Chapter 7162

Because this trip involved nearly 3,000 kilometers and the road conditions were complex,

Kikuchi Kohei specially arranged for a tanker truck to accompany their convoy.

Otherwise, the range of any single vehicle would be far less than 3,000 kilometers.

Moreover, the harsh environment here would require a large amount of fuel for heating,

And warming the equipment, making the overall fuel consumption even more astonishing.

After the tanker truck was added to the convoy,

Kikuchi Kohei checked the condition of all the vehicles,

And after confirming everything was in order, said to Brovnen,

“Master, we can set off now.”

Brovnen nodded and said to Kikuchi Kohei,

“Depart immediately!”

The convoy, consisting of four snowmobiles and one tanker truck, immediately set off,

Traveling southwest along the coastline before turning northwest, completing a U-shaped route.

Their one-way trip would take approximately eight days,

Allowing Charlie to monitor their movements in real time based on the tanker truck's location.

Four days after Brovnen's departure, Charlie called Matsushita Heikichi and instructed him,

"You can operate the buoy now."

Matsushita Heikichi immediately replied,

"Yes, sir, please wait a moment."

After hanging up, Matsushita Heikichi immediately went to the fuel tank and rewrote the program for the microcontroller of the control system.

Then, he returned to his lounge, and after waiting for five minutes,

The entire cabin's alarms sounded!

A system AI alarm blared from the loudspeaker:

"Suspected fuel leak, please check immediately!"

Triggering a Level 1 emergency, everyone on board became alert.

The engine room engineer immediately went to the fuel tank to check the situation.

After discovering the buoy was malfunctioning,

He immediately raised it back up and manually entered a code to deactivate the alarm.

The entire alarm lasted approximately three minutes.

During those three minutes, the Ministry in Japan was in an uproar.

The moment the alarm was transmitted,

The Ministry's system sent a synchronized message to senior management.

When they saw that the research vessel had issued a Level 1 emergency alert regarding a rapid fuel leak, they were terrified.

After all, this research vessel was Japan's only heavy icebreaker.

If anything were to happen to it, the entire country would lose its icebreaking capabilities for a short period.

When the higher-ups questioned the research vessel, its response left them puzzled.

The research vessel replied that the surface monitoring system had malfunctioned,

But the problem had been resolved.

It seemed like a false alarm, but the astute staff immediately realized something was amiss.

If the electronic liquid level system malfunctioned, that would be plausible.

After all, sensor problems aren't uncommon.

However, a malfunction in the physical buoy is quite strange.

Moreover, the buoy's sudden low-level warning indicates a momentary physical downward movement.

But a buoy is a hollow, sealed structure made of corrosion-resistant material,

Like a buoyancy board for learning to swim.

If placed in a sealed pool and left untouched,

It wouldn't sink to the bottom even after a month or two,

Or even eight or ten years.

This means that even if a buoy in the fuel tank were stuck,

It would never suddenly plunge into the fuel and become stuck—that defies physics.

Therefore, the worker immediately realized that the lowest liquid level detected by the buoy must be the icebreaker's true liquid level.

The reason it hadn't been detected at such a low level before must have been due to something restricting its descent!

He pulled up the icebreaker's data and, using the difference in the height of the two buoys,

Immediately determined that the icebreaker had underreported its fuel consumption by at least 1,300 tons.

A thought popped into his head: Secretly using 1,300 tons of fuel—what are these people doing?!