

Chapter 7177

Brovnen journeyed south through the frigid Antarctic polar night.

While the outside low temperatures didn't significantly affect him,

The rapid pace in this environment was incredibly taxing on his physical strength and spiritual energy.

He could have stopped after a few dozen kilometers,

And immediately began digging for an ice shelter,

But he was terrified of the modern firepower,

Fearing he might perish there.

So he ran nearly two hundred kilometers before choosing a place where even penguins were nowhere to be seen.

There, he used his sword energy to carve out an ice cave about one meter in diameter and thirty meters deep.

After creating the cave,

He shattered all the excavated ice fragments into sand-sized ice crystals,

Which quickly dissolved into the swirling snow and ice.

Brovnen then immediately jumped inside.

To maximize his safety,

He used his spiritual energy to melt some of the ice on the cave walls,

And then used it to lift the ice to the entrance.

The sub-zero temperatures of minus sixty degrees Celsius quickly refreezed the water lifted by his spiritual energy,

And Brovnen, like a silkworm, sealed himself in a cocoon.

His plan was simple:

He would simply wait here until the Antarctic summer arrived.

As for exploring Antarctica, that would have to be put on hold this year.

Otherwise, with his dwindling spiritual energy,

He wouldn't be able to sustain himself for long while exploring the region.

This reflected Brovnen's style:

He'd rather give up halfway than take risks.

After doing all this, he gracefully landed at the bottom of the thirty-meter-deep cave.

He sat cross-legged, holding his breath and preparing to enter a meditative state.

Once in meditation, he could not only abstain from grains,

But also didn't need air at all.

Without specialized equipment and a thorough search,

The US military wouldn't be able to find him.

Before entering meditation, Brovnen looked up.

Although it was a polar night outside, the aurora was dazzling.

The thirty-meter-thick ice layer couldn't block all the light,

And the complex internal structure of the ice allowed the faint aurora to penetrate and be irregularly refracted,

Giving the surroundings a dreamlike quality.

Looking back on the fruitless days,

He couldn't help but sigh, reminding himself:

Don't become completely absorbed in meditation,

Let time pass too quickly outside.

Wake up every so often to avoid missing the Antarctic summer.

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Kikuchi Kohei and the others weren't taken back to Japan's Showa Research Station,

But directly to the US McMurdo Station.

At McMurdo, he and the other team members were interrogated in isolation by US military personnel.

Even Watanabe Goro didn't have a chance to approach the interrogation room,

Let alone participate in the interrogation.

The interrogation was simple,

Focusing on two core questions:

First, why were they going to such lengths to conceal their movements from home?

Second, what exactly were they searching so openly in Antarctica?

Kikuchi Kohei took the blame for everything.

His explanation was simple:

Everyone was obeying his orders.

He was the one who instructed them to conceal everything.

As for what they were searching for, it was equally simple:

Searching for gold and mining gold ore.

The US military felt its intelligence had been severely insulted.

Mining gold ore in Antarctica?

Are there even commercially exploitable gold mines here?

Even if it were possible, this would be one of the most difficult places in the world to mine gold, right?

Without breaking through an ice sheet thousands of meters high,

How can you extract gold from the rock layers?

But breaking through an ice sheet thousands of meters high would cost far more than the potential profits from gold mining.

Moreover, this research team simply doesn't have such advanced drilling equipment!

According to data provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology,

The drilling equipment at Showa Station has a maximum drilling depth of no more than two thousand meters,

And its strength is only sufficient to extract ice cores from a depth of two thousand meters.

It can't drill into rock at all.

How can they possibly explore and mine gold with that?

Moreover, even if these devices could drill through rocks,

They couldn't be used for large-scale mining.

The drill bit diameter was only 122 millimeters,

About the size of a bowl.