

Full Time 131

Chapter 131: The Crimson Forest

Suddenly, her two long ears, spinning at a steady pace, made a BIU sound and simultaneously pointed in a certain direction. Without any hesitation, she aimed her gun that way and exclaimed, "There's something!"

In that direction grew native plants from Empire River Star, a messy patch of red thorns. However, on their home planet, the thorns were quite low, whereas here they were as tall as towering trees.

Each branch was incredibly thick, struggling to stretch outwards, and every spike seemed like a javelin, giving the impression they could launch from the plant body like crossbow bolts.

Moreover, these giant thorn trees could emit a faint red, poisonous gas, making the entire Thorns Forest look hazy and illusorily serene.

HISS HISS HISS...

A sinister sound emerged from the forest, as if something was about to burst out. It was followed by the RUSTLING of a large patch of thorn bushes collapsing and branches shaking!

The mercenary captain quickly made tactical hand signals. Eight heavy armored vehicles dispersed in an arc, their mounted weapons all aimed at the Thorns Forest.

The mercenaries dismounted, using the vehicles for cover, and targeted every exit of the forest.

After a long wait, there was still no movement. Everyone was confused but dared not lower their guard. Hu Ling thought for a moment and called out, "Old Mo, you're up!"

Old Mo handed his firearm to a gloved mercenary beside him and cautiously advanced to within a few dozen meters of the Thorns Forest. Then, his body began to twist bizarrely. A pile of sand appeared over his heart, quickly turning into a whirlpool of quicksand that howled as it transformed his entire body.

He opened his mouth, his voice rasping like sand grains in the wind, "I'll take a look inside."

Then, with a SWISH, the quicksand spilled onto the ground, flowing rapidly towards the forest like water.

Qing Ruyan maintained the composed air of a master, remaining at the rear. She gently nudged Chen Gu's chest with her elbow—almost in the same spot he had touched hers—and whispered, "Did your 'Mind Belief' detect anything?"

Chen Gu shook his head imperceptibly. "There's something watching us from all around, but it's rather elusive. It was inside the Thorns Forest just now, but it has disappeared."

"Disappeared?" Qing Ruyan was puzzled.

"I can't explain it either. They just vanished abruptly from my perception."

Qing Ruyan also adopted a rare, grave expression, as if something had occurred to her, but she remained silent.

The SWISHING sound of flowing sand came continuously from the Thorns Forest. Hu Ling and the others remained on high alert, ready to rush in and rescue Old Mo if he encountered any trouble.

About seven or eight minutes later, some quicksand seeped out from the forest. Soon after, a large stream of sand followed, gathering outside the forest into a humanoid form before slowly reverting to Old Mo's human appearance.

Hu Ling asked eagerly, "Did you find anything?"

"No living creatures," he responded. "But there's something you should come see."

He also reminded them, "That red mist is poisonous. Turn on your oxygen devices."

The mercenaries were all wearing sophisticated Mechas, each equipped with a miniature personal Life Support System. Leder had prepared an identical set of Mechas for everyone, and they all suited up.

These were standard-issue Mechas of the Confederation military, far inferior to the puppet Melincha's. Its advantage was... it was cheap.

Although Old Mo's reconnaissance found no danger, Leder still cautiously left half of the team outside.

Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan moved together, following the group into the Thorns Forest.

The various advanced sensors on their Mecha helmets malfunctioned. To the naked eye, the forest interior was a blur of red.

"Follow me," Old Mo said, leading the way. He navigated through the forest with many twists and turns until they reached a clearing.

There stood a giant metal wreckage.

It resembled a postmodern sculpture, riddled with holes. Its overall form was like a great beast with a huge coelacanth's head attached.

Upon closer inspection, the 'sculpture' was heavily rusted. It seemed unlikely to withstand the corrosive red mist for much longer.

Everyone looked on, full of confusion, when suddenly someone exclaimed, "This, this is the Elephant Fish Monster!"

But how could such a powerful steam-powered mechanical xenospecies, with strength ranging from the Fourth to Sixth Energy Level, mysteriously die here, riddled with holes?

Upon closer inspection, the holes on the Elephant Fish Monster's carcass were all quite smooth, not like bullet holes torn open by random gunfire.

Chen Gu's expression darkened, and Qing Ruyan asked quietly, "What are you thinking of?"

"Let's talk once we're out of here."

After a thorough check, everyone felt heavy-hearted.

The powerful Elephant Fish Monster was dead, but the cause of its death remained shrouded in mystery, which hardly seemed like good news. Leder was the most disappointed. The Elephant Fish Monster's body was empty, so he couldn't obtain any mechanical organs.

According to his earlier plans, the Elephant Fish Monster's organs could have been used to create several powerful cyborgs.

"Let's get out of here," Leder commanded, feeling helpless. During the retreat, Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan fell behind to cover their rear.

Chen Gu quickly told Qing Ruyan about the Ghost Woman Mutant he had encountered at the Zhaojieze City branch—a Mutant whose bodily fluids could corrode almost anything.

"Those holes... they look like they were corroded by splashes of bodily fluid."

Qing Ruyan was shocked. "There's a Mutant here?"

"I can't be sure; it's just a guess," Chen Gu replied. "But I can't think of any other reason that would turn this powerful mechanical creature into such a ghastly state!"

Qing Ruyan fell silent, seriously considering the probability of Chen Gu's hypothesis.

Once outside, both of them were troubled. The Yingudusi Devil's Pit was already full of dangers; if Mutants were added into the mix... the difficulty of their mission would skyrocket.

Chen Gu suggested to Qing Ruyan, "How about we find an excuse to pull out? With so few of us, if we encounter real danger, we'll be completely wiped out."

"When we get out, we can report the situation here to headquarters and request that higher Energy Level professionals be dispatched to investigate."

Qing Ruyan thought for a moment but shook her head. "No, right now it's only your conjecture. We need to gather solid evidence to convince headquarters to take action."

Chen Gu was inwardly anxious, but he couldn't sway Qing Ruyan's decision. To leave on his own would not only involve getting past Leder, but the journey back alone was also dangerous.

The group withdrew from the Thorns Forest. Suddenly, a WHOOSHING sound came from behind them, like a strong wind rustling through bushes.

Chen Gu's 'Mind Belief' suddenly flared with a warning. He spun around and shouted, "Watch out!"

The entire Thorns Forest trembled, firing thousands of sharp spikes!

In the sky, a volley of slender red projectiles shot towards them, a scene reminiscent of ancient times on their home planet when opposing armies would hurl javelins at each other.

Chapter 132: Do Not Collect the Corpse

Lao Mo roared and transformed into flowing sand, spikes WHIZZING through his form.

Hu Ling's legs fiercely pushed off the ground, and he broke into a sprint. Surprisingly, his speed was no less than that of the spikes.

Dora's hands moved swiftly. She switched her energy gun to its highest rate of fire and immediately opened up, creating a dense protective screen of firepower that blasted every incoming spike to pieces.

Qing Ruyan first threw Chen Gu out, then she began to run with all her might. Even though a "Psychological Spy" wasn't skilled in direct combat, the burst of speed from a Second Energy Level expert was enough for her to evade the spikes.

The professionals each displayed their unique skills and were largely unharmed, but the mercenaries were in dire straits.

One mercenary crossed his arms, and large metal plates CLATTERED out from beneath his Mecha's elbows, forming a shield. He had just taken cover when a volley of spikes shot towards him, easily piercing the shield and pinning him to the ground. He was riddled like a porcupine.

The Mecha's propulsion systems were also no match for the spikes. Another mercenary who turned to flee was a fraction too slow and ended up riddled like a porcupine.

The gunners on the war vehicles scrambled inside. A continuous THUDDING sound followed—the spikes hammering against the armor.

Fortunately, the war vehicles' armor held against the spikes, and the drivers quickly swerved to escape.

A few minutes later, the survivors regrouped in a clearing, looking dishevelled. They looked back to see the area they had just vacated completely covered in countless red Thorn spikes. Among them lay the bodies of several dozen comrades!

"Damn it!" Leder cursed, glaring fiercely at Lao Mo.

Lao Mo's face had darkened. Although the spikes had passed through his sand-form body without causing physical damage, their venom had left some residue within him.

Moreover, Lao Mo felt deeply wronged. There truly hadn't been much danger within the forest itself. The Thorns Forest wouldn't have fired indiscriminately when they entered, as that would have damaged its main body.

The Thorns Forest seemed to possess a degree of intelligence and was quite cunning: it hadn't attacked when the convoy first arrived, a time when everyone was on high alert. Instead, it chose to strike precisely when they had exited the forest, the moment their vigilance was at its lowest.

Lao Mo didn't want to take the blame for this, nor did he feel he deserved it.

"Let's check the war vehicles and treat the wounded," someone said.

After being thrown by Qing Ruyan, Chen Gu could have used his strength to land smoothly. However, to conceal his abilities, he deliberately took a dramatic tumble. His face was now bruised and swollen. Worst of all, he had landed right on a hidden, tender injury on his face. The pain was so intense that tears welled in his eyes. But Liu Shichan was standing right beside him. To maintain his "tough guy" image, he desperately held the tears back.

As a result, Chen Gu's eyes were now tear-filled, like those of a weary old bull.

His resentment towards Qing Ruyan deepened.

Liu Shichan stood shoulder to shoulder with Chen Gu. This made the Liu Family's veteran bodyguards, tasked with protecting their young lady, tremble with fear. The President is not far off, watching! That's the President's young favorite; not just anyone can take a bite, good heavens!

"Were the holes on the elephant fish creature caused by the forest's spikes?" Qing Ruyan asked. She pulled a spike from the side of a war vehicle; it had penetrated a good seven to eight centimeters into the armor.

The war vehicle's armor was incredibly tough, certainly more resilient than the bodies of steam-powered mechanical species. If these spikes could hit the elephant fish creature, they would undoubtedly pierce its shell.

Realization dawned on everyone. So that was it.

"But..." Hu Ling, with his experience, raised another question. "The internal components of the elephant fish creature were all hollowed out. Could the Thorns Forest have done that too?"

"It's possible," said the mercenary captain, who had narrowly escaped. "I remember plants on my home planet that hunt animals for nutrients."

He looked towards the densely packed spike-covered area and declared firmly, "I have to rescue my men! I can't let them be devoured by a forest!"

But how to rescue them?

Everyone looked at the Thorns Forest. It was still swaying in the wind, its branches bristling with numerous sharp spikes. The previous volley had consumed, at most, ten to twenty percent of its arsenal.

The mercenary captain ordered, "Bring the war vehicles over! We'll use them for cover..."

Leder cut him off bluntly. "No! The spikes will damage the war vehicles. By the time you drag the bodies back, the vehicles will probably be wrecked."

The mercenary captain roared, "So I'm just supposed to stand by and watch my brothers become fertilizer?"

Leder was unmoved. "The boss will pay compensation that will satisfy your brothers. Their families will be able to live comfortably with that money. But if you disobey orders, there will be no money. What's your choice?"

The mercenary captain was gasping with rage. Another mercenary held him back. "Cap, this is our lot in life. The boss is willing to pay extra; that's a pretty good outcome already."

The mercenary captain turned away, frustrated, but didn't press the issue.

After a brief rest, the team set off again. They were about to reach Location Number One. Liu Shichan asked, "Mr. Leder, are you certain the remains of the super life are at Location Number One?"

Leder shook his head. "I can only be sure that there's a massive metal carcass near Location Number One. I can't guarantee anything else."

Liu Shichan seemed preoccupied, silently lowering her head.

Chen Gu guessed the Liu Family's involvement was likely for the remains of the super life.

What would they want with the remains? Ordinary people, unlike professionals, had little use for the remains of a super life.

En route, Chen Gu found an opportunity to approach Liu Shichan. "Does your family need the remains?" he asked.

Liu Shichan glanced at him but didn't deny it. Chen Gu pressed, "What do you need that for?"

Instead of answering, Liu Shichan said, "You've seen the dangers of this world of the extraordinary now. Do you regret your decision?"

"This time... if we all make it back alive, find a way to leave that old woman. I'll arrange the rest for you."

Chen Gu persisted, "Even if the Liu Family needs the remains, they wouldn't need to send you, would they?"

Liu Shichan said no more and turned away.

Qing Ruyan drifted over like a phantom, a chill in her voice as she watched Liu Shichan's retreating back and sneered, "Old woman? Hmph..."

Chen Gu glared at her. "Are you really going to pick on a young girl?"

Qing Ruyan bristled. "What's that supposed to mean? If she's a young girl, then I'm an old woman?"

"That's not what I meant..." Chen Gu stammered, unable to explain. Qing Ruyan tossed her hair, huffed, and stalked off.

At the head of the column, Dora's long ears twitched and then suddenly stopped moving.

She leaped onto the roof of a vehicle and tapped it. "Higher."

After ascending several dozen meters, Dora peered into the distance, then jumped down excitedly. "I see the metal carcass!"

Chapter 133: The Magic Eye (1)

Everyone's spirits immediately lifted. "Where?"

Dora took the lead. The group crossed a stretch of ink-blue grassland and saw a vast, deep pit. At the very bottom, several huge, curved metal objects were embedded in the soil, with other block-like metal pieces scattered around.

It somewhat resembles metal ribs, Chen Gu thought.

Leder exclaimed excitedly, "Bring out the detection equipment!"

The mercenaries quickly unloaded special equipment from the combat vehicle. Leder waved his hand, directing, "Go collect some samples and bring them back."

The mercenaries hesitated. Who knew if this seemingly calm pit, like the Thorns Forest before it, concealed deadly dangers?

Leder pointed at Old Mo. "You go."

Old Mo grimaced, knowing Leder still blamed him for the Thorns Forest incident. He transformed into his sand state again and slid down the edge of the deep pit.

Hu Ling and his team unobtrusively moved closer, securing several of the most advantageous positions for an attack. They had done the same when Old Mo previously entered the Thorns Forest, positioning themselves to rescue their teammate.

Chen Gu nodded silently, thinking that Hu Ling treated his subordinates quite well.

Qing Ruyan whispered in his ear, "This is a common tactic among mercenaries. If they confirm these are the remains of a super-lifeform, they'll rush down immediately. Due to the employment agreement, all spoils belong to the employer. However, the first ones down can easily hide a few inconspicuous small items. The employer can't exactly search them. They seize advantageous positions under the guise of supporting teammates, and no one can object."

Qing Ruyan sneered. "Hmph, camaraderie? Perhaps some of it is genuine, but deeper down, it's still driven by profit."

Chen Gu was taken aback, not having realized all the complexities involved.

Qing Ruyan raised an eyebrow at him. "You, you're still too green."

Just as Chen Gu was about to nod in agreement, he sensed something odd about her gaze. As though I... was being teased?

Damn it! Chen Gu cursed inwardly. He recalled Griffin Wester's memories. Looking at mercenary groups like Hu Ling's and Dora's, he quickly found several adjectives: Low-grade, pocket-sized, junior, bottom-rung...

In the original language of the Star Battle Instructor, it was: "I indeed have no knowledge of such trash!"

Chen Gu fell silent. Alright then. The Blue Blood Thugs were the top mercenary corps back in the day. Old Sir certainly had the right to say that and to look down on these lesser mercenary groups. Griffin Wester excelled at combat and had no experience with the so-called 'survival tactics' of these small-time mercenaries. He never cared about 'survival'; his own survival was never an issue. His path truly lay across the stars and seas!

Chen Gu might not have understood Hu Ling's group's petty schemes, but Dora and the others were keenly aware. Soon, Chen Gu noticed Locke and Ken also subtly maneuvering into advantageous positions.

Since they had all come together, it was natural for them to want a share of the spoils.

Chen Gu then saw Dora, eager to jump in, while he himself shrank back behind Qing Ruyan.

He wasn't covetous of the so-called remains of the super-lifeform. If I need something, I still have my wealthy son! It's just that the old brat has a rather twisted personality... If I were to ask him for it, he'd most likely refuse. But if I don't ask, he'll surely prepare it in secret and force it upon me. Just like last time with the supermatter. What can I do? I can't let the kid's filial piety go unappreciated. I, the Emperor, could only half-heartedly accept. Of course, I still had to refuse verbally with a couple of 'Absolutely not! Absolutely not!'

Chen Gu had two objectives for coming to the Yingudusi Devil's Pit: first, the Four Hundred Braves, and second, the 'rebel' Dilina.

However, with no leads on either matter and the danger growing increasingly terrifying, Chen Gu felt quite frustrated.

Chen Gu decided. Let them fight over it. I'll just lay low—'No use stringing the bow if the demons don't show, no need to release the hawk if the rabbit doesn't go.'

Chen Gu was completely unaware that, to Miss Liu Shichan of the Dead Phoenix Society, who was observing coldly from the rear, his behavior seemed like sheer timidity.

Liu Shichan snorted. How can someone who navigates the world shy away when things get tough?

But then she became conflicted. I was the one who told him to be careful and try to withdraw.

She couldn't decide whether to be pleased that this classmate had listened to her advice or annoyed that he lacked the courage to fight...

After pondering for three seconds, Big Sis Liu finally reached a conclusion: I'll help him this one time, but my organization absolutely cannot have such a degenerate!

Chen Gu remained vigilant of his surroundings with Mind Belief. Suddenly, his gaze shifted in a certain direction, toward a patch of loose soil above the deep pit.

As Chen Gu looked, something under the soil seemed to stir, but it quickly became still again, as if nothing had occurred.

He frowned, pretending not to have noticed, and turned his head back.

Old Mo reached the metal remains and used a small laser cutter to slice off a piece before returning. Leder quickly took it and placed it into the analysis device.

The device BEEPED steadily, analyzing data point after data point.

Leder grew increasingly excited. The data displayed so far strongly suggested these were the remains of a super-lifeform.

As the final, most critical piece of data was about to appear, everyone's attention focused on the device. It was a pivotal moment; even the mercenaries craned their necks to see.

BEEP—

The final data was about to display when a sudden scream pierced the air. Everyone, startled, looked towards the sound. A mercenary had fallen. A fist-sized black shadow erupted from his body and instantly vanished into the ground.

"What the hell is that!"

The mercenary captain bellowed, raising his gun and scanning the surroundings.

But then, screams erupted one after another. Mercenaries on the periphery fell, one by one, a black shadow bursting from each of them.

RAT-TAT-TAT...

Gunfire erupted, but the targets were small and moved with incredible speed. They quickly burrowed into the ground and disappeared. Not a single one was hit.

Guns raised, everyone searched anxiously. Suddenly, from the ground beneath all the professionals, WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH! Groups of black shadows shot out!

Dora's long ears shot straight up. She dropped her rifle and her hands flew to her waist, snatching two small pistols. BANG! BANG! BANG! She fired rapidly. Several black shadows lunging at her were hit. They emitted a SQUEAK and fell several meters away, then tumbled into the ground and vanished.

Chapter 134: The Devil's Eye (2)

Elder Mo was still in a state of liquified sand when several black shadows plunged into his body, only to be flung out from the other side, seemingly bewildered. They twirled around and then burrowed back into the ground.

In an instant, Elder Mo turned into a sand sphere, trapping a black shadow inside his body.

Hu Ling moved swiftly, leaping and dodging, but his huge body made him an obvious target. The black shadows darted around, forcing him into an awkward defense.

Eventually, he was caught off guard. PUFF! A black shadow penetrated his body.

Hu Ling let out a roar and punched himself. BAM!

This punch tore a giant, bloody hole in his own body! The black shadow, mixed with flesh and blood, was expelled more than ten meters away.

The black shadow spun around in place a few times, appearing disoriented, before sinking into the ground and disappearing.

Hu Ling, sweating profusely from the pain, clenched his teeth and glared fiercely. With no time to tend to his wounds, he remained vigilant for the potential reappearance of the black shadows.

Boluo's approach was the simplest and most brutal: he used a bomb to blast himself dozens of meters away. Collapsed on the ground and coughing up blood, he was temporarily out of the black shadows' attack range.

Huo Mei reached out and grabbed a heavy armored combat vehicle to shield herself, only to find that the black shadows effortlessly perforated the vehicle!

Smooth, round holes appeared on the surface of the combat vehicle.

Huo Mei never imagined the black shadows to be so terrifying. By the time the shadows pierced through the combat vehicle and lunged at her, it was too late to dodge.

THWIP THWIP THWIP THWIP!

Clusters of black shadows burrowed into her body. Only then, her mouth full of blood, did Huo Mei struggle to say, "Mechanical species?"

Her abilities were the most suitable for dealing with these things, but it was too late.

She was fierce; her face contorted as she morphed the black shadows inside her into iron pellets. Then, bearing a dozen massive wounds, she sighed and collapsed.

"Huo Mei!" Hu Ling bellowed, his eyes nearly bursting with fury.

But more black shadows burst forth from the ground beneath his feet. Hu Ling, unable to linger in his grief, desperately fended them off once more.

Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan had it easiest. Qing Ruyan pulled Chen Gu. With her mysterious power activated, a swarm of black shadows headed their way. However, they changed their minds mid-course, sensing they should not attack "one of their own." They turned around and headed straight for Locke and Ken nearby.

Locke and Ken screamed and scrambled in a panic, narrowly avoiding injury.

The mercenaries suffered heavy losses. Even the mercenary captain lay on the ground, the earth beneath him soaked with his bright red blood.

The assault lasted for more than ten minutes.

When the black shadows finally receded, no one dared to let down their guard. They remained highly alert for quite a while before finally relaxing and collapsing to the ground with a sigh of relief.

Hu Ling had two large wounds. Without time for treatment, he dragged his injured body quickly to Huo Mei's side.

Huo Mei's eyes were wide open, lifeless.

Hu Ling, weighed down with sorrow, lowered his head and tremblingly helped close her eyes.

Dora was also in a disheveled state. Her star-shaped sunglasses had flown off to who knows where, and one of her braids had been sheared off by a black shadow. Now, half her hair was braided, the other half loose and wild.

She shouted loudly, "President, Chen Gu, Locke, Ken..."

Locke and Ken didn't respond. Dora looked around until she saw Locke sitting with his back to everyone, holding Ken.

Dora's heart sank. She silently walked over and patted Locke on the shoulder. "My condolences..."

Locke's body slumped over. Only then did Dora see that both of them had fatal wounds. It seemed that after Ken was injured, Locke had refused to abandon him. While dodging with Ken in his arms, a black shadow had pierced straight through them both!

Dora felt extremely upset. She wiped her eyes hard and assembled a huge energy gun. Without a word, she began firing madly at the ground around her!

After emptying three energy cells, a hand reached out from behind her and gently grasped her shoulder. "That's enough..."

Turning around, Dora saw the President. She held back her tears and threw herself into her embrace. Biting her lip, her shoulders trembled continuously as she tried not to cry out loud.

Qing Ruyan was taken aback. I just came to stop you from venting, don't waste any more energy...

But moments later, her expression softened, and she gently patted Dora's back. "It's okay, it's okay now."

The mercenaries were almost completely wiped out. To Chen Gu's surprise, however, Leder and Liu Shichan were both unharmed. Even the few Liu Family members protecting Liu Shichan were fine; they merely looked a bit disheveled.

Suddenly, a hoarse voice came from the side, "Quick, over here! I can't hold on any longer!"

Elder Mo had trapped a black shadow with his body, and it was wriggling inside him painfully.

"Who can control this thing?" Leder asked loudly. Everyone looked at Boluo, who had set off explosions on himself three times in a row to escape the shadows' attacks and was still busy coughing up blood.

Noticing everyone's gaze, he hesitated. "I'll give it a try."

Elder Mo couldn't wait any longer and suddenly opened his mouth... Everyone thought he would spit out the shadow. Instead, PSSST! A burst of something sprayed out from the lower rear part of his body with considerable force, shooting quite far...

Everyone was taken aback, and Boluo, especially, was caught completely off guard—he didn't catch it.

Elder Mo said helplessly, "These kinds of things... they're uncontrollable. Everyone understands."

As soon as the shadow hit the ground, Boluo had already altered the material structure of that patch of ground, turning it into hard ceramic.

But even though the shadow couldn't vanish instantly, it still drilled in with a SCRAPE! SCRAPE! SCRAPE!

Boluo gritted his teeth and activated his ability again, turning the ceramic into a fiercely heaving mass of molten lava.

GURGLE...

The shadow suddenly floated up, tumbling and spinning before flailing wildly! It seemed like it couldn't swim.

Finally trapped, everyone let out a long sigh of relief and took a closer look.

"Is this... that group of mechanical eyes?"

When they had first entered the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, they encountered a group of mechanical eyes connected by metallic flexible shafts. Weren't they the same as this thing about to drown right before their eyes?

The mechanical eyes blinked rapidly in the lava. A metallic flexible shaft trailed behind like a little tail, flailing aimlessly and to no avail.

Chen Gu's expression turned strange. This scene... it seems familiar. It's like something I've seen in some biology documentaries.

The mechanical eye species, much like a drowning person making a last desperate effort before sinking, violently shook its little tail. It seemed to be searching for some target and suddenly sprang up, as if about to leap out of the lava.

However, it still fell back with a PLOP!, powerless in the end.

Chapter 135: Trace of the Saintly Hand

This final, futile effort unexpectedly alarmed Boluo, who spat out three mouthfuls of vintage 1982 blood, forced himself to activate his power, and doubled the range of the lava.

This desperate move trapped almost all of his teammates on the spot.

The ground beneath everyone's feet turned into lava, prompting a chorus of alarmed cries as they each deployed their life's ultimate skills—be it unleashing their powers or contorting their powerful core muscles—to forcibly leap to safety.

In any case, when everyone returned to the safety zone, they looked more bedraggled than the next. Only Qing Ruyan, the Second Energy Level master, stood out. Her strength was evidently head and shoulders above the rest; her form, unflustered by the chaos, was about to float away.

But, as bad luck would have it, Chen Gu suddenly reached out and grabbed her.

Qing Ruyan's body sank downward, almost falling into the lava.

She couldn't maintain her aloof persona any longer and nearly lost her composure. With no choice but to give it her all, she managed to drag this burdensome teammate out of there. Her clothes were disheveled, sweat was visible on her hairline, and she gave Chen Gu an extremely dissatisfied glare.

Chen Gu explained in a low voice, "I was trying to escape on my own, then I suddenly remembered I'm just a vase now..."

Forget it, I won't quibble with him—it's all for the mission. Qing Ruyan consoled herself with this thought.

After the Mechanized Eye creature fell back into the lava, it went utterly berserk, its previously cute appearance gone without a trace. From the center of its eye emerged a peculiar drill bit, densely covered in sparkling saw teeth, spinning rapidly with a loud WHIRR as it drilled chaotically everywhere.

Chen Gu looked at this thing, then turned to look at the heavy armored vehicle next to Huo Mei, and suddenly realized, "The elephant-fish monster was devoured by this thing!"

His previous speculation was wrong; it wasn't corroded by the Mutant's bodily fluids but drilled out by this thing.

Meanwhile, the Mechanized Eye creature in the lava was slowly being melted away.

At this moment, Boluo could no longer hold on. He spewed another mouthful of blood as his power dissipated. Without his power to sustain it, the lava cooled rapidly, solidifying into rock.

Glove was busy treating Hu Ling's injuries. Leder, troubled by the sight of mercenary corpses strewn about, was left with no usable men under his command.

Liu Shichan was quietly discussing something with her people.

Dora sighed and prepared to bury Locke and Ken.

Chen Gu walked up to the rock, where the Mechanized Eye creature had been mostly melted and fused with the stone. From the surface of the rock, Chen Gu plucked out a sparkling object.

It was one of the drill bit's saw teeth.

He examined it closely. Qing Ruyan approached. "Found something?"

"A special crystal. It's not metal, nor... diamond. Its hardness is comparable to diamond, capable of easily penetrating most metals, but it's much tougher than diamond."

Qing Ruyan didn't seem too concerned. "Take it back and have the material analyzed."

In this era, many synthetic substances could achieve such properties.

Chen Gu nodded and collected it, prying a few more from the rock's surface.

Leder let out a sigh nearby. "It's not the remnant of a super life form; we must continue the search."

He had been standing right there when—just before the most critical data was to be revealed—the Mechanized Eye creature attacked.

Chen Gu wasn't surprised. How could they be so lucky to find the remnants of a super life form at their first location?

This place was closest to the edge of the Yingudusi Devil's Pit. If there were any remnants here, earlier explorers would have taken them long ago.

"Our task must continue." Leder's expression was very grim. Clearly, the horrors of the Yingudusi Devil's Pit were far beyond his imagination, and he too hoped to complete the mission and leave as soon as possible.

It took the group more than half an hour to regroup and set off again. The convoy's personnel had been greatly reduced, now down to just over a dozen people.

Only four of the heavy armored combat vehicles were still operational.

Leder popped out the holographic map again and confirmed the route. "We'll follow this line to the second location and set up camp under this stretch of rock en route."

Night was approaching. The wilderness of the Yingudusi Devil's Pit was even more terrifying than during the day. Based on the experiences of past explorers, it was best to dig a hole and camp underground. They were well-prepared in advance, as the vehicles were equipped with specialized rapid excavation equipment.

Everyone was doubly cautious on the way. Thankfully, the group of Mechanical Eye species did not appear again. Hu Ling breathed a sigh of relief. "We should have left the territory of the Mechanical Eye species."

Around five-thirty in the afternoon, just before dark, they reached the designated camping spot.

Leder waved his hand. "Scout the surroundings."

Hu Ling, wearing gloves, quickly completed the patrol. "It's safe."

Leder led some people to begin digging under a huge rock with machinery. After the hole was made, they would perform further processing on the tunnel.

The presence of the Mechanical Eye species—creatures that could emerge from the ground at any moment—necessitated changes. Their usual procedure was to reinforce the tunnel walls with a ceramic-

like strengthening. Now, however, Leder had his people insert hundreds of thin metal wires into the tunnel walls on top of that. If any vibrations were detected, an early warning system would activate immediately.

This was the best they could achieve under the current conditions.

Chen Gu also took a walk around the area. Halfway through, he turned back and called Qing Ruyan out.

"What's up?" Qing Ruyan asked curiously. Chen Gu pulled her to a secluded rock. Circling around it, they found on the other side a door-panel-shaped giant stone, over ten meters long, covering another large rock. On the inner side of this door-panel stone, a clear handprint was deeply embedded a few centimeters into the rock!

Qing Ruyan's face changed as she compared the handprint to her own. "The fingers are slim, and the palm is relatively elongated—it's a woman's hand!"

Chen Gu nodded. "Dilina's Hand of Annihilation!"

This item, designated 3-04, combined with the powers of Nuclear Explosion Nun, could easily accomplish this feat.

"Dilina has been here before, and there was likely a battle nearby."

The two immediately spread out in search of other traces, but despite searching until dark, aside from the handprint, they found nothing else.

The two returned to the tunnel, disheartened. The others had already imagined their entire "private mission" and didn't dare say or ask anything. They could only silently admire in their hearts. Second Energy Level experts are certainly formidable, to be in high spirits even in such a dangerous environment!

At night, the professionals took turns keeping watch. Neither Dora nor Hu Ling dared to put Qing Ruyan on the watch list. "Please focus on resting, to recuperate and gather strength."

"The journey ahead is even more treacherous and difficult; we need your power!"

As night fully fell, thunder and lightning raged in the Yingudusi Devil's Pit. Even five meters underground, they could feel that terrible power.

The continual dull roars always came with successive, massive tremors.

Even some unknown giant creatures were passing over the ground surface, and a few times nearly collapsed their dugout.

The professionals were terrified. After several changes of guard, it was finally Dora's turn in the early hours. She huddled with her weapon at the mouth of the tunnel, glanced at the sleeping Leder, and sighed to herself. This money really isn't easy to earn...

Chen Gu, who was sleeping soundly, suddenly opened his eyes as Mind Belief began to send a strong psychic warning.

Chapter 136: Burning Tyrannosaurus Rex (1) Third Release

Chen Gu glanced at Qing Ruyan, who was sleeping not far from him, and silently reached out his hand, preparing to pinch her face.

This is a great opportunity for revenge!

There's a situation; I was just trying to wake you up, he thought, formulating his excuse.

But just as his wicked hand was about to reach Qing Ruyan's face, she suddenly woke up. Chen Gu felt a bit embarrassed and made several gestures to indicate danger.

Qing Ruyan seemed to have seen right through him and revealed a mocking smile.

As soon as she got up, everyone else woke up too.

"Danger is approaching!" someone warned.

"Big Rabbit, go take a look," Qing Ruyan ordered.

Dora felt very embarrassed. That nickname is so humiliating! President, couldn't you refrain from saying it in front of so many people?

She shrank her neck and, with a WHOOSH, darted out of the cave entrance.

The cave entrance was five meters below ground level, but the passage itself was longer than five meters. It twisted and turned, designed to provide defensive space if they were discovered.

She cautiously approached the second bend when suddenly her long ears twitched and pointed forward.

Big Rabbit immediately halted, kneeling in a shooting stance.

The lights on her shoulders illuminated the area ahead; all was calm.

Yet Dora dared not let her guard down and maintained her shooting posture.

Silently, a dark red root crept slowly into the dark tunnel.

What the hell kind of place is this! Big Rabbit wailed internally, her terror and vulnerability making her feel just like a little white rabbit.

But her hands didn't hesitate as she adjusted the firearm's ammunition mode.

WHIZZ—CLICK!

Incendiary round mode.

BANG!

She fired a shot into the tunnel ahead. With a ROAR, a burst of flame erupted, instantly reaching an extreme temperature.

That one root turned to ash in an instant.

Then Big Rabbit heard a cacophony of SCRAPING and SQUEALING sounds from the tunnel, as if many things were densely packed together and retreating, or perhaps something was screaming in pain.

Just imagining it made Big Rabbit's scalp tingle, her hair stand on end, and chills run down her spine.

I'm really just a timid little rabbit who likes to please others!

Despite her fear, her hands moved skillfully, firing a shot then switching ammo modes, alternating between incendiary and explosive rounds.

BOOM!

BANG!

BOOM!

BANG!

With each burst of flame and explosion, the tunnel ahead finally gave way and completely collapsed. The SCRAPING and SQUEALING sounds gradually disappeared.

Dora let out a long sigh of relief, gently patting her ample bosom, which, befitting her 'Big Rabbit' moniker, bounced with the motion.

She cautiously looked around, ensuring there were no onlookers, then stuck out her little tongue. "You scared this little rabbit half to death!"

The others rushed over from the main cave. "What happened?"

After Dora explained, she added a complaint, "Are all the plants here so weird and terrifying?"

Leder said helplessly, "Let's dig our way out once it gets light."

After the electromagnetic storm raged through the night, one would normally expect good weather the following day. However, the Yingudusi Devil's Pit seemed to have a mind of its own. It adamantly refused to clear up. Instead, the sky remained overcast with thunder roaring, and it occasionally unleashed yet another thunderstorm.

The group managed to dig a new passageway, emerging from underground covered in dirt like a bunch of groundhogs. Then, BOOM! A red lightning bolt struck nearby, shattering a human-height boulder into smithereens.

"AHH—"

Dora screamed. Thankfully, everyone else was also startled, so no one noticed the cowardice hidden deep within the 'big-toothed cowboy rabbit.'

Leder was also extremely fatigued. He hadn't expected the mission to turn out like this, barely on its second day.

"Let's go. We'll try to reach Site Two by noon," Leder announced.

"Everyone, be careful."

The previous evening at dusk, they had concealed their vehicles behind a large rock, camouflaging them with dry branches.

But when everyone arrived behind the rock, they were all perplexed. "Where are our vehicles?!"

Behind the large rock was nothing but empty space; their four heavy armored vehicles had mysteriously disappeared.

Chen Gu lightly nudged Qing Ruyan. "Look over there."

Everyone followed his gaze and saw a huge, red-and-green sphere on the outskirts of their campsite. It was a bizarre plant, resembling brambles yet also somewhat like vines.

Its leaves faced the lightning, much like sunflowers turn toward the sun. With each flash of lightning from the thunderstorm, fine streaks of electricity raced over the leaves before being absorbed.

This strange plant formed a dense mass, its thick, reddish-brown roots gripping the soil deeply.

Their four heavy armored vehicles were tightly bound in its center. Countless vines had penetrated them, already corroding the vehicles until they were riddled with holes.

It was as if they had been swallowed into a stomach and were being continuously digested and absorbed.

Dora immediately thought of the roots that had scared her in the tunnel and exclaimed angrily, "So, it was this thing!"

With a CLICK, she chambered a round. It's broad daylight, and my teammates are here! Big Rabbit isn't afraid of you! Let's do this!

Leder shook his head. "Even if we get the vehicles out, they're unusable now. Let's not provoke this monster anymore. We're leaving."

The group moved forward on foot, feeling frustrated and stifled.

「After a few kilometers」

Chen Gu spotted a deep pit nearby, its interior marked by concentric circular layers.

He pulled Qing Ruyan back. "That's from a Biological Nuclear Explosion."

Qing Ruyan's eyes lit up. Another clue!

Perhaps due to the day's "terrible" weather, the mechanical species were reluctant to venture out. To their surprise, the group encountered no danger that morning and successfully reached Site Two.

Here, an ancient battleship lay crashed, embedded diagonally into the earth.

Despite centuries of weathering and decay, its surface marred with rust, the wreck still loomed before them like a mountain—towering and immense.

Leder circled the battleship. "This is an old Confederation 'Guan Hai' class medium Close Range Attack Ship.

"Everyone, be cautious. According to the information on our devices, a special Energy Gathering Mechanical Species known as the Burning Tyrant is active around here.

"However, judging by that Elephant Fish creature from before, the situation within the Yingudusi Devil's Pit changes rapidly. It's very possible a new mechanical species has already replaced the Burning Tyrant..."

Before he could finish, Chen Gu suddenly perked up his ears. "Do you hear anything?"

Leder was annoyed at being interrupted, especially by someone he considered a mere 'vase'—the President's pretty companion. But since this 'vase' belonged to President Qing Ruyan, he couldn't show his displeasure.

Dora, however, always eager to please the President, chimed in, her long ears twitching as she listened intently. "It sounds like... snoring?"

When the others listened closely, they indeed heard a faint, intermittent HUFFING sound.

Hu Ling pointed towards the remains of the battleship. "It's coming from inside there."

The group looked at the battleship wreckage with curiosity. Peering through the dilapidated gaps and holes, they suddenly saw two bright lights illuminate from within.

Then, with a loud CRASH, parts of the battleship wreckage were smashed open! Flames ROARED upwards, and a massive creature charged out, accompanied by the resounding CLANGOR of machinery.

Chapter 137: Grenade Tactics (1)

BOOM—

Flames erupted, spreading rapidly like a torch thrown into a sea of oil.

A giant mechanical beast, several dozen meters tall, shook the earth as it charged out. The two lights from before were its eyes. Its entire body was engulfed in terrifying flames, which constantly flowed down, intensifying the surrounding sea of fire.

Dora quickly retreated. Using her petite body, she successfully avoided the Burning Tyrannosaur's attention and reached a spot thousands of meters away. She slapped her chest. From the shaking, unstable backpack behind her, eight super high-strength alloy spider legs ejected with a WHOOSH. They CLANGED as they stabbed into the ground, providing her with a very stable launch platform.

Big Rabbit swiftly attached various components to her long rifle, then forcefully pulled open all the energy ports and inserted eight energy blocks. She quickly aimed at the Burning Tyrannosaur's head and decisively pulled the trigger.

BOOM!

The power of this shot was even greater than that of a heavy battle tank's cannon. A bright beam of light struck the Tyrannosaur squarely, causing the colossal beast to stagger. As the firelight dissipated, a noticeable void appeared on the metal giant's skull.

However, the Burning Tyrannosaur did not fall; instead, it became enraged. It turned viciously, setting its sights on Dora. Its pair of massive eyes grew brighter and brighter!

Big Rabbit panicked. "This is bad! We're gonna die! What awful luck..."

Behind her, the eight spider legs retracted quickly. Supported by them, she rolled and crawled away rapidly.

The Burning Tyrannosaur's eyes suddenly shot out two intense energy beams, far more powerful than Big Rabbit's previous shot...

BOOM! BOOM!

Two large, deep pits instantly appeared in the ground, their edges charred and carbonized. That wasn't the end. The beams from the Burning Tyrannosaur's eyes chased Dora, carving two horrifying trenches hundreds of meters long into the ground!

"AAAAAH—"

Dora comically, yet swiftly, rolled and crawled, narrowly avoiding the fatal strike.

On another side, Hu Ling donned his solo Mecha. Gritting his teeth, he charged into the sea of flames, hoping to use the Mecha's defensive capabilities to get close enough to attack the Burning Tyrannosaur. But he hadn't anticipated the intensity of the fire. Just three steps in, and the entire Mecha glowed red. Hu Ling burst out at an even faster speed. He tore off the Mecha, crying out from the burns. His lush body hair was now almost entirely gone.

Chen Gu couldn't help but think: Using flame to remove pig bristles, this ancient technique, indeed has a scientific basis.

Lao Mo roared and transformed into a stream of quicksand. Unexpectedly, the Burning Tyrannosaur turned its head, roared, and spat out a scorching fireball. BOOM! He was blasted apart, sand and dust scattering over a thousand square meters. It would take him some time to re-form.

As Big Rabbit frantically fled, she cried out for help to Qing Ruyan, "President, we need your power!"

Qing Ruyan was also troubled. "I can make it not attack me, but I can't get close to it either!"

The dreadful sea of flames spread around them, covering a range of over a thousand meters. It would be more manageable if they had a maglev vehicle, but their basic Mecha couldn't fly.

When everyone was at a loss, a voice suddenly came through faintly, "I happen to have a method."

Chen Gu!

The Burning Tyrannosaur continued its rampage, its eyes firing energy beams, its mouth shooting fireballs, causing the group of Professionals to scatter in chaos.

Just as a "pretty boy" decided to chime in, Boluo couldn't help but curse, "What method could *you* possibly have?"

But Qing Ruyan commanded, "Stop beating around the bush! If you have a method, speak up!"

Chen Gu looked at Boluo helplessly. "You throw him onto the Burning Tyrannosaur's head," he said. "Let him create a bomb inside its body."

Everyone's eyes lit up. It was a very bold idea, but it seemed feasible.

Boluo: "..."

WTF?! Dude, all I did was offer a single retort, and you're using me as a meat-stuffed bun to throw at the Tyrannosaur? What kind of crappy tactic is this? You useless pretty boy... you're inhuman!

But at that moment, Chen Gu saw a dangerous gleam in Qing Ruyan's eyes and immediately shivered. Oh no, I've miscalculated! How can a crappy alchemical bomb compare to a Biological Nuclear Explosion? If Boluo fails, and this Burning Tyrannosaur is so terrifying, Qing Ruyan—that damn woman—will definitely risk exposure and throw *me* as a human sandbag at the Burning Tyrannosaur. I might as well dig a hole and bury myself.

Hu Ling, yelling wildly, charged over, two giant energy beams chasing him. As he passed, Hu Ling pushed Boluo towards Qing Ruyan. "What are you hesitating for? Act fast!"

"Captain..." Boluo stammered.

Qing Ruyan grabbed Boluo with both hands and asked in a deep voice, "Do you have any last words... No, I mean, trust me, this will be successful!"

Boluo yelled, "Wait a minute, wait a minute! Even if I make the bomb, how do I get back?!"

Chen Gu roared, "Jump down!"

"I'm afraid of heights..." Boluo, a dignified Professional, was almost in tears. While they were dilly-dallying, the other Professionals were being chased by the Burning Tyrannosaur to the brink of desperation, urging them on:

"Throw him!"

"Throw him now!"

"Quick, throw him!"

Chen Gu, that clever little devil, gave Boluo another idea. "If you're too scared to jump, then do what you did before: make a less powerful bomb and blast yourself out."

What?! You monster! How could you even think of such a depraved idea? Boluo thought.

"HIYAH!" Without waiting for Boluo to object, Qing Ruyan mustered all her strength and threw him. Boluo went WHOOSHING high into the air.

Chen Gu clapped from the side, praising, "Excellent! Like Dharma throwing an elephant!"

Qing Ruyan turned back, looking at him, perplexed.

Boluo let out a long scream in mid-air, finally managing, "Make sure you throw accurately..."

PFFT!

He plunged headfirst into the Burning Tyrannosaur's eye socket.

"Accurate!" Qing Ruyan said, quite satisfied.

Luckily for him, the energy beams from the Burning Tyrannosaur's eyes were dormant at that moment, so poor Boluo wasn't instantly melted. However, the heat in both eyes was still intense, scorching Boluo, who cried out weirdly as he scrambled out.

To the Burning Tyrannosaur, it was like a tiny speck of dust had flown into its eye. It raised a claw to rub it. Its front claws were actually longer than a real Tyrannosaur's, capable of reaching its face. How miraculous was that!

Its front claws were very small compared to its massive body. But for Boluo, who had just escaped from the eye socket, the sight of one of those claws casting a giant shadow over him was terrifying. He scrambled and rolled away in a hurry. Then, caught off guard, he nearly fell off the Tyrannosaur's head.

He was terrified of heights. Looking down, Oh my god— He quickly closed his eyes. Can't look, can't look! His legs felt like jelly, and he was losing control of his bladder.

Fortunately, the Burning Tyrannosaur's flames were mainly concentrated on its body. Although its head was hot, it only scorched his buttocks.

While he was on a thrilling roller coaster ride up top, Hu Ling and the others below were struggling to hold on, screaming continuously, "Hurry up!"

Chapter 138: Grenade Tactics (2)

Boluo felt extremely aggrieved as he finally, and with great trepidation, began to use his ability. Meanwhile, Chen Gu noticed a detail: Liu Shichan, under the protection of several people, remained hidden in the distance, and the Burning Tyrannosaurus seemed to completely ignore them.

Although Leder was also scrambling in chaos with everyone else, chased by the Burning Tyrannosaurus, his agility and speed were by no means inferior to that of a professional—in fact, he was even better than Glove and the others!

Is this guy a professional too? Hu Ling wondered, having already sprinted past for the second time, roaring as he urged, "Boluo, hurry up!"

Dora, having rolled and crawled past countless times, was frantic. "I can't hold on anymore! I feel like vomiting..."

Poor Old Mo had only just managed to reform an arm when a terrifyingly large foot stomped down with a THUD. The Burning Tyrannosaurus roared as it chased after Hu Ling, leaving nothing but dust in its wake.

Only Chen Gu, without any complaints or prodding, offered nothing but positive, full-hearted encouragement. Waving his arms with fervor, he cheered, "Boluo, keep it up, you can do it, I believe in you! Blast yourself sky high!"

Boluo had already planted enough bombs inside the Burning Tyrannosaurus. Since this terrifying Energy Gathering Mechanical Species was wreathed in intense flames and its temperature was extremely high, the bombs would detonate in mere seconds.

Boluo clenched his teeth, closed his eyes, and buried a bomb beneath his backside.

BOOM...

A bomb exploded on the Burning Tyrannosaurus's face, causing it to involuntarily tilt its head—the bomb's power was indeed somewhat laughable to it. Then, acting on instinct, it whipped its head back, and with a resounding THWACK, used its own face to send Boluo flying...

Chen Gu was horrified when he saw Boluo stuffing a bomb under his backside and shouted with great concern, "Don't do that! Just put it on your back..."

Immediately after, he witnessed the Burning Tyrannosaurus's unintentional masterstroke... Ah, well, it doesn't matter now, Chen Gu thought.

WHOOSH! Boluo flew several kilometers before crashing heavily to the ground. The moment he landed, the bombs he had planted inside the Burning Tyrannosaurus began to explode in succession.

The bombs were all placed at critical joints of the Energy Gathering Mechanical Species. One had to trust Boluo's professionalism as a demolition maniac; even with the considerable pressure on his bladder severely distracting him, he had still impeccably completed his task.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Violent explosions occurred one after another, these bombs far more powerful than the one Boluo had stuck beneath himself. Flames erupted and splattered from the Burning Tyrannosaurus, creating a world-shaking spectacle.

Finally, after dozens of bombs had detonated, everyone held their breath, looking towards the sea of fire. When the smoke and dust cleared, their hearts sank. The massive Energy Gathering Mechanical Species still stood, unyielding!

This is bad, Chen Gu thought. If Boluo fails, that damn woman Qing Ruyan will definitely grab me and throw me over... He glanced around, searching for a suitable escape route. He'd even madly calculated that, on his way, he could grab Big Rabbit and throw her at Qing Ruyan to block any pursuit!

But the next moment, as the Burning Tyrannosaurus tried to roar skyward, its body shifted, accompanied by a series of CRACKLING sounds. Then, the colossal, hundreds-of-meters-tall body suddenly split apart, its massive chunks crashing heavily to the ground.

"PHEW—"

Everyone breathed a collective sigh of relief; it was finally over.

The Burning Tyrannosaurus was incredibly formidable, at least a Level Five, possibly even a Level Six. If one were to compare sheer strength, all the professionals present, even combined, would not have been its match.

However, the reason professionals were highly valued by the major Star Nations was due to the complexity and peculiarity of their abilities. With the right combination, professionals could even annihilate an entire fleet.

"Boluo!" Leader Hu Ling immediately remembered his good brother and roared as he rushed towards Boluo.

He and Glove pulled Boluo out. The demolition maniac looked especially pitiful; most of his bones were shattered, and his face was covered in blood.

"Quick, we need healing potions!"

Leder handed one over. "Our supplies are gone, and we don't have many healing potions left..."

Hu Ling snatched it away and quickly injected Boluo.

After Boluo's injuries stabilized, his eyes remained vacant. Being blasted hundreds of meters into the air and plummeting back down had clearly inflicted permanent psychological trauma on someone with such severe acrophobia.

"How do you feel?"

"Are you okay?"

"You were really brave!"

A deluge of free yet insincere comforts and encouragements followed, none of any real significance. Among them, 'Best Actor' Chen Gu's lines were the most heartfelt, his performance spot on!

Boluo suddenly shivered, his eyes flickered as if his soul had returned. He glanced around at everyone, his gaze finally settling on Chen Gu's face. His expression was a peculiar mix: three parts dumbstruck awe, seven parts resentment. His lips moved, but he hesitated to speak.

Chen Gu felt a pang of guilt and quietly hid behind the President.

Qing Ruyan stepped forward. "Boluo, you've endured much. Rest well."

Chen Gu didn't dare to linger and immediately ran towards the warship wreckage. "I'll go check it out, see if I can find anything."

Liu Shichan followed him, her words laced with sarcasm, "I wouldn't have guessed you were such a tactical genius."

"Heh heh," Chen Gu chuckled dryly.

The warship wreckage was massive. Even after several centuries of weathering, most of its internal structure remained remarkably intact.

Chen Gu and Liu Shichan searched together but found nothing. They only discovered huge claw marks on certain parts of the warship's hull.

"They must be from its battle with super lifeforms."

After a while, Qing Ruyan came over to meet Chen Gu. Seeing the President's somewhat unhappy expression, the individuals beside Liu Shichan couldn't help but worry. We need to figure out how to advise the Young Mistress later, they thought. She's playing with fire. The President is already very displeased; she clearly doesn't want to share her 'vase.'

Chen Gu gave Qing Ruyan a meaningful look, and she found an excuse to lead him away. The Liu Family members immediately surrounded Liu Shichan, bombarding her with earnest, unsolicited advice.

Chen Gu led Qing Ruyan deeper into the warship. The deeper they went, the better preserved the facilities became. Soon, they arrived at a cabin where Chen Gu whispered, "Take a close look."

This cabin looked ordinary, but Qing Ruyan quickly found a decayed scripture in a drawer beside the bed. Its cover was marked with the symbol of the Atomic Holy Church.

Qing Ruyan was startled. Searching further, she found the same symbol drawn on a wall.

Is this... Dilina's quarters? she wondered.

Chen Gu nodded. "Highly likely. If Dilina indeed resided here, it would imply that the cooperation between the Four Hundred Braves and the military during that ancient battle was exceptionally deep. The truth of the matter is probably far more complex than later generations imagine."

Chapter 139: 【VSG-47】 Weapon Station (1)

Up to now, the two had found three traces left by Dilina. After braving numerous dangers, they had finally reaped some rewards.

The pair carefully inspected the other compartments and discovered another, which had been the residence of "Heavy Hammer" Xu Shilong, a legendary sailor from the Four Hundred Warriors.

There were multiple versions of legends concerning Xu Shilong's background and origin.

The more credible one held that he was from the military of the Star State, possibly a member of some secret laboratory. His profession was a "Potential Energy Courier," able to convert various potential energies into impactful force, with each punch unleashing tremendous destructive power.

"So, Dilina and Xu Shilong were the links between the Four Hundred Warriors and the military cooperation," Qing Ruyan analyzed. "But why would the powerful military want to work closely with the Four Hundred Warriors? Even though the Four Hundred Warriors is strong, the military never lacks professionals."

The history of hundreds of years ago was complex and puzzling, and the two could not find any clues.

At this moment, Dora's excited shout suddenly came from outside, "President, President, where are you? Come and see what we've found!"

Qing Ruyan and Chen Gu went outside. Dora came up to meet them, took Qing Ruyan's hand, and started to run, "Quick, come and see!"

On one side of the battleship's wreckage lay a deep pit filled with glass-like substances—the den of the Burning Tyrannosaurus Rex. Peculiarly, the area was piled with all sorts of things that were either weirdly shaped, brightly colored, or glittering.

Most were useless, such as twisted tree roots that had died centuries ago, or rocks embedded with large patches of mica. But there were also some useful items, like intact heavy mechas and large energy generators.

These things were likely left by explorers who had come before. As for what had become of their owners, it went without saying.

However, the rest of the team was gathered on the other side, and Dora pulled Qing Ruyan into the mix, "President, please look at this!"

In the center of their circle was a flattened, semi-spherical metallic head.

Qing Ruyan frowned, "What is this?"

It looks like an ancient heavy mecha too, she surmised.

Leder smiled and said, "For this expedition, we did a lot of work, one aspect of which was collecting various materials from that era."

Qing Ruyan replied with a frown, "Get to the point."

"This is a special-purpose mobile weapons station of the Confederation from that era, with the internal code [VSG-47]. Few people outside knew about it. Its main purpose was—mining super life form remains!"

"Hmm?" Qing Ruyan's interest was piqued. "Its presence here means that super life forms indeed perished back then, and the Confederation mined them for a time?"

Leder nodded excitedly, "Not only that, but this type of mining weapon station was expensive to build, each one a significant asset of the Confederation, never to be discarded lightly."

"Its appearance here suggests that the mining operation might have been interrupted by some accident back then, with the military even lacking the time to retrieve these weapons stations."

"That also means they likely didn't have time to collect all the harvested remains—this [VSG-47] might still contain super life form remains that were mined back then!"

"If we're even luckier, this device might still retain the coordinates of every location it operated in. As long as the data isn't damaged, we could use these coordinates to find the spots where they mined super life form remains!"

Excitement glinted in everyone's eyes, especially Liu Shichan's.

Of course, everyone knew that with the electromagnetic chaos in the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, such data should have been corrupted long ago after several hundred years. But there was still that sliver of hope.

Qing Ruyan immediately said, "Dig this thing out!"

The crew was full of motivation, and it only took them about fifteen minutes to excavate the intact [VSG-47].

This contraption was essentially still a mobile weapon station, so it was massive, much larger than a typical heavy mecha, almost resembling a metal fortress.

Even in their demise, super life forms would exert a profound and lasting impact on the surrounding environment, causing the numbers of various dangerous species to surge. To ensure safety during collection, the Confederation would refit mobile weapon stations into such gathering devices.

The crew lifted the [VSG-47] out. Its towering seven-meter stature and enormously sturdy body gave it an almost "short and stout" appearance from a distance.

On each side of its semi-spherical, flattened head, one side was equipped with three rapid-fire weapons, while the other held an eight-tube missile launcher.

Its entire body was protected by heavy armor, with a row of machine guns positioned on its chest. Four mechanical arms extended outward; three were directly fitted with various weapons, leaving only one arm equipped with a five-in-one collection device...

The outer sides of its two robust mechanical legs also bore various high-power weapons. It truly was armed to the teeth.

Leder rubbed his hands together excitedly, "Come, let me see how to open it. I remember the hatch is right here..."

Due to its age, all security measures had long since failed. Leder found the mechanism and pulled forcefully, but it didn't trigger any of the [VSG-47]'s warning systems. However, the hatch still didn't open.

He examined it for a moment, "It's jammed."

"Hu Ling, come and give me a hand."

Hu Ling roared and transformed into the Hell Titan. Following Leder's direction, he forcefully pried the hatch open.

BOOM... THUD!

The armored hatch crashed down heavily, revealing a staircase inside.

Hu Ling shone a flashlight inside and then prudently ordered, "Old Mo, you go in first."

Old Mo's complexion was still somewhat ashen. The Burning Tyrannosaurus Rex had caused him severe harm. He mustered his strength and transformed into flowing sand, streaming up the steps.

After a while, a series of thudding noises suddenly echoed from within the [VSG-47], growing closer and startling everyone. Dora raised her gun without hesitation.

A dark figure suddenly rushed out from the hatch. Dora shot it accurately, blasting the figure to pieces.

"`HAHAHA...`"

Old Mo's hoarse laugh came from behind the hatch. Only then did everyone see clearly that the dark figure was a mummified corpse in an ancient military uniform, likely the pilot of the [VSG-47].

Old Mo had thrown it out to deliberately scare them.

The group cursed out loud, "`Despicable!`"

Qing Ruyan expressed her dissatisfaction, "`After all, he was a martyr of the Star Nation and should not be desecrated in such a manner!`"

Old Mo chuckled dryly a couple of times and dared not fool around anymore. He stretched out a patch of flowing sand from the hatch, which formed into his own face. "`There's no danger. Come on in.`"

One by one, the team entered. The interior was somewhat spacious, and they quickly gathered around a two-meter-square sealed box.

Anyone could tell that this was the collection box; if there were any findings, they would definitely be inside it.

A seal still hung on the box. Old Mo had refrained from taking any private spoils in advance.

Chapter 140: VSG-47】 Weapon Station (2)

"Open it," Leder said, filled with anticipation. Hu Ling stepped forward boldly, knelt before the seal to examine it, then drew his military saber and violently tore the entire seal off.

He gripped the handle of the case, glanced at the people around him, and then forcefully lifted it.

CLATTER—the case opened, and everyone leaned over to look inside. The case was empty. Everyone was greatly disappointed.

Chen Gu, however, walked around the case, knocked on its bottom with his hand, and asked, "Why is this so thick?"

Without hesitation, Hu Ling violently dismantled the entire case.

The lid and sides were fine, but the steel plate at the bottom was indeed three times thicker in comparison. Dora stepped forward from behind, raised her hand, and a laser knife extended with a CLICK.

With her long ears standing erect, she cut carefully. After a full two hours, she finally separated what appeared to be a skeletal mask from the steel plate!

"I knew it!" everyone exclaimed, thrilled. Remains hidden so covertly had to be extraordinary; they might even be used to create a generator.

"It seems the pilot suddenly lost contact with headquarters but strictly followed his duty, hiding these precious remains in the hope that the military would find them later."

The pilot had also been very clever, directly embedding the remains into the steel, making them part of the steel plate. If someone else had knocked and found no hidden compartment, they probably would have given up.

Leder picked up the remains and smiled. "Now, however, it's our spoil of war."

He was very excited. "Everyone present has contributed. The boss won't let your efforts go unrewarded." He gave a particular nod to Chen Gu. "Although young Chen isn't a professional, he has made significant contributions along the way, especially with the earlier human-grenade tactics and this time, identifying the anomaly with the case."

Chen Gu smiled "sheepishly," while Boluo was full of resentment.

Leder secured the remains. "I'll check the data stored here..." Liu Shichan approached him, and Leder pulled her aside. "Rest assured, if there are skeletal remains of the Guilo species, we will honor our agreement and hand them all over to you. However, as you have seen, this is clearly from an animal-type super-life form..."

Liu Shichan was greatly disappointed, but Leder added, "However, you needn't lose hope. Our data indicates that during that battle, more than one super-life form appeared, and there's a seventy percent chance that one of them was from the Guilo species. We'll continue our search, and we will satisfy our allies."

Liu Shichan sighed. "That's all we can hope for now."

Leder comforted Liu Shichan and then went to search for the data interface inside the [VSG-47]. This "ancient" device was very different from current ones and would take some effort to operate.

Chen Gu, having overheard the conversation between Leder and Liu Shichan, came over quietly and asked, "Does the Liu Family need Guilo species remains? Are there any special requirements?"

If it were just ordinary Guilo species remains, they could simply buy them on the market; the Liu Family wasn't short of money.

Liu Shichan, her mood low, sat hugging her knees and slowly said, "Grandfather is sick. We need the most vital part of a Guilo super-life form—the part that can be used to create a generator... You might not understand what a generator is, but it's the most precious part of all the remains, possibly more precious than supermatter itself!

"Such treasures can't be bought; no one would sell them.

"The Yingudusi Devil's Pit is our only chance.

"This time, of course, I didn't have to come. But since I was little, Grandfather has always been the one who doted on me the most. My parents were busy with business and rarely paid much attention to me. It was Grandfather who would tell me stories to put me to sleep at night...

"In my generation, I'm the only one left in the Liu Family. I couldn't be at ease otherwise, so I had to come myself."

Chen Gu understood. From this perspective, the Liu Family probably had no idea about Leder's and his boss's illegal human body modification business. They were only entangled in this operation because of the super-life remains.

Chen Gu sighed inwardly. I'll help if I can, he resolved.

However, he also knew the chances were slim. With Qing Ruyan involved in this operation, no matter what treasure was found—like the mask-shaped remains they had just discovered—it would ultimately be confiscated by the Bureau of Mystic Security.

A piece of Guilo species remains capable of crafting a generator—the Confederation would not hand such a thing over to the Liu Family, even if an old man's life depended on it.

Leder busied himself for a while, finding a bunch of interfaces, but he couldn't identify the data port.

"Let's camp here for tonight," Leder announced as the sky began to darken. The location of the Burning Tyrannosaur's nest was suitable, with the warship wreckage providing protection against the nighttime electromagnetic storms.

Hu Ling went over and tidied up a heavy Mecha. He picked through some parts, found a suitable energy pack, installed it, and pressed the start button. After a moment, it successfully started up with a BEEP!

Hu Ling chuckled. "This baby is mine now."

Anyway, no one was competing with him for it.

The interior of the heavy Mecha was comfortable. Hu Ling climbed inside, using it as "pajamas," and decided to sleep in it for the night.

The rest of the group entered the [VSG-47], where there was enough space for everyone to rest.

Lao Mo forcefully pulled the hatch open and locked it. Liu Shichan's subordinates distributed some high-nutrition synthetic food. After a simple meal and arranging the night watch shifts, everyone prepared to rest.

Only Leder remained awake, using his handheld computer, trying to extract data from the [VSG-47].

Before entering the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, he had prepared some highly anti-interference equipment, and this computer was one such device.

However, the performance of such equipment was quite average, so its processing speed was slow.

Chen Gu saw Liu Shichan sitting alone on a platform, staring blankly into space. He knew she was worried about her grandfather, and he felt a twinge of distress. Subconsciously, he began to project Chen Qingyu onto Liu Shichan.

Perhaps because the lingering power of the Burning Tyrannosaur was still present, no strange creatures disturbed them that night. At dawn, Leder clapped his hands vigorously, gathering everyone. "We're in luck!"

"Most of the data inside this thing is damaged," he announced. "But after I repaired some of it, I extracted the two coordinates that appeared most frequently."

Boluo, who wasn't good at anything other than making things explode, asked in a daze, "Two coordinates? Are there two super-life forms to be mined separately?"

Chen Gu said quietly, "One site should be for the super-life remains, and the other is likely a camp. The remains would be mined, transported to the camp, and then collectively moved out of the Yingudusi Devil's Pit."

Boluo suddenly felt his intelligence was inferior to that of a high school student—especially that scheming high school student who was always coming up with slimy tactics to outsmart him!

He felt completely out of sorts and suddenly understood why this kid always managed to trick him.

Leder gave a dry laugh, careful not to bruise Boluo's ego. "Of course, both guesses are possible. We'll head for this coordinate today."

He opened the holographic map again. "This coordinate is located between the sixth and eighth designated sites. It's most likely the place where a super-life form fell."

So, you still agree more with Chen Gu's guess—one location for the remains and the other for a camp, Boluo thought silently.