

## I CAN CONTROL RESOURCES

### Chapter 121 - 117: Eastern Capital Military Academy's Number 1 (Part 2)

'It still hurts!'

'Handsome men are nothing but trouble!'

Kong Kun, however, remained silent, merely clenching his fists.

"Let's go. I'll take you to see the Battle Rankings, and we'll pick up a couple of training uniforms on the way," Gui Zian said simply, then turned to lead the way.

「...」

The grounds of the Eastern Capital Military Academy were vast.

Gao Neng had arrived the previous night and hadn't gotten a good look around. This morning, he'd gone straight to the training grounds. Walking through the campus now, he found it all quite novel.

He didn't waste any time, though.

After this morning's great battle, he had come to truly understand that at the Eastern Capital Military Academy, strength was everything. If he weren't strong enough, he'd probably have been beaten to death by now.

After walking for a bit, Gao Neng began to cultivate as he observed his surroundings.

His Spiritual Power was formidable, allowing him to multitask. So, as he followed Gui Zian, he also continued to magnetize his arms.

"You can multitask?" Gui Zian paused, seemingly able to sense the energy fluctuations as Gao Neng magnetized his body.

"Multitask?!" Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing's expressions changed.

Gao Neng just nodded casually.

'Isn't this standard practice?'

"Even if you can multitask, magnetizing your body while walking consumes an immense amount of Spiritual Power," Gui Zian continued.

"It's fine. My bone marrow, muscles, and blood are perfected, so my Spiritual Power recovers quickly." Gao Neng didn't bother being secretive; after all, they would all be training together from now on.

Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing's expressions changed once more.

It wasn't just them; even Gui Zian's expression flickered.

'So what if you're a genius?!'

'Damn it!'

"Gao Neng, Gao Neng, what color is your magnetic core?" Fang Tangtang, on the other hand, didn't seem too discouraged by his words. Instead, she sidled up next to him.

"What about yours?" Gao Neng asked cautiously.

"Hahaha, even though I'm only at Tier Two Mid Stage, my magnetic core is light pink!" As she said this, a faint, proud smile graced her lips.

"Light pink?" Gao Neng nodded. Then, he glanced at his own magnetic core and instantly felt that something wasn't right. His core, which had originally been bright red, had now turned into a light red.

'What's going on?'

In truth, Gao Neng didn't know much about the concept of magnetic cores.

Seeing this, he hesitated for a moment before finally speaking. "I guess mine would be considered light pink?"

"What?! Yours is light pink too?" Fang Tangtang shrieked.

It wasn't just her. Even Gui Zian, who was leading the way, froze mid-stride.

"Gao Neng, did you say your magnetic core is light pink? Are you sure?!" Gui Zian seemed utterly astonished, staring at Gao Neng in disbelief.

"I... think so? Is there a problem?" Gao Neng wondered inwardly. 'Why was it fine when Fang Tangtang said hers was light pink, but everyone has such a huge reaction when I say it?'

"Breaking the Fourth Human Limit is truly a world apart from the third!" Gui Zian nodded and explained, "The color of a magnetic core represents its 'quantity.' To put it bluntly, different amounts of stored energy result in different colors. Generally, only someone at Tier Two Late Stage or Tier Three will have a pink core!"

"Oh, so what color comes after pink?"

"Red, of course."

"Huh? That's really weird, then. Mine was definitely red last night. I don't know how, but today it's turned pink."

THUMP!

Feng Qingqing's foot slipped, and she nearly fell flat on her rear.

Meanwhile, Gui Zian, Kong Kun, and Fang Tangtang were frozen on the spot. The three exchanged a look, with Kong Kun and Fang Tangtang staring at Gao Neng as if he were some kind of monster.

Even Gui Zian's expression twitched.

"Gao Neng, this is no time for jokes. Was your magnetic core actually red?" Gui Zian's expression was exceptionally serious.

"It really was," Gao Neng nodded.

"How long did it take you to break through and become an Energy Warrior?" Gui Zian asked.

"About two months, I think. Dr. Lan knows about it." Gao Neng had considered hiding it, but it wasn't really a secret; after all, Dr. Lan and his team already knew.

'Of course, the main thing is that Gui Zian just said the core's color only represents its energy storage. That shouldn't be a problem, right?'

"Two months!" Gui Zian's eyes nearly popped out of his head. Then, he mused, "What a damn monster. A Tier One's magnetic core is the same as a Tier Four's?!"

"By the way, what color is your core, Instructor?" Gao Neng asked tentatively.

"Me? Heh heh, you're just trying to ask what my strength level is, aren't you, kid? No harm in telling you. My magnetic core is purple, and I'm a Tier Seven. If you want revenge for this morning, I'm happy to accept your challenge." Gui Zian sneered. 'No matter how much of a freak you are, you're still just a Tier One right now.'

'Did you really think I can't keep you in line?'

"Haha... You're joking, Instructor. How could I possibly fight you?" Only then did Gao Neng truly realize Gui Zian's level of strength.

'He's actually a Tier Seven?!'

'No wonder his aura is even more oppressive than Shen Ning'Er's!'

'I wonder what tier Shen Ning'Er is at now?'

"I don't mind if you want to fight. The invitation is always open." Gui Zian had naturally guessed what Gao Neng was thinking and replied casually before continuing, "Your magnetic core's color has faded likely due to energy consumption. You might want to go to Logistics and trade for some Energy Pills."

"Are they free?"

"In your dreams. Energy Pills are refined from energy-rich ores and herbs; how could they possibly be free? If you want to trade for them, use Merit Points!"

"Merit Points can be exchanged for Energy Pills?"

"Not only can you exchange Merit Points for Energy Pills, you can trade them for all sorts of things. Even promotions in military rank are tied to Merit Points!" This time, it was Fang Tangtang who answered. At the mention of Merit Points, her eyes lit up again. "Gao Neng, are you short on cash? I can buy your Merit Points from you."

"The academy's Merit Points can't be bought with money. No matter how rich you are, you have no hope of getting a promotion without them," Kong Kun, who had been silent until now, finally spoke up.

"Kong Kun, what's your rank?" Fang Tangtang asked immediately.

"Sergeant. Why?" Kong Kun replied.

"Oh, nothing. It's just that I'm already a Lieutenant. Would I ever deliberately flaunt my rank in front of a Sergeant like you?" Fang Tangtang beamed.

"..." Kong Kun was speechless.

"Alright, we're here!" Just then, Gui Zian finally stopped. He pointed to four massive screens on the building before them. "Those are the Battle Rankings."

"The Battle Rankings!" Gao Neng looked up.

Before him were four massive screens, and at the top of each was a large letter: "A," "B," "C," and "D."

Below those letters, each screen listed the names of twenty teams.

After each team's name were the names of its captain and members.

In addition to that...

In front of each team, there was also a corresponding number.

For example, the top team on the "A" ranking read: "ID: Training Room 001, Hunt God Team (Captain: Lin Ying; Members: Chen Qing, Qiao Yaqiu, Han Yuping)."  
Each team consisted of four people.

"So if I defeat this... 'Hunt God Team,' I'll be number one on the Battle Rankings, right?" Gao Neng asked casually, looking at the names on the screen.

"That's right. Defeat the Hunt God Team, and you'll be number one on the rankings. Defeat Lin Ying, and you'll be the number one student in the entire Eastern Capital Military Academy. To be honest, that Lin Ying kid's strength is pretty average. Tier Five Late Stage, with seven talents over 80 percent. Want to give it a shot?" Gui Zian said with a placid, sarcastic smile.

"No need to think about it. First place on the Battle Rankings is mine for the taking. And not just that, I'm determined to become the number one student at the Eastern Capital Military Academy," Gao Neng stated with a calm expression.

'Tier Five Late Stage? So what?'

Before he'd even become an Energy Warrior, he had already taken Shen Ning'Er down twice. Was that something he'd just make up?

(Today's update is a bit late, but here's a 4,000-word Chapter for you!)

## **Chapter 122 - 118: I Can Break Your Bones, Believe It or Not?**

"Hmph, Lin Ying is no ordinary Tier Five Late Stage expert!" Feng Qingqing turned her head to the side.

"By senior year, it should be possible! No, maybe even junior year!" Kong Kun considered this seriously before voicing his opinion.

"Wait until junior year? Won't the Hunt God Team have graduated by then? Why don't we just challenge the Hunt God Team tomorrow!" Fang Tangtang said, her face alight with excitement.

"Ahem!" Gui Zian cleared his throat heavily. "Confidence is a good thing, but you have to be realistic. The Eastern Capital Military Academy's battle rankings only have spots for 80 teams. With four people per team, that's a total of 320 people on the rankings. Meanwhile, the Eastern Capital Military Academy enrolls 1,200 students each year, and the War Academy's senior class alone has 400 students. For a first-year to make it onto the battle rankings..."

Gui Zian didn't finish his sentence, just offering a small smile instead.

"So, has a first-year never made it onto the battle rankings before?" Fang Tangtang asked, sounding unconvinced.

"Of course, there have been. If I recall correctly, Lin Ying himself made it onto the battle rankings as a first-year. However, he joined a team formed by third-year students," Gui Zian replied.

"First-years can join third-year teams?" Gao Neng was a little surprised.

"Of course. Although the Eastern Capital Military Academy is one of the top four military academies, not every student who gets in is a genius. It's not unheard of for a second-year to be stronger than a fourth-year. In a way, getting on the battle

rankings really just means your individual strength is in the top 300," Gui Zian explained.

"So what are the benefits of getting on the battle rankings?"

"There are definitely benefits, and they're huge. Besides having priority access to specific training rooms, every team on the battle rankings also gets a discount when exchanging for items with Merit Points at the logistics department, based on their rank," Gui Zian said with a smile playing on his lips.

"A discount?"

"That's right. D-List teams get a 20% discount, C-List teams get 40%, B-List teams get 60%, and A-List teams get 80%! On top of that, the academy also gives out Merit Point rewards every year based on the battle rankings," Gui Zian said with a grin.

"It's that good?!" Gao Neng was finally interested. Getting on the battle rankings meant spending less to exchange for items, plus there were Merit Point rewards.

It was basically a care package!

"Geniuses always get special privileges. Feel like giving it a shot? Actually, the last-place team on the D-List is pretty average. Only one of their four members is Tier Three; the other three are all Tier Two Late Stage." As Gui Zian spoke, the smile on his face grew wider.

'One Tier Three and three at Tier Two Late Stage? That doesn't sound so hard.'  
Gao Neng glanced at the name of the last team on the D-List.

The Lone Soul Team!

Captain: Cui Jun.

He didn't bother looking at the other members' names.

'This name is so cringey, though. Lone Soul... maybe adding "Wandering Ghost" would be more fitting?'

"Alright, that's enough looking at the battle rankings. I'll take you to get your training uniforms," Gui Zian said, clearly not intending to continue the topic. For first-years to get on the battle rankings, their only option was to join a second or third-year team.

Otherwise, it was completely hopeless.

Even among Tier Twos, combat power could be completely different.

Kong Kun could be called a genius among this year's new students, but he was still just a genius among \*new students\*. If he really went up against the people on the battle rankings, he wouldn't be able to beat a single one.

After all, real combat wasn't just about talent; it also came down to experience and tactical coordination.

Anyone who could make it onto the battle rankings...

How could their combat experience and coordination possibly be poor?

As for Gao Neng...

Gui Zian didn't try to discourage him too much. After all, Gao Neng was monstrously talented, almost unnaturally so. If he got lucky and a third or fourth-year team extended an invitation, it wasn't entirely hopeless for Gao Neng to get on the battle rankings.

...

The group of five, led by Gui Zian, entered the building.

This was the War Academy, an enormous twelve-story building. The battle rankings were hung on its exterior wall.

Gui Zian helped Gao Neng and the others each claim two sets of training uniforms. They were all a standard design, made of black material, but they weren't military dress uniforms.

The Eastern Capital Military Academy was a cradle for the Military Department.

However, students were not issued military dress uniforms until they had officially joined the Military Department.

After collecting the training uniforms,

Gui Zian then took Gao Neng and the others to tour the War Academy's training rooms.

Gao Neng's eyes gradually lit up.

These training rooms seemed to be the same kind of "black technology" as the simulated battlefields from the college entrance exams. However, the equipment here was clearly much more sophisticated.

"The training rooms can simulate any battlefield environment, and even conjure simulated enemies. They're perfect for individual and team training in the early stages," Gui Zian explained.

Gao Neng was keen to go inside a training room and have a look.

But he discovered...

...practically every training room was full.

"Want to use a training room? You'll have to get in line. Otherwise, you get on the battle rankings and win priority access to one. Then no one will be competing with you for it." Gui Zian pointed to a list of names outside a training room. "You register up front to get in line. You'll probably have to wait seven or eight days to get in once."

"A seven or eight-day wait?" Gao Neng was a bit speechless.

"The Eastern Capital Military Academy only has 80 training rooms in total, but there are 5,000 students. Why else do you think the battle rankings exist?"

"Isn't that too few?"

"Too few? You wouldn't think so if you knew the daily resource consumption of a single training room. This is the Eastern Capital Military Academy we're talking about. For other military academies, having 30 rooms would be considered impressive. And those academies have even more students; they'd be lucky to get into a training room once a month."

## **Chapter 123 - 118: I Can Break Your Bones, Believe It or Not?**

Gao Neng fell silent.

Gui Zian didn't press the matter. He gave them a quick tour of the War Academy campus, handed them a class schedule, and then said his goodbyes.

Once Gui Zian was gone, Fang Tangtang went back to trying to convince Gao Neng to join her team. She also invited Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing to join as well.

Gao Neng ignored her.

'If I'm going to be on a team, I'll be the one leading it.'

'I'm a genius. Why would I ever play second fiddle to Fang Tangtang?'

Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing, however, seemed tempted. Fang Tangtang had boasted that she possessed a "killer move" of incredible power—one that could cut down anyone in her path and would let them climb the combat rankings with ease.

Gao Neng wasn't buying it.

'If she really had a "killer move" like that, I probably would've experienced it this morning.' He clearly remembered beating her so badly that she'd even dropped her Scythe of Death.

He glanced at the system's evolution progress.

There was still some time.

He decided to head to the logistics department first. If he recalled correctly, he had 1,100 Merit Points, and he was curious to see what he could exchange them for.

...

The Eastern Capital Military Academy's logistics department was actually very large.

The place Gao Neng went last time was just the reception for new student registration. Item exchange was in another location, in a very spacious hall.

It was quite busy inside.

The reason was that there was only one service window.

A long line of more than ten people had formed.

Gao Neng waited patiently in line, practicing magnetizing his arm as he did.

After waiting for almost twenty minutes, it was finally his turn.

"What do you want to exchange for?" The person in charge was an old woman in her fifties. She asked with a yawn, without even lifting her head.

"I'd like to know what's available for exchange," Gao Neng said politely.

"Hm? A freshman?" The old woman lifted her head.

Only then did Gao Neng get a clear look at her. She had half-white hair and wore a pair of glasses, but her complexion was quite ruddy.

'The legendary "sweeping monk"?'

Gao Neng was quite knowledgeable and had read many novels, so he instinctively felt that someone in such a cushy job must be a reclusive master.

"Yes, I'm a freshman. My name is Gao Neng. This is my student ID." Gao Neng handed over his student ID, which contained his information.

"So you're Gao Neng?" The old woman smiled. "I've heard your name. Hmm... you've got quite a few Merit Points. 1,100. So, tell me, what do you need?"

"Do you have anything that increases energy?"

"We do. If you want to increase your energy, the simplest way is to take an Energy Pill. Energy Pills are divided into First Grade to Ninth Grade. The higher the grade, the more energy they contain. Which grade would you like to exchange for?" the old woman continued.

"How much is a First-Grade one?" Gao Neng asked again.

"5 Merit Points each."

"Can I buy them with money?"

"You can use money, but the academy's rule is that if you use money, you pay the market price. A First-Grade Energy Pill costs 20,000 Alliance Coins on the market."

'An Energy Pill is 20,000 Alliance Coins, and that's 5 Merit Points... which means 1 Merit Point is worth 4,000 Alliance Coins? I have 1,100 Merit Points, so... I have 4.4 million?!' Gao Neng was startled. He hadn't realized he was a millionaire.

"Want to exchange?"

"Not yet. Could you tell me the price of a Second-Grade Energy Pill?"

"A Second-Grade Energy Pill..."

...

Gao Neng and the old woman went back and forth, one asking and one answering.

Meanwhile, the students waiting in line behind them were also discussing it.

"So that's Gao Neng? This year's top freshman!"

"I heard he broke the Fourth Human Limit, and he's so handsome! Oh, my poor heart, how can such an outstanding junior exist?" a female upperclassman muttered.

"Outstanding? He's only at the Tier One Early Stage right now. A genius from the Forgotten Land... just how much of a genius can he really be?"

"Heh, cultivation doesn't just rely on talent. It needs resources. And to get resources, you need money. No money? What's he going to cultivate with?"

"Hahaha, true that!"

Wherever there are people, there is jealousy. After hearing the female upperclassman's words, some naturally grew disgruntled. But everyone just discussed it amongst themselves; no one would dare provoke him to his face.

Gao Neng paid them no mind. He'd always been the object of jealousy; he was used to it.

After asking about the exchange prices for Energy Pills from First to Ninth Grade, he started asking about a bulk price. For example: is there a discount for buying 10 Energy Pills at once?

If not for 10, then what about 20?

After being told there was no discount no matter how many he bought, Gao Neng gave up on the Energy Pills and turned to ask about weapons. What was the price for a first-grade one? And a second-grade one?

After he was done asking about weapons...

He started asking about the weapon grading system, and then about how different weights affected the exchange price.

When he was finally done with weapons, he started asking about battle armor.

And there were many types of battle armor: gauntlets, fist wraps, boots, leg guards, chest plates, and also single items like Heart-Protecting Mirrors, Goggles...

「Half an hour later.」

The students waiting behind Gao Neng were finally starting to look grim.

'What the hell?'

'He's been asking questions for half an hour!'

"Hey, Gao Neng, what are you actually exchanging for?"

"Hang on. I have a lot of Merit Points, so I want to get all the details before I exchange anything," Gao Neng replied without turning his head.

'We'll endure it!' The students held back.

After all, the Eastern Capital Military Academy's rules forbade students from fighting privately on campus. If they really wanted to duel, they could invite a teacher to officiate.

「An hour later.」

Gao Neng had more or less finished his questions.

The students finally let out a sigh of relief, because they saw Gao Neng writing an exchange list. They figured he should be done with his exchange soon enough.

And Gao Neng was indeed writing an exchange list.

'First-Grade Energy Pills are cheap and can boost my energy. To finish magnetizing my arm, I'll definitely need an energy supplement, so I need to get some.'

'Ten should do for now.'

'I need a weapon.'

'Fang Tangtang's Scythe of Death looked so impressive. Besides, the old woman advised that using a weapon before reaching Tier Four would boost my combat power.'

However, Gao Neng hadn't decided what weapon to get yet.

'But armor is a must.'

'I'm only Tier One, so I'll need leg guards, a Heart-Protecting Mirror, and some other miscellaneous stuff, like a gas mask, night-vision goggles...'

Gao Neng listed a long string of items.

Watching him write that long list, the old woman's eyes grew brighter and brighter. It seemed this kid was a big spender after all.

Exchanging 1,100 Merit Points all at once.

'This is a huge deal!'

"Alright, I'll exchange for this much." After finishing the long list, Gao Neng handed it to the old woman for her to calculate the Merit Point cost.

"Hmm, let me see." The old woman took the list and began to calculate.

Meanwhile, the students behind him stared with eyes red with envy.

"Who was it just now who said this kid had no money for resources? I promise I won't beat him to death!"

"1,100 Merit Points! He's exchanging it all at once? This kid isn't just rich, he's loaded! That's worth millions on the market!"

"Since when are people from the Forgotten Land this rich?"

The students grew even more jealous.

Just then, the old woman finished her calculations and announced the price. It was a total of 1,050 Merit Points—truly a nice, big transaction.

"So, are you exchanging?"

Gao Neng started to say, "I'll exch—," but the rest of the word died on his lips. Suddenly, he felt that something wasn't quite right.

'Did I get something wrong?'

"Is there a problem?" the old woman asked, confused. She calculated it again. 1,050 Merit Points. There was no problem. Her calculation skills were very strong.

"If I exchange for 1,050 points at once, can I get a 20% discount?" Gao Neng asked again.

"I can give \*you\* a break—a broken bone. How about that?" The old woman had a sharp sense of humor. This was the logistics department of a military academy, not a flea market. Hadn't this kid asked her the same question at least ten times already?

"Then I won't exchange. I'll wait a couple of days until I fight my way onto the combat rankings, then I can get a 20% discount. It's not a good deal to exchange now." Gao Neng shook his head and turned to leave.

## **Chapter 124 - 119: System Evolution Complete**

He truly felt it wasn't worth it.

1,050 Merit Points. If he could get a 20% discount, he'd save over 200 points.

Exchanging them now...

It really wasn't worth it!

Gao Neng walked away quickly without a single glance back.

"..."

The old lady and the students were all stunned.

This guy had been dawdling at the logistics department for nearly two hours, asking a ton of questions and even making a full list of things to exchange.

But when it was finally time to make the exchange, he just said, "It's not worth it right now."

And then, he ran off?!

He ran off!

More importantly, did Gao Neng just say he was going to fight his way onto the Battle Rankings in a couple of days?

A freshman who just enrolled is already thinking about getting on the Battle Rankings... Who gave him that kind of confidence?!

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!"

"Ignorance is bliss, I suppose. Once he finds out how strong the people on the Battle Rankings really are, he'll probably learn that there's always someone better."

"Hahaha..."

The students chuckled but didn't say anything more.

Meanwhile, Gao Neng was already on his way back to the dorm, lost in thought as he walked.

The logistics department had a lot of things, but they really weren't cheap.

He had a few million in savings now, but what would he do when that ran out? According to Gui Zian, replenishing energy was the most fundamental method for continuous cultivation.

To put it simply...

You could only cultivate if you had energy. Without energy, his progress would stagnate.

Gao Neng's magnetic core had already turned pale red, which meant that magnetizing his arm, on top of the heavy consumption from this morning's battle, was taking a huge toll. 'What do I do if the energy in my magnetic core runs out?'

Be prepared for danger in times of peace.

Getting on the Battle Rankings would give him a 20% discount on exchanges. That was a way to cut costs.

But Gao Neng felt he didn't just need to cut costs; he also needed to open up new sources of income. Without a stable "revenue stream," he'd be truly finished once his 1,100 Merit Points were gone.

The cost of cultivation was immense!

Just now at the logistics department, Gao Neng hadn't just been asking about prices. He had also noticed something: some students were selling ore and energy materials.

And besides them, other students were buying ore and energy materials.

It was a very subtle detail.

But thinking back on it now, Gao Neng felt there was something strange about it.

The ones selling...

They all seemed to be wearing War Academy school badges.

The ones buying...

They were wearing Manufacturing Academy school badges.

'Wait, does that mean... so that's how it is!' Gao Neng instantly understood. Students from the War Academy collected materials from outside, sold them to the school for Merit Points or money, while students from the Manufacturing Academy bought those materials to process them into weapons, armor, or Energy Pills...

'So the Eastern Capital Military Academy's logistics department is a small-scale "trading platform."'

'In that case...'

'If I can gather the materials myself and then manufacture my own weapons, armor, or Energy Pills, doesn't that mean I can cut out the "middleman"—the logistics department?'

'No middleman taking a cut. I'd be completely self-sufficient!'

'That sounds pretty great.'

'But why hasn't anyone else thought of this seemingly obvious loophole?'

'Wait!'

'I think I missed a detail somewhere.'

'First, where would I go to gather materials? Second, I don't think I know how to manufacture weapons and Energy Pills, do I?'

'Finally, even if I learned to manufacture weapons now, I'd probably have to learn them one by one. For example, if I learned to make swords, I'd just keep making swords. If I really made ten swords, I couldn't use that many. I'd still have to sell them.'

'And then...'

'It seems I'd end up back in the hands of the "middleman," the logistics department.'

'Ugh!'

Gao Neng gave a wry smile.

'The dream is beautiful, but reality is cruel, as expected.'

Back at the dorm.

Gao Neng first took a shower. He heard some noise from upstairs; Fang Tangtang was probably rolling around up there.

He paid it no mind and started to sing while cultivating. Before long, he felt the muscles in his arm beginning to magnetize.

'Cultivating by singing is really fast!'

Gao Neng was delighted.

But this joy didn't last long, because he soon discovered that the color of his magnetic core had changed again. The red hue was now almost invisible.

And besides that...

He found that the speed of magnetization had actually slowed down.

"The energy really is about to run out!" Gao Neng opened his eyes and stopped cultivating. He was starting to feel genuinely anxious now.

'I have to fight my way onto the Battle Rankings as soon as possible!'

'Otherwise, I'll have to exchange things at full price... and that would be a huge loss.'

'Also, I have to find a way to make money. But how? Ore, energy materials? Where do I even go to collect this stuff?'

Just as he was thinking about this, he heard a knock on the door.

"Who is it?" Gao Neng's heart skipped a beat. 'Could it be that someone is here to beat me up because of my singing?'

"Death God Fang Tangtang," a crisp voice answered from outside.

"Uh..." Gao Neng opened the door.

It was Fang Tangtang, just as he'd expected.

She was still wearing a green frog onesie with a big-eyed frog hat, but she looked rather sleepy.

"Why did you stop singing?" Fang Tangtang asked right away.

"What do you mean?" Gao Neng was confused.

"Sing a little longer. I was just about to fall asleep..." Fang Tangtang said, yawning again as she prepared to head back upstairs.

"Wait a minute, Fang Tangtang, do you know how to make money?" Gao Neng's eyes lit up slightly as he looked at the departing Fang Tangtang.

"What? Do I have to pay to listen to you sing?" Fang Tangtang seemed surprised, then tilted her head and thought for a moment. "How about 1,000 Alliance Coins for a full night of singing?"

"..." Gao Neng was speechless.

'She's treating me like a street performer, isn't she?'

'Still, 1,000 Alliance Coins for one night...'

'That's like an unexpected windfall.'

"Not satisfied? How much more do you want? Or how about this: you sing it again, I'll record it, and I'll pay you a 10,000 copyright fee. How's that?" Fang Tangtang blinked.

"Didn't you want to start a team?" Gao Neng, seeing Fang Tangtang's drowsy state, decided to switch to a more stimulating topic.

"A team... Huh? That's right! Are you going to join my Death God Team?" Fang Tangtang paused for a moment, then immediately snapped awake, her eyes shining brightly.

"No, the name 'Death God Team' is too tacky. I want to change it!" Gao Neng genuinely thought the name was mediocre. He felt that if they were going to form a team, the name had to be elegant, grand, and most importantly, imposing.

"Tacky? Then what do you want to change it to?" Fang Tangtang blinked again.

"Invincible Team!" Gao Neng said with a serious expression.

"Invincible Team? Invincible..." Fang Tangtang fell into deep thought, but her eyes soon lit up again. "Good name! Let's call ourselves the Invincible Team!"

"I'll be the captain," Gao Neng added.

"You, the captain? That's impossible! I, Fang Tangtang, would rather die than let someone else be my captain! I have an ultimate move, you know. When I use it, I can take an enemy's head from miles away!"

"In two days, I'm going to fight my way onto the Battle Rankings. If you won't join, then I'll just find someone else," Gao Neng said with a wave of his hand.

"Two days?! Are you sure?"

"I'm sure!"

"Alright then, I, Fang Tangtang, am willing to make a small sacrifice and join your Invincible Team. But I have to say this upfront: if you can't get us onto the rankings in two days, then I, Fang Tangtang, will quit. Also, a team needs four people. Who are we going to find for the other two spots?"

"Let's go with Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing." Gao Neng could only think of those two, since he didn't really know anyone else.

"Okay, I'll call them right now!" Without a moment's hesitation, Fang Tangtang immediately called Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing, telling them to rush over for a top-priority meeting.

Gao Neng didn't stop her.

Only after Fang Tangtang finished her calls did he start asking about ways to make money, as well as how to acquire ore and energy materials.

"There are lots of ways to make money! Students in the Manufacturing Academy buy raw materials, manufacture things, and then sell them for a profit. But not everyone can make money that way. If your manufacturing skills aren't good enough, your success rate will be very low."

"A low success rate means no profit, and you might even lose money."

"As for students from the War Academy, they basically just mine ore and gather energy materials. There are two ways to mine. One is right here in the City of Hope. Our Eastern Capital Military Academy has a dedicated mine shaft. However, the mines under the City of Hope are pretty much depleted, so you can't dig up much good stuff."

"But it's a different story outside. Leaving the City of Hope to mine on the battlefield, now that's exciting! Plus, there are more energy materials out there, and best of all, you can kill enemies. Kill enemies, get good stuff. You know what I mean, right?"

"The last way is to be a model student here at the academy. Every instructor has the authority to grant a certain amount of Merit Point rewards. For example, didn't Bald Shark just hand out 200 Merit Points last time?"

"Merit Points can be exchanged for anything. If you can butter up Bald Shark, he might give you some Merit Points, and that's as good as earning money!"

Fang Tangtang explained a great deal all in one breath.

Gao Neng didn't interrupt; he was soaking up all the information.

After listening to Fang Tangtang, he had a much better idea of the situation. It was more or less what he had figured, though he hadn't expected there to be a "success rate" for manufacturing things in the Manufacturing Academy.

'But it makes sense, when you think about it.'

'It's just like running an experiment—there are always successes and failures. If you could really just casually create good items, the Manufacturing Academy's doors would probably be broken down by all the applicants.'

'To create a high-grade weapon, you need extremely fine control. Besides that, I heard the Manufacturing Academy has requirements for the \*number\* of talents one has, unlike the War Academy, which only requires one's talent to be high-level.'

'The requirements for the Manufacturing Academy are actually the opposite of the War Academy's. The Manufacturing Academy values quantity more. For example, if you have 10 talents over 40%, you'd be considered a genius in the Manufacturing Academy.'

'But a person like that in the War Academy...'

'...would be pretty average, actually.'

'Speaking of which, doesn't that make me a pretty good fit? Not only are all my talents at 100%, but the key thing is I have a super-duper lot of them!' Just as Gao Neng thought this, a familiar mechanical voice sounded in his ear.

"DING! System evolution complete!"

## **Chapter 125 - 120: Successful Evolution: A New Era Begins**

'It's done?' Gao Neng's heart leaped with joy. He immediately opened the system interface, only to find it was still a black screen, but now with a few lines of text on it.

"System Evolution Path Selection."

"Normal Evolution: After selecting Normal Evolution, the System will randomly issue daily tasks. The descriptions for these tasks are very detailed, allowing the Host to choose which ones to accept, granting a high degree of autonomy. The risk is low, but rewards will be limited to common items and skills. (Recommended for Hosts who like to play it safe.)"

"Excellent Evolution: After selecting Excellent Evolution, the System will randomly issue daily tasks. The descriptions for these tasks are relatively simple, and accepting them carries a certain degree of risk. However, the rewards have a chance of including high-level items and skills. Furthermore, the System will help the Host unlock a second ability attribute, providing greater room for growth. (Recommended for Hosts who wish to challenge themselves.)"

"Nightmare Evolution: This extreme evolutionary journey is a dance on a knife's edge. Advance and live, retreat and die! The fiery passion of youth is destined to never cool. You are a true powerhouse. You will not bow to anyone. Your rebelliousness and arrogance are such that even the System must give way! Your path will be your own to command. You will have the authority to create your own quests. As for your ability attributes? They will be, without a doubt, the strongest! (High risk is often accompanied by high reward. If you're not afraid to die, step right up!)"

"Hint: The most suitable choice is the best choice. Once an evolution path is confirmed, there is no turning back. The Host is advised to quell their impulsive urges and take a good look at the lucky halo above their head."

'There are even evolution paths to choose from?!' Gao Neng was completely stunned.

'The System doesn't evolve on its own!'

'Instead, I'm the one who chooses the path? Or, to put it another way, I'm choosing the intensity of the evolution?'

He had not expected this.

And what he'd expected least of all was that after carefully reading the three evolution paths four or five times, no matter how he looked at it, the Nightmare Evolution seemed incredibly good.

"Ability attributes? They will be, without a doubt, the strongest."

'That's super badass, right?'

'And even the System has to give way to me?'

'I can even create my own quests?!'

'Is there even anything to think about?'

'Even an idiot would know which one to pick, right?'

'But why does this feel so strange...'

Gao Neng read them over again. The Normal and Excellent options both mentioned "daily tasks," which should be similar to the System's previous quests.

'Could it be that quests I create myself are even harder than the ones the System issues?'

'That doesn't make any logical sense.'

'It's obviously a huge trap!'

'Would I really fall for such an obvious trap?' Gao Neng felt an inexplicable sense of intellectual superiority. 'This dumbass System's intelligence is really nothing special.'

What kind of person dies the fastest?

Greedy people. They always die the fastest!

Was Gao Neng a greedy person?

Yes!

He was!

Gao Neng's hand hovered over the Excellent Evolution option, hesitating for a long time.

His subconscious told him that Nightmare looked good, but he absolutely couldn't choose it. Excellent was the best choice. He could get a second attribute and have a chance at high-level items and skills.

'Lie low and build up my power!'

'Don't get reckless!'

"I choose Nightmare!" Gao Neng said aloud.

"Please confirm, Host. Do you really wish to select Nightmare Evolution? (Hint: The abilities gained after Nightmare Evolution will far surpass your current level of strength. Once this choice is made, you can never take a step back!)"

"Yes, I'm sure. I choose Nightmare!" Gao Neng repeated.

He was afraid of death.

In fact, he was terrified of it.

But this time, he chose Nightmare with unwavering resolve.

There was no other reason. He just felt that this opportunity was right in front of him, and if he didn't seize it, he would surely regret it in the future.

Even if he one day stood at the pinnacle of the world, he would look back and wonder...

'Why didn't I choose Nightmare Evolution back then?'

It was like choosing a life partner. There's a rich girl and a poor girl. You love the poor one, but choosing the rich one would let you live a better life in the short term.

How would you choose?

If you chose the rich girl, you'd gain material comfort for a while. But one day, when you've reached the top, wouldn't your heart still ache for the one you truly loved?

That was exactly what Gao Neng was thinking right now.

'Nightmare Evolution is obviously the hardest path.'

'But it's also definitely the best. When the best option is available, why would I settle for something worse?! Even if it's only a tiny bit worse, it's still worse!'

"BEEP! The Host has impulsively chosen Nightmare. The System will now commence Extreme Evolution!"

"Evolving..."

"Evolution successful!"

SWOOSH!

The black screen of the System panel gradually brightened.

Gao Neng opened the System's panel without a moment's hesitation.

Name: Gao Neng.

Age: 18.

Basic Information: Freshman, Eastern Capital Military Academy, City of Hope.

Vitality: 456/623 (Rating: Excellent).

Stamina: 220/286 (Rating: Excellent).

Talent: Iron 100%, Copper 100%, Tin 100%, Silver 100%, Gold 100%, Phosphorus 100%, Sulfur 100%, Silicon 100%...

Special Abilities: 1. Eye of Deprivation (Beginner). 2. Three Hundred Nursery Rhymes (Intermediate). 3. Lifeform Transformation (Beginner).

Special Skills: 1. Infinite Energy Infusion.

Evolution: 0/10 (Completion).

'My Vitality and Stamina haven't changed, but how did the Eye of Deprivation go from a trial version to "Beginner"? Is this a benefit of Extreme Evolution? Also... that "Infinite Energy Infusion" I got from the high-level treasure chest has been categorized as a "Special Skill." What's the difference between a special ability and a special skill? What does that even mean?'

Beyond that, there was the "Evolution: 0/10."

He could understand this part. 'It means the System can evolve again, and the condition is to complete ten quests, right?'

Gao Neng felt his guess was probably correct.

He didn't immediately check what "Infinite Energy Infusion" did, because he had a nagging feeling. 'After the System's Extreme Evolution, why does it feel like almost nothing has changed?'

'That's not right!'

'What about the promised evolution?'

'Wait a minute!'

'There seems to be a number "2" at the bottom?'

'And not just a "2," there's a "3" as well?!'

'A second attribute?'

Gao Neng immediately clicked on the panel for the second attribute.

And then...

He was dumbfounded.

Second Attribute:

Ore Mining Skill (Proficiency: 100%): Your shovel and pickaxe will perfectly avoid any action that would damage the ore. Any ore you unearth will be perfectly intact.

Ore Identification Skill (Level: Perfect): No ore can escape your eyes. With a single glance, you will know where to find ore.

Energy Material Collection Skill (Proficiency: 100%): Your fingers are perfectly nimble. Any energy materials you gather will not lose a single trace of energy.

Energy Material Identification Skill (Level: Perfect): As long as it has energy, you can sense it. No energy materials can escape your eyes.

Weapon Appraisal Skill (Level: Perfect)...

Glove Appraisal Skill (Level: Perfect)...

Greaves...

...

Energy Pill Manufacturing Technique (Success Rate: 100%): You only need to know the composition of an Energy Pill to manufacture it with a 100% success rate.

Weapon Manufacturing Skill (Success Rate: 100%): You only need to glance at a weapon blueprint to manufacture the weapon on it with a 100% success rate.

Helmet Manufacturing Skill (Success Rate: 100%): You only need to glance at a helmet blueprint to manufacture the helmet on it with a 100% success rate.

Greaves Manufacturing Skill (Success Rate: 100%)...

Boots...

...

Gao Neng was truly a bit stunned.

'Does this mean I've become a true master miner now? And the most overpowered part is, I only need a single glance to know where to find ore?!'

'Am I a human ore-detector?'

'And energy materials... Wow, it didn't leave those out either!'

Moreover, all of his manufacturing skills had a 100% success rate. What did that mean? 'Does this mean I can now perform Alchemy with a pressure cooker?'

'So this is the "second attribute" the System mentioned during the evolution?'

'Extreme Evolution!'

'The abilities really are super strong.'

Gao Neng was quite satisfied.

This evolutionary path could be said to have solved his most pressing problem. He had come to deeply understand that at the Eastern Capital Military Academy, you needed money to get stronger.

And right now, wasn't this second attribute's entire purpose to make money?

'I just wonder what's behind the number "3"...'

His heart pounding with excitement, Gao Neng subconsciously tapped his finger lightly on the number "3".

"What is this thing?!" This time, Gao Neng wasn't just stunned; he was terrified. The third page of the System panel didn't have much text.

Just one word.

"Incubation!"

Other than that, the page was completely black.

It was a completely black space, yet it wasn't static. It was slowly flowing.

It looked a bit like a "black hole," but not quite. A black hole should be a hole, but this third page was a solid expanse of black, like liquid ink.

Most importantly, this inky darkness was truly in motion, shifting slowly like water.

'Incubation?'

'What does that mean?'

'Wait, don't tell me I fucking grew a uterus?!' Gao Neng was genuinely panicked by the thing on the third page. If he really "incubated a child," what kind of ridiculous plot twist would that be?

'I, Gao Neng, can actually give birth to children, right?'

"..."

Gao Neng was speechless. He decided to ask the dumbass System.

"System, what does 'Incubation' on the third page mean? Isn't there an explanation?"

"..."

There was no reply.

'Did the dumbass System go mute after the Extreme Evolution? No, that's not right. The System just had a notification tone a moment ago.'

Gao Neng didn't dwell on it for the time being.

He wanted to check the meaning of the special skill "Infinite Energy Infusion," but another question was making him even more antsy with curiosity.

Creating his own quests!

That was what he most wanted to figure out right now.

'I'll check out "Infinite Energy Infusion" later. First, I've got to try creating a quest!'

## **Chapter 126 - 121: Self-Initiated Mission, So High**

Gao Neng tapped on the system panel, returning to the home screen.

Sure enough, at the very bottom, he found a button to post a mission.

Tap!

An input box appeared, prompting him to enter the mission's name.

"I can really post my own missions?" Gao Neng was genuinely surprised now. 'Post my own mission, complete it myself... isn't that just unbeatable?'

But what kind of mission should he post?

'Catch ten rats?'

'Ugh...'

'Too boring.'

Just as he was thinking this, Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing arrived.

As fellow freshmen living in the same dormitory area, they arrived quickly. Both of them had changed into casual clothes.

"Tangtang, what did you call us for?" Feng Qingqing's brows furrowed slightly when she realized this was Gao Neng's room, but she didn't say anything more.

"To form a team, of a course!" Fang Tangtang said excitedly.

"You called us all the way over here just to talk about forming a team?" Feng Qingqing was a little speechless. 'Didn't we just talk about this today?'

'Why bring it up again?'

Feng Qingqing looked at Kong Kun.

Kong Kun glanced back at Feng Qingqing before speaking up. "We're still thinking about forming a team. There's no need to rush, is there?"

"What do you mean, no need to rush? Gao Neng says we're fighting our way onto the battle rankings in two days!" Fang Tangtang retorted immediately.

"In two days?!"

Feng Qingqing and Kong Kun were both shocked.

They both looked at Gao Neng at the same time, but they quickly realized what was going on. 'Does this mean Gao Neng and Fang Tangtang have already teamed up?'

"So, are you in or not? Just give us a straight answer. Either way, we're definitely challenging the battle rankings in two days!" Fang Tangtang declared with absolute certainty.

"Well... alright, I'll join!" Kong Kun nodded. As a fellow prodigy, he wouldn't admit to being inferior. If Fang Tangtang and Gao Neng had the guts to take on the challenge, so did he.

"Feng Qingqing, what about you?" Fang Tangtang looked at her.

"I'll join too, but shouldn't we first decide who's going to be the captain?" Feng Qingqing said, biting the bullet after a moment's hesitation.

"I'll be the captain," Gao Neng said, speaking up.

"You?" Feng Qingqing's expression flickered.

"And I'm the vice-captain!" Fang Tangtang chimed in immediately.

"Alright, Gao Neng can be the captain. So, what's the team name?" Kong Kun had no intention of arguing over the captaincy. He had lost to Gao Neng, so it was only natural for Gao Neng to lead.

"The Invincible Team!" Fang Tangtang announced proudly.

"..." Kong Kun was taken aback.

And it wasn't just Kong Kun.

Feng Qingqing also had a strange look on her face. She wasn't too surprised about Gao Neng wanting to be captain, but wasn't this team name a bit too arrogant?

The Invincible Team!

'If we get defeated, won't that be humiliating?'

"On the path of the strong, if you don't advance, you fall behind. Since there's no retreat, the only option is to be invincible! We are invincible, so our team should be the 'Invincible Team'!" Gao Neng said offhandedly.

"Fine, the Invincible Team it is. I have no objections. Feng Qingqing, how about you?" Kong Kun fell silent for a moment before finally nodding.

"Do we really have to use that name? Can't we consider something else, like... the Cyan Snake Team?" Feng Qingqing looked mentally drained as she stared expectantly at Fang Tangtang and Kong Kun.

"The Cyan Snake Team?" Kong Kun felt even more drained.

'Give me a break!'

'You're a top graduate from Eastern Capital High School, for crying out loud!'

'You were even the campus belle!'

Kong Kun was truly speechless. He'd wondered what kind of suggestion Feng Qingqing would make, and she came up with the Cyan Snake Team. At this point, the Invincible Team was definitely the better option.

With that, the team matter was settled.

An idea finally formed in Gao Neng's mind. 'Since we're going to challenge the battle rankings in two days anyway, I might as well post a mission for it.'

"Challenge the Battle Rankings!" While Fang Tangtang and the others were still discussing team details, Gao Neng found a moment to quickly type four words into the mission creation field.

'This mission shouldn't take any extra time!'

Just as he was about to hit confirm...

A thought suddenly struck him. 'Something feels off...' After a moment, he modified the mission he was posting, changing it to "Challenge the D-Rank of the Battle Rankings!"

'That should be fine, right?'

"Please input the mission reward."

Another input box popped up.

'Huh, this is great! I can even set my own reward? What should I put... Right, Energy Pills! That's what I need most right now. How about ten Energy Pills? Nah, that reward is too small. A hundred? Still seems a little low... Screw it! Fortune favors the bold, and the timid starve to death!' Gritting his teeth, Gao Neng typed in "1,000 Energy Pills."

'It's just challenging the D-Rank, right?'

'How hard can it be!'

"DING! Host has posted a mission: Challenge the D-Rank of the Battle Rankings!"

"Mission Description: You are the undefeated War God of the battle rankings. You are destined to stir up a storm on the D-Rank and become a truly invincible existence."

"Mission Completion Conditions: Host must challenge 20 teams from the D-Rank within 30 days and maintain a 100% undefeated win rate."

"Mission Reward: 1,000 First-Grade Energy Pills."

"Mission Penalty: A debt of 1,000 Energy Pills of random grade. (The system will automatically withdraw Energy Pills from the Host's possession, taking pills of any grade until the debt of 1,000 is paid.)"

"..."

"..." Gao Neng froze.

The mission he'd posted was to challenge the D-Rank, not to steamroll all twenty teams on it! Besides, he couldn't steamroll them even if he wanted to!

'The lowest-ranked team on the D-Rank...'

'...has a captain who's already Third-Order.'

'So what about the team at the very top?!'

'Don't tell me they have a Fourth-Order!'

Gao Neng felt like he was going to lose his mind. Defeating twenty D-Rank teams in one month meant he'd have to fight a new challenge almost every single day. And he had to win every match?

'So...'

'...this is how the "post your own mission" feature works?'

'Nightmare-level evolution... So, here's the question: can I get a do-over? I think I'll just pick "Excellent Evolution"... no, wait, "Average Evolution" is good enough for me!'

No voice answered him.

There was only a countdown timer, which read: 30 days.

Meanwhile, in the room, Fang Tangtang, Kong Kun, and Feng Qingqing were still discussing the finer details of the team's formation, such as who would be the main attacker, who would be support, and so on.

"Can I just cut in for a second?" Gao Neng interrupted their chat, his face a mask of bitterness.

"If you have something to say, spit it out. What are you interrupting for?" Fang Tangtang shot back casually.

"If I said... and I'm just saying, hypothetically... if I wanted to fight all twenty teams on the D-Rank in one month... what would you all think?" Gao Neng asked tentatively.

"???"

All three of them stared at Gao Neng.

Kong Kun's eyes were filled with disbelief.

Feng Qingqing's eyes showed confusion, which quickly morphed into disdain. 'Is this guy kidding? Does he really think I'd believe that?'

It wasn't just Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing who were skeptical.

Even the normally fearless Fang Tangtang was left speechless for a moment, her mouth agape.

Then, all three of them burst out laughing.

"Hahaha..."

"That joke isn't funny at all!"

"Let's get back to discussing our fighting styles and special abilities. Since we're aiming to take the lowest spot on the battle rankings, we should at least get familiar with each other's skills first."

The three of them turned away from him and resumed their conversation.

"I'm being serious. I really have to defeat twenty D-Rank teams within a month. And... I can't lose. Not even once. What do you say to that?" Gao Neng knew they didn't believe him. To be honest, he could hardly believe it himself. 'Is this even f\*cking possible?'

'It's a suicide mission!'

Even though it was just the D-Rank, once a team was on the battle rankings, they weren't weak. Furthermore, winning twenty straight victories... it was basically a hopeless endeavor.

"Hahaha... Gao Neng, keep on bragging. We're all listening," Fang Tangtang said, unable to stifle her laughter as she looked at his dead-serious expression.

Feng Qingqing also turned her head away.

'He's lost his mind!'

'We haven't even beaten a single team yet, and he's already talking about taking on twenty. The teams on the battle rankings aren't made of mud! We're just first-year freshmen.'

'And what Order is he? First-Order, that's what!'

'Beating us Second-Orders already makes him a super prodigy. What is he thinking? There's a limit to how conceited one person can be, isn't there?'

Feng Qingqing ignored Gao Neng.

But Kong Kun stared at Gao Neng for a long moment. He couldn't see any hint of a joke on his face. "Gao Neng, are you serious?"

"I am," Gao Neng replied with a bitter smile.

"Gao Neng, have you lost your mind?!" Feng Qingqing couldn't hold back any longer. "Don't you know that you have to wager Merit Points to challenge the battle rankings? It's a minimum of 100 Merit Points per challenge!"

"I'm not crazy. As for Merit Points... I have them!" Gao Neng gritted his teeth. He actually hadn't known about this, but if there was a wager... 'Does that mean I can use these challenges to farm a bunch of Merit Points?'

'This sounds like a pretty good deal!'

Of course, that was all on the condition that he could actually win.

"What are you getting at? Now that we're a team, if we lose, the Merit Points cost will be split among us. My point is, there's no way we can win, so why should we go and throw away our points?" Kong Kun said, sounding a little disgruntled.

"I'll put up all the Merit Points. If we win, I take eighty percent of the winnings. If we lose, it's on me, you guys don't have to pay a thing. How about it? You in or not?!" Of course, Gao Neng couldn't tell Kong Kun, 'I f\*cking did this to myself by creating this stupid mission.'

'Once I get through this...'

'I'll never let my itchy fingers get the best of me again. I'm never, ever posting my own mission again, not if you beat me to death.'

'But the question is...'

'...can I even get through this one?'

'If I can't, the penalty is 1,000 Energy Pills! That's a death sentence! When would I ever be able to earn 1,000 Energy Pills to pay back the system?'

"You... really want to do this?" Kong Kun fell silent. He truly hadn't expected Gao Neng to offer such terms, shouldering the entire Merit Point risk himself.

"Yes!" Gao Neng affirmed.

"What do you two think?" Kong Kun looked toward Feng Qingqing and Fang Tangtang.

"I, Fang Tangtang, am no coward who hides in her shell! If we're going to do this, then we should contribute Merit Points proportionally. It feels pointless to not contribute at all. Here's my proposal: if we lose, we'll cover half the cost. If we win, we take half the winnings. How's that?" Fang Tangtang was no longer laughing; she was completely serious.

"You're all insane! A bunch of lunatics! How did I, Feng Qingqing, end up teaming up with you... Ah, my boobs ache! It hurts, it hurts... Fine, let's do it! We'll register the team tomorrow and then issue the challenges! And... I'm posting this to my social media right now. I, Feng Qingqing, am going to challenge twenty D-Rank teams in one month! Yay!" After saying her piece, Feng Qingqing whipped out her phone, threw up a peace sign, and snapped a selfie.

"Alright, let's do it!" Kong Kun also gritted his teeth, then grabbed his phone and quickly typed out a post.

Gao Neng glanced over.

Kong Kun seemed to be posting on a forum. If Gao Neng wasn't mistaken, the title at the top read: The Eastern Capital Military Academy's Internal Discussion Forum.

"I, Bone Kun, have arrived! All you scrubs on the D-Rank, tremble in fear! Because within a month, I'm going to beat every last one of you until you're picking your teeth up off the floor!"

"..." Gao Neng watched as Kong Kun clicked 'post' with a smirk. He suddenly had a feeling that things were getting a little out of hand.

And more importantly...

He saw that Fang Tangtang had also picked up her phone.

"Hey, Sister Ning'Er! I'm forming a team with your husband tomorrow! And we're going to defeat all twenty teams on the D-Rank of the battle rankings within a month, hahaha! Wanna come and watch? Huh? You don't know who your husband is? That's impossible! Your husband announced it in front of all the academy instructors at the freshman orientation assembly. Grandpa Song was there too! Didn't he call you to confirm it?"

"..." Gao Neng.

Gan Liniang!

## Chapter 127 - 122: Insidious, but None More So Than Gao Neng

How many people lived in the City of Hope?

Five hundred million!

Even the Eastern District alone had a population of over one hundred million.

With such a massive population, how could their social circles be this small?

Fang Tangtang actually knew Shen Ning'Er. Not only that, but they seemed to be on excellent terms. The way she called her "Sister Ning'Er" was even more affectionate than how he said it.

Gao Neng didn't hesitate any longer. He snatched the phone from Fang Tangtang's hand and, under her astonished gaze, spoke into it. "This is Gao Neng... What? You're shy? What's there to be shy about? That's that, then. I'm busy. No time to bullshit with you."

"..." Fang Tangtang's jaw dropped so wide you could almost fit a fist in her mouth.

Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing were just as horrified.

'Gao Neng is so powerful!'

'How dare he talk to Shen Ning'Er with that tone? She's the granddaughter of the Eastern Capital Military District's deputy commander! Could it be... their relationship has already progressed beyond that of a normal couple to something...'

AHEM!

Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing didn't dare to imagine what came next.

But to have crossed that line at eighteen, and with Shen Ning'Er of all people... When they looked at Gao Neng again, their gazes held a trace of admiration.

"Alright, everyone go home. Tomorrow, we'll talk to Bald Shark first, then we'll formulate a strategy and start challenging the battle rankings!" Gao Neng said no more, decisively dismissing them.

'Would he really tell Fang Tangtang and Feng Qingqing that he had actually hung up the phone before he even finished talking?'

"Alright, we'll discuss it tomorrow then," Kong Kun nodded.

"Okay, and I'll put up the Merit Points for the first match by myself." Gao Neng spoke again. Seeing their confused looks, he added, "The three of you will pool together 10 Energy Pills for me. We'll use the logistics department's exchange rate of 5 Merit Points per pill. If we lose, the 10 Energy Pills are gone. If we win, I'll give you all 100 Merit Points back."

"Trading Energy Pills for Merit Points? Okay!" Feng Qingqing's eyes lit up. It was easy to trade Merit Points for Energy Pills, but trading Energy Pills for Merit Points was much harder.

Gao Neng had made such an offer.

Naturally, they had no objections. In fact, they felt like they were getting a great deal.

"I'll put in four, then," Fang Tangtang said magnanimously. "I'm the vice-captain. The more I put in, the more I'll earn!"

"Alright, then Feng Qingqing and I will each put in three." Kong Kun didn't hesitate, pulling three First-Grade Energy Pills from his pocket and placing them on the table.

The three of them left.

Only then did Gao Neng turn his gaze to the ten Energy Pills on the table.

'So this is an Energy Pill, huh?' Gao Neng looked at the ten green pills, feeling a bit emotional. He'd had no choice. Without Energy Pills, he couldn't cultivate tonight. Not only that, he might not even have the "energy" needed to control his powers.

Energy!

You need energy to cultivate, and you need energy to fight!

Gao Neng picked up an Energy Pill, swallowed it, and then carefully tried to feel its effects.

Just as he expected, the color of his magnetic core was slowly returning.

But one First-Grade Energy Pill...

It didn't seem to be enough.

He ate five in a row before his magnetic core gradually began to turn red. However, it was still a little dull compared to the vibrant red it had been right after his breakthrough.

Gao Neng opened his system interface.

'Let's see what this 'Infinite Energy Imbuement' skill is all about! Huh... Did I miss a line earlier?' Gao Neng had originally intended to check the skill, but after opening the interface, he suddenly noticed a new value below his HP and Stamina.

He'd been in such a hurry to check his second attribute before that he hadn't paid it much mind.

Now, he happened to see it only because the value was constantly changing.

HP: 550/623

Stamina: 235/286

Energy: 896/1320

'So I can see my energy value now? It's a shame "Three Hundred Nursery Rhymes" only restores HP and Stamina, not Energy...' Gao Neng was a little disappointed, but after a moment's thought, he let it go. 'If I could restore Energy just by singing, I could really just lie my way to becoming a War God.'

'Based on the energy recovery rate...'

Gao Neng did a rough calculation. There must have been a tiny bit left in his magnetic core before. Now, after eating five First-Grade Energy Pills, his energy value had recovered to 896 points, and it seemed to still be rising.

'By that logic...'

One First-Grade Energy Pill was worth around 200 points of energy.

Gao Neng stopped looking at his energy value and turned his attention to 'Infinite Energy Imbuement.' He casually tapped it open, and a line of text quickly appeared.

"Infinite Energy Imbuement: Infinitely imbues any item with energy."

"That's it?" Gao Neng's mouth fell open.

'This damn description really is... so lame!'

'Imbuing energy into an item?'

'Could it be similar to 'Energy Manifestation'?''

Gao Neng recalled Shen Ning'Er once saying during a demonstration of Energy Manifestation that to manifest energy, one must infuse it with "essence, qi, and spirit."

He hadn't really understood what she meant by that.

He knew what "essence, qi, and spirit" were.

But as for how to infuse them into energy, he had no idea.

However, seeing the description for Infinite Energy Imbuement now gave him a sudden idea. 'Could it be that if you imbue an item with energy, the item... comes to life?'

'Or maybe, its power will be magnified a hundred times?'

'I'll have to test it when I have time!'

Gao Neng didn't dwell on it. He glanced at his energy value again. Sure enough, once it recovered to 1120 points, the recovery all but stopped.

'Five First-Grade Energy Pills aren't even enough to fill my magnetic core? Just how many of these am I going to need in the future?' Gao Neng gave a bitter smile, then began cultivating by singing "Little Leaping Frog."

Time was tight!

He didn't want to waste a single moment.

'Tonight, I have to finish magnetizing my entire right arm.'

...

While Gao Neng was cultivating by singing...

...the internal forums of the Eastern Capital Military Academy were already exploding.

A single post by Kong Kun had successfully stirred up a huge storm, triggering a flame war between the freshmen and the upperclassmen.

"Gao Neng, Fang Tangtang, Kong Kun, and Feng Qingqing are forming a team!"

"Their goal isn't just to get on the battle rankings!"

"Wipe out 20 teams from the D-Rankings within a month?! Are all the first-years this arrogant now? Are they treating us Eastern Capital Military Academy upperclassmen like we're already dead?"

"How dare this 'Bone Kun' call us trash?!"

"..."

Message after message flooded the forums.

By the next morning, the news had spread throughout the entire Eastern Capital Military Academy.

"Vice Director Gui, your students are really aiming for the heavens!"

"Vice Director Gui, has Gao Neng gone crazy? Or did you use reverse psychology on him... If he really does take down 20 D-Ranking teams in a month, you'll be known as one hell of a mentor!"

"Vice Director Gui..."

All the way from his morning commute to the War Academy, Gui Zian had been greeted by countless instructors, and with each one, his expression grew darker.

'What the hell is going on?!'

He knew Gao Neng wanted to fight his way onto the battle rankings.

But fighting onto the rankings and challenging 20 D-Ranking teams were two completely different things.

Just as he was thinking...

...the military music playing over the campus broadcast suddenly stopped.

It was followed by a series of unidentifiable crashing sounds. Finally, the crashing stopped, and a few soft coughs came through the speakers.

"I'm Gao Neng, captain of the Invincible Team!"

"I'm Fang Tangtang, vice-captain of the Invincible Team!"

"I'm Kong Kun... AHEM, a member of the Invincible Team."

"Feng Qingqing..."

"Our mentor is the War Academy's Vice Director Gui Zian! We are now representing our teacher, and the Invincible Team, to formally announce that under Teacher Gui's leadership, we will fight all 20 teams on the D-Rankings within one month! If anyone has a problem with that, we'll beat you until you don't!"

The voices vanished, and the crashing sounds started up again.

"..." At this moment, Gui Zian's face was so dark it was almost impossible to look at. 'These kids really are trying to ascend to the heavens, aren't they?!'

'They actually went to the broadcasting room!'

'If I'm not mistaken, those four must have beaten up the students in the broadcasting room.'

'Most importantly, did those four brats have to specifically announce my name over the broadcast? And what was that about taking on the D-Rankings under my leadership?'

'If you have a problem, we'll beat you until you don't!'

'What are those four trying to do?'

Gui Zian didn't wait any longer. He strode rapidly toward the broadcasting room. In no time, he saw the four of them being kicked out.

"HAHAHA... Gao Neng, now Bald Shark will definitely have to support us with all he's got!" Fang Tangtang was ecstatic, not the least bit ashamed about being thrown out.

"Isn't this plan a little too malicious? Will Bald Shark really give in?" Feng Qingqing asked, a little worried.

"Eighty percent chance he will!" Kong Kun said with certainty.

"What Bald Shark? It's Teacher Gui! You have to call him Teacher Gui from now on, got it?! Think about it... If we really do conquer the D-Rankings, it'll bring glory to Teacher Gui's name. If he doesn't support us, is he going to deliberately

sabotage us instead? Wouldn't that just get the whole academy talking?" Gao Neng spotted Gui Zian in the distance and immediately shot a look at the other three.

"Oh? And what would the academy say about Teacher Gui?" Fang Tangtang had sharp eyes too. She immediately understood and shouted at the top of her lungs.

"What do you think they'd say? They'd say Teacher Gui is useless! His students made a bold declaration, but their supervising teacher is too timid to fight! In the army, that'd make him a deserter... Oh, no, not even a deserter. A soldier must dare to fight, but Teacher Gui doesn't dare. What would you call that?" Gao Neng immediately replied.

"No backbone!" Fang Tangtang shot back instantly.

"To be precise, no soldier's backbone!" Gao Neng corrected.

"Oh, is that so? Then will Teacher Gui ever be able to hold his head high again?"

"Of course not! His nickname might even have to change. Forget Bald Shark, they'll just call him Bald Turtle!"

"..."

"Shut up! The four of you, stop putting on a show for me! Get over here, now!" Gui Zian couldn't listen anymore. 'These kids are staging a coup!'

'Issuing a challenge over the broadcast and then dragging him, Gui Zian, down with them? How had he not seen through their malicious scheme sooner?!'

(Please support the official release, thank you!)

## **Chapter 128 - 123: Shen Ning'Er Has Arrived on the Scene**

...

Eastern Capital Military Academy.

Inside the Vice Dean's office in the War Academy's training building.

Gui Zian looked at the four people standing before him, their expressions utterly relaxed. He was truly exhausted. 'If I had another chance, I would absolutely never want to be the mentor for these four.'

It had only been one night, and they had already caused a huge uproar.

"Just tell me, what on earth are you trying to do?" Gui Zian asked, weary.

"We've challenged 20 teams from the Ding List!" Fang Tangtang announced excitedly. She showed no awareness of having done anything wrong; on the contrary, she looked eager for more.

"That's right." Gao Neng nodded as well.

'Since we've already decided to challenge the Ding List, there's not much point in being secretive anymore. At the very least, we can't afford to lose when it comes to morale.'

And besides that...

'I also need Gui Zian's full support.'

'So, the only way is to drag Gui Zian down with us. If we win, we all share the glory. If we lose, we all share the shame.'

Gui Zian, of course, understood this now. He glanced at the four of them again and finally sighed in resignation. He had truly been backed into a corner.

These four had already made their declaration public.

'Stop them now? That's pretty much impossible.'

"When do you want to start the challenges?" Gui Zian asked, finally relenting after a moment's internal struggle.

"Tomorrow!"

"So soon?!"

"We have to challenge 20 teams from the Ding List within a month. We have no choice but to be fast!" Gao Neng replied.

"Have you never heard the saying 'sharpening the axe doesn't delay chopping the wood'?" Gui Zian's expression was grim. 'Do these kids really have no idea what they're up against?'

'Fighting tomorrow? What do they take the teams on the battle rankings for? Pushovers?'

"I only know that you have to strike while the iron is hot. Hesitate, and you lose your nerve. Since we've decided to fight, let's ride this momentum and challenge them all at once!" Gao Neng retorted.

"Kids these days... honestly... All right, since you've made up your minds, I'll be direct. You want my help? Fine. But there's not much I can do," Gui Zian finally conceded.

"Are you giving us Merit Points? A thousand points for each of us should be no problem, right?" Gao Neng immediately asked.

"Do you take me for a fool? Merit Points are out of the question. However, I can open a training room for you for a day. How much you can learn in that time is up to you!"

"You've got to give us some Energy Pills, then, right? We're all dirt poor!" Gao Neng wasn't too disappointed; he had only been testing the waters with the Merit Points request.

The Energy Pills, however, were something he really needed to fight for.

'I trained all night yesterday and used up more than half my energy again, but the magnetization of my right arm still isn't finished. Clearly, completely magnetizing my entire right arm is much harder than just doing my palms.'

"You're poor?" Gui Zian's gaze shifted from Gao Neng to Fang Tangtang. 'Do they really not know who Fang Tangtang is?'

'With a vice-captain like her...'

'...you actually have the nerve to cry poor in front of me?'

"Uncle Gui, we really are poor," Fang Tangtang said, seeming to notice his gaze. A subtle smile touched the corners of her lips.

"Fine. I can provide some Energy Pills. Five per person."

"Only five?" Gao Neng was clearly unsatisfied. He was about to challenge 20 teams in a row; what good would five Energy Pills do?

"What I mean is, I'll sponsor five pills for every team you defeat. If you lose... not only will you get nothing, you'll have to pay back double the amount you've already taken! How about it?"

"We have to pay them back if we lose?"

"If you don't have the guts, then don't compete!"

"Fine. We'll pay you back double if we lose. But if we really manage to beat all 20 teams, how about an extra 100-pill bonus from you, Teacher Gui?" Gao Neng said, cutting to the chase.

"We'll see about that. For now, everyone follow me to the training room!" Gui Zian ignored the question, standing up and heading for the door.

'Five Energy Pills per team? That seems acceptable.' This time, Gao Neng didn't say anything more. As long as he could replenish the energy he spent, it would be fine.

...

The group of five left the office.

Led by Gui Zian, they soon arrived at the door of a training room.

Gui Zian was efficient. Without wasting words, he spoke briefly with the instructor at the door and then led Gao Neng and the others inside.

The training room was spacious, at least three or four hundred square meters in area. And this was just one such room; the Eastern Capital Military Academy had a total of 80 of them.

It was Gao Neng's first time truly setting foot in one of the Eastern Capital Military Academy's training rooms, and he found it all rather novel.

Inside, there were various machines for physical training.

There were also two large screens.

Additionally, on the eastern and western walls, there were two identical metal doors. Gao Neng guessed that the real training area lay behind them.

A Virtual Battlefield, just like the one from the practical portion of the college entrance exam.

"Do you know why the battle rankings at the Eastern Capital Military Academy are based on teams?" Gui Zian asked, his expression serious. He made no move to enter the doors.

"Because military academies don't train individual soldiers. They train for team coordination!" Kong Kun answered immediately.

"Correct! The biggest difference between a military academy and a regular university is that we place far more emphasis on teamwork. Having great individual strength is all well and good, but can a single person truly dominate an entire battlefield? It's possible, but only if there's an extreme imbalance of power between the two sides!"

Gui Zian paused for a moment before continuing. "But how often do you see that kind of imbalance? Humans have their powerhouses, but don't the other races have them, too? If a human powerhouse were to wantonly slaughter the weak of another race, couldn't a powerhouse from that race do the same to humanity's weak to vent their anger?"

"So, in reality, battles with such a huge disparity in power are incredibly rare!

## Chapter 129 - 123: Shen Ning'Er Has Arrived (Part 2)

"Real combat is, fundamentally, a battle between equals. The strong versus the strong, army versus army—that is the most common form of warfare you'll encounter!

"And what we train you to be here at the academy is the tip of the spear on the battlefield. Large-scale frontal wars aren't common nowadays, but small-scale clashes happen almost every day!

"A four-person team, or what we call a squad, is the optimal composition we've determined after many years of research. Does anyone know why?"

"I do!" Feng Qingqing spoke up. "My dad once told me that a four-person squad is the one most likely to survive on the battlefield!"

"Correct. A three-person squad can still carry out some battlefield operations, but if something happens to one of them, the entire squad could be annihilated. Only with four people is the chance of survival higher. If one dies, there are still three

left, and they still possess a certain degree of combat effectiveness. As for five... that's too many people. It's easier to be spotted!"

Gui Zian nodded. "It might sound cruel, but the truth is, people die every day on the battlefields outside the City of Hope. One day, you'll have to go to the front lines, and you too may have to face the death of your teammates..."

"..."

Silence.

None of the four said another word.

Everyone knew that after the Cataclysm, although the Human Alliance had established the City of Hope, the world outside remained a battlefield.

Without the sacrifices made on that battlefield, how could the City of Hope possibly continue to exist?

"Alright, you all have a clear grasp of the basic concept. I'll now begin teaching you four-person tactical coordination. Everyone has their specialty, and only by combining them can the team's strength be maximized. Therefore, it's necessary for a team to assign positions. Take you four, for example. Kong Kun's specialty is

his high Defense Power... He's suited for a meat-shield type defensive position. He can take a hit and dish one out!

"Feng Qingqing is agile and fast, perfect for sneak attacks, assassinations, and reconnaissance... So, Feng Qingqing can focus on the assassination role, mainly by increasing her speed.

"As for Gao Neng... your explosive power is more than sufficient, and your physical advantage is obvious. You could be considered for a burst-damage position. However, you also have a weakness, Gao Neng. If I'm not mistaken, you haven't learned any fighting techniques, have you?"

"No..." Gao Neng admitted with a nod. He really hadn't learned any kind of fighting style.

"Military Boxing?" Gui Zian pressed.

"I have it, but I haven't had the chance to learn it yet," Gao Neng nodded again.

"You should learn it when you get the chance. I'll teach you a set of fighting techniques later. For the four positions, we have a tank, an assassin, and a burst-damage dealer. All that's left is the long-range sniper..." As Gui Zian spoke, his gaze shifted to Fang Tangtang.

"I'm the long-range sniper!" Fang Tangtang immediately replied.

"You're the long-range sniper?!"

"..."

"You have a scythe! How long is it? And you can snipe from long range with it?!"

This took not only Gao Neng by surprise, but Kong Kun and Feng Qingqing as well. After all, Fang Tangtang's Scythe of Death was only three meters long at most. It was impossible to associate that with long-range sniping.

"Fang Tangtang is indeed the long-range sniper. As for that scythe of hers... it's just for show!" Gui Zian, who seemed to know Fang Tangtang quite well, replied casually before continuing, "Once the positions are set, the next step is formation changes. Four people can create a variety of different formations.

"When charging, you'll primarily use a triangle formation: Kong Kun at the front, Gao Neng and Feng Qingqing on the left and right flanks, and Fang Tangtang covering the rear. If the charge bogs down, Fang Tangtang can immediately fall back to create distance and provide long-range sniping and support... That effectively changes it into a diamond formation. There's also the square formation, the line formation..."

Gui Zian explained a great deal all at once.

It was only then that Gao Neng truly understood what the Eastern Capital Military Academy was all about: battlefield coordination and the skills for life-or-death struggles.

There weren't many frills.

The military academy was a place for practical combat training.

Gui Zian lectured in great detail, covering everything from four-person formation changes to the responsibilities of each position. He spoke for a full hour before finally stopping.

"Alright, let's enter the training ground!" With that, Gui Zian walked over to a control console and began selecting a mode.

Gao Neng glanced over...

He was surprised to see several different modes.

"Hunter Mode"

"Mission Mode"

"Guardian Mode"

"..."

'What do these modes mean?'

"When you encounter enemies on a real battlefield, completely wiping them out is actually very difficult. The same goes for the Battle Rank challenges. That's why the challenges also have different modes to choose from!" Gui Zian casually explained, having noticed the confusion in Gao Neng's eyes. He didn't bother paying any mind to the other three.

After all, people like Fang Tangtang were intimately familiar with the Battle Ranks long before they ever set foot in the academy.

'A student from the Forgotten Land? He doesn't even fully understand the Battle Rank rules, and he's about to challenge the Top 20 D-Rank teams? Is he going to get beaten to tears?' Gui Zian sighed internally. Without another word, his finger finally pressed "Hunter Mode" on the control console.

...

As Gao Neng followed Gui Zian through the metal door, that familiar feeling came over him again. His body felt as if it were enveloped in a special kind of energy.

'Inside the magnetic stack...'

'What exactly is in here?'

The question resurfaced in Gao Neng's mind.

The next moment, he, Fang Tangtang, and the others found themselves in a desert.

"Hunter Mode. Objective: eliminate the opposing team. Eliminating a team member earns 1 point. Eliminating the captain earns 1.5 points. Time limit: 1 hour!" As the voice finished, a figure shot out from the sand.

"AH!"

Feng Qingqing let out a sharp cry.

"The first thing you do upon entering the training ground is find a good hiding spot. Then, you look for an opportunity to attack the person with the weakest Defense Power on the enemy team. This is practical combat!" By the time the voice rang out again, Feng Qingqing had already vanished. The figure then pounced toward Fang Tangtang. "The long-range sniper is also a fine choice!"

"Uncle Gui, your pants are falling down!" Fang Tangtang shouted as she rapidly retreated.

"A Hunter's most basic psychological trait is to not be distracted by an enemy's words!" Gui Zian completely ignored Fang Tangtang's shout. He threw a punch, and she disappeared.

Two punches, two down!

Next, Gao Neng felt as if he'd been targeted by a wild beast.

"Next, to take out the captain. This'll be fun!" Gui Zian lunged at Gao Neng, not holding back in the slightest. His speed was incredible.

"Ah... Don't!" Gao Neng yelped, seemingly startled. As Gui Zian's punch flew toward him, he dropped flat on the ground.

This actually took Gui Zian by surprise.

His fist had missed Gao Neng's face.

Just as he was processing this...

A cloud of sand suddenly flew up.

"You dare to fight back, kid?! A trick like that is useless against me!" As his eyes narrowed, Gui Zian instinctively threw another punch down at the prone Gao Neng.

But just as his punch landed...

A sharp pain suddenly shot through his crotch.

"AH!" Gao Neng let out a pained cry.

"Nngh..." Gui Zian's face paled. He had only one thought now. 'This kid from the Forgotten Land... he's really nothing like a regular academy student.'

'Fucking...'

'Despicable!'

'Oww, my groin!'

...

「The next day, at noon.」

The daily schedule at the Eastern Capital Military Academy was always quite regular. Students would typically rest for a while after lunch or head to the training grounds to get some exercise.

But today, the student dormitories and training grounds were nearly deserted.

It was just a Battle Rank challenge match. Even one involving a clash between new and senior students, enough to stir up the whole campus, wouldn't normally draw such a large crowd.

But if news got out that Shen Ning'Er had arrived at the gates of the Eastern Capital Military Academy... then even the third- and fourth-year students who had no interest in the challenge would come running.

The number one prodigy of the younger generation in the Eastern Capital Military District.

An eighteen-year-old Major in the Military Department.

A legendary figure who was also a peerless beauty—who wouldn't want to catch a glimpse?

(Please subscribe!)

# Chapter 130 - 124: Altar in the Desolate Village

Inside the War Academy's building, the place was abuzz with activity.

The spacious viewing room on the first floor was packed to the brim with military academy students.

Challenges for the battle rankings were open for students to watch, because observing the tactical coordination of others was, in itself, a form of learning.

And just as the students were buzzing with discussion, several figures finally walked in through the main doors of the viewing hall.

"Principal Song is here!"

"Bald Shark... no, wait, Vice Director Gui is here too!"

"Wow, Vice Principal Wang came as well!"

Watching Song Tianyun and Wang Qixing enter one after another, the students in the viewing hall were all a bit shocked. It was just a challenge match; they couldn't believe it had drawn the attention of both a principal and a vice principal.

However, when they saw the final figure who entered, all the students' gazes shifted from the two men, focusing entirely on her.

Shen Ning'Er was really here!

Her dark military uniform accentuated her perfect figure, and her jet-black hair fell upon her shoulders. Shen Ning'Er's beauty was truly stunning, striking one to their very core.

Especially the aura she carried.

She was truly valiant and heroic, beyond reproach.

"Ning'Er, why don't you come sit with us two old geezers in the front?" Song Tianyun glanced at the hall full of students, then turned to Shen Ning'Er with a smile.

"I can just find a place to sit anywhere." Shen Ning'Er no longer addressed Song Tianyun as Grandpa Song, instead identifying herself as a student. After all, this was the Eastern Capital Military Academy.

"Haha... Look around. Do you see any open seats?" Song Tianyun gestured at the sea of heads.

"Alright then, I will follow the principal's arrangements." Shen Ning'Er didn't refuse again. She followed Song Tianyun, Wang Qixing, and the others through the crowd to the viewing seats at the very front.

Several instructors from the War Academy immediately stood up.

"Principal Song, Principal Wang, Vice Director Gui, Major Shen!" the instructors greeted them.

"Everyone, please sit. No need to be so formal with Ning'Er. Although she's a Major in the Military Department, here at our Eastern Capital Military Academy, she's a student." Song Tianyun smiled, but still offered the seat beside him to Shen Ning'Er.

Wang Qixing also smiled without saying anything.

Shen Ning'Er was indeed a student at the Eastern Capital Military Academy. However, if you really treated her like an ordinary student, then you were the one being clueless.

A Major in the Military Department wasn't considered an extremely high rank.

But an eighteen-year-old Major was something else entirely. In the entire Alliance, there were only a handful of Majors under the age of twenty.

And Shen Ning'Er was the youngest of them all.

Most importantly, there were already rumors that Shen Ning'Er was about to be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Once that became a reality, she would become the youngest Lieutenant Colonel in the Alliance.

The group sat down.

The chatter from the surrounding students quieted down significantly.

"Do you guys think... Shen Ning'Er might actually have some kind of relationship with that Gao Neng?"

"No way. He's from the Forgotten Land. How could Shen Ning'Er possibly be interested in him?"

"But if there's nothing between them, why did Shen Ning'Er show up right when Gao Neng is challenging the D-Rankings? And she's here to watch, too. Is that really a coincidence?"

"..."

No one could answer that question.

The situation was just too much of a coincidence. But they couldn't bring themselves to believe that Shen Ning'Er and Gao Neng were actually a couple.

...

「Inside Training Room 080.」

As the captain of the Lone Soul Team and the last-place holder on the D-Rankings, Cui Jun was actually feeling a little down. After all, he was already a fourth-year.

It wasn't easy for a fourth-year student to fight his way onto the battle rankings.

He didn't have much talent; he relied entirely on experience. After four years, he had finally climbed to the very last spot on the rankings, and he considered it a graduation gift to himself.

'But damn it...'

He hadn't even had time to warm his seat before he was challenged.

And by a few first-year freshmen, no less?!

"Gao Neng, is it? If I don't beat you to a pulp today, my name isn't Cui!" Cui Jun's fists were clenched tightly. This was too humiliating. Getting trampled by geniuses from the second and third years was one thing, but now even first-year freshmen were walking all over him. Did they really think his three-plus years here were for nothing?

"Captain, what's our strategy?" Fatty asked.

"What strategy? We just go up and crush them. A few greenhorns think they can cause an upset?" a skinny guy said with a look of disdain.

"I think we should be more cautious," a short guy said, shaking his head.

"Zhang Tao is right. No matter how strong our opponents are, we can't underestimate them. I heard even Principal Song came for this match. I don't want to get blindsided by a bunch of rookies!" Cui Jun seemed to agree with the short guy.

"Alright, then we'll show these freshmen that experience always wins!" Fatty and the skinny guy nodded seriously upon hearing this.

CLICK!

Just then, the door to the training room was pushed open.

Gao Neng, Fang Tangtang, and the others, now changed into black training uniforms, walked in. The moment they entered, they saw four pairs of eyes staring daggers at them.

"Hello, seniors," Gao Neng greeted them.

"Hmph, a bunch of greenhorns!" Fatty and the skinny guy turned their heads away.

Cui Jun's expression was also quite unpleasant, but he stood up and pointed to the control console. "As the challengers, you get to choose the mode!"

"Then we'll choose Task Mode." Gao Neng, Fang Tangtang, and the others had already discussed this.

"Task Mode?" Cui Jun glanced at Gao Neng. "I thought you'd be arrogant enough to choose Hunt Mode. Looks like you don't have much guts after all."

"Captain, don't say that. It just means they know their place! Hahaha..."

"Yeah, it's good they know their place! We'd be terrified if they chose Hunt Mode. A bunch of first-years hunting us four fourth-year veterans, haha..."

"We've chosen. Let's begin." Gao Neng ignored the laughter from Cui Jun's team, directly selected Task Mode on the console, and then walked toward the metal door.

"..." The expressions on Cui Jun and his team's faces changed at that moment.

"Oh, by the way, Judge Cui, your Wandering Ghosts Team... you really live up to your name! Trying to goad a bunch of freshmen? Are you that afraid of losing?" Gao Neng said, suddenly turning back just before reaching the metal door.

"Hmph, don't think you actually have a chance just because it's Task Mode!" Cui Jun didn't say any more. He turned and led his three teammates through the metal door, but his fists were clenched even tighter.

'These four...'

'They're not stupid!'

...

Gao Neng was, of course, not stupid.

If he'd really been goaded into playing Hunt Mode by a few words from Cui Jun, then he would be the real idiot. After all, this was a battle between unequal opponents.

Gao Neng didn't have any other thoughts. He just wanted to win, and in a situation where the power levels were mismatched, only Task Mode offered a chance of victory.

Task Mode: Find the unique mission item in the scenario and place it at the designated location. The first team to do so wins.

WHOOSH!

The moment Gao Neng and his team entered the metal door, a notification sound chimed in their ears.

Scenario: Altar in a Desolate Village.

Time: 12:00 AM, Midnight.

Mission Brief: Find the ritual item 'Nine-legged Black Tripod' in East Village, then place it on the altar in West Village. (Hint: The two villages are 500 meters apart. Time limit: 1 hour.)

The sky went dark, with only a full moon hanging high above.

"East Village is that way!" Feng Qingqing was the first to spot a dilapidated signpost. The two words "East Village" were written on it, along with an arrow.

"We all just got here, so it's unlikely the signpost has been moved. That's got to be East Village," Kong Kun said, nodding in agreement with Feng Qingqing.

"Then what are we waiting for? Let's go," Fang Tangtang said, looking at Gao Neng.

"Alright, let's go!" Gao Neng hesitated for a moment before nodding. 'Since this is Task Mode, it probably won't be as simple as it looks on the surface,' he thought to himself.

However, the other three were all urging him to go to East Village.

If he hesitated now and let Cui Jun's team get the jump on them, they would lose the challenge.

"Let's go!"

"Let's run over there as fast as we can!"

Seeing Gao Neng nod, the three of them picked up the pace.

The scenario wasn't very large.

Even without any lights, the small path was still fairly clear. Soon, the four of them saw a few thatched huts ahead on the overgrown path.

This was a truly deserted village.

"Cui Jun's team isn't here yet. Let's hurry and find the Nine-legged Black Tripod," Fang Tangtang suggested.

"We don't need all four of us. One should stay behind. Feng Qingqing, you'll be on lookout at the village entrance. If Cui Jun's team shows up, signal us. The three of us will search," Gao Neng said after some thought.

"Mm, Gao Neng's right. Just in case!" Kong Kun agreed.

"Okay, I'll stay." Feng Qingqing didn't object and quickly found a good vantage point at the village entrance to hide and observe.

...

The three of them began to search the desolate village.

Before long, they had searched every house, but they couldn't find the Nine-legged Black Tripod. Moreover, Cui Jun's team still hadn't appeared.

"What's going on? Did we go to the wrong village?" Fang Tangtang asked, confused.

"Unlikely. This should be the right village. The strange thing is, why isn't Cui Jun's team here yet? Could it be that they already came here before us?" Kong Kun frowned.

"There are no signs of a search in the village. They haven't been here. Think back, is there any place in the houses we haven't searched yet?" Gao Neng also felt that something was off.

"Does the coffin count?" Fang Tangtang suddenly asked.

"A coffin?"

"Yeah, there's a big black coffin in that large ancestral hall over there. I... I didn't dare to open it," Fang Tangtang said, looking a little embarrassed by the end.

"..." Gao Neng was speechless.

'I thought this scheming loli was fearless. Turns out she's afraid of corpses? Or maybe ghosts? Should I find a time to scare her for fun?'

"I'll go open the coffin!" Kong Kun, on the other hand, had no such qualms. Hearing what Fang Tangtang said, he walked straight toward the ancestral hall.

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「Back at the Eastern Capital Military Academy.」

In the first-floor viewing hall of the War Academy, the students watched the two different scenes playing out on the screens. The freshmen were shaking their heads and sighing, while the senior students looked smug.

"The freshmen are still lacking in experience," Wang Qixing commented, watching the screen.

"Haha, learning a lesson isn't necessarily a bad thing. It would be normal for Gao Neng's team to lose this match," an instructor sitting next to Wang Qixing said with a smile.

Gui Zian, however, said nothing.

But as he looked at the screen, his expression was quite dark.

'This is truly a complete domination by experience!'

Even he could only feel helpless. After all, he could teach tactical coordination, but real combat experience was something Gao Neng and the others had to grasp for themselves.