

I CAN CONTROL RESOURCES

Chapter 71: Through and Through

Gao Neng was surprised by how hard the pointed-eared woman's butt was, but he didn't panic.

What if he couldn't pierce it in one go?

Then he would stab twice, three times, four times...

...until he broke through!

Gao Neng frantically controlled the javelin, continuing to stab at the pointed-eared woman. His eyes were bloodshot. He was venting; he wanted her dead.

He didn't know what kind of emotion he was feeling right now.

But one thing was certain: the pointed-eared woman's viciousness toward Jin Lingling had deeply affected him.

'Why would she be so cruel to a passerby? Why did she even want to kill her?'

'Did Jin Lingling do anything to provoke her?'

'Not at all!'

In a sense, Jin Lingling posed no threat to the pointed-eared woman, but the woman hadn't even blinked when she kicked her. She even seemed to derive a sense of pleasure from it.

At that moment, a strong sense of crisis washed over Gao Neng. The words Shen Ning'Er had spoken at the Third Senior High School suddenly flashed through his mind.

"When the Human Alliance retreated from the Forgotten Land, there were over seventy million people left behind. And now? There are fewer than ten million!"

Sixty million people had died tragically!

Moreover, Gao Neng also knew that during humanity's most prosperous era of peace, the total population had once exceeded six billion.

But now?

The total population of the Human Alliance was less than five hundred million!

Over five billion people had died during the Great Cataclysm. If their bones were piled up, they would form a towering mountain!

Gao Neng knew these things, but he had always treated them as history. He knew the atmosphere in the Forgotten Land was grim, filled with despair and darkness.

But he had never truly put himself in the shoes of someone living in the post-cataclysm world.

Not until the appearance of the pointed-eared woman.

Only now did he truly understand that no matter how innocent the weak were, they were still like ants before the strong. Even if you didn't provoke anyone, a strong person could crush you with a single finger.

'This woman has a note about me. I can't let her go. If she has my information, she must have my family's information too! Even if I escape today, she'll still come looking. If she can't find me... she'll probably go after my mom! This woman must die!'

Gao Neng expanded the range of his Spiritual Power again. He was going to try to simultaneously mobilize other energy elements in the surroundings. He wanted to kill the pointed-eared woman in one fell swoop.

BOOM!

The ground trembled.

Clusters of eerie green will-o'-the-wisps rose into the air.

'Phosphorus!'

"Hm?! The intel only confirmed this kid has three talents: iron, copper, and tin... It seems phosphorus is his fourth!" The pointed-eared woman's expression grew

grim as she watched the rising will-o'-the-wisps. "A genius like this must be nipped in the bud!"

At this thought, the pointed-eared woman charged at Gao Neng again.

Her body was incredibly tough; ordinary iron couldn't truly harm her. So, she chose not to dodge the iron javelins anymore, instead using her dagger to parry them as she forced her way closer to Gao Neng.

Closer!

Closer!

Just as the distance between them closed to less than ten steps, a ghostly green will-o'-the-wisp merged with an iron javelin, transforming it into a firearm flickering with spectral fire.

BANG!

The firearm struck the pointed-eared woman's body. Although it still didn't pierce through, its power was much greater, and it made a sizzling sound.

The pointed-eared woman was knocked back again.

Then, more firearms came lancing toward her.

'With my strength, there's no way I'll fall to this kid, right?' The pointed-eared woman found it hard to believe, but these firearms truly posed a threat to her.

PSHLICK!

Just then, a different sound rang out.

"!!!" The pointed-eared woman instantly felt that something was wrong. An intense, piercing pain was surging up from a certain part of her body.

It wasn't just painful.

It was searing hot!

'That kid stabbed my...' The pointed-eared woman reached out and forcibly pulled the firearm from her body, her face turning pale.

'I'm injured?'

'I'm actually injured?!'

'Run!'

The thought flashed through her mind and was gone.

The stabbing pain made it difficult for her to even stand steady, let alone run.

'Huh? I think I pierced it? Why did this one... pierce through? Strange...' Gao Neng couldn't quite figure it out.

However, the pointed-eared woman seemed to be in a lot of pain.

'Can't stop now!'

'I have to keep stabbing!'

There's an old saying: kick 'em while they're down.

The day's events had made Gao Neng truly feel the cruelty of the post-cataclysm world. He would no longer be soft. He had to become stronger than before. He would show the pointed-eared woman no mercy.

'Wherever she's weak...'

'...I'll stab there!'

Having found the "weak spot," Gao Neng naturally became even more frenzied.

The firearms, each wreathed in spectral fire, converged on the pointed-eared woman's butt as if they had eyes, showing no mercy.

"I'm really going down!!!" the pointed-eared woman shrieked, unwilling to accept her fate. The firearms coming from all directions forced her to defend herself frantically with her dagger.

And then...

...she was pierced again!

"AHH!"

The pointed-eared woman's scream was rather miserable.

Gao Neng's resolve wavered slightly. 'This isn't right...' But then he quickly remembered the pointed-eared woman's viciousness when she attacked Jin Lingling.

'Other races show humans no mercy, so I can't show them any mercy either! I absolutely can't be soft-hearted! They're so cruel, killing the innocent without a second thought. I can't hold back... I can't!' Gao Neng repeatedly warned himself that the pointed-eared woman before him deserved no sympathy.

'Kill her!'

'I have to kill her!'

'It's either her or me...'

'I have a mother at home who needs me. I can't die yet. I have to get stronger. I have to get into the Military University and take my mom somewhere safe to live.'

'Stronger!'

'I have to become strong!'

'Strong enough to protect my family!'

Everything that had happened today was a reminder of just how cruel this world truly was.

"KILL!!!" Gao Neng roared. His physical strength was nearly depleted, but he once again bolstered his Spiritual Power.

At the same time, he started doing broadcast calisthenics.

"One, two, three, four. Two, two, three, four. Three, two, three, four. Four, two, three, four. And again..."

"..." The pointed-eared woman was speechless.

'Is he celebrating?!'

'I, a noble Night Elf of the grand Celestial Race... am about to be killed by a human who celebrates by doing elementary school calisthenics?!'

'The humiliation!'

PTUI!

The pointed-eared woman was so enraged she spat out a mouthful of blood. At the same time, she felt a sharp, piercing pain in her arm.

'It pierced my arm?!' The pointed-eared woman couldn't believe it, not until she clearly saw the streak of silvery-white light flowing on that firearm.

"A Steel Alloy Gun!!!"

"This kid... No... He has more than five talents!"

The pointed-eared woman was shocked and filled with despair.

"YOOOO!!!"

A long cry escaped the pointed-eared woman's lips. At the same time, a puff of black mist shot out, quickly condensing in the air to form a small sprite with black wings.

SWOOSH!

The little sprite flapped its wings and shot up into the sky.

At the same time, javelins pierced the pointed-eared woman's body, turning her into a human pincushion in the blink of an eye.

THUMP! Gao Neng fell and sat on the ground.

"Meow!! Meooow..." Gao Xiaomeng let out a victorious cry, then its body went limp, and it fainted right in Gao Neng's arms.

"MEOW!!"

"Meow meow!"

"..."

Over 3,000 stray cats immediately responded.

Gao Neng looked at the surrounding stray cats, then at the fainted Gao Xiaomeng. A question that had previously faded away rose in his mind once more.

'Gao Xiaomeng...'

'...is it the stray cat from the Dream Toy Factory right now, or is it that liquid lifeform from inside the magnetic pile?'

'If it's just a stray cat, how can it release the power of the "magnetic pile"?''

A strong sense of crisis rose in Gao Neng again. Most importantly, he remembered that when he "merged" with the magnetic pile, Gao Xiaomeng hadn't been there.

'Gao Xiaomeng only showed up after that liquid lifeform appeared. So, how did it know I could resonate with the magnetic pile?'

Chapter 72: A Tricky Problem?

But if Gao Xiaomeng really is that liquid lifeform...

Then how did it know I hit it with a wrench and a hammer at the Dream Toy Factory?

'Nip any crisis in the bud? Gao Xiaomeng is unconscious right now. Is this the perfect chance to turn it into soup?' Gao Neng's fist clenched and unclenched, over and over...

After agonizing over it for five minutes.

He ultimately decided to wait and see.

The main reason was that when Gao Xiaomeng had turned into a "magnetic pile" just now, it had felt a bit odd. That sensation was somewhat different from a genuine "magnetic pile."

A genuine magnetic pile possessed a powerful "devouring" force. When he'd borrowed its power, he had been completely unable to control it. It felt like being held in an unshakeable grip, as if he could be pulled into another world at any moment.

But the sensation from Gao Xiaomeng just now hadn't been like that at all.

Although Gao Xiaomeng also had a power similar to a magnetic pile, that power had instead formed a cycle with Gao Neng.

'So, *this* is a true fusion?' Gao Neng's expression turned odd at the thought. 'Did I just fuse with a cat?'

Er...

Regardless, this power within Gao Xiaomeng was worth investigating.

Gao Neng didn't dwell on it. He could already hear a commotion in the distance. Someone was coming. A lot of someones, by the sound of it, and they were moving quickly.

"You all should go. I'll take care of Gao Xiaomeng," Gao Neng called out to the surrounding stray cats.

"MEOW MEOW MEOW..."

"..."

The stray cats stared at Gao Neng, their expressions baffled.

"Er, I'll take care of your Xiaomeng Queen!" Gao Neng said, freezing for a second. He then remembered the title Gao Xiaomeng had used for herself.

"MEOW!"

The stray cats understood this time.

In a flash, they all scattered and were gone.

Just then, several figures appeared in the distance. They looked somewhat familiar. The person in the lead was the very same student from the girls' high school who had escaped earlier.

"Gao Neng is over there!"

"Major Shen, Principal Xue, I've found Gao Neng!"

"Hmm?! Where is he?"

In no time, Gao Neng was surrounded by a crowd.

'Looks like the student from the girls' high school contacted the school after she escaped,' Gao Neng thought.

The moment Shen Ning'Er saw Gao Neng, a flicker of urgency crossed her eyes. But upon seeing the pointed-eared woman on the ground, she quickly concealed it.

"Are you alright?" Shen Ning'Er asked, her tone level.

"I'm fine. I ran into a non-human on the way and took care of it," Gao Neng said with a smile, offering no further explanation.

"A non-human... a Dark Elf..." Shen Ning'Er seemed to want to say something, but ultimately held her tongue. She simply waved a hand at Lieutenant Chen, who was standing behind her. "Lieutenant Chen, please secure the Dark Elf and have the body sent to the research institute."

"Yes, ma'am!" Lieutenant Chen nodded.

The others only started to approach then.

"Gao Neng, thank you for saving my four students," Xue Jingjing, the principal of the girls' high school, said immediately, nodding at him.

She was a woman in her thirties, wearing light makeup. While not stunningly beautiful, she carried herself with the grace of a mature woman.

"Four?" Gao Neng asked, surprised.

"Yeah, Sister Lingling didn't die. She's seriously injured, but she's alive. And Li Lanlan only has minor injuries," the student from the girls' high school quickly explained.

"Oh, I see. That's great..." Gao Neng nodded, not saying anything else.

"Gao Neng, you did very well. What happened to Jin Lingling isn't your fault. After all, you encountered a Dark Elf. Even a typical Energy Warrior would be no match for her. It's just a shame she probably won't be able to continue with the college entrance exams... By the way, how exactly did you kill her?" Xue Jingjing glanced at the pointed-eared woman on the ground, who couldn't be any more dead, and felt a chill run down her spine.

"Well..."

"Haha, I was just asking. My apologies, that was presumptuous of me. Everyone has their secrets; I shouldn't have pried. Anyway, I'm just glad you're okay." Xue Jingjing smiled and didn't press the matter.

"..." Gao Neng remained silent.

...

It was ten o'clock at night when Gao Neng returned home.

As always, Xu Zilan had left dinner out for him.

Gao Neng didn't tell Xu Zilan about killing the Dark Elf. He only mentioned his results from the preparatory test, not wanting her to worry.

Upon hearing Gao Neng's talent test results, Xu Zilan's expression changed visibly. Finally, she began to cry softly.

Gao Neng rarely saw Xu Zilan cry...

But he could tell they were tears of joy.

'Mom, don't worry. I'll definitely get stronger. I'll be able to protect you. You've raised me for eighteen years, and I'll never let any harm come to you!' Gao Neng

vowed this silently. He now felt an overwhelming urgency to become stronger and leave the Forgotten Land.

City of Hope!

Military University!

'I have to get in!'

'The Forgotten Land is too dangerous. If there's one Dark Elf, there could easily be a second. They're already targeting me. They want to kill me...'

'I'll only be safe once I get to the City of Hope!'

'But there's still one problem. The trial period for the Eye of Deprivation is over. If I don't pay the renewal fee, the skill will be temporarily disabled.'

"System, how do I renew the Eye of Deprivation?" Gao Neng only had this one skill, and after a moment's thought, he decided he shouldn't let it go to waste.

"100 Alliance Coins per day," the mechanical voice replied.

"That expensive? Why don't you just rob people?!"

"You could also choose not to renew. If you don't, the skill will disappear completely."

"Harsh. What if I renew for a longer period? Like, for a month? How much would that be?" Gao Neng asked, gritting his teeth.

"3,000 Alliance Coins."

"No discount for thirty days? Fine, I'll renew for five."

"Apologies. The minimum renewal period is thirty days."

"..." Gao Neng was silent. He remained silent. Then, he found he couldn't take it anymore. "You piece of crap system, you're doing this on purpose, aren't you?"

"Host has been detected using the insult 'piece of crap.' Renewal period increased to forty days."

"..." Gao Neng said nothing more.

He chose to renew.

Soon, the number '40 days' appeared next to the Eye of Deprivation. At the same time, he noticed that the 9,000 Alliance Coins Xu Zilan had given back to him was now 4,000 short.

"Piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap, piece of crap..." Gao Neng immediately cursed non-stop for a full five minutes.

"..." The system remained silent.

...

「Two days later.」

Date: June 6th.

Early in the morning, during the self-study period, Li Qingping personally made a school-wide broadcast commending Gao Neng for killing a Dark Elf. He also awarded Gao Neng one thousand Alliance Coins.

After receiving the one thousand Alliance Coins, Gao Neng immediately had Li Qingping contact Lieutenant Chen from the Military Department. Lieutenant Chen was silent for five seconds before ultimately applying for a five-thousand-Alliance-Coin bonus from the Military Department on his behalf.

In total, he had received six thousand Alliance Coins.

Gao Neng pocketed five thousand of the Alliance Coins and gave the remaining one thousand to Principal Xue Jingjing of the girls' high school, asking her to pass it on to Jin Lingling. Then, he said seriously, "I'm going to do something big in the future. I hope you won't be angry, Principal Xue!"

Xue Jingjing looked completely baffled.

She didn't quite understand what he meant, but she was pleased by his act of kindness. She then went on to publicize Gao Neng's heroic deeds throughout the girls' high school once more.

Overnight, Gao Neng's popularity at the girls' high school soared once again.

Then...

In a flash, another day went by.

Date: June 7th.

Gao Xiaomeng was still in a coma, but the college entrance exams had officially begun. They would last for two days, with half a day dedicated to theory and a day and a half to practical combat.

people.

That was the total number of participants from the Forgotten Land taking the college entrance exam.

As expected, the theory exam was held at First High School. The practical exam, however, would take place at the military training base on the outskirts of the city.

Early in the morning, members of the Military Department and the Public Security Bureau had formed an iron-tight cordon around First High School.

"Gao Neng, I heard you killed a Dark Elf? That's incredible! Can I get a picture with you?"

"I want a picture too!"

"Me too, me too..."

The moment Gao Neng appeared, he was swarmed by students from the girls' high school.

A few students from First High were mixed in with the crowd as well. As for Second High and Fourth High... no one from those schools seemed to want a picture with him.

BRRRING!

The bell to enter the examination hall rang.

Li Qingping nodded at Gao Neng. "Gao Neng, you have to give it your all this time. Do your best on the exam!"

"Principal Li, do you really want to be the chairman of the Supervisory Committee?" Gao Neng didn't head in immediately. Instead, his eyes darted to Li Qingping's breast pocket.

"..." Li Qingping was momentarily confused as to why Gao Neng had suddenly brought that up again. But he subconsciously followed Gao Neng's gaze downward. His old face flushed slightly. "This pen... It's been with me for three years, through thick and thin... Fine, it's yours. May it bring you great results on your exam!"

"Thank you, Principal Li! I'll be sure to do my best!" Gao Neng nodded, accepting the Alloy Steel Pen from Li Qingping with a brilliant smile.

He also took another glance at his quest log.

"Ultimate Mission 2/5: I Am the Overlord."

"Mission Description: A true overlord doesn't just dominate their own small turf; they dominate the entire Alliance. From the moment you pick up your pen, idioms like 'words that blossom into flowers' or 'a Midas touch' are insufficient to

describe your dominance. You are the king of the examination hall. No one can challenge your authority!"

"Completion Condition: Dominate the Human Alliance in the theory exam. Become the top scorer in the theory portion of the college entrance exam for the entire Alliance, not just for the Forgotten Land."

'The conditions are clear enough. It's just that line in the description: "You are the king of the examination hall. No one can challenge your authority!" It seems a little strange. Is someone actually going to try and fight me in the exam hall? No way, right...?' Gao Neng read it over carefully one more time before deciding not to dwell on it.

'Yeah, what kind of trouble could possibly pop up? The security here is so tight, and I've been studying for three days straight. It's just getting first place on the theory exam...'

So easy!

Chapter 73: Sure Enough, It's a Trap!

...

The Military Department was responsible for supervising the college entrance exams.

Their style was rather crude. Instead of being split into multiple examination halls, all 452 candidates were placed directly into First High School's grand auditorium.

Inside the spacious auditorium sat 452 desks. Over 50 security cameras provided comprehensive, blind-spot-free surveillance, while more than 30 Examiners patrolled back and forth. This was the finesse within their crudeness.

Gao Neng swept his gaze across the room and couldn't help but sigh. 'Cheating carries risks; proceed with caution.'

However, he had no intention of cheating. After all, no one's scores were better than his.

"The theoretical exam will last for three hours. There are no breaks. You may not leave your seats for any reason. If you have to pee, hold it. If you have to shit, do it in your pants! If anyone experiences a stomachache and can't stay seated, their qualification to take the exam will be immediately revoked!" The military officer in charge of proctoring announced the first rule of the theoretical exam.

"Three hours... Why can't we use the restroom?" a female student who had drunk too much water asked, instantly feeling immense pressure.

"There is no 'why.' The examination hall is a battlefield!" the Examiner's tone was ice-cold. "Since you've chosen this path, you will consider yourselves soldiers. If you can't even hold it for three hours, what will you do on a real battlefield? Go there to die?!"

"..." The entire hall fell silent.

Getting disqualified for needing to use the restroom—the rule was incredibly domineering, even unreasonable. But it also gave the candidates an early taste of the Military Department's strictness.

There was nothing to be said for it. They would just have to hold it in.

"Rule number two..."

"Rule number three..."

"..."

"Alright, we will now distribute the papers. The exam begins now!" After announcing all ten rules, the 30-plus Examiners began handing out the theoretical exam papers for the college entrance exam.

The theoretical exam consisted of four papers in total, with questions printed on both the front and back. There was one paper for each subject, divided into two theoretical courses and two basic specialized courses.

The two theoretical courses were: "Advanced Mathematical Theory" and "The Development and History of the Alliance Language."

The two basic specialized courses were: "Classification and Fundamentals of Energy Elements" and "Properties of Elements and Their Fundamental Relationship to Energy."

Three hours for four double-sided papers was not a small amount of work.

After Gao Neng received his papers, he started with the first one, "Advanced Mathematical Theory."

There was an old saying for taking exams: start with your strongest subject and finish all the questions you know how to do first.

Gao Neng didn't have any questions he couldn't do.

Besides, all four subjects were his strong suits, so the old saying was rather meaningless to him. The only reason he started with advanced math was that it happened to be on top of the pile.

The first question was... functions.

'Simple.'

Gao Neng glanced at it, picked up his pen, and began. Next came indefinite integrals, definite integrals... none of it could stump him. His grasp of the material was rock-solid.

Thirty-five minutes later, he had finished the advanced math paper.

Next, Gao Neng began "The Development and History of the Alliance Language."

Compared to advanced math, this course involved a lot more memorization.

Gao Neng worked through it rather quickly.

He finished it in 25 minutes.

The last two were "Classification and Fundamentals of Energy Elements" and "Properties of Elements and Their Fundamental Relationship to Energy." These two courses primarily covered rudimentary knowledge and weren't too difficult.

In total, they took him one hour.

All in all, he spent two hours to complete all four papers.

Gao Neng let out a breath. Finishing all his papers early was normal for him; he was long used to it. But just to be safe, he decided to check his answers one more time.

One question, two questions, three questions...

Gao Neng checked his work quickly. 'This answer is beautiful, definitely full marks... This one is straight from the textbook, no problem there. The calculation process for this question is simple and clear, full marks!'

「Ten minutes later.」

He finished checking everything.

"Perfect!" Gao Neng grinned. It felt great when things went smoothly and success came naturally, without any surprises. He casually slipped his pen into his pocket, preparing to turn in his exam.

But the moment the pen entered his pocket, he suddenly felt something stuffed inside. Then, he smelled a foul odor.

'Huh?'

'I showered today.'

Gao Neng subconsciously reached into his pocket. A cloud of yellowish-white powder spilled out, landing right on the exam papers laid out on his desk.

'What is this?'

'Uh...'

'Phosphorus powder?!'

Gao Neng's eyes went wide.

Then, he saw a ball of fire erupt on his papers. It happened incredibly fast; in the blink of an eye, all four exam papers were devoured by the phosphorescent flames.

"Whoa, Gao Neng's on fire!"

"What? Gao Neng's on fire... oh, wait, no, Gao Neng's *papers* are on fire!"

"What a foul smell!"

The surrounding candidates reacted in an instant.

The 30 Examiners also noticed the commotion. Two of them rushed over immediately. They looked at the papers, now reduced to ash, then at Gao Neng, their expressions grim.

"Gao Neng, what's going on here? Why would you bring phosphorus powder into the examination hall?" one of the Examiners demanded.

'Yeah... why *do* I have phosphorus powder on me?' Gao Neng was asking himself the same question. Who had sabotaged him? Who planted phosphorus powder on him?!

'Was it one of the students from the girls' high school?!'

'Back at the school gate, they had all scrambled to take photos with me. If they wanted to plant it on me, they would have had the chance.'

Countless faces flashed through Gao Neng's mind.

The faces of those female students paraded through his thoughts one by one: the refined, the cute, the timid, the precocious, the bashful, the androgynous...

But these faces quickly vanished, because he remembered a critical problem: he had a life-or-death mission to complete.

"Gao Neng, your papers are destroyed. Your score for the theoretical exam can't be calculated. Why don't you come with us and explain what just happened?" the Examiner pressed when Gao Neng remained silent.

"Please give me another set of papers, thank you!" Gao Neng didn't answer the Examiner. He had no time to argue with them now; he had to finish the theoretical exam.

"Another set of papers? Gao Neng, be reasonable. We understand how you feel, but there's no time left. There are only forty minutes remaining. You still want to do another set?" The Examiner was clearly taken aback.

"That's right, Gao Neng. It's impossible to finish another set in forty minutes. You'd be better off coming with us. If you can really prove that someone tampered with you or your papers, we can consider applying to our superiors to grant you an exemption," the other Examiner said.

"I don't want an exemption! I just want another set of papers!" Gao Neng glanced at the time. There were 37 minutes left until the end of the exam.

'Thirty-seven minutes!'

'To finish four test sets in one go in just 37 minutes.'

'And the clock was still ticking.'

'This is absolutely insane...'

But he was out of options. And explaining the situation to the Examiners was even more impossible.

Because his mission wasn't simply to pass the theoretical exam, nor was it to get an exemption. It was to become the top scorer in the entire Alliance on the theoretical portion of the college entrance exam.

'I have to get another set of papers.'

'Fuck this stupid-ass system...'

'How did I not realize it? So **this** was the trap hidden in the phrase, "You are the king of the examination hall, and no one can challenge your authority!"'

'Who the fuck is trying to screw me over?!'

Chapter 74: This Is Definitely a Hack

"Gao Neng, don't get worked up. Calm down. Let's go over the problem slowly. First, tell me, did you bring this phosphorus powder in yourself?" the Examiner said placatingly.

"All I want right now is another test paper. Give me the test!" Gao Neng did want to go over it slowly, but the problem was, he didn't have time.

Fuck this!

Son of a bitch!

Goddammit!

Gao Neng was a man of good upbringing, but he couldn't be bothered with that right now. He just wanted to vent, to really let it all out.

"..." One of the Examiners was speechless.

"Gao Neng, you need to consider this carefully," another Examiner chimed in with a frown, trying to persuade him. "If you're willing to explain the truth of the matter, we might be able to petition our superiors to give you a decent score based on your academic record. But if you insist on taking another test, we can only classify this incident as your own fault. In that case, your score will be whatever you get on the exam."

"That's right, Gao Neng, don't be rash. With only 30 minutes, you can finish one or two sections at most... Your theory exam score will likely be a failing one."

"I've thought it through. Give me the test!" Gao Neng was getting really anxious now. Another five minutes had passed, leaving only 32.

"..."

The two Examiners fell silent.

But in the end, they gestured anyway.

Another Examiner walked over, holding four test papers. As he placed them on Gao Neng's desk, he offered one last piece of well-meaning advice. "Gao Neng, we really think you should re—"

"No need to consider it!" Before the Examiner could finish, Gao Neng snatched the papers and began working at a furious pace.

The three Examiners exchanged a look and shook their heads helplessly.

Meanwhile, the other students watched Gao Neng with a mix of expressions: surprise, sighs, ridicule, anger, and pity.

"I think something's definitely wrong here! Why would Gao Neng bring phosphorus powder into the exam hall? He's not an idiot."

"Maybe he just forgot he had it on him? I heard Gao Neng killed a Dark Elf a few days ago, and people at the scene said they smelled phosphorus powder. It's possible he really did have some on him."

"That happened? Still, I think this might be related to the inspector committee's president election. After all, Gao Neng is the most likely candidate to become this year's top scorer!"

"That's possible... Anyway, if I were Gao Neng, I definitely wouldn't choose to take another test. Isn't that just stupid? The Examiners already said they could give him a good score based on his usual grades if the issue is cleared up. Now, he's probably going to bomb it!"

"Yeah, there are only 30 minutes left. How could he possibly finish four test sections? Isn't he just shooting himself in the foot?"

The students chattered amongst themselves.

Gao Neng, however, had his brow tightly furrowed. He ignored the surrounding chatter and focused completely on the test, but he found that he really couldn't finish it.

Take the advanced mathematics section alone.

He had spent 35 minutes on it before. Even though he already knew the questions now, he still had to write out all the steps for the solutions again.

'It'll take at least 20 minutes!'

'If one section takes over 20 minutes, what about the others?'

Gao Neng did a quick calculation. Even if he didn't run into any problems, he would need over an hour. But there were only 30 minutes left until the end.

'Give up on advanced math?'

'Impossible!'

If he gave up on advanced math, forget being the top scorer in the entire Alliance—he wouldn't even be the top theory exam scorer in the Forgotten Land.

'What do I do?'

'What the hell do I do?'

Gao Neng was frantic. In this situation, the only way was... to cheat.

'Wait a minute!'

'Cheat?!'

Gao Neng's eyes lit up. 'That's right, I can cheat! I've already done these problems once, so I can accurately judge what's right and wrong.'

'I have Spiritual Power!'

'As long as I cover the exam hall with my Spiritual Power, I can see the content on other people's tests. Then, all I have to do is copy what I see onto my own paper.'

'First, I'll lock onto He Haifan. He's the top student at First High, so his accuracy rate is definitely not low!' At this thought, Gao Neng's Spiritual Power transformed into a tendril.

He didn't spread his Spiritual Power across the entire room, but focused it solely on He Haifan's test. The drain was still within his limits.

Soon, he could clearly see the contents of He Haifan's paper.

The one on top was advanced math!

Gao Neng gave it a quick scan. The accuracy rate was over 80%.

He didn't hesitate any longer.

He immediately copied all the work from He Haifan's paper.

SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE!

Gao Neng's pen moved incredibly fast, as if he had a supercomputer in his head. The entire process was as smooth as flowing water, requiring no thought at all.

An Examiner who was about to leave happened to see this scene.

!!!

"What the fuck?!"

...

「In the monitoring room.」

There were quite a few people inside.

Since it was a theory exam, there weren't many security precautions. Besides Shen Ning'Er and Lieutenant Chen, the principals of the five high schools were basically all present.

He Lin, the principal of First High, was loudly demanding to know who had framed Gao Neng, arguing that it was clearly a ploy to cast the principals of the other high schools in a bad light.

Li Qingping, meanwhile, was pleading with Lieutenant Chen.

He hoped the Military Department wouldn't take Gao Neng at his word and would still consider using a composite score if Gao Neng couldn't finish.

As the two were talking, Shen Ning'Er made a gesture for silence.

The monitoring room then fell quiet.

And then...

The eyes of Li Qingping, First High's Principal He Lin, Xue Jingjing, and the others all went wide.

Because on the monitor in front of them, Gao Neng was desperately working on his advanced math paper at the speed of a "typewriter."

"Is that kid a monster?!" a soldier couldn't help but exclaim.

"Such speed! I, He Lin, have been teaching for over thirty years, and I've never seen anyone do advanced mathematics like it was simple arithmetic!" First High's Principal He Lin was a bit stunned himself.

"Can he finish it?" Xue Jingjing, surprisingly, seemed a little worried for Gao Neng.

"It seems advanced mathematics is Gao Neng's strong suit. I saw him start with the math section at the beginning of the exam, too. He won't necessarily be this fast on the other sections." Lieutenant Chen made an "accurate" judgment based on his many years of experience as an examiner.

And then...

Gao Neng, on the monitor, picked up another pen.

He held a pen in each hand.

He spread two test sections out at the same time.

SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE!

SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE!

"..."

His two hands looked as if they were convulsing, but the pens they held were writing one correct answer after another.

Lieutenant Chen's jaw dropped.

"Holy shit, this guy's definitely using cheats!"

Chapter 75: A Different Combat Assessment

...

It wasn't just the monitoring room.

By now, every student in the examination hall who had finished their paper was staring dumbfounded at Gao Neng—at his two hands, which were moving as if they were convulsing.

"Wow, Gao Neng has lost his mind!"

"Is he really taking the exam? It looks more like he's just copying notes..."

"Writing that fast, what could his accuracy possibly be? 50%? 40%? Or maybe 30%... This is a suicidal way to take a test!"

Unlike the people in the monitoring room, the students couldn't see the content of Gao Neng's papers. As a result, they gave him even stranger looks, their eyes filled with doubt and confusion.

"If he can score higher than me like this, I'll eat shit on the spot!" He Haifan was almost certain that Gao Neng was just scribbling nonsense.

No matter how much of a genius you were, no one could possibly answer questions at such an absurd speed!

But the three Examiners standing right next to Gao Neng could see.

They were furiously trying to solve the problems in their heads, following his pen and checking if his answers were correct. And then, they discovered...

They were all correct!

Goddammit, they're all correct!

Time remaining: 15 minutes.

Gao Neng had finally completed two exams: one for *Advanced Mathematical Theory* and another for *The Development and History of the Alliance Language.*

The three Examiners' eyes nearly popped out of their sockets.

He had actually finished!

He finished two papers in fifteen minutes, using two pens... taking two tests simultaneously! What was he doing, performing the legendary Art of Ambidexterity?!

Gao Neng paid them no mind.

He continued on to the remaining two basic specialized subject exams.

Because now, he truly could focus on two things at once. With his Spiritual Power being sufficiently strong, his left and right hands were perfectly capable of performing different tasks.

His Spiritual Power shifted from one target to another. He Haifan's paper wasn't always facing up, but this wasn't a major problem.

There were 452 candidates in the hall.

Time was almost up.

Most of the candidates—well over half—had already finished their exams. Finding a suitable target wasn't actually that difficult.

Of course, there was still one prerequisite.

You had to be able to accurately determine which exam papers had the correct answers.

If you couldn't make that judgment, what was the point of copying?

At best, you'd just get the same score as the person you copied from.

Ten minutes later...

Gao Neng stopped writing.

The two basic specialized subject exams were done.

"Whew..." Gao Neng let out a breath and glanced at the time. Five minutes left.
"Hm, not bad. Still have five minutes to check my work."

THUMP!

A student fell right out of his chair and onto the floor.

'Check his work?!'

'He finished four exams in half an hour, and he still has time to check them?!'

"Ahem!" The three Examiners coughed heavily, then exchanged a look. One of them gently patted Gao Neng's shoulder. "Gao Neng, nice work!"

What could they say?

They couldn't say anything...

'This kid is a monster. And a monster who's using cheats, at that!'

Only after watching the three Examiners leave did Gao Neng finally relax. 'It seems... they really can't detect my Spiritual Power?'

'Wait, is Spiritual Power undetectable?'

'No!'

Gao Neng remembered that back in the underground factory, Angel Mu Feifei had seemed to "capture" his Spiritual Power. But besides her, no one else seemed to have sensed it.

Even when facing the sharp-eared woman, when Gao Neng had released his Spiritual Power to pinpoint her location, she hadn't sensed it either.

'Hmm...'

'It must be because these people aren't strong enough!'

So what level of strength did one need to possess Spiritual Power? Gao Neng didn't know yet. After all, the high school curriculum didn't cover such specialized knowledge.

...

「In the monitoring room.」

Li Qingping also let out a long breath and patted his chest. He could see the contents of Gao Neng's exam papers, so he naturally knew Gao Neng's score wouldn't be low.

"Principal Li, weren't you just saying that we should consider Gao Neng's composite score?" Lieutenant Chen wiped the sweat from his forehead, then seemed to remember something.

"There's no need for consideration!" Li Qingping declared with a stern expression. "The college entrance exam is sacred! How could we make an exception for one person? He must be graded according to his actual results!"

"Hahaha..." Lieutenant Chen laughed so hard he was almost in tears.

Meanwhile, Xue Jingjing and the other principals just chuckled before congratulating Li Qingping, saying that Third Senior High School had truly produced a super genius this time.

Li Qingping accepted their praise without any false modesty, merely smiling nonchalantly. "It's nothing, you don't have to praise him so much. Besides, your students aren't bad either. Although, none of them are as outstanding as Gao Neng, but that can't be helped, right? Hahaha..."

"..." Principal He Lin of First High.

"Looks like Principal Li is a shoo-in for the chairmanship of the Supervisory Committee now, huh? Does this mean lunch is on Principal Li today?" Xue Jingchang said with a smile.

"With Major Shen from the Military Department here, I, Li Qingping, wouldn't dare presume to host." Li Qingping laughed it off, his heart still aching over the fountain pen that Gao Neng had swindled from him.

"Ahem." Shen Ning'Er gave a light cough.

The entire room instantly fell silent.

"After the exam, take them directly to the 'Military Exercise Training Base.' Everything has been arranged. They'll have lunch there, and after lunch, we will announce the theory exam results. Then, the practical assessment will begin." After speaking, Shen Ning'Er stood up, nodded to the principals, and walked out of the monitoring room.

"Principals, please prepare to accompany us to the Military Exercise Training Base." Lieutenant Chen's expression turned serious as he watched Shen Ning'Er leave.

"Understood!" Li Qingping and the others nodded at once.

Outside the monitoring room,

Shen Ning'Er looked up at the sun, which was already high in the sky. "Ah... Dear Grandpa Sun, tell me, if I had taken the theory exam with him, would I have lost?"

"No way, no way! The lovable little imp Shen Ning'Er is the strongest!" a strange, hoarse voice replied from her own mouth.

"Grandpa Sun is so honest!" Shen Ning'Er smiled, then left happily.

...

The theory exam concluded.

Led by the principals of the various high schools, Gao Neng and the other students once again boarded the bus, heading for the military training base on the outskirts of the city.

The college entrance exam lasted for two full days, with no time to go home in between.

An hour later, the four hundred-plus students arrived at the entrance of the Military Exercise Training Base.

Before them stood a structure resembling an underground fortress. Apart from a single large gate, the rest was all-natural mountain rock.

'An underground fortress?'

'Shouldn't it be a wide-open training ground...?'

Although Gao Neng had lived in the Forgotten Land, this was his first time at a military base. He remembered Li Qingping mentioning that the content of the practical assessment was random and changed every year.

But in his mind, Gao Neng had always imagined the practical assessment would be a tournament-style fight, with a group of people trading punches on a stage.

However, when he saw the fortress before him, he suddenly had a strange feeling that this practical assessment might be a little different from what he had imagined.

(A note about Spiritual Power: I, Xin Yi, originally planned to write about this later, but seeing that many readers are confused, let me offer a quick explanation. So far in the book, I've only written about two people who can perceive Spiritual Power: Angel Mu Feifei and Shen Ning'Er. Their perceptions are also different; Mu Feifei can directly "capture" it, while Shen Ning'Er just feels that something is off. When Gao Neng first got his Spiritual Power, he even said he'd become "super-duper strong." How could anyone think it's so common that everyone has it? After all that, it's not too much to ask for a recommendation ticket, right?)

Chapter 76: The Arrogant and Unbridled Loner

Inspection, clear.

The Military Department was all about speed.

It didn't take long before Gao Neng and the others were officially riding a bus into the base.

Gao Neng took in the sights of the military base with a sense of novelty. It was mostly constructed from some unknown alloy and concrete, and it looked incredibly sturdy.

Then, the bus stopped, and they were led into the base's cafeteria.

More than 400 people sat nervously at the cafeteria tables.

This time, Lieutenant Chen came out in person instead of hiding in the surveillance room. 'Looks like Lieutenant Chen is in charge of this combat assessment,' Gao Neng guessed.

"Let me formally introduce myself. My surname is Chen," Lieutenant Chen Bai said, his face calm and his tone serious. "My given name is Bai. You know, 'white,' as in 'red, orange, yellow, green, blue... and paper.'"

"Chen Bai?" The students below looked at each other, completely dumbfounded.

"What, was my joke not funny?" Lieutenant Chen Bai looked puzzled.

"Heh heh..."

The students forced a few laughs.

If anyone else had said it, they probably would have laughed. But how were they supposed to laugh when he was making that deadpan face?

"Looks like you're all very nervous. It's fine, you can relax for now. After all, you'll be even more nervous in a little while," Chen Bai continued.

The students remained silent.

"Alright, relaxation time is over. You have ten minutes to eat. Begin!"

"Huh...? Only ten minutes?!"

"Hurry up and eat!"

"I'm starving, but this food... tastes awful!"

A wave of complaints rippled through the room.

Chen Bai, however, stood on the stage, his gaze sweeping over the crowd below before finally landing on Gao Neng, who was also wolfing down his food. A smile tugged at the corner of his mouth.

"Don't choke... Eat slowly, there's no rush... Everyone, eat a little less. We might have another meal later tonight. If you stuff yourselves now, you won't have room for the whole roasted lamb."

"Huh? There's whole roasted lamb?"

"Wow, that's great!"

"I've never had whole roasted lamb before! I'm definitely going to gain five pounds this time!"

The students' eyes lit up at once.

Gao Neng, however, didn't spare Chen Bai a single glance. He just kept shoveling rice and grabbing food. He felt Chen Bai wasn't nearly insidious enough—a far cry from the Idiot System, at least.

'As if I'd believe you!'

'You tricky bastard, you're up to no good!'

'The schedule for the combat assessment was perfectly clear: one and a half days. Knowing the Military Department's style, there's no way we'd get a break, probably not even time to sleep.'

'A whole roasted lamb? As if.'

...

「Forgotten Land, First Senior High School.」

While Gao Neng and the others were eating in the training base's cafeteria, the grading of the theory exams back at First High was already reaching its conclusion. Dozens of military officers were hard at work grading the papers.

The exam papers of 452 students.

With the help of computers, it didn't take too long.

The Military Department had always been swift and decisive. Whether it was the theory exam or the combat assessment, they would grade and announce the results on the same day.

The four subjects were split into four separate divisions for grading.

"Huh? I've got a perfect score here, not a single question wrong. Looks like the Forgotten Land has a genius or two," a voice said.

"What a coincidence... The one I'm grading is also a perfect score?"

"It can't be that much of a coincidence, can it? The paper in my hands seems to be a perfect score too."

"Are we grading the same person's exam...? Why do I have a perfect score here too?" the last officer asked, his expression strange.

...

And then, there was silence.

"It can't be, right? If the four of us are grading the same person's paper, doesn't that mean this person got a perfect score on all four theory subjects?!"

...

「Suburbs, Military Training Base.」

Gao Neng and the others had just finished eating when the results of the theory exam were transmitted from First High. The speed was unbelievably fast.

"Alright, your theory exam results are in." After speaking, Chen Bai casually pointed to the display screen behind him, and lines of text appeared.

The scoring for the theory exam was a total of 150 points per subject, for a grand total of 600 points across four subjects.

When the students heard the results were out, they all turned to the screen. And then, many of them did a spit take with the food still in their mouths.

"PFFT!"

"No way?! 600 points... Who scored 600 points?!"

"The exam number is 0734! Who's 0734?"

"It's Gao Neng!"

"He got a perfect score of 600? How... I don't believe it! Oh my god... I don't believe it! He finished four exams in thirty minutes and still got a perfect score!"

When they saw the 600 at the very top, all the students looked at Gao Neng in disbelief.

He Haifan's face went white.

His total score for the four subjects was 535, ranking him second.

Although he was ranked second, the gap between his total score and Gao Neng's was a full 65 points.

"How could he score so high? It's impossible... Ugh, it's rigged! There has to be something shady going on! I don't believe it!" He Haifan refused to believe it.

However, he also knew that the Military Department would never show favoritism. Moreover, the exam results were graded by different officers, with computer-assisted answer checking.

There was simply no way it could be rigged.

Unless... the entire Military Department was in Gao Neng's pocket. But was that possible?

"Gao Neng is so amazing!" The female students were relatively calmer. Their eyes just sparkled, without much skepticism.

Faced with all this...

Gao Neng appeared very calm.

"Standard procedure. No need to be surprised. It's just that the maximum score is only 600. Nothing to be done, that's all I could get!" After saying his piece, he got up and began doing some calisthenics.

The combat assessment was about to start.

A little post-meal exercise would help with digestion.

...

Everyone fell silent.

Gao Neng said no more, because he had already received a notification from the system. 'A perfect score on all four subjects. If this doesn't make me number one in the entire Alliance, I don't know what will.'

"Congratulations, Host. You have completed: I Am the Overlord. You have received one Primary Treasure Chest."

"Open."

A Bone Marrow Cleansing Pill fell into his hand.

Gao Neng now had two Bone Marrow Cleansing Pills in his possession.

As for the final evolution mission, he had now successfully completed two parts. With only three more to go, he could evolve. Gao Neng was in a pretty good mood.

He started to imagine what would happen after he evolved.

'A Transformer? A loli robot? Or a set of Saint Seiya armor? At the very least, a mount that could fly through the sky and burrow through the earth wouldn't be bad, right?'

'Hahaha... Once that happens, I can finally ditch this Idiot System, right? If I just stop accepting its quests, what's the Idiot System gonna do to me?' Gao Neng chuckled to himself.

He was a man of great patience.

Right now was his growth period, and his strength wasn't yet sufficient. Although the Idiot System's quests were a pain, the rewards were still good. This was the reason for his patience.

'As long as I get strong enough...'

'I'll definitely abandon it and start enjoying life.'

'First, I'll set a small goal...'

'Raise a few twin-tailed lolis in princess dresses, buy a big house surrounded by fields... Hmm, I'll have to buy a car, too. Oh, and I have to buy my mom, Xu Zilan, some nice new clothes.'

'As for the Idiot System?'

'I'll be super-duper strong by then. Who would be dumb enough to take on these kinds of shitty quests?' Gao Neng thought, casually opening the third mission.

"Ultimate Mission 3/5: The Arrogant and Unruly Lone Wolf!"

"Mission Description: A true lone wolf will not allow any uncontrollable factors to exist around them. When night falls, your arrogance and insolence will be unleashed to their fullest."

"Completion Conditions: Take down over 10 proctoring military officers (including Chen Bai), whip them, and while you're at it, take first place in the combat assessment."

Chapter 77: Transformation Can Be Explosive

"..." Gao Neng almost coughed up blood. Last time, during the prep school exam, he'd been forced to call the Examiner an idiot in front of everyone. He'd put up with that.

This time, it was going too far!

'No more cursing, just straight to fighting?'

'And it was a damn whipping?! Should I drip a few drops of wax on Chen Bai's body? Maybe rub a kitchen knife on his face for good measure?'

Gao Neng was genuinely baffled this time.

'He could never beat someone with Lieutenant Chen Bai's strength. And even if he could, what then? If he really attacked Chen Bai, couldn't Chen Bai just have him finished off after the combat assessment was over?'

'Most importantly, Chen Bai seemed to be in charge of this combat assessment. If he took the guy down, who was going to give him first place?'

"The theory portion is worth 30% of your grade, while the combat assessment is worth 70%. If you didn't do well on theory, you'll have to go all out in combat. Now, prepare for the combat assessment!" Chen Bai, completely oblivious to any

personal threat, announced after the scores were posted, punctuating his command with a wave of his hand.

A few Examiners in black military uniforms immediately began clearing the area. They opened a side door of the cafeteria and led the students into the combat assessment zone.

Gao Neng naturally hurried to follow.

But the look he gave Chen Bai was a little complicated.

'How am I going to do this?'

He considered pretending to make small talk with Chen Bai to feel him out.

"Lieutenant Chen, what's your combat strength usually like in a real fight? Could you tell us a bit about it?" Gao Neng found an opening and sidled up next to Chen Bai.

"Chatting with Examiners is prohibited until the combat assessment is over." Chen Bai gave Gao Neng a casual glance and strode away.

"..." Gao Neng was speechless.

'Pretty cautious, huh?'

...

Soon, under Chen Bai's guidance, Gao Neng and the other students entered a sealed room. With black walls on all four sides, it looked like a prison.

"This is the site for the combat assessment?"

"There's not even an arena... How are we supposed to fight?"

"Is it an escape room game?"

The students all looked bewildered.

"Stop guessing. The event for this combat assessment is... Battlefield Survival!" Chen Bai announced, standing at the front of the room to explain the rules.

"Battlefield survival?" the students repeated blankly.

"Through this door is the location for the assessment." Chen Bai pointed to a closed alloy door behind him and continued, "After you enter the Virtual Battlefield, you'll be randomly assigned to one of ten different zones. What's more, your appearance will change—you'll be turned from humans into animals!"

"Turned into animals?" Now the students were even more confused.

"That's right. The Virtual Battlefield contains many different species of animals. Some are native to the environment, while others are your fellow candidates. Your mission is to find the students disguised as animals and kill them. You'll earn one point for every kill."

"Oh, I see." The students seemed to understand, but they were still puzzled. "Lieutenant Chen, why do we have to be turned into animals?"

"This is to test your camouflage and reconnaissance skills. Just like on a real battlefield, you can only survive if you know how to disguise yourself. You will never know who your opponents are, how strong they are, or where they're hiding. Therefore, you must also possess sharp reconnaissance abilities to find

opponents weaker than yourself. If your intelligence is faulty... well, congratulations, you'll be killed by your target!"

"If we get killed, do we really die?"

"You won't die, per se... but it will be very painful. Twice as painful as normal, in fact. Also, your strength, speed, and other abilities will be identical to your real-world stats. Finally, your score for this assessment is based on your kill count. In other words, if you just hide the whole time and don't kill any opponents, you'll be eliminated in the end!" Chen Bai explained.

"..." This time, the students understood perfectly.

They couldn't just turtle.

Because even if they managed to survive until the very end by hiding, they'd still get a score of zero.

"The assessment will last for a day and a half," Chen Bai added. "Here's a tip: remember to find food once you're inside. Otherwise, you'll probably starve to death."

"Liar! Didn't you say there'd be whole roasted lamb? I didn't eat at all!" Fatty from Third High stood up, his face a mask of indignation.

"You actually believed that?" Chen Bai sneered.

"I... I..." Fatty's face flushed crimson.

"There really is a whole roasted lamb, but it's reserved for the final victors. The top ten get to eat. As for the rest of you... you can enjoy watching them. One last thing: you won't have a compass inside, but you will get an audio cue. This cue only gives a general direction. If you can't find a way to navigate, you might just get struck by lightning and die."

"..." None of the students said another word. They were already strategizing: how could they kill the most opponents and still be the last one standing?

Gao Neng could pretty much guess what the other students were thinking.

'It all came down to one thing: teaming up!'

It was the simplest and most effective solution.

After all, if a team could actually survive to the end, they would have accumulated a good number of kills, meaning their final scores wouldn't be too bad.

The only problem was...

The starting locations were random.

It was impossible to form teams in advance; they would have to find allies after entering the battlefield. That made establishing trust the biggest problem of all.

After all, an exam like this could determine your entire future!

Most importantly, with everyone's appearance altered, their true natures would be laid bare. No one would know who their teammates really were. It was just like chatting online—you never knew if you were talking to a cute girl or some gross old guy picking his feet.

Someone could be shouting, "Hey, girl, let's team up!" and then smash you over the head the second you turned your back. That was entirely possible, wasn't it?

'Besides, Chen Bai must have anticipated the teaming-up strategy. It probably won't be that easy, will it?'

"Time's up! The combat assessment officially begins now!" Chen Bai announced after a glance at the time. As he spoke, the alloy door behind him slid open.

Gao Neng glanced inside.

The space beyond the alloy door was pitch-black, like an abyssal portal connecting to some other dimension.

'Must be some black-ops tech developed from that 'magnetic pile' again,' Gao Neng thought. He didn't dwell on it, as the students had already begun filing in.

He took a step inside.

In the darkness, Gao Neng felt an unknown force cling to him, enveloping his entire body.

He took another step.

And his vision was suddenly flooded with light.

A small stream flowed at his feet, its water so clear he could see fish darting about.

Behind and all around him stretched a dense forest of towering trees. The sun shone brightly, and a refreshing breeze rustled through the leaves.

Looking at his surroundings, Gao Neng thought he was starting to understand what Chen Bai meant about needing to find his direction.

'A jungle?!'

'How the hell was he supposed to find his way around here?'

'Wait a second!'

'Let's see what I turned into first.'

Gao Neng walked to the edge of the stream to look at his reflection and immediately wanted to start cursing.

A duck!

He, Gao Neng, had become a little yellow duckling!

'Is this supposed to make me into the Kung Fu Duck or something?'

Just as he was having this thought, the water in the stream before him suddenly roiled, and a black crocodile covered in thick Scale Armor lunged out.

"I'm Gao Neng! I'm Gao Neng from Third High! Anyone want to team up? Speak now if you do! I'm only taking five people, not looking for more!" the crocodile shouted the moment it emerged.

Gao Neng was taken aback.

'That's a valid strategy?'

As he was thinking, a zebra suddenly leaped from the forest with a SWOOSH. Rearing up on its hind legs, it neighed, "Who the hell dares to impersonate me? I'm the real Gao Neng!"

"..." Gao Neng was speechless.

Chapter 78: How About Some Braised Duck Feet

'These two clowns are really getting into it, huh?'

Gao Neng had seen people use their ultimate moves the moment they came online, but he'd rarely seen anyone be this flamboyant right off the bat.

What's more, the Crocodile had actually been bluffed by the Zebra. After a stunned moment, it fell to the ground with a THUD.

"Student Gao Neng, I was wrong! I'm actually Zhang Xiaotian, a student from Year Three, Class Three, right next to your Class Two. We've met before, you remember me, right?"

"You're Zhang Xiaotian?" The Zebra tilted its head back, looking down on the Crocodile.

"Yes, yes, yes, I really am!" The Crocodile groveled, its previous arrogance completely gone. "Student Gao Neng, please carry me! I want to team up with you."

"Team up? We'll have to see if you're even qualified." The Zebra looked smug.

Gao Neng was starting to lose his patience.

'There's a giant yellow duck standing right in front of you two clowns. Can't you see me?'

'Are you blind!'

He decided to let this Crocodile and Zebra have a good taste of his webbed feet!

Just as he was about to strike...

Another shout came from behind him.

"Where's Student Gao Neng? Where is Student Gao Neng?!" A Golden Snub-nosed Monkey shot out from the woods, its eyes bulging and its mouth pursed in a cutesy pout.

"I'm Gao Neng. Who are you?" the Zebra asked, its expression hostile.

"Li Caicai! My name is Li Caicai! Do you remember me, Student Gao Neng? I'm a student from the girls' high school. We even took a picture together! Please, Student Gao Neng, let me team up with you! I'll do whatever you say!"

"Oh? Li Caicai, I know you. You took second place in the girls' high school's last physical fitness test! Right?" The Zebra seemed to recall something.

"Yes, yes, that's me! But compared to Student Gao Neng, my strength is, well, just like my name implies—pretty 'green.' But I'll work hard to be a good assistant for Student Gao Neng! After all, my power burst is 295. As long as I don't run into He Haifan from First High, I'll be fine!" the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey nodded immediately.

"A power burst of 295?! Hmm... acceptable. And you?" A flash of excitement crossed the Zebra's eyes before it turned its head toward the Crocodile.

"Mine's 267!" the Crocodile said instantly.

"Alright. Seeing as you're both being honest, I'll carry you." The Zebra finally nodded. "But remember this: you must listen to me. If you dare to sneak attack me from behind or run away mid-fight, don't blame me for being ruthless and forgetting we're all students. Got it?"

"Got it, got it!"

The Crocodile and the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey nodded at once.

Gao Neng watched from the side, completely dumbfounded. 'These three are such drama queens!'

'Eye of Deprivation!'

'It can see through any disguise!'

Gao Neng had originally thought it could only see through things like the Makeup Technique, but he never expected the skill could even see the person hidden underneath the animal avatar with perfect clarity.

'The so-called student from the girls' high school, Li Caicai...'

The Golden Snub-nosed Monkey's true identity was a short, ugly Fatty. If he wasn't mistaken, it was probably some nameless student from Fourth High.

And the Crocodile wasn't Zhang Xiaotian from Third High, either.

As for this Zebra...

Gao Neng had to admit he was a little impressed. The Zebra was the actual student from the girls' high school. She had wavy, curly hair and a few freckles on her face.

"Huh? There's a yellow duck here?" The Crocodile seemed to have finally noticed Gao Neng's presence. It leaped back a meter.

"QUACK, QUACK..." Gao Neng called out twice.

"Oh, it's just a wild duck. Scared me for a second. Why don't we kill it and have a barbecue? Didn't Lieutenant Chen say we needed to find food?" The Crocodile breathed a sigh of relief.

"You don't find food, you take it! We'll go over there and recruit a few more people. Once we have the numbers, will we still have to worry about food?" the Zebra shot the Crocodile a cold look and began to issue commands.

"Student Gao Neng is right!" the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey immediately chimed in, sucking up.

"Alright, let's go." The Zebra seemed to be enjoying this sense of accomplishment. Without giving Gao Neng so much as a second glance, it held its head high and prepared to turn and leave.

The Crocodile and the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey immediately followed.

Gao Neng watched as the three idiots turned their backs to him. A thought sighed through his mind: 'Duck feet... are they better braised, steamed, or stewed?'

'Battered it is!'

'Not only does that make them tender and flavorful, but I can also complete the "Ruthless Flower-Destroyer" task.'

Gao Neng made his decision.

First, he'd take out the Zebra from the girls' high school!

BANG!

A bright yellow, webbed foot kicked the back of its head.

The Zebra, completely defenseless, was sent flying by the kick. It rolled twice on the ground before its head smashed into a rock.

THUD!

A painful blow to the head!

"AHHH!!!" The Zebra let out a squeal like a pig being slaughtered. It clutched its head and rolled around on the ground, clearly in immense pain.

'Looks like what Chen Bai said about the pain being doubled... must be true!' Gao Neng didn't stick around to watch. In a one-on-three fight, he didn't actually have much of an advantage.

'I have to take one out first!'

So, he darted forward and was in front of the Zebra again. Then, he lifted his webbed feet and began frantically kicking the Zebra's head, chest, butt, stomach, face...

A flurry of violent kicks.

As the old saying goes: to be merciful to your enemy is to be cruel to yourself. Besides, he had already given a heads-up to the girls' high school principal, Xue Jingjing, and even included a gift of one thousand Alliance Coins.

'Xue Jingjing definitely won't blame me.'

'After all, people like him, who were polite before resorting to violence, were a rare breed indeed.'

"Ahhh... spare me! It hurts... it hurts so much... Don't kick my chest... It's gonna burst..." the Zebra begged for mercy. Then, its body went limp and vanished on the spot.

"..."

The Crocodile and the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey.

'What the hell?!'

'Student Gao Neng... got killed by a duck?!'

'Good heavens!'

'What a savage duck!'

'So the animals in this battlefield are all this powerful? If even Student Gao Neng was killed, wouldn't that mean they don't stand a chance?'

ROAR!

A beast's roar echoed from the jungle.

A twenty-meter-tall Tyrannosaurus Rex poked its head out of the jungle. Its cold eyes scanned its surroundings, and its sharp teeth sent a chill down the spine.

The faces of the Crocodile and the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey turned pale.

'Not only is there a savage duck, but there's also a powerful Tyrannosaurus Rex?!' The two exchanged a look and, without a moment's hesitation, turned and fled.

'Trying to run?' How could Gao Neng let his prey escape? Even if these guys didn't add points to his "Ruthless Flower-Destroyer" task, they were still kills for the combat assessment.

BANG!

One kick from a webbed foot took down the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey.

BANG!

Another webbed-foot kick!

The Crocodile went down too.

What followed was a rain of kicks and wing slaps.

"Ah... Lord Duck, I was wrong! I shouldn't have called you a wild duck... Ah, it hurts! Am I going to die?! Spare me, Lord Duck..."

"This is a foul! The duck is killing people! This combat assessment is unfair... Ah, don't hit my face! It hurts, it really, really hurts..."

Finally, the voices stopped.

The Golden Snub-nosed Monkey and the Crocodile had successfully followed the Zebra.

Gao Neng flapped his wings, preened his feathers, and then looked up at the Tyrannosaurus Rex rampaging through the jungle in the distance.

For a moment, a wry smile appeared in his eyes.

Thanks to his Eye of Deprivation, he could clearly see that the Tyrannosaurus Rex was actually an Examiner from the Military Department.

He had actually guessed that the Examiners from the Military Department would likely get involved. The so-called "teaming up" was a complete sham, because the more people you grouped with, the bigger a target you became.

'These Examiners were here to "clear the field."'

Because this combat assessment was a battlefield survival simulation, it would be just like a real battlefield—accidents could happen at any time. These Examiners *were* the accidents.

'But still...'

'Isn't this going a bit too far?'

'We get to be ducks, zebras, crocodiles, and golden snub-nosed monkeys... while you guys get to be a Tyrannosaurus Rex?!'

'This stupid System, it wants me to slay a dragon!'

'No, wait!'

'It wants me to *whip* a dragon!'

Chapter 79: What a Bunch of Good Ducks

...

Military Training Base.

The three students who had been "killed" by Gao Neng were standing at the exit.

The scene was incredibly awkward.

Finally, the short, stout student from Fourth High couldn't hold back any longer. "You're a student from the Girls' High?! You said you were Gao Neng! Why are you... a girl?"

"Hmph!" The girl from the Girls' High lifted her chin, flicked her hand, and stormed off.

Then, only the short, stout student and a bearded young man were left, staring at each other, sparks flying in their eyes.

Meanwhile, in another sealed room.

Information on the three eliminated students was displayed on a screen.

In addition, a little yellow duck was leisurely strolling by a creek on the screen. The only difference was that it had a number "3" floating above its head.

"Those three... talk about unlucky! To think they'd impersonate Gao Neng right in front of him..." The principal of Fourth High shook his head, a little speechless.

"Aren't others impersonating him all over the place? They just haven't run into the real one yet." Xue Jingjing felt a pang of frustration. After all, the exam had just begun, and one of her students was already out.

Still, getting killed for impersonating Gao Neng...

There wasn't really much she could say about that.

"Hehe..." Li Qingping chuckled, humming a little tune. He casually held up three fingers and waved them in front of First High's principal, He Lin. "That's three!"

First High's principal, He Lin, said nothing.

But his face flushed slightly red. Gao Neng had already taken first place in the theory exam. If he also took first in the practical assessment, this year's top scorer in the Forgotten Land's college entrance exam would really go to Third High.

"Huh? Everyone, look! What is Gao Neng doing?" the principal of Fourth High exclaimed.

"Is he... beating up a duck?" Xue Jingjing stared at the screen, where Gao Neng was throwing punches amidst a flock of ducks. For a moment, she couldn't believe her eyes.

But the fact was...

Gao Neng really was wailing on a wild duck!

And around him, a full twenty wild ducks were squawking chaotically.

The most shocking part was, after he finished beating up the duck, Gao Neng actually started running into the creek to catch fish. And then, he really caught one.

"He's started feeding the ducks!"

"He's feeding the one he beat up first... and the duck is actually eating it! Look, all the other ducks are swarming over..."

"He's not trying to become the... Duck King, is he?!"

The principals all looked at each other, horrified expressions on their faces.

Because they really did see that flock of ducks start to follow Gao Neng around the creek, and they all seemed to regard him with a mixture of fear and reverence.

...

「In the Virtual Battlefield.」

Gao Neng looked at the twenty ducks in front of him, feeling very pleased.

'What is the best disguise?'

'It's not about hiding well. It's about being able to stand right in front of your enemy without them noticing you—because you're surrounded by a flock of ducks.'

Gao Neng had done it.

First, he pretended to be an ordinary duck and infiltrated the flock by the creek. After identifying their Duck King, he made his move without hesitation.

He pinned down the Duck King and gave it a thorough beating.

When he had beaten it enough, he gave the Duck King half a fish as compensation. Finally, he distributed the rest of the fish to buy the loyalty of a troop of duck soldiers.

Now, he was the new Duck King of these twenty ducks.

'As expected of black technology developed from the magnetic pile. Even the ducks in here have higher IQs than normal ones!' Gao Neng had actually had a bold theory when he attempted this.

He thought of Gao Xiaomeng. Since her intelligence had been enhanced after coming into contact with something from the magnetic pile, could the lifeforms in the "Virtual Battlefield"—also developed from the magnetic pile—possess the same trait?

The results proved that his guess was likely correct.

These twenty ducks truly possessed some intelligence. While they were no match for Gao Xiaomeng, their IQs were definitely much higher than the blockheaded ducks of the outside world.

'What exactly is inside the magnetic pile? A civilization? Or a whole world?' Gao Neng didn't dwell on it. The question was too big, and he wasn't qualified to investigate it yet.

The problem at hand was...

Get stronger first!

And to get stronger, he had to be ruthless with the flowers!

And whip the dragon!

"QUACK QUACK QUACK!" Gao Neng turned and squawked a few times at the little duck team standing behind him.

"QUACK QUACK QUACK!"

"QUACK QUACK..."

The little duck team responded immediately.

'Their learning ability really is strong!' Gao Neng wasted no more time and strode toward the Tyrannosaurus Rex in the distance. His goal was to whip the dragon, so naturally, he had to prove a few things first.

When Gao Neng walked, the ducks walked.

When Gao Neng stopped, the ducks stopped.

When Gao Neng flapped his wings, the ducks flapped their wings.

What a good flock of ducks.

Soon, under Gao Neng's leadership, the small duck squad arrived within ten meters of the Tyrannosaurus Rex, which quickly noticed Gao Neng's presence.

That's right!

Gao Neng had no intention of hiding at all.

He led his duck squad and appeared openly before the Tyrannosaurus Rex.

"QUACK QUACK QUACK!" Gao Neng vocalized.

The other ducks quacked along.

The Tyrannosaurus Rex blinked, looking at the flock of ducks before it as if deep in thought. Then, it took a step and stomped down hard.

"QUACK QUACK QUACK!"

Three ducks were crushed into paste.

The other ducks and Gao Neng frantically flapped their wings and fled backward.

The Tyrannosaurus Rex had no intention of chasing them. It let Gao Neng and the ducks leave, then continued on in another direction, letting out a roar.

'Looks like these Examiners can't recognize us on sight!' Gao Neng had his answer. Although the Examiners could transform into a Tyrannosaurus Rex, their other settings were likely the same as the students'.

The Examiners also needed to use detection and judgment to find the candidates.

That seemed reasonable enough.

Otherwise, if they could really see through a candidate's disguise with a single glance, it wouldn't be training—it would be a massacre.

Gao Neng guessed this was probably a training assessment for the Examiners from the Military Department as well. However, compared to the other candidates, these Examiners were far more vigilant.

'They won't even let a flock of ducks go!'

'Damn it!'

'I'll remember what you look like. You crushed three of my duck soldiers. I'll have to add a few extra lashes to your whipping to settle this score!' Gao Neng mentally took note.

Well then, time to get started for real.

The Examiners were too vigilant right now, so there weren't any good opportunities. His targets were the students from the Girls' High. That was what he most wanted to do at this stage.

Gao Neng's Spiritual Power spread out rapidly.

In just a moment, he discovered several active Girls' High students nearby.

'The one on the left has good prep school and theory scores. She should have a chance to get into the Military University, so I'll spare her life for now. The two on the right... their theory and prep scores are average. They'll do!' Gao Neng had a mission to complete, but he wasn't about to ruin someone's future over it.

He still had to take them out, of course.

It was just a matter of timing.

He would let the stronger Girls' High students accumulate some points first. Later on, when their scores were high enough, he would go take them down. This wouldn't affect his mission.

Having confirmed his targets, Gao Neng crept toward the two Girls' High students on the right.

One of them was quite close.

She was hiding in a patch of tall grass, disguised as a red-furred fox.

When Gao Neng led his duck squad to the edge of the grass, the fox remained completely still, clearly planning to lie low and play it safe in the early stages.

"QUACK QUACK!" Gao Neng squawked twice, then pounced.

"Ah... no! Let go of me... you beast! Ah... it hurts... it hurts, it hurts, it hurts... so painful..." the fox shrieked, struggling for her life.

Chapter 80: The First Prompt

Would Gao Neng let go?

Absolutely not!

He pressed down hard, his two wings balled into fists, relentlessly pummeling all sorts of soft spots on the fox's body.

The scene was, for a moment, quite bloody.

The fox's cries were miserable, but Gao Neng was too strong. Pinned beneath him, she couldn't move at all. In the end, she could only die amidst her screams.

Flower Destroyer: 4/30.

Gao Neng was in a great mood. At this rate, he could take down at least ten to twenty in the Virtual Battlefield. If he was lucky, maybe even more.

'Huh? Another female high school student is actually heading my way? She must have heard the commotion over here.' Gao Neng spread his Spiritual Power out again and discovered that another target was now even closer. This was a pleasant surprise.

Gao Neng decided to wait in the tall grass for a bit.

Soon, a large white rabbit appeared in his field of vision. Its two eyes were red, and its ears were perked up, constantly listening for any sounds in the surroundings.

"QUACK QUACK QUACK!" the duckling squad called out.

"..." The large white rabbit froze for a moment, a hint of caution in its eyes, but it still gradually approached, hopping along cutely.

But the instant she reached the edge of the grass...

A duck wing shot out.

"AHHH!!!" The large white rabbit let out a piercing scream. Before she could even react, Gao Neng grabbed her and pulled her into the tall grass.

Then, miserable screams rang out again.

"I'll fight you to the death... Ah... It hurts! Let me go... Who are you?! Sob, sob, sob... You're a bully, you ambushed me... AHHHHH..."

Finally, the sounds stopped.

Gao Neng tidied his feathers and strode out from the tall grass.

Flower Destroyer: 5/30.

Keep it up!

'Time to get quacking, I'm getting close to ten!'

Gao Neng was a positive, hardworking, and aspiring person, so he wouldn't get arrogant over a small success. He was going to take down even more female high school students.

...

「Half an hour later.」

Two female high school students, walking shoulder to shoulder, came face to face with a flock of ducks. However, the flock clearly didn't draw much of their attention.

After all, who would believe that more than ten students had all turned into ducks and successfully formed a team?

It clearly made no sense!

Then, to help them improve, Gao Neng had no choice but to act, teaching them a small lesson. Amidst the two female students' screams, he secured another two kills.

...

「Another hour passed.」

Gao Neng reaped another two female high school students.

At this point, he had already eliminated 9 people in this battlefield exercise!

Among them, a total of 7 were female students.

Flower Destroyer: 9/30.

Just one more, and he would get a Beginner's Treasure Chest.

Gao Neng didn't slack off. He could already feel that as time went on, he was encountering fewer and fewer female high school students.

It was probably related to the decrease in the total number of participants.

'I can't rest. The female students will only become scarcer. I have to seize this early-game opportunity and take them down decisively before they can adapt to the battlefield environment!' Gao Neng continued to search for targets.

Soon, he found another one.

This female student seemed quite strong. She had turned into a peacock and was viciously beating a rhino. If nothing unexpected happened, the Second High student who had turned into a rhino wouldn't last another five minutes.

A smile touched the corner of Gao Neng's mouth.

He immediately sneaked over. After all, this was a heaven-sent opportunity. Not only could he take down a female student, but he could also pick up a kill along the way. It was a profitable deal.

「Three minutes later.」

The rhino clearly couldn't hold on any longer.

The doubled pain sensation made him understand the true meaning of a life worse than death.

Right now, he couldn't do anything but lie on the ground. However, just then, he saw a duck with yellow feathers.

This duck descended from the sky like a Celestial God.

A kick from its webbed foot.

It landed right on the peacock's forehead.

What followed was a scene so bloody it made his heart tremble.

The once-powerful peacock, in front of this duck, seemed to turn into a plucked chicken. It was taken down without even a chance to parry.

"Ah... You're despicable and shameless! You ambushed me! I won't accept this!"
The female student let out an indignant cry before disappearing on the spot.

The rhino immediately forced himself to his feet.

"I'm Zhang Maomao from Second High. Excuse me, are you Senior Lv Guoyuan?"
In the rhino's eyes, only Lv Guoyuan from Second High would possibly come to his rescue.

Just as he was thinking this, he realized something was wrong.

Because, descending from the sky above his head were more ducks. One, two, three... At least close to twenty of them.

My god!

Is this a duck army?!

"BAM!"

A webbed foot kicked him in the face.

The rhino finally saw reality for what it was. This world was cruel. The other party wasn't here to save him at all, but to steal the kill... Damn kill-stealer!

"Ding! Congratulations, Host, for completing the first stage of Flower Destroyer. You have successfully taken down 10 female opponents. Reward: one Beginner's Treasure Chest," the mechanical voice sounded.

A treasure chest appeared before Gao Neng.

The Bone Marrow Cleansing Pills became three.

If his guess was right, he should be able to break through the third human limit with just one more.

Gao Neng's mood was excellent.

But...

「Meanwhile, at the military training base.」

The Girls' High School's principal, Xue Jingjing, finally couldn't hold it in any longer.

"That's eight! Gao Neng has killed eight of my girls' school students all by himself! Li Qingping... You dare say this is a coincidence? You dare say you didn't arrange this?! If you don't give me a reasonable explanation today, I, Xue Jingjing, will fight you to the death!" Xue Jingjing flew at him, claws out, ready to fight the smugly grinning Li Qingping.

"That's right, you have to fight him to the death!" The principal of Fourth High also spoke up at this moment. "Anyway, I don't have a chance at becoming the chairperson of this inspection committee anymore."

"Heh heh... Principal Xue, I support you." The principal of Second High, who had been silent until now, also started laughing. With things having reached this point, the outcome was basically set in stone.

Gao Neng's kill count was now 11.

Ranking first.

Meanwhile, He Haifan, who was ranked second, only had 5.

As for the other two hopeful competitors, Lv Guoyuan and Mao Shan, they had even fewer.

Lv Guoyuan had 3.

Mao Shan had a mere 2.

Most importantly, this gap seemed to be widening. Gao Neng's luck was so good it was almost unbelievable; he ran into people wherever he went.

And they were all, without exception, weak female high school students.

When he finally encountered a stronger female student, it just so happened to be at a critical moment when she wasn't paying attention. The result went without saying.

Not only was the female student taken down, but he also picked up a kill on a Second High student in the process.

If they hadn't seen it all happen on the screen with their own eyes...

They would have really suspected that this kid was carrying an electronic map marked with the locations of every kill!

"Principal Xue, you're wrongly accusing an innocent person! How would Gao Neng know who his opponents are? It's just a coincidence!" Li Qingping said with a laugh. Then, he glanced at the principal of First High, He Lin. "Principal He, why don't you be the judge here? This business with Gao Neng taking out the girls' school students, is it a coincidence or not?"

"Hmph... A coincidence!" Principal He Lin from First High gritted his teeth.

"See? Even Principal He says it's a coincidence. Principal Xue, don't be so arbitrary. Let's keep watching... Who knows, maybe Gao Neng will exclusively kill First High students next. Right, Principal He?"

"Hmph!" He Lin snorted coldly, turned his head away, and said no more.

'Talk about the hunter getting pecked by the goose.' For years, only Second High had ever been able to challenge First High's authority. But now, the one truly putting the pressure on him was Third High.

...

Gao Neng had no idea what was happening at the military base.

He only knew that the sky in the Virtual Battlefield had darkened. A layer of gray mist had even settled over the dense jungle, obstructing his vision.

And at the same time...

He heard the first system prompt.

"Head east continuously, or you will encounter a storm!"

'East? Which way is east?' Gao Neng looked up at the trees obscuring the moonlight, then at the ever-thickening fog around him. For a moment, he was a bit lost.

Can Spiritual Power tell north from south, east from west?