

Dawn of a New Era #Chapter 111: Divinity - Read Dawn of a New Era Chapter 111: Divinity

Chapter 111: Chapter 111: Divinity

"It's likely that its previous power was consumed too much, leaving it with hardly anything left now!" he thought to himself, regret already creeping in.

Nevertheless, greed has no bounds; Chen Shouyi decided not to trouble himself further.

He looked at the large tree in front of him and saw that it hadn't died. The gentle breeze from before had completely vanished, and the oppressive aura had also disappeared without a trace, dispersing into nothing.

Even its emerald leaves, once imbued with a strange brilliance, had lost their mysterious color, becoming indistinguishable from common forest plants, regressing from extraordinary to ordinary.

Perhaps, as the Barbarians return to settle here and time passes, it might regain its strength.

However, this would not happen in a short time.

It could take decades, or even centuries.

...

Next, Chen Shouyi carefully walked in the open space, his body occasionally swaying, sometimes tottering, as he readjusted to his newly gained strength.

Although the increase wasn't significant this time, it was mainly in comparison to his overly high expectations.

In fact, this single improvement alone boosted his strength by nearly fifty percent, and his agility increased by thirty to forty percent, breaking through the fourteen-point threshold altogether.

This was a tremendous leap.

By numerical calculation, his arm strength now reached about 580 kilograms, akin to Director Fang from the Martial Arts Notarization and Discipline Inspection Office,

completely at the level of a great Martial Artist.

As for agility, a value of 14.1 was five times that of an ordinary person.

The reaction time for an average person to withdraw their hand when touched by something hot is about 0.1 seconds; he needed only 0.02 seconds. An average driver seeing danger needs 0.25 seconds to react, while he needed only 0.05 seconds.

This was a decisive difference, as if time had been extended fivefold. During the time it took for an ordinary person to receive and react to information, Chen Shouyi could kill them five times over.

Moreover, strong reflexes also mean higher speed. Even without any martial arts techniques, the power of his punches could reach two to three tons. Using a lunge thrust method to mobilize all of his muscle strength, his punch could easily break the sound barrier, with power even reaching ten tons.

Coupled with a physique six times stronger than normal, granting a robust body and acute senses, along with an intellect supporting hyper-speed cognitive responses, once he fully readjusts to his strength, his combat ability could multiply fivefold, if not more.

...

At this moment, Chen Shouyi suddenly sensed some commotion from the Book of Knowledge.

He felt a little surprised, but knowing the importance of the Book of Knowledge, he did not dare to let his guard down.

After cautiously scanning the surroundings and sensing that the Barbarians likely won't return anytime soon, he immediately closed his eyes and entered the Gray Mist Space.

He noticed the space had expanded completely, from its original diameter of thirty meters to a diameter of thirty-five meters. The gray mist beneath his feet seemed denser.

These unusual sights flashed before him, and then he looked at the small tree.

At just one glance, a sliver of astonishment crossed his heart.

Between the branches of this small tree, there was a faint silvery shimmer intertwined, filled with countless flickering shadows, layered and overlapped, showing blur images of numerous natives in a trance.

Some were in jungles, others under large trees, some in low wooden huts; they prayed in various places, expressing their humility and reverence to the large tree in various ways.

As his eyes fell on the silvery light with shadows, a theory emerged in his mind.

This must be the Power of Faith accumulated by that Divine Tree.

This is the source of the power of deities.

But Chen Shouyi only took a glance at these shadows before he was completely attracted by something else.

A minute yet bright and pure light spot, about the size of a mung bean, sat at the core of this layer of faith light.

It emitted a dazzlingly pure brilliance like a diamond.

At this moment, it was like a trapped little fish, frantically darting around, struggling fiercely, yet within the branches of the World Tree, an unseen force seemed to bind it, rendering escape impossible.

At the sight of this light point, Chen Shouyi's heart started pounding, an intense desire surging within him.

Could this be divinity?

A thought suddenly appeared in his mind: what makes divine creatures known as divine is their congealed divinity, granting them long lives, a step closer to godhood.

Compared to the Power of Faith, this is the foundation of godhood.

Numerous scientists on Earth have attempted to research divinity and even divine status, exploring the mystery of godhood and enhancing human strength.

However, up until now, Chen Shouyi hadn't heard of anyone succeeding.

Such a thing is neither matter nor mere energy but a peculiar energy-information aggregate.

Staring straight at this light point, his steps seemed driven by some force, as he walked step by step toward the small tree, his heart pounding wildly.

The silvery Power of Faith was gradually dissipating, dissolving into countless beautiful dots of starlight, merging into this space as it visibly expanded. Meanwhile, the range within which the divinity struggled grew smaller; under an unseen pull, it approached the trunk.

Don't take it all, I still need it!

Seeing this, Chen Shouyi got anxious and hastened his steps.

In a few strides, he reached the small tree, reaching out to grab the light point, and upon contact, his mind was suddenly jolted, rapidly repelled, and only after a long while did he come to his senses.

His soul was too weak to withstand the power of divinity.

He tried several more times, but without exception, was swiftly repelled each time, until he finally gave up in resignation.

The light of the Power of Faith dimmed more and more, eventually becoming indiscernible, and the divinity slowly merged into the trunk of the World Tree.

In a daze, it seemed as if an unseen force spread out, and the leaves of the World Tree emitted a clear, melodious, and mysterious divine melody.

Immersed within this, Chen Shouyi couldn't help but feel invigorated, as if his spirit were cleansed, swiftly restoring the mental energy greatly consumed by the impact of the divinity to full strength.

Accompanied by this mysterious divine melody, the small tree rapidly began to grow and flourish.

From originally just over a meter tall, it gradually surpassed two meters...

At this point, Chen Shouyi suddenly noticed that among the leaves, a small golden, illusory fruit was growing.

It's described as "small" as it was tiny, the size of a sesame dot, yet it radiated dazzling golden light, being quite conspicuous.

Chen Shouyi felt a spark in his heart, stepped forward at once, and immediately focused his gaze.

The next moment, he experienced a slight daze, finding himself in a peculiar place, empty and hollow, neither connected to the sky above nor the ground below, seeming to be in mid-air.

Fortunately, he was long accustomed to this kind of mental immersion in the Memory Space, so he wasn't panicky.

He calmly surveyed the surroundings and found this place to be entirely a world of wind.

Breezes, gales, zephyrs, whirlwinds, typhoons, tornadoes, all kinds of winds blew and raged here continuously.

After only a brief observation, he felt overwhelmed with information in his mind, causing a headache, and was soon forced to exit this world after only half a minute.

Chen Shouyi awoke, inundated with information in his mind, feeling that he almost grasped something profound, yet upon more detailed reflection, it seemed as though he hadn't sensed anything at all.

He looked at the golden fruit.

"Could it be that this is the power extracted by the World Tree after absorbing the divinity of that great tree?"

The otherworld is a mysterious realm, and he knew many True Gods had divine positions, like the God of Knowledge, or the God of Hunting.

These divine positions aren't just random titles or self-proclaimed.

They are crystallizations of their insights into the world, heaven and earth, laws, humanity, or civilization, recognized by the otherworld, possessing mysterious power. Each divine position represents the domain of their power, as well as the direction of their relentless pursuit.

"And this golden fruit clearly embodies the Divine Tree's understanding of wind. Perhaps, compared to enhancing body attributes, this golden fruit is my true gain." Chen Shouyi could not help but realize in his heart.

Chapter 112: Chapter 112: Wind Element Abilities

On the sea surface, Chen Shouyi munched away while letting the canoe drift aimlessly.

Shell Lady squatted on the edge of the boat, staring unblinkingly as the giant tore off a large piece from the giant brownish-yellow bird in his hand, devouring it with his bloody maw. Her expression flickered between amazement and shock.

Feeling a bit embarrassed under Shell Lady's burning gaze and varied expressions, Chen Shouyi asked, "Want some?"

Shell Lady immediately shook her head in disdain and said loudly, "I wouldn't eat such a thing."

She was always fond of light flavors, eating almost nothing aside from honey.

It's puzzling how this unhealthy diet hasn't led to malnutrition.

Chen Shouyi stopped bothering her, chewing up the last bit of duck neck bones and all, before taking another one from the plastic bag and biting into it vigorously.

"Giant, I helped you find a-a-a... an evil giant today. When will I get my big gem?" Shell Lady suddenly asked.

"You'll have to wait until we go back," Chen Shouyi replied.

"Is it a-a single one?" Shell Lady's eyes rolled shrewdly, a hint of anticipation in her voice.

"It's a single one. When did I mention two?" Chen Shouyi glanced at her, asking curiously.

"Oh!" Shell Lady responded with some disappointment, but upon thinking about soon receiving a big gem, she grew excited again and flew onto Chen Shouyi's shoulder.

"Giant, when shall we go kill those evil giants again?"

Chen Shouyi, in the middle of eating, almost choked on his food upon hearing this.

He saw through her little scheme immediately.

Indeed, it's a case of remember the taste but forget the beatings—valuing money over life. Who was it that was terrified and kept shouting to go back?

While chewing, he mumbled, "Next time!"

"Is there still a reward?"

"There is!"

"Is it still a big gem?"

"It is!"

...

Chen Shouyi ate rapidly, finishing more than half of his supplies in less than ten minutes. Patting his bulging stomach, he exhaled a breath, finally feeling full.

He grabbed the oar and, while rowing, experimented with his wind control ability. The headwind gently avoided Chen Shouyi, curving around the sides before turning back to accelerate and blow against his back.

Now, with his basic level of atmospheric control ability, manipulating such three to four-level breezes was a piece of cake for him.

However, compared to that divine tree, the range he could manipulate was pathetically small, with only a one-meter radius, not even covering the canoe, making it impossible to perfectly neutralize the headwind's impact.

One might say it's better than nothing.

In the meantime, he tested the maximum wind strength he could achieve through manipulation, discovering it could only reach about five to six levels.

Truly a feeble ability.

Reflecting on the performance of the divine tree earlier, Chen Shouyi suddenly felt that even if he absorbed all the insights of the divine tree regarding wind, it wouldn't be of much use.

Using it for direct combat seems unlikely.

Perhaps its only offensive capability would involve kicking up dust to blind the enemy, impairing their sight; the effect might be better with pepper or lime powder added.

Of course, if this were usable on Earth, it could definitely be used to blow up skirts, causing panic among women and delivering psychological damage!

However, at this stage, the greatest use of this ability for Chen Shouyi is still as an auxiliary.

This wind control ability can greatly mitigate the negative impact of wind resistance on him. In other worlds, whether running or attacking, as long as he's focused, wind resistance almost has no impact, allowing him to perfectly unleash his speed.

...

Back on Earth, it was already eight o'clock the next morning.

"Hey handsome, you're back!" At the hotel reception, upon seeing Chen Shouyi dragging a suitcase, the receptionist's eyes brightened, and she greeted him with a smile.

Simultaneously, she couldn't help but sigh inwardly at his extravagance, booking a room without staying.

"Hmm, good morning!" Chen Shouyi responded with a smile to the pretty receptionist and returned to his room.

In the bathroom, he washed away the dust and bloody smell, then changed into clean clothes.

Before leaving the bathroom, he glanced in the mirror.

As his physique improved, his skin became more delicate, with a healthy, radiant glow, and his features seemed subtly adjusted, appearing more harmonious.

"I feel more handsome again!"

The thought flashed through his mind.

At that moment, inspired, Chen Shouyi took the sword case from the room and drew his sword.

Then, he lightly and experimentally scraped the blade along his arm. The edge of this martial artist's sword, coated with a nanofilm hardening layer, was extremely sharp, able to slice through hair with ease.

Ordinary steel bars wouldn't require much effort as a single slash would easily cut through them without any damage to the sword. A normal person's touch would lead to a cut, let alone a scrape.

However, he found that beyond a slight itch, his skin remained unharmed.

His eyes lit up, and he applied more force.

Despite the skin on his arm beginning to indent, as he lightly etched, upon closer inspection, he found a nearly imperceptible cut had been made, breaking the superficial layer but not bleeding.

He didn't test further, assuming more force would draw blood.

Chen Shouyi sheathed the sword back into its scabbard, feeling quite satisfied.

This skin was probably several times tougher than cowhide.

Although in battle, this level of defense might end with the same outcome if hit by a martial artist-level expert's strike, bullets from a handgun would likely no longer be lethal to him.

...

On a small island in the other world.

For several days, Chen Shouyi hadn't returned to Hedong, spending most of his time training on the island to adapt to his newfound strength.

Holding a long sword, Chen Shouyi repeatedly struck a small tree.

"Ssshhh!"

The sword blade tore through the air, emitting faint, almost inaudible, sounds.

Each slash released a cyan-tinted, conical Qi force, hitting the tree trunk and leaving two to three-centimeter marks.

Unlike on Earth, where the sword aura was only three-centimeters long, invisible, and could only cling to the sword body, this Qi force was tinted with cyan and could attack externally.

In fact, this phenomenon was not the first occurrence.

A month ago, in this same location, a similar occurrence happened inadvertently, though it had been a faint and fleeting color then, and he hadn't paid much attention, especially after the blood ritual event of the cult, which forced him to leave Dongning City.

Later, through repeated practice, he discovered this Qi force, mistaking it for the same thing as sword aura.

But obviously, it wasn't.

This was a highly concentrated high-speed airflow, stemming from what he originally believed was his weak attack power in his atmospheric control ability.

Its power rivals true sword aura and allows attacks beyond the sword, maintaining considerable lethality within two to three meters, potent enough to pierce through an average barbarian's body.

At first, during practice, only two or three out of every ten slashes produced this cyan-colored Qi force. Yet, he didn't know whether it was due to frequent practice or because of daily insights from the golden fruit's internal world of wind, leading to increasingly adept control over the wind.

Now, he could successfully produce it eight or nine times out of ten attempts, with increasing concentration and power.

Unfortunately, it had a drawback. Chen Shouyi noticed only bow-stab strikes achieved such damage; other sword forms merely created colorless, slightly sharp gusts that might cut skin, but would struggle to slay barbarians.

Chen Shouyi speculated it might relate to the speed of the strike.

The bow-stab was the fastest and most powerful strike among all sword forms—one stab released like a bullet from a chamber, a mere instant of electricity and fire.

Even on this island with triple gravity, his current stabs have exceeded the speed of sound. But changing to other forms, his speed wasn't even a third of that.

Chapter 113: Chapter 113: Exchange

Next, he began practicing other Sword Forms.

He moved swiftly, the sword light poured like a waterfall, smoke and dust rose around him.

His physical prowess now far exceeds that of ordinary Barbarians, only slightly weaker than the Barbarian Clan Leader back then.

However, coupled with the terrifying attack speed brought by the powerful explosiveness of the Martial Arts Power System, even if that Barbarian Clan Leader were still alive, he would only last for one exchange in close combat.

After two hours, he finally stopped, exhausted.

His muscles twitched uncontrollably, his whole body enveloped in thick steam, as if he had just come out of a steam-filled oven.

With trembling hands, he picked up a large bottle of mineral water, unscrewed it, and drank half of it in one go.

"Giant, Giant, I found lots and lots of golden sand." At this moment, Shell Lady saw he had stopped and quickly flew over, eagerly boasting from afar.

Chen Shouyi nodded slightly, calmly indicating he knew.

No reminder is needed; upon returning to this small island, Shell Lady actively helped him collect golden sand, and over the past four days, she had collected about one and a half pounds.

At this point, Chen Shouyi suddenly remembered he hadn't asked Shell Lady about something, so he beckoned to her: "Come here, come here!"

Shell Lady obediently flew down to his shoulder.

"Do you remember where the Yaqiao Flower is?"

"Yaqiao Flower? Is that the flower I was born from?" Shell Lady asked in surprise.

Chen Shouyi nodded: "Yes, that's the one!"

"Giant, do you want to eat it too? But it's gone, there was only one and I ate it all, roots and leaves included," Shell Lady said with a hint of pride.

"I'm not looking for the Yaqiao Flower to eat; I'm asking where it was growing?" Chen Shouyi said.

"I already told you, it's on this island where I was born."

Chen Shouyi felt a bit tired: "I'm asking for the exact location?"

"That was many, many sunrises and sunsets ago, I can't remember at all, and I don't want to think about it!" Shell Lady replied impatiently, showing little interest.

"Think about it again, there's a reward!" Chen Shouyi coaxed.

"Is it a big big gem?" Shell Lady suddenly perked up, asking.

"It's a small gem; the big and big big gems are all gone!" Chen Shouyi snapped.

Shell Lady's appetite was growing. Answering a question now demands a crystal ball, why don't you just outright steal?

Shell Lady turned her head, showing disbelief, last time he said there were no big big gems, but there were, she's long suspected the Giant hid a big treasure.

But something is better than nothing, she reluctantly tried to recall, considering this is childhood memory, she muttered to herself: "Where could it be, where could it be?"

Then she kicked and flew upwards:

"Maybe here, maybe there, or maybe over there!"

She flew around the island once and returned out of breath within ten minutes, loudly declaring: "Giant, I remembered, right there, come quick!"

Chen Shouyi's heart raced with excitement, immediately following Shell Lady.

Soon, they arrived before a pit on the mountainside that sloped inward.

The pit had a diameter of about two meters and was one meter deep, appearing circular and radiating outward, resembling a meteorite impact crater on the mountainside.

After a quick look, Chen Shouyi confirmed: "Is this the place?"

Shell Lady nodded vigorously: "I was born here!"

Truly an astonishingly strange creature.

The pit had already accumulated a layer of soil, and Chen Shouyi set his sword aside, starting to dig the sand soil with his hands.

"Giant, what are you doing? Are you trying to find my 'brother's' toe?" Shell Lady asked, noticing Chen Shouyi's odd behavior.

Perhaps from watching too many cartoons, she occasionally threw in a few Chinese phrases while speaking, often leaving him utterly confused.

"Brother's toe?"

"I am Pig Prepared, snort snort, and these are my brother's toes, snort snort!" Shell Lady suddenly mimicked, even making pig-like snorting sounds.

What a bizarre mix.

Seeing Shell Lady looking adorably dumb, Chen Shouyi resolved in his heart to definitely introduce a more normal cartoon next time.

"Nope!" Chen Shouyi confirmed.

"Oh!" Shell Lady showed a hint of disappointment.

Chen Shouyi turned and ignored her, the island consisted mostly of coarse granular sand soil formed from weathered rock, relatively soft and easy to dig through. Within minutes, Chen Shouyi reached hard rock, carefully cleaning away the sand inside.

Upon seeing the bottom presenting a perfect bowl shape, Chen Shouyi instantly realized this was surely a meteorite crater.

"If there's anything, it must be at the center of the crater!" he thought and began reaching around.

The next moment, he felt a smooth substance.

Chen Shouyi's spirit soared, carefully brushing off the soil on the surface, instantly a subtle, lustrous gleam caught his eyes.

But before Chen Shouyi could excavate the object, Shell Lady's eyes lit up, and she anxiously shouted, "It's mine, it's mine, it's mine."

"Stop yelling, we'll talk when I get it out," Chen Shouyi said as he grasped the mysterious substance and pulled hard, quickly extracting it from the rock crevice.

It was a cylindrical object about ten centimeters in length, not a standard cylinder, thinner in the middle and thicker at the ends, with an elliptic upper end, three to four centimeters in diameter, and a flat five-centimeter base with a slight depression.

After brushing off the sand, its glossy surface was revealed.

What is this thing?

He thought it looked somewhat familiar, though he was certain such a complex structure could not have formed naturally.

Chen Shouyi instinctively flicked it with his finger, surprised.

The object made no sound at all; then he picked the cylinder up and forcefully struck the surrounding rock. Even as the rock broke apart, no sound emanated from the object itself, just the rock's crackling echoed.

As a recently dropped out high school student, Chen Shouyi knew sound in materials arose from vibration, which resulted from the material's deformation.

No sound meant no deformation during the striking process.

Looking at the still gleaming, unharmed cylinder, Chen Shouyi was amazed.

"This material is likely far harder than diamond. Just consider, this tiny object's impact formed the crater, if it weren't hard, it would've shattered long ago, how could it be intact?"

"You've stared long enough, give it back to me, hurry!" Shell Lady, grown impatient, jumped repeatedly.

This was found near her birthplace, undoubtedly hers by birthright.

"One small gem!" Chen Shouyi proposed without hesitation.

"No, no, no!" Shell Lady shook her head violently, she was about to explode. The exchange was clearly unreasonable by simple size valuation, outright deceiving a child.

"Then three small gems."

"#@¥ Giant, you liar, this is mine, I brought you here, don't think of taking my stuff unless you give me one big big gem."

Shell Lady shouted angrily as she flew out, her tiny hands gripping the mysterious column in Chen Shouyi's hand, seeming ready to wrest it away.

"How about swapping it for a big big gem?" Chen Shouyi seized the chance to offer.

"Giant, you're sure you're not lying?" Shell Lady hesitated, then quickly confirmed, her face showing delight.

"If you clutch this ugly gem any longer, I won't trade with you," Chen Shouyi pretended to scoff.

Seeing Chen Shouyi's firm reply, Shell Lady released her grip instantly, afraid he might change his mind, soon returning to his shoulder with silly giggles.

For her, while this thing seemed like a gem, it couldn't compare to the pure, transparent, and perfectly rounded big big gem.

...

Chen Shouyi toyed with the crystalline column, inwardly pleased with himself, and pocketed it. He had no idea what use it might have, but he knew one thing for certain—it was definitely no ordinary object.

Chapter 114: Chapter 114: Nightly Changes

In the evening, seated in front of the computer, Chen Shouyi carefully drew a terrain map using a drawing software, relying on his memory. After half an hour, he breathed a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, such work doesn't demand much from a Martial Artist, nor can it be expected to.

As for precision, what is that anyway? Relying on visual estimates, how precise could you really be?

If one can roughly depict where a mountain is, where a river flows, the degree of danger in various areas, and the size of tribes that exist, that would already be quite good.

Next, he began drafting the exploration report.

This was relatively simple.

There is a fixed format for such reports.

Furthermore, for the passage in Dongning City, there's not much to describe; there are just these two islands nearby, and the main danger has already been resolved by him, leaving only a group of frightened and helpless old, sick, and feeble Barbarians.

At this moment, Chen Shouyi had an idea and specially noted down the gold mine discovered on the small island at the end of the report.

Thinking about it, he opened the map again and marked it anew.

According to the Explorer's regulations, any property obtained by explorers during alternate world exploration belongs to the explorers, and for discoveries such as mines, explorers also enjoy a ten percent profit.

However, few Martial Artists benefit from the latter.

The alternate world is almost completely undeveloped, with an astonishing abundance of mineral deposits, numerous enough to be seen everywhere.

But in reality, scarcely any companies conduct mining in the alternate world.

On one hand, ordinary machinery is useless in the alternate world, with steam power being the maximum achievable, yielding extremely low efficiency.

On the other hand, triple gravity means any worker in the alternate world needs to be at least at the Martial Artist Apprentice level. Human capital costs are exorbitant, and often the value of minerals extracted is far less than the cost of wages and casualty allowances.

Moreover, danger can arise at any moment in the alternate world, which leads to few companies daring to mine there.

Of course, there are exceptions, unless the mineral is of extremely high value or holds strategic significance.

For example, high-grade uranium ores or some rare metals.

And a rich gold mine barely makes the cut.

The small island has abundant gold, with little danger nearby. Mining is easy, even the Shell Lady can casually collect a few taels of gold every day, and the entire island is estimated to have more than a hundred tons.

Gold prices have been rising recently, from over three hundred per gram originally to now surpassing five hundred per gram, making Chen Shouyi feel the island definitely holds mining potential.

He uploaded the map, which he himself found somewhat unsatisfactory, along with the exploration report to the Explorer's website.

Awaiting final review.

...

Dongning City, Mou Luo Town, Niutou Mountain.

The night was silent and dimly lit when the sudden sound of rolling shattered stones erupted.

In the mountain's mid-section, an opening appeared.

In the night, one figure after another emerged from the cave.

A total of thirty-five Barbarians, these Barbarians wore animal hides, with robust and hardy physiques. Upon arriving here, they appeared very excited, each prostrated on the ground, loudly praying.

"Great God of Hunting, you are the source of power, the merciful protector of the tribes... Coming to this Devil's world, we shall spread your glory with the Devil's blood and soul, enhance your greatness, and welcome your arrival."

"Blood sacrifice!"

"Blood sacrifice!"

"Blood sacrifice!"

A group of Barbarians lowly roared in excitement, their terrifying aura startled countless drowsy birds into flapping away.

...

The alternate world is a realm of rising gods, some powerful, some weak, some are True Gods, some haven't even developed Divinity. They're merely worshiped or feared primitively by Barbarians and treated as gods.

All kinds are beyond count.

Setting others aside, focusing on specific True Gods.

Among them, Natural Spirits becoming gods, is a special category.

Due to their innate capability to devour souls and flesh, such gods often have a habit of blood sacrifices to absorb life's essence and souls, thereby enhancing their power.

Especially certain gods with fear-related Divine Positions, before becoming gods, they were mostly oblivious without much intent to guide followers into faith, recklessly

treating Barbarians as penned sheep, instinctively maintaining limited reproduction and survival.

The Barbarians live in fear and despair from birth, not only wary of beast attacks but also dread Natural Spirits' consumption, deeply rooted in despair and dread, so faith is naturally out of the question.

These Natural Spirits passively receive emotions like fear, resentment, and despair year after year, day after day.

Eventually, they successfully seal their godhood through these emotions, relying on spreading fear to uphold their divinity.

Of course, many restrained Natural Spirit gods already understood the importance of faith before becoming gods and recognized the preciousness of followers, only targeting other tribes for blood sacrifices or substituting with livestock.

Even as True Gods, they maintained such habits.

To them, faith is like staple food, monotonous but sustaining, while souls and flesh are desserts, delicious and sweet.

The God of Hunting is one such.

Earth's existence presents a sumptuous feast to such gods, who've long been drooling.

People here are physically weak, yet their souls aren't frail, and compared to the alternate world's sparse population density, Earth is densely populated.

Previously, their powers were mostly unnoticeable here, Divine Power dissipated completely upon arriving here, leaving many gods to attempt numerous times yet always ending in failure.

However, now as the world undergoes a significant shift, though gods' powers exhibit slight regression, it's similarly allowing their power to be transmitted here to a limited extent.

Many gods begin to stir anew.

In fact, almost every god has faintly anticipated that an unprecedented upheaval is imminent. Some gods will weaken or fall during this shift, while others will rise, everything reshuffled anew.

They're all preparing for the impending upheaval.

Some orthodox gods venture to stealthily establish faith, while other Evil Gods issue divine commands aiming to perform blood sacrifices in the other world to accumulate power.

As long as they locate a safe Spatial Passage, it's easy to kill hundreds or even thousands, and losing a few followers pales in comparison with the gains.

The God of Hunting seeks a win-win approach.

Previously, he tempted human explorers into building a cult, successfully for a while.

Unfortunately, the good times didn't last, and soon, his established faith was eradicated by humans, leaving him utterly dissatisfied with the extensive Divine Power expended for initial investments.

This time, he no longer intends to sneak around.

Chapter 115: Chapter 115: Chaos

In the early morning, Chen Shouyi seemed to faintly hear thunder, but didn't think much of it, turned over and continued to sleep.

The next morning, he got up, washed up, and packed his luggage.

He had been in Dongning City for seven days, and the immense power he gained had long since been thoroughly adapted to, transformed for use. Today, he planned to return to Hedong. He gently picked up the Shell Lady, who was still sound asleep, placed her with care into his briefcase, and then put the briefcase into his suitcase.

"Handsome guy, you're not staying today?" the pretty receptionist asked, her tone seemingly laced with a hint of regret.

"I've finished my business, so of course I'm returning." Chen Shouyi replied with a smile.

After completing the check-out procedures and collecting his deposit,

he left the hotel, holding a sword case in one hand and carrying his suitcase in the other.

He reached out on the street and hailed a taxi.

"To the high-speed rail station?" Chen Shouyi said.

"Are you going for travel or a family visit?"

"Neither."

The driver was quite talkative, and started chatting incessantly as soon as Chen Shouyi got in the car, with Chen Shouyi nodding occasionally in response.

Just halfway into the ride, he saw several military vehicles speed past, filled with armed soldiers, and soon afterward, a few armored vehicles followed.

Filled with surprise, Chen Shouyi asked the taxi driver, "What happened last night?"

"Not sure, I don't know either. But it should be a drill, right!"

Dongning had been under lockdown recently, so this wasn't unfamiliar. The driver rather nonchalantly commented, "In Dongning, that's nothing. Not long ago, the city was like a war zone; gunshots could be heard everywhere."

Chen Shouyi chuckled slightly, not saying a word.

Half an hour later, on the way passing a square near the suburbs, Chen Shouyi noticed it was filled with tents, crowded with people everywhere. Everyone wore a look of panic, and many were wailing loudly.

The driver also fell silent, no longer speaking.

As they continued driving forward, all the nearby shops were closed, the streets almost void of pedestrians, with a large number of fully armed soldiers patrolling back and forth. Something major must have happened!

The taxi slowed down and gradually came to a stop, with the driver apologetically telling Chen Shouyi, looking a bit uneasy, "Young man, I'm not doing this business anymore. The high-speed rail station is not far, just a few steps away."

Chen Shouyi couldn't insist and had to get off the car with his luggage.

Watching the taxi quickly turn around and drive further and further away.

Chen Shouyi turned his head, noting the solemn atmosphere. With furrowed brows, he saw soldiers not far ahead and quickly walked a few steps:

"Big Brother, what's happening here?"

"You don't know?" The dark-skinned soldier looked slightly bewildered.

"I just came from the east of the city, heading to the high-speed rail station," Chen Shouyi explained.

"Then you'd better not go. The area is already sealed off. Early yesterday morning, a large number of Barbarians appeared nearby, killing anyone they encountered. Several villages were entirely massacred. Fortunately, the Mou Luo Town Armed Department reacted promptly and held out until my regiment arrived... Most have now been wiped out, but a few Barbarians are still wandering around, extremely dangerous."

Don't underestimate a town's armed department. In the past twenty years, during the semi-military state of Xia Country, countless weapons have been produced. Even town people's armed departments keep numerous decommissioned artillery and machine guns, and even armored vehicles on hand.

"I'll go take a look!" Chen Shouyi said.

With that, he grabbed his luggage and continued walking forward.

"Hey hey hey, don't go." The soldier hurriedly shouted a few times, seeing Chen Shouyi speed up, he had no choice but to give up.

Truly young and fearless.

...

The road was deserted, apart from patrolling soldiers, there was not a single pedestrian. In the distance, three armed helicopters occasionally hovered low, creating a loud noise.

Giving the illusion of a war atmosphere.

Chen Shouyi carried his sword case and dragged his luggage, walking quickly.

In no time, he reached the high-speed rail station, only to find it completely closed, without a single person inside.

He sat down on the steps by the roadside.

A gust of autumn-filled chilly wind blew through, the maple tree leaves by the roadside danced in the air.

Autumn had arrived.

The high-speed rail station was located in the suburbs of Dongning, about five or six kilometers from Mou Luo Town. The air was faintly filled with a smell of gunpowder, mixed with hints of blood. The front was probably a scene of slaughter.

Just then, he faintly heard a burst of bean-like gunfire, which abruptly stopped a few seconds later. One of the helicopters quickly changed direction, flying towards where

the gunfire came from. Soon, a whip-like fiery line descended from the sky, spraying countless rounds of machine gunfire.

Seconds later, the armed helicopter flew off into the distance again.

After sitting for a moment, Chen Shouyi stood up. Hailing a taxi back was likely impossible now; not a single car was on the street.

So he continued walking forward.

The nearby residents seemed to have already been evacuated; not a shadow was visible in the windows of the residential buildings on either side.

As he walked further and further, the buildings became fewer, and farmland began to appear on the roadside.

Meanwhile, the smell of blood and gunpowder also grew stronger and stronger.

After walking a few more kilometers, Chen Shouyi saw the road ahead completely blocked off, with caution tape stretched across, four machine guns set up on the road, long strings of gold-colored ammunition draped on the ground, with stacks of ammunition boxes piled nearby.

"Danger ahead, no entry. We are in war-time condition, do not wander around. Please leave here immediately." Before Chen Shouyi could get closer, a soldier jogged over, loudly commanding.

"Sorry, I'll leave right away," Chen Shouyi said.

Although he could definitely get through by presenting his Martial Artist Certificate, he thought it better to not. The military is the most powerful force against the otherworldly threat. With the land and sky already locked down, any wandering Barbarians would have nowhere to escape. His presence might not help, and he might even accidentally get hurt.

Chen Shouyi was about to leave when the machine guns suddenly sounded. He halted, turning around, and saw a Barbarian about three to four hundred meters away, sprinting fast down a country path, at an extremely high speed of roughly fifty to sixty meters per second.

But this was clearly not his top speed; in solid ground, his speed would probably double.

Chen Shouyi felt a heavy weight in his heart.

This Barbarian was extremely powerful, comparable to the Clan Leader of the Barbarians, no, even stronger.

His vision now was incredibly sharp; he could clearly see the Barbarian's face filled with terror and despair, his body covered in blood, though it should not be his, but from the people he had killed.

Four machine guns crazily spewed bullets in a fierce barrage, but sadly, due to the distance, it had little effect. He ran further and further, seemingly trying to escape into the nearby forest.

At this moment, a helicopter not far away noticed the commotion here, changed direction, quickly flying over.

Soon it launched six or seven rockets consecutively. A few seconds later, several large flames engulfed the Barbarian, accompanied by a thunderous explosion. When the flames dissipated, the Barbarian was left with its limbs scattered everywhere, completely silent.

Chapter 116: Chapter 116: Phalange

The sound of war only gradually subsided after noon.

However, the soldiers did not retreat and continued to maintain a state of martial law.

Because of this, Chen Shouyi had to stay in Dongning.

Gradually, more and more news began to spread, causing the entire city of Dongning to become anxious.

It is said that the death toll this time exceeded three thousand people, and five villages were slaughtered and sacrificed to the gods.

In the afternoon, more troops moved into Dongning, entering Mou Luo Town.

A large number of tanks, rocket launchers, and armored vehicles drove by like a long dragon, exuding a solemn atmosphere.

The crowd of spectators stood by the road, without any cheers, only silence and unease.

This newly discovered passageway is obviously extremely dangerous. Chen Shouyi could foresee that Mou Luo Town and the surrounding areas would probably be designated as a military zone, and all residents nearby would be relocated.

In fact, there might already be a few nuclear warheads aimed at Mou Luo Town now.

Due to this incident, Chen Shouyi had to stay in Dongning for two more days, and it was only on the third day that he returned to Hedong.

Stepping out of the train station, Chen Shouyi looked at the bustling scene outside with cars coming and going, and his long-repressed mood finally relaxed.

...

Taking the elevator to the fifth floor, he pressed the doorbell of his home.

"Coming!" Chen Xingyue quickly opened the door, and upon seeing Chen Shouyi said, "Brother, you're finally back! Look who I brought!"

Chen Shouyi, hearing this, glanced toward the living room and saw a tall, graceful figure standing up, hesitatingly saying, "Shouyi?"

"Sister, when did you come? No classes today?" Chen Shouyi said in surprise.

It was his cousin, his uncle's daughter Chen Yuwei, who was currently studying at Jiangnan University, the top school in Jiangnan Province, located in Hedong City.

Perhaps it was fate, but both Chen Xingyue and Chen Yuwei were exceptionally talented. However, Chen Yuwei had a strong personality and got along well with Chen Xingyue since childhood. Every time he made little Chen Xingyue cry, Chen Yuwei would make him cry even more.

As they grew up, she stopped bullying him, but they couldn't get close either.

"Are you confused? Today is Saturday. I also just arrived. If it weren't for your face looking familiar, I almost wouldn't have recognized you. How come you've become so handsome now, much more pleasing to the eye than before." Chen Yuwei said excitedly, looking at the seemingly transformed Chen Shouyi.

"Haha, it's alright, I'll go put down my luggage first." Chen Shouyi smiled and went to the bedroom to put his things away.

When Chen Shouyi came out, Chen Yuwei asked:

"By the way, I heard from Xing Yue that you've become a Martial Artist?"

"Pretty much." Chen Shouyi smiled.

"Really?" Chen Yuwei opened her mouth with disbelief, confirming.

"Really!" Chen Shouyi nodded. There was nothing to hide.

Chen Yuwei screamed in excitement, walked over, hugged Chen Shouyi, and hopped around, her face full of joy: "When Xing Yue told me, I thought she was joking, but it turns out to be true."

The soft chest kept rubbing against his chest, making Chen Shouyi quite embarrassed, so he hurriedly said, "Sister, please!"

"Still shy, huh? Want me to introduce you to a girlfriend?" Chen Yuwei teased, hugging his arm: "I know quite a few beauties, what type do you like?"

"Sister, I'm only seventeen!" Chen Shouyi hurriedly evaded, not to mention he already had a girlfriend. Thinking of the lost contact with Zhang Xiaoyue made his heart slightly gloomy.

Finally escaping Chen Yuwei's teasing, Chen Shouyi asked about their family's situation and found everything to be fine. His uncle and aunt both worked in government offices, and the power outage did not affect them, at least life was worry-free.

Nevertheless, Chen Shouyi still urged Chen Yuwei to advise his uncle to move the family out of Dongning City as soon as possible.

Since the appearance of that high-risk passageway, Dongning City was no longer safe, and if the war expanded, it could become the front line at any time.

...

The family restaurant had already started its trial operation, so Father Chen and Mrs. Chen hadn't come home all day and only hurried back in the evening. As there were relatives visiting, the whole family went to a hot pot restaurant at the community gate for a meal.

After returning, Chen Shouyi found an excuse to go back to his bedroom.

...

He sat cross-legged on the bed, with strands of airflow subtly circulating around him.

The candle deliberately lit in front of him swayed slightly, with its flame continuously tilting.

"Compared to the otherworld, life on Earth is really thousands of times weaker!" Chen Shouyi thought to himself.

He estimated that even the Divine Tree, if it came to Earth, would be no better than him.

And he wondered how much power the True God could unleash.

Whether it was the mysterious deity on the high-speed rail or the God of Hunting in Dongning City, or the ongoing war in the Toni Kingdom, these recent frequent incidents stirred a sense of crisis within him.

He could feel that as the Mysterious Power of the otherworld invaded, these terrifying creatures were again eager to rouse, frequently probing Earth.

His strength was still too weak.

In the past nine days, his attributes, other than perception—which increased by 0.2 to reach 11.7—hadn't changed.

Since absorbing the Divine Tree and experiencing an attribute surge, except for perception maintaining its original pace, his progress had slowed considerably.

However, during static training, he was about to complete the phase of incorporating into the flesh. Now, during static training, his muscles appeared relatively clear upon introspection, showing detailed variations of light and dark, even allowing him to observe finer muscle fibers.

He estimated that in another ten or fifteen days, he could completely finish this and enter the next stage.

He glanced sideways and saw the Shell Lady with brilliant eyes, watching cartoons intently.

Chen Shouyi took out the irregular crystal and played with it in his hand.

After arriving on Earth, its luster dimmed significantly, appearing even more ordinary.

Clearly, it still contained some extraordinary power.

For some reason, every time he looked at this crystal, he felt a sense of familiarity, as if he had seen it somewhere before.

Suddenly, a light bulb went off in his head, and he widened his eyes: "No way!"

He quickly got up and moved to the computer.

As soon as the computer was blocked, the Shell Lady immediately became displeased. She angrily slapped the bedspread with both hands and shouted, "#@#, the giant, prepared, I want it prepared!"

"Wait, I'll just use it for a bit!" Chen Shouyi said, not paying attention to the annoyed Shell Lady.

He opened a new webpage and quickly searched for "phalanges."

Soon, a series of images appeared before his eyes. He clicked on a relatively clear one and compared the semi-transparent crystal against the screen.

He couldn't help but take a sharp breath, discovering they had a 70-80% resemblance.

This was indeed a phalanx and a finger bone from the front end, at least ten centimeters long.

The owner of this phalanx must be at least tens of meters tall.

Looking at this already crystallized phalanx.

Could this be a relic of a god?

Chapter 117: Chapter 117: Pantheon

The next morning, Chen Shouyi grabbed a wooden sword and ran all the way to the haunted house, ready to practice sword.

But he discovered a large crowd gathered at the entrance of the haunted house. Upon approaching, Chen Shouyi realized that the originally locked iron door was wide open, the courtyard's weeds had been cleared, and there were more than a dozen workers inside renovating.

The crowd whispered among themselves, pointing and discussing.

"Truly fearless."

"I heard it only cost twenty million, probably bought it cheap without checking. They must not have done any research when buying," a fat middle-aged man with a large gold chain around his neck sneered.

"Twenty million isn't cheap at all," an elderly man shook his head, "For a place like this, I wouldn't even pay two million. It's ominous."

Chen Shouyi frowned slightly upon hearing this, realizing he couldn't practice here anymore.

Feeling helpless, he glanced around and decided to head back to his neighborhood.

The environment in his neighborhood was quite nice, with a sizable lakeside park inside.

In the early morning, there were people exercising everywhere, besides the elderly, there were also many young people practicing martial arts.

Although the noise was a bit loud and disruptive, making it difficult to unleash power.

However, today he would just have to make do.

Chen Shouyi found an empty area, got into position, and slowly practiced sword as if he were an elderly person, carefully experiencing the exertion of his body, and his muscles flowed like water, moving slowly yet smoothly.

...

Not far away, two lively young girls practiced sword while chatting.

One girl in a dark blue short-sleeved sports outfit complained, "Now martial arts classes have become large classes. If we fail the martial arts exam in the future, we won't graduate. Ahhhh, what a ridiculous rule. I'm not even planning to apply to the Martial Arts Academy."

The other girl in a pink sports outfit randomly swung a few swords. Her well-developed chest bounced slightly as she wiped the sweat from her forehead, dejectedly saying, "You're still better off. You've practiced before; I barely have."

The girl in dark blue quickly comforted her, "I'm not much better than you, maybe just a little bit. Did you sign up for any training classes?"

"Of course I did; hardly anyone in our class hasn't signed up," the pink girl replied.

"Li Siyuan didn't sign up!" Speaking of Li Siyuan, the dark blue girl's eyes sparkled.

"He's already passed the Martial Arts Apprentice exam, so why would he need tutoring? I heard he doesn't even want the recommendation to the Beijing Martial Arts Academy and is now applying to universities abroad, planning to study overseas."

"If it were me, I would have gone long ago. But the ideas of a genius aren't understandable to ordinary people," the dark blue girl sighed.

The pink girl paused, took a sip from a nearby bottle of mineral water, glanced around, and suddenly said, "Jingjing, that person's sword strikes are so precise!"

The dark blue girl named Jingjing stopped and glanced over, dismissively saying:

"What's so impressive about that? Judging by his slow movements, he's still a beginner experiencing muscle coordination. I'm telling you, how standard a sword form looks is useless; the key is muscle coordination and the speed of the strike to truly unleash power."

"Oh!" The pink girl listened in a daze, starting to believe it somewhat, but he's really handsome, with a tall build, rosy lips, and bright teeth, a special demeanor in every move.

She took a few small sips of water, put down the mineral water bottle, and couldn't help but look at the young man again, only to find his sword form had changed. He was no longer thrusting straight but was performing a bewildering series of moves she didn't recognize.

She watched, amazed, and quickly added, "Look how many sword forms he knows?"

The dark blue girl continued practicing sword, not even turning her head: "I've already told you, it's all show, useless in reality. Even the park's old sword dancers practice better than him; it's probably some stuff he learned online by fumbling around. I've seen a lot of people like this."

The pink girl couldn't argue back.

So frustrating!

She just felt he was so amazing, the moves were beautiful, and the person was handsome, she thought to herself, giving up practicing sword to watch the young man from a distance.

She saw his movements, sometimes fast, sometimes slow. Slow like an ox pulling a cart, the sword thrust substantial; fast like a lightweight body gliding over water, like a spider skimming across the water, each sword stroke was expansive, with a strong sense of aesthetic pleasure.

With such good-looking movements, how could he possibly be a beginner as Jingjing suggested?

A few minutes later, the young man stood with his sword, exhaling a breath of white mist.

It was deep autumn, the morning air was chilly, and this white mist shot out like an arrow over five or six meters, lingering in the air without dispersing.

The pink girl widened her eyes slightly, stunned, nearly gasping in surprise.

The young man seemed to sense something, suddenly turned and glanced at her, nodding at her in acknowledgment.

The pink girl flushed with embarrassment, avoiding eye contact and covertly picked up her wooden sword, randomly thrusting a few times, her heart pounding.

After some time, she stopped again, only to find her subject of interest had long left, watching him walk away leisurely with his wooden sword, disappearing into a residential building.

"He lives in building five too?" The pink girl wondered, placing her small hand over her chest, "How come I've never seen him before, could he be new?"

...

In a coffee shop.

Melodious music drifts in the restaurant, Chen Shouyi looked at Bai Xiaoling and asked, "You said you have important information to tell me, you can speak now."

"Something major happened, you need to be careful for the next few days," Bai Xiaoling said with a solemn expression.

Chen Shouyi picked up his coffee, took a sip, seemingly indifferent, "Why? What happened?"

"In the past week, five martial artists have disappeared in Hedong City, including one major martial artist," Bai Xiaoling said.

Chen Shouyi was slightly surprised at these words, putting down his coffee cup, "That's impossible."

A major martial artist disappearing without a trace, unless it's by a similar martial artist or someone of even greater strength. But aren't these all official personnel, at least with government status, high-ranking and powerful?

Under the government's strict constraints, who would foolishly challenge social order?

"The police suspect this is the work of the Pantheon; it's their style. Hedong has now requested intervention from higher forces," Bai Xiaoling continued, not waiting for Chen Shouyi to ask further, explaining:

"It's an international terrorist organization, long established, always very mysterious. Since the worlds merged, this organization has existed, initially made up of some financial groups and scientists, later joined secretly by some martial artists. Their ultimate goal is to become gods, for which they conduct crazy human experiments, even willingly cooperating with deities from other worlds.

The organization has been attacked many times but always quickly resurfaces.

I only recently learned about this organization; it's highly confidential. If I weren't your liaison officer, I wouldn't even be entitled to this knowledge."

Chapter 118: Chapter 118: Arrangements

Chen Shouyi rubbed his temples, somewhat troubled, and said, "So, it seems there might be someone from the organization among the martial artists in Hedong City."

"I'm not sure about that, but their identities are quite secretive. If they aren't exposed, no one will know they are hiding their true identities," Bai Xiaoling said after a brief silence.

That made sense. After all, it was a terrorist organization that couldn't be exposed to the light. Once their identities were revealed, it would mean death.

"By the way, who is the missing famous martial artist?" Chen Shouyi suddenly remembered to ask.

"It's Director Fang Shengjie from the Martial Arts Notary and Discipline Inspection Bureau!"

Upon hearing this, Chen Shouyi couldn't help but be taken aback and put down his coffee.

So it was him.

Back then, Fang Shengjie had high hopes for him, hoping to recruit him into the Martial Arts Notary and Discipline Inspection Bureau, but he ultimately declined. He didn't expect that the missing martial artist would be him.

"You know him?" Bai Xiaoling noticed a change in Chen Shouyi's expression and asked with concern.

"I've met him a few times, so I guess you could say I know him!" Chen Shouyi shook his head and finished his coffee in one gulp.

Bai Xiaoling hesitated for a moment as she looked at the handsome and charming Chen Shouyi, then gritted her teeth and said:

"You're in considerable danger now. Most of the missing people, besides Director Fang, are young martial artists. I suggest you stay out of sight for a while."

...

Across the street from the neighborhood, Chen Shouyi's family's small restaurant was located here, but this was his first time visiting.

The restaurant wasn't large, about forty to fifty square meters, but the decor was quite nice, with a vintage dark brown style. It looked much better than the old restaurants in Dongning. The shop was empty, with only one chubby person having a meal.

Of course, it was already afternoon and well past the usual mealtime.

"Why are you here?" Mrs. Chen called out as soon as she saw Chen Shouyi.

"I came to check things out. Mom, how's business these days?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"The restaurant has only just opened a few days ago, so there's no way for business to be booming yet. Nowadays, it's not even enough to cover the rent, but once repeat customers increase, it will gradually get better," Mrs. Chen said.

Just then, Chen Dawei also walked out from the kitchen: "Have you eaten yet?"

"Dad, I ate earlier. Why not hire a chef?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"For such a small restaurant, I can handle it myself. Why hire a chef?" Chen Dawei said.

Chen Shouyi was speechless. It wasn't that he was complaining about his father, but to be honest, his dad's cooking skills weren't great. In Dongning City, they managed with low prices, and business was alright. However, in a metropolis like Hedong, there was no competitiveness.

But Chen Shouyi didn't persuade them further. The family had enough money and didn't have to worry about living expenses, especially with him there.

"Mom, Dad, have you ever thought about traveling? You've been working hard all your life, you should take some time to see the world." Chen Shouyi subtly suggested.

"Travel? Why spend that money? It's exhausting and not fun at all," Mrs. Chen, accustomed to frugality, instinctively refused. But halfway through the sentence, she sensed something was off and quickly whispered, "Wait, did something happen?"

Having gone through a cult incident before, she was now quite sensitive to such matters. As soon as Chen Shouyi mentioned it, she sharply sensed something was wrong.

"Recently, the security in Hedong is a bit chaotic. There's an underground organization causing havoc. As a martial artist, I'm naturally not afraid and can't leave easily, but I worry some people might target martial artists' families, which could implicate you and Xing Yue," Chen Shouyi said nonchalantly.

Father Chen and Mrs. Chen exchanged a worried glance.

...

Under Chen Shouyi's persuasion, his parents acted quickly. By that afternoon, they hurriedly left with Chen Xingyue, and he personally saw them off at the train station.

"Are you really deciding to stay in Hedong City?" On the way back, Bai Xiaoling looked at Chen Shouyi through the rearview mirror as he rested his eyes with a calm expression, and couldn't help but ask.

Chen Shouyi opened his eyes, flicked his fingers, producing a crisp sound, and said lightly, "I'm not in the habit of fleeing at the first sign of trouble like a lost dog. Let them come if they want to!"

He didn't know how strong he was now, only that he was very strong, likely stronger than an ordinary big martial artist.

With this level of strength, running away would make him feel ashamed.

With confidence in his abilities, he felt a mix of excitement and impatience at the prospect of confrontation.

...

After having dinner outside, Chen Shouyi returned to his residential building.

He stepped into the elevator, and as the doors began to close, a clear voice echoed:

"Wait!"

Chen Shouyi quickly pressed the open button, and soon a young girl rushed in, bringing a refreshing fragrance with her. "Thank you!"

Seeing that the girl hadn't pressed a floor button, Chen Shouyi glanced at her, asking, "Which floor?"

The girl had a bit of baby fat and fair skin, wearing a brown floral jacket over a white T-shirt with a cartoon rabbit, and a plaid pleated skirt, looking quite youthful and adorable.

The girl glanced at Chen Shouyi, her cheeks slightly reddening, and softly said, "I'm on the fifth floor too!"

Chen Shouyi found it a coincidence and laughed, "Then we're neighbors. My name is Chen Shouyi, and I just moved in recently."

"I'm Song Tingting," the girl mustered the courage to say shyly, gazing at Chen Shouyi.

She had bright and moist eyes, as if brimming with autumn water.

"I think you look familiar. Have we met somewhere before?" Chen Shouyi asked. As soon as he finished speaking, he realized his pick-up line was somewhat cliché, but he truly found her familiar.

To his surprise, the girl nodded immediately, shyly saying, "We met during morning exercises."

"Oh!" Chen Shouyi, who had a good memory, recalled it quickly upon her reminder. "You were the one in the pink tracksuit?"

"Yes, your skills were impressive. Are you a Martial Artist Apprentice?" Song Tingting said, feeling her heart race, palms sweaty.

Chen Shouyi smiled and replied, "Something like that."

The fifth floor arrived quickly. Chen Shouyi stepped out of the elevator, took out his keys, and was about to open his door when he noticed the girl lived right next door.

At that moment, Song Tingting also looked at Chen Shouyi, and when their eyes met, she quickly diverted her gaze, her face blushing like a ripe persimmon.

Not overthinking it, Chen Shouyi walked inside.

Feeling the emptiness of the house, he let out a faint sigh.

He entered his room, turned on the computer, and logged into the Explorer Network. He found that his exploration task had been reviewed, and there was a digital certificate for the small island's gold mine, proving it was his discovery.

Next, he checked his bank account, finding the money already deposited.

With over 3.5 million in savings, he closed the webpage.

The efficiency was indeed quite impressive.

However, the gold mine wouldn't yield results anytime soon.

...

In the following days, everything remained calm. Each day, Chen Shouyi was either practicing his sword skills or on his way to practice, leading a remarkably routine life.

During these days, he found a better place to train his swordsmanship.

It was an abandoned factory nearby, pending demolition.

The factory was large, spanning several dozen acres, so even when he exerted himself fully, the sound wouldn't reach the outside.

Chapter 119: Chapter 119: Rebuilding Faith

The back seat of a black business car.

Four people sat facing each other, their faces calm.

"Why is there so much commotion this time? People are starting to pay attention to me now." A square-faced middle-aged man said with anger on his face, an aura of faint pressure surrounding him.

"Don't worry, Director Cao, our actions are always cautious. They won't find anything."

"But what's the deal with Fang Shengjie? Do you not realize how much trouble a person of his level causes once something goes wrong? You can just walk away scot-free, but I'd be the one in trouble then."

"Fang Shengjie was just an accident. If he hadn't meddled, we wouldn't have killed him. Besides, it was an order from above. You wouldn't disobey that, would you? With everything you've done over the years, there's no going back." A dark-skinned youth with Southeast Asian features sneered sinisterly, a hint of malevolence on his face.

The square-faced middle-aged man's face immediately darkened.

"Shut up, Coret!" A middle-aged man with a shaved head reprimanded.

The malevolent youth shrugged and stayed silent.

"This incident was our mistake; we were too lax in our vigilance." The bald man continued as he saw the square-faced man's expression soften, "The target for this mission is seven young Martial Artist Level live bodies, and we still need two more. Once the mission is complete, the organization has always been generous to its own. You'll receive three tubes of Primordial Divine Blood."

"The organization still hasn't used up the Primordial Divine Blood?" The square-faced man finally changed expression, suspecting.

He knew that the Pantheon had obtained some remnants of gods through various means at the onset of otherworldly invasions, which is why many martial artists were lured and enticed.

Money wasn't a concern; most of them weren't lacking it, but the increase in power was something they couldn't ignore.

Though Great Xia acquired far more divine remains than the Pantheon, they also had a lot more martial artists. Over the past twenty years, the quality of the Divine Blood in Great Xia had degraded and diluted countless times, losing most of its divine effects. In comparison, the Pantheon's Divine Blood was undoubtedly much more effective.

"The original Divine Blood was long used up. However, the organization has reestablished faith for It, greatly enhancing the quality of the Divine Blood."

The square-faced man pondered slightly, and then his expression drastically changed: "You're not afraid of backlash?"

The simplest way to improve Divine Blood quality was to take the divine remains to the other world, control a Barbarian Tribe, and reestablish faith, which was akin to reviving an ancient god from death.

This kind of situation had occurred before.

"I'm not sure about that. Compared to the gains, even if there's backlash, the Pantheon can afford the loss!" The bald man smiled, revealing a set of white teeth, "And what's the harm in having another god in the other world? There are many gods there, and perhaps It should thank us for its rebirth."

"Relax, old boy, you Great Xia people are too cautious. The four of us Martial Artists in Hedong City are enough to walk sideways without major issues. If not for the need for caution and secrecy, I alone could handle it." Another person, who had remained silent, spoke up.

This was a tall, handsome young man with a charming smile on his lips as he spoke, his Mandarin somewhat awkward, clearly not a native of Great Xia.

"Let's finish this job quickly; staying here feels a bit stifling," the Southeast Asian said, somewhat impatiently.

.....

"The first practical quantum satellite was successfully launched at 3:40 on December 25, 2015, at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center and officially put into use. This marks an important step forward in our country's communication technology.

It also means that our country has become the first in the world to restore satellite signals.

According to reporters from the National Defense Science and Industry Bureau and the National Space Administration, quantum communication technology uses high-energy photons for quantum entanglement transmission, unaffected by otherworldly force fields.

Quantum communication is not only applied to daily communications for the people but also to communication assurance for water, electricity, gas, and other energy supplies and livelihood network infrastructures. It is also applicable in defense, finance, and

commercial fields, poised to bring about significant changes in the industry and technology sectors.

In the next half-year, our country will successively launch three to five satellites to initially establish a global communication and military network while accelerating the construction of a ground quantum communication network..."

"The war in Tony Country is coming to an end, with a multinational force led by Xia, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and others taking official control of Wushui City. Apart from small-scale battles, the war has basically subsided. It is reported that the number of casualties among the multinational forces has reached as high as more than 15,000, including the number of soldiers sacrificed from our country..."

At this moment, a knock on the door was heard. Chen Shouyi frowned, grabbed the sword beside him, stood up from the computer desk, and walked out of the bedroom.

Stopping cautiously about four or five meters from the door, he listened carefully and heard only a faint breathing.

Seems to be an ordinary person, Chen Shouyi was slightly relieved in his heart:

"Who is it?"

"It's me, is that Senior?" A crisp voice came from outside the door.

Chen Shouyi put the sword behind his back and opened the door. At the door was his new neighbor, Song Tingting.

"Senior, do you want some grapes?" She held a basin of washed grapes, boldly looking at Chen Shouyi, her face a little nervous.

"Oh, thank you for the grapes!" Chen Shouyi politely said as he took the grapes.

"Can I come in?" Song Tingting asked cautiously.

Chen Shouyi hesitated for a moment and said: "Of course, please!"

With the Shell Lady still in the bag, there was no worry of being discovered. He carried the plate into the kitchen, took out a fruit bowl, and poured the grapes into it.

Song Tingting found a pair of shoe covers in the shoe cabinet by the door and gently walked into the house. She glanced around briefly before following Chen Shouyi into the kitchen, looking at the sword in his hand: "Senior, are you practicing martial arts?"

"Sort of," Chen Shouyi thought as he looked at Song Tingting's defenseless face: This girl is kind of naive, alone with a guy, and doesn't feel concerned at all.

"Even someone as skilled as you works so hard. Not like me, I can never seem to learn." Song Tingting said, her eyes flashing as she looked at Chen Shouyi.

"It's not something that happens overnight; it takes time."

"Oh, can I ask you for advice in the future?" Song Tingting looked up expectantly.

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After some awkward small talk, Song Tingting soon asked to leave: "My mom is probably looking for me, I better go!"

"Oh, take care. Oh, right, your fruit bowl."

Song Tingting stuck out her tongue, quickly turned around to take the fruit bowl, and left the room.

Smelling the lingering fragrance the girl left behind, Chen Shouyi took a deep breath, suppressed the restlessness in his heart, and returned to the bedroom.

...

As soon as Song Tingting opened the door, her mom came out of the kitchen and asked, "I just turned around, and you were gone. Where did you go just now?"

"I went outside to eat some grapes." Song Tingting replied.

Her mom looked at the fruit bowl, now empty, and said with exasperation, "You eat so fast; your dad and I haven't even had any yet."

"Mom, the grapes we bought today were delicious. I want more tomorrow!" Song Tingting hugged her mom's arm, shaking it coquettishly.

"How did I give birth to such a foodie!"

Her dad, sitting on the sofa reading a newspaper, laughed and said, "If our beloved daughter wants to eat, we'll just buy more tomorrow."

Chapter 120: Chapter 120: Courting Death

At eleven o'clock in the evening, the bedroom's landline suddenly rang.

After the phone rang three times, Chen Shouyi, who was practicing the Thirty-Six Techniques for Body Conditioning, stopped and glanced at Shell Lady who was watching cartoons without blinking, walked over, picked up the phone, and said in a deep voice: "It's Chen Shouyi!"

"Come quickly and save me." The call was from Lu Weifeng.

Chen Shouyi's heart sank: "Where are you?"

"I'm in the lower district on Shouming Street... Number 29, beside the public phone booth, I can't hold on much longer... Remember, do not call the police, I don't trust anyone right now." He coughed a few times suddenly, seeming to have been injured.

Chen Shouyi hesitated for a few seconds, then said: "Wait, find somewhere to hide first, I'll be right there!"

Then he hung up the phone.

Lu Weifeng was a martial artist from the same class as him and was considered his closest martial artist friend; Chen Shouyi couldn't let him die, and with his temperament, he couldn't do such a thing.

Damn, is the Pantheon targeting Lu Weifeng this time?

He stood for a while, a trace of killing intent flashed in his eyes, picked up his sword, and quickly left.

He walked quickly out of the community, flagged down a taxi, and as soon as he sat in the car: "Go to Shouming Street, Number 29."

The driver glanced at the sword in Chen Shouyi's hand, made no comment, and soon started the car.

Chen Shouyi's expression was as calm as water, watching the lights outside the window rapidly recede; inside the car was silent.

Gradually, he calmed himself down, held the sword, and began to close his eyes to rest. About half an hour later, he opened his eyes and found the car seemed to be straying off course. He asked: "Driver, you took the wrong road, haven't we arrived yet?"

"I've been driving taxis for ten years, Hedong's streets—I could navigate them with my eyes closed; Shouming Street is in the suburbs!" the driver smiled and said.

"Then drive fast, I'm in a hurry." Chen Shouyi nodded, not suspecting anything, he hadn't heard of Shouming Street before moving to Hedong.

"Alright!" The driver suddenly slammed the accelerator.

Time was approaching twelve o'clock, and there weren't many vehicles on the road.

The taxi sped along, slowly revealing large areas of unfinished buildings on either side. Before long, the driver suddenly turned the steering wheel, heading toward a construction site!

"Driver, are you sure you didn't make a mistake." Chen Shouyi finally felt something was wrong and said coldly.

"Sorry, drank too much water and need to relieve myself, found a place, need to go first."

At this moment, Chen Shouyi keenly noticed, although the driver looked apologetic, there was a trace of a cold smile at the corner of his mouth.

An idea flashed like lightning through his mind, in an instant he understood everything.

This was a conspiracy, a plot targeting him.

From Lu Weifeng's plea for help to the conveniently passing taxi driver to the dark construction site ahead, it was all a trap.

A strong anger rose from his heart.

Lu Weifeng, damn it, you're asking for death!

Without a second thought, Chen Shouyi smashed the taxi's driver's seat railing with a hand, grabbing the driver's neck, the driver suddenly let go of the steering wheel, clutching Chen Shouyi's hand with one hand.

But that hand was like cast iron, completely unmovable.

"What a grand setup, excellently disguised, you've even deceived me." Chen Shouyi sneered.

Judging by his struggling strength, he turned out to be a martial artist in disguise.

"Don't... don't kill me, I'm forced." A long cut made by a steel pipe appeared on his face, the flesh rolling open, blood gushing.

Full of fear, one hand desperately reached under the seat, where there was his protective short sword.

But before he could reach it, the next moment, an irresistible force came over, the driver's seat railing instantly broke, his body like a broken sack hit the windshield, rolling over a dozen times, until the back of his head hit the wall with a thud, finally stopping.

He suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood, his mind blank.

"Bang!" With a loud noise, the passenger door was kicked flying over ten meters.

Chen Shouyi with the Long Sword walked out.

That "driver", standing up with effort, swaying: "I...I was forced."

As soon as he finished speaking, he felt something flash before his eyes, with a boom, his chest was kicked seven to eight meters away, a crisp sound of bones cracking, countless ribs were broken, he lay on the ground like a corpse, blood flowing continuously from his mouth, body twitching.

Watching Chen Shouyi walking quickly over, his eyes full of fear and despair.

Chen Shouyi stepped on his chest, applying slight force: "How many people inside?"

He suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood, perhaps sensing death approaching, he glared fiercely: "You're doomed!"

Chen Shouyi's expression turned cold, he suddenly stepped hard.

With a crunch, his chest collapsed instantly, blood and flesh splattered like mud.

Chen Shouyi glanced at that stretch of dark construction site ahead, then turned around to head back.

He was confident in his own strength, yet wasn't a fool; such a blatant trap meant for him, he'd be mad to walk right into.

"Clap clap clap!"

At that moment, a burst of applause suddenly echoed.

Chen Shouyi paused, looking toward the sound.

On the opposite side of the street stood a handsome young man in a black leather jacket, clapping his hands and walking briskly toward him:

"Truly unexpected, if I hadn't been outside monitoring the situation, today's mission would have failed."

No cars had passed on this street for some time, clearly, this spot was carefully chosen.

Chen Shouyi said nothing, slowly drawing his sword, stepping toward him with no expression on his face.

"Boy, all struggles are futile!" He shrugged, smiling gently, completely at ease.

As if he would not face any opponent, but rather a leisurely outing, he didn't even carry any weapons, apparently intending to capture him alive.

A glint of coldness flashed in Chen Shouyi's eyes as the distance between them quickly closed.

Twenty meters, fifteen meters, ten meters...

In an instant, Chen Shouyi moved, his attack reminiscent of a thunderclap, the piercing sound reverberating painfully through the ears.

Feeling the fierce wind against his face and the swiftly magnifying blurred sword tip, the young man's smile had yet to fade completely before his expression shifted drastically.

At the critical moment, he sharply dodged to the side, and the leather jacket on his body was instantly torn by the violent airflow, a searing pain coursing through his chest.

Ignoring his fear, he quickly retreated, stepping swiftly backward.

However, it was already too late. Chen Shouyi switched moves swiftly, his sword slicing towards the chest and abdomen like a startling swan, passing in a flash.

The handsome young man instinctively tried to raise his hands to block the sword's edge, but caught nothing but air.

Inserting the sword back into its scabbard, Chen Shouyi walked ahead without even glancing back, taking several strides and quickly vanishing into the darkness.

The young man stood rooted to the spot, motionless, cold sweat dripping profusely from his forehead.

Soon, three people slowly emerged from the construction site.

The bald man glanced at the corpse, furrowing his brow, he called out to the distant, rigid young man: "Eric, where is he?"

The young man said nothing.

There were no streetlights, and the dim light left no one aware of the young man's odd behavior.

The square-faced man glanced at the brutally killed driver, his temples throbbing, a flicker of anger crossing his face. This was a trusted aide he had painstakingly cultivated, now dead, he averted his gaze, speaking solemnly:

"Perhaps he used the opportunity to escape? This was someone Fang Shengjie vouched for, who would have thought he was this strong!"

"After this, the other side will probably be on alert, next time we change targets!" the bald man said.

"Eric, what's wrong with you, stop standing there, let's go."

The young man remained unmoved.

The Southeast Asian finally sensed something was wrong, walked over, and discovered the other was covered in blood, face pale, eyes full of terror.

"What's wrong with you? Are you hurt?" he turned to the bald man and shouted:
"Captain, Eric seems off."

After saying this, he prepared to go support him.

The young man hurriedly stared at him in panic, signaling desperately with his eyes.

The Southeast Asian didn't understand, thinking the other was about to collapse, he quickened his steps.

"No..."

As soon as he opened his mouth, the young man suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood, his body swaying slightly, on the verge of collapse.

Seeing this, the Southeast Asian hurriedly supported him strongly, then strangely felt the other's body was a bit light. He glanced down instinctively, and his hands loosened involuntarily.

Half of the body fell to the ground with a thud, the lower half had collapsed, and the ruptured liver and lungs had fallen out.

The Southeast Asian squatted down quickly, apologetically saying: "Brother, I'm sorry, I really didn't know, you won't blame me, right?"

"I... I... FU... CK!" he struggled to extend a hand, giving the Southeast Asian the finger.

The bald man was already rushing over, and upon seeing this, his face changed dramatically, asking in a deep voice: "Who did it?"

"This time... the target was very strong, I was careless... Captain... you must... avenge me... kill him!" he stared wide-eyed, black blood gushing incessantly from his mouth, whispered intermittently.

"Alright!" the bald man nodded gravely.

"Tha-thank you, give me... a quick one!"

"Bear with it!"

Then, he reluctantly turned his head, gritting his teeth before delivering a sharp strike to the young man's forehead.

With a crack, the skull shattered.

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In the dark corner, Chen Shouyi averted his gaze, eyes lowered, his hand feeling the rough sword hilt: "So it was him!"