it out."

"I'll use spiritual energy to control their minds and make him..."

"They will all obey my orders."

Siyan said, "Controlling their minds isn't difficult."

"The difficulty lies in the surveillance equipment everywhere,"

"From the dock to the ship."

"Without backup, your entry into the dock might leave clues."

"If someone notices something amiss and traces your itinerary back to Buenos Aires, and further,"

"They might pinpoint the location of the Anti-Warriors Den near Buenos Aires,"

"Which would be a threat to the organization."

Brovnien was silent for a moment, then asked him,

"So you mean, I can avoid trouble by secretly boarding the ship at sea?"

Siyan nodded and whispered, "What I mean, Chief Steward Wu, is that the research vessel..."

"The management is extremely strict, and the dock's surveillance data is uploaded to the server in real time."

"Argentine police, homeland security agencies, and even hackers with backdoors can access the data."

"The data backups are extensive, the transmission links are long,"

"And destruction is difficult."

"If you board the ship at sea, you won't leave any clues at the dock."

"After boarding, you can use your spiritual energy to control the crew and have them delete all the ship's surveillance footage after you land."

"If you want to be absolutely certain,"

"You can choose a suitable time for the ship to wreck and everyone to perish."

"Then it will be even more foolproof."

Brovnen asked him, "What if I leave Antarctica someday?"

"Will I also have to board a ship at sea?"

Siyan said, "It depends on when you leave."

"If you leave in winter, you'll only have less than a month left."

"You need to see if any research vessels are still leaving Antarctica by April."

"If you miss that window, you'll probably be stuck for the entire winter."

"If you wait until summer to leave, it will be much easier."

"There will be many commercial cruise ships coming and going then."

"Our Left Army Governor's Office also has a cruise ship operating company."

"And we happen to have a polar expedition cruise ship that can come and pick you up."

Brovnen nodded slightly and said,

"In that case, let's do as Revendor says."

...

After Charlie's research vessel, the Iliad, sailed at sea for three days,

It safely passed through the Roaring Forties,

Rounded the Antarctic Peninsula, and slowly approached the Antarctic continent.

At this time, the sea surface near the Antarctic continent was covered with a thick layer of ice,

And the research vessel could only move forward at an extremely slow speed,
Breaking through the ice as it went.

The research vessel is approaching 80° South latitude.

Although it hasn't entered polar night yet,

The daily daylight hours are already less than three hours,

On the eve of the polar night.

The displays inside the ship show the real-time outside temperature,

Which has already plummeted to an astonishing -55 degrees Celsius before sunrise.

After sunrise, the temperature will rise by about 10 degrees Celsius.

However, compared to this extreme cold, the outside environment is calm and peaceful,

With almost no wind, waves, or snow.

The only sounds are the cracking of ice and the low-frequency noise of the engines.

After another sunrise, the ice-covered Antarctic continent was visible outside the window.

The captain announced over the intercom that the research vessel would dock at the edge of Antarctica in a few hours.

And everyone should prepare to disembark.

Since the journey was nearing its end, Charlie woke Jeremiah and Ria, who had been in seclusion.

The two returned to their room, quickly packed their belongings, and waited for the ship to dock.

At this moment, Maria was pleasantly surprised to see a large army of penguins marching towards the mainland on the frozen sea.

Pointing to the dense black dots on the ice, she excitedly exclaimed,

"Young Master, look!"

"They're Emperor penguins!"

Charlie looked over and was astonished to discover that these penguins were migrating from the frozen sea towards the Antarctic interior.

He asked, puzzled, "The Antarctic interior is the coldest place right now."

"Why are these penguins still heading in?"

Chapter 7132

Maria smiled and said, "Emperor penguins are just that strange."

"Other penguins migrate north in winter,"

"But they come back to breed deep in Antarctica."

Charlie remembered something and said,

"I think I saw it on TV before."

"Thousands or even tens of thousands of emperor penguins would huddle together to withstand the wind and snow."

"It was quite a spectacular sight."

"Yes,"

Maria said, "Their habit is to breed in the coldest time."

"Gathering in groups to incubate eggs and raise their young."

"This is probably the only animal we can see in the Antarctic interior in winter."

The Antarctic winter is the harshest environment on Earth,

And very few animals can overwinter there.

The emperor penguin is one of them.

Because the Antarctic sea surface is freezing at a rate of several kilometers per day,

Ice layers several meters thick have formed near the Antarctic continent.

At this point, research vessels don't need docks.

When the ice thickness exceeds the icebreaker's capabilities,

The ship simply comes to a slow stop and stops moving forward.

At this moment, several people waiting a kilometer away saw the ship stop and give a signal,

And immediately began to drive several ice tractors slowly toward the research vessel.

Each of these ice tractors was towing a trailer,

Some with cargo holds and others with passenger cabins.

Immediately afterward, Captain John approached Charlie and told him,

"Mr. Wade, you and the three ladies can prepare to disembark."

"The research station staff will pick you up first."

"You can take your luggage and supplies with you in the vehicle."

"If anything is too large or heavy, you can leave it with us."

"We will use a crane loader to load the ship's supplies and equipment into the trucks later."

Charlie nodded and asked them,

"Captain Torreson, when are you returning?"

John Torreson checked the time and said,

"It's still over a hundred kilometers from here to the research station."

"It will take at least four hours by snowmobile."

"We need to wait for the staff to transport all the goods."

"And arrange the work at the research station before returning together."

"From now until departure, it will probably take about four days."

Charlie nodded slightly.

After four days, there would probably be very few people left on the Antarctic continent,

Which would be more convenient for cultivation?

When Charlie and his three companions disembarked,

The short daylight was drawing to a close.

A hundred meters away on the ice cap,

Three members of the Nordic polar research team were waiting beside a snowmobile.

They had received information that after resupplying the research station with fuel and other supplies,

They would be setting it to unmanned operation.

The station's power, heating, and water supply would operate automatically and remain habitable.

Instruments would record the operational status and key indicators such as temperature, humidity, air quality, and oxygen levels.

If the unmanned operation of the research station throughout the winter went smoothly this year,

A group of researchers could truly stay there for the winter next year.

Because there is no sun and unstable winds in Antarctica during the winter,

There is almost no usable clean energy.

The most stable source of energy is diesel generators,

And the heat generated during power generation can also be used to heat the research station.

Therefore, the research vessel was to supply the research station with at least 150 tons of diesel fuel to sustain its operation throughout the winter.

Transporting fuel was relatively troublesome, requiring at least two or three trips to complete the haul.

Therefore, the research team members were prepared for a busy day,

Hoping to finish their mission early and return to their warm homes in Northern Europe.

When the three research team members from the station saw Charlie and his group of four,

They were somewhat surprised.

They were driving a snowmobile to tow the crew cabin,

Intending to bring back anyone who could help on board,

But they hadn't expected there to be four Asian faces on board.

Charlie took the initiative to step forward, shaking hands with the leader.

While using his spiritual energy for a mental suggestion,

He introduced himself to the three:

"Gentlemen, I am a meteorological expert from the military."

"I have a very important mission here."

"While you are here, you must absolutely cooperate with my work."

"After you leave, you must forget my existence."

"Can you do that?"

The three immediately answered in unison:

"We can."

Chapter 7133

Charlie nodded and asked the leader,

"What is your name?"

The man respectfully replied,

"My name is Charles, Charles Johnson."

Charlie asked him, "Okay, Charles, how many of you are there now?"

"At the research station?"

Charles said. "We were originally a team of sixteen,"

"But most of them went back at the end of summer."

"Now it's just the three of us staying here to prepare for the winter unmanned operation."

Charlie nodded and instructed,

"Then take us there now."

Charles nodded and said, "No problem, everyone, please get in the vehicle."

"My two colleagues will be responsible for driving us back."

Accompanied by Charles, Charlie and the other three boarded the crew cabin,

While the other two went directly into the driver's seat of the snowmobile.

The vehicle then started and headed towards the research station more than 100 kilometers away.

Antarctica is truly the end of the world.

All around are ice and snow and endless mountains.

There are no real roads, but most of the terrain is relatively flat,

So the snowmobile can pass easily.

There is absolutely no trace of human presence here.

It is perhaps the only virgin land on Earth that has hardly changed over hundreds of millions of years.

According to Charles, research stations in the Antarctic interior are not actually concentrated.

They are scattered about 100 kilometers inland from the coastline.

The Nordic research station is relatively close to the coastline.

Most are actually 200-300 kilometers inland,

And some are even near the South Pole.

Reaching them by land would be at least a thousand kilometers,

Almost impossible in winter.

Only in summer, through makeshift airfields on the ice sheet,

Can supplies be resupplied and personnel deployed?

Even so, most research stations cease operations in winter.

On this continent, larger than Canada, very few research stations remain operational during winter.

Charlie also learned from him that once winter arrives,

These operational stations follow strict operating procedures.

Without unforeseen circumstances,

They are not allowed to leave the station for more than 24 hours,

Meaning their movement is restricted,

So there is virtually no interference between the various research stations.

Charlie then asked about the aurora borealis.

Charles told him that Antarctica had recently entered its aurora season,

But it hadn't yet reached its peak.

Therefore, at the Nordic research station, one could see the aurora every two or three days.

However, once the polar night arrived in April or May,

The aurora could be seen almost daily,

Sometimes, even continuously for several days.

This was practically the perfect environment for Charlie's seclusion.

The snowmobile traveled for several hours in the Antarctic night,

Finally, stopping in the center of a cluster of low-rise buildings.

The Nordic research station, from the outside, looked unremarkable, even somewhat shabby.

The front consisted of a row of elevated bungalows nearly a hundred meters long.

To the left were several arched buildings of the same design and specifications,

Arranged in a very orderly fashion.

To the right stood several special buildings,

Each is equipped with various devices, including communication and weather monitoring equipment.

In the center of the complex were several different types of special vehicles—transport trucks,

Bulldozers, cranes, and excavators—all of which were tracked vehicles.

After the vehicle came to a stop,

Charlie and his companions got out of the warm cabin.

Although they had only traveled a little over a hundred kilometers inland,

The temperature was considerably colder than when they had just disembarked,

As the sun had been out for several hours.

Charles subconsciously assumed that Charlie and his group were military personnel concerned with national security,

So he politely and warmly said,

"It's gotten quite cold now."

"The four of you might not be used to it yet."

"Let's go inside quickly!"

Charlie nodded.

The three women beside him, however,

Didn't feel the cold at all, and curiously looked around.

After all, most people wouldn't have the opportunity to come to such a place,

Especially in winter.

Charlie said to Charles,

"Could you first give us a detailed introduction to the entire research station and its operation?"

"Such as the hardware facilities and the basic operating methods of the necessary equipment?"

Chapter 7134

Charles nodded and introduced them to the four of them,

"The main building in front of us is the research station's living and daily indoor work area."

"All indoor spaces are equipped with electric underfloor heating."

"And there are 24-hour heat exchange, fresh air, and humidification equipment."

"Plus a molecular sieve oxygen production system,"

"So it can basically maintain constant temperature, humidity, and oxygen."

After speaking, he pointed to several arched buildings on the left and said,

"Our generator sets are in the first equipment compartment on the left."

"There are a total of five diesel generator sets."

"Three main and two backup, plus an energy storage system to ensure an uninterrupted power supply."

"The second equipment compartment contains our ice-melting equipment and water storage equipment."

"Using the temperature and electricity of the diesel generator sets,"

"The stored glacial ice is slowly melted, purified, and stored in water tanks, then transported to various rooms through underground pipes."

Charlie asked him,

"Are all these devices automatically operating?"

"Yes,"

Charles said. "All the equipment will run automatically after the mode is set."

"The diesel generator set will adjust its power according to the electrical load."

"And the same goes for the melting water equipment."

"It stores a large amount of glacial ice."

"At least a thousand cubic meters, plus the underground reservoir,"

"Which also has nearly a hundred cubic meters."

Charlie nodded.

More than a thousand cubic meters of water should be enough for the four of them to use for a winter.

Charles continued, "Our oil storage tanks are all built underground around the main building."

"With ample fire and explosion prevention measures."

"They can store up to 500 tons of high-grade diesel fuel."

"Besides the generator sets, all the vehicles are also diesel-powered."

Charlie asked him, "How do we refuel these vehicles?"

Charles led Charlie to the central parking lot.

In the center of the parking lot, there were four refueling machines specially developed for polar regions.

While demonstrating how to refuel the vehicles, Charles explained,

"The fuel here is ultra-low-temperature diesel fuel mixed with aviation kerosene."

"It can flow normally even at minus 70 degrees Celsius."

"All the vehicles have also been modified for polar environments."

"Apart from needing a little extra time to preheat,"

"They are not much different from inland vehicles in terms of operation."

Charlie specifically asked him about the operation of the enclosed snowmobile.

After understanding everything,

He asked Charles to take everyone inside the research station to learn more.

Although the outside temperature was below -50 degrees Celsius, the interior of the main building of the research station maintained a comfortable 26 degrees Celsius.

The building covered approximately 4,000 square meters and contained over 20 rooms,

Ranging from four-person to single rooms,

Similar to those on the research vessel.

Each room was equipped with a portable toilet and shower.

Wastewater was automatically recycled,

And sludge and solid waste were automatically collected and transported back to their home country for processing on supply ships.

The restaurant and kitchen had ample food reserves,

Not enough to keep the station fully operational for the entire winter,

But fortunately, only Maria among Charlie's group of four needed to eat.

The others could abstain from food, so the supplies were quite plentiful.

Charles also explained to Charlie that, in addition to the necessary equipment and supplies,

There was a television, a telephone, and satellite internet.

All communications were via satellite, with efficiency comparable to that onshore.

In case of any emergency, Charlie could contact the outside world immediately,

And others could also contact him instantly.

However, this network coverage is limited to the research station area.

When venturing outside for fieldwork, the vehicles are equipped with Musk's Starlink system,

Providing signal coverage across the entire Antarctic continent at high speed,

Exceeding 100 megabits per second.

Charlie was quite surprised by Starlink's coverage and speed.

He had never encountered such a product before and was surprised that such a comprehensive network service could be guaranteed even in the polar regions.

Even with the first phase of the satellite communication system, he had Abren built and completed and operationalized,

It could only ensure basic communication outside the two major polar regions.

To achieve such seamless, high-speed network coverage,

The number of satellites would need to be increased exponentially.

While Charlie was mastering the operation of the research station's equipment and vehicles,

Fuel trucks were constantly shuttling between the research vessel and the vessel.

They spent a full thirty hours refueling and replenishing other necessary supplies.

After refueling, they packed and loaded large amounts of garbage onto trucks.

Three days had passed by the time the last truck was fully loaded, and the transport was completed.

During these three days, Charlie witnessed two auroras,

But because the others were still working,

He did not leave the research station.

As the supply team and the three remaining personnel finished their work and prepared to return,

Charlie watched their vehicles depart from outside the research station.

After leaving, everyone completely forgot about Charlie's existence.

Subconsciously, they considered the research station to be in its unmanned operation phase,

And the next visit wouldn't come until the Antarctic summer in the latter half of the year.

After these people left, only the four of them remained within a radius of several hundred kilometers around Charlie's research station.

Charlie joked that this might be the loneliest place in the world,

But interestingly, none of them felt lonely.

On the contrary, all four felt this was a rare opportunity in life,

A chance to completely escape the hustle and bustle of the world.

Just as the four had settled into their new home,

A Japanese research vessel set sail from Ushuaia.

On the vast sea, a fishing boat bobbed gently.

Brovnen sat cross-legged in the cabin, meditating with his eyes closed.

At this moment, Siyan ran in, excitedly saying,

"Elder, the research vessel you've been waiting for has arrived!"

Chapter 7135

On the dark, calm sea, a research vessel flying the Japanese flag was sailing steadily.

Before entering the Roaring Forties,

The sea was relatively calm,

Both large and small ships could be seen from each other via shipboard radar.

Within a radius of several kilometers, there were only these two ships,

One large and one small.

This Japanese research vessel was Brovnen's target.

Even with his abilities,

He couldn't traverse the entire Roaring Forties alone,

So he needed to hitch a ride on a research vessel,

Preferably, finding a place to land in Antarctica.

Among the research vessels that had departed from Ushuaia in recent days, only this vessel was from East Asia.

Although Brovnen hadn't seen Japanese people since the First Sino-Japanese War,

He knew that because they were both East Asian, the physical characteristics of Chinese and Japanese people were not significantly different.

Blending in with this research team was the best option for him at the moment.

As the two ships approached each other, Brovnen prepared to board by wading, planning to wait until they got even closer before making his move.

However, the other ship, detecting the approaching distance on radar,

Proactively corrected its course, intending to maneuver around them at a safe distance.

Upon seeing this, Brovnen immediately instructed Siyan to send a distress signal via the intercom.

Siyan shouted, "SOS! SOS! This is ARG7717."

"Our vessel has lost power, is damaged, taking on water, and is about to sink."

"Requesting assistance from JRC5990!"

At this moment, on the research vessel JRC5990 (IMO registration number),

The watch officer immediately called the captain via intercom:

"Captain, we have received a distress call from a vessel with IMO registration number ARG7717."

"It is approximately five nautical miles away."

"The vessel has encountered a malfunction and is about to sink."

"Requesting instructions."

A deep voice came from the intercom: "Ignore it."

"Full speed ahead!"

"We don't have time to waste on this small vessel."

"Let them contact the Argentine maritime rescue department!"

The duty officer said instinctively. "But the other ship is about to sink..."

The captain said coldly, "Baka!"

"So what if it sinks?"

"We traveled tens of thousands of kilometers to get here to carry out the mission of Antarctic scientific research,"

"Not to rescue fishermen."

"Their lives are none of our business!"

"Full speed ahead!"

The duty officer had no choice but to respectfully say,

"Yes, sir! I understand!"

Inside the fishing boat, Siyan watched as the other ship on the radar moved further and further away,

And its speed increased.

He said with a dark face, "Damn it,"

"This ship is not only not coming to rescue us,"

"But it is speeding up and detouring!"

"Ba5tard!"

Brovnen snapped, "Didn't you say people these days are friendlier?"

"And that there is such a thing as international humanitarianism?"

"How can there be people who refuse to help those in distress?!"

"What kind of humanitarianism is this?"

Siyan was also very frustrated.

It was he who gave Brovnen this idea,

Because he thought that since Brovnen could use his spiritual energy to control people's minds,

As long as they lured this research vessel over,

The rest would be up to him. But who would have thought that ship not only didn't come, but instead sped away?

This was too unethical.

Helpless, he said with shame,

"I'm sorry, Elder, I overestimated their character."

"Why don't we wait a little longer?"

"Another research vessel is leaving tonight, it's from Canada."

Brovnen also lost his temper, gritting his teeth and saying,

"No way! I can't swallow this!"

"Go full speed ahead and catch up with it!"

Seeing Brovnen's resolute attitude,

Siyan swallowed his words of persuasion and turned to the boatman, saying,

"Speed up and chase after it!"

The fishing boat that Siyan had prepared was not as simple as it looked on the surface.

Its hull and power system had been greatly upgraded.

If it really sped up, catching up with a 10,000-ton ship would be a piece of cake.

The fishing boat immediately accelerated to full speed and chased after the research vessel.

When they were less than a kilometer away from the research vessel,

Brovnen looked at the stern of the ship,

Feeling the impact of its wake on the fishing boat, and said to Siyan,

"Alright, you guys go back, I'll board the ship myself."

Siyan quickly said, "Elder, this ship is full of Japanese people."

"You don't speak Japanese or English."

"I'm afraid you won't be able to communicate!"

Brovnen snorted coldly and said,

"I don't believe that a whole ship full of research experts can't find a single one who speaks Chinese."

"If I really can't find one,"

"I'll sink their ship and wait for the Canadian ship!"

Siyan asked, "Elder, should we wait here for now?"

"Alright,"

Brovnen said. "You all stay far away."

"If you find the ship has sunk within an hour, come closer to get me."

"If the ship hasn't sunk, it means I've found someone who speaks Chinese."

"And you can go back."

Siyan nodded and said,

"Yes, Elder, I obey!"

Chapter 7136

Brovnen gently smoothed his sleeves, put his hands behind his back,

And lightly touched the deck with his toes, instantly rising into the air.

Just as he was about to land on the water,

He gathered his spiritual energy under his feet, creating an invisible barrier between his feet and the sea.

Then, his body moved across the sea with incredible speed and silence,

Far faster than a ship could move.

Reaching the research vessel, he lightly touched the ground again,

Rising nearly a hundred meters into the air, he arced through the air and landed directly on the bridge of the research vessel.

The crew hadn't noticed anything amiss.

Since the fishing boat had been following them without getting too close,

No radar alarms were triggered.

The watch officer was focused on getting into the Roaring Forties before the next storm hit,

To avoid increased risks, he was solely focused on heading straight ahead.

Furthermore, this area had never been frequented by pirates, so he had no sense of caution.

As he and the crew propelled the ship at full speed,

They were completely unaware that a figure had appeared outside the control room from the top deck.

While everyone was busy, the control room door suddenly opened,

And a figure stood there, his expression cold and somewhat menacing.

The crew inside the control room was startled by the sudden appearance of the stranger.

The ship had departed from Japan a little over a month ago, carrying both crew members and members of a research team.

Although these two groups hadn't known each other before,

They had become somewhat familiar with each other over the past month,

Making it unlikely that a complete stranger would suddenly appear.

But who else could be on this vast ocean besides their own crew?

The driver instinctively asked, "Anada..."

Before the man could finish, Brovnen swept his sharp gaze across the crowd and said coldly,

"Who speaks Chinese? Come out and speak!"

His words caused the dozen or so people present to freeze in shock.

For Brovnen, calming these people was a matter of a single thought.

However, calming their minds didn't mean he could control them.

Only those who could understand his commands would obey him and be under his control.

The others, who couldn't understand his commands, were now as if they had lost consciousness, standing motionless in place.

Soon, a young man stepped out from among the restrained people.

He walked a few steps forward to Brovnen and said in fluent Chinese,

"I can speak Chinese."

Brovnen nodded in satisfaction and asked him,

"What's your name?"

The man respectfully replied,

"My name is Matsushita Heikichi."

Brovnen waved his hand dismissively,

"Matsushita? From now on, you're a lackey."

"Do whatever I tell you to do wholeheartedly."

"Refer to yourself as 'this humble one' when speaking to me, understand?"

Matsushita Heikichi immediately replied with utmost devotion,

"This humble one obeys."

Brovnen grunted and asked him,

"Tell me, how many people are on your ship?"

Matsushita Heikichi said,

"There are twenty-six crew members and twenty-two members of the research team."

Brovnen frowned and asked,

"I just had someone shout for help from the fishing boat."

"Why didn't you help?"

Matsushita Heikichi quickly replied,

"It's not that this humble one was unwilling to help,"

"But the captain ordered full speed ahead,"

"And this humble one had no choice but to obey."

"Captain..."

Brovnen snorted coldly, then opened his right hand,

Powerful spiritual energy emanates from his palm and invisibly surrounds the entire research vessel.

In that instant, everyone on board was completely captivated.

Then, he looked at Matsushita Heikichi and said coldly,

"Now you will speak and make everyone on board obey your orders."

“And follow your lead in everything!”

Matsushita Heikichi immediately complied, picked up the microphone on the walkie-talkie,

Switched the channel to ship-wide broadcast,

And rattled off a string of words.

The gist of which was that from now on, everyone must strictly obey his orders.

After he finished speaking, Brovnen continued,

“Tell everyone to continue their work as usual.”

“And maintain normal communication with the outside world.”

“Don’t reveal any weaknesses.”

These people were like robots waiting for orders, instinctively obeying whatever command was given.

So, when Matsushita Heikichi gave them the order in Japanese,

Everyone immediately returned to their work, as if nothing had happened.

However, once Matsushita Heikichi gave an order,

They would execute it with all their might.

Matsushita Heikichi himself only obeyed Brovnen’s orders,

So Brovnen could control everyone at will simply by using Matsushita Heikichi’s Japanese-Chinese communication skills.

Immediately afterward, he said to Matsushita Heikichi,

"Lackey, use the walkie-talkie to call your captain over here!"

Matsushita Heikichi bowed respectfully, then immediately picked up the microphone and gave the order to the captain.

Soon, the gray-haired captain rushed over.

Upon seeing him enter, Matsushita Heikichi said to Brovnen,

"This is our captain."

Brovnen stared at him intently, initially wanting to smash him to pieces,

But then he reconsidered.

Since this ba5tard was the captain, his professional skills were undoubtedly up to par.

He still needed these men to work for him.

He couldn't afford to kill the most senior and experienced captain.

However, remembering how this bastard had "failed to save him" earlier, he couldn't swallow his anger.

So he coldly said to Matsushita Heikichi,

"Tell this ba5tard to strip nak3d and stand at the bow as his punishment!"

Chapter 7137

The aging Captain Sato,

Under the influence of psychological suggestion, he willingly stripped naked and walked to the bow deck in full view of everyone.

The research vessel was venturing deeper into the strait into the night,

And the temperature was dropping lower and lower.

Although the captain was frozen, turning purple and stiff,

He still stood there hunched over like a wretched, almost sinister statue.

Seeing that he was about to die of hypothermia in the cold wind,

Brovnen ordered Matsushita Heikichi to carry him back.

When the captain was brought back, he was already stiff,

But fortunately, he was still breathing.

Once his temperature goes up, he wouldn't die.

Brovnen found him annoying and simply had him thrown back into his cabin to rest.

Then he called Matsushita Heikichi over and asked,

"How many days will it take to reach Antarctica?"

Matsushita Heikichi respectfully replied,

"About three and a half more days."

Brovnen said coldly, "Find a way to reduce it to three days."

"I don't have that much time to waste at sea."

"Yes, sir!"

Matsushita Heikichi agreed without hesitation.

The research vessel's original voyage and prescribed speed had a safety margin,

So, the speed could be increased.

Reducing three and a half days to two days was basically impossible,

But reducing it to three days was not a problem.

So, the ship immediately went full speed ahead, heading towards Antarctica.

At this time, on the Antarctic continent, Charlie was driving a snowmobile,

He carried three people towards a gentle hill south of the Nordic research station.

The magnificent Antarctic aurora had already appeared,

And Charlie planned to go up the hill to get a closer look at the aurora.

Upon reaching the hilltop, he swallowed a Qi-Nourishing Pill,

Intending to once again circulate the earliest set of hand seals to exchange his spiritual energy with the mysterious entity within his body.

The remaining five pills were a safety net he set for himself.

He needed to ensure he always had five pills on hand for unforeseen circumstances.

This time, the Four Directions Treasure Canopy again imparted sixteen hand seals to Charlie through the aurora,

Bringing the total number of Great Sun Tathagata hand seals to eighty.

These eighty Great Sun Tathagata hand seals significantly improved the overall efficiency of spiritual energy acquisition.

After returning to the research station, Charlie planned to enter seclusion for a period of time,

Accumulating enough spiritual energy before exchanging for the remaining hand seals.

Once in seclusion, time seemed to cease to exist.

A few days passed in the blink of an eye.

Three days later, the Japanese research vessel docked at the edge of the Antarctic continent.

Its docking point was approximately two hundred kilometers from where the Nordic Iliad had previously anchored.

The Japanese research team was already waiting there.

Similar to the process on the Iliad,

They would first deliver supplies before completing the personnel exchange.

Brown, visiting Antarctica for the first time,

He was amazed to witness the aurora borealis in the long, dark night.

Seeing this desolate continent reinforced his belief in a story he'd heard over a century ago.

Perhaps the gate to ascension truly lay in this endless wilderness.

However, he underestimated the sheer size of Antarctica.

Its coastline alone stretched 20,000 kilometers,

And its interior extended thousands of kilometers.

Searching for relics in such a place would be virtually impossible.

For a moment, he didn't even know where to begin.

Not knowing where to start, he decided to focus on what was in front of him.

The research team members became his ideal henchmen.

He subtly manipulated everyone,

And since he happened to find one among the remaining team members fluent in Chinese,

He kept him and Matsushita Heikichi as his two henchmen.

Originally, the research team that had come with the ship was tasked with replacing the remaining members and then returning to Japan.

These people had spent half a year in Antarctica and were all extremely homesick,

Especially since the journey home would take more than a month.

However, Brovnen had no intention of letting them leave,

Not even those who had already worked and lived in Antarctica for a summer were now preparing to return home for rest.

This was because, to him, these research team members were like slaves.

He had easily gained control of everyone,

And from now on, they would be completely obedient to him,

Becoming his helpers and laborers in exploring Antarctica.

Even more valuable was that these research team members were the most knowledgeable about Antarctica.

With them serving him, his plans would be much more efficient,

So losing even one would be a huge loss.

Since the ship was to remain, he might as well keep everyone there.

He needed more lackeys to obey his orders,

So he could become a local tyrant in this vast, frigid Antarctic land.

On the other hand, he couldn't let the research vessel leave Antarctica.

Otherwise, if he needed to leave before winter arrived and couldn't find a ship capable of breaking through the ice and traversing the formidable Roaring Forties,

Wouldn't that be awkward?

So, he called over Matsushita Heikichi and asked him,

“How long can this ship stay here at most?”

Chapter 7138

Matsushita Heikichi replied, "Waiting isn't a problem."

"Our supplies can last for at least half a year."

"And our fuel can last for more than half a year without long voyages."

"However, if the ship stays here, as the temperature gets colder and the ice-covered area along the coastline grows larger and the ice layer thicker,"

"Once the ice layer exceeds our icebreaking limit, the ship might not be able to move."

"If we want to move again, we can only wait for the weather to warm up and the ice to melt."

Brovnen frowned and said, "That won't do."

"I need you to be on standby along the Antarctic coastline at all times."

"In case I need you."

"You'd better think of a way to meet my requirements."

Matsushita Heikichi said,

"That's simple."

"I can have the ship move outwards every day as the ice expands,"

"Always staying within a controllable ice thickness zone."

"That way, we can respond immediately when you need the ship."

"This way, we only need to move a few kilometers at most each day,"

"And the fuel consumption won't be high,"

"Allowing us to continue for a long time."

Brovnen nodded in satisfaction and then asked,

"Let me ask you, if I ask you to change your plans and not return to Japan for the entire winter,"

"Will somebody immediately contact you?"

"Or come here?"

Matsushita Heikichi said. "Our research vessel is national property."

"If we refuse to obey the order to return home, the government will definitely come after us,"

"And might even send in the army."

"We'll certainly be accused of treason."

Brovnen stroked his beard and clicked his tongue, saying,

"This is troublesome."

"You need to think carefully about how to reasonably keep all these people and the ship in Antarctica."

Matsushita Heikichi thought for a moment and said,

"Well... I can't think of a good solution either."

"It's one thing to be a few days late due to unforeseen circumstances,"

"But if we don't return for the entire winter, no reason will hold water."

Brovnen asked him, "What if the ship breaks down?"

"Or freezes and can't get out?"

"Well..." Matsushita Heikichi said respectfully,

"The government can monitor the research vessel's location in real time via GPS."

"If we report to them that the ship is frozen,"

"But in reality, we're slowly moving it every day to prevent it from freezing,"

"The government will realize we're lying and will definitely send troops to investigate."

Brovnen asked, "If the ship is really frozen,"

"Is your army capable of rescuing us in Antarctica?"

Matsushita Heikichi shook his head: "Our ship is the only heavy icebreaker in the country."

"If it is really frozen, the country can't send any ships to rescue us."

"Even if we ask another country for help, it will be too late."

"By the time their icebreaker arrives after a journey of several dozen days, the ice will probably be hundreds of kilometers thick."

"Even the best heavy icebreakers in the US can't get in."

"At most, they can only dock on the outer edge of the ice sheet and help evacuate the personnel."

Brovnen nodded and said, "That makes things easier."

"You can report back to the country later."

"Say the ship had a mechanical problem and needed repairs,"

"And then keep delaying until it froze over."

"When the ship couldn't move, ask the research team to consult with the country."

"They want everyone to be considerate and not waste resources coming back for a rescue."

"They suggested everyone stay here and work hard."

"Taking the opportunity to accelerate Japan's Antarctic exploration."

Matsushita Heikichi naturally obeyed him without question,

But this lackey was also quite dutiful, respectfully saying,

"You just said the research vessel should be on standby."

"But if we really let the ship freeze, your need for the ship might not be met."

Brovnen sneered, "A mere ice blockage might be a problem for your icebreakers."

"But for me, it's nothing."

“Your ship is just sitting here; when you really need to move it, I can break the ice myself!”

Brovnen’s strength wasn’t enough to cleave a crack in the ice.

The difficulty lay in crossing the devilish Roaring Forties alone, without any support.

The environment—where one can neither fly nor walk, relying solely on spiritual energy to float—combined with towering waves and gale-force winds exceeding level 11, would be unbearable even for Victoria.

Therefore, Brovnen had to leave the ship in Antarctica.

He immediately ordered Matsushita Heikichi to deliberately delay the loading and unloading of supplies,

Slowing down the departure as much as possible.

When the departure could no longer be delayed, and if repairs were assured, to deliberately sabotage the ship’s propulsion system.

By then, ice would have frozen the area for several kilometers,

Even tens of kilometers, with ice exceeding two meters in thickness, rendering the ship unusable even if repaired.

Fortunately, the ship has ample fuel and supplies,

Ensuring uninterrupted power, heating, and water while stationary.

As for the research station, there is no need to worry.

There is a safety margin in supplies, and a large new batch has been added.

Although there are more people, they could certainly handle the workload.

Even if supplies ran out later, they could find a way to airdrop supplies using military aircraft.

And if all else failed, the expedition team could simply live frugally,

As long as they didn't die and could still work—after all, Brovnen himself didn't need to eat.

Having made up his mind, Brovnen instructed Matsushita Heikichi to stay on the ship and carry out his orders,

Then, he called over Kikuchi Kohei, another member of the expedition team, and instructed him in Chinese:

"Kikuchi, you are responsible for arranging for all the expedition team members to return to the research station."

"Also, starting today, dedicate three hours each day to teaching them Chinese."

"Make sure they study with all their might,"

"So that I don't have to give orders only to you in the future."

"Do you understand?"

Polar scientist Kikuchi Kohei bowed deeply at a ninety-degree angle and said respectfully,

"Please rest assured, I will definitely complete the mission!"

Chapter 7139

When Brovnen arrived at the Japanese Antarctic research station,

The straight-line distance between him and Charlie was approximately 400 kilometers.

Like the Nordic research stations, the Japanese station was surrounded by desolation and had few neighbors.

The problem lies in the sheer size of Antarctica.

When only a few countries establish research stations in Antarctica, they keep their numbers limited and spaced apart.

They all leave room for their own and other countries' future development.

Being too close to other countries' research stations would not only hinder their own future development,

However, it may also potentially compromise the secrecy of certain missions.

Antarctic research is about more than just investigating the local environment and flora and fauna.

Like space exploration, Antarctic research is not only about science but also about a country's strategic planning,

And even the development of certain strategic technologies.

For example, both the United States and China have tested their Mars rovers in Antarctica.

This is because Mars itself is a planet with an average temperature of only around -60 degrees Celsius,

And Antarctica is the closest place on Earth to this environment.

Furthermore, Antarctica has many glaciers and hills,

These share significant similarities with the terrain of Mars.

Because Antarctic research expeditions from various countries utilize a wide range of cutting-edge technologies,

They rarely choose to cluster together.

Brown couldn't hide his disdain as he looked at the low-rise buildings under the polar night starlight.

Especially when he saw the characters for "Showa" written in Chinese characters outside the station,

His face contorted with contempt and extreme displeasure.

Suddenly, he conjured a palm-sized miniature sword from his wrist,

Infused it with spiritual energy and activated its array.

The tiny sword, less than a foot long, suddenly seemed to be enchanted,

Instantly growing larger and longer into a gleaming sword, a full 1.3 to 1.4 meters long.

This sword didn't actually grow that long.

It was simply the spiritual energy activating the array that conjured this sword form.

With this sword formed from spiritual energy,

It could cut through iron like mud and shatter mountains and rocks.

Brovnen, wielding his longsword, lightly swung it at the stone tablet inscribed with the words "Showa Station,"

Instantly smoothing the inscription.

Then, with a flick of his sword, he left three elegant, freehand cursive characters on the tablet: "Wu Han Palace."

Brovnen wasn't well-educated and couldn't think of a grander name.

He figured if the legendary Guanghan Palace on the moon truly existed,

It would probably look something like this—cold, dark, and gloomy.

However, this place wasn't for Chang'e.

It was to become his temporary residence for a while.

So, he simply changed one character in a rather vulgar way, making it Wu Han Palace.

He reasoned that "Wu" represented the Wu family,

"Han" (cold) was the most fitting word for this place, and "Gong" (palace) signified his extraordinary status.

After changing the name, the research station looked much more pleasing.

He secretly thought, now that the Wu Han Palace was there, this was his place of practice, and he naturally needed a Taoist name.

After much thought, since he already used Wu Han Palace as the name of his Daoist temple,

He might as well use Guanghan Zhenren (Master Guanghan)

As his Daoist title—it sounded majestic, ethereal, and full of profound meaning.

So, he summoned Kikuchi Kohei and instructed him,

“Kikuchi, from now on, everyone who sees me must kneel on one knee and respectfully address me as Guanghan Zhenren, including you.”

“Understand?”

The power of psychological suggestion is to completely eliminate any ambiguity and maximize execution.

Kikuchi Kohei immediately knelt on one knee without a word and respectfully said,

“I pay my respects to Guanghan Zhenren!”

“Ah,” Brovnen felt much more refreshed.

Despite being a highly respected elder in the Warriors Den, he had never truly experienced any real sense of honor.

He began his seclusion in his youth, meditating cross-legged for over a hundred years.

His consciousness was almost constantly within his own sea of consciousness,

Completely immersed in his own world, far more lonely than Sun Wukong,

Who was imprisoned under the Five Elements Mountain for five hundred years?

At least Sun Wukong had a shepherd boy to bring him fruit.

He hadn't had anyone to talk to during his years of seclusion.

After emerging from seclusion, although the members of the Den treated him with great respect,

He could sense that that respect wasn't out of blind obedience,

But rather out of their subservience to Victoria.

This made him feel like a star actor in a theatrical troupe back then.

Although everyone in the troupe bowed and scraped before him,

They were all the troupe owner's men,

They had no loyalty to him, and he held no real power within the troupe.

Now it was different.

These dozens of Japanese research team members, including Kikuchi Kohei, were all loyal henchmen.

In this "Wu Han Palace," he was the undisputed leader,

And he didn't need to live in Victoria's shadow at all.

So he immediately said to Kikuchi Kohei, who was kneeling on one knee,

"Go, call everyone over and have them all pay homage to me!"

Kikuchi Kohei respectfully replied loudly,

"Your subordinate obeys!"

He then immediately went to gather everyone.

Although those people didn't understand Chinese,

Brown's psychological suggestion to them was done through Kikuchi Kohei speaking in Japanese,

So they were absolutely obedient to Kikuchi Kohei.

So, the group immediately gathered in the freezing square.

In front of the "Wu Han Palace" stone tablet,

Kikuchi Kohei told them in Japanese to learn the pronunciation of eight Chinese characters after him.

The group racked their brains to learn the pronunciation of these eight characters, taking a full twenty minutes.

Chapter 7140

Brovnen was also patient.

With his hands behind his back, he stood on the platform in front of the stone tablet, looking down at the group of people practicing pronunciation in small groups.

Kikuchi Kohei kept running and weaving among them,

Constantly correcting their pronunciation problems.

At one moment, Brovnen suddenly understood what kind of life Victoria had lived for the past few hundred years.

She was an empress surrounded by tens of thousands,

Even hundreds of thousands of people!

And she sat on that throne for hundreds of years!

If only he could have the chance to live as freely and happily as she for hundreds of years.

In the sub-zero temperatures, Kikuchi Kohei managed to break out in a sweat.

The sweat fell onto his eyelashes, where it froze into ice crystals in the cold wind,

Eventually forming two thick, icy eyebrows on his eyelids.

He rushed to Brovnen, knelt on one knee, and said,

"Reporting to Guanghan Zhenren, all members of the Showa Station are ready!"

Brovnen frowned and questioned, "Say it again, what station?!"

Kikuchi Kohei then noticed the three Chinese characters on the stone tablet behind Brovnen and quickly corrected himself,

"Reporting to Guanghan Zhenren, the members of Wu Han Gong Zhenren are ready!"

Brovnen was satisfied and coldly said,

"Since you are ready, then let's begin!"

Kikuchi Kohei, like a conductor of a symphony orchestra, turned to look at the crowd, waved his hands, and the crowd shouted in extremely strange accents,

"Zaixia Canjian Gong Han Zhenren!"

The crowd shouted with great enthusiasm,

And the white mist they exhaled rose up at the same time,

Merging into one, which was quite a spectacular sight.

Brovnen was momentarily stunned, thinking that he had misheard.

He was Guanghan Zhenren; how could these Japanese people insist on calling him Gong Han Zhenren?

He initially thought these Japanese were deliberately being disobedient,

But then he realized that didn't make sense.

They'd already been given psychological suggestions.

Even if he made them stand naked in minus fifty degrees Celsius, they wouldn't hesitate for even half a second.

It was clearly a language barrier.

So, with a dark face, he said to Kikuchi Kohei,

"From today onwards, teach them to speak Chinese for six hours every day,"

"And each person is only allowed three hours of sleep!"

Kikuchi Kohei immediately replied loudly, "Yes, sir!"

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of kilometers away, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology was unaware that members of their two research teams,

Along with the crew of their only heavy icebreaker, they had become Brovnen's lackeys.

Since learning that the research vessel had safely arrived in Antarctica,

They hadn't paid much attention to the research teams, assuming they were only carrying out routine tasks and that these professionals would smoothly complete the handover of personnel and supplies in the next few days.

Three days later, when the research team members' Chinese proficiency had significantly improved,

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology received a message from the research vessel.

The research vessel experienced a mechanical failure and needed to be repaired on-site before it could begin its return journey.

Officials from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) were puzzled.

How could a brand-new research vessel break down so soon after arriving in Antarctica?

Normally, minor mechanical problems wouldn't affect normal navigation and were repaired on the go.

But this vessel was completely immobilized and required repairs in Antarctica.

They immediately contacted the research vessel, expressing their biggest concern:

"Can it return before the coastline freezes beyond its icebreaking limit?"

Captain Matsushita Heikichi replied:

"It's unpredictable."

"Please prepare for the possibility that the research vessel may not be able to return this winter."

MEXT immediately erupted in chaos.

Leaving dozens of people and a ship stranded in Antarctica wasn't particularly dangerous,

As the ship and research stations had ample supplies, enough to keep them there until the Antarctic summer.

The crucial question was: who the hell could afford the embarrassment?

While the news of the research vessel's departure didn't garner widespread attention,

It did attract interest from polar enthusiasts and the families of the expedition team.

If they didn't return, it would be a disgrace to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) if the news got back home.

It would be a disgrace to the entire Japanese scientific community if it got international attention.

This wasn't just the MEXT being overly anxious.

There was precedent.

Not long ago, two American astronauts were stranded in space for 286 days due to a Starliner malfunction,

Their planned eight-day mission ended in a shocking 286-day ordeal.

The image of one of the astronauts, emaciated to the point of being skin and bones, shocked the world.

With American astronauts stranded in space and Japanese researchers stranded in Antarctica, this would be a major blow to MEXT.

Although the tradition of seppuku (ritual suicide) for those primarily responsible for the disaster is less common in Japan these days,

The tradition of suicide by hanging still exists.

For example, Yasuhiro Sato, the person in charge of the Fukushima nuclear accident,

Knew he had made a grave mistake and ultimately chose to atone with his death.

If a major blunder occurred during the polar expedition, resulting in an international scandal, the pressure on the person in charge,

While not as immense as that of Yasuhiro Sato, it would still be at least 70-80%.

The public pressure would be unbearable for most people.

Therefore, the person in charge convened a top-secret internal meeting.

After some discussion, they decided to request the Antarctic expedition team members and research vessel crew to inform their families that they were on a secret scientific mission in Antarctica and would not be able to return home for a short period.

They also requested that they maintain a unified narrative and never mention the ship's malfunction.

To appease everyone and ensure full cooperation, they even offered a ten-times-daily-pay rule:

For every day they stayed in Antarctica beyond the original plan,

They would receive ten extra days' wages, continuing until their return.

The expedition team members and crew had completely submitted to Brovnen and were truly indifferent to money.

When Brovnen asked them to agree, they immediately and without hesitation agreed.

The unanimous and prompt agreement from everyone moved the high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology to tears several times.

They believed their researchers' dedication was unparalleled in the world.

Reassured, they immediately announced that Japan would launch its largest and longest-running Antarctic winter scientific expedition in history, leading the Japanese public to believe there was some major discovery that couldn't be revealed yet, causing a frenzy of excitement online.

Little did they know, it was all the work of Brovnen, the "Real Person of the Moonlit Night."

Chapter 7141

Upon becoming the master of Wu Han Palace, Brovnen renovated and reorganized its interior.

First, he ordered the demolition of a nearly 100-square-meter polar laboratory,

Clearing out all its contents and using it as his residence.

While called a residence, it was essentially a place for meditation and cultivation,

Sleep was no longer a necessity for someone of his level of cultivation.

Second, he merged the dormitories of the Japanese expedition team members.

Previously, some leaders had single rooms,

But now all were converted into four-person rooms.

The dormitories closest to his own were completely emptied,

Creating an additional layer of physical isolation between him and the others.

However, Brovnen did not remain immersed in this empty title and the illusion of being worshipped by dozens of people.

After the simple internal renovations,

He had Kikuchi Kohei find the largest and most detailed map of Antarctica and began planning future exploration directions on it,

Searching for the legendary Gate of Ascension.

He instructed Kikuchi Kohei to mark the area within a 50-kilometer radius of all Antarctic research stations on a map using a compass,

Based on human activity in Antarctica,

And then mark the area within a 100-kilometer radius of the South Pole as well.

Looking at the scattered circles on the map,

Brovnen focused his attention on the areas furthest from the circles,

Or areas where no circles appeared at all.

He reasoned that modern humans had been exploring Antarctica for many years,

And these research stations and the area around the South Pole had certainly been explored.

Even if there were any relics of cultivators, they would likely have been discovered long ago.

Therefore, he planned to ignore these areas and focus on those remote, almost unexplored places.

Initially, he considered going alone;

After all, as long as he was on land, this environment wouldn't be a problem for him.

However, he quickly realized a serious issue:

He would have difficulty orienting himself during the polar night in Antarctica.

Besides, with so many free laborers available, why not use them?

So, he used a red marker to circle several areas on the large map,

Then pointed to the nearest one and asked Kikuchi Kohei,

"How long would it take us to drive here?"

Kikuchi Kohei measured the distance on the map with a ruler and calculated it on a calculator, saying,

"Reporting to Master, it's about 300 kilometers from here,"

"But we have to go around some mountains,"

"So the total distance is about 400 kilometers."

"The snowmobiles will need two days to travel."

Brovnén said calmly, "400 kilometers?"

"You don't need two days to travel that far."

"Go and organize a team of ten people, with three vehicles."

"We'll set off in two hours and must arrive within 24 hours."

Kikuchi Kohei didn't hesitate at all and immediately said respectfully,

"Yes, Master, I will arrange it right away."

Two hours later, a team of ten people had already assembled in the courtyard of Wu Han Palace.

They prepared three tracked snowmobiles,

These were very large and could fit ten people in each.

Brovnen himself rode in one, with Kikuchi Kohei as the driver,

And the rest of the team split into the other two.

Three snowmobiles drove out of the camp and headed towards the mountains hundreds of kilometers away.

Brovnen's vehicle was in the middle of the convoy.

He didn't rush to meditate and cultivate,

But sat in the passenger seat, looking at the vast ice-covered continent around him,

And asked Kikuchi Kohei, "Kikuchi, how thick is the ice sheet in Antarctica?"

"Ice sheet?"

Kikuchi Kohei was taken aback and said, "You mean the ice cap, right?"

Brovnen waved his hand, "Same idea."

"I just want to know how thick this ice sheet is from the actual land."

Kikuchi Kohei thought for a moment and said,

"The vast majority of the flat land in Antarctica is formed entirely from frozen seawater."

"And the ice cap is on average over two thousand meters thick."

"Two thousand meters..."

Brovnén was somewhat shocked.

The ancients said that three feet of ice doesn't form in a day,

And three feet is only about one meter.

But the ice sheet here averages over two thousand meters thick.

If the legendary Gate of Ascension isn't on the ice cap,

But on the land beneath it, wouldn't it require venturing two thousand meters into the ice to find it?

Chapter 7142

Thinking of this, Brovnen felt a sense of despair.

Having seen a map of Antarctica, he knew just how vast the continent was.

He had initially thought the search for clues would be on millions of square kilometers of ice,

But now it seemed he would have to search within a vast expanse of ice and snow, two kilometers deep.

This difficulty was practically hellish.

However, even with this hellish difficulty, Brovnen refused to give up.

He knew very well that under Victoria's control,

He had no chance of escaping her grasp.

If he couldn't find the path to immortality, he might not even outlive Victoria.

Therefore, Antarctica might be his best chance.

He secretly vowed that if the legendary Gate of Ascension truly existed,

He would find it, no matter where it was!

After 24 hours of non-stop travel, the three snowmobiles finally arrived at the location designated by Brovnen.

It was situated in a north-facing mountain pass, where the biting wind was intense.

After getting out of the car, Brovnen walked on the glacier.

After a few steps, he stopped, pressed his palm against the ice surface,

He released his spiritual energy to explore and sense the situation and structure beneath the ice sheet.

With Brovnen's strength, his spiritual energy, if it were to travel through the air, could detect movements within a ten-kilometer radius.

However, facing an ice sheet over two thousand meters thick,

This transmission power was significantly reduced.

Let alone probing the situation beneath the ice sheet within a ten-kilometer radius,

Even after his spiritual energy was released and penetrated the ice to reach the rocky ground,

The area it dispersed to was only about three or four miles.

Seeing Brovnen's furrowed brow as he touched the ice,

His loyal companion, Kikuchi Kohei, couldn't help but ask with concern,

"Master, what are you doing?"

Brovnen replied impatiently, "This is none of your business."

He then stood up and said to Kikuchi Kohei,

"Get in the car, head south for two kilometers."

Kikuchi Kohei immediately nodded and respectfully said,

"Yes, sir!"

He then immediately called for the others to prepare to get in the car.

Brovnen returned to his car, constantly sighing and clicking his tongue.

He couldn't help but lament, "Each exploration only covers an area of about two kilometers in radius."

"How long will it take to explore the entire continent?"

"Moreover, each exploration to a depth of over two thousand meters consumes a considerable amount of spiritual energy.

If this continues, the spiritual energy will be depleted,

And there will be no way to replenish it.

Wouldn't we have no choice but to give up?"

Kikuchi Kohei, while driving, couldn't help but ask,

"Master, is something on your mind?"

"Why don't you tell me and see if I can offer any help?"

Brovnen sneered, "Just drive."

"This is none of your business."

"If you say another word, I'll cut out your tongue!"

Seeing that he seemed somewhat angry,

Kikuchi Kohei immediately dared not say another word.

Brovnen was unaware that modern Antarctic scientific expeditions already possessed something called ice radar.

This device could detect depths of two to five thousand meters,

Revealing structures beneath the ice surface.

Many subglacial basins, bedrock, lakes, and even ice fissures were discovered using it.

This radar came in ground-based and airborne versions.

Ground-based radar, as the name suggests, was operated from the ground,

While airborne radar was mounted in the air by aircraft or drones.”

Both types of equipment were present at the Japanese research station,

Now known as the Wu Han Palace.

Currently, winter prevents the use of aircraft,

But the use of ground-based ice radar was unimpeded.

If Brovnen informed Kikuchi Kohei of his needs,

Kikuchi would undoubtedly recommend ground-based ice radar immediately.

He only needed to load the radar onto a vehicle and conduct surveys along the way,

A process far more efficient than Brovnen searching for it himself.

Unfortunately, Brovnen, who had been in seclusion for a century, had not read many books and had no in-depth understanding of modern technology.

Knew nothing about these things.

He even had a transcendent sense of superiority,

Believing that apart from spiritual energy,

No one could possibly detect what was under the ice layer more than two thousand meters deep.

Chapter 7143

While Brovnen was exploring the Antarctic ice sheet using the most primitive methods,

Charlie had already been in seclusion at the Nordic research station for twenty days.

During these twenty days, he practiced the Great Sun Tathagata Hand Seal almost non-stop.

To his surprise, as he became more proficient with it,

His speed of practice was rapidly increasing,

And his spiritual energy was growing much faster than before.

In the eyes of Jeremiah and Ria, Charlie's hand seal practice speed was already more than one level faster than theirs.

When Charlie completed a full set of eighty hand seals,

Jeremiah had completed less than thirty,

And as for Ria, her speed was even slower,

Perhaps not even having completed twenty.

For Charlie, these hand seals, once mastered, seemed to be engraved in his mind, even exceeding the scope of muscle memory.

Often, as soon as one hand seal was formed, four or five other hand seals were already being prepared subconsciously.

Gradually, Charlie discovered that he seemed to have some inexplicable talent for these hand seals,

And there seemed to be some mysterious energy within his body helping him to be faster and faster.

In twenty days, his spiritual energy had recovered to an unprecedented level of abundance.

When his spiritual energy was so abundant that it had nowhere to go,

Charlie opened his eyes and saw Jeremiah and Ria still sitting cross-legged, practicing hand seals.

He silently got up and left his secluded room.

Having reached his limit, he considered making another deal with that mysterious entity.

So, he went to the window and looked out.

Outside was an endless night, and alongside that night,

A magical aurora borealis stretched to the horizon.

The Antarctic climate was becoming increasingly cold,

And the aurora was becoming more frequent and covering a wider area.

Currently, the aurora appears almost 24/7 and wouldn't stop for months.

Therefore, he decided to call Jeremiah and Ria and take them to wait under the aurora to see if any new hand seals would appear.

Maria saw him and happily stepped forward to ask,

"Young Master, finally, you emerged from seclusion!"

"How have you been these past few days?"

Charlie smiled and said, "Pretty good."

"I'm getting the hang of the Great Sun Tathagata Mudra."

"I just wonder how long you've been in seclusion this time?"

Maria chirped, "Twenty days and three hours, Young Master."

"That long?"

Charlie was somewhat surprised.

A period of seclusion was like a long dream for him;

He slept, dreamed, and woke up,

Making it difficult to perceive or recall exactly how much time had passed.

The next moment, he couldn't hide his heartache as he asked Maria,

"You must have been very lonely during the polar night for twenty days, right?"

Maria's expression was one of surprise and astonishment,

With a hint of emotion.

She hadn't expected that Charlie's first thought upon learning how much time had passed would be to feel sorry for her.

Deeply moved, she feigned composure and said,

"Thank you for your concern, young master."

"I've been fine these past twenty days."

"After all, I've lived for so many years,"

"I'm used to being alone."

"That's not true,"

Charlie bluntly exposed her lie, saying earnestly,

"If you were truly used to being alone,"

"You wouldn't have adopted so many orphans and kept Old Zhang by your side."

Maria was suddenly struck by these words,

Her eyes involuntarily welled up with tears and reddened.

The fear of loneliness was real.

After all, she had the body of a seventeen or eighteen-year-old,

And despite having lived for four hundred years, the heart of a seventeen-year-old.

Even a seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl would fear loneliness at home alone,

Let alone someone who had wandered for centuries.

Feeling her tears were about to overflow,

She turned away, wiping them away from Charlie.

Charlie couldn't help but step forward, gently putting his arm around her shoulder.

Looking at the aurora outside the window, he asked,

"You've attained immortality without being able to cultivate."

"Such immortality must be very difficult for you."

Maria's delicate body trembled slightly,

Then she silently nestled her head against Charlie's chest.

The beautiful aurora, refracted through her tears, seemed even more dreamlike.

She parted her lips slightly and said earnestly,

"Young Master, for me, immortality is a daily wonder."

"Four hundred years, over a hundred thousand days and nights, the sun rises and sets, the sky brightens and dims—I haven't missed a single day."

"In comparison, most cultivators spend the vast majority of their time in long periods of seclusion."

"Even if they've lived for thousands of years,"

"The actual sunrises and sunsets they've experienced are perhaps less than what I've witnessed."

Chapter 7144

Charlie suddenly froze.

He had originally thought that his twenty days of seclusion were nothing more than a fleeting dream,

While she had to endure twenty days of hardship here, it must have been incredibly difficult for her.

He hadn't expected her to view the matter this way.

The twenty days of seclusion and Maria's words made him understand even more why cultivation is a matter that spans hundreds or even thousands of years.

In truth, fate is fair.

While cultivators may enjoy longevity,

They are merely slowing down the pace of life, much like sea turtles.

If you are destined to live only a hundred years, witnessing only 36,500 sunrises and sunsets,

Even if you extend each sunrise and sunset viewing time to ten days,

It seems like you've lived a thousand years,

But the truly exciting experiences are only a hundred.

Once a cultivator begins cultivation, no matter how long their life, they lose the joys and sorrows that humans should experience.

And the exciting experiences of traversing the world.

Like Meng Changsheng, finding a cave to cultivate for hundreds of years wouldn't bring much pleasure.

Meng Changsheng lived a thousand years,

But he probably personally witnessed fewer than 36,500 sunrises and sunsets.

Even if a thousand years of cultivation gave him strength beyond the reach of ordinary people,

What good would it do?

Having missed so much excitement, ultimately turning to dust with extraordinary abilities would be a waste and a torment.

Fortunately, Charlie doesn't truly pursue immortality.

His greatest motivation for cultivation is to completely eradicate the Warriors Den and avenge his parents.

Once his revenge is achieved, he would rather spend the rest of his time experiencing life like Maria,

Rather than confining himself to endless cultivation.

The two lingered by the window for a long time before Charlie sighed softly and said,

"If one day my revenge is achieved, I will never again go into seclusion for even a day."

"I want to be like you, not missing a single day of excitement."

...

Meanwhile, hundreds of kilometers away in the Antarctic wilderness,

Brovnen continued his special exploration.

For the past twenty days, he had searched for clues throughout the continent,

But had made no valuable discoveries.

He speculated that the so-called Gate of Ascension was not actually some kind of formation that allowed people to ascend to immortality.

A more plausible theory was that after the end of the Dharma era, the most powerful sects on Earth brought their cultivators to this continent for a final struggle.

Some cultivators caught the last train to ascension from here,

While others were left on Earth to die alone.

After generations of those who remained died, the sect was erased from existence.

Some left Antarctica to live out their lives in the mortal world,

Bringing with them legends about the Gate of Ascension.

If his deduction is correct, then that sect must have had a training ground in Antarctica.

As the most powerful sect on Earth before the end of the Dharma era,

It must have left behind a wealth of cultivation techniques, magical artifacts, and high-end materials.

If he can find the ruins of that sect, his path of cultivation will surely be opened up.

However, searching so meticulously in the vast Antarctic was like finding a needle in a haystack.

After twenty days of fruitless searching and wasting considerable energy,

He finally had a breakthrough.

He called over Kohei Kikuchi and asked,

"You're a scientist, you must know a lot about Antarctica, right?"

Kikuchi humbly replied,

"I probably know more than the average person."

Brovnen tentatively asked,

"If I want to know what's on the surface more than two thousand meters below the ice sheet,"

"How do you think it could be achieved?"

Kikuchi asked, "What do you mean by 'what's there's, roughly what size?"

"If it's something smaller, we don't have a good way to find it."

Brovnen then said, "I want to find a group of buildings buried under the ice sheet."

"If there are such buildings, or man-made structures, under the ice sheet,"

"Do you have any way to find them?"

"I know this is definitely difficult."

"As scientists, do you have any ideas on how to solve this?"

As he spoke, Brovnen thought to himself,

"I imagine even these scientists would have little idea."

"What a good way."

Upon hearing this, Kikuchi Kohei, as if answering the question "What does one plus one equal?",

Blurted out, "If we're looking for a target as large as a complex of buildings,"

"Just use ice radar!"

"A quick scan will tell you what's under the ice sheet."

"Not to mention pure ice layers over two thousand meters deep, even rock layers several thousand meters deep can be detected using seismic exploration."

"By artificially creating seismic waves, the geological structure within a ten-kilometer radius can be clearly seen."

"So, large artificial building complexes can also be found using this method."

Brovnen was astonished and asked,

"Are these two technologies difficult to implement?"

Kikuchi Kohei shook his head: "Not difficult at all. We have ice radar on our vehicles."

"And the base has even more powerful ones with a wider detection range."

"If we need to use seismic exploration, the base also has explosives and exploration equipment."

Brovnen's expression was one of astonishment.

Recalling the hardships of the past twenty days, he slapped Kikuchi Kohei across the face in a fit of rage, cursing,

"Damn it, why didn't you tell me this earlier, if you had such good technology?!"

Chapter 7145

Brovnen's slap sent Kikuchi Kohei flying backward.

This was only because Brovnen, though furious, had deliberately restrained his strength, his anger barely kept in check.

Otherwise, the slap would have easily shattered his head.

Kikuchi Kohei lay unconscious in the snow.

Brovnen, cursing, approached him.

Seeing that he was seriously injured and indeed unconscious,

He hesitated, torn between his urge to abandon him and a nagging sense of responsibility. For a moment, frustration and indecision flickered across Brovnen's face.

However, he needed to figure out the new technology Kikuchi Kohei had mentioned.

So, he could only grit his teeth and mutter,

"Damn it, slapping you and then wasting my spiritual energy to wake you up,"

"You're such a useless piece of trash!"

Despite the slap and the curses, he still had to try to save him.

Reluctantly, he channeled some spiritual energy into his body to revive him quickly.

Upon waking, Kikuchi Kohei rubbed his head,

Which was swollen like a pig's head, still feeling groggy.

Brovnen impatiently asked him,

"When can that radar you mentioned be activated?"

Kikuchi Kohei, disregarding his dizziness, immediately replied respectfully,

"Reporting to Master, the ice radar can be activated at any time."

"However, I need to know what type of target you want to detect."

"And its exact size, because this detection technology isn't very precise."

"It can't detect very small objects."

Brovnen said, "What I'm looking for is an underground city."

"Or rather, an underground town."

"An underground city?"

Kikuchi Kohei instinctively said,

"This...this is impossible."

"The Antarctic ice sheet has existed for hundreds of millions of years,"

"Far longer than human history."

"How could there be a town underneath?"

Brovnen said, "That's not your concern."

"Your task is to believe it exists and find it!"

As he spoke, he unconsciously reinforced this psychological suggestion in him.

Kohei Kikuchi's eyes immediately lit up, and he said firmly,

"The real person is right!"

"Antarctica is so vast, there must be some unknown underground town!"

"If we find it,"

"It will definitely be a groundbreaking discovery that will go down in history!"

At this moment, Kohei Kikuchi had been doubly brainwashed by Brovnen,

And in this situation, he had completely entered a fanatical phase.

The fanatical phase has one advantage and one disadvantage.

The advantage is that it can unleash stronger execution power than before.

And the disadvantage is that it often leads to a loss of objective judgment due to fanaticism.

However, Brovnen was very satisfied with his attitude and ordered him,

"From now on, you will lead your men and do everything in your power to find this underground town."

"It may not be the traditional town you think it is."

"So you must pay attention."

"If you find any traces of human activity underground,"

"Tell me immediately!"

Kikuchi Kohei excitedly said, "No problem!"

"Don't worry, Master!"

"We will formulate an exploration plan, deploy three ground teams, and explore in three directions."

"We also have a helicopter, which can be equipped with radar for searching when the weather is suitable!"

"We will try to find it as quickly as possible!"

Then, Kikuchi Kohei immediately ordered all the snowmobiles to turn on their ice radar and divided the people into three teams,

All are heading in different directions.

Once on the ice radar, the exploration range and speed will increase exponentially.

Kikuchi Kohei planned to first use the radar to scan as many areas as possible,

And then have the people at the base carefully analyze the radar images.

In short, both the front line and the rear were working overtime to find the underground town that Master had mentioned.

However, they soon realized a serious problem,

What was the detection range?

Currently, based at Wuhan Palace, the snowmobile, fully loaded with fuel, has a range of about 600-700 kilometers in this frozen land.

However, the problem is that they need to conduct reconnaissance along the way,

So their speed cannot be too high.

Moreover, the vehicles and equipment require electricity and heating,

This increases fuel consumption

Chapter 7146

A full load of fuel can only support about 400 kilometers.

But they also have to calculate the return fuel.

Otherwise, if they run out of fuel in the icy wilderness,

Everyone in the vehicle will likely freeze to death.

This meant that every time they drove out for over 200 kilometers,

They had to begin their return journey to ensure they had sufficient fuel.

However, if they went back to resupply and then returned,

They would be wasting another 200 kilometers.

To ensure the exploration progress, Kikuchi Kohei made a radical decision.

He put all the other snowmobiles at the base into operation.

Each exploration vehicle was assigned a snowmobile as a support vehicle,

Shuttling back and forth between the base to transport fuel and supplies,

Ensuring that the exploration snowmobiles wouldn't backtrack.

However, in his frenzy, Kikuchi Kohei overlooked one thing.

Their base was already overloaded, supplies were scarce,

And fuel reserves could only meet the needs of small-scale operations.

Now, with all vehicles in operation, and operating at a high load of shuttling back and forth,

Plus, the deployment of helicopters, fuel consumption was several times faster than designed.

When Charlie awakened Jeremiah and Ria and brought them back to the aurora borealis,

Wu Han Palace's Japanese research team had already entered a high-intensity search phase.

Under the aurora, Charlie once again sacrificed most of his spiritual energy to acquire sixteen new hand seals.

This brought his total number of Great Sun Tathagata hand seals to ninety-six.

The underlying logic of the Great Sun Tathagata hand seals is simple:

Each additional seal enhances the overall effect.

This gradual accumulation has far surpassed the initial limitation of only sixteen seals.

This gave Charlie immense confidence.

If there were further developments in the Great Sun Tathagata hand seals,

The efficiency would likely reach an astonishing level when the number reached one hundred and sixty.

However, Jeremiah, under the aurora, noticed a problem.

She said to Charlie with a puzzled look,

"Mr. Wade, I tried the new hand seals."

"But they don't seem to be working."

"Not working?"

Charlie asked in surprise, "That shouldn't be the case."

"I've already performed ninety-six hand seals,"

"Which are stronger than before."

"How could they not be working?"

Jeremiah was also puzzled and said,

"I have indeed completed all the hand seals,"

"But strangely, spiritual energy was generated after completing the first eighty hand seals."

"I was a little confused at first because when I went from sixteen hand seals to thirty-two,"

"As long as the seventeenth hand seal was connected smoothly and stably,"

"Spiritual energy would be generated when the thirty-second hand seal ended and returned to the first hand seal."

"I thought that should be a complete cycle."

"But just now it seems that the last sixteen hand seals are not connected with the first eighty hand seals."

At this moment, Ria also opened her eyes and said,

"Mr. Wade, my situation is the same as Sister Yun's."

"That's really strange."

Charlie frowned and analyzed, "When I completed the eighty-first hand seal, I performed the eighty-first hand seal at a normal speed and frequency."

"The spiritual energy was also generated when the ninety-six hand seals were completed,"

"And it was indeed significantly improved compared to before."

"Why didn't it work for you?"

Jeremiah asked, "Could it be that our own cultivation is not high enough?"

"So we can only operate the first eighty hand seals?"

Ria added, "Or the hand seals themselves have their own hierarchy."

"For example, eighty hand seals constitute one level."

"And we are currently only at the first level?"

Charlie said, "What you two said is possible."

"Let's go back and try again."

"If it still doesn't work, you should continue your seclusion to consolidate the first eighty hand seals."

Jeremiah nodded slightly and asked him,

"Shall we go back now?"

"Okay."

Charlie stood up and said to the two of them and Maria,

"Let's go back."

Under the aurora, the four of them walked back to the research station.

In the quiet night, Charlie suddenly heard an unusual noise.

He couldn't help but murmur,

"Strange, why is there the sound of a helicopter engine?"

Chapter 7147

When Charlie heard the faint sound of an engine,

The other three girls were completely bewildered.

Apart from the wind and the rustling of the snow and ice,

There was no other sound.

How could there be a helicopter?

Moreover, when they arrived at the research station and met with the Nordic research team,

They had heard them say that helicopters rarely operate in Antarctica during the winter.

Unless there was an emergency concerning personal safety,

They would never risk starting them.

A slight mistake could result in a crash and death.

However, since Charlie said he heard it,

They believed he wasn't just making it up.

So, Maria said, "Perhaps it's another research team's helicopter on a mission."

Charlie said, "If a helicopter is really deployed on a mission,"

"It's highly likely someone is injured."

He then frowned and said,

"The helicopter seems to be getting closer and closer to us."

At this moment, dozens of kilometers away,

A helicopter was searching along a predetermined route.

They were equipped with an aerial ice radar,

Scanning the ice sheet below at full power.

Their planned flight path brought them a few kilometers from the Nordic research station.

Because they needed to explore the ice sheet,

They had to precisely control the helicopter's altitude,

Keeping it as close to the ground as possible.

As the helicopter drew closer, Jeremiah and Ria heard its approach.

Jeremiah asked Charlie,

"Mr. Wade, should we go back?"

"Or just wait here and see?"

"Let's wait and see,"

Charlie said. "They've flown this far."

"It doesn't seem like they're here to rescue people."

"After all, in such extreme weather,"

"Who would send someone out on such a long-distance mission?"

"Okay."

They all decided to wait and see which country's research helicopter was undertaking such a large-scale mission at this time.

Because the Wu Han Palace's research helicopter was conducting an exploration,

Its movement was slow.

The four waited a long time before one of the helicopters appeared in the aurora-covered sky.

Although they were still several kilometers apart,

Charlie immediately spotted the large red circle on the fuselage and asked in surprise,

"It looks like a Japanese helicopter."

"What are they up to this time of the year?"

Maria remembered something and said,

"When you were in seclusion, I saw some news about Antarctica."

"It seems that the Japanese research team launched their largest-ever winter research expedition to Antarctica this year."

"It is said that the research stations are fully staffed, even almost overstaffed."

"Oh, really?"

Charlie also found it strange and said,

"We've been here once before,"

"So we know that even some countries with year-round stations still operating in this cold weather have reduced their team members to ensure sufficient supplies."

"After all, it's not easy to supply supplies."

"And now it's impossible to get them in at all."

"With them launching such a large-scale operation this time,"

"Can their supply reserves be used?"

Maria shook her head: "This I don't know,"

"But what you said makes sense."

"Even if they can bring a large amount of supplies via research vessels, the scale of the research station is limited."

"Take our current research station, for example."

"First of all, there is a clear limit to the fuel reserves."

"And the construction of the oil storage tanks is very troublesome."

"Not only does the entire oil storage tank equipment need to be transported directly from other continents,"

"But the supporting stabilization equipment and transmission pipelines also need to be transported to the site."

"The oil tanks need to be unloaded from the ship and transported to the research station."

"And a large pit needs to be dug to bury them."

"This definitely cannot be completed in winter."

"They haven't announced any information about the expansion of the research station."

"With so many people suddenly coming,"

"The fuel and supplies probably won't be enough."

"What's more, they're using helicopters on such a large scale."

Chapter 7148

Maria continued:

"I've looked at the map these past few days and roughly know the locations of some other countries' research stations."

"It's at least 300 kilometers from the Japanese research station."

"Their helicopters not only didn't turn back, but they kept going forward."

"This trip will probably consume a lot of fuel."

"Are they just trying to survive?"

"If dozens of people don't have fuel to generate electricity and keep warm,"

"It could easily lead to deaths."

Charlie thought Maria's words made sense, so he said,

"I'll ask someone to help me find out what's going on."

"If they are planning to conduct large-scale scientific research in Antarctica this winter, it will be a problem for us."

Maria nodded and said, "Young Master,"

"Are you going to ask Miss Ito for help?"

"Yes."

Charlie smiled and said, "Nanako has a lot of influence in Japan."

"Her people should be able to figure out what big moves the government is planning in Antarctica."

Then, while calling the three of them back to the research station,

He used a satellite phone to call Nanako.

The call connected, and Nanako asked with surprise and delight,

"Are you calling me from Antarctica, Charlie?"

"Yes," Charlie smiled,

"I'm still under the aurora borealis in Antarctica, heading back."

"How romantic,"

Nanako exclaimed, then asked,

"Is there something you need me to do?"

Charlie said directly, "Nanako,"

"I hope you can help me investigate what the Japanese government is up to with this largest-ever Antarctic expedition."

"It would be even better if you could figure out their mission."

Nanako immediately replied, "No problem."

"I'll have someone look into it right away."

The Ito family's influence in Japan is no less than that of the Samsung family in South Korea.

They wield immense power not only in the private and financial sectors,
But also in various government departments and even within the cabinet.

Although Japan's Antarctic expedition was highly classified,

This level of secrecy was like a thin sheet of paper to the Ito family—easily pierced.

So, Nanako quickly called back and told Charlie,

"Charlie, I just had someone look into it."

"This scientific expedition to Antarctica, on the surface, is the largest in history."

"But it was actually caused by an accident."

"An accident?"

Charlie asked her, "Do you know the specifics?"

Nanako replied, "Yes."

"A newly launched research vessel transported the winter expedition team to Antarctica."

"They planned to unload the personnel and supplies and then return with the summer expedition team."

"However, because they needed several days to transport supplies, the ship's propulsion system suddenly malfunctioned."

"And couldn't be repaired in a short time."

"Now the ship is stuck in frozen ice."

"Far exceeding its icebreaking capabilities,"

"So both the crew and the ship are stranded there."

"To avoid a scandal, they announced it was intentional."

Charlie frowned even more deeply and said,

"If twice the number of personnel are stranded in Antarctica,"

"Then supplies and fuel should be quite scarce."

"Why would they be so extravagant, using helicopters directly?"

"Could you ask on that side again what mission the helicopters are carrying out?"

"Shouldn't the expedition team here report to Japan?"

Nanako said, "Charlie, please wait a moment."

"I'll ask about the helicopters."

"Okay, Nanako, thank you for your hard work."

Charlie waited a while, and Nanako called back,

Somewhat shocked, saying,

"Charlie, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology said they didn't see any takeoff record for the helicopter."

"If what you just saw was really the helicopter from the Japanese research station,"

"Then it can only mean they deliberately concealed the helicopter's movement information."

Charlie was even more puzzled.

First, the research team was stranded.

Second, the research team secretly called for a helicopter without telling their home country—this didn't seem like normal at all.

So he asked Nanako,

"Isn't the Japanese research vessel stranded?"

"Do you have its location coordinates?"

"I want to go there and take a look!"

Chapter 7149

Charlie had been on a research vessel once and knew that although it looked like a ship,

Its various systems were designed with more redundancy than two ships combined.

It was illogical for such a vessel to break down so easily.

Combined with the fact that the Japanese research team had begun secretly using helicopters without their direct superiors' knowledge,

And had even deliberately disabled GPS tracking,

He felt something was amiss.

He felt that these people weren't trapped here,

But rather deliberately staying for some purpose.

However, this motive was strange.

They were all research team members.

If they truly had any Antarctic research projects,

It should have been the newly arrived team members in charge.

And once a project was decided, they would certainly have made all the necessary preparations before departure,

Including personnel, supplies, and equipment.

In that case, the research team members who had already spent the entire summer here should have returned to Japan.

The research vessel's crew had no reason to deliberately remain in Antarctica.

Moreover, they not only remained but also engaged in their own underhanded activities in Antarctica.

What was their purpose?

Weren't they afraid of being held accountable back home?

What's even more absurd is that flying helicopters in Antarctica during this season is extremely dangerous.

These are research team members, not soldiers following orders.

Why would they take such a huge risk to conduct actions in Antarctica that are unknown to the authorities?

This makes no sense.

Originally, Charlie could have ignored these matters,

But seeing these Japanese research team members flying helicopters back and forth,

Even starting to fly overhead made him uneasy if he didn't figure out what they were doing.

Therefore, he decided to first check if there were any anomalies at their stranded research vessel,

Or better yet,

To find someone to find out what they were doing.

Most importantly, he had to ensure that their activities stayed away from the vicinity of the Nordic research station.

Otherwise, if the next time the Great Sun Buddha's handprint appears in the sky,

And they discover it and spread it, it would be a real problem.

Charlie shared his concerns with Maria, Jeremiah, and Ria.

They all felt that the Japanese expedition team was indeed acting strangely,

And since Charlie's current cultivation relied on the changes of the aurora,

The Japanese expedition team flying around was definitely a hidden danger.

So, Maria asked him,

"Young Master, you asked Miss Ito for the coordinates of the research vessel."

"Don't you plan to go to their research station first?"

Charlie shook his head and said,

"No matter what they're up to, the research station is their core area."

"In comparison, the research vessel, which can't be moved, is definitely on the periphery."

"I think it's better to start with the research vessel first,"

"Just to be on the safe side."

Maria said thoughtfully, "What you said makes sense."

"It's always good to be cautious."

Jeremiah then said, "Mr. Wade, let me go with you."

"It can help you share the burden."

Charlie politely declined, "Miss Yun and Miss Song, you two should stay here to take care of Miss Lin."

"She has no cultivation."

"If she encounters danger, she probably won't be able to protect herself."

"I'll go alone and return in a day."

Maria said, "Young Master, you don't need to worry about me."

"I can stay here and not leave even half a step."

"I don't think there will be any danger."

Chapter 7150

"No,"

Charlie firmly refused, "The environment here is special."

"If we really encounter danger, there won't be enough support in a short time."

"I'll feel more at ease if Miss Yun and Miss Song stay to take care of her."

Seeing Charlie's resolute attitude, Maria nodded gently and said,

"Then please be careful, young master."

Nanako quickly found the coordinates of the research vessel's grounding for Charlie.

It was about 300 kilometers from his location,

But because the ship was stranded on the coastline at the end of summer,

It was now possible to drive across the frozen sea.

Since the frozen sea was relatively flat,

The snowmobile could travel a bit faster, reaching the destination in five hours.

However, the snowmobile was a large and noisy target,

Making it easy to be spotted.

Charlie decided to drive to a location 50 kilometers from the target first,
And then switch to walking from there.

Soon, he was driving a light snowmobile from the Nordic research station,
Speeding across the ice until he stopped and turned off the engine 50
kilometers from the target.

Charlie left the vehicle behind and gathered invisible spiritual energy beneath
his feet.

While the energy wasn't enough to levitate him,
It created a barrier between his feet and the ice.

Then, he silently raced across the snow-covered ground at a speed
comparable to the snowmobile.

Meanwhile, the Japanese research vessel had been frozen in the ice for nearly
a month.

Although the surroundings were bitterly cold and the environment seemed
extremely harsh,

It was actually the most stable time for the ship,

As it was completely frozen to the ice, like a giant ice structure,

Remaining motionless, no matter how heavy the wind and snow outside.

Thanks to a sufficient reserve of marine diesel fuel,

The generators roared relentlessly,

And the heat generated by the internal combustion engines kept the entire cabin warm and comfortable.

At this moment, Brovnen's henchman, Matsushita Heikichi, was idly lounging in his captain's cabin.

When Brovnen left, he announced that he was the new captain of the research vessel,

And due to psychological suggestion,

The entire crew, including the previous captain, treated him with utmost respect.

He was now thoroughly enjoying this feeling of being respected,

And coupled with the boredom of being frozen in the ice every day,

He began to enjoy life on the ship.

Moreover, Brovnen's focus was currently on urging the research team to find the Gate of Ascension.

Aside from having Matsushita Heikichi remain on standby,

No other orders came in, making Matsushita Heikichi's days even more leisurely.

The others on board had also adapted to this idle state over the past few days.

In this icy wilderness, they hadn't sent anyone to keep watch.

Everyone was cooped up in their warm rooms,

Only routinely keep the radar running.

However, the ship's radar couldn't detect any humanoid targets,

So no one suspected that someone was rapidly approaching the research vessel.

In the blink of an eye, Charlie had arrived below the Japanese research vessel.

Although the ship's side was at least ten meters above the ice,

He simply used his legs to leap up from below the side and land lightly on the deck.

Since the entire ship no longer needed to sail,

The entire cockpit was empty.

Finding no one on the deck,

Charlie immediately used his spiritual energy to search the entire interior of the ship.

Finding that almost all the crew members were in their cabins,

He focused his attention on the only person living in a single cabin.

That person was Matsushita Heikichi,

Who was sitting in his room with his legs crossed,

Listening to music.

Chapter 7151

As Matsushita Heikichi belted out his song in his hoarse voice,

He suddenly noticed a figure beside him.

Before he could even react,

He was rendered immobile.

He could only stare at Charlie in terror,

His entire being was in a state of utter panic.

Charlie didn't know if the man spoke Chinese,

He assumed these people worked on the research vessel. They were likely university-educated.

He figured he could understand some English.

So, he prepared to give him a psychological suggestion,

And then ask him a question in English.

But when he actually made the suggestion,

He was shocked to discover that a suggestion had already appeared in the man's mind!

A cultivator?!

Charlie suddenly became alert.

Were there cultivators in Antarctica besides him?

Then... this person must be one of the three elders who disappeared from the Earth Network system after arriving in Ushuaia, right?!

A few days ago, just as he was setting off for Antarctica,

The Earth Network system discovered that one of the three elders had arrived in Ushuaia.

Charlie had worried that this person might be tracking him,

But he lost contact with him afterward.

Brovnen wanted to reach Antarctica. To do this, he abandoned public transportation.

And instead traveled by fishing boat to the shipping lanes of the research vessel,

Thus, I boarded the Japanese research ship.

However, now that Charlie saw the crew member had been psychologically manipulated,

He immediately guessed that the elder's route to Antarctica was through this very research ship.

Since the research ship was stranded here,

It proved that the elder had already arrived in Antarctica,

And the recent large-scale activities of the Japanese research team were likely under his control.

At this moment, Charlie was deeply worried.

He didn't know the elder's purpose in coming to Antarctica—was he here to find him?

To find Maria, or for some other reason?

He wanted to get to the bottom of this through this man,

But the thought of him being psychologically manipulated filled him with apprehension.

Psychological manipulation cannot coexist.

In other words, if he wanted this Japanese man to obey him,

He had to erase the psychological manipulation left by the elder.

Although Brovnen was much stronger than Charlie,

Spiritual energy was still extremely precious to him.

Therefore, when he used psychological suggestion on these ordinary people,

He only touched on it briefly,

Not wasting too much spiritual energy.

As long as Charlie used stronger spiritual energy,

He could erase the suggestion he left behind.

However, this also carried a great risk.

Once the elder returned and saw this person,

He might notice the abnormality.

Even if Charlie could still make this man obey him,

If he examined him carefully, he would find that the psychological suggestion in the man's sea of consciousness had changed.

It's like everyone can recognize their own handwriting.

Others might be able to imitate one's handwriting to deceive a third party,

But they certainly couldn't fool the original person.

Soon, Charlie realized that he seemed to be in a dilemma.

Using psychological suggestion might be discovered by the other party.

If he didn't use it,

He would have to kill this man,

Otherwise, he would definitely report to the elder immediately.

But killing him also had great hidden dangers.

A person who had been psychologically suggested to couldn't commit suicide or disappear on their own.

If he disappeared, there must be someone else behind it.

The other side might have already used psychological manipulation on everyone on the ship,

Ensuring they wouldn't fight each other.

Therefore, whether he killed this man or made him disappear,

The other side would realize the danger.

After much deliberation,

Charlie decided to risk trying psychological manipulation.

At least that way, he would still have a chance to deceive the other side.

Moreover, this research vessel was probably not the main base for their search of Antarctica.

Chapter 7152

Perhaps they wouldn't come personally,

In which case, there would be no risk of being discovered.

Therefore, Charlie immediately made a decision,

Using even stronger spiritual energy to erase Matsushita Heikichi's mental suggestion,

And then cast a new spell.

Once his mental suggestion took effect, Charlie asked in English,

"Who ordered you to stay here?"

Matsushita Heikichi immediately replied,

"I was ordered by the Guanghan Zhenren."

"Guanghan Zhenren?"

Charlie wondered.

He took out the image of the missing Warriors Den elder from Ushuaia on his phone,

Showed it to the other man and asked,

"Take a look, is this the person?"

Matsushita Heikichi immediately nodded,

"That's right, it's him."

"This is the Guanghan Zhenren."

His answer was not unexpected for Charlie, so he asked again,

"Where is this person now?"

Matsushita Heikichi replied,

"The Zhenren should be at Wuhan Palace right now."

"Wuhan Palace?"

"Where is it?"

After Brovnen proclaimed himself Guanghan Zhenren, he treated these people as his servants,

So he specifically ordered Kikuchi Kohei to inform everyone about the renaming of the research station,

And his self-proclaimed title of Guanghan Zhenren.

Therefore, Matsushita Heikichi had already received the order.

Faced with Charlie's question, he truthfully replied,

"Wu Han Palace is our Showa-era research station in Antarctica."

"Only renamed by the Zhenren."

Charlie was momentarily amused and exasperated.

This elder certainly had a playful spirit,

Giving the research station such a childish name is not a good idea.

It seemed he also aspired to be a sect leader like Victoria.

Charlie then asked him,

"Has that True Man of Guanghai been here recently?"

"No," Matsushita Heikichi said.

"He hasn't come back since he landed and went to the research station."

"But he sent people over a few days ago to transport some supplies."

Charlie continued,

"Do you know what he's doing in Antarctica?"

"Not really,"

Matsushita Heikichi answered.

"I only heard that the True Man has dispatched several snowmobiles and a helicopter,"

"Using ice radar to scan the entire Antarctic continent."

"Ice radar? What does it do?"

Matsushita Heikichi said,

"It scans the structure beneath the ice sheet,"

"With a detection depth of two to four thousand meters,"

"And can reveal the topography and structure beneath the ice sheet."

"Under the ice sheet..."

Charlie frowned.

The elder had these men search beneath the ice sheet,

Apparently, he was unaware that Maria and he were also there.

But what was there to search for in the Antarctic ice sheet?

Hadn't it formed millions of years ago?

They probably wouldn't even find a dinosaur fossil here.

He asked Matsushita Heikichi,

"Do you know what he's looking for?"

"I don't know,"

Matsushita Heikichi said.

"I only know they're out exploring every day."

"Wu Han Palace's fuel consumption is severe."

"They need to transport some marine diesel from our oil tanks."

"However, at their rate of consumption,"

"It won't be long before our ship runs out of fuel."

"Not only will it not last until the sea thaws in summer,"

"But we probably won't even survive this winter."

Charlie frowned and asked,

"Without fuel, are you doomed?"

"Yes," Matsushita Heikichi said casually,

"If we run out of fuel,"

"We won't last two days before freezing to death."

Charlie sighed inwardly.

This elder seemed to be a heartless executioner,

Completely disregarding the lives of these people to achieve his goals,

Even hastening their demise.

He became even more curious:

What is this person looking for in Antarctica?

Chapter 7153

In Charlie's understanding, Antarctica offered almost no advantages to cultivators,

Other than being far removed from modern society.

Firstly, there were no traces of human habitation there,

And secondly, there were a few rare plants and animals.

Cultivating here meant finding neither magical treasures nor materials.

He wouldn't have traveled such a long distance to this place,

If it weren't for chasing the aurora borealis.

However, since the elder of the Warriors Den had come in person and taken the entire Japanese expedition team as his servants,

He must be searching for something of unknown value.

For a moment, Charlie felt an instinctive surge of excitement.

If Antarctica truly possessed something valuable,

Wouldn't it be a huge windfall if he could find it?

Before the Warriors Den's elder?

But Charlie also knew his own limitations.

Even with Jeremiah and Ria, the three of them were no match for the Warriors Den's elder.

Even if they knew what he was looking for,

It would be difficult to get ahead of him.

Moreover, with Antarctica currently frozen over,

Ships couldn't enter,

Meaning both he and the elder would be trapped on this continent for at least four or five months.

If he continues searching for Antarctica for the next four or five months,

Charlie and Maria will face constant unknown risks.

They'll likely have to play a game of hide and seek.

However, Charlie doesn't want to just sit and wait to die,

So he gives his satellite phone number to Matsushita Heikichi, reminding him,

"If that Guanghan Zhenren contacts you,"

"Call me immediately and tell me the details."

His satellite phone uses an overseas service provider.

The cost is prepaid and doesn't require real-name registration.

Even if the elders of the Warriors Den know,

They won't be able to trace his identity.

As long as the elder doesn't come to the research vessel in person,

He won't know that Matsushita Heikichi has been controlled by other cultivators,

Allowing Matsushita Heikichi to continue acting as his undercover agent.

Besides this, Charlie asks Matsushita Heikichi,

"What's the current status of the ship's surveillance?"

Because he wasn't sure about the ship's surveillance system's operation initially,

Charlie has been avoiding the cameras,

Preventing his face and profile from appearing within their coverage area.

Inevitably, he's been obscuring his face beforehand.

Matsushita Heikichi replied,

"Currently, all the ship's surveillance cameras are on."

"But they're not synchronized to the cloud."

"Aside from the ship's data center storing the footage,"

"No one else can access this data."

Charlie asked him, "Could you transmit these images to the server I specify?"

Charlie's ground network system benefits from the built-in cameras of countless vending machines on the ground.

These cameras capture everyone's faces and transmit them to the server,

His AI model captures and recognizes faces in real time on the server.

Therefore, as long as the ship's surveillance footage can be uploaded to the designated server,

The entire ship will become part of the ground network system.

Matsushita Heikichi told Charlie,

"Uploading data is no problem."

"Our ship has several satellite networks,"

"Including eight public and private Starlink devices,"

"Which can be used to upload surveillance videos."

"That's good."

Charlie felt relieved and instructed,

"I'll give you the server address later."

"You need to arrange it as soon as possible."

"No problem!"

Matsushita Heikichi said respectfully,

"I will do my best to implement this as soon as possible."

Charlie nodded and said, "Go and operate it now."

"I'll wait in your room."

"Inform your crew that no one is allowed to approach your room."

"Okay!"

Matsushita Heikichi said respectfully,

"Please wait here for a moment."

"I'll arrange it."

Charlie remembered something and added,

"By the way, when will the people from the research station come again?"

Matsushita Heikichi thought for a moment and said, "They've organized an oil transport team."

"And they'll come to transport fuel one or two times a day."

"They should arrive in another two or three hours."

Chapter 7154

The research station's fuel consumption is extremely high.

Not to mention the Antarctic winter,

Even in the past Antarctic summer, their research station has never experienced this much.

Now there are so many people,

And their research team members have never been this busy.

Now, almost all the vehicles and helicopters are constantly operating outdoors.

Radar scanning requires a lot of electricity,

So the internal combustion engines on these vehicles and aircraft also consume a lot of fuel to power them.

In winter, Japanese research helicopters, equipped with ice radar, consume nearly two tons of fuel per hour,

Making them absolute fuel guzzlers.

To ensure the operation of this equipment,

The Japanese research team organized a dedicated fuel transport team,

Using a snow tractor paired with a heavy-duty fuel tanker trailer to transport a full truckload of fuel back each day.

The 20-ton capacity of each tanker is only enough for the helicopter's needs.

Hearing that the transport team was coming,

Charlie asked Matsushita Heikichi,

"Do the transport vehicles have GPS positioning and video recording capabilities?"

"Yes,"

"Actually, every vehicle used at the Antarctic research station is equipped with GPS positioning and an Internet of Things (IoT) system," Matsushita Heikichi explained.

"This data is accessible to the relevant domestic authorities."

"Who can monitor the vehicle's location in real time?"

"Even the surrounding video feed.

However, we've been ordered to remove the network modules from all the vehicles.

Without the network, video and GPS coordinates cannot be uploaded,

And the domestic authorities can't track them."

Charlie asked,

"Are you sure you only removed the network communication modules?"

"Confirmed," said Matsushita Heikichi.

"The order from Guanghan Zhenren is that the real-time status of all vehicles and equipment cannot be known domestically."

"Therefore, we immediately arranged to remove the IoT modules from all equipment."

"Including our research vessel."

"Theoretically, as long as the network modules are restored,"

"The coordinate information will be immediately uploaded to the server via satellite."

"And the staff on the mainland will be able to see it."

Charlie asked him, "Is there any way to secretly restore the network communication function of these vehicles?"

"But one thing is certain."

"They cannot transmit any data to your mainland."

"Instead, they must transmit all the data to my server according to my requirements."

Matsushita Heikichi nodded and said,

"That's not difficult."

"We just need to replace the network communication modules."

"Fortunately, we have some Starlink systems on board for our crew."

"We just need to install one of the Starlink systems on the vehicle and set the data transmission address."

As he spoke, Matsushita Heikichi explained,

"GPS and vehicle cameras are not intelligent hardware."

"They only provide data, just like the GPS and camera on a mobile phone."

"The communication modules we removed are used to send data to the relevant domestic authorities."

"They also use a dedicated network for transmission."

"We just need to replace them."

Charlie was immediately delighted.

If he could obtain the real-time location of one of the oil tankers and access the onboard camera footage,

It would mean being able to see the research station's situation daily,

And possibly even spot the elder of the Warriors Den in the footage.

This would definitely give him more leverage.

Therefore, he asked Matsushita Heikichi,

"If I let you do this, won't it be discovered by Guanghai Zhenren or the transport team?"

Matsushita Heikichi replied,

"That shouldn't be the case."

"All the equipment is integrated into the roof."

“Even if you put the Starlink terminal inside,”

“It’s highly unlikely to be detected,”

“Unless they need to restore the original dedicated network someday.”

Charlie smiled slightly and began to deduce the logic.

First, the elder had cultivated for many years and was unlikely to understand such specialized matters.

Therefore, he wouldn’t issue particularly technical orders,

Such as directly instructing them to dismantle the dedicated network module.

He would have given verbal orders,

Instructing the research team to devise their own solution to ensure they weren’t exposed.

Secondly, since these professionals chose to remove the dedicated communication module,

Logically speaking, it’s like a phone having its SIM card removed and internet connection cut off.

The professionals solved the problem using their expertise,

And that’s considered their task complete.

They wouldn’t periodically check the SIM card slot to see if a different SIM card had been inserted.

That doesn’t make sense.

Thirdly, spiritual energy can't detect the signal."

"This means that even if the car's internet is back on,"

"The invisible and intangible signal frequency is impossible for the other party to detect.

The professionals won't check,

And the elders of the Warriors Den won't notice the problem.

Doesn't this provide a perfect opportunity for covert observation?

Chapter 7155

Everyone working on this research vessel was a top student,

And Matsushita Heikichi, in addition to his major in nautical technology, also earned two degrees in marine electrical engineering,

Giving him a thorough understanding of information technology equipment.

Charlie's request wasn't difficult.

It only required removing the communication module from the transport vehicle,

Installing a Starlink system, connecting it,

And then transmitting the data to the designated address.

For Matsushita Heikichi, this was a piece of cake.

So, when the fuel truck arrived,

Matsushita Heikichi, noticing the fuel transfer would take at least two hours, found a reason to send the other staff away and promptly began the equipment modification.

And completed the equipment modification in less than an hour.

The vehicle's GPS positioning module was a simple, plug-and-play module.

Once powered on, it immediately began searching for GPS satellites,

Acquiring coordinates,

And then pushing the real-time coordinates to the data interface five times per second.

Any device in the vehicle that requires GPS coordinates can directly capture them from this data interface.

The driving trajectory recorder captures GPS coordinates,

And stores them in a black box,

Generating route records through continuous capture.

The navigation system captures GPS coordinates and displays them on a map in real time to provide navigation services for the vehicle.

The background monitoring equipment also captures coordinates in real time,

And uploads them to the server of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology via satellite.

However, because the original communication module has been removed,

Even though GPS is activated, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology still cannot obtain the real-time coordinates here.

The Starlink system that Charlie had Matsushita Heikichi activate directly uploads all this data to a relay server,

Which then transmits it to the AI model.

In addition, the video signals from the vehicle's dashcam, 360-degree surround view function,

And in-cabin cameras are also linked to Starlink,

Enabling the real-time uploading of all images.

On top of the transport vehicle, there is a protrusion resembling a large backpack,

Where network communication, satellite positioning, high-power antennas, and other equipment are basically integrated.

Matsushita Heikichi also hid Starlink here and then closed the cover again,

Achieving a near-seamless concealment.

Charlie called Duncan using the satellite phone and told him to attempt to intercept the data through the relay server.

The relay server acted as an external firewall.

Even if the modifications he had Matsushita Heikichi make were discovered,

Others, through the device's settings, could only see that data was transmitted to the relay server,

But they're not able to trace who operated it or who took the data from it.

Duncan hadn't expected that the elder of the Warriors Den who disappeared in Ushuaia had actually reached Antarctica,

Nor had he expected Charlie to achieve a certain degree of counter-surveillance using such a method.

Impressed, he immediately instructed the AI model to begin capturing the data.

Soon, the AI model grasped the vehicle's real-time dynamics,

And surrounding video signals.

Because GPS coordinates were acquired very frequently,

Even at high speeds, the vehicle's location was displayed in real-time with an accuracy of within one meter.

Even more impressively, having obtained data from the vehicle's 360-degree surround-view cameras,

Once the elder appeared near the vehicle, his face would be immediately uploaded to the AI model,

Which could then instantly recognize him.

Seeing this, Duncan said to Charlie,

"Mr. Wade, it would be even better if we could get them to connect the audio signal from the vehicle's intercom system as well."

"We could hear their conversation in real time."

True to his reputation as a Chinese detective,

His information acumen far surpassed Charlie's.

Charlie, suddenly reminded, exclaimed with delight,

"That's easy!"

"I'll have that guy set it up quickly."

Chapter 7156

Matsushita Heikichi, without complaint, immediately connected the vehicle's communication equipment,

And the audio from the vehicle's video recording is sent to Starlink.

This way, not only would their communication channels be captured,

But the conversations between the people inside the vehicle and those around them would also be recorded.

Moreover, even if people are far away, their voices are unclear,

Or there is a lot of ambient noise; these are not problems.

Because the AI model is constantly iterating,

Its audio processing capabilities are already phenomenal.

It can not only amplify the sound but also completely remove ambient noise and background noise,

Making human voices clearer.

Everything is under control.

Two hours later, the transport truck,

Fully loaded with dozens of tons of fuel, began its return journey.

Its coordinates were updated in real time in the AI model,

And all channel communications were translated into Chinese by the AI in real time.

When Duncan saw the AI-translated dialogue,

He immediately noticed several very suspicious points.

For example, they mentioned four internal code names in the conversation:

The First Land Exploration Team, the Second Land Exploration Team, the Third Land Exploration Team, and the Air Exploration Team.

This indicated that the other party was conducting a very large-scale exploration operation.

Furthermore, they mentioned underground towns multiple times in the conversation,

And repeatedly asked the other party to confirm whether the radar results showed the possibility of underground towns existing.

So, he immediately reported the situation to Charlie.

Charlie then realized that the other party was constantly scanning the Antarctic ice sheet in order to search for underground cities.

Logically speaking, this place must have been established long before the emergence of Homo sapiens.

Even with today's advanced technology, humans cannot establish towns beneath the Antarctic ice sheet,

Let alone the ancient civilizations.

In other words, without adequate equipment and supplies,

Ancient people would have been utterly doomed.

As he pondered this, he suddenly thought of Maria.

She was physically weak, but because she had taken the Eternal Green Pill,

The extreme cold was not a problem for her for now.

Then he thought, if she, without cultivation, could withstand the extreme cold,

How much more so would cultivators like himself, or even those with a far greater level, be able to enter Antarctica?

For cultivators, coming to Antarctica wouldn't be difficult.

Even if it was difficult to enter in winter, summer wouldn't be a problem.

Thus, a clear comparison between ancient and modern times gradually formed in his mind.

In present-day Antarctica, ordinary people find it difficult to enter,

But scientists can enter with superior equipment.

In ancient Antarctica, ordinary people simply couldn't enter,

But cultivators could enter with their powerful cultivation.

This means that in ancient times, Antarctica was a true haven for cultivators.

Even the deepest mountains of the Shinwa Mountains could be accidentally accessed by ordinary people,

But Antarctica was impossible.

The Roaring Forties acted as a natural defensive barrier,

Completely keeping ordinary people out.

This pristine land, completely isolated from ordinary people, was an ideal training ground for cultivators.

Could the elders of the Warriors Den searching for the underground city here have been built by cultivators back then?

Antarctica remained untouched for at least several thousand years in human history.

If a sect seized this opportunity and developed and multiplied there for hundreds or even thousands of years,

That sect would undoubtedly be very large.

Although the Antarctic ice sheet has existed for hundreds of millions of years,

The extreme temperatures, violent storms, and blizzards make it impossible for newborns, young, and elderly cultivators to withstand such extreme weather if they were to live there long-term.

Therefore, the best option was to build an underground town capable of sheltering from the storms.

If all these inferences are true, then these cultivators lost their final path to ascension during the Dharma-ending Age.

There are only two possibilities for them:

Either they gradually died off generation after generation,

Their numbers dwindled,

They fell into a population trap,

And eventually all perished.

Or they continued to multiply in some unknown corner to this day!

Chapter 7157

Filled with curiosity about the underground city in Antarctica,

Charlie embarked on his journey back to the Nordic research station.

Meanwhile, the fuel trucks had already filled all the transported fuel into the storage tanks at the Japanese research station.

Brovnen, unusually interested in leaving his Wu Han Palace, stood in the central square,

Surveying his surroundings with a smug expression, secretly sighing,

“Having such a modern team is truly invaluable in a barren place like Antarctica.

It’s just a pity that we’re still a bit short-handed.

Compared to the hundreds of thousands of members of the Warriors Den,

This small force is indeed rather meager.”

Just then, Kikuchi Kohei was supervising the fuel transfer.

After checking the remaining fuel,

He instructed the transport personnel in Japanese to pay close attention to the fuel safety warning line.

Once the fuel level approached the warning line,

Regardless of the weather, they must immediately set off for the research vessel.

Brovnen, seeing him from afar, smiled and waved,

"Come here."

Kikuchi Kohei hurriedly ran up to him, eagerly asking,

"What are your orders, Master?"

Brovnen asked him,

"How is the exploration progressing?"

Kikuchi Kohei quickly replied,

"Master, the three ground exploration teams are still advancing,"

"But as you know, radar coverage is limited."

"Our current advance in three directions is at two 70-degree angles."

"The further they go, the larger the area they need to cover."

"And the slower their advance becomes."

"It's almost impossible to scan the entire Antarctic region in a short time."

He then quickly added,

"By the way, Master... "

"The helicopter's fuel is running low."

"It can only last two more days before it has to stop."

"So I wanted to ask you if we should stop the helicopter for now."

"And save the fuel for emergencies."

Brovnen frowned and asked him,

"Don't you transport a lot of fuel back every day?"

"Why is the helicopter's fuel running low?"

Kikuchi Kohei explained, "It's like this, Master."

"The helicopter uses specially processed aviation kerosene,"

"Which is different from the diesel fuel used in our generators, heating equipment, and ground vehicles."

"The research vessel has a large diesel fuel reserve."

"Since it also relies on diesel for power."

"However, the helicopter's fuel reserve is relatively low."

"And we've been flying non-stop these past few days,"

"So the fuel consumption is quite high."

"It's too big."

Brovnen said somewhat angrily, his face full of pressure,

"If the helicopter stops, the search speed will decrease."

"Don't you have any other options?"

Kikuchi Kohei said helplessly,

"Well... we really don't have any options."

"After all, we can't extract and refine oil in Antarctica."

"The only way to obtain aviation kerosene is to transport it from China."

"But now it's impossible for any ships to get in."

Brovnén gritted his teeth and asked unhappily,

"Is there really no other way in Antarctica?"

Then, he had a flash of inspiration and immediately said,

"If all else fails, we can just steal some from other research stations!"

Kikuchi Kohei immediately said in a panic,

"Absolutely not!"

"Master! If we go and seize other research stations now,"

"And they report it, it could become an international dispute,"

"And we'll be in big trouble."

Brovnén scoffed, "So what?"

"Didn't they say they can't get in?"

"Let's just seize what they want!"

"Once summer comes, I'll leave this place,"

"And I won't care about anyone else's life or death!"

Chapter 7158

Kikuchi Kohei explained,

"Master, saying they can't come in only applies to regular research teams."

"Regular research teams really can't come in right now."

"Not only do they lack the equipment,"

"But even if they did, the research team members wouldn't have the capability."

However, the military can intervene if it draws attention.

"If it attracts international attention,"

"Some countries might send troops to intervene."

Brovnen asked him, "What methods do the troops have to get in?"

"Mainly airdrops and paratroopers."

"In an emergency, they have the capability to airdrop special forces and lightly armored vehicles here."

"And their bombers can conduct precision bombing around the clock,"

"Not to mention their long-range strikes."

"Damn it,"

Brovnen muttered, somewhat frustrated.

He had thought he was now the local landlord of Antarctica,

However, it turned out that troops from various countries could come and go as they pleased.

However, the possibility of getting the military to deliver aviation kerosene to the research team was extremely slim,

So the helicopters would have to be grounded.

However, at this moment, a new idea suddenly popped into his head,

And he blurted out, "If I can't openly rob them,"

"Then I can always steal from them covertly, right?"

"Which country has the most research team members, supplies, and equipment in Antarctica right now?"

"Tell me, and I'll take control of them all."

"Not only will they provide fuel and supplies,"

"But they can also help me in my search!"

Kikuchi Kohei subconsciously said,

"If you're asking about the research team with the most personnel, it's definitely the American research team."

"They have several research stations in Antarctica."

"The largest of which is McMurdo Station,"

"With more than two hundred research team members stationed there during the winter."

"There must be a lot of equipment and supplies there."

"More than two hundred people?"

Brovnen was a little overwhelmed and said,

"That's too damn many people."

"I can't even hint at them all."

"Isn't there a station with fewer people?"

For Brovnen, psychological suggestion is also a kind of spiritual energy consumption.

Last time, he had already consumed a lot of spiritual energy by hinting at the dozens of people at Showa Station.

If he had to hint at more than two hundred people,

He was afraid that he would have almost no spiritual energy left.

What if they encountered some danger?

He had only a few pills left in his pocket,

And replenishing them would be a major problem.

Kikuchi Kohei, unaware of his worries and genuinely wanting to solve his problem, respectfully said,

"Master, other American stations only have a few dozen people at most."

"Their supplies can't compare to McMurdo Station."

"McMurdo Station isn't just the largest Antarctic research station,"

"But also the logistics base for all American Antarctic research stations."

"Therefore, it has a vast reserve of supplies and equipment."

"There are probably more than three or five helicopters, not to mention fuel."

Upon hearing this, Brovnen suddenly felt a surge of interest.

If he could bring them under his control,

With so many supplies and equipment,

His search speed could probably increase several times over.

That would greatly increase his chances of exploring Antarctica.

Although it might consume a lot of spiritual energy,

Putting him into a dangerous period of depletion,

There were no enemies in Antarctica,

So what did he have to worry about?

Moreover, if he could control over two hundred more people,

He would have nearly three hundred people at his disposal,

Along with a large amount of modern equipment.

It seemed unlikely that anything in Antarctica could threaten him.

Since that's the case, why not take the risk?

With this thought in mind, he immediately asked Kikuchi Kohei,

"Where is that McMurdo station you mentioned?"

"How far is it from here?"

Kikuchi Kohei replied, "It's about 1,300 kilometers away as the crow flies."

"But if you drive, it's a huge detour."

"Almost 3,000 kilometers."

Brovnen almost coughed up blood:

"Damn it, that far?!"

Chapter 7159

Seeing Brovnen's shocked expression, Kikuchi Kohei truthfully replied,

"Reporting to you, it is indeed that far."

"Moreover, the area is not just a flat ice sheet."

"There are also numerous icebergs and hills."

"Our travel speed will be greatly reduced by taking a detour."

"Even if the snowmobile travels non-stop,"

"The entire process will take at least eight days."

"Eight days..."

Brovnen couldn't help but question,

"Isn't the straight-line distance only a little over 1,300 kilometers?"

"Why not just fly there?"

Kikuchi Kohei quickly explained,

"Reporting to you, Master, about 1,300 kilometers of that distance is over the sea."

"This means that there's nowhere for the helicopter to stop and refuel along the way."

"Even with auxiliary fuel tanks,"

"It simply can't fly that far."

Brovnen asked him,

"So, besides taking a detour, there's no other way?"

Kikuchi Kohei thought for a moment and said,

"There's no other good way."

Brovnen asked again, "What about the ship?"

"What if we get the ship to set sail?"

"We could park the helicopter on the ship,"

"Sail the ship to waters closer to them."

"And then transfer the helicopter there!"

Kikuchi Kohei shook his head,

"Master, didn't you want the Japanese public to know the specifics of the ship?"

"If the ship moves, they'll know we're lying."

"That's tantamount to treason,"

"And they might even send troops to quell the rebellion."

Brovnen "Can't I just turn off the entire positioning system?"

"How can they detect the ship's movement if the positioning system is off?" said Kikuchi Kohei.

He pointed overhead and said,

"Spy satellites and commercial camera satellites pass overhead every day."

"They have relatively fixed orbits and take pictures of the ground."

"They automatically compare these pictures with previous ones in their systems,"

"Making it easy to detect which objects have moved."

Brovnen cursed, "Do you think I'm stupid?"

"Isn't it polar night?"

"What can satellites possibly capture?"

Kikuchi Kohei said, feeling wronged,

"Although it's polar night, there's the aurora."

"So the visibility isn't too bad."

"Furthermore, satellite resolution and light sensitivity are much higher than the human eye."

"What the human eye can't see, the cameras can."

"And most importantly, our research vessel is quite large; even at night,"

"It can be seen from the satellite."

"Smaller objects like vehicles and helicopters are relatively safe."

Brovnen was furious.

This was damn troublesome! he clenched his fists in helpless rage.

Even with his arrogance, he wouldn't dare confront a sovereign nation.

If Japan discovered that its research team seemed to have betrayed their country and sent troops,

Even if he could escape, his search for the Gate of Ascension would be put on hold.

Furthermore, the new arrivals might discover the psychological manipulation he had used on the team members.

In that case, reaching the American research station would likely be impossible by land.

Eight days there and back make sixteen days in total.

Brovnen was on the verge of tears.

However, he also knew very well that with the current capabilities of this research team,

Completing the exploration of the entire Antarctic this winter was simply a pipe dream.

If they could capture the McMurdo Station,

With its large number of personnel and abundant supplies and equipment,

Things would be completely different.

The search speed would increase at least three or four times.

Thinking about it this way,

The sixteen-day delay on the road wasn't a major problem.

He could consider it a necessary investment.

Having figured this out, he immediately told Kikuchi Kohei,

"Prepare as quickly as possible."

"We're heading to that American research station to expand our territory!"

Kikuchi Kohei respectfully replied,

"Yes, Master, I obey!"

Chapter 7160

When Charlie returned to the Nordic research station,

Duncan had already completed the deep processing of the captured audio using AI.

Natural noise and equipment noise were all stripped away bit by bit by the AI algorithm,

Clearly restoring the conversation between Brovnen and Kikuchi Kohei.

Realizing that Brovnen was about to make a significant move,

He immediately sent the processed audio and video to Charlie.

Charlie, Maria, Jeremiah, and Ria watched the video together,

And all four of them looked somewhat shocked.

Charlie murmured, "This elder is taking a gamble."

"If he takes over the more than two hundred people at the McMurdo Station,"

"Even if he is not discovered by the relevant authorities of the United States and Japan for the time being, their large-scale search will inevitably cause a huge fuel shortage and equipment wear and tear."

"When summer comes, and more scientific expedition members and tourists arrive,"

"This secret will be impossible to keep!"

"By then, the relevant authorities in both countries will be astonished."

"For example, why did thousands of tons of fuel disappear inexplicably over the winter?"

"Why did the odometers of those vehicles increase by an astronomical number?"

"Even if they can adjust the odometers, the wear and tear on the tracks, tires, engines, gearboxes, drive shafts, and other worn parts cannot be hidden."

"Frequent use of the vehicles will also rapidly deplete their spare parts reserves."

"All of this will alert their respective authorities."

"Leading to a large-scale investigation."

Maria agreed, saying, "Young Master is right."

"Spiritual energy can erase traces of memories,"

"But it cannot erase the traces of natural physics."

"This elder should be well aware of this himself."

"Therefore, I suspect that he intends to gamble everything this winter."

"Whether he succeeds or not, he probably won't set foot here again."

Ria said with some worry,

"Their large-scale operation during this season will inevitably cause a shortage of supplies."

"Even if the McMurdo Station has a large reserve of supplies, it absolutely cannot withstand such frequent searches."

"Therefore, they will definitely target other research stations in the near future."

"Will they come after us?"

"It's not impossible,"

Charlie said gravely. "The current situation is far too passive."

"We can't rashly go out and use the aurora to communicate with that mysterious thing."

"Staying here also carries certain risks."

"Even if we wanted to leave Antarctica now, it would be a pipe dream."

"If they really continue this large-scale search,"

"It wouldn't be surprising if they found us."

"We can only pray that this elder doesn't discover us..."

At this point, Charlie said with some frustration,

"If I had known we would encounter him here, I would have tried to bring a few close-in weapon systems (CIWS)."

"If we had his facial features and physical characteristics, we could have used CIWS with radar and AI algorithms to lock onto him and ambush him somewhere in Antarctica."

"Maybe we could have kept him here forever!"

Ria asked excitedly, "Mr. Wade, can the CIWS still be sent in now?"

Charlie shook his head:

"It's definitely not going to happen now."

"By the time it can be sent in, it will be too late."

"Alright."

Ria sighed somewhat reluctantly,

"If we could have taken down one of the elders, it would have been a huge blow to Maria."

Charlie nodded in agreement and smiled,

"Unfortunately, we can't seize this opportunity."

Maria was silent for a moment, then said to Charlie,

"Young Master, I have an idea."

Charlie smiled, "Miss Lin, please say it."

Maria said, "If we could send a message to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, letting them know that the Japanese research team is carrying out some kind of secret operation behind the Ministry's back,"

"The Ministry will definitely assume they have betrayed the country and will take it very seriously."

"But they are too far away to reach them."

"Their only icebreaker is still stuck here."

"So they will definitely ask the military for help."

"Given the cooperative relationship between Japan and the United States, they will most likely synchronize this situation with the United States."

"And even request the assistance of the US military."

"Once the US and Japanese troops land in Antarctica,"

"Not only will they destroy the foundation he has painstakingly built at the Japanese research station,"

"But they will also prevent him from controlling the American research station."

"At that time, if both countries launch military operations simultaneously,"

"He will probably be like a stray dog, losing his foothold in Antarctica."

Charlie nodded with some surprise and said,

"Miss Lin's idea is very good,"

"But I have only one concern."

Maria said, "Please say it, master."

Charlie sighed, "My concern is that if this elder becomes a stray dog, he will definitely have to find a new place to live in the vast Antarctic."

"If he finds us here, or passes through us, that would be really awkward."

Marianodded and said, "That risk does exist."

"But I don't think it's that great."

"We are only two or three hundred kilometers away from the Japanese research station."

"If he wants to avoid the search by the US and Japanese military,"

"He will definitely run further away and most likely won't choose this place."

"That's true."

Charlie thought Maria was indeed contemplative and meticulous.

Her method was excellent.

Following her plan, this elder, who originally wanted to expand his territory, might very well lose his base of operations due to internal strife.

The question now is how to make the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology discover the problem "naturally"!

Chapter 7161

Charlie had considered asking Nanako to help him report the problem directly to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

However, upon closer examination,

He realized that if he was going to do this,

He had to do it flawlessly,

Otherwise, once there was an information link,

There was a possibility that someone could trace the source.

He didn't want to leave any risk for Nanako.

After pondering for a long time, he said to Maria and the other two,

"I've decided to start with those Japanese research team members,"

"And get them to expose their secrets to the Japanese public."

Maria asked, "Does Young Master have any specific ideas?"

Charlie said, "These Japanese research team members have been psychologically instructed not to reveal the actual situation to their superiors or families back home."

"If we let them directly leak the information,"

"No matter what method they use, it will seem very deliberate in the eyes of that elder."

"So... I want their equipment to help us transmit these messages."

"Equipment?"

Maria asked, "You mean vehicles or helicopters?"

Charlie said, "Icebreakers."

Charlie continued to explain, "Icebreakers are the only equipment without tampering in the information transmission system."

"The information transmission equipment on other vehicles and helicopters has been removed from their original machines."

It was left in fixed positions. This created the illusion for the Ministry that nothing had been touched.

"However, since the icebreaker wasn't originally intended to move,"

"And given its large size, they had no choice but to keep it frozen in place."

"The Japanese side could still monitor its location."

Charlie analyzed, "I'm thinking that with all the intensive searching they've done these past few days,"

"Consuming so much diesel fuel, the icebreaker's fuel level must have decreased rapidly."

"If the fuel level information was synchronized with the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in real time,"

"They would definitely notice the anomaly."

"So, it's highly likely that the ship's engine room workers tampered with the fuel level detection."

"Whatever they did, I'll find a way to restore it to normal."

"The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will see that the fuel level has instantly decreased by thousands of tons."

"They'll definitely realize something's wrong."

Maria nodded and said, "The fuel consumption is their biggest flaw."

"So many vehicles are motionless in the eyes of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and the ship is also motionless."

"Once they get the real fuel consumption,"

"They will definitely realize that those snow vehicles that consume the most fuel must have been moving behind their backs."

"Moving equipment without authorization is already serious."

"But deliberately damaging equipment information is even more egregious."

"They will definitely find a way to investigate."

Charlie said, "I'll call Matsushita Heikichi on the research vessel."

Matsushita Heikichi was resting in the captain's cabin at the moment.

After the entire ship broke down, he basically had no real work and was just waiting to die every day.

When he received Charlie's call, Charlie's mental suggestion immediately took effect.

He was on high alert and pressed the answer button:

"Hello, sir!"

Charlie hummed in agreement and asked,

"Does the data you report to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology every day include your remaining fuel level?"

"Of course,"

Matsushita Heikichi said. "There are electronic level sensors and physical sensing floats in the fuel tank."

"They calculate the data every minute and automatically upload it to the cloud."

"Which the Ministry can check at any time."

Charlie asked again, "Have you tampered with the fuel level information?"

"Yes,"

Matsushita Heikichi said. "The master instructed us that we absolutely could not let the authorities notice anything amiss,"

"So I arranged for several engine room workers to remove the electronic level sensors and their corresponding error reporting modules."

"The physical sensing floats were also tampered with."

"Their height was artificially controlled to create the illusion of slow fuel consumption."

Charlie thought to himself,

"Just as I expected,"

And then asked, "What method did you use?"

Matsushita Heikichi said, "We used a strong magnet to suspend a small micro-controlled motor from the top of the fuel tank, controlled by a microcontroller."

"The motor drives..."

"The reel is moving, and the reel, suspending the float,"

"Slowly descends to create false fuel level information."

Charlie asked him, "What would happen if the micro-control motor malfunctioned?"

"Causing the float to quickly return to the actual fuel level?"

Matsushita Heikichi replied,

"That would be terrifying."

"The system would think that we rapidly consumed thousands of tons of fuel in the few seconds or tens of seconds between two data readings,"

"Which clearly far exceeds the fuel consumption of our icebreaker."

"Therefore, the system would immediately determine it as a fuel leak."

"And a high-speed leak at that,"

"Which would trigger a level one emergency signal."

"Okay."

Charlie asked him, "If I need you to destroy this device?"

"Can you do it without anyone noticing?"

"It's not difficult,"

Matsushita Heikichi said. "I can change the microcontroller's program parameters to make it rapidly reverse the gears and lower the float at a certain time."

"After it's done, I can rewrite the microcontroller to restore it."

"The data will be unrecoverable, and no one will know that I tampered with it."

Charlie smiled and said, "Okay, then wait for my message."

"Do it immediately if needed!"

Chapter 7162

Because this trip involved nearly 3,000 kilometers and the road conditions were complex,

Kikuchi Kohei specially arranged for a tanker truck to accompany their convoy.

Otherwise, the range of any single vehicle would be far less than 3,000 kilometers.

Moreover, the harsh environment here would require a large amount of fuel for heating,

And warming the equipment, making the overall fuel consumption even more astonishing.

After the tanker truck was added to the convoy,

Kikuchi Kohei checked the condition of all the vehicles,

And after confirming everything was in order, said to Brovnen,

"Master, we can set off now."

Brovnen nodded and said to Kikuchi Kohei,

"Depart immediately!"

The convoy, consisting of four snowmobiles and one tanker truck, immediately set off,

Traveling southwest along the coastline before turning northwest, completing a U-shaped route.

Their one-way trip would take approximately eight days,

Allowing Charlie to monitor their movements in real time based on the tanker truck's location.

Four days after Brovnen's departure, Charlie called Matsushita Heikichi and instructed him,

"You can operate the buoy now."

Matsushita Heikichi immediately replied,

"Yes, sir, please wait a moment."

After hanging up, Matsushita Heikichi immediately went to the fuel tank and rewrote the program for the microcontroller of the control system.

Then, he returned to his lounge, and after waiting for five minutes,

The entire cabin's alarms sounded!

A system AI alarm blared from the loudspeaker:

"Suspected fuel leak, please check immediately!"

Triggering a Level 1 emergency, everyone on board became alert.

The engine room engineer immediately went to the fuel tank to check the situation.

After discovering the buoy was malfunctioning,

He immediately raised it back up and manually entered a code to deactivate the alarm.

The entire alarm lasted approximately three minutes.

During those three minutes, the Ministry in Japan was in an uproar.

The moment the alarm was transmitted,

The Ministry's system sent a synchronized message to senior management.

When they saw that the research vessel had issued a Level 1 emergency alert regarding a rapid fuel leak, they were terrified.

After all, this research vessel was Japan's only heavy icebreaker.

If anything were to happen to it, the entire country would lose its icebreaking capabilities for a short period.

When the higher-ups questioned the research vessel, its response left them puzzled.

The research vessel replied that the surface monitoring system had malfunctioned,

But the problem had been resolved.

It seemed like a false alarm, but the astute staff immediately realized something was amiss.

If the electronic liquid level system malfunctioned, that would be plausible.

After all, sensor problems aren't uncommon.

However, a malfunction in the physical buoy is quite strange.

Moreover, the buoy's sudden low-level warning indicates a momentary physical downward movement.

But a buoy is a hollow, sealed structure made of corrosion-resistant material,

Like a buoyancy board for learning to swim.

If placed in a sealed pool and left untouched,

It wouldn't sink to the bottom even after a month or two,

Or even eight or ten years.

This means that even if a buoy in the fuel tank were stuck,

It would never suddenly plunge into the fuel and become stuck—that defies physics.

Therefore, the worker immediately realized that the lowest liquid level detected by the buoy must be the icebreaker's true liquid level.

The reason it hadn't been detected at such a low level before must have been due to something restricting its descent!

He pulled up the icebreaker's data and, using the difference in the height of the two buoys,

Immediately determined that the icebreaker had underreported its fuel consumption by at least 1,300 tons.

A thought popped into his head: Secretly using 1,300 tons of fuel—what are these people doing?!

Chapter 7163

The usually laid-back, nine-to-five officials at Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) were unusually working overtime today.

In a fully enclosed meeting room,

They were intensely discussing the fleeting liquid level signal from the icebreaker.

The person who discovered the problem reported,

"I personally believe this is extremely serious."

"These people have been hiding something from us in Antarctica,"

"Doing something we don't know what,"

"And they're using all Japanese research equipment,"

"Yet they're not carrying out any exploration mission officially issued by Japan."

"I have reason to suspect they've committed treason!"

The MEXT official was deeply troubled.

Although he knew the situation was serious,

As the person in charge, he tried to downplay the seriousness, fearing the consequences for his leadership.

Nobody wanted such a serious systemic problem to occur under their jurisdiction.

If it were reported, how would he report it?

How would he present his performance?

He might even be removed from his post.

So he tried to speak in a gentle tone, saying,

"Mr. Watanabe, please don't get too agitated."

"We have no other evidence to prove that our Antarctic expedition team has betrayed us."

"Besides, the signal you mentioned only appeared for a moment."

"What if it was a false alarm?"

"Impossible, absolutely impossible!"

The reporter immediately exclaimed.

"The liquid level signal isn't a high-precision device."

"Nor is it a micro-control device."

"Its existence is to provide redundancy for all electronic systems."

"So, the fact that it showed that height data proves the float must have reached that height."

"Unless someone jumped in, grabbed the float,"

"And rapidly sank before instantly letting go,"

"Such data fluctuations are impossible."

The second-in-command asked him,

"You said there's a difference of 1,300 tons."

"Does that mean they've used that much fuel behind our backs?"

"Yes!"

The reporter explained,

"Their previous fuel consumption curve was very linear, slow, and reasonable."

"After all, the icebreaker was frozen solid,"

"So they wouldn't start the main engine, only the generator set."

"The fuel consumption rate couldn't possibly be fast unless there was a fuel leak."

The person in charge said,

"Well, maybe it is a fuel leak!"

To him, a fuel leak would be an embarrassing problem, but far easier to explain and survive politically than outright defection by the team.

Even if the icebreaker exploded and was totaled,

It was still far better than a complete defection.

After all, no research team in history had ever committed such a colossal act of defection.

If it were to get out, it would become international news.

The second-in-command, wanting to amplify the matter, said seriously,

“Over a thousand tons of fuel consumption,”

“If they really kept it from us, it proves they are definitely carrying out a large-scale operation.”

“We still don’t know what they are doing.”

“What if they are carrying out some kind of terrorist activity?”

“What if they are massacring research team members from other countries in Antarctica?”

“If this gets out, our country will lose all face!”

Everyone immediately expressed their strong agreement.

The area is frozen over now, and people generally can’t get in.

What if these people really go crazy and cause trouble up there?

Besides, everyone knows that in such a serious matter,

The person directly in charge will bear primary responsibility,

And the top leader’s secondary responsibility.

Therefore, everyone hopes an investigation can be launched as soon as possible to prevent the situation from escalating.

Otherwise, everyone might lose their jobs.

The person in charge was also somewhat overwhelmed.

He asked everyone, "Think about it."

"Under what circumstances could dozens of research teams from different groups, units, and companies simultaneously betray their country?"

Even with eight brains, he couldn't figure it out.

This was a group of research team members,

And they weren't even from the same team.

Some were from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology,

While others were brought in from other research institutions.

After all, all research institutions nationwide, and even some companies, would seek help from the MEXT to rent research stations,

Or buy quotas if they needed Antarctic research.

Chapter 7164

It was like a hastily assembled tour group.

How could they possibly have such strong unified action?

Someone exclaimed, "Shouldn't we quickly check everyone's survival status?"

"What if many of these people have already been killed or imprisoned?"

"We can't guarantee that all reliable people are psychopaths or extremists,"

"But what if there are a few, and these few people have taken control?"

"Damn!"

The person in charge cursed.

"If something truly horrific happened in Antarctica,"

"I'd be kneeling before the entire nation,"

"Even if I didn't commit seppuku."

He quickly ordered, "The meeting is adjourned."

"Immediately contact the families of all expedition members,"

"Subtly inquiring when they contacted their families and whether they can be 100% certain that the person contacted was them."

"If so, record it as 'survived'."

"If not, record it as 'questionable.' Let's assess the situation."

Everyone immediately sprang into action.

Half an hour later,

Watanabe reported, "Sir, we just tallied the numbers."

"The families have all video-chatted with them."

"They have internet access."

"It seems no horrific incident occurred."

The person in charge breathed a sigh of relief:

"That's great, that's great..."

No one had died.

His initial worry vanished instantly,

Replaced by a profound sense of relief.

He said, "Since they're all alive, let's try to investigate their current situation."

"Could we request help from the US military?"

"Ideally, they could send a reconnaissance plane to check."

Someone agreed: "Yes!"

"Asking America for help is the right thing to do!"

“Exaggerate the situation.”

“The US has hundreds of research personnel in Antarctica.”

“They’ll definitely take this very seriously,”

“And help us get to the bottom of it!”

The person in charge nodded:

“In that case, report the situation to the Ministry of Defense.”

“And request that they contact the US for support!”

...

When the US Department of Defense received the report from the Japanese Ministry of Defense,

The person in charge froze.

He found the information provided by Japan absurd and laughable—the entire research team had committed treason?

What kind of logic led them to such an assumption?

However, based on their alliance,

They decided to help Japan confirm the situation first.

Therefore, the order was given to the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Requiring them to immediately develop a feasible plan to confirm the situation of the Japanese Antarctic research team.

The US military, with its rich war experience, quickly found a starting point for this matter.

No need to send commandos or scouts to infiltrate.

To determine if these people had betrayed the system, only one thing needed to be ascertained.

That is, whether this research team's machinery was resting at home or out working.

The government was wondering where the fuel had gone, weren't they?

Fuel can't be eaten or drunk.

Its only use is to refuel these machines.

If these vehicles were all at home, the American military wouldn't need to waste time arguing with the Japanese.

There was most likely a problem with the fuel signal.

But if these vehicles weren't at home,

This was a serious matter.

Because in the Japanese positioning system,

These vehicles had been at home without moving!

Therefore, a military high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft immediately took off from its base in South America, heading to Antarctica.

At this time, the Japanese research team was still carrying out Brovnen's exploration requirements.

Almost all the functional vehicles were out.

Only a few open-top snowmobiles remained at home,

Because these things couldn't be driven in extreme cold.

When the reconnaissance aircraft arrived,

The research team didn't even notice.

Because the noise of the aircraft's engines was almost completely drowned out by the sounds of their mechanical equipment, the radar was running at high power,

And the diesel engines were practically at full throttle to provide ample power and electricity.

No one noticed that a reconnaissance plane was speeding across the Antarctic winter,

A region rarely used by aircraft.

The aircraft's thermal imaging system clearly captured numerous unusual heat sources on the frigid Antarctic continent.

These were all the mechanical devices the Japanese were frantically operating.

Soon, when the images captured by the aircraft were synchronized with the US Joint Chiefs of Staff,

The commander in charge of the operation was stunned.

Pointing to the various photos on the large screen, he demanded,

"What are these Japanese research team members doing?!"

"They've deployed almost every vehicle they can!"

A subordinate blurted out,

"This is extremely serious,"

"And they're divided into multiple groups."

"It's clearly a reconnaissance mission!"

The commander immediately said,

"Report to the Pentagon immediately!"

Chapter 7165

At this moment, Brovnen was still meditating cross-legged in his snowmobile.

He was still resting and recuperating for the more than 200 researchers at the McMurdo Station,

Unaware that the Pentagon was already discussing countermeasures with the Japanese Ministry of Defense.

He was still about two days' drive from McMurdo Station.

After confirming that the Japanese researchers had indeed committed treason,

The Pentagon's actions, aside from reminding its own research stations to be wary of the Japanese, were not particularly proactive.

The Japanese Ministry of Defense, on the other hand, showed a strong will to survive after learning of the confirmed cases,

Wanting to resolve the issue as quickly as possible to prevent its spread.

After a day of discussions between the Pentagon and the Japanese Ministry of Defense, the Pentagon's leadership presented a preliminary countermeasures plan to the Japanese Ministry of Defense.

During the video conference, the other party stated,

"Our idea for you is to send a negotiation team a specially modified American LC-130 Hercules transport aircraft to fly directly to Antarctica to meet with the defecting Japanese research team members."

"This would allow them to ascertain the situation."

"And, ideally, persuade them to surrender and be brought back to an American military base for interrogation."

The Japanese Ministry of Defense official felt this approach was too impractical:

"We actually prefer to urgently deploy 100 special forces personnel,"

"And six special operations armored infantry vehicles to Antarctica to capture these people and forcibly bring them back to Japan."

The Pentagon official shook his head.

"That's impossible."

"According to the Antarctic Treaty, no country is allowed to conduct military operations in Antarctica."

"Not even military exercises."

The Japanese Ministry of Defense official gave an awkward laugh and countered,

"But you are representing the United States, after all."

"The United States has no obligation to abide by these treaties!"

The Pentagon official firmly stated,

"We cannot bear the stigma of conducting military operations in Antarctica,"

"So the best solution is for you to send unarmed personnel to quell the rebellion."

He then reminded them,

“Although your research team members have all defected,”

“They certainly don’t have weapons.”

“We have no need to send troops against a group of unarmed individuals.”

The Japanese Ministry of Defense was at a loss.

The main issue was the current weather.

Very few aircraft could fly to Antarctica and land successfully on the ice sheet.

Japan didn’t have any, so it had to rely on the United States.

The United States felt there was little profit to be made in this matter,

And whether or not the rebellion was quelled had little to do with them,

So they weren’t particularly concerned about it.

Sending troops to provoke the Antarctic Treaty over this was not worthwhile in their eyes.

Left with no other option, the Japanese Ministry of Defense hastily dispatched a surrender-persuasion team of twenty negotiation experts, psychologists, and legal advisors.

This team then flew to a US military base in South America.

After all, they needed American aircraft to reach Antarctica.

After a twenty-hour flight, the team arrived at the US military base,

Not far from the McMurdo Station.

Accompanying the team was a high-ranking Japanese Ministry of Defense official named Goro Watanabe.

Watanabe's mission was to persuade the Americans to send a contingent of Navy SEALs to Antarctica before the Hercules transport planes took off for the mission.

In case of any unforeseen circumstances.

However, despite Watanabe Goro's best efforts to persuade these officials, they only replied,

"I'm sorry, Mr. Watanabe, the Pentagon has clearly instructed that no armed personnel may be brought to Antarctica."

"Even the US pilots who are transporting your surrender delegation are not allowed to carry sidearms."

Watanabe Goro was frustrated:

"Sir, isn't this a bit too inhumane?"

"The success rate of the surrender delegation is not high."

"If they fail, they can only return."

"And we will be powerless against those traitors."

The US military official adjusted his sunglasses and smiled:

"Mr. Watanabe, not sending a single soldier or a single bullet to the Antarctic continent is the bottom line of our military."

"We hope you can understand."

Having said that, he stood up and said coldly,

"The plane will take off in one hour."

"Mr. Watanabe, you may prepare to board."

Watanabe Goro had no choice but to stand up and slowly walk out of the conference room.

On the airport runway, the plane, whose landing gear had been modified into a combination of tires and sleds, was undergoing final pre-flight checks.

The Japanese surrender delegation was also preparing to board.

According to the plan, they would land directly on the ice sheet fifty kilometers from the Japanese research station.

In addition to carrying twenty people,

The transport plane would also transport two unarmed snowmobiles for their use.

Therefore, the transport personnel were currently pushing the snowmobiles into the transport plane's cabin,

And securing them with modular mounting plates.

Watanabe Goro and his assistant went to the back of the plane,

And waited with the surrender delegation for the equipment to be secured before boarding.

At this moment, Kikuchi Kohei, who was traveling with Brovnen to McMurdo Station, said to Brovnen,

"Master, we'll arrive at McMurdo Station in three hours."

"Very good."

Brovnen nodded slightly and instructed,

"As long as we can get in smoothly, everything will be fine."

Chapter 7166

The research team at McMurdo Station had already received a warning from the Pentagon,

And knew about the Japanese research team's defection.

Although they were unarmed personnel,

They possessed various cutting-edge technologies,

So their radar system was operating at maximum power 24 hours a day,

Constantly on guard against everything around them.

When Brovnen's convoy was detected by their radar,

They immediately became alert and broadcast over the radio:

"This is McMurdo Station."

"Approaching vehicles, please state your nationality, number of people, and purpose."

Kikuchi Kohei was startled.

They were still dozens of kilometers away.

How had they been detected?

Was their radar operating at full power in the dead of winter?

He immediately reported to Brovnen:

"Master, those people are asking us to identify ourselves and our purpose."

"What do you think we should do?"

Brovnen said calmly:

"In the polar regions,"

"What's the most common reason you give when contacting foreign research teams?"

Kikuchi Kohei said, "We need rescue, I guess."

"Everyone in Antarctica is quite friendly."

Brovnen nodded:

"OK, then tell them we need help."

Kikuchi Kohei immediately followed Brovnen's instructions,

Informing them that he was from a Japanese research team and was seeking help from them because of insufficient vehicle supplies and a breakdown.

The American research team was on high alert.

Why would a traitorous research team come to them?

So they immediately reported the news to the Pentagon.

...

Watanabe Goro and his men had all boarded the transport plane.

The conditions inside the transport plane were very basic.

Everyone only had small folding stools to sit on along the edges.

The middle section consisted entirely of modular transport tracks and fasteners.

The two snowmobiles were now fixed in the center of the cabin.

Just as everyone thought the plane was about to close its doors and prepare for takeoff,

A U.S. Air Force personnel rushed in,

Unlocked two snowmobiles from their tracks and moved them outside the cabin.

Immediately afterwards, nearly a hundred heavily armed commandos boarded the aircraft.

Then, the two snowmobiles were replaced with four all-terrain armored infantry fighting vehicles.

These soldiers, each with a grim expression and silent,

Greatly surprised Watanabe Goro.

At that moment, the U.S. base commander from before stepped forward.

Watanabe Goro quickly asked,

“Commander, what’s going on?”

The commander replied coldly,

"We're going to Antarctica!"

Watanabe Goro exclaimed in surprise,

"Weren't we not sending a single soldier?!"

Faced with Watanabe Goro's questioning,

The commander remained unfazed.

He said seriously, "Based on the situation just now,"

"We were indeed going to uphold the Antarctic Treaty,"

"And not send a single soldier there."

"But now, the situation has changed."

Watanabe Goro felt a sense of déjà vu.

He rubbed his eyes, repeatedly confirming that the man in front of him was the same base commander,

Who had just told him he would never send a single soldier to Antarctica.

Now, how could he have organized hundreds of Navy SEALs to support Antarctica in the blink of an eye?

He couldn't help but ask,

"What changed?"

"Did our commander request troops from your commander?"

The commander glanced at him and said,

“As far as I know, that is not the case.”

He then picked up the walkie-talkie and shouted sharply,

“Why hasn’t M142 arrived yet?”

“Hurry up, we’re going to be late!”

Watanabe Goro was speechless.

He was, after all, from the Ministry of Defense,

And roughly half of the weapons used by his Self-Defense Forces were made in the United States,

With many others being jointly developed by the US and Japan.

Therefore, the moment he heard “M142,”

He knew they were referring to the American M142 tracked self-propelled rocket launcher.

This thing was highly mobile,

Had even greater firepower,

And the new model could fire guided rockets with a range of 300 kilometers.

Moreover, it used a 6×6 all-wheel drive system,

Providing powerful propulsion.

It was designed for all terrains,

So even if dropped onto the Antarctic ice sheet,

It would certainly be able to move swiftly.

The M142 abandoned the tracked design, weighing just over five tons,

And a single transport aircraft could easily carry three units.

Watanabe Goro thought to himself,

"Dmn it, are these people out of their minds?"

"Either they don't deploy a single soldier, a single gun, or even allow pilots to carry sidearms,"

"Or they just bring out all these self-propelled rocket launchers and put them in Antarctica,"

"Making it easy for them to attack the snowmobiles of various international research teams."

It's easier than a tank hitting a truck,

After all, this thing has a much longer range than a tank,

And once it's equipped with guided munitions,

It can hit any target within 300 kilometers.

Chapter 7167

The next second, Watanabe Goro suddenly realized a very serious problem:

Could these SEALs and M142 self-propelled rocket launchers be prepared to attack our scientific research team?

Originally, he hoped they would send troops,

Not to kill these traitorous scientific research team members,

But to take them under control as quickly as possible, to capture them alive.

Sending soldiers to capture them alive is reasonable.

However, sending self-propelled rocket launchers has absolutely nothing to do with capturing them alive.

Watanabe Goro broke out in a cold sweat and quickly said,

"Commander, our... our plan is primarily to persuade them to surrender."

"Even if persuasion fails, we prioritize capture over attack."

"With such heavy firepower, if an accidental clash occurs,"

"The consequences will be dire..."

The base commander coldly replied,

"I have orders from higher-ups."

Watanabe Goro choked back tears,

"Our research team members are only suspected of treason."

"We can't kill them!"

The US base commander said, "Our previous operation was to transport you to Antarctica."

"Now, our operation is to transport our soldiers and weapons to Antarctica."

"And we'll drop you off along the way."

"So, if you still want to board this plane, you have to cooperate with us here!"

Watanabe Goro immediately became much quieter.

He knew his role and status in this operation; he was merely a minor character.

If he were to confront the commander directly, he would most likely be kicked off the plane.

So, he could only sullenly sit back in his seat.

At that moment, three M142 self-propelled rocket launchers roared onto the runway.

Another modified transport plane taxied behind them.

Watanabe Goro couldn't believe it.

These people were actually taking three M142s—were they going to war?

But this was just the appetizer.

The US base commander, through the radio, ordered:

"Second echelon personnel and equipment, get ready."

"After the first drop, they'll come to pick you up for the second drop!"

The US military was so tense because they feared the defected Japanese research team might attack their Antarctic research station.

McMurdo Station was unlike any other research station.

It was America's reliable Antarctic base, like Everest Base Camp, of immense strategic importance.

The US had not only invested enormous manpower and resources in this station but had also stockpiled a lot of equipment that shouldn't have been taken to Antarctica.

They didn't know if the news had leaked, nor what these defecting Japanese research team members were planning,

But their priority was to ensure McMurdo Station didn't bear any risk.

Therefore, they devised two strategies.

One was to immediately dispatch a team to McMurdo Station to reinforce its defenses,

And simultaneously launch an attack on the Japanese research team heading there.

The other strategy was to send another force to land in the middle of the Japanese research team's retreat route, cutting off their escape.

These two forces, operating in a pincer movement,

It would eliminate the defectors heading to McMurdo Station and then immediately converge to advance together to the Japanese research station and quell the rebellion.

For safety, they brought older armed personnel and weapons.

Ready to open fire immediately if the Japanese research team dared to advance recklessly, without needing permission.

As three M142s entered the cargo hold of the second transport plane, Watanabe Goro's plane began taxiing.

After a roar, the plane soared into the sky, followed closely by another transport plane.

Watanabe Goro sat nervously on the narrow bench,

Still not understanding what was happening.

...

Brown's convoy was getting closer and closer to McMurdo Station.

What puzzled Kikuchi Kohei was that more than half an hour had passed since he sent out his distress signal,

And the communications personnel at McMurdo Station had not responded.

"This is outrageous!"

Kikuchi Kohei couldn't help but complain,

"How can they do this? We said we needed rescue."

"And they didn't even reply!"

"They have no humanitarian spirit whatsoever."

Brovnen frowned and asked,

"What would happen if we just drove over there?"

Kikuchi Kohei thought for a moment,

"We don't have any inside help, so driving over there is probably not an option."

"Their radar has already locked onto us."

"If we rashly rush in, they will definitely report to the US military immediately."

"Their nearest military base can get here in just over two hours."

"We don't have any weapons, so we definitely don't have much of a chance."

Brovnen doubted,

"They're just a bunch of research team members."

"I can handle them myself."

Just then, a warning came from the McMurdo Station staff through the wireless communication system:

"On behalf of the US government, I demand that you immediately stop approaching McMurdo Station!"

Kikuchi Kohei angrily said, "Damn it! We came for help."

"The US and Japan are allies and close partners."

"We've run into some problems, so what's wrong with you helping us?"

The other party was very nervous at this moment.

According to intelligence, this other group has collectively betrayed their country.

Anyone capable of such a thing is either mentally unstable or utterly inhuman.

Their destination—the American research station—is clearly up to no good!

Chapter 7168

Brovnén's patience was wearing thin.

He now only wanted to rush in, subdue everyone inside, and end the battle as quickly as possible.

However, the loyal Kikuchi Kohei stopped him, advising,

"Master, don't be impulsive!"

"Their radar coverage is already so wide, proving they've entered a high-level alert state."

"The radar and surveillance information might be being uploaded to the US government in real time."

"If you act now, the surveillance video will be at the Pentagon before you even get inside."

"If they discover your true identity, you'll only be in more trouble!"

Brovnén gritted his teeth and asked,

"Didn't you say they were easy to communicate with?"

"Why have they suddenly become so wary?"

Kikuchi Kohei shook his head: "Master, I really don't understand this either."

"The relationships between the various Antarctic research stations are more complex than those between individual countries."

"The relationship is even better, because on the basis of national alliances, there's an added sense of mutual reliance and support on this continent."

"Normally, when we go to an American research station, many people come out to welcome us when we arrive."

"We've never been this wary before."

Brovnen frowned: "Could it be that they know about our situation?"

Kikuchi Kohei looked equally puzzled: "It shouldn't be, right?"

"We've all sworn to be loyal to the Master, and we would never leak even a word."

Brovnen: "That's very strange. What exactly makes them so wary?"

Just as Brovnen was racking his brains and didn't know what to do, two beams of light appeared in the sky and got closer and closer to them.

The American transport plane had finally arrived.

In just over two hours, their plane was at full speed, flying from the South American military base to the airspace above the Antarctic continent.

Upon seeing the plane, Kikuchi Kohei exclaimed in alarm,

"Oh no! American planes are here!"

Brovnen asked, "Can American planes still come to Antarctica at this time of year?"

Kikuchi Kohei replied, "Private airlines and ordinary passenger planes certainly don't have this capability."

"Any plane that can fly over Antarctica this season must be a military aircraft."

Brovnen was shocked: "You mean the American military is here?"

"What are they doing here?"

Kikuchi Kohei shook his head:

"I don't know what they're doing in Antarctica,"

"But I have a feeling they're here to support the McMurdo Station."

Brovnen frowned: "They're here to support the McMurdo Station, so you mean they're guarding against us?"

"Yes." Kikuchi Kohei nodded. "They must be wary of us."

Brovnen cursed, "Isn't this unbelievable? Why are they so nervous?"

Just then, the plane opened its rear hatch, and parachutes began to unfurl from the rear.

Kikuchi Kohei turned pale with fright. "It's paratroopers!"

"They have gone mad! The Antarctic Treaty doesn't allow any country to send troops or weapons to Antarctica."

"Yet they've sent paratroopers directly!"

Just as he finished speaking, a super parachute, many times larger than a regular parachute, suddenly opened.

Kikuchi Kohei's legs went weak with fear.

"Shin, they're up to no good! They've even deployed heavy weaponry here!"

Brovnen was furious. He had been swaying in a snowmobile for days before finally reaching the vicinity of McMurdo Station,

And they were almost there when the Americans sent troops.

In this situation, even a direct assault would be pointless,

Because what he needed was to bring the entire research team of the American research station under his control without alerting the enemy.

But once the enemy became wary, even if he rushed over and took everyone under control now, the enemy would still send a continuous stream of troops,

Which he alone could not withstand.

So he asked Kikuchi Kohei, "In your opinion, what should we do now?"

Kikuchi Kohei replied without hesitation,

"The best thing for us now is to evacuate as soon as possible and not confront them head-on."

Brovnen was furious and angrily questioned,

"You mean we've made a wasted trip?"

Kikuchi Kohei nodded, "Sir, it's good enough if we make a wasted trip. What I'm most afraid of is that their goal isn't just to protect McMurdo Station."

"If they catch up with us and ask us what happened, that would be troublesome. Wu Han Palace's situation would definitely be exposed!"

Upon hearing this, Brovnen urged without hesitation,

"Quickly, quickly, turn back now! We can't afford to lose more than we gain!"

Wu Han Palace was Brovnen's foundation on the Antarctic continent.

With those research team members, his goal of exploring Antarctica had a basic guarantee.

His desire to expand his territory and increase his manpower was also based on the premise that this research team was already operating at full capacity.

Therefore, he could accept the failure of this territorial expansion operation,

But what he absolutely could not accept was that this failure would endanger his safety.

So, the snowmobiles immediately stopped, turned around, and began speeding back without stopping.

At this moment, the US military commander on the first transport plane immediately received a message from the research station.

On the radar, the approaching vehicles had all turned around and left.

The US military commander's expression was serious, and he said coldly,

"Running so fast only proves they're up to something!"

"The second echelon must hurry to their return route and prepare to intercept them."

"I will lead the remaining SEALs and members of the Japanese delegation."

"Turn around immediately and head to Showa Station in Japan!"

"Leave one M142 at McModo Station for defense;"

"The remaining two should not be deployed, but come with me to Showa Station!"

Watanabe Goro's heart pounded with fear upon hearing this.

He witnessed the deployment of approximately fifty Navy SEALs and two armored personnel carriers.

If they were to transport the remaining personnel and equipment to Showa Station, this firepower would be enough to flatten the station several times over.

If any conflict were to occur, wouldn't this unleash a massacre?

Thinking of this, he felt extremely uneasy, fearing the situation would spiral out of control.

The current American strategy was no longer related to the Japanese.

Their requirement was to first ensure the safety of McMurdo Station,

And then, once safety is secured, immediately arrest all the research team members.

They were determined to find out two things:

First, why they had betrayed their country;

And second, what they were searching for in Antarctica in their various groups!

If there were any unknown secrets involved,

The Pentagon would not allow them to slip through their fingers.

Therefore, now that Brovnen had escaped,

Their task naturally became the roundup of all Japanese research team members!

Chapter 7169

Brovnen, who fled in panic,

Never expected that his original plan to come to the American research station to recruit some followers and expand his strength would end with him running away with his tail between his legs.

On the way back, he kept cursing under his breath:

“Damn, what’s the big deal for them?”

“They even mobilized their army!”

A hundred years ago, he wouldn’t have been afraid of the military.

They were just guns and cannons,

Nothing to threaten someone of his cultivation level.

But after a century of seclusion,

He realized that the speed of technological development in modern society far exceeded his cultivation speed.

The firepower of modern armies was so fierce that it could raze an entire city to the ground—something cultivators couldn’t even dream of.

He had also heard of a count who died tragically under close-in weaponry fire.

While the count’s strength could withstand a few rounds,

It couldn’t withstand hundreds or thousands of rounds per minute.

Therefore, facing the American army, he didn't hesitate to flee.

Kikuchi Kohei, whose mind he controlled and who was wholeheartedly loyal to him,

Frowned deeply, his eyes clouded with confusion and a flash of worry.

He said to Brovnen,

"Master, something seems off about this!"

Brovnen asked,

"What's it?"

Kikuchi Kohei explained,

"Almost every country in the world has signed the Antarctic Treaty."

"They promise not to send a single soldier or bring a single gun to Antarctica."

"But just now, the United States sent paratroopers and even armored vehicles."

"This is clearly a violation of the Antarctic Treaty."

"They're just using the excuse of encountering danger to ask for help."

"Why would they send such a large force?"

"Yeah, why?"

Brovnen was bewildered and unsettled.

It felt like when he lived in a village.

He went to his neighbor's house to borrow some noodles,

And the neighbor brought down dozens of bandits from the mountain,

Armed with long guns, ready to attack him.

It was completely unnecessary.

Unless they knew that borrowing noodles was a pretext,

And that they really wanted to kill his whole family.

But he hadn't revealed any information,

So how did the other side sense the danger?

Brovnen muttered to himself,

"Unless someone in my family leaked the information!"

Kikuchi Kohei heard him mutter something,

But didn't quite catch what he said, so he quickly asked,

"Master, what did you mean by leaking information?"

Brovnen said coldly, "I suspect that the Wu Han Palace leaked information."

"Could it be that Japan already knows that you are all loyal to me now?"

Kikuchi Kohei said with a surprised look,

"Impossible, Master."

"Every member of the Wu Han Palace is devoted to you."

"Even if you told us to die right now, we wouldn't even flinch."

"How could we leak information to outsiders?"

Brovnen nodded slightly and agreed,

"You're right."

"You are all my loyal subordinates,"

"And it's unlikely that you would betray me."

"But even if you haven't betrayed me, it's impossible to completely prevent the government from finding out about the situation here through other channels."

"After all, we have been conducting large-scale explorations in Antarctica for a long time,"

"And it's inevitable that some link might be overlooked."

Chapter 7170

Kikuchi Kohei agreed wholeheartedly,

"We have only done our best to use methods that we think can deceive the country."

"But after all, the technical conditions are limited,"

"And these methods are not necessarily 100% successful."

Brovnen said with some tension, "If my guess is true,"

"Then, since the United States knows about this situation, Japan must also know about it."

"They will definitely come to investigate."

"That means these American troops may very well chase us all the way to Wuhan Palace."

"That would be really troublesome..."

Kikuchi Kohei sighed, "Master's concerns are not unfounded."

"If the government finds out about this, it will be extremely serious."

"And the government will definitely investigate thoroughly."

Brovnen asked him anxiously, "Then what should I do?"

"If their army marches on Wuhan, where will I go?"

"If I stay, I can't explain myself,"

"And it will surely be a fierce battle."

"If I leave, where in this vast Antarctic will I find a place to live?"

At this point, Brovnen was extremely frustrated,

And his Dao heart was greatly affected.

He cursed in frustration, "Damn it!"

"If I had known this would happen, I wouldn't have bothered with the United States."

"I wanted to conquer cities and territories,"

"But who would have thought that before I even conquered the city,"

"My backyard would be on fire! It's infuriating!"

Kikuchi Kohei said loyally, "Master, please rest assured,"

"We are willing to be loyal to you wholeheartedly."

"Wherever you go, we will follow you!"

Brovnen was extremely depressed.

These scientific expedition members would certainly be of great use if they could help him explore Antarctica.

However, if they were to escape with him in Antarctica,

They would all become a burden.

Firstly, the harsh environment makes long-term survival outside the shelter impossible.

Secondly, their presence would create too much of a target, causing him trouble.

Currently, if the Japanese and American governments were to jointly investigate this matter,

The best solution would be for him to withdraw first.

As for the Japanese research team members,

Their fate is predictable.

They will certainly be taken back to Japan for investigation.

However, he isn't afraid, because he has psychologically instilled absolute loyalty in them,

And they will certainly not answer any questions related to him.

Therefore, this matter may ultimately leave the Japanese with an unsolved mystery forever.

They will never understand why these people collectively betrayed their country,

Nor will they ever know what they were secretly searching for in Antarctica.

So he asked Kikuchi Kohei,

"If one day you are taken back to Japan by the government for investigation,"

"And they interrogate you about what you were doing in Antarctica behind their backs,"

"What would you say?"

Kikuchi Kohei replied without hesitation,

"Don't worry, Master, I will not reveal any information related to you."

"Even if a gun is pressed against my head,"

"I will not utter a single word."

Brovnen was satisfied with his attitude and nodded slightly.

Although he had prepared for the worst,

He was still unsure what would happen,

So Brovnen wasn't in a hurry to leave.

He planned to retreat to the Wu Han Palace with Kikuchi Kohei first.

If the American army came looking for him, he wouldn't need to worry,

Because, although he was unlikely to be their match,

With his cultivation level, he could easily detect them in advance and evacuate before they found him.

Besides this, he also made another preparation:

If conditions allowed, he would try to control a soldier who could speak Chinese,

Find out their plans, and see if he could seize any opportunity!

Chapter 7171

It would take Brovnen at least five days to get back to the Wu Han Palace.

Meanwhile, the second transport squadron of the American army arrived at their return route,

A crucial point just over an hour later.

This airdrop consisted entirely of M1128 infantry fighting vehicles and M142 self-propelled rocket launchers,

Along with supporting reconnaissance vehicles.

The M1128 infantry fighting vehicles were equipped with heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, and even 105mm tank guns,

Forming a comprehensive fire network with the M142s.

In addition, the reconnaissance vehicles were equipped with high-power, high-precision radar,

Capable of detecting mobile targets and even individual targets within a radius of tens of kilometers,

And assisting the M1128s and M142s in precision strikes.

After landing safely, these vehicles immediately concealed themselves behind a hill,

With their radars operating at full power,

Awaiting the arrival of the Japanese scientific expedition's snowmobile convoy.

The Japanese surrender delegation, including Goro Watanabe, failed to land at McMurdo Station,

Their plane did not land but instead parachuted to the intermediate point to await the arrival of the second wave of aircraft.

Only after the second wave arrived did their plane land on the Antarctic ice sheet,

Where Watanabe and all the other members of the delegation disembarked.

The second wave consisted of two more transport planes than the first.

After dropping heavy equipment into Antarctica, they immediately set off for their return flight.

Watanabe and his men were required to remain inside infantry fighting vehicles.

For the next period, they lived and ate with American soldiers in these vehicles,

Using individual rations.

Their accommodations consisted mainly of taking short naps in the small seats when tired.

Because the infantry fighting vehicles lacked toilets,

American soldiers dug a makeshift snow pit in the field to serve as a temporary toilet.

This makeshift toilet had a diesel heater to maintain a certain temperature.

Otherwise, a person using it in such conditions could easily suffer frostbite,

And if constipation occurred, it would be one of the most agonizing experiences imaginable.

These harsh conditions caused immense suffering for the surrender delegation,

But they were powerless to change anything.

They were on American planes, and wherever the Americans told them to go, they had to go.

In the freezing Antarctic polar night, even if they wanted to leave, they had nowhere to go.

What frustrated Watanabe Goro even more was that the American commander hadn't even disembarked.

He had merely made a brief stop in Antarctica before returning to his military base in South America.

Two days later, Brovnen's convoy was gradually approaching.

However, no one, including Brovnen, realized the danger lurking within.

They were detected and locked onto by radar dozens of kilometers away from the US forces,

And M142 guided rockets could be fired at them at any time.

However, the US operational plan prioritized capturing them alive.

The first step was to capture the research team heading to McMurdo Station,

Then interrogate them to uncover the root cause of their treason,

And how many potential enemies remained at the Showa Research Station?

Once they understood the situation at the station,

They would formulate the next phase of their plan:

To go to the Showa Research Station to quell the rebellion.

Brovnen, after a bumpy journey, gradually relaxed as he saw that the enemy hadn't sent any pursuers for two consecutive days.

During these two days, Kikuchi Kohei had also maintained contact with the other research team members at the Showa Station via satellite phone,

Inquiring about the current situation.

The feedback was that everything was normal and no strangers had approached.

Brovnen naturally trusted these people implicitly;

After all, they were puppets controlled by his psychological suggestion,

And they would rather die than betray him.

With no powerful enemies ahead and no pursuers behind,

He felt much more at ease,

And everything would be discussed further upon returning to the Wu Han Palace.

However, he was unaware that multiple American offensive weapons systems had locked onto them,

Ready to fire at any moment.

Chapter 7172

Just as the two sides were less than five kilometers apart,

All the American armored vehicles simultaneously emerged from the other side of the hill,

Launching a pincer attack towards the snowmobiles where Brovnen was located.

At this distance of several kilometers,

The Japanese research team members, besides Brovnen remained completely oblivious.

Brovnen, however, keenly sensed the roar and vibration of several diesel engines several kilometers away.

He was instantly alarmed and exclaimed,

"At least eight vehicles are approaching us!"

"Really?"

Kikuchi Kohei asked, bewildered.

"Everything looks normal outside, Masato."

Brovnen said seriously,

"You'll find out soon enough."

"I feel very uneasy, like someone is watching me intently."

Kikuchi Kohei asked in surprise,

"Masato, could we already be locked onto?"

"Locked onto?"

Brovnén frowned and asked,

"You mean, locked onto by their weapons?"

"Yes."

Kikuchi Kohei said,

"We're civilian vehicles."

"They can easily lock onto us with fire control radar."

"Once locked onto, we won't be able to escape."

Brovnén immediately said,

"Quick!"

"Reverse at full speed and then detour south to try and shake them off!"

The driver immediately turned around on the spot,

And drove at full speed in the opposite direction.

Seeing this, the approaching American forces, forming a pincer movement, immediately accelerated and gave chase,

Simultaneously radioing:

"Attention, we are the United States military."

"We demand that you stop immediately for inspection."

"Or we will open fire!"

Kikuchi Kohei, understanding English, nervously said,

"It's...it's the Americans!"

"They're telling us to stop for inspection."

"Or they'll open fire!"

Brovnen gritted his teeth,

"Damn it, they've even sent people to intercept us!"

"Are they trying to encircle us?"

He cursed angrily, then said to Kikuchi Kohei,

"Tell them we're just ordinary research personnel."

"The team members don't want trouble."

"But they also don't want to be controlled by them."

Kikuchi Kohei immediately said in English,

"Sir, we are members of the Japanese Showa Research Station."

"Currently carrying out a scientific research mission."

"You have no right to demand that we stop for inspection."

Watanabe Goro's voice immediately came from the other end, harshly rebuking,

"Damn it!"

"I am Watanabe Goro from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology."

"The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology did not issue you any large-scale exploration missions this winter."

"Who gave you these missions?!"

"Do you know that you are now suspected of treason?!"

Kikuchi Kohei's face turned deathly pale.

He looked at Brovnen and said nervously,

"Master, the second-in-command of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is here."

"Even he is here."

"It seems they must have noticed our actions."

"What should we do now?"

Brovnen realized at that moment that he would definitely not be able to return to Wu Han Palace.

The Japanese government had already noticed the problems with Wu Han Palace,

And they would not rest until this matter was thoroughly investigated and resolved.

Moreover, he had previously planned that if the US military approached,

He could blend in with the research team and slip through,

Or find another opportunity within their ranks.

But with even Japan sending people,

It meant that his chances of getting away with the research team were virtually zero.

A nervous Brovnen immediately asked Kikuchi Kohei,

“If I try to escape now, is it still possible?”

Chapter 7173

As Brovnen's most loyal subordinate,

Kikuchi Kohei showed no doubt or disappointment regarding the question.

On the contrary, he thoughtfully analyzed,

"Master, whether you can escape depends on,"

"Whether the enemy has the ability to lock onto you and launch an attack."

Brovnen was extremely frustrated.

At this moment, neither advancing nor retreating seemed appropriate.

Advancing meant fighting his way out,

And single-handedly killing the American and Japanese soldiers ahead.

In Brovnen's view, if he could evade their firearms and get close enough to kill them,

It might not be a pipe dream.

But the problem was, this wasn't an unprepared research team.

It was a regular American army.

This meant that all their actions were likely being transmitted in real-time to their superiors via satellite.

This was the vast difference between modern times and a hundred years ago.

In the society of a hundred years ago, he would have been fearless.

Even if an army were chasing him,

As long as he eliminated all those pursuing him,

He could ensure that his information wouldn't be leaked by the dead.

But things are different now.

While he still has the ability to kill them,

He lacks the power to stop the real-time data transmission.

Even if he kills them, he'll be exposed,

Revealing his identity and existence as a cultivator to the world,

Potentially attracting even more intense attacks from the US military.

However, retreating doesn't guarantee a safe escape.

Aside from the risk of being hunted down again, the harsh Antarctic environment is a different story.

Even with high cultivation and the ability to survive without food,

What good is it?

Maintaining his body's survival and function in this environment requires a constant drain on spiritual energy,

Which he's recently been expending heavily on.

Surviving the Antarctic winter will be incredibly difficult.

Seeing his silence, Kikuchi Kohei offered his assessment:

"Master, you should escape!"

"Escape offers a glimmer of hope."

"If you don't, once captured,"

"You won't withstand Watanabe Goro's scrutiny and will be exposed quickly."

Brovnen nodded gravely.

Kikuchi Kohei was right.

Staying meant certain death.

Even if he were captured and could find a way to escape,

It wouldn't be a good option.

Why wait until he was exposed before escaping?

Having made up his mind, he asked Kikuchi Kohei,

"If I escape now, what methods can I use to avoid their detection?"

Kikuchi Kohei frowned and thought for a moment, then said,

"Reporting to you, Master, that's not difficult."

"They haven't activated reconnaissance aircraft or helicopters."

"So their detection equipment must be vehicle-mounted individual radar or thermal imaging devices."

"Both of these devices have a major drawback."

"They can't penetrate steel or complex objects."

"In other words, since we're currently inside the snowmobile, their radar can only detect the snowmobile."

"But not how many people are inside."

"The thermal imaging can only detect the snowmobile's exhaust fumes."

"And the heat radiation from the engine makes it impossible to see the heat radiation signals of us inside the snowmobile."

At this point, Kikuchi Kohei said seriously,

"Master, as long as you maintain a straight line with them and us while you're escaping—that is,"

"Always running directly in front of us—they won't be able to detect your presence."

"I can have the other vehicles change formation."

"Driving alongside us to create a larger blind spot for you."

"Once you've run a certain distance,"

"We'll stop and surrender."

"This way, their radar will have a hard time locking onto you."

"If their attention is drawn to us, you can leave silently."

"Good, very good."

Brovnen was instantly overjoyed.

If he followed Kikuchi Kohei's method,

Although he would lose the Wu Han Palace,

At least he wouldn't be exposed or attract pursuit.

Chapter 7174

He could find a safe place to hide for a while,

And once the dust settled, he could find a way to leave Antarctica.

If he couldn't leave before winter ended,

He'd simply find a deserted area and dig a deep ice cave.

He initially considered finding another uninhabited research station as a temporary shelter,

But then he thought that even if a research station was uninhabited,

It would certainly have various surveillance devices.

He didn't understand modern technology,

And what if he was unknowingly caught on their surveillance?

Wouldn't that be like walking into a trap?

Therefore, digging an ice cave to hide in became the best solution he could think of.

The Antarctic ice sheet is thousands of meters thick.

Although the temperature is extremely low,

As long as he can avoid the Antarctic winds and snow,

The pressure will be greatly reduced. Moreover, igloos have always been an excellent choice for protection in the polar regions.

Although he didn't understand the physics behind it,

He had known for over a century that in the northern wilderness, there was a race similar to East Asians called the Inuit,

Who lived in igloos,

This not only blocked the wind and snow but also provided excellent insulation.

Digging an ice cave tens or even hundreds of meters deep,

Hiding inside like a hibernating polar bear would greatly reduce the loss of spiritual energy!

Having made up his mind, Brovnen immediately asked Kikuchi Kohei,

"Kikuchi, what will happen if you get caught?"

Kikuchi Kohei shook his head: "Master, I don't know either."

"It depends on how the country defines this matter."

"However, what is certain is that we will likely be escorted back for interrogation as soon as possible."

"We might even be taken to the McMurdo Station,"

"Or even a US military base in South America for interrogation."

"Because, based on my understanding, they will definitely be very curious about what we are exploring in Antarctica."

"If they don't find out, even if Watanabe Goro wants to send us back to our country,"

"The United States will definitely not agree."

Kikuchi Kohei knew more about modern history than Brovnen.

Although the United States has always nominally been for justice or peace,

They also have their own selfish motives.

In geopolitics, effective justice depends on interests.

Recently, everyone has been exploring the Antarctic continent to help Brovnen find the underground town he mentioned.

The United States must be extremely curious.

Since Japan asked them for help,

They must take this opportunity to find out everything.

Upon hearing Kikuchi Kohei's words,

Brovnen immediately said,

"Kikuchi, you are a loyal subordinate."

"I have another task for you before I leave."

Kikuchi Kohei replied without hesitation,

"Please say it, Master!"

"I will do anything, even die for it!"

Brovnen said coldly, "I've already given the others psychological suggestions."

"So they definitely won't betray me,"

"And neither will you."

"However, as you said, they are so curious about this matter."

"They will definitely try to find out the reason."

"I hope you can take the initiative to shoulder this responsibility and tell them that you are in charge of everything."

"And all members of the expedition team obey your orders."

Kikuchi Kohei immediately nodded and said,

"Don't worry, Master, I will do as you say!"

Brovnen continued, "If they ask you why you did this,"

"Just say that you felt that Antarctica must contain a lot of gold."

"And you wanted to take this opportunity to explore the gold reserves."

"If you can also mine some gold ore, that would be even better."

Kikuchi Kohei nodded,

But then said with some worry,

"Master, they might not believe this explanation."

"It's alright."

Brovnen said in a cold voice,

"Even the most discreet person can't keep a secret better than a corpse."

"So the best way to keep a secret is to die with it."

"After you tell them all this, don't worry about whether they believe you or not."

"When they're not paying attention,"

"Find an opportunity to commit suicide and leave it all as a mystery."

"Once you're dead,"

"They'll gradually give up digging deeper!"

Chapter 7175

Kikuchi Kohei offered no objection or resistance to Brovnen's request.

Without a moment's hesitation, he immediately and respectfully said,

"It is my honor to die for you, Master."

"Please rest assured,"

"I will guarantee with my life that your secret will not be revealed!"

Brovnen nodded in satisfaction.

Then, he said to Kikuchi Kohei,

"Now, cover my retreat according to your plan!"

"Yes, Master!"

Kikuchi Kohei did not hesitate and immediately said through the intercom,

"Other vehicles, immediately move to my rear to provide cover!"

At his command, the other vehicles quickly moved to the rear of this vehicle.

At this time, the American pincer attack was still closing in.

Kikuchi Kohei said to Brovnen,

"Master, the closer they get, the larger the blind spot our vehicles will create for the radar."

"Once they catch up a little more, you can escape!"

Brovnen nodded slightly and sighed softly,

"Greed knows no bounds."

"This time, not only have we lost Wu Han Palace,"

"But the exploration of Antarctica will also be forced to stop."

At this time, the military convoy was still in pursuit.

Even though the US military vehicles were all military vehicles,

They weren't designed for polar environments.

So even at full throttle, they couldn't close the distance with the Japanese expedition team's snowmobiles.

Seeing that they couldn't catch up, the US military used a public channel to warn:

"Japanese expedition vehicle,"

"If you don't stop, we're going to open fire!"

Immediately afterward, a barrage of dozens of cannon shots rang out,

The US machine guns are blasting a large series of craters in front of the snowmobiles.

The machine guns weren't very powerful.

Any armor could easily withstand them.

The problem was that the snowmobiles had no armor at all.

If they were hit, a single shot would blast a huge hole,

And the people inside would likely be killed or injured.

Kikuchi Kohei said to Brovnen with a grave expression,

“Master, these bastards have opened fire on us!”

“If you don’t leave quickly, you might get caught in the crossfire.”

“And that would be a real problem.”

Although Brovnen knew that modern weapons were powerful,

But seeing it for the first time.

He was still shocked by the speed and destructive force of this weapon’s firing,

Seeing it for the first time.

The dozens of artillery shots had been fired in almost a second,

And the shell craters appeared instantly in front of him, almost within the blink of an eye.

This meant the shells traveled at nearly the same speed as the speed of sound.

He could probably achieve that speed with a single, powerful shot,

But a continuous barrage was impossible.

Therefore, he felt a mixture of awe and apprehension towards modern weaponry.

He asked Kikuchi Kohei, "What should we do now?"

"If I run away now, will they chase after me?"

Kikuchi Kohei pondered for a moment and said,

"Don't rush, Masato."

"Wait until they get close to us, then you can escape."

"Their attention will be on us; they shouldn't notice you."

Brovnen knew there was no better option at this point.

He could only try.

As the American vehicles drew closer to the expedition team's snowmobiles,

Brovnen's heart pounded in his chest.

He channeled all his spiritual energy into his body,

Ready to flee at any moment.

The US warship's firing had a significant deterrent effect, easing their anxiety.

They then accelerated their preparations to capture the research team.

Just as they approached the snowmobile convoy,

No one noticed a figure speeding away from the front of the vehicles,

Disappearing into the darkness.

Chapter 7176

The detection equipment on the military vehicles, blocked by the snowmobiles, failed to detect this.

Upon approaching the convoy, they immediately dispatched heavily armed soldiers to surround the snowmobiles,

And demanded that the Japanese research team members surrender immediately.

Initially, apart from Kohei Kikuchi,

The other expedition members had no intention of surrendering,

As they were subconsciously loyal to Brovnen.

Fortunately, Brovnen didn't understand Japanese,

So all his orders were issued through Kikuchi.

In other words, while these expedition members were loyal to Brovnen,

They all obeyed Kikuchi's orders.

Kikuchi immediately ordered them via internal communication:

"Everyone must surrender unconditionally!"

After saying this, he opened the snowmobile door first,

Raised his hands and stepped out.

Kikuchi, the first to surrender, was immediately arrested by the American forces,

And all the other expedition members were also captured without exception.

Watanabe Goro stepped out of the vehicle and,

Looking at the captured research team members, angrily questioned them,

"The country spent so much money sending you to Antarctica for scientific research."

"Why did you betray the country?"

Kikuchi Kohei replied fearlessly,

"But we didn't betray the country."

"They were just following my orders."

"It was all my arrangement!"

Before coming, Watanabe Goro had thoroughly reviewed the files of all the research team members and remembered each of them perfectly.

So he immediately questioned Kikuchi Kohei,

"You damn Kikuchi!"

"What exactly are you exploring in Antarctica behind the back of your country?"

As soon as he finished speaking,

He was immediately subdued by the soldiers, and his mouth was covered.

The Americans also realized that these people's actions were abnormal,

And that there must be some unspeakable secret.

Therefore, they wanted to send these people to McMurdo Station as soon as possible for interrogation.

So, whatever the secrets were,

They had to be the first to know and couldn't let Watanabe Goro get there first.

As the second-in-command of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Watanabe Goro was immediately gagged by two soldiers,

And dragged back into the armored vehicle.

Although he was extremely unhappy,

He was powerless at the moment and couldn't even find a way to protest.

Immediately afterwards,

All the research team members, including Kikuchi Kohei, were escorted to the American armored vehicles.

These vehicles split into two groups:

One takes Kikuchi Kohei and his team to the McMurdo research station,

And the other is taking Watanabe Goro towards the Japanese research station.

Watanabe Goro had no choice but to accept this forceful arrangement.

When the two sides began to part ways,

Brovnen had already sprinted several kilometers in one go.

This rapid sprint relied entirely on his spiritual energy,

But it also caused his spiritual energy to be consumed at an increasingly rapid rate.

However, Brovnen dared not stop.

Because the American forces had ambushed them from the east and chased them westward,

Without glass, they had to run westward for ten kilometers to avoid radar detection before turning south.

The reason for heading south was that there were American troops to the east,

The only route to McMurdo Station was to the west,

And the north was a frozen coastline.

Therefore, fleeing south was the best option.

Meanwhile, Charlie, with Nanako's help, learned about the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's actions.

Upon learning that they had secretly cooperated with the US military to begin arresting the traitorous expedition members,

He finally breathed a sigh of relief.

The US military's strong intervention in Antarctica completely disrupted Brovnen's plans.

Not only were he and the three women safer,

But Brovnen's original plans were also greatly undermined.

Now, as long as he avoided running into him,

This threat would be eliminated!

Chapter 7177

Brovnen journeyed south through the frigid Antarctic polar night.

While the outside low temperatures didn't significantly affect him,

The rapid pace in this environment was incredibly taxing on his physical strength and spiritual energy.

He could have stopped after a few dozen kilometers,

And immediately began digging for an ice shelter,

But he was terrified of the modern firepower,

Fearing he might perish there.

So he ran nearly two hundred kilometers before choosing a place where even penguins were nowhere to be seen.

There, he used his sword energy to carve out an ice cave about one meter in diameter and thirty meters deep.

After creating the cave,

He shattered all the excavated ice fragments into sand-sized ice crystals,

Which quickly dissolved into the swirling snow and ice.

Brovn then immediately jumped inside.

To maximize his safety,

He used his spiritual energy to melt some of the ice on the cave walls,

And then used it to lift the ice to the entrance.

The sub-zero temperatures of minus sixty degrees Celsius quickly refreezed the water lifted by his spiritual energy,

And Brovnen, like a silkworm, sealed himself in a cocoon.

His plan was simple:

He would simply wait here until the Antarctic summer arrived.

As for exploring Antarctica, that would have to be put on hold this year.

Otherwise, with his dwindling spiritual energy,

He wouldn't be able to sustain himself for long while exploring the region.

This reflected Brovnen's style:

He'd rather give up halfway than take risks.

After doing all this, he gracefully landed at the bottom of the thirty-meter-deep cave.

He sat cross-legged, holding his breath and preparing to enter a meditative state.

Once in meditation, he could not only abstain from grains,

But also didn't need air at all.

Without specialized equipment and a thorough search,

The US military wouldn't be able to find him.

Before entering meditation, Brovnen looked up.

Although it was a polar night outside, the aurora was dazzling.

The thirty-meter-thick ice layer couldn't block all the light,

And the complex internal structure of the ice allowed the faint aurora to penetrate and be irregularly refracted,

Giving the surroundings a dreamlike quality.

Looking back on the fruitless days,

He couldn't help but sigh, reminding himself:

Don't become completely absorbed in meditation,

Let time pass too quickly outside.

Wake up every so often to avoid missing the Antarctic summer.

...

Kikuchi Kohei and the others weren't taken back to Japan's Showa Research Station,

But directly to the US McMurdo Station.

At McMurdo, he and the other team members were interrogated in isolation by US military personnel.

Even Watanabe Goro didn't have a chance to approach the interrogation room,

Let alone participate in the interrogation.

The interrogation was simple,

Focusing on two core questions:

First, why were they going to such lengths to conceal their movements from home?

Second, what exactly were they searching so openly in Antarctica?

Kikuchi Kohei took the blame for everything.

His explanation was simple:

Everyone was obeying his orders.

He was the one who instructed them to conceal everything.

As for what they were searching for, it was equally simple:

Searching for gold and mining gold ore.

The US military felt its intelligence had been severely insulted.

Mining gold ore in Antarctica?

Are there even commercially exploitable gold mines here?

Even if it were possible, this would be one of the most difficult places in the world to mine gold, right?

Without breaking through an ice sheet thousands of meters high,

How can you extract gold from the rock layers?

But breaking through an ice sheet thousands of meters high would cost far more than the potential profits from gold mining.

Moreover, this research team simply doesn't have such advanced drilling equipment!

According to data provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology,

The drilling equipment at Showa Station has a maximum drilling depth of no more than two thousand meters,

And its strength is only sufficient to extract ice cores from a depth of two thousand meters.

It can't drill into rock at all.

How can they possibly explore and mine gold with that?

Moreover, even if these devices could drill through rocks,

They couldn't be used for large-scale mining.

The drill bit diameter was only 122 millimeters,

About the size of a bowl.

Chapter 7178

With such a small hole, even if gold ore was found, mining was impossible.

They wouldn't even recoup the cost,

Let alone cover the equipment's fuel expenses.

Therefore, the interrogation team unanimously concluded that Kikuchi Kohei was lying and hiding his true purpose.

So, they began to interrogate the other research team members one by one.

They tried every interrogation method imaginable,

But failed to get them to talk.

These people were even less capable than Kikuchi Kohei.

At least Kikuchi Kohei could fabricate a lie to insult their intelligence.

The other research team members simply refused to speak.

In their subconscious, they thought,

"You can kill me or torture me,"

"I certainly won't reveal my true identity."

This is the powerful effect of psychological suggestion.

It can make people abandon everything else and only regard the content of psychological suggestion as gospel.

Immediately afterwards, the US Navy SEALs assembled at McMurdo Station.

Modified military transport planes landed above the ice sheet,

And the soldiers immediately boarded, heading to the Japanese research station.

Goro Watanabe requested to travel to Showa Station with his own surrender-persuasion team on the transport plane,

But he was refused by the American commander.

He told Watanabe, "We have now taken full control of this incident."

"You are only allowed to stay at McMurdo Station and are not permitted to interfere."

"Our personnel will take full control of the Showa Station."

Watanabe was furious and questioned,

"Why?!"

"This is our own matter."

"Our people, our research station, our staff are here."

"Why are we not allowed to interfere?"

The commander retorted, "Since it's your own matter, why did you request support from us?"

"Don't forget, we sent transport planes, armored vehicles, and SEAL teams for this."

"It's only natural that we take over."

"Allowing you to stay at McMurdo Station is already a special favor."

"Otherwise, we would have sent you back to our base immediately."

"So you could go home directly from there!"

Watanabe was speechless with frustration.

What kind of nonsense was this?

He wasn't even allowed to interfere in his own affairs.

The key issue was this commander's overbearing attitude.

He was in Antarctica, not an illegal immigrant in the US,

And these American soldiers weren't ICE personnel.

Why were they treating him like this?

He was indignant and contacted his superior via satellite phone.

His superior was also furious upon hearing this.

The nation's honor was about to be tarnished.

He told Watanabe Goro,

"I will immediately request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lodge a protest with the United States."

"You must hold on a little longer."

"This matter cannot be allowed to be completely taken over by the United States!"

Watanabe Goro said, "They are already assembling the Marines."

"They plan to arrest everyone at Showa Station and bring them here."

"I can't stop them at all!"

"This is outrageous!"

His superior said angrily.

"They are going too far!"

"I will protest to the Cabinet immediately."

"We cannot allow them to take over our research station unilaterally!"

Watanabe Goro said,

"Then I await your good news."

Just as he finished speaking,

Watanabe Goro suddenly heard someone shout,

"Call the doctor!"

"Kikuchi has hanged himself!"

Chapter 7179

When Watanabe Goro rushed frantically to the room where Kikuchi Kohei was being held,

Kikuchi's body was hanging from the bathroom doorframe.

The item he used to hang himself was his own thermal underwear.

This material, specially developed for polar regions, was warm, skin-friendly, breathable, and incredibly durable.

The two legs tied together could easily hang an adult weighing over 140 pounds.

Unlike most people who hang themselves,

Kikuchi Kohei's expression showed no pain or ferocity.

Instead, he wore a resigned smile.

Just as Watanabe Goro and the other Americans were at a loss,

The research station's doctor arrived and immediately pulled Kikuchi Kohei's body from the knot made of his clothing.

The doctor performed CPR while checking his pulse and heartbeat.

Unfortunately, Kikuchi Kohei was already dead.

The research station was neither a prison nor a police station.

There were no special detention rooms.

After interrogating Kohei Kikuchi, they put him in an empty room and left a few soldiers outside to guard him in case he escaped.

But no one expected that he would commit suicide.

The Americans were baffled.

The military official, exasperated, yelled,

"Is this guy fucking crazy?"

"What's the big deal?"

"Even if we send him back to Japan for trial,"

"Since there weren't any serious consequences,"

"He'll only get five to eight years at most, right?"

He then pointed at Watanabe Goro and demanded,

"Come on, tell me,"

"How many years will he get for this kind of unauthorized expedition to Antarctica?"

Watanabe Goro looked bewildered.

"I don't know."

"It's never happened before."

"It depends on whether he had the intent to commit treason."

"If it's not treason,"

"Just unauthorized exploration, he should get less than five years."

"If it is treason, he might get the death penalty."

The military official sneered,

"Don't scare us."

"That guy from the mountain, the gunman, only got life imprisonment, right?"

"This guy, going back to Japan for trial, he can't possibly get the death penalty, can he?"

Watanabe Goro said awkwardly,

"You..."

That's not entirely unreasonable.

The military official pointed to Kikuchi Kohei's body and asked,

"Since he's unlikely to be sentenced to death,"

"Why did he commit suicide?"

Watanabe Goro, unable to contain his emotions, angrily replied,

"I don't know either!"

"You didn't let us speak to him from beginning to end,"

"You didn't let us participate in the interrogation."

"And now that he's committed suicide, you come to question me?"

"I want to question you, too!"

"Did you pressure him, or torture him to extract a confession?"

Realizing he wouldn't get anything from Watanabe Goro and not wanting to be accused in front of everyone,

The military official immediately said to the soldiers beside him,

"Take him and the rest of the surrender delegation to Sector Three for house arrest."

"Without my order, they are not allowed to step out of there!"

McMurdo Station is the largest Antarctic research station,

A massive research institution with multiple semi-independent areas.

Semi-independent means these areas are connected to the core area.

Essentially, it's like multiple prison sections within a large prison,

All of which can be completely sealed off.

Watanabe Goro and the accompanying members of the Japanese surrender delegation were all placed under house arrest in Sector Three.

Immediately afterward, the military mobilized.

Just as the paratroopers began boarding their planes for takeoff,

Chapter 7180

Charlie also departed alone from the Nordic research station,

Heading towards Showa Station.

Through Nanako's connections in Japan,

He learned that this research team heading to McMurdo Station had been intercepted en route,

And the elder of the Warriors Den had already fled on his way back to Showa Station.

This meant that the military would inevitably take over Showa Station,

And that elder certainly wouldn't dare to return.

Charlie's trip to Showa Station was to see as soon as possible how the US military would handle this matter.

If he could also obtain some evidence,

The subsequent developments would be even more interesting.

After all, he was well aware that this secret deployment of troops to Antarctica violated the Antarctic Treaty.

However, the location of the US landing was not known to the outside world.

The few foreign research stations with research teams stationed in Antarctica were far from the landing site,

And due to weather conditions, they rarely traveled far.

Therefore, the military's plan this time was to come and go quietly,

Trying to keep their presence a secret from the outside world.

But Charlie couldn't let them have their way.

He had to obtain evidence of this military intervention and make it public.

...

The military acted swiftly, completing the assembly of personnel and equipment,

In addition to the maintenance and takeoff preparation of transport planes, this can be accomplished in just over two hours.

This efficiency was truly impressive in such extreme cold.

Two hours after takeoff, the transport planes arrived at Showa Station in Japan.

Nearly a hundred Navy SEALs and several infantry fighting vehicles parachuted near the station and then surrounded it.

The research team at Showa Station was still carrying out the exploration mission assigned by Brovnen.

Since most of the team members were not at the station,

The military simply occupied it and forced the few researchers stationed there to recall all the remaining members via internal radio.

However, the captured researchers were fiercely loyal to Brovnen,

Believing they were all carrying out the mission assigned by Guanghai Zhenren, they would rather die than betray him.

Therefore, even with guns pointed at them, none of them were willing to yield.

Enraged, the military commander immediately ordered his soldiers to torture several research team members.

Some soldiers, still hesitant, whispered,

"Sir, if we attack the research team members at the research station for no reason, won't it cause a diplomatic incident?"

"This is Antarctica, not the Middle East..."

The military commander roared, "For us, what's the difference between Antarctica and the Middle East besides the climate?"

"Even in Europe, if those people dare to oppose us, we'll take them down!"

"The President might be sending troops to Greenland soon,"

"And you piece of trash won't have a chance to earn merit then!"

The soldiers, thoroughly humiliated, lost any remaining conscience.

If a soldier is considered a coward by his superior,

His chances of promotion are extremely slim.

So, they immediately became bloodthirsty,

Dragging the research team members into a room and brutally beating them.

Several unarmed and untrained expedition members were beaten black and blue,

Some are even on the verge of death,

Yet they remained steadfast and refused to yield.

Even the American soldiers couldn't bear to watch any longer and ran to report to their commander:

"Sir, those people are almost dead, but none of them will talk."

"Their mouths are tighter than trained special agents!"

The American commander, enraged, shouted:

"Go! Strip them naked, drag them out, freeze them until they suffer hypothermia,"

"And bring them back."

"I refuse to believe we can't pry their mouths open!"

The expedition members were stripped down to their underwear,

And dragged out of the research station by several American soldiers,

Directly into the polar night at minus sixty degrees Celsius.

The intense, biting cold instantly froze their skin,

Leaving it numb and stiff,

Followed by excruciating pain as if a thousand needles were piercing their skin—a pain no ordinary person could endure.

After only a few dozen seconds of exposure to the extreme cold,

Visibly frostbitten skin began to appear,

And instinctively, they screamed in agony.

Seeing that the time was right,

The American soldiers used guns to drive them back to the research station.

Unbeknownst to them, outside the icy, snow-covered station,

A man was silently hiding in the snow,

Using his spiritual energy to shield himself from the extreme cold,

And recording the entire ordeal of the half-naked research team by armed soldiers on his cell phone!

Chapter 7181

The Research Team members, who had been frozen in the extreme cold, immediately turned bright red upon entering the indoor space with a temperature of around 20 degrees Celsius.

The temperature difference of over 80 degrees Celsius caused their skin to scald as if they had just been boiled.

The itching and pain were even more intense than when they were exposed to the elements,

To the point that everyone frantically scratched their entire bodies,

Some even leave them covered in sores.

The military commander hadn't expected that just a few dozen seconds could torment them to this extent,

And he couldn't help but worry that they had gone too far.

After all, if the protests from Japan escalated and the White House felt the pressure of public opinion,

He would likely be forced to take the blame.

However, he quickly reconsidered.

Whatever, the more he looked at the situation, the stranger it seemed.

If he didn't get these people to talk, he might miss some great secret.

If there were truly valuable clues involved,

He might be able to make a significant contribution.

Since these researchers were going to be transferred to McMurdo Station anyway,

The injured could simply be detained longer and released once they recovered.

If they complained to their government, they could simply deny it.

For him, there were plenty of ways to smooth things over.

Therefore, he ordered the interrogation of these researchers to be intensified,

Forcing them to issue orders to all their comrades outside to return.

However, further intensification of the interrogation would likely result in deaths.

Their resilience far exceeded expectations.

Even after being tortured to this extent, they showed no signs of relenting.

The military commander was somewhat puzzled.

Even many specially trained agents and special forces soldiers would find this kind of torture difficult to withstand,

So why were these ordinary researchers with no military experience completely unaffected?

His subordinate rushed to him for instructions, saying,

“Sir, these people seem to have an incredibly strong sense of conviction.”

"Our conventional interrogation methods simply can't break it.

"We're at a loss!"

The commander coldly replied,

"I refuse to believe there's any conviction that can't be destroyed."

"Did they only spend a short time outside in the cold?!"

"Increase the intensity!"

The subordinate said worriedly, "If we increase the intensity any further, they might die."

"Their skin is already starting to ulcerate!"

"It looks like they've been scalded with boiling water."

"If they go out in the cold again,"

"Their skin might be destroyed!"

The commander was horrified.

He hadn't realized that minus sixty degrees Celsius could be so deadly.

If these people were frostbitten beyond recognition,

It would be difficult to explain.

He was momentarily troubled.

At this rate, it wouldn't be easy to gather the scattered Japanese soldiers back from Manchuria.

If they alerted the enemy, these people might destroy the evidence.

There were two options.

One was to wait and see, with everyone remaining hidden and waiting for the Research Team to return for supplies.

This would definitely be effective.

But it would take a long time.

The second option was to take the initiative,

sending troops out in all directions to capture all the Research Team members currently working.

This would be much faster, but it would be a challenge for the soldiers,

it would require splitting into multiple groups and pursuing them for hundreds or even thousands of kilometers.

After much deliberation, he decided to report back to superiors,

presenting both options and seeing which one they would choose.

So, he immediately reported the details via satellite phone.

The government was increasingly curious about the secret of the Research Team.

They couldn't understand what secrets Antarctica held that would make these people risk their lives to protect it.

The more this happened, the more eager they became to find out the truth.

The government immediately ordered them not to sit idly by,

But to send troops to arrest them.

Once captured, the personnel were to be interrogated immediately,

And the equipment was sealed off, awaiting the arrival of their technical experts to retrieve the data.

Upon receiving the order, the military commander immediately began redeploying troops,

And tracking the tracks left by the expedition team's vehicles on the ice sheet.

Charlie bypassed the Japanese Showa Research Station and waited until all their armored vehicles had departed before quietly leaving.

However, he didn't rush back to the Nordic research station.

Instead, he used a satellite network to send Duncan videos of the military abusing the Research Team in the extreme cold,

As well as videos of the Navy SEALs boarding armored vehicles and leaving the research station.

He then called Duncan and instructed him,

"Detective Li, have the AI model retrieve the contact information of major Japanese internet celebrities."

"Preferably, their email addresses for collecting materials."

"Then, send these two videos to them through secure channels."

Charlie wanted to send the videos to Japanese internet celebrities.

Because he felt their government might not have the backbone to stand firmly on this.

If the videos were given to them, they might try to cover them up.

But the public was different.

The public didn't have a strong sense of the bigger picture,

And this didn't involve their own interests,

So they were mostly driven by emotion.

These videos would definitely anger them,

So they would likely choose to expose them.

Moreover, internet celebrities valued traffic above all else.

Having such explosive videos was like entertainment bloggers obtaining top-tier celebrity scandal evidence.

They would definitely release them immediately to gain traffic.

Furthermore, Charlie gave the videos to more than one internet celebrity,

Providing multiple backups.

Even if celebrity A didn't choose to expose them,

Celebrities B, C, and even Z would compete to do so.

Internet celebrities themselves possess massive fan bases,

So once they release a video, it will instantly spread throughout the internet.

The public will be outraged, making this a spectacle.

Moreover, once the netizens begin to condemn it, the matter will undoubtedly garner global attention.

Anyone with a sense of justice will likely condemn the US military's actions, especially their violation of the Antarctic Treaty by sending troops into Antarctica.

It will certainly face accusations from countries around the world.

Chapter 7182

It was morning in Japan.

Many internet celebrities who make a living by creating videos are currently brainstorming content for their videos.

With so much homogenized content online and plagiarism so common,

Top influencers are now investing more in content planning,

Trying to find more unique themes and angles to attract their followers.

Many influencers have even opened email addresses for submitting materials,

Offering substantial rewards, promising to pay out once the material is accepted.

Just as many bloggers and teams were racking their brains for today's work,

An email suddenly appeared in their inboxes with a horrifying subject line:

The United States violated the Antarctic Treaty, secretly deployed troops to Antarctica,

Controlled the Japanese Showa Research Station,

And arrested and abused Research Team members!

Upon first seeing the email's subject line,

Almost all Japanese online influencers assumed it was a prank.

Is the US sending troops to Antarctica?

Controlling Japan's Showa-era research station, even arresting and abusing Researchers?

How could that be?

In their view, the US-Japan alliance was stronger than the alliances between most countries in the world.

Moreover, Japan had always been subservient to the US, even displaying utmost humility and worship.

These people even held annual events to commemorate Matthew Perry, who invaded their country and forced it to open its doors.

Under these circumstances, how could the US possibly harm its researchers in Antarctica?

However, despite their skepticism, human curiosity led them to open the video file in the email.

What they found immediately left them speechless.

Armed Marines at the Showa Research Station in Antarctica were forcing several Researchers,

All of them were dressed only in their underwear, enduring the extreme cold at gunpoint.

The Researchers immediately erupted in agonizing screams of pain.

The scene was utterly gruesome.

Witnessing their countrymen being treated this way ignited outrage among almost every internet celebrity.

They immediately posted the footage online,

Some directly condemn the atrocities,

Others are questioning the video's authenticity and urging netizens to help verify it.

Given the increasing prevalence and sophistication of AI,

And the growing realism of AI-generated videos,

They worried that if the video were indeed AI-generated,

It would unfairly accuse their ally country.

These videos immediately caused a huge uproar on the internet.

Most people could tell the video was genuine,

It was undeniably realistic.

Since the video was deemed authentic, all the questions focused on why the US military would attack its researchers.

These research team members were all unarmed civilians!

The Japanese high command discovered the videos immediately,

And was instantly overwhelmed, completely unsure how to respond.

Through Goro Watanabe's report, they were aware of the US military's domineering actions in Antarctica,

But they knew they had no control over the US military's activities there,

So they could only suffer in silence.

They initially thought they could let the US investigate,

But they never expected the US to treat their own research team members so cruelly.

For the Japanese high command, the abuse of their research team members by the US military wasn't unacceptable in itself.

What was unacceptable was that such incidents were filmed and posted online.

This forced the Japanese high command to no longer turn a blind eye.

They immediately lodged a public protest with the US through diplomatic channels,

Demanding that they immediately cease their mistreatment of the research team members and withdraw their troops from Antarctica.

Within minutes, not only Japan protested, but also China, as well as the permanent members of the UN Security Council, including the UK, France, and Russia.

All lodged strong protests with the United States, demanding a reasonable explanation for their secret military intervention and violation of the Antarctic Treaty.

It was late at night in the United States.

The White House spokesperson, who was fast asleep, jumped out of bed after receiving the report on the phone, grabbed his phone, and hysterically demanded,

"What?! The military intervention in Antarctica has been exposed online?"

"What's going on with the military?"

"How could they make such a basic mistake?"

Her husband, more than thirty years her senior, was fast asleep when she suddenly jolted awake by her questioning.

He sat up abruptly and instinctively asked,

"What happened, honey? You startled me."

The spokesperson smiled apologetically and said,

"There's been a slight emergency."

"I'm going out to take this call."

"Honey, you can continue to rest."

With that, she quickly grabbed her phone and left the bedroom, angrily demanding into the phone,

"I want to know, how could someone film this clandestine operation and post it online?!"

The person on the other end of the line said helplessly,

"I've already asked the person in charge."

"The departments have started investigating the poster's identity."

"But they're hiding it too well."

"The video was uploaded and sent through an anonymous server."

"It's impossible to detect."

"There's no way to trace it."

"So they don't know who filmed the video and uploaded it online."

The White House spokesperson paced anxiously back and forth in the room:

"What a bunch of useless idiots!"

"I'm heading to the White House right now."

"Tell the other staff to come over immediately."

"I need to meet with them to discuss tomorrow's public statement and see how to reasonably explain this!"

The other party said awkwardly, "The most serious problem right now isn't how to explain our deployment to Antarctica."

"But why were we subjected to the Research Team's inhumane torture and forced confessions?"

"This is the biggest public relations crisis right now."

"Some people are even saying that our soldiers' actions are no different from what the Japanese fascists did back then!"

"What?!"

The White House spokesperson exclaimed in shock.

"You mean our soldiers tortured the Japanese research team?"

"Tortured them? They stripped them naked and took them outdoors in Antarctica at -60 degrees Celsius,"

"And the whole thing was filmed and posted online!"

"I'll send you the video now, take a look!"

"Quick, send me the video!"

"Okay, sent it, please check!"

The White House spokesperson quickly opened her messaging app,

And soon received a video.

She clicked play and watched the video bit by bit,

Then she felt a wave of dizziness wash over her.

Forcing herself to adjust for a moment, she gritted her teeth and said,

"I'm going to the White House now."

"Immediately notify all relevant personnel to assemble there."

The other party said,

"By the way, several permanent members of the Security Council have issued diplomatic notes demanding an explanation for our deployment to Antarctica."

"Japan is also demanding an explanation for the mistreatment of research team members."

"There's widespread outrage in their country,"

"And they've started organizing demonstrations."

"Should we inform the President?"

The White House spokesperson thought for a moment and sighed,

"It's too late now. Let's not disturb the President's rest."

"He's been overwhelmed with problems on the island lately."

"Now is the time for us to do everything we can to ease the President's burden."

"We must do this well and not cause him any more trouble!"

The other party said, "Okay,"

"I'll notify the others to go to the White House now!"

"Okay!"

The White House spokesperson hung up the phone and immediately returned to his bedroom.

As soon as she entered the bedroom, she rushed to the walk-in closet to change her clothes.

Her husband, dragging his tired body, came into the closet and asked her in surprise,

"Honey, what happened? Why are you going out so late?"

While changing her clothes, she said helplessly,

"Something serious has happened,"

"And I have to go there as soon as possible to deal with it!"

Chapter 7183

By the time the spokesperson rushed to the White House,

News of their secret deployment of troops to Antarctica and the mistreatment of Japanese research team members had already made headlines.

This scandal was so shocking that the global attention it garnered was absurd.

The main reason is the sheer bizarre nature of this situation.

Japan is arguably the United States' most steadfast ally and junior partner,

And its national strength surpasses that of England,

A long-time European ally, and even surpasses that of its neighbors Canada and Mexico.

Japan is the leading figure among America's junior partners,

And the fact that it has been treated this way is truly astonishing.

Moreover, this time, it has also extended the flames of war to the last continent on Earth untouched by their conflict—Antarctica.

From the moment their troops landed on the Antarctic ice sheet,

The iron heel of their war has trampled across the entire globe.

It is precisely because of these unique circumstances that the nature of this matter has been continuously escalated to an increasingly serious level.

On the road, the car sped along.

But the spokesperson was incredibly anxious.

Unable to wait for the vehicle to reach the White House,

She began a video conference with her team.

The meeting connected; everyone was in the car.

Many were still in their pajamas, looking quite disheveled.

The spokesperson began, "Okay, now let me outline our current priorities."

"First, we need to quickly find a way to conduct public relations globally."

"Issuing warnings to all media outlets and social media platforms reporting on this matter,"

"Demanding they immediately cease all reporting on this issue and delete all related content online."

After saying this, the spokesperson sighed,

"I know this is basically impossible to achieve,"

"But we must still demonstrate this attitude and successfully convey it to all media outlets and social media platforms."

"This way, if the high-ups ask,"

"We will at least have taken remedial measures immediately."

Everyone agreed.

Although they all worked in the prestigious White House,

They were essentially just employees,

So everyone clearly understood that what they needed to do in this situation was to minimize or avoid their own responsibility as much as possible.

The decision to send troops to Antarctica was not made by their staff and public relations team,

So essentially they did not need to bear any responsibility for this event.

However, they were responsible for public relations and external relations,

So they needed to be responsible for the subsequent development of this matter.

If they did nothing and allowed the impact of this event to continue to escalate,

That would certainly be their dereliction of duty.

Therefore, they must make the most comprehensive response immediately,

Even if these responses are actually ineffective.

This is similar to the medical staff in the emergency room who, faced with a brain-dead patient,

Still try their best to perform a round of resuscitation work for the family's benefit.

Although the outcome cannot be changed, what needs to be done must still be done.

The spokesperson then added,

"Your work must be documented."

"Which platforms you contacted, regardless of the method, must be documented."

"For emails, print out the email information."

"For text messages, take screenshots."

"For phone calls, record the calls."

Everyone immediately agreed.

The spokesperson continued, "I'll be at the office in 15 minutes."

"We're tentatively scheduled to hold a press conference there in an hour."

"So please notify all your reporters to be in the press briefing room within an hour."

"We'll use the extra 45 minutes to discuss the best possible explanation for the actions shown in the video."

"No problem!"

Seeing her clear and composed demeanor, everyone felt reassured.

The spokesperson then added,

"Immediately notify the military to appoint a responsible person to contact us in twenty minutes!"

"Before the press conference begins,"

"We need to know the military's next move."

"Whether they will withdraw immediately or remain in Antarctica."

"Also, tell them to shift all the blame to the Showa team."

"Whether it's the research station's higher-ups,"

"The defense department, or even the cabinet—don't give them any chance to refuse."

Chapter 7184

When the White House staff called the military,

The military was already in a state of utter chaos.

They were the ones who had sent troops,

And the mistreatment of the research team members was also the work of the troops they had sent,

So they were the ones under the most pressure at that moment.

Normally, the military doesn't take the White House press corps seriously,

But in this situation, even the world's most powerful military can only cower like a turtle,

Leaving everything to the White House press corps for crisis management.

The White House team is undoubtedly the most professional in public relations,

And their advice is highly valuable:

Shift the blame as much as possible, even if it has to be forced!

Shift the blame to whom?

Of course, to the Japanese research team.

So, they immediately contacted the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Japanese Ministry of Defense.

In a video conference, the US military representative requested:

"We will hold a press conference in an hour."

"At which time we will explain to the world what happened in Antarctica,"

"So I need your cooperation."

The head of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology awkwardly asked:

"What has been exposed is the behavior of your military."

"Harming our research team. How can we cooperate in this?"

The US military official coldly replied:

"You must publicly announce to the world that your research team has all betrayed the country."

"And is illegally conducting large-scale exploration in Antarctica."

Then, he said to the head of the Japanese Ministry of Defense:

"As for you... "

"You must also publicly admit to the world that you invited our military to help you quell the rebellion."

"Our military action was not directed against the Antarctic continent."

"But only against your research team!"

“Furthermore, the reason we mistreated your research team was at your request—to conduct surprise interrogations of your traitorous research team members!”

The defense official on the other side said awkwardly and angrily,

“Sir, it’s true we requested your help in suppressing the rebellion.”

“But we never requested that you mistreat our research team members.”

“How can we explain this to our country after you treat our team members this way and make us take the blame?!”

The military official retorted sharply,

“Damn it!”

“You need to look for an answer.”

Undoubtedly, the heads of Japan’s defense department and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology were furious at this moment.

However, for them, anger wouldn’t solve anything,

Because it was anger directed at the United States.

Therefore, faced with the unreasonable demands from these officials,

They didn’t even have the courage to refute them.

After all, this incident wasn’t entirely their fault.

They had indeed deployed troops under the guise of helping Japan,

And now that something had gone wrong, they certainly couldn't stand idly by.

However, how much responsibility Japan should take became a point of contention between the two sides.

Japan felt that it was like two drivers who violated traffic rules, causing an accident.

Everyone was responsible, and it was impossible to assign full liability to either party.

If the US commandos were to mistreat their own research team members,

They would have tolerated it if it hadn't been exposed,

But now that it was, how could they explain it to their people?

Chapter 7185

So the official from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology mustered his courage and said,

"Sir, you can't put all the blame on us, especially regarding the mistreatment of research team members."

"If we're to take the fall, how can we explain this to the other research team members and scientists?"

"Everyone here works in various units under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology."

"They're not military personnel."

"Even if they make mistakes at work, they should be resolved through normal civil and commercial procedures."

"If they find out we resort to force,"

"Or even request foreign military intervention, how will we maintain our reputation?"

The official from the Ministry of Defense quickly added,

"Yes, sir, we can..."

"We openly admit that we requested you to send troops."

"But the US needs to give us a public explanation for the mistreatment of our research team members."

"That would be fair and reasonable."

The US military official retorted sharply,

"Fair? Where is the fairness?!"

"When your whole country was starving, and MacArthur had to come to the US Congress to ask for food for you,"

"Why didn't you talk about fairness then?!"

"When you used your geographical advantage to become a Cold War bridgehead and received countless supplies and aid from us,"

"Why didn't you talk about fairness then?!"

"Now that we need you to take the blame, you talk to me about fairness?!"

The two Japanese men were immediately silent.

Although they weren't together, and although they were only on a video call,

They couldn't help but look at each other on the screen,

Hoping the other could find a way to refute the US military official.

However, neither of them could find a suitable breakthrough.

The US military official, gradually losing patience, said coldly,

"We will be holding a press conference soon."

"I hope you two won't waste any more time here."

"If this matter has a significant negative impact on America,"

"Rest assured, given our style, the consequences will be repaid tenfold, a hundredfold."

"Perhaps because of your insistence today, some of your citizens will lose their jobs in the future."

"And some companies will go bankrupt."

"You need to think these things through as soon as possible."

"If you can't decide, then report the matter to your superiors and let them decide."

"I'll wait for you for twenty minutes."

With that, this military official left the video conference.

The two Japanese men in this situation, they naturally dared not make a rash decision.

So, after discussing it,

They decided to immediately report the matter to the cabinet and let the cabinet make a decision.

Some things can not only be passed down but also passed up.

As long as you have the courage to shirk responsibility, you can tell your superior,

"I'm just dealing with this mess anyway,"

"You figure out how to solve it."

The superior can't do anything about it.

At most, they'll just fire him.

Looking back now, being fired is no longer a big deal,

As long as they don't bear the burden of national responsibility.

What if they didn't serve the deal well?

And America retaliates against Japan later?

Wouldn't they become traitors?

At that point, it wouldn't just be about losing their jobs.

They might even get shot by a gunman one day.

Upon receiving the report, the cabinet didn't dare delay for a moment and immediately convened a meeting of all members to discuss the matter.

While the cabinet was still discussing what to do,

Victoria, far away from Antarctica, also received the news.

She never dreamed that Antarctica, where she had spent so many years, would become the focus of global attention.

She immediately realized that this must be related to Brovnen!

After Brovnen left, he went to Ushuaia and,

With the help of Siyan Wu, the governor of the Left Army Commandery, the governor went to Antarctica.

Victoria wasn't very surprised when she received the news,

Because the plan was simply for the three of them to go out and find opportunities.

No one knew if there were any opportunities in Antarctica,

And Victoria felt that this kind of surprise was exactly what she wanted.

Otherwise, if everyone followed her preconceived notions,

Some corners might never have been noticed.

Chapter 7186

But Victoria never dreamed that Brovnen's trip to Antarctica would lead to such a big incident!

She didn't know the specific situation in Antarctica yet,

Only that the US military had landed overnight with weapons and equipment,

And had attacked the Japanese research team,

But she didn't know if it was related to Brovnen,

And she couldn't contact him now.

However, regardless of whether this matter was related to Brovnen or not,

She was now extremely nervous.

Although the Qing-Breaking Society's headquarters were extremely well-hidden,

Almost entirely underground on an unnamed island,

This method of concealment could only evade ordinary satellites and aircraft.

If any foreign military with specialized detection equipment were to inadvertently scan the area,

They would discover that the island, barely visible beneath, had been hollowed out.

Previously, Victoria was never worried about exposure because the island was hundreds of kilometers from both Antarctica and South America.

South America itself received little attention, and Antarctica even less.

Her island had no tourist attractions nearby, and no commercial shipping routes passed through it.

Civilian planes, ships, and even research vessels never flew overhead or beside it.

Furthermore, she had had the surrounding area surveyed two or three decades ago.

There were no oil or mineral resources, and fisheries were not abundant.

In addition, the island's ownership had been purchased by the South American government,

Prohibiting unauthorized trespassing,

So she never worried about security risks.

But now things are different.

Overnight, the US military deployed hundreds of soldiers,

Several armored vehicles and even self-propelled rocket launchers are being sent to Antarctica.

This display of modern weaponry immediately made Victoria uneasy.

She knew very well that once everything here was exposed to the military of a superpower like the US,

There would be only one outcome: conquest.

To destroy this place, the US wouldn't even need to send troops.

They only needed to deploy more bombers to level the island.

As for the underground fortifications,

Even if they could withstand the first wave of bombing,

The people and facilities inside wouldn't survive.

All the air in the underground facilities was supplied from the island's surface through large ventilation systems.

Once the surface was bombed, those inside with insufficient cultivation would surely die.

Moreover, although this place was only a few hundred kilometers from the Antarctic continent,

A few hundred kilometers was practically no distance for the US military.

If the situation in Antarctica continued to escalate, and US aircraft happened to fly overhead one day and detect something amiss,

It would be all over.

Antarctica was bound by the Antarctic Treaty,

Yet they could still invade without hesitation.

What chance would they have of this place?

Victoria was in a state of panic,

Feeling a sense of impending doom.

She immediately summoned Revendor and anxiously instructed him,

"Revendor, notify all the scholars in America and Japan,"

"And their families,"

"And tell them to find out why the United States is sending troops to Antarctica."

"I have a feeling this is very suspicious."

Revendor also knew the matter was of great importance,

Potentially affecting the very survival of the Anti-Qing Society,

So he immediately replied solemnly,

"Your Majesty, rest assured,"

"I will inform them immediately!"

Then, he suddenly remembered a detail and said,

"By the way, Your Majesty,"

"According to the routine reports from the Left Army Commander's Office recently,"

"Elder Brovnen went to Antarctica on a Japanese research vessel at sea."

"Could the US attack on the Japanese research team be related to Elder Wu?!"

Chapter 7187

Revendor's words made Victoria feel sorry for herself instantly.

She knew that the elder Brovnen had gone to Antarctica,

But she didn't know the specific details.

She didn't expect that there was such a hidden story here.

Since Brovnen was a Japanese research vessel that boarded the ship using extraordinary means,

Victoria can almost be sure that he must have used psychological hints against the Japanese research team members.

Moreover, in that case, psychological suggestion certainly cannot be used only for one person.

It must be necessary to control all scientific expedition team members to ensure their absolute safety,

And the absolute confidentiality of the general whereabouts.

But she couldn't understand what he had done in Antarctica to provoke the US military.

In her view, his behavior is not only a threat to his own safety,

But also a threat to the safety of the entire Warriors Den.

Victoria said angrily at this moment:

"Brovnen has only been out for a month, and he has caused such a disaster!"

"There are so many places in this world that he doesn't go to,"

"But instead goes to that freezing Antarctica."

"Is there something about that place that attracts him?"

Revendor quickly stepped forward to persuade him:

"Lord, please calm down."

"In this situation, there is no point in blaming the elder."

"This subordinate thinks the most urgent task is to first find out what happened in Antarctica that alarms the US military."

Victoria said coldly:

"What you said is quite simple."

"Although Antarctica is not far away from us, it is basically impossible for us to cross it now."

"The power of the devil's westerly belt is not something that ordinary people can resist."

"From the entire Warriors Den, I can only be the one to cross this water body."

Revendor realized that he had said something wrong,

So he immediately knelt on the ground and said respectfully:

"The great Lord, please calm down your anger."

"It was this subordinate who had been talking too much."

"The great Lord and even her honor should not go to such a ghost place in person."

"In the eyes of this subordinate,"

"We should wait and see for the time being how the US military would respond to this matter."

"This subordinate thinks that as long as the elder does not expose himself,"

"It won't put us in too much danger."

Victoria said coldly: "In this case, we must still be 10,000% careful."

"My two biggest concerns now are: Brovnen must not engage the US military head-on,"

"Otherwise, we will inevitably get into big trouble."

"And the US military must not increase its troop deployment in Antarctica,"

"Otherwise, it will increase the risk of our exposure."

Revendor asked: "Lord, with the strength of the Great Elder, it is winter in Antarctica now."

"Should he come back?"

"That's right."

Victoria nodded and said:

"With his strength, he should be able to cross the devil's westerly belt in spring."

Revendor sighed and said, "This also means that we will not be able to make any contact in the next two or three months."

Victoria nodded and said angrily:

"It is best not to expand the situation in this matter."

"Otherwise, I will not forgive him when he comes back."

After saying this, she waved her hand and said:

"Go and inform those scholars."

"Report the news to me as soon as it comes."

Revendor said respectfully:

"Subordinate obeys!"

Revendor came out of Victoria's training room and immediately issued a message to the Fifth Army Military Governor's Office,

Asking them to immediately consult all scholars with all clues related to what happened in Antarctica.

Soon, a message came from a book student in the White House,

Sending the truth about the US military's deployment to Antarctica.

Revendor quickly returned to report to Victoria, saying:

"Replying to the lord, the scholar in the White House came to report that the US military sent troops to Antarctica because Japan suspected that the scientific expedition team was collectively treasonous and had launched large-scale illegal exploration in Antarctica."

"They were temporarily unable to send soldiers to Antarctica to quell the rebellion."

"So they asked the United States to help."

Victoria frowned: "There is no doubt that the entire Japanese scientific expedition team should be controlled by Brovnen."

"Why did he let these people explore freely in Antarctica?"

"I asked him to look for natural resources and treasures."

"Those things were insignificant, small objects that were absolutely useless for geological exploration equipment."

"He must be looking for something big."

"Even something too big to be called a thing."

Chapter 7188

Revendor said, "The US military has controlled most of the scientific expedition members there and has intercepted some of their exploration records."

"The geological exploration equipment used by these people can explore to a depth of more than a kilometer under the ice sheet."

"But it is generally believed that there is little exploration value below this depth because there are no ancient traces of human existence here."

"Even if they possessed some rare minerals, they had almost no mining value."

"The White House now couldn't understand what this scientific expedition team was looking for."

"The subordinate feels that only the senior elders knew about this issue."

Victoria smacked her lips in confusion:

"For today's corporate countries or for religious people like us, places like Antarctica are not very valuable for exploration."

"But Brovnen is a smart man."

"Since he has spent so much energy focusing on Antarctica,"

"It means that there must be something in Antarctica that we cannot think of yet."

At this point, she sighed: "If he hadn't alarmed the US military, I could have gone to Antarctica to find out."

"In this situation now, even if I'm curious,"

"I can't go under the US military's nose and make moves."

Revendor thought about it for a moment and said:

"Lord, this is after the US military withdrawal from Antarctica."

"There is a lot of public pressure on the US military now."

"This subordinate thinks they will not be able to hold out for long before publicly withdrawing,"

"And they may even throw all the blame to Japan."

Victoria nodded and said solemnly:

"Let all the scholars keep a close eye on all the actions of the United States."

"I suspect they are very curious about Antarctica now."

"Maybe they will also secretly investigate and explore Antarctica."

At this moment, Revendor suddenly received a push message on his phone.

He quickly said to Victoria:

"Lord, the White House is about to hold a press conference!"

Victoria immediately said:

"Turn on the big screen, I want to take a look!"

Revendor nodded respectfully and immediately walked to a wall in Victoria's training room.

He reached out and swept the wall lightly.

The stone wall instantly opened from the middle to the sides,

Revealing an LCD screen at least 20 square meters in size.

This type of LCD screen is like the giant LED used by singers in concerts.

It is modularly assembled piece by piece.

Although Victoria's daily life and training are almost the same as those of three or four hundred years ago,

She is also a smart person who embraces technology.

Therefore, the Warriors Den has all the modern equipment that should be available,

And they are all top-notch.

A dedicated satellite network maintains communication with satellites in space at all times through antennas disguised as rocks on the ground of the small island.

Although this place is located on the edge of the world,

The network delay for watching the White House live broadcast in such a place is no greater than that in the United States.

In the White House, the live video signal at this time, countless reporters had already filled the entire speech hall.

Everyone was anxiously waiting for the speaker to appear.

They had prepared too many questions and needed to ask the speaker questions as soon as possible.

At this time, in the back room of the White House Speech Room, the young spokesperson was sitting and taking deep breaths to adjust her mentality,

While constantly beeping out various notes to warm up her voice.

With only 10 minutes left until the press conference,

She couldn't help but feel a little nervous at this moment,

Because she knew that what she would face today was a vicious battle.

How to minimize the actions of sending troops to Antarctica and abusing Japanese scientific expedition members has become the core of her current considerations.

At this moment, a team member came over quickly and said to her excitedly:

"The military replied that the Japanese defense department and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology have compromised."

"They will hold a press conference in 20 minutes to explain the situation to the world."

"They will admit that we sent troops to Antarctica at their request."

"But the matter of the scientific expedition team members,"

"They will also admit that they asked for the results of the investigation as soon as possible."

"So they instructed us to conduct a rigorous interrogation."

The spokesman immediately breathed a sigh of relief and smiled:

"Great!"

"This way, we only need to push out the few soldiers who specifically abused the Japanese scientific expedition team members."

"Say that this was all their own behavior,"

"Let the military deal with them, and apologize to the victims."

"And the matter will be over!"

Chapter 7189

At this moment, the White House spokesperson felt not only relaxed but also very pleased.

She knew very well that through her efforts,

The potential negative impact of this incident had been minimized.

Preparing for crisis communication in such a short time,

And achieving such a favorable outcome was a classic case study in White House crisis management.

All of this was thanks to her composure under pressure,

Her quick reaction and her sound strategy.

She believed that after this incident,

Her presence in the White House would reach a new peak.

So, with only ten seconds left in the scheduled press conference,

She confidently walked into the press room with a smile on her face.

The room was instantly illuminated by a barrage of flashes,

The shutters are clicking incessantly.

Facing the countless flashes, the spokesperson showed no discomfort or tension,

But instead smiled throughout as she approached the podium and began,

"I apologize for keeping you all waiting."

"Before we begin today's press conference,"

"I would like to apologize for the delay."

"Our press conference will be twenty minutes later than scheduled."

A murmur of surprise rippled through the room.

Everyone was waiting for her to provide an explanation to the world regarding the incident in Antarctica.

They had assumed that the White House would quickly release this major news story after holding a press conference so soon.

However, the press conference was suddenly postponed.

The spokesperson then announced, "The reason for the postponement is that in 10 minutes,"

"Japan will be holding an emergency press conference in their country before ours."

"So, if you want to know about the situation in Antarctica,"

"Please wait until they finish their press conference."

"Our large screen will broadcast it live,"

"So don't worry."

"In 10 minutes, I will be watching the press conference with you."

The room erupted in disbelief.

They hadn't received any notification from the Japanese side about the upcoming press conference.

This was mainly because the Japanese side knew that taking the blame for something like this was unseemly,

So they were rushing to hold a press conference as quickly as possible,

Ideally, without any reporters.

They wanted to simply explain the situation to the cameras and then end the session quickly,

Avoiding a potentially embarrassing Q&A session where someone might ask something embarrassing.

Because the other party involved in this matter is the Japanese scientific expedition team,

Everyone is eager to know how the Japanese government will respond.

So, everyone patiently awaited the Japanese press conference.

Ten minutes passed quickly.

The large screen switched to footage from the Japanese press conference.

Interestingly, Japan hadn't invited any media,

Only one person was present in the entire hall—their spokesperson.

He looked slightly out of place,

He adjusted his glasses, took a deep breath, and then stepped onto the stage.

Once on stage, he spoke his first words:

“First, please allow me, on behalf of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, to express my apologies to the people of the world.”

“We are very sorry that our actions have caused trouble and confusion for people around the world.”

After speaking, he stepped off the stage and bowed deeply towards the cameras.

It must be said that their dedication to apology is truly extraordinary.

His head was almost level with his knees.

After several seconds, he stood up,

Adjusted his glasses again, returned to the stage, and solemnly began:

“First, I want to inform everyone of something.”

“Our research team stationed in Antarctica has recently been suspected of collectively betraying the country.”

There was no audience at the Japanese press conference,

So his remarks didn't elicit any immediate response.

Chapter 7190

However, at the White House press conference,

All the media reporters present couldn't help but gasp in surprise.

The spokesperson continued, "Regarding the suspected treason,"

"I need to first explain something,"

"Because people abroad may not be aware,"

"But those at home should remember that recently our icebreaker encountered a malfunction while transporting a new batch of research team members to Antarctica,"

"Causing the icebreaker to be unable to return,"

"Leaving both the old and new research teams stranded in Antarctica."

"We notified our country of this at the time."

"Fortunately, our Antarctic research team has sufficient supplies to support them through the winter."

"Since then, we have been closely monitoring their situation."

"Maintaining daily contact to inquire if they have encountered any problems or difficulties there,"

"And their replies have always been that everything is fine."

At this point, the spokesperson continued, "During this period, our back-end system showed that,"

"Almost all large polar vehicles and equipment had not been activated."

"These devices were being stored as planned, awaiting the end of winter."

"However, what we didn't expect was that two days ago..."

"Suddenly, we received a fuel level signal from our icebreaker, indicating that it had suddenly consumed a large amount of fuel."

"The signal quickly returned to normal,"

"But our experts determined it wasn't a false alarm."

"However, strangely, the backend system showed that none of our vehicles or equipment had been used."

"Therefore, we requested assistance from the US military to investigate."

"The investigation revealed that all our heavy vehicles were conducting exploration in Antarctica."

"And even our helicopters were continuously surveying the continent."

"These actions were not authorized by us."

"Based on these individuals' unauthorized and illegal use of state-owned machinery, equipment, and fuel,"

"We have reason to infer that they have committed actual treason."

"However, because we lack the technical capability to deploy troops to Antarctica in winter,"

"We requested US military assistance."

After saying this, the spokesperson stepped off the podium again,

Once more demonstrating his dedication and bowing deeply to the camera.

He then returned to the podium and continued,

"At our request, the U.S. military deployed troops and arrested our research team members suspected of treason."

"We authorized them to interrogate these team members."

"Unexpectedly, one of our team leaders admitted to treason."

"But refused to reveal his true motives for treasonously exploring Antarctica."

"Out of responsibility to Antarctica and the world, we implored the U.S. military personnel on site to use torture to extract confessions from these team members—the footage you saw in the video."

"Here, on behalf of all the research team members from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and their families, I apologize to the people of Japan and the world."

"Although our intentions were good, our actions were indeed very inappropriate."

"Causing harm to the individuals involved and distress to the general public."

"We will resolutely prevent such incidents from happening again."

He then stepped off the podium for the third time,

Once again demonstrating his dedication and craftsmanship.

At this point, the art was complete.

The White House press conference was erupting in cheers and gasps.

The cheers came almost entirely from American media.

The impact of this event was so significant,

And the negative that American media naturally felt deeply ashamed.

But the Japanese press conference had just shifted the blame to the vast majority of the issue,

Meaning that the immense public and international pressure on the United States had instantly lessened by 90%.

The gasps came from foreign media outlets that had been waiting to see what would happen.

Everyone was eager to see how the American spokesperson would respond to the barrage of questions,

Resorting to sophistry and distorting the truth.

However, they hadn't expected them to employ such a clever, underhanded tactic.

The spokesperson's expression now held a victorious smile.

Amidst the astonishment of the crowd, she stepped onto the podium, a professional smile on her face, and began,

"I believe everyone has clearly seen the Japanese press conference and is aware of the specifics."

"Now, we will proceed to our own press conference."

"Since the Japanese spokesperson has already explained things clearly,"

"We will skip the press conference and go directly to the Q&A session."

Chapter 7191

The reporters in the audience raised their hands.

The spokesperson scanned the room,

Deliberately selecting a Russian reporter, and said,

“Please, the reporter from RIA Novosti, ask your question.”

The Russian journalist truly never expected this to happen to him.

Generally, when holding live press conferences,

The Q&A session avoids targeting media from countries with whom they have a hostile relationship.

To prevent these journalists from publicly attacking them.

Even when they have to call on one or two journalists to ask questions,

It’s usually done much later in the session,

With very little time allotted, it resulted in low viewership.

But tonight, with such a major event,

They actually gave the first question-and-answer slot to a Russian journalist—it’s simply outrageous.

Amidst surprise and delight, the Russian journalist quickly composed herself and, microphone in hand, asked,

"Ms. Spokesperson, if I remember correctly, the Antarctic Treaty stipulates that no country may send troops to Antarctica for any reason."

"Although the Japanese spokesperson just explained the specific situation,"

"I don't think this is a reasonable excuse for the United States to send troops to Antarctica."

"Couldn't two countries collude and stage such a farce to openly send troops to Antarctica?"

"Moreover, this matter could have been reported to the United Nations first."

"And then the UN could have decided whether a particular country or the UN should send a joint force to resolve it."

"But the United States and Japan bypassed the UN and unilaterally decided to secretly send troops."

"Isn't that a rather egregious act?"

The Russian journalist felt that her question was watertight,

And the other side had no direct rebuttal,

Because whatever happened between them was their own business.

The US's deployment of troops to Antarctica was wrong.

The spokesperson, unperturbed, began,

"You should have just heard the Japanese explanation of the situation."

"They discovered a large amount of fuel missing from the icebreaker."

"We have reason to suspect that this fuel was used on some exploration equipment."

"And we also have reason to suspect that the traitorous Japanese research team used the fuel for environmental destruction."

"Moreover, no one knows what kind of exploration they were conducting."

"What if it was an act of terrorism?"

"If intervention is not timely and extremely serious consequences occur,"

"Who will be responsible for Antarctica and for the people of the world?"

The Russian journalist, not expecting such self-aggrandizement, immediately retorted with dissatisfaction,

"Your explanation is far-fetched."

"I don't believe a group of research team members would do anything to harm Antarctica or humanity."

The spokesperson scoffed, "That's because you simply lack the experience and lessons learned from frontline counter-terrorism operations."

"Think about 9/11. Before it happened, who would have imagined that a few passengers would conspire to commit such a horrific terrorist attack?"

"If we had strengthened security checks on all passengers before that,"

"Would you have sued us for human rights violations?"

The Russian journalist was stumped and could only awkwardly reply,

"You're confusing the issue."

The spokesperson shook his head,

"The United States has been deeply involved in counter-terrorism for many years."

"To borrow our President's words, no one understands counter-terrorism better than us,"

"And no one understands terrorists better than us."

"Therefore, we absolutely cannot wait until something happens to reflect on what we've overlooked."

"We must eliminate all risks as much as possible from the source."

"There's an old Chinese saying, 'Prevention is better than cure.'

"I believe this saying reveals..."

"I completely agree with the philosophy."

"In such a rushed situation, we simply didn't have enough time to consult the United Nations and then have it voted on."

"Under normal circumstances, the whole process would take at least 48 hours."

"And no one can guarantee that the United Nations will approve it after 48 hours."

"What if your country exercises its veto power during the voting process?"

"Wouldn't the situation be delayed even further?"

The Russian journalist stood up in dissatisfaction and said,

"I think your speculation is offensive to us!"

Chapter 7192

The spokesperson shook his head and said,

"I am not targeting any person or country."

"I am just saying that once this matter is not decided and acted upon immediately,"

"There are countless possibilities for it to be delayed or even canceled."

"What if those traitors do something unforgivable in Antarctica?"

"Causing irreversible damage?"

"The damage is not just to Antarctica,"

"But to all of humanity."

At this point, she sighed and said seriously,

"Of course, as you just said, we did violate the Antarctic Treaty."

"That's an indisputable fact,"

"And we don't intend to make any excuses."

"But as the other spokesperson just said, and as I explained, our goal wasn't to maliciously send troops to Antarctica or maliciously violate the Antarctic Treaty."

"We acted out of a responsible attitude towards our allies,"

"Antarctica, and all of humanity."

"Therefore, we will submit a statement to the United Nations regarding this matter."

"And we are willing to accept any punishment from the UN. Of course,"

"Our soldiers did indeed engage in some inappropriate behavior on the front lines."

"For example, at the request of the Japanese side,"

"They caused some physical harm to the research team members."

"We will also order the military to deal with this matter seriously and apologize to the victims and their families."

"Thank you, RIA Novosti reporter, and thank you, everyone. Next question."

The media reporters present were stunned.

No one had expected that the White House spokesperson would resolve almost all the questions in just this first round.

Having said all that, even if the reporters were prepared to attack them with guns and cannons,

It would be difficult to achieve the desired effect.

In fact, it could be said that the United States had become immune to such attacks.

Further attacks would only cause superficial damage,

And persisting under these circumstances would appear shameless.

Everyone knew that the White House had won a very difficult public relations battle,

Mainly thanks to Japan drawing attention away from the conflict.

Then, knowing the tide had turned, the reporters stopped focusing on the previous issues of troop deployment and the mistreatment of Japanese researchers.

Instead, they focused on what the Japanese researchers had actually done in Antarctica,

The damage and impact they had caused,

And when the US military would withdraw from Antarctica.

These questions were no big deal to the White House,

So the spokesperson answered everyone's questions truthfully.

Regarding the question of what the Japanese research team was doing in Antarctica, the spokesperson stated,

"Actually, we haven't figured that out either."

"Their actions are quite unusual."

"They are exploring the Antarctic ice sheet."

"But everyone knows what's underneath—just the original rocks of the Antarctic continent."

"It's unlikely we'll find anything new."

"We will continue our in-depth investigation with the Japanese side,"

"And we will hold a press conference immediately to announce any new discoveries to the world."

As for the damage to Antarctica, the White House spokesperson said,

"We don't have very specific data on the damage yet."

"But we do know that they have been conducting large-scale secret exploration in Antarctica for over a month."

"The exploration area is very large,"

"So if we were to assess the damage,"

"We would need to gradually reconstruct their entire exploration process and identify any problems along the way."

"As before, we will announce any results immediately."

The White House spokesperson added,

"Regarding the withdrawal of troops,"

"I can give you a very clear answer: we are already organizing personnel and equipment."

"And we will complete the necessary preparations and leave the Antarctic continent within 24 hours."

"We will not leave a single soldier or missile in Antarctica,"

"So please rest assured!"

Chapter 7193

When the press conference was broadcast live worldwide,

Charlie was surprised by the White House's swift response,

And excellent public relations.

Nevertheless, he had already achieved his original plan and objectives.

By letting the Japanese discover the problem,

He had completely thwarted the Antarctic exploration plan of the elder of the Warriors Den.

Given the current tense situation in Antarctica,

The elder would definitely not dare to attack any other country's research team.

This meant he had lost the support of modern technology and his team.

Whatever he was searching for in Antarctica could now be considered closed.

Charlie speculated that the elder's next plan was likely to find a safe place to hide,

Until the Antarctic winter was over,

Then try to blend into a commercial travel group to return to other continents.

In this way, Charlie didn't need to worry too much about the threat the elder posed.

He could continue to look for suitable opportunities to obtain more Great Sun Tathagata Handprints through the aurora borealis.

However, the aurora borealis, a common sight in Antarctic winters, failed to appear for several days.

The absence of the aurora didn't cause Charlie too much trouble,

So he focused more on his seclusion,

Perfecting his Great Sun Tathagata Hand Seal and accumulating more spiritual energy.

Meanwhile, Brovnen, trapped dozens of meters inside the ice, was in a terrible mood.

Although he planned to go into seclusion until the Antarctic summer,

The events of the past few days had completely disrupted his Dao heart,

Making him extremely anxious.

He had carefully reviewed the trouble this incident would bring him.

His small action had attracted the American military to Antarctica,

Meaning the governments of the US and Japan must have realized something was amiss.

Logically, they would certainly do everything in their power to investigate what happened to the Japanese expedition members.

The fact that they had been psychologically manipulated would only lead the investigation into a dead end,

Which is not a good thing.

Such a dead end would appear extremely strange and abnormal in the face of a state apparatus,

Because dozens of people's psychological defenses can't be so impenetrable under normal circumstances.

Once both governments find this matter suspicious,

The subsequent impact will be far-reaching.

They will definitely treat this as an unsolved case,

And relentlessly investigate until they uncover the true cause.

Besides worrying about getting burned,

Brovnen was even more concerned that if this matter became too big,

It might reach the ears of the Lord.

What would he say if the Lord questioned him about the commotion he had caused in Antarctica?

If he told her that he was searching for rare and precious resources in Antarctica,

She certainly wouldn't believe him.

That would mean he had to tell her the truth,

About the Gate of Ascension.

Regardless of whether she would reprimand him,

What if she believed the legend and mobilized the entire Warrior Den to search for it in Antarctica?

Then he would have missed a golden opportunity.

According to his plan, if he could secretly find the Gate of Ascension and obtain more cultivation resources and techniques,

His cultivation would undoubtedly improve rapidly,

And he might even obtain the resources for the Eternal Green Pill like the Lord.

Lord's lifespan was less than a hundred years.

If he could live to five hundred,

The Warrior Den would likely become his after her death.

Having followed Victoria for so many years,

He knew all too well the immense power and resources of the Warrior Den;

To lead this organization was practically to be an uncrowned king.

Chapter 7194

But if Victoria were to seize this opportunity,

He would completely lose it.

Moreover, this was only a relatively good scenario.

Brovnren knew Victoria's personality and style very well.

If she found out he was hiding something so important from her,

She would lose all trust in him,

And his future position in the Warriors Den would be in jeopardy.

The more he thought about these problems,

The worse his mental state became,

Preventing him from truly immersing himself in seclusion for several days.

Originally, this cramped ice cave had not been a problem for him.

Once he entered a meditative state,

He would no longer perceive anything around him.

But because he couldn't enter a meditative state,

He began to feel a strong aversion to the cramped environment,

Like suddenly developing claustrophobia, feeling restless, and uneasy.

However, the weather was still working against him.

Originally, beneath this ice layer,

He could faintly see the aurora borealis filtering through,

Preventing him from feeling completely plunged into darkness.

But in the past two days, the aurora had disappeared.

To make matters worse, the moon had also disappeared.

The moon and sun in Antarctica are very different from those in other regions.

During the polar night, there are months when the sun is completely invisible.

However, the moon rotates in a cycle of approximately 15 days.

This means that for almost 15 days,

The moon is constantly in the sky,

But for the next 15 days, it is completely invisible.

These past few days, without the moon or the aurora, visibility across the Antarctic continent has plummeted to an extreme low.

While there might be faint starlight under the open sky,

Barely enough to discern the outlines of objects,

Brown, trapped beneath the ice, cannot see even a sliver of starlight,

Making his ice cave virtually pitch black.

After countless unsuccessful attempts to enter a meditative state, coupled with the extreme darkness,

Brovnen's mental state was on the verge of collapse.

He even desperately wanted to rush out,

Even if it required expending extra spiritual energy to cope with the sub-zero temperatures of over -60 degrees Celsius.

He would rather go outside.

Having made up his mind, he completely abandoned meditation and got up to break free of the ice.

However, to his surprise, after his eyes had adjusted to the extreme darkness for several days,

He suddenly noticed a barely perceptible light emanating from beneath his feet.

That light couldn't even be called light;

It resembled the snowflake patterns that appeared in one's vision when the eyes were closed.

He even wondered if he was experiencing some kind of hallucination or visual illusion due to the extreme darkness.

At first, he didn't pay much attention to it,

Only thinking about getting out of this hellish place as quickly as possible.

However, that eerie, minute light seemed somewhat different from the light patterns that appeared when his eyes were closed.

The difference was that the patterns he saw when his eyes were closed were random and moving.

He blinked frequently, and the patterns seemed to float around when his eyes were closed.

But no matter how many times he blinked, the pattern of light emanating from the depths of the ice sheet beneath his feet never changed position.

Suddenly, he realized that this might not be a hallucination,

But something real.

Thinking of this, he couldn't help but murmur,

"Those researchers explored Antarctica for over a month."

"And their feedback was that there's nothing but ice beneath the ice sheet,"

"Only rock at depths of thousands of meters."

"In other words, these ice sheets may have formed tens of millions of years ago."

"So what exactly is that tiny light down there?"

Chapter 7195

While prolonged exposure to extreme darkness won't improve eyesight,

It will certainly increase sensitivity to light by hundreds or even tens of thousands of times.

This was the case for Brovnen.

The lack of aurora borealis and moonlight for days,

While making him irritable, it had also allowed his eyes to adapt to the extreme darkness gradually.

This was why he was able to see the faint points of light below when he was almost at his breaking point.

If the aurora borealis had been constantly shining through the ice,

He would never have noticed these almost imperceptible lights.

After confirming that it was light and not a hallucination,

He suddenly felt a surge of excitement.

The scientists had told him that there couldn't be any human remains beneath the Antarctic ice sheet,

But a story he'd heard 100 years ago told him that before the end of the Dharma era,

There must have been many extremely powerful cultivators in the world,

Whose supernatural abilities would have allowed them to build an underground city in Antarctica.

So he couldn't help but ask himself,

"Could it be that the light spots below are related to the Gate of Ascension?!"

With this thought in mind, he immediately summoned his miniature sword,

Flicking it with one hand until it transformed into a longsword.

He then broke through the ice, sealing the top of the ice cave, and began using spiritual energy to propel the flying sword deeper into the ice below.

To prevent the excavated ice fragments from clogging the cave,

He directly used his spiritual energy to spray those fragments onto the surface.

If someone were at the cave entrance,

They would see the ice cave seemingly come alive,

Frantically spewing out ice shards.

Fortunately, Brovnen had indeed fled far enough when he was hiding from the American forces.

Within a radius of hundreds of kilometers,

He was practically the only living person.

This is mainly because he is currently in the heart of Antarctica,

A place that is not very significant for research stations.

Most Antarctic research stations are located on the peninsula because it is convenient for navigation.

The rest are mostly located in the coastal areas of the continental plate,

Also, for the convenience of navigation and transportation.

Only a very few, like the United States Pole research station, are specifically built near the South Pole.

In other words, the current range of human activity in Antarctica is a large circle with a small dot in the middle.

Apart from the surrounding area and the central South Pole,

The remaining large area is uninhabited.

This gave Brovnen a lot of confidence.

More importantly, the moon wouldn't be out for many days to come,

And whether the aurora would appear was still unknown.

Visibility was extremely low under these conditions,

So there was even less worry about being discovered.

Brovnen spent a day digging down at least 300 meters into the ice.

This 300-meter excavation consumed a lot of his precious spiritual energy,

But it also gave him increasing hope.

As he descended the ice, the light, initially extremely faint, became much clearer.

He could see a green dot of light emanating from beneath the ice,

Resembling a distant traffic light when the eye is out of focus.

He knew that the ice would significantly alter the light; what appeared to be a dot was currently impossible to determine.

Chapter 7196

If the light source were deep enough within the ice,

Even a large area of green light would likely be reduced to a single dot after refraction.

Based on the changes in light caused by the 300-meter depth,

He roughly estimated the distance and felt that the point of light was at least a thousand meters away.

Perhaps it really was built on an ice sheet thousands of meters deep,

The bottom layer is the original rock layer of the Antarctic continent.

Thinking of this, he couldn't help but feel discouraged.

For those top cultivators before the end of the Dharma era,

They could probably clear the way from the top to the bottom of the ice layer in the time it takes to drink a cup of tea.

But for him, he hadn't yet opened his Niwan Palace,

And his strength hadn't achieved that significant leap.

Using spiritual energy to power his flying sword for this kind of excavation work was truly strenuous.

If he continued in this desperate situation,

His limited spiritual energy would probably be almost completely exhausted.

But the thought that this might be the remains of cultivators from before the end of the Dharma era filled him with renewed energy.

In his view, cultivators from before the Dharma era who could build their caves thousands of meters below the ice and survive for so long in Antarctica must have been top-tier experts with extraordinary power.

Even Meng Changsheng, let alone Victoria, would likely be an insignificant figure compared to such masters.

And this was their relic.

Having failed to ascend to immortality,

And with their lifespans exhausted,

They couldn't take any of their cultivation resources with them—elixirs,

Spirit stones, and various magical artifacts—all likely beneath the ice,

Waiting to be discovered.

He felt like a penniless tomb raider who had accidentally unearthed the tomb of the founding emperor of the most powerful empire in ancient human history.

This tunnel he had carved through the ice was like a tomb raider's path to the imperial tomb.

If he could dig this tunnel down,

All the way to the bottom,

And into the underground palace, he could obtain inexhaustible wealth.

From this perspective, what's the tiny bit of spiritual energy consumed in digging the tunnel?

As long as he can dig through it and obtain what he has been dreaming of,

His strength and cultivation will greatly increase,

And he might even have a chance to become evenly matched with Victoria.

If he is even bolder, his cultivation might even surpass Victoria's.

If his cultivation could truly surpass Victoria's,

This would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

As an elder of the Po Qing Society,

And second only to Victoria in cultivation,

He was certain that no one in society could discern the changes in his cultivation before facing her.

This would allow him to easily reach Victoria.

In ancient times, 99% of rebels perished when confronting their rulers.

He, however, could avoid this major obstacle.

Once he possessed the ability to defeat Victoria,

He could directly defeat her.

Then force all members of the Den to submit to him.

The foundation Victoria had built over centuries would be easily within his grasp!

Victoria is a member of the Wu family,

And so is he.

Seeing Victoria's power waning,

The Wu family members would never defy him.

Everything would proceed as smoothly as water flowing into a channel!

Thinking of this, his heart surged with excitement.

He no longer cared about the spiritual energy he had consumed.

Instead, he channeled even more into his flying sword,

Making it spin at an even faster speed,

Hoping to reach the source of light beneath the ice as soon as possible.

He knew that place would be the key to completely changing his fate and allowing him to defy destiny!

Chapter 7197

Five more days passed in the darkness.

During these five days,

Brovnen was like a miner working in a black coal mine,

Digging with all his might into the ice layer below.

Each day, the ice layer was being excavated to a depth of at least two hundred meters.

Fortunately, the surface was protected by a biting wind.

Otherwise, simply clearing the accumulated ice debris would have been an enormous undertaking.

With each nearly thousand-meter advance,

The green light became increasingly clear.

To his surprise, the light wasn't a spot or patches of light,

But rather it grew larger with increasing depth,

Now resembling a black hole shimmering with an eerie green light.

Yes, it looked like a black hole.

Although the ice layer was still tens of meters thick,

The basic shape of the black hole had emerged—an entrance directly into the rock layer.

Brovnien was overjoyed.

Was this hole the entrance to an underground city?

Or the legendary gate to ascension?!

The legend of the Gate of Ascension didn't primarily attract him with the possibility of ascension itself.

He knew his strength was far too weak,

And even if a Gate of Ascension existed,

Its threshold was beyond his current reach.

What truly captivated him was the legendary sect,

That had migrated to Antarctica and discovered the Gate of Ascension there.

Whether that sect had ascended or perished,

Their ruins and cultivation resources were unlikely to have been taken with them or lost forever.

Therefore, he hoped the opening led to the sect's underground ruins in Antarctica.

If it truly was ruins,

It meant that, like the headquarters of the Warriors Den, an underground city lay below, entirely built into the rock.

The green-glowing opening below would likely be the only entrance to this underground city.

He, then, would become the lucky one to exclusively enjoy all the cultivation resources of this underground city.

Thinking of this,

Brovnen's nearly depleted spiritual energy seemed to receive a significant boost,

Instantly filling him with energy.

However, in reality, his spiritual energy hadn't been replenished at all.

On the contrary, it had been reduced to less than 20% over the past few days.

But like a driver with less than 20% fuel left but about to refuel at a service area,

Everything was within reach,

So he didn't care about his depleted spiritual energy.

He felt he was about to receive a massive replenishment,

Perhaps even an inexhaustible supply station.

At that moment, a few dreamlike lights suddenly streamed into the ice cave over a thousand meters deep above him.

Brovnen looked up and saw the aurora borealis appearing outside the seemingly tiny ice cave entrance,

No bigger than a match head.

This filled Brovnen with immense joy.

The aurora, which had disappeared for many days, had suddenly returned!

He felt that the aurora's appearance at this moment was a completely auspicious sign!

It foreshadowed that he was about to obtain a priceless treasure and usher in a new chapter in his life!

His body trembled slightly with excitement as he laughed heartily in the ice cave thousands of meters deep:

"Heaven has helped me!"

"It truly is heaven's help!"

"I thought everything had reached a dead end,"

"But I never expected this to be such a great blessing from God!"

"This gate to ascension is hidden deep within the rock layers beneath the Antarctic ice sheet."

"Even the scientific exploration equipment couldn't reach this depth."

"If the American army hadn't invaded Antarctica,"

"Even if those Japanese had explored the entire Antarctic for me,"

"They would never have discovered this place!"

"It's fate! It really is fate!"

With that, he let out a long roar,

Squeezing out even more spiritual energy from his body,

Making his flying sword run even faster!

Meanwhile, at the Nordic research station,

Charlie, Jeremiah, and Ria were still in seclusion.

Maria sat alone by the window, brewing tea.

There had been no aurora for several days,

And Charlie hadn't emerged from seclusion.

Although Maria was somewhat lonely, she wasn't bored.

She spent her days drinking tea, reading books,

And calculating divination,

Finding a fulfilling time alone in the polar night.

Chapter 7198

However, she was always cautious.

Because it was polar night outside,

And there was an unknown elder of the Warriors Den roaming Antarctica,

She always made sure to close all the curtains tightly before emitting any light.

At this moment, Maria had the curtains closed,

Boiling water in an electric kettle.

After the water was boiled, she brewed a pot of Pu'er tea,

Then turned off the light and opened the completely blacked-out curtains.

As soon as she opened the curtains,

She was astonished to find that the polar night outside was no longer just a hazy, starlit expanse.

Streaks of aurora borealis, like endless green ribbons, had appeared in the sky!

Maria was overjoyed.

She quickly got up and went to the room where Charlie, Jeremiah, and Ria were in seclusion,

Gently knocking on the door and saying,

"Young Master, the aurora has appeared!"

Charlie instantly awoke from his meditation.

The aurora had arrived!

These past few days, he had replenished his spiritual energy to a state of abundance,

Almost overflowing, just waiting for the aurora to arrive so he could quickly make a deal with that mysterious entity,

And use up the excess spiritual energy.

Now, the aurora has finally arrived!

Jeremiah and Ria were also awakened by Maria's voice.

They opened their eyes and looked at Charlie.

Ria asked her in surprise,

"Mr. Wade, the aurora has appeared again?"

Charlie stood up excitedly and said with a smile,

"Miss Lin said it appeared,"

"So it must have appeared. Let's go see!"

After saying that, he stepped to the door and opened it.

Maria was standing outside the door with an excited expression.

Charlie looked out the window and saw that the aurora had indeed appeared.

He immediately said,

"The aurora is right overhead,"

"So we don't need to go far."

"We can start practicing the hand seals as soon as we step outside."

Maria asked him, "If you practice the hand seals,"

"Will the mysterious entity be able to pass on the new Great Sun Tathagata hand seals through the aurora?"

"And that elder of the Warriors Den sees it?"

Charlie smiled and said, "There is definitely such a risk."

"But I think it's worth the risk."

"After all, the aurora stretches for thousands of miles and keeps changing."

"If you look at the aurora from other angles,"

"You might see thousands of miles of laser beams overlapping together,"

"Which would make it difficult to see the specific shape of the aurora."

"Only when we are right under the hand seals can we see it clearly."

Then, Charlie added, "There are definitely risks."

"But I think it's worth the risk."

"The Antarctic winter lasts at least two more months."

"We can't just sit here and wait to die for that long."

Maria nodded slightly and said,

"What you said makes a lot of sense."

"Whether we can even see it from a distance is still unknown."

"And even if we can,"

"It probably won't look the same as what we saw from below."

Afterward, the four of them immediately left the warm research station.

Upon reaching the courtyard,

Charlie immediately sat cross-legged in the snow,

Intending to immediately activate the hand seals that distribute a large amount of spiritual energy.

It was at this moment that Brovnen exerted all his strength to break through the last layer of ice between himself and the cave entrance.

To his surprise, the dark cave entrance seemed to be blocked by an invisible force,

And his body couldn't enter at all.

At this moment, he seemed to be inexplicably suspended above the cave entrance.

No matter how hard he tried,

His body couldn't penetrate even an inch.

Meanwhile, within Charlie's sea of consciousness,

A golden pagoda, mostly repaired, slowly emerged from the sea,

Followed by a burst of brilliant golden light.

Before Charlie could finish his hand seals, Maria suddenly exclaimed,

"Young Master, look!"

Charlie, focused on his hand seals, abruptly looked up and discovered that even before he finished, the spiritual energy was drawn away,

The aurora in the sky had already changed its appearance.

However, it was no longer in the shape of hand seals,

But rather... an arrow that rolled across the sky like a flag, always pointing south!

Chapter 7199

The four people beneath the aurora borealis stared in astonishment at the enormous,

Rolling arrow formed from aurora particles in the sky,

Exchanging bewildered glances.

None of them understood why the usually majestic aurora had suddenly changed its appearance.

For days, they had been following the aurora to learn the Vairocana Buddha hand seal,

And looking up at the massive seal made them feel inherently small.

Furthermore, the Vairocana Buddha hand seal was a Buddhist practice,

Amplifying the solemnity, majesty, and sense of oppression.

Now, the Buddhist hand seal had suddenly transformed into an arrow,

A change that was quite disconcerting.

Charlie stared at the arrow pointing south, muttering,

"What does this sudden arrow mean?"

"Is it guiding me?"

As soon as he finished speaking, the arrow vanished,

Then reappeared, flashing three times in the air.

"Holy crap..."

Charlie exclaimed in surprise,

"This thing can even understand human speech..."

Ria stared in disbelief and said,

"Mr. Wade, it's telling you to go south."

"Could there be some kind of opportunity in the south?"

Jeremiah nodded and said,

"That mysterious thing has been teaching you the Great Sun Tathagata hand seal all along."

"Now it suddenly conjures up an arrow pointing the way."

"It seems that, just as Ria said,"

"It's pointing you to some kind of opportunity."

Maria said seriously from the side,

"Young master, this mysterious thing wants you to go south."

"The south is the heart of Antarctica."

"All the way to the South Pole."

"This route is desolate and uninhabited."

"Before reaching the South Pole, there are no research stations along the way."

"I speculate that the elder of the Warrior is probably hiding in this area to avoid those American soldiers."

"Although this area is very large,"

"I think that in such a desolate place,"

"Once someone appears, the target will be very obvious."

"In addition, the other party's cultivation level is very high."

"He will most likely find you before you find him."

"We should be more cautious."

Charlie was also somewhat hesitant at this moment.

If that elder hadn't been in Antarctica,

He would have followed the guidance without hesitation.

After all, the harsh Antarctic weather wouldn't kill him.

At worst, he'd make a wasted trip without any real danger.

But Maria was right.

Although the area south of here was vast, it was all uninhabited.

Anyone appearing in this area would be completely out of place.

Moreover, the elder of the Warrior was far more powerful than he was.

If he were discovered,

His attack would likely strike before he could even react.

Just as Charlie was at a loss,

The arrow in the sky suddenly disappeared.

Then, the particles that made up the aurora began to break and reform,

Vaguely forming five large characters in the air.

These five characters were in traditional Chinese characters and read:

“Fortune favors the bold.”

Charlie was immediately shocked.

This was the first time the mysterious entity had communicated directly with him.

Before this, besides showing him various hand seals,

It had only shown him the arrow.

Charlie hadn't initially thought this mysterious entity possessed intelligence.

He assumed it followed some mechanism,

Displaying those hand seals upon encountering the aurora,

Like a pre-programmed projector.

Chapter 7200

But at this moment, he understood:

This mysterious entity possessed intelligence and its own consciousness.

Not only was Charlie astonished,

But the three women beside him were also completely dumbfounded.

Who could have imagined that something invisible and intangible existed in this world,

Possessing human wisdom and consciousness,

And even fluent in Chinese characters?

Maria, well-informed, almost immediately pointed to the five characters and exclaimed,

“Young Master, these characters are all in traditional clerical script!”

“Both the font itself and the writing style conform to the characteristics of the Tang Dynasty.”

Charlie was even more astonished.

He still couldn't figure out where this mysterious thing came from,

Or where it was located.

Now that he knew it even had its own consciousness,

It was truly unsettling.

However, now was not the time to investigate the origin of that mysterious thing.

Charlie looked up at the five words,

"Fortune favors the bold."

"And thought to himself, "The fact that the other party gave me these five words as guidance suggests that there must be an opportunity in the South."

"However, opportunities are accompanied by dangers."

"I might encounter the elder of the Warrior."

"The elder's cultivation is second only to Victoria."

"So he should be much stronger than me."

"If I were to meet him in this vast Antarctic,"

"I would probably be unable to fight back or escape,"

"And it would be almost certain death."

"However, on the other hand, this mysterious thing has been quite good to me."

"I gave it a lot of spiritual energy,"

"And it taught me the Great Sun Tathagata Hand Seal."

"It's unlikely that it would betray me now."

Since it said 'Fortune favors the bold,'"

"It must mean that I have a chance to escape unscathed."

"As long as it's not a certain death,"

"I can consider giving it a try!"

With this thought, Charlie immediately said to the other three,

"Miss Yun, Miss Song, you two stay here with Miss Lin and protect her safety."

"I will follow the guidance to find out what's going on."

"Young Master, isn't this too dangerous?"

Maria asked worriedly.

Charlie pointed to the words in the sky and smiled,

"Even if it says, 'Fortune favors the bold.' Danger is inevitable,"

"But opportunity certainly exists."

Maria, reluctant to see Charlie take the risk, advised him,

"Young Master, I believe safety is far more important than any opportunity."

"You're so young and already possess such an extraordinary fortune."

"You're truly a dragon among men."

"Perhaps a little more caution is warranted."

Charlie smiled, "Miss Lin, don't worry."

"Although this journey is risky, please don't forget the great gift you gave me."

"With it, even if I encounter danger, I should have a chance to escape."

Maria knew that the great gift Charlie spoke of was the ring she had given him.

Based on their previous experience,

The ring hadn't recognized Charlie as its master and still considered his father its owner.

If the ring's holder encountered danger,

The ring would still send him to the person his father most wanted to see.

In other words, if Charlie encountered danger,

The ring would save him again, sending him to her.

This reminded her of the first time the ring was presented to Charlie,

And their intimate moment in the hot spring.

Her heart pounded, and her face flushed crimson.

She could tell that Charlie was determined to investigate,

And she couldn't dissuade him.

So she earnestly instructed him,

"Young Master, please prioritize your safety."

"Do not act rashly or linger in battle."

"I will await your safe return."

Charlie nodded slightly and smiled, saying,

"Don't worry, I know what I'm doing."

"Trust yourself, and trust the mysterious thing,"

"Or rather, the mysterious person, with whom I've been communicating for so long."

"I will definitely obtain the wealth he spoke of and return safely to see you all!"