

Full Time 121

Chapter 121: Big Rabbit Appears

Qing Ruyan chuckled softly and said no more as they ate breakfast and covertly reviewed the documents.

Leder had checked into the "Moonship Hotel" ten days ago, while Liu Shichan had arrived three days prior. However, since Leder's arrival, all hotel expenses had been charged to Liu Shichan's account.

Chen Gu noticed that it was a very high-end hotel, with a daily room rate of six thousand Starshields. Big Sister's family is really wealthy, he couldn't help but marvel inwardly.

The factory Leder frequently visited, coincidentally, produced high-end, high-nutrition synthetic foods. They had their own laboratory, and their products had always maintained a good reputation. They owned their brand and also manufactured products for some large companies.

"Shall we go check out this factory?" Chen Gu suggested.

Qing Ruyan, seemingly bored that day, readily agreed with great animation. "Sure, but this is Empire River Star, your turf. If anything goes wrong, you handle it."

In broad daylight, the two sauntered over to the factory's exterior. This was the confidence of a professional. Chen Gu's perception could preemptively neutralize any threats nearby, and Qing Ruyan's abilities, similar to those of a Psychological Spy, meant they were easily overlooked, as others would subconsciously ignore them.

Then, under Qing Ruyan's lead, Chen Gu swaggered into the guardroom. The two security guards on duty turned a blind eye to their presence, continuing their tasks as usual. Qing Ruyan, with Chen Gu in tow, took two security uniforms, and they began patrolling inside the factory.

Chen Gu was internally assessing Qing Ruyan's professional abilities. They were different from a Psychological Spy's psychological invisibility, which was actually a form of mental suggestion that made one appear as an agreeable figure in the target's mind, engendering a kind of familiarity. Qing Ruyan's abilities were obviously more complex and powerful. She could mimic a President or make people turn a

blind eye to her. Clearly, she wasn't a Psychological Spy; her profession was more mysterious and powerful.

As they patrolled deep into the factory, they encountered several armed warriors outside a small, standalone workshop. The warriors chased them away with guns raised, shouting, "No need for you to interfere here; we've already told you! Do you idiots need bullets to jog your memory?"

The two "left in anger and fear." Such a performance was a walk in the park for Great Actor Chen, but Qing Ruyan's ability to do the same was impressive.

After departing the factory, Qing Ruyan stroked her chin. "There's definitely something off. We'll come again tonight."

During the day, other members of the task force had already started checking into the "Moonship Hotel."

Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan continued their covert surveillance and recognized "Big Rabbit" at first glance.

She was not very tall and sported a pair of denim hot pants, her straight legs tanned to a healthy wheat color. She donned tactical boots and an olive-colored, tight tactical vest. Carrying a huge black tactical bag in one hand slung over her shoulder, with each step she took, her ample chest bounced vigorously. Chen Gu stole a glance. Remembering the girl's enthusiastic invitation to 'play with her rabbits,' I must have been a fool! How could I have refused such a hospitable host? he thought.

Despite dressing like a cool tomboy, Big Rabbit wore sunglasses with five-pointed star-shaped, colorfully bordered frames, lending her an instant lively and playful air. However, Chen Gu would never underestimate this girl; he was certain that her huge black tactical bag was filled with various types of beyond-limit weaponry.

After a day of covert observation, the two had a general understanding of everyone involved in the mission, yet they hadn't joined up with the group.

By nightfall, they had donned black tactical suits and quietly appeared outside the factory. This was Chen Gu's first mission without the support of the internal affairs, action, and cleanup teams, and he

couldn't help feeling a bit nervous. However, in front of Qing Ruyan, he acted "firm and decisive," just like a veteran special agent.

The external guards posed no obstacle to them, and they easily reached the vicinity of the standalone factory building. Qing Ruyan pressed Chen Gu down and, after observing for a while, gestured to him with several hand signals.

Following her cues, Chen Gu noticed a hidden observation and sniper post on the workshop's roof, with sentry posts on the high points of the buildings on both sides as well. In covert areas around the factory building, there were four fire support points, all equipped with mechanically enhanced rapid-fire weapons.

Flawless,

Chen Gu murmured to himself. In this state, it's absolutely impossible to enter silently.

Suddenly, Qing Ruyan sent Chen Gu a bill: 600,000!

Chen Gu was startled. He then saw Qing Ruyan press a button on her belt, and several ants crawled out, slowly making their way toward the factory building.

"Hyper-realistic scout bugs," Qing Ruyan explained in a low voice. "They can evade most surveillance and jamming methods."

Chen Gu saw that the fire support points hidden in the darkness were equipped with various superwave, infrared, and magnetic surveillance and jamming devices, yet they had no effect on these ants. He nodded. "Really useful, and really expensive."

He glanced at Qing Ruyan. But aren't you doing this to make money? The initial investment seems a bit high, doesn't it? So, not a word this woman says can be trusted.

The price of their complete realism was that these bugs moved at the actual speed of crawling ants. Chen Gu waited tediously for over an hour before the ants finally entered the factory building. Even then, they couldn't directly transmit images, as the signal would be detected.

Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan spent another two hours waiting before the ants finally emerged. Once they had slowly crawled back, Qing Ruyan collected them, and the two immediately left—the sky was almost dawning.

「Back at their dwelling,」

Qing Ruyan immediately accessed the bugs' records. After watching for a while, she didn't seem to find anything significant. This workshop appeared to be just an ordinary production site.

But as they watched it over and over, analyzing carefully, Qing Ruyan suddenly pointed to a corner in the video. "Here!"

Chen Gu saw someone taking something out of what looked like a refrigerator.

"It's so late, and the workshop has already stopped production. Who would come to get something at this time?" Qing Ruyan mused.

As she spoke, she began working quickly on her interface. The video angles weren't ideal, but she soon connected to the local bureau's AI via the network. Applying sophisticated algorithms, she stitched together the footage from each ant, finally piecing together a complete image from the fragments.

A person dressed in a special biohazard suit opened the freezer. In fact, from another angle, it was clear that this wasn't a real freezer but a built-in safe disguised as one. Even more eerie, the item taken out was sealed inside a transparent structure and looked like some kind of mechanical component.

Chapter 122: President and Her Little Vase

Chen Gu didn't recognize it at all. "What is this thing?"

Qing Ruyan's face turned serious as she slowly said, "These are the mechanical organs of an Energy Gathering Mechanical Species!"

"What... what use is this thing?"

Qing Ruyan didn't answer immediately. She meticulously double-checked all the video recordings, searching for any clues, then tossed some images to Chen Gu. "Look at these traces of dust. They suggest this workshop is just for show. All the machines haven't been operated for a long time. The sole purpose of this independent workshop is to conceal these mechanical organs!"

Chen Gu asked again, "What exactly are they doing this for?"

Qing Ruyan said, "Illegal human body modification—it's a very profitable business. In the entire Star Sea, the scale of the underground world's illegal body modification exceeds your imagination!"

Official propaganda portrayed illegal human body modifications to the public as minor tinkering by small workshops, unlikely to attract many people willing to "mutilate" their own bodies.

Thus, although illegal modifiers did exist, their numbers were not large, and the scale of this part of the black market was actually not extensive.

This was an understandable tactic; after all, there was a need to guide public opinion. But the reality was different.

"Several months ago, on Capital Star, there were several vicious cases where criminals with illegal body modifications attacked multiple important targets, causing dozens of casualties.

"Subsequently, the General Administration Bureau summarized such cases across the nation and discovered that the incidence of such cases had been rising sharply recently.

"Moreover, these criminals looked no different from ordinary people. Yet they could unleash terrifying combat abilities, and conventional police officers and their weapons were completely ineffective against them.

"After compiling various pieces of intelligence, we concluded that a new type of illegal human body modification is on the rise. Its source is likely Empire River Star—which is my true reason for coming here."

Chen Gu understood. "You took on this mission because of this?"

"Yes."

Qing Ruyan pointed to the video. "They purchase Energy Gathering Mechanical Species on Empire River Star and then, using a technology we still don't know about, implant these mechanical organs into the human body. The combination of the two can give ordinary people combat abilities comparable to professionals."

Chen Gu asked, "How do you know that these illegal human body modifiers are connected to the Atomic Holy Church's mission?"

Chen Gu suddenly realized something else. "No, that's wrong! The ones connected to these people are related to Big Rabbit's mission!"

Qing Ruyan had already stretched lazily. "Alright, that's enough work for today. My little assistant, you should go freshen up quickly. Today is the meet-up day. The President will be making her entrance with her little assistant soon."

Chen Gu curled his lip, knowing that Qing Ruyan didn't want to answer his previous question. He couldn't press her for answers; she held a higher position in the organization than him, and it also seemed her Energy Level as a professional was higher than his. Unless he resorted to seduction, Chen Gu couldn't think of any other way. Chen Gu considered himself an upright person and had no intention of doing so.

As he left, Qing Ruyan called out from behind, "If your little sweetheart from school recognizes you, do you know how to explain it?"

Without turning his head, Chen Gu called back, "Work-study."

...

Inside the Moon Ship Hotel, Big Gold-Toothed Cowboy Rabbit, still wearing those colorful five-pointed star sunglasses, stood in the lobby, intermittently glancing toward the entrance.

Leder sat on a sofa beside her and said with some dissatisfaction, "If the President doesn't show up, your squad's value will be greatly diminished. The boss won't pay a group of First Energy Level individuals that much money. You should be well aware of that."

Big Gold-Toothed Cowboy Rabbit waved a small hand impatiently. "I know, I know, don't rush me. The President's promises are as good as gold. She said she'd come, so she definitely will."

Just then, a tall, capable woman in professional attire walked into the hotel lobby, her high heels CLICKING on the floor. Behind her followed a young, handsome male assistant carrying her briefcase and luggage.

She scanned the lobby, quickly spotted Big Gold-Toothed Cowboy Rabbit, and walked straight over. "Big Rabbit?"

Big Gold-Toothed Cowboy Rabbit felt a bit embarrassed and shrank back slightly. Her online personality was indeed different from her real-life one. In real life, people generally care more about saving face.

"President? It really is you! I knew you'd keep your promise. You can call me Dora."

She glanced at the President's assistant, and her eyes lit up. Yes, that's definitely the President's type of assistant—young, handsome, and clearly versatile.

The President said indifferently, "He's my assistant. Don't mind him. As long as he doesn't slow us down, it's fine."

Big Rabbit secretly chuckled. The President is certainly protective of her handsome assistant! She then said enthusiastically, "A warm welcome! Come on, I'll take you to check in."

"This is Leder, the client's agent. He will be joining us on our venture into the Yingudusi Devil's Pit."

Chen Gu, following behind, observed Leder closely, trying to discern whether he had undergone that kind of body modification.

The check-in process was quick. A suite was arranged for the President, with the master bedroom inside and an outer lounge for her handsome assistant.

This way, the President could conveniently summon her assistant at any time.

Qing Ruyan entered the room and gave Dora an appreciative nod. "Well arranged."

Dora smiled happily, full of envy for the President. I want to be a Second Energy Level master too! And I want a versatile, handsome assistant as well! Life goals! Strive for them, Big Rabbit!

While Qing Ruyan discussed mission arrangements with Dora and Leder, Chen Gu bustled about like a diligent newlywed, moving in and out of the suite to arrange Qing Ruyan's personal items.

By the time this busy bee had finished his tasks, Dora and Leder had already taken their leave.

Qing Ruyan explained to Chen Gu, "There will be a dinner party later for all the mission participants to meet, introduce themselves, and get acquainted. This should facilitate cooperation during the mission."

"However, these self-introductions can't be fully trusted. Everyone will hold something back and not reveal their true capabilities."

"We set off early tomorrow morning. It should take us two hours at most to reach the outskirts of the Yingudusi Devil's Pit."

"Then, the client will announce the exploration route. They've likely found some clues through historical research but won't disclose the route in advance for fear of leaks."

Chen Gu nodded but couldn't help asking, "Leder and his group are in the illegal body modification business. What use is exploring the Yingudusi Devil's Pit to them?"

This time, Qing Ruyan answered, "It just shows you still don't understand the Yingudusi Devil's Pit. It might be due to radioactive substances left from the great war, or perhaps it's where the remains of fallen super-lifeforms nurtured them. Regardless, the most powerful mechanical alien species on all of Empire River Star originate from the Yingudusi Devil's Pit!"

Chen Gu had a sudden realization. "I see. Their goal is still those powerful mechanical alien species."

Qing Ruyan smiled. "Alright, do your job well—you are my assistant now. Dress sharply and accompany me to the dinner party."

Chapter 123: Professional Banquet

Chen Gu was utterly depressed. Ironically, the idea had been his own; he had lifted a rock only to drop it on his own foot.

「Half an hour later」

Qing Ruyan, clad in a black evening gown, appeared at the entrance to the hotel's most prestigious banquet hall.

Chen Gu, in a simple suit, was immediately met with Qing Ruyan's frown. "What are you wearing? Are you some fresh graduate who just found a job?"

Dragging Chen Gu straight to the hotel's first-floor shopping mall, she swiftly outfitted him in a fashionable deep purple suit. Paired with a pale gold skinny tie and maroon leather shoes, his entire ensemble proclaimed a simple truth to everyone: I am merely a vase.

The President's vase.

Qing Ruyan nodded in satisfaction. "This is more like it."

Chen Gu rolled his eyes and consoled himself internally, Well, as an Oscar-winning actor, I can play any role, even that of a male vase.

Inside the banquet hall, everyone had arrived. Dora and two other uniquely dressed professionals sat at one table, while the "hosts," Delai and Liu Shichan, were seated at the central table.

At another table sat a team of five in uniform, apparently another group of professionals hired by the employer.

The President, arriving fashionably late with her personal vase in tow, caused some quiet dissatisfaction among the members of the other professional team. However, they were here on business and, considering the high risk of the mission, were not about to start squabbling at their first meeting.

Still, the team exchanged glances, muttering among themselves, "Her style is quite frivolous."

"So relaxed at the Second Energy Level. It seems this is as far as she'll go in life."

"Don't provoke her. We might not respect her lifestyle, but we must respect her power."

The only woman in the five-member team was bald, her body pierced wherever possible. Her face and scalp were covered with mysterious and eerie tattoos. She looked greedily at the President's vase, licking her lips with apparent desire.

"Huo Mei!" the captain chided her sharply. "Don't provoke her! We might need her to save our lives in the Yingudusi Devil's Pit!"

Huo Mei muttered discontentedly but stopped staring at Chen Gu.

When Chen Gu walked in, Liu Shichan's face briefly registered shock, but the girl was quick to suppress it, pretending as if nothing had happened.

Dora eagerly ran over to pull out a chair for the President. "Please, take a seat."

Qing Ruyan offered a disingenuous apology. "Sorry for the delay, something came up. Please forgive my tardiness."

Leder, with a smile, stood up. "We don't mind at all, President. The purpose of getting everyone together today is to get to know each other a bit, so we can cooperate more effectively in the upcoming mission."

He continued, "Let me start by saying our boss has hired a 40-man army to provide logistical support for everyone. The boss is very generous. All you need to do is solve those... problems; the army will take care of the rest of the minor inconveniences."

The other team stood up first to introduce themselves.

Each of the five members was at the First Energy Level, but the leader, Hu Ling, candidly admitted he was at the limit of the First Energy Level and was just waiting to accumulate enough money to advance to the Second Energy Level.

His profession was Hell Titan, an Old Profession granting exceptionally strong physical strength. Chen Gu had once fought alongside a Hell Titan at the Zhaojieze City branch and was therefore familiar with the profession.

Another member, "Glove," was a Medium Instructor, a New Profession capable of manipulating various "mediums." Many forms of energy, like sound waves, require a medium, and this profession utilized such characteristics for combat.

"Boluo" was an Alchemist. However, unlike team leader Marcus, he focused on using his abilities to create various explosions, specializing in one direction rather than developing broadly like Marcus.

In some respects, he could be considered a watered-down version of a Nuclear Explosion Nun.

Chen Gu disagreed with Boluo's professional choice because, no matter what, playing with explosions simply couldn't compare to professions specializing in nuclear-type effects.

Boluo's approach seemed to lead to rapid development in the early stages, allowing him to quickly secure a foothold within the team and become an indispensable part of their combat strength. However, by narrowing his path, he would become increasingly marginal in the future.

"Old Desert" was a Sand Demon of the Ancient Deserts, a rather rare Old Profession with the ability to turn oneself into flowing sand. In this state, one could take on various forms made of sand, significantly increasing strength and resilience to damage.

However, this profession was also known as a heavily downgraded version of a Multistate Special Agent.

The only female in the group, Huo Mei, was a Magnetic Converger, with the ability to control various magnetic forces.

This was a very powerful New Profession. From her casual self-introduction and the indulgence of her teammates, Chen Gu could tell that this woman actually held a high status within the group.

But what was the deal with her covertly throwing a flirtatious glance at me during her introduction? It's not that I'm prejudiced against your looks; it's just that your... style is totally not my type.

After Hu Ling's team finished introducing themselves, it was Dora's turn.

Dora, hoping everyone would cooperate to complete the mission, stood up proactively. "My name is Dora, and I am a Guardian Elf, First Energy Level."

Chen Gu nodded to himself, acknowledging that this was an Old Profession whose practitioners possessed an extremely high talent for shooting. Big Rabbit probably specialized in long-range attacks.

Two people standing beside Dora stood up, hand in hand—a couple.

"My name is Locke."

"My name is Ken."

"I am a Paradox Architect."

"I am a Microscopic Analyst."

That's right, both were male. Chen Gu paused a moment and almost laughed out loud. Locke sounds like 'lock,' and Ken sounds like 'key,' doesn't it? From their names alone, one could discern their roles in this relationship! How intriguing!

Paradox Architect is a New Profession with many limitations. The practitioner needs to construct a "paradox" out of thin air to use their ability.

If they couldn't find the right paradox in a fight, then the practitioner was just a slightly more powerful warrior at best.

But if they created just the right paradox, a fight that was evenly matched could turn into a one-sided slaughter.

In terms of traits, it was somewhat similar to Melincha's Relative Arbiter.

The Microscopic Analyst, however, was much more convenient. As long as they could see through the "microscopic" truth of their target, they could make any changes to it.

Finally, it was the President's turn. She stood up and said plainly, "Psychological Spy, Second Energy Level."

Then she sat down. No one dared to stand up and accuse her of arrogance. Even though a Psychological Spy doesn't have strong direct combat abilities, merely being at the Second Energy Level allowed her to

prevent all the professionals present from attacking. She could even use psychological suggestion to make anyone commit suicide on the spot!

Then, it seemed the President realized the banquet hall was still silent; everyone was waiting for her to introduce the decorative vase beside her.

Chapter 124: The Little Boy

The President chuckled, pointing at Chen Gu. "A very capable young man. If... hmm, I mean if, he can keep up this performance, perhaps in a few years I'll help him become a professional."

"But rest assured, everyone, what I'm giving him now makes him at least equivalent to a reliable warrior. He won't hold us back on missions."

Even among the professionals, several envious glances fell on Chen Gu. Just being "capable" is enough to become a professional? How incredibly lucky! Do you know how we had to fight with everything we had, facing countless dangers, before we finally became professionals?

It must be said, in this world, some people just casually "do a little" and surpass the efforts of many others' lifetimes.

How unfair!

The mutual introductions came to an end, and then the banquet officially began.

At one point, Chen Gu went to the restroom. Just as he came out, a hand pushed him from behind, shoving him back into one of the stalls.

Chen Gu smelled a familiar perfume.

He raised his hands. "Hey, hey, hey, Big Sis, this is the men's restroom."

Liu Shichan forcefully turned him around and pinned him against the wall, asking angrily, "What are you doing? Do you know who these people are?"

Chen Gu feigned a perplexed look. "They don't seem like ordinary people. I often hear the President mention 'professions,' but those professions sound so strange..."

Liu Shichan looked at Chen Gu with exasperation. "Is it because of what the President gave you that your physical skills improved so much?"

"Is it also because of the President that you have those bodyguards, and that lightning-fast 'Xuanwu III model'?"

Chen Gu remained silent.

Such assumptions could be disastrous! Chen Gu never imagined his various anomalies at school would form such a perfect explanation here!

He didn't deny it on the spot, which made Liu Shichan even more certain of her conjecture.

She looked at Chen Gu with sympathy, trying to persuade him. "I know you want to succeed. As someone with an ordinary background, you're naturally fighting hard to climb up.

But you must understand that every gain requires a sacrifice. Sometimes, you may think you can handle these sacrifices, but I'm telling you, that's an illusion!"

"Whatever the President gives you, she will take it back a hundred, even a thousand times over!"

"These people are very dangerous, more dangerous than you can imagine! If you get mixed up with her, you'll be beyond redemption."

"We were classmates. I'll try to find a way to help you. Just quit this mission and leave the President forever! Otherwise... one day you'll regret it."

Chen Gu looked at her and didn't find her ridiculous; instead, he was very touched. For a high school classmate with whom he hadn't had much interaction, Liu Shichan was indeed loyal.

Still, he had to harshly reject her. "I can't. I have an agreement with the President. I can't leave her. Otherwise, not only I, but my family will be implicated too."

"This..." Liu Shichan was very anxious. After a moment's thought, she said, "My family has some influence. I can help arrange for you to change your identity and start over on another planet."

Chen Gu still shook his head. "I can't take that risk."

"You—" Liu Shichan got angry. "You fool! You have no idea what kind of incident you've gotten yourself into!"

She angrily let go of Chen Gu, pushed the stall door open, and left.

Someone had just come in to use the restroom and was startled to see Liu Shichan. With a dark face, she scolded, "Wrong restroom, you pervert! Were you trying to peep?"

The man quickly jumped out, while Liu Shichan also left without looking back.

The man looked again. No mistake, it was the men's restroom. He stuck his head back in to check and saw a row of urinals.

"That bitch—"

Chen Gu didn't come out immediately. Initially, he was only a bit surprised to find Liu Shichan involved in the matter. After all, they were just classmates without much interaction.

But Liu Shichan's loyalty, her desperate efforts to save him, made Chen Gu feel a twinge of guilt.

He wanted to help Liu Shichan now.

Qing Ruyan had already set her sights on Leder, who was involved in a major illegal human modification case that might have far-reaching implications.

What role does the Liu Family play in this case? Could it affect Liu Shichan?

Chen Gu found it very hard to believe that the straightforward and loyal Big Sis Liu—the head of the Dead Phoenix Gang and owner of the best legs at Lubei Middle School—would do such a thing for money.

This is a bit tricky... Chen Gu muttered to himself in the stall.

The person who had just entered the restroom happened to hear him. With good intentions, he knocked on the stall door and slipped a business card inside. "Hey, brother, are you dealing with some... unmentionable male problem? Go see this person; he has a miracle cure..."

Chen Gu was speechless.

My heartfelt thanks to you! he thought sarcastically.

"Just take it. We're all men here; there's nothing to be embarrassed about."

Chen Gu couldn't refuse such kindness and silently pocketed the business card.

About fifteen minutes later, Chen Gu returned to the banquet hall. Qing Ruyan gave him a knowing smirk and whispered, "Finished talking with your little sweetheart? How did it go? Can she accept who you are now?"

Liu Shichan had also disappeared for a little while; the well-informed Qing Ruyan immediately guessed what she had been up to.

Chen Gu gave her an irritated look and whispered back, "We're just classmates, not 'little sweethearts'."

Qing Ruyan, however, looked completely nonchalant. "You don't need to explain anything to me."

Chen Gu was secretly annoyed, feeling like he was hitting cotton with a punch.

Towards the end of the banquet, Hu Ling came with his team to toast the President. His five members surrounded Qing Ruyan, and then, as if things weren't awkward enough, Huo Mei sneakily pinched Chen Gu's butt from behind!

Chen Gu almost jumped on the spot.

Damn it, I actually got groped!

This was a profound insult to the Great Actor Chen's decades as a renowned playboy in his previous life!

Fortunately, Huo Mei was cautious of the President and didn't take any further action.

When the banquet finally ended, an exhausted Chen Gu followed Qing Ruyan back to the suite and threw himself onto the sofa.

As Qing Ruyan removed various precious jewels from her body, she seemed to ask casually, "If our investigation ultimately shows that the Liu Family is involved in this case, and Liu Shichan is aware of it, what will you do?"

Chen Gu paused, then said blankly, "I don't know. I really don't know."

He recounted what Liu Shichan had told him in the restroom and then added, "I feel that she's not that kind of person."

Qing Ruyan turned around and looked at him seriously. "Chen Gu, you've committed a cardinal sin in investigation by letting your personal feelings interfere with the case."

Chen Gu was taken aback again, then a strong wave of irritation washed over him. To hell with personal feelings, to hell with investigations! I'm just an actor! I'm only playing a role, not some damn real Bureau of Mystic Security agent!

But he couldn't vent these emotions to Qing Ruyan. Instead, he grabbed a cushion, buried his head in it, and fell silent.

Qing Ruyan looked at him and continued humming a tune as she went to remove her makeup.

That night, Qing Ruyan lay languidly in bed and sent a message to Aviloya's private account, far away on Capital Star, with a message: "He's still such a naive, endearing boy."

Chapter 125: Out of Control

Chen Gu lay on the small bed in the lounge. A great beauty was sleeping next door, yet he had no romantic thoughts; he couldn't see through her, and moreover, she held the power of life and death over him.

He was still thinking about Liu Shichan and the Liu Family's affairs, somewhat troubled about how to handle them. Suddenly, a thought entered his mind: If transplanting the mechanical innards of the Energy Gathering Mechanical Species into humans could be successful, then what sin would such a technology hold? If humans with transplants possessed physical abilities comparable to Professionals, why should it be prohibited? Merely because it's "illegal"?

Once this thought appeared, it grew wildly like weeds.

If transplantation is considered a sin—the very premise is flawed—then regardless of whether Liu Shichan is aware or not, she really hasn't committed any sin!

Chen Gu was very pleased. I seem to have found a solution to the difficult problem I'm facing!

BOOM—

The wooden door between him and Qing Ruyan exploded. A figure rushed in swiftly from the bedroom, its five fingers spreading like a vast net, swooping down towards Chen Gu.

Chen Gu's vision blurred; he wasn't sure if it was because she was too fast for him to see clearly, but he could tell from her form that it was Qing Ruyan.

But a surge of rage suddenly rose in Chen Gu's heart: So what if she's from the headquarters? Am I just supposed to be oppressed by you for no reason?!

He roared, activating the Radiation Missionary Profession, and his whole body began to flicker with an incredibly bright light.

However, Qing Ruyan's hand pressed down with overwhelming force, as if imbued with some mysterious power.

There was something odd about Chen Gu himself too; he distinctly felt he might have the ability to avoid the attack, or even confront it head-on.

But what was that ability? I can't remember!

Five streams of restraining power descended, and Chen Gu THUDED back onto the bed.

If anyone had been in the room at that moment, they would certainly have had a nosebleed.

Qing Ruyan, from her bed next door, had sensed something unusual with Chen Gu and immediately blasted through the door to attack. Great Actor Chen, unfortunately, didn't have the habit of wearing pajamas.

Now Qing Ruyan was straddling Chen Gu's waist, one hand pressing down on his face—indeed, a position quite suited for a female President and a male trophy.

Chen Gu struggled fiercely, veins bulging like earthworms from his forehead to his neck. His eyes were bloodshot as he glared angrily at her through the gaps between Qing Ruyan's fingers.

Qing Ruyan locked eyes with him; something seemed to be happening between them...

Gradually, Chen Gu's state calmed, and the bloodshot in his eyes receded layer by layer.

Chen Gu blinked, completely recovered. He suddenly felt puzzled. Did I just... enter a berserk state? That makes no sense at all. Where did my reason go? And why would I feel such strong anger towards Qing Ruyan? That's completely uncalled for...

Qing Ruyan's fingers were still tightly gripping his face as she asked in a cold voice, "Are you okay now?"

"I'm okay now," Chen Gu replied, feeling somewhat guilty, as he didn't understand what had just happened to him.

"Hmph." Qing Ruyan withdrew her hand but not before twisting his face hard, making Chen Gu's tears nearly stream out. This is definitely punishment, not some insincere flirting!

"Do you know what happened?" Qing Ruyan asked.

Chen Gu shook his head in bewilderment, recalling, "I was just lost in thought when suddenly you barged in. I thought perhaps you couldn't bear the lonely, desolate night and were about to force yourself on innocent little me..."

Instead of getting angry, Qing Ruyan laughed. She suddenly reached out and poked the swollen spot on Chen Gu's face where she had twisted it. This time, Chen Gu really did tear up.

That really hurt!

"You," Qing Ruyan shook her head, "just can't stand to lose. If you can't beat me, you have to strike back with your words."

Chen Gu thought to himself: You call yourself magnanimous? Then why did you poke me! For a young lady, you're always thinking about poking people. Is that what girls are supposed to do?

Qing Ruyan suddenly became serious and said, "You were on the verge of losing control. The next step would have been your fall!"

Chen Gu was startled. "Losing control?!"

He certainly knew what losing control meant, and what falling entailed. In other words, he had been a hair's breadth away from becoming a Professional Mutant!

Would I then cooperate effortlessly with the Evil Gods in the Endless Realm, working closely and intimately with them?!

Chen Gu's initial reaction was disbelief. Those who lost control and fell—whether Professionals or ordinary people—were mostly seduced by some mysterious voice or vision.

But when Chen Gu reflected on his state just moments ago, there was indeed no other explanation for it than losing control.

A wave of intense fear washed over his heart.

"But how could I lose control just by thinking?" Chen Gu asked in confusion.

Qing Ruyan said, "What were you thinking about just now?"

Chen Gu slowly recalled and began to recount his thoughts. Qing Ruyan understood when she heard about the mechanical organ transplants. She shook her head helplessly and said, "Your convictions were shaken, that's why you experienced a state of losing control."

She added, "It's also my fault for not explaining in detail the dangers of illegal body modification using mechanical organs."

"Take a look at this first," Qing Ruyan said, sharing a collection of images with Chen Gu.

Chen Gu nearly vomited on the spot when he opened the images. The photos showed piles of corpses! Disemboweled, or cut into various shapes.

What was most disgusting were not the corpses themselves, but the prolific growths on them. Some had dense tumors like bunches of grapes; others had large blisters; some had bamboo shoot-like fleshy growths; and still others had long, thin, dense fleshy tendrils...

"Do you think these illegal body modifications are easy to succeed at? No. Based on one operating room we raided, their success rate is less than 1%."

"And those who fail suffer severe rejection by their bodies, ultimately ending up like what you see here. All who underwent the modification died in unspeakable agony."

"Furthermore, the vast majority of these people did not volunteer for the modification."

"Their main sources are twofold: death row inmates from prisons, and kidnapped vagrants."

"The masterminds behind this couldn't care less if these people live or die. Once someone successfully undergoes the modification, nano-mines are implanted in their body. They must do everything according to the masterminds' demands; any defiance means being blown to smithereens."

Qing Ruyan asked calmly, "Now, do you still think that such 'surgery' isn't evil, and that those who conduct such 'surgeries' are not sinful?"

Chen Gu was left speechless by her question. Although it was somewhat embarrassing, Qing Ruyan's words had undoubtedly reinforced his convictions. For Chen Gu, who had just been on the verge of losing control, this was a good thing.

But the awkwardness lingered. Having lived two lives, I have a clever trick to resolve such awkwardness! The only way to perfectly dissolve one awkward situation is with another.

Chen Gu's gaze shifted, lingering on a certain loose neckline. He coughed. "Maybe... you should get off first."

Qing Ruyan, after all, wasn't truly that nonchalant. Her face flushed crimson, and her finger shot out, precisely hitting the sore spot on Chen Gu's face.

"OW—" Chen Gu cried out in pain as Qing Ruyan gracefully floated off him.

Chapter 126: Poke Poke Poke

Chen Gu, tears welling in his eyes, covered his face. "You heartless woman! With such devastatingly good looks, how could you be so cruel!"

Qing Ruyan made a gagging gesture at him, then stifled a laugh herself, turning and walking away with a touch of haughtiness.

Suddenly, Chen Gu remembered something. "How did you pull me back from the brink of losing control?"

Qing Ruyan teased him as usual, "With love, of course."

Like hell I believe you! There's never a word of truth from this woman's mouth.

Then she added, "You, go out and get another room for yourself."

The door between the bedroom and the lounge was shattered, leaving everything exposed between them. Chen Gu wasn't pleased. "Don't forget our relationship. If everyone finds out I got a room for myself tonight, they'll definitely be suspicious."

Qing Ruyan yawned. "That makes sense. You can sleep in the living room out front."

"Well..." Chen Gu felt like he'd shot himself in the foot again. He wanted to crash in the lounge, but Qing Ruyan extended a finger, ready to poke him, so Chen Gu grabbed his quilt. "Fine, I'll go..."

In Chen Gu's mind, that "I'll go" wasn't an action but a curse word, expressing his dissatisfaction with Qing Ruyan.

Chen Gu settled into a makeshift bed on the living room sofa and began to seriously ponder why he had suddenly lost control. When he finally understood, a cold sweat broke out on his back!

During the last battle against True Knowledge Sin, he had continuously pushed his limits, especially after Park Sanyi had endured his first Biological Nuclear Explosion.

Evidently, a hidden danger had already been sown back then, and Chen Gu himself had been aware of this potential issue. He just hadn't expected this hidden danger to erupt so suddenly.

I was really lucky this time. Qing Ruyan was right next door and sensed it in time to intervene. Plus, Qing Ruyan happened to have some skill that could pull me back from the brink of losing control.

If things had gone slightly wrong, I'd be a Mutant by now.

I wonder if this incident has eliminated the hidden danger.

I must be extremely careful in the future. Unless it's a life-or-death situation, I absolutely cannot push my limits repeatedly like last time.

Suddenly, Chen Gu had an epiphany. A professional... it's like walking a tightrope thousands of feet in the air.

Lost in these thoughts, he drifted off to sleep before he knew it.

「The next morning,」

Chen Gu suddenly felt a sharp pain on his cheek. He cried out and opened his eyes, just in time to see a delicate, pale little finger retracting. Beautiful peach blossom patterns were painted on its nail.

"That damn woman used her finger on me again!" Chen Gu was furious. However, having received a great favor from her just last night, he had to suppress his immense dissatisfaction for now, no matter how unhappy he was.

Chen Gu shot Qing Ruyan a fierce glare before heading off to freshen up.

Outside the bathroom, Qing Ruyan's laughter, like tinkling silver bells, drifted in. "You don't need to rush. The two of us must be late. Otherwise, it won't fit our public image."

The 'too-short nights of pleasure make the sun rise too soon, and from then on the sovereign holds no early court' kind of image?

Qing Ruyan was quite the drama queen. After Chen Gu finished freshening up, she insisted on "doing his makeup." Consequently, everyone else had already finished breakfast by the time the two of them came downstairs.

Chen Gu was sporting two large, dark circles under his eyes.

The onlookers suppressed their laughter. Young men might have plenty of stamina and be very capable, but clearly, the President is no weakling either! Look, they got up late, didn't they?

Huo Mei stared intently at the pair, her eyes full of envy. The life of a Second Energy Level master is so decadent! It makes one so envious.

Liu Shichan was silently fuming. Chen Gu didn't even spare her a glance, which made her secretly grind her teeth. This guy has no self-respect at all!

Leder approached with a smile. "We have prepared a sumptuous breakfast for Your Excellency."

Qing Ruyan waved her hand. "I'll pass. It's not easy for a woman to maintain her figure." Then she pointed at Chen Gu. "Pack some extra for him to eat in the car. To... replenish his strength."

A few people finally couldn't help but chuckle.

Chen Gu was inwardly furious. Replenish what? Does this Movie King look like someone who needs replenishing? This Movie King is an extraordinary man who can battle for eight hundred rounds all night and still stand tall and indomitable! As long as I'm just boasting in my own head, no one else can hear it, so it's not embarrassing.

Leder nodded. "Alright then, let's hurry and depart. The restaurant has fresh oysters; I had them all packed up."

「At the hotel entrance,」

several luxurious maglev cars were already waiting. Everyone boarded, with teams exchanging combat experiences, while only Chen Gu was busy battling a mountain of food.

And you know what? The hotel restaurant's oysters were actually delicious.

Wangxingjiao City was relatively small, so it only took half an hour for the maglev cars to leave the city limits. At a predetermined location, everyone transferred to two heavy armored combat vehicles. Forty mercenary warriors were waiting for them there.

Once the group had rendezvoused, they headed straight for the Yingudusi Devil's Pit.

The distance from Wangxingjiao City to their destination was less than 2,000 kilometers. The heavy armored combat vehicles were actually quite fast, though they were massive energy consumers.

The convoy comprised ten heavy armored combat vehicles: eight for transporting personnel and the other two carrying supplies.

These were Mammoth II-type combat vehicles, standard issue for the Confederation military. Each side of the hull mounted two rapid-fire autocannons firing Type 7 standard energy projectiles.

On the vehicle's roof was a multi-purpose electromagnetic gun, capable of switching between machine gun and sniper rifle modes.

In machine gun mode, it fired small-caliber kinetic rounds. In sniper mode, it offered a variety of ammunition, including high-pressure plasma rounds, large-caliber kinetic rounds, and super-explosive core projectiles.

The rear of the combat vehicle also housed four units of vehicle-mounted missiles.

In terms of protection, the combat vehicle's main armor was modular 150mm composite armor, capable of withstanding frontal attacks from large Insect Race creatures.

The armor thickness varied slightly across different parts of the vehicle, corresponding to their specific defensive needs.

Overall, the Mammoth II-type combat vehicle boasted fierce firepower and robust defenses, making it the Confederation's primary combat vehicle on battlefields against the Alien Insect Race.

The trade-off for such excellent performance was an exorbitant price tag and extremely high energy consumption.

The fact that this expedition team could be equipped with such combat vehicles indicated that their sponsors were indeed wealthy and possessed considerable influence.

Unlike older diesel-powered combat vehicles, the Mammoth II-type combat vehicle convoy utilized a silent design for maximum stealth on the battlefield. The convoy's noise levels were kept very low as it sped through the wilderness outside the city.

Atop each combat vehicle, an elite mercenary warrior manned the electromagnetic gun emplacement. They were clad in full-coverage personal Mecha, making them look like iron warriors.

「Two hundred kilometers out from the city,」

the terrain grew more complex. From time to time, steam machinery creatures would appear, roaring and spewing black smoke.

Their tempers were as foul as the black smoke they belched. Upon spotting the convoy, they would bellow and give chase, eager to attack.

However, the speed of the steam machinery creatures was no match for the convoy. After chasing for a few kilometers, they would realize the convoy had long since vanished in a cloud of dust, leaving them to only roar and angrily paw at the ground in frustration.

Chapter 127: Energy Gathering Mechanical Species

The farther they got from the city, the more mechanized creatures they encountered, and powerful Energy Gathering Mechanical Species began to emerge.

Chen Gu had already eaten all the oysters and was sitting in his spot, slowly digesting his meal when suddenly he felt the war chariot shake violently.

An Energy Gathering Mechanical Species, thousands of meters away, crashed to the ground 0.3 seconds later. Its body was torn open by a large-caliber kinetic round, spilling light blue mechanical fluid everywhere.

It let out a death rattle.

Locke, somewhat displeased, rebuked the gunner on the roof, "Don't stir up trouble unnecessarily!"

The gunner replied with neither humility nor arrogance, "That was a Long Claw Wolf Mechanical Species. They are extremely fast and can keep up with our convoy, posing a potential threat. To ensure smooth progress, it's necessary to eliminate them."

Locke was left without a comeback, his face barely able to hide his embarrassment.

Leder gave a slight smile and said, "The boss employs the most experienced mercenaries. We can trust them completely. Let them handle these minor troubles before we reach the Yingudusi Devil's Pit."

As the number of Energy Gathering Mechanical Species gradually increased, the gunner's shooting frequency also increased.

Soon the convoy arrived at a wasteland, and in the distance, they could faintly see undulating mountains. Leder said, "Up ahead is the Morolgoth Mountain Range. Cross those mountains, and we will reach the Yingudusi Devil's Pit."

No sooner had he finished speaking than the Mammoth II war chariot suddenly jerked upwards, sending everyone on board flying.

The mercenary driver exclaimed in alarm, "Damn it, Sand Worm Mechanical Species!"

The group could already see the flat ground suddenly start to churn. A gigantic mechanical body, emitting a terrifying roar and flashing bright blue lights, rolled up from beneath, sending the convoy scattering in disarray.

This was a formidable Energy Gathering Mechanical Species, hundreds of meters long. Its body was made of hundreds of huge, yellow-brown metal rings, each tens of meters in diameter, connected by massive gears and chains.

Bright blue lights flashed continuously between the gears.

On its head, a terrifying metal maw opened, bristling with countless steel teeth, clanging metallically as it snapped open and closed.

Every move it made caused the earth to tremble and the mountains to shake.

With a flick of its tail, a war chariot was flung away like a toy.

The drivers quickly maneuvered their war chariots to escape outward. Leder's expression changed. "Damn it, this kind of powerful Energy Gathering Mechanical Species shouldn't be appearing outside the Yingudusi Devil's Pit."

"Gentlemen, it's time for you to take action!"

They didn't need to be told; the professionals had already jumped out of the war chariots.

The Sand Worm Mechanical Species twisted its body. One war chariot was clearly not going to escape, but suddenly the creature's movements slowed noticeably, allowing the doomed war chariot to narrowly escape the massive creature's encirclement.

Cheers erupted from the mercenaries in the war chariot.

Chen Gu saw Huo Mei on the ground with her arms outstretched. Her tattoo-covered face was contorted, muscles twitching, as sweat dripped from it.

With the activation of the Magnetic Force Converger ability, Huo Mei proved why, despite her erratic nature, she held such a high status in the squad.

However, she was still only at the first Energy Level and could only delay the massive Sand Worm Mechanical Species to such an extent, far from controlling it.

HUFF... After saving the war chariot, Huo Mei gasped heavily and quickly retreated. The Sand Worm Mechanical Species had already noticed her. It turned its head, its terrifying metal maw opened, and a ball of blue light condensed. WHOOSH! A beam of energy shot out.

Hu Ling roared and transformed into the Hell Titan, moving as fast as lightning. He rushed to Huo Mei's side, grabbed her, and leaped dozens of meters away.

They dodged the lethal blow, but the immense power of the energy jet still sent them flying.

The other professionals took turns attacking, their diverse abilities alternately unleashed, constraining the Sand Worm Mechanical Species.

But this Energy Gathering Mechanical Species was too massive, and for the time being, the group could only contain it, unable to find a way to completely deal with the problem.

"Got any powerful grenades?" The President suddenly asked. Chen Gu then realized that Qing Ruyan, like himself, had stayed inside the war chariot and hadn't jumped out with the professionals.

Leder thought for a moment, opened a compartment on the war chariot, and took out a yellow grenade.

"The Ecstasy IV Glory Grenade. It's the Confederation's most powerful personal grenade, issued to warriors executing do-or-die missions. It's used to perish together with the enemy at the critical moment."

Qing Ruyan took out three more from the ammo box. She casually pulled a strap, tied the four Glory Grenades together, and held them in her hand as she opened the vehicle's door and walked out with ease.

The professionals saw the President and were uncertain. "What is she doing?"

Qing Ruyan landed on the ground, holding the four grenades as she walked nonchalantly towards the Sand Worm Mechanical Species.

Oddly enough, the volatile and powerful Sand Worm Mechanical Species didn't attack Qing Ruyan, even going out of its way to avoid crushing her when its body could have potentially rolled over her.

The President made her way to the fighting Sand Worm Mechanical Species at a leisurely pace, then climbed up its massive body.

Dora cheered jubilantly, swinging her fists, "The President is mighty!"

Hu Ling had a sudden realization. "The power of the Psychological Spy! The President used her ability to make the creature believe she was one of its kind. That's why it won't attack and will even intentionally protect her."

It's probably not as simple as being of the same kind, Chen Gu thought secretly inside the war chariot. Perhaps that woman disguised herself as a female Sand Worm Mechanical Species, explaining why this big guy is so eagerly attentive to her.

Qing Ruyan quickly climbed to the head of the Sand Worm Mechanical Species. When it opened its mouth, she pulled the pin and threw the grenades inside.

After completing this, Qing Ruyan suddenly became agile. She rapidly descended from the creature's body. Once on the ground, she bounded away and, in a flash, had covered several kilometers, shrinking behind a large rock.

The professionals also realized what was happening and fled into the distance. Halfway through their escape, BOOM! A thunderous explosion erupted, and a burst of orange-yellow flames shot out from the Sand Worm Mechanical Species's head.

Fragments of the shattered mechanical body flew outwards like shrapnel, and the radius of the blast wave reached several kilometers!

The war chariot and the professionals were all propelled outwards by the dreadful force.

Chen Gu sat inside the war chariot, feeling the world turn upside down, followed by the heavy crash of the war chariot hitting the ground, and then rolling over more than a dozen times.

It took a while before the buzzing in his ears subsided, and he shook his head as he stood up.

The war chariot was listing sideways; he pushed open the door on the roof to crawl out.

Not far from him, a mound of earth shifted, and a small head with pentagram sunglasses emerged, one lens missing. The dirt-covered Big Rabbit looked towards the location of the Sand Worm Mechanical Species and asked, "How did it go? Is it dead?"

Chapter 128: Tenacious Vitality

Chen Gu wasn't concerned about that. As long as he and Qing Ruyan were present, there was no problem a nuclear explosion couldn't solve. If one attempt didn't work, they would simply try a second time.

He looked around; Liu Shichan was in one of the combat vehicles ahead. However, since the vehicles all looked identical and were jumbled together, he couldn't distinguish which one was hers. He was very worried about Liu Shichan's condition.

Qing Ruyan emerged from behind a massive, cracked boulder. Her expression was grave as she gazed at the Mech Worm, which had already lost nearly half its body to the explosion. For a moment, she couldn't be certain of its demise.

The professionals had all gathered. Light blue mechanical fluid gushed from the Mech Worm's wounds like water from a breached dam, yet the bright blue glow on its body never faded.

WHIRRR...

Suddenly, a strange mechanical sound arose. Everyone's expression changed. "Not good, it's still alive!"

"This thing is like an earthworm; cutting it in half won't kill it! What do we do now?" someone panicked.

Qing Ruyan snapped, "Nonsense! We just didn't hit its Energy Core. Let's go again!"

She charged towards a combat vehicle but changed her mind midway, heading towards Boluo instead. "I'll take you up," she said. "Can you create a bomb that can travel down its body and explode all the way through?"

BOOM—

Before Boluo could answer, the Mech Worm on the ground suddenly reared its body again! This time, however, its tail became its head, erupting with intense light. After a phase of thermal self-evolution, a mechanical mouth, also full of sharp teeth, opened on its tail!

ROOOAAR— It roared in pain and anger, using its thermal ability a second time to cauterize the wound, then furiously ground its way towards them.

Qing Ruyan swiftly scooped up Boluo. "You don't have a choice anymore!"

"Ah?" Boluo shuddered with fright, already being carried by the President as she sprinted towards the Mech Worm.

Chen Gu had checked three combat vehicles without finding Liu Shichan. He wasn't worried about the Mech Worm; Qing Ruyan was unfathomable, and with her there, they would surely hold. He rushed to the fourth combat vehicle. This one was rather unlucky, having crashed into a cluster of rocks, its chassis severely deformed. Chen Gu exerted considerable effort to pry open the metal door. "Liu Shichan?"

He shouted into the vehicle twice but received no response. Just as he was about to move to the next one, a soft moan reached him. Chen Gu quickly rushed in. Several ammunition boxes had toppled over, pinning someone underneath.

He pushed away the ammunition boxes; indeed, Liu Shichan was trapped beneath them.

"How are you?" He quickly lifted Liu Shichan out. Before he could examine his classmate's injuries, he heard a cry of warning, "Watch out!"

A deep blue energy beam shot towards him.

Chen Gu's body tensed. His physical strength reached its peak in an instant. Grabbing Liu Shichan and pushing off with his legs, he shot out like a cannonball.

A clear, deep pit appeared where his feet had been.

In the instant he departed, the energy beam struck that combat vehicle.

BOOM—

The combat vehicle was completely obliterated. The ground undulated under the force of the massive explosion, and then a column of flames erupted into the sky!

Chen Gu felt as if a giant hand of flame had fiercely pushed him from behind.

By the time he came to his senses, he was lying in a deep pit thousands of meters away. Every bone in his body felt as if it had snapped, an excruciating pain.

At the same time, his vision was blurry, and his ears buzzed as if two airplane engines were roaring inside them.

Fortunately, as a professional, he could sense that although he was in bad shape, he hadn't sustained any critical injuries.

After a good while, his vision and hearing finally returned. He struggled to get up and check on Liu Shichan in his arms.

Liu Shichan's forehead was bleeding from a wound, and one arm seemed dislocated. The injuries were not life-threatening; Chen Gu breathed a sigh of relief.

He looked back towards the battlefield, where the professionals had been forced to use every trick up their sleeves.

Hu Ling was constantly darting about the perimeter, lifting and hurling huge boulders at the Mech Worm, distracting its attention.

Dora had taken cover several kilometers away. Eight spider-leg-like mechanical arms extended from her tactical backpack, stabbing deeply into the ground to completely stabilize her. In her hands, she held an energy gun longer than herself, continuously aiming and firing.

Each shot accurately struck a vital gear on the Mech Worm's body, causing it to stagger and bellow in rage.

Qing Ruyan, gripping Boluo, had climbed to the Mech Worm's neck. Boluo pressed his hands against the creature, mustering all his strength to activate his ability.

"Hurry, they can't hold on much longer!" Qing Ruyan urged.

Boluo's originally dark face was now deathly pale. After struggling for a long time, he finally managed to gasp out, "I'm afraid of heights—"

Qing Ruyan wished she could slap this guy to death, but right now, he was a crucial part of their strategy.

As the professionals on the perimeter were on the verge of collapsing, Boluo finally stammered, "Ready."

Before Boluo could react, Qing Ruyan had already thrown him off the Mech Worm's neck, hundreds of meters high.

AAAHHH—

A shrill scream tore through the sky.

Hu Ling, who had been acting as a human catapult for some time, was gasping for breath. Seeing his teammate hurled through the air, he could only lament his unfortunate fate. He opened his arms, constantly retreating, aiming to catch Boluo.

After much effort, he unexpectedly tripped over a stone and flipped backward. Boluo YELPED as he slid over him and slammed solidly into the ground.

After throwing Boluo, Qing Ruyan also leaped from the Mech Worm's body, rushing to Chen Gu's side in a few bounds.

Explosions began on the Mech Worm. Amidst the deafening booms, it was gradually blown to pieces.

Each explosion was less powerful than the "Ecstasy IV Model" Glorious Thunder, but they were incessant. Finally, the Energy Core hidden somewhere within the huge Mech Worm detonated.

BOOM! A brilliantly bright blue light burst forth. Hu Ling was struggling to pull Boluo from the ground. The two of them were blown far away by the force, tumbling head over heels.

After a long while, everyone, covered in dust and grime, finally crawled out from various small craters and mounds of earth.

"It's finally over." Everyone let out a long sigh of relief, spitting out the dust in their mouths.

They hadn't even entered the Yingudusi Devil's Pit and had already encountered such a colossal creature; it felt like an inauspicious start.

But Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan exchanged a look. Their focus was on Leder, who seemed somewhat excited. He was yelling and directing several uninjured mercenaries, "Come on, follow me to confirm if that big brute is really dead!"

His true purpose was undoubtedly to collect the Mech Worm's mechanical innards.

Qing Ruyan glanced at Liu Shichan, cradled in Chen Gu's arms, and flashed a teasing smile. "Quite the loving couple, aren't you?"

Chen Gu said, "We're classmates..."

Qing Ruyan waved her hand, tossing out that infuriating phrase again, "You don't have to explain to me."

Chen Gu was rendered speechless by her remark again. Am I trying to explain to you? If you weren't so sharp-tongued, constantly trying to provoke me, would I even bother saying this to you?

Chen Gu felt wronged just thinking about it. Ever since his soul had transmigrated, he had remained pure and innocent, his days marked by considerable hardship. It was truly disheartening...

Chapter 129: Entering the Yingudusi Devil's Pit

Warriors from the Liu Family, who were accompanying Liu Shichan for her protection, rushed over to treat her. Seeing their professional techniques, Chen Gu was able to relax.

The mercenaries were rescuing their comrades from the damaged combat vehicles. Leder returned with a few warriors, cursing as they arrived, "That damn thing is finally completely dead." His mood was foul, mostly because Boluo's alchemical bomb had destroyed all the innards of the Sand Worm mechanical species.

After resting in place for half an hour, everyone was busy, leaving Chen Gu as the most idle person there. But even the most irritable mercenary didn't dare to approach him and ask for "a hand." The President had demonstrated abilities far surpassing others in the recent combat, proving she was in a league of her own within this group. So, Chen Gu could only lament in the untamed northern winds... quietly being a perfect vase.

Liu Shichan had recovered. After a moment's hesitation, she approached Chen Gu and said softly, "Thank you for saving me. We people of the martial world value our word as gold! What I said to you before will always hold true. If you change your mind, feel free to find me anytime."

After speaking, Sister Liu held her head high and walked back. The few Liu Family members sent to protect her quickly pulled her aside, whispering persuasions, clearly thinking their young mistress had taken a liking to the President's pet.

Liu Shichan was stubborn; their persuasion clearly had no effect. Then, as her attendants looked up, they saw the President standing on a large rock. She was staring at them with an unreadable smile, a chilling glint flashing in her eyes!

The attendants shivered in fright. They hastily bowed and scraped, forcing smiles for the President, then turned and redoubled their efforts to persuade their young mistress.

Chen Gu said to Qing Ruyan, annoyed, "Why bother scaring them?"

Qing Ruyan raised an eyebrow. "Because it's amusing."

Chen Gu shook his head. This woman's behavior was bizarre; he really couldn't figure her out. But as a method actor, he had an almost obsessive-compulsive determination to understand a character's personality and inner thoughts. The less clear she was, the more he wanted to get to the bottom of it.

The team set off again. However, two vehicles were too severely damaged to be used, so people now occupied the vehicles originally intended for transporting supplies. With four people still unable to fit, four mercenaries donned single-soldier Mechas; two rode outside the lead vehicle and two outside the rearmost one.

In one of the middle vehicles, Leder was discussing with the others, "This Sand Worm mechanical species, according to the Confederation's classification standard, is at least a Level Four Other Species."

Humanity classified enemies such as Mutants, Other Species, and the Alien Insect Race into nine levels, with Level One being the lowest and Level Nine the highest. This classification corresponded to the Energy Level of professionals, a detail most people were unaware of.

Initially, this system used Roman letters for identification: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon...

Later, this was deemed too complicated, so numbers were used directly. Only Mutants still used the old letter-grade system, though the new generation of professionals was also abandoning it in favor of straightforward numerical levels.

"Encountering such a powerful mechanical Other Species outside the Devil's Pit makes me suspect something has changed inside. Everyone, please be extra cautious on this mission," Leder continued. Despite his warning, there was no intention of backing down. The client had paid, so the mission had to be completed. However, Leder's words gave everyone pause, and Hu Ling quickly gathered his team to discuss.

Meanwhile, Dora, with the affectionate couple in tow, approached Qing Ruyan. "President, what are your thoughts?"

Qing Ruyan replied indifferently, "I require the client to pay the full compensation upfront."

Dora was speechless for a moment, but on second thought, it seemed appropriate. If something unexpected happens and we all die here, at least our life-risk payment will be secured, and our inheritance can go to those we care about.

"Alright, I'll talk to them later," Dora agreed, then asked, "So, regarding the situation in the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, do you have any theories?"

Qing Ruyan glanced at Leder and said calmly, "There's no need to frighten ourselves."

Half an hour later, the convoy began to cross the majestic Morogule Mountain Range, where fierce winds made the heavy armored combat vehicles seem "unsteady." The hurricane slowed the convoy's progress, leading to an attack by a swarm of Rust-Iron Pangolins, a Steam Mechanical Species, in the mountains.

These Steam Mechanical Species had limited combat power but were numerous—their nests were near a coal mine and an iron mine, allowing them to reproduce prolifically. The mercenaries couldn't handle these creatures with energy guns, so ultimately, the professionals had to intervene.

This time, however, there was no significant danger. The President sat with complete composure atop a combat vehicle, doing her nails, not lifting a finger. Chen Gu became the most leisurely person in the entire team—he didn't even need to do his nails.

Leder finally managed some gain this time, discreetly hiding away some mechanical innards. However, the innards of the Steam Mechanical Species were clearly inferior to those of the Energy Gathering Mechanical Species, so Leder remained displeased.

After crossing the Morogule Mountain Range, they entered the perimeter of the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, where the group paused for a short break. Chen Gu jumped onto a vehicle's roof and gazed into the distance.

Ahead lay a boundless expanse of gray-black clouds. Occasional flashes of blue or red lightning flickered within, sometimes like a live snake darting swiftly through the dense miasma. At other times, it resembled fireworks erupting in the night sky, instantaneously spreading across an immense area. Still other times, it was like a colossal, twisted sword thrusting violently from one side, instantly piercing the entire sea of clouds! A CRACKLING AND BUZZING sound came from everyone's communication devices; strong electromagnetic interference had rendered them unusable.

Beneath the dense electromagnetic thunderclouds, the ground was a stretch of parched yellow. The undulations of the terrain were faintly visible near and far. Intermittent roars echoed from within, reminding any living creature of the extreme danger here.

Leder gathered everyone and, with a wave of his hand, activated a holographic map projection. Affected by the magnetic storm, the holographic map was unstable, flickering intermittently.

"This is a relatively reliable topographical map of the periphery, compiled from data gathered during previous expeditions into the Yingudusi Devil's Pit," Leder explained. "Locations marked in red indicate possible sites of powerful mechanical species. Those marked in yellow are where the remains of super-lifeforms might be buried." Leder paused, then added helplessly, "As you can all see, there's a significant overlap between the two."

Chapter 130: Too Small to Notice

"We've consulted experts, and they all believe that the powerful mechanical species within the Yingudusi Devil's Pit likely emerged due to the influence of super-life remains."

"So, this mission is extremely arduous. Everyone must be very careful."

He clapped his hands. Two mercenaries brought over four sealed boxes and opened them in front of everyone. Inside were rows of meticulously protected test tubes containing a pale red liquid.

"This is a special serum the boss procured at great expense. As for the source... I'm sorry, but I must keep it confidential. The boss signed a non-disclosure agreement with the other party. It's an enhancement serum still in the experimental stage, and it's very potent. If we encounter insurmountable trouble and have no other options... I believe this would be the best choice."

"Everyone take one."

After Leder finished speaking, he casually picked one for himself.

The mercenaries stepped forward one by one to take theirs. The remaining professionals followed, with Hu Ling leading his team to take theirs. Dora's eyes flickered as she chose one with an amused smile.

She had already decided not to use it. After the mission, she'd find a lab and sell this thing for a good price! The client signed a non-disclosure agreement with the other party, but *I* didn't.

Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan were the last to take theirs. They didn't examine them much in front of everyone and simply pocketed them.

"Alright," Leder said, drawing a route on the holographic map with his hand. "We'll head to Location Number One first."

The convoy set out again, but this time the alert level was significantly heightened. On top of each combat vehicle, besides the electromagnetic gun positions, there were two mercenaries and one professional.

The President still enjoyed immense privileges. She was the only one not required to stand guard on the vehicle's roof. And her pretty-boy freeloader, Chen Gu, of course, stayed with the President.

"Attention!"

The scout in the lead vehicle suddenly yelled, "Two o'clock, four hundred meters!"

Communication devices were completely useless, so everyone had reverted to the era of shouting to communicate.

Everyone immediately looked in that direction. There, a patch of soft soil began to bulge, as if something was hidden underneath.

PUFF! A round mechanical eyeball sprouted from the ground, connected to a flexible mechanical shaft as thick as a pinky finger.

PUFF! PUFF! PUFF! A series of mechanical eyeballs emerged.

They turned agilely, following the convoy's movement, and then a faint, chattering sound wafted around, as if something was conferring.

Everyone tensed up; the mercenaries adjusted their energy guns to the highest setting, while the professionals quietly gathered their power.

However, nothing bizarre happened until the convoy left their surveillance range, and everyone breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Leder said, "The route we've chosen is the safest based on our current intelligence. Please trust that the amount the boss spent on this far exceeds what any of you might imagine."

After about thirty miles, they were nearly at Location Number One.

Leder explained, "According to the information we've collected, a Steam Mechanical Species known as the Elephant Fish Monster is said to reside near Location Number One. Its strength ranges from the Fourth to the Sixth Energy Level."

"Within its operational range lies a buried expanse of massive metal bones. These could be the remains of a super-life form or possibly the wreckage of an ancient fleet; it's currently undetermined. We need to conduct an on-site survey to ascertain this."

Hu Ling added, "Very few Steam Mechanical Species can reach power levels beyond the Fourth Energy Level. Steam Mechanical Species are generally weaker than Energy Gathering Mechanical Species, but higher-level Steam Mechanical Species are extremely dangerous, often possessing special weapons and fearsome brute strength. Everyone must remain vigilant!"

As he spoke, he took a deep breath and completed his transformation into the Hell Titan.

After transforming, the Hell Titan, at the peak of the First Energy Level, stood three and a half meters tall, like a small giant. Ordinary mercenaries looked like children beside him, and even heavy armored combat vehicles seemed like toy cars!

The convoy slowed down, advancing gradually.

Dora stepped down from the combat vehicle. She knelt on one knee to the side, hands clasped over her chest, head bowed, chanting something that sounded like a spell. Then, her body also began to change slowly: her ears gradually grew pointed and angled upwards, and her entire figure elongated.

She then stood, adjusted the energy weapon in her hands, opened a side slot, and inserted three additional energy magazines.

She looked at everyone. "In this form, my perception abilities are greatly enhanced. The electromagnetic storm is interfering with our radar equipment, but now, I am a humanoid radar."

Leder smiled with satisfaction and gave her a thumbs-up. "The boss's money was well spent."

Chen Gu also possessed a similar ability, Mind Belief. However, he didn't reveal it, instead secretly paying close attention to their surroundings.

He focused on a particular direction and gently nudged Qing Ruyan beside him with his elbow, signaling her to look. However, Qing Ruyan didn't respond.

Chen Gu found this odd. He turned to look at her, only to find Qing Ruyan glowering at him.

"What's wrong?" Chen Gu asked, puzzled. Qing Ruyan continued to glare at him. Chen Gu subconsciously glanced down and realized his elbow had brushed against Qing Ruyan's chest...

How awkward. It wasn't intentional! Don't be so petty. Besides, I didn't even feel anything when I brushed against you. It's really because you're too small.

Chen Gu mechanically withdrew his elbow and again used his eyes to indicate the area of concern: a patch of soft sand.

"This is the fourth time."

Although those mechanical eyeballs hadn't reappeared, they encountered similar patches of soft ground every so often along the way. Chen Gu also had the feeling that something was observing them from the shadows.

Qing Ruyan furrowed her brows and whispered into his ear, "Our data has no record of such a mechanical species."

They had no idea what these things were, making it impossible to assess the threat they posed.

Using her body to shield her movement, she quickly jabbed a finger precisely into the wound on Chen Gu's face!

Chen Gu stifled a cry of pain, his eyes watering.

So cruel!

Before they set out today, Chen Gu had used his Atomic Life ability to treat the wound on his face. It looked healed on the surface. But Qing Ruyan was not to be trifled with; that earlier twist of hers, whatever technique she'd used, had somehow left a hidden injury!

"Hmph!" Qing Ruyan snorted proudly, turned her head, and ignored him.

The convoy continued to move forward. Dora's two pointed ears, like two antennas, moved in steady circles above her head.

Watching those ears from behind, Chen Gu's mind automatically supplied sound effects: BEEP-WHIRR—
BEEP-WHIRR—BEEP-WHIRR—

He didn't know why.

And he always felt an urge to tug on those rabbit-like ears!