

I CAN CONTROL RESOURCES

Chapter 4: Little Goblin, You're So Beautiful

With his resolve steeled, Gao Neng began to consider the difficulty options for "Sacrificing Shen Ning'Er."

He didn't even spare a glance for Normal difficulty.

He completely ignored it.

After all, he wasn't an ordinary person.

That left only two difficulties: "Excellent" and "Nightmare."

Gao Neng's eyes immediately shot to Nightmare. It offered a 100% chance of getting a Middle-Level Treasure Chest and a 100% chance of obtaining a special ability. The temptation was immense!

'But with my current strength, I can barely kill a chicken with my bare hands...'

'How am I supposed to forcefully subdue Shen Ning'Er?'

Gao Neng thought it over for a minute. Then, he figured since this was his first time, he might as well be a little gentle. Just settling for "Excellent" would be fine.

'As for the Middle-Level Treasure Chest, there'll be other chances!'

'And the special ability... a 50% chance. It wasn't high, but it wasn't low, either. It all came down to luck, and his luck had always been pretty good.'

"Alright, I'll choose Excellent!" Gao Neng wasn't one to procrastinate. Once he made a decision, he acted decisively.

DING!

Host has successfully selected Excellent difficulty.

Upon completing Excellent difficulty, the Host will receive a baptism of the ultimate ability. Additionally, there is a 100% chance of receiving a Beginner-Level Treasure Chest and a 50% chance of randomly obtaining a special ability.

Clue:

Shen Ning'Er is a genius, but the price of genius is steep. For as long as she can remember, Shen Ning'Er has spent her life in training. She had no happy childhood, only ceaseless training day and night. This caused her rebellious phase to start much earlier than anyone else's.

During her childhood, Shen Ning'Er ran away from home once and spent a night in a filthy sewer. Throughout that night, a "squeak squeak" sound echoed constantly in her ears.

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"That's it? 'Squeak squeak'?" Gao Neng's brow furrowed. 'The mission clue is just *this*? A squeaking sound is all the hint I get?'

'Bad review!'

'So, the question is, what exactly was making that squeaking sound?'

'An animal?'

Gao Neng thought for a moment. 'Plenty of animals can squeak. For example, sparrows... oh, wait, sparrows chirp... hold on, a filthy sewer?'

'It's rats!'

'The kind of animal that continues to thrive even after a great cataclysm!'

'Shen Ning'Er is afraid of *rats*?!'

'If it weren't for the clue from this damn mission, Gao Neng would have found it hard to believe. Shen Ning'Er, a being who could manifest iron energy into a freaking "dragon," was afraid of tiny, weak rats?!

'Still, after thinking about it, it was understandable.'

'The one and only time she ran away from home, she spent the night in a filthy sewer surrounded by the sounds of rats. In a way, that really was a nightmare.'

'Then...'

'Another question arose.'

Gao Neng had used his genius-level intellect to instantly deduce that the squeaking meant rats. Now, how could he use this information to forcefully subdue Shen Ning'Er?

'I can't just shove a rat in her face to scare her, can I?'

Gao Neng felt that if he actually tried that, he'd probably end up dead. 'After all, who's to say that in her fright, Shen Ning'Er wouldn't react instinctively? One panicked iron fist and I'd be sent flying.'

'Alright...'

'I can't be too direct.'

'Haste makes waste,' a principle Gao Neng understood well. He still had over nine hours left. There was plenty of time to come up with a more intelligent application of force.

He decided to first acquire the flames and fresh blood needed for the sacrificial ritual.

He spent nearly half an hour buying over a dozen candles from a small shop and acquiring a small bag of chicken blood from a restaurant's kitchen. It cost him five Alliance Coins in total. The cost stung!

Now, all that was left was the rats.

'Where can I find a rat?'

'No, wait!'

'Where can I find a *nest* of rats?'

Gao Neng figured that to be on the safe side, he'd need at least eighty to a hundred live rats. But that presented another problem.

There was no shortage of rats in the Forgotten Land.

If he got a large net and put down some bait at the abandoned food processing plant on Southwest Road, catching eighty to a hundred rats wouldn't be too difficult.

The problem was, how could he get close to Shen Ning'Er with eighty to a hundred frantically squeaking rats in tow?

'That would be difficult!'

Three or five rats would be easy to control; he could just knock them out and tape their mouths shut. But with eighty or a hundred, who could guarantee that a few wouldn't wake up along the way?

'Looks like winning through sheer numbers is out of the question.'

'I'll have to go for quality over quantity and find a few particularly vicious, large rats.'

'Speaking of large rats...'

"I've got it!" Gao Neng's eyes lit up. 'Talented people are just built different. My mind is so flexible; I can grasp the crux of any problem, no matter how difficult.'

"Gao Neng!" Just then, a woman's voice called out.

"Hm?" Gao Neng turned around and saw a middle-aged woman standing not far away, dressed in tattered cloth and holding a mop.

'When you're skipping class, who are you most afraid of running into?'

Gao Neng didn't know about other people, but he was absolutely terrified of seeing the woman before him.

"Mom... what are you doing here?" Gao Neng flinched, wanting to run but not daring to.

"Aunt Liu is moving and needed help cleaning, so I came over. Why aren't you in class?" Xu Zilan, of course, wasn't going to ignore such a critical question.

"We're just doing review at school, and there are no classes this afternoon..." Gao Neng rarely lied, and he wasn't lying this time either. There really were no classes that afternoon; his actual duty was to proctor an exam.

"Is that so? Well, since you don't have class, you should head home early. Aunt Liu gave me two eggs and a piece of meat. I'll make them for you tonight." Xu Zilan seemed to be in a good mood, a slight smile on her lips. A few wrinkles showed on her dust-streaked face, but they couldn't hide her delicate features.

"Um... I'm studying with a classmate tonight, so I won't be home for dinner." Gao Neng lowered his head. He knew exactly what his mother meant by "gave." Exchanging labor for food—that was how Xu Zilan had managed to raise him alone for the past eighteen years.

"Not coming home for dinner? Don't stay out too late, then. Your health is important. I know the college entrance exams are in a few days, but we can always..." Xu Zilan trailed off, hesitant to continue.

"Mom, I've got something to do. I'll be back late, so don't wait up for me. Just go to bed!" Gao Neng said, then bolted as if fleeing for his life, not even waiting for a reply.

"..." Xu Zilan's mouth moved as if to say something, but in the end, no words came out. She just stared blankly at Gao Neng's retreating figure.

"Woman of the Gao family, the toilet isn't cleaned yet!" a shrill voice called out.

"Alright, I'm coming," Xu Zilan said, pulling her gaze away. She rubbed her chapped hands together, let out a breath, then grabbed her mop and briskly entered a dilapidated two-story building by the side of the road.

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「Golden Grand Hotel.」

It was one of the largest hotels in the Forgotten Land, boasting a full suite of amenities: a swimming pool, a bar, a sauna, and of course, the essential training rooms.

Inside a private training room.

Shen Ning'Er, dressed in a weighted black military uniform with her long hair tied back in a ponytail, stared intently at a black training apparatus before her.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Lightning-fast fists hammered against the apparatus, followed by several powerful roundhouse kicks. A string of terrifyingly high force-reading numbers flashed across the screen.

A bead of sweat trickled down her face, leaving her cheeks slightly flushed. She looked like a peach blossom in early spring—youthful and captivating.

KNOCK KNOCK! Two raps sounded at the door.

Qin Tianxiong walked in.

He immediately snapped to a standard military salute.

"Major Shen!" Unlike back at the Third Senior High School, Qin Tianxiong's eyes now held clear admiration and reverence for Shen Ning'Er.

An eighteen-year-old Major.

There were only a handful of those in the entire Alliance. Her rank represented more than just outstanding strength; in the military, distinguished service was the only true basis for promotion.

"Lieutenant Qin, is something the matter?" Shen Ning'Er stopped her workout, slowly unstrapping the weights from her uniform and letting her ponytail down.

"A few more love letters were slipped under the door, and a couple of clueless guys invited you to dinner. Now I get why you wanted to switch rooms with me," Qin Tianxiong said with a pained expression.

According to rank, Shen Ning'Er was assigned the large suite while he only got a small one. However, the moment they received their room keys, Shen Ning'Er had insisted on switching.

Qin Tianxiong hadn't understood at the time, assuming she was just trying to conceal her identity. It wasn't until he started finding love letters periodically slipped under his door that he realized the people of the Forgotten Land were far more direct and daring than he had imagined.

"Thanks for the trouble," Shen Ning'Er said with a slight nod.

"Heh, just helping Major Shen fend off a few flies. It's no trouble. On another note, I found someone relevant to our mission: Tang De's son. He's a third-year high school student, and he's right outside the hotel entrance," Qin Tianxiong said, nodding.

"You're bringing this person up for a reason, Lieutenant Qin. What's on your mind?"

"Well... it's not a fully formed idea, but I believe the power dynamics in the Forgotten Land are rather complex. Relations with the City of Hope have grown more strained over the years, and nearly all the undercover agents the military sent have been lost. If we could use Tang De to get our hands on some internal intelligence, it might be helpful for our current mission."

"You have a point, Lieutenant Qin. 'Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles without defeat.' Here is the internal intelligence on the major powers in the Forgotten Land, including Tang De. You can use this for reference." As she spoke, Shen Ning'Er pulled out a metal storage device and handed it to him.

"Internal intelligence on the major powers of the Forgotten Land?! Could this be... I understand. I'll go study it right away!" Qin Tianxiong's expression changed. He respectfully excused himself and exited the training room.

"Alright." Shen Ning'Er quietly watched Qin Tianxiong leave. Not until the door closed did a smile grace her lips. 'A lieutenant, suggesting a major run a honey trap under the guise of the mission? It seems the Forgotten Land is anything but 'peaceful.' '

CRACK!

She slammed a fist into the training apparatus.

A terrifying number flashed on the screen again, more than double her previous reading.

Shen Ning'Er nodded in satisfaction. She then pulled off her gloves, walked over to a mirror, and glanced around to make sure there were no surveillance devices. Once certain she was alone, she quickly made a silly face at her reflection.

"You little vixen, you're gorgeous!"