

Full Time 191

Chapter 191: Personal Experiment

By this time, Chen Gu had already thought through the stakes involved and his role in it; he was the most suitable candidate.

Chen Jixian and Mei Lixue didn't trust the gorilla, and the gorilla didn't trust them either. Chen Gu, on the other hand, had become the candidate that both parties could accept.

If it weren't for his near-degeneration into a Mutant during his previous experience at the Moon Ship Hotel, Chen Gu might have impulsively volunteered.

But with that experience behind him, he was acutely aware that "pollution" and "degeneration" were not just abstract terms to throw around; they were real and could happen without one noticing!

Chen Gu knew very well he was not a great man; he too felt fear, concern, worry, and dread...

The room fell silent for a moment before Mei Lixue took a deep breath and said, "Let me do it. Gao Mengjiu, we were classmates, you should..."

But before she could finish, the gorilla harshly interrupted her. "Absolutely not! How dare you ask me to trust you? You are my nightmare!"

Embarrassment washed over Mei Lixue. She had mustered the courage to volunteer, and here was her old classmate, showing no regard for their past connection.

Chen Jixian raised his hand. "Enough. I'll do it myself."

"No!" Chen Gu and Mei Lixue objected in unison.

Mei Lixue quickly said, "You're the branch chief! If something goes wrong, the consequences are unimaginable!"

Chen Jixian replied calmly, "When I make the attempt, you will all monitor me closely. Then, immediately arrange for tests to ensure I don't harbor any latent mutation. This is to prevent significant damage to the Bureau of Mystic Security and Wuzhaoyin City!"

Just as Chen Gu was about to speak, Chen Jixian looked over at him, making rare eye contact. "Do you remember our previous conversation? I will always be a commander, and this—this is a decision I must make!"

Chen Gu opened his mouth but eventually said, "Okay."

The gorilla frowned, seemingly worried. Chen Gu reassured him, "He can be trusted." The gorilla then reluctantly accepted.

Chen Jixian picked up the box on the table and said sternly, "Activate the highest-level security protocol!"

The lights in the room shifted, and the branch's management AI responded in a pleasant voice, "Authorization received from the branch's highest authority. Highest-level security protocol activated!"

From each corner of the ceiling, a honeycomb-shaped Energy Emitter flipped open. The lights throughout the entire building dimmed as non-essential energy consumption was paused.

All available energy was channeled into this room. The four honeycombs CRACKLED as they generated a thick, enclosed energy cage!

Then, from all four walls, narrow-aperture laser guns flipped out, automatically locking onto Chen Jixian.

Each wall bristled with exactly sixty-four laser guns, densely packed, their barrels like the spines of a porcupine.

Chen Jixian took a deep breath. "It's starting. Step back a bit..."

The others retreated, moving outside the energy cage. Once they were out, the energy cage would constrict and lock, preventing anyone from exiting.

Chen Jixian opened the box and was about to retrieve the relic when Chen Gu suddenly rushed back, slamming his hand on the box. SNAP! The lid nearly caught Chen Jixian's hand.

The three people outside were stunned. Chen Jixian frowned at him and said lightly, "Get out!"

Chen Gu cursed, "You damn well can't order me around!"

Among those present, only Man Suling was unaware of the true relationship between Chen Gu and Chen Jixian. When the young she-wolf saw Chen Gu mercilessly scold the senior leader, her eyes suddenly sparkled. So domineering, so mesmerizing!

The gorilla subconsciously sensed trouble. He looked towards the door. "Should we... step outside for a bit?"

Chen Gu waved him off, then fixed his gaze on Chen Jixian, speaking in an undeniable tone, "I'll do it. You get out!"

Chen Jixian had used the weight of his "decision" to convince him, but Chen Gu simply couldn't stand by and watch the other man walk into danger.

Even though their 'father-son' relationship was nominal at best, and their actual emotional bond was incredibly thin, Chen Gu still couldn't do it. He couldn't overcome that internal barrier.

Stand aside and watch his 'son' take the risk?

Examine this relic himself? Despite his fear and apprehension, Chen Gu decided at the last moment to step forward.

Chen Jixian's face was grim. He understood Chen Gu was using his supposed 'fatherly' status to pressure him, especially in front of subordinates. If they were alone, he might have 'caved'—after all, that's what fathers in other families did, and he rather enjoyed the feeling.

But not now. He lifted his gaze, about to reprimand him, when Chen Gu's voice softened. "Go out. I have a way to avoid being contaminated."

Chen Jixian paused, stunned. Something deep inside him seemed to stir. He asked doubtfully, "Really?"

"I... I wouldn't lie to you."

Chen Jixian's eyes reddened slightly. He slowly turned and walked towards the exit of the energy cage. He reached the edge and wanted to turn back, to say something more... But Chen Gu, looking impatient, snapped, "Hurry up and get out!"

Chen Jixian silently walked out. After a moment's thought, he issued an order: "Have Qing Ruyan on standby, ready to provide support at any moment!"

After their last expedition to the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, both Qing Ruyan and Chen Gu had submitted operation reports. Chen Jixian had secretly read them and knew that Chen Gu had nearly mutated, and Qing Ruyan had saved him.

Chen Gu was very pleased with this arrangement. This kid, he thought smugly, is still quite filial.

However, he also understood that attempting to communicate with the Evil God using this relic of the Myriad Forms Heavenly Dragon was extremely dangerous. The slightest mishap, and he would mutate directly, with no time to wait for Qing Ruyan's support.

"No way!" the gorilla strongly objected. "This mess is my fault! I can't drag you into it."

Chen Gu waved him off. "Your opinion means dogshit to me. Objection overruled. Trust your old man; I'll be fine!"

The gorilla, too anxious to care that this bastard was still taking advantage of him even now, said urgently, "It's too dangerous! You're only at the First Energy Level..."

Chen Gu had already placed his hand on the relic.

Chen Gu hadn't lied to his 'adult' son; he did have a small plan.

Just a small one.

When they had reached the earlier stalemate, Chen Gu had already switched through three memories from "The Past of Four Hundred People" in quick succession, trying to find a solution.

He found nothing of note in the memories of Milna Katerina or Griffin Wester. However, when it came to Derek Kun Shen, he did find something.

This Fifth Energy Level Quantum Wizard was himself a very meticulous researcher, always keen to understand the Endless Realm and the strange entities residing within it.

Through numerous experiments and extensive research, he had postulated three possibilities for the "temptation" and "contamination" originating from those entities. First, they could be higher-dimensional organisms employing methods currently incomprehensible to the life forms of this dimension to influence them.

However, this hypothesis also had aspects that were difficult to explain. If they were indeed higher-dimensional beings, their methods of tempting and contaminating the life in this world should not be subject to so many restrictions.

Chapter 192: It's Not Easy Being a Hero

The second possibility was that, similar to Chen Gu's profession, some quantum abilities were used, ones that humans had not yet thoroughly researched.

This hypothesis also had its own flaws. If it were a quantum method, those at the Ninth Power Level, known as "Quantum Wizards," should have perceived such methods and warned future generations. However, that did not happen.

The third possibility was that these entities used a very mysterious force that humans had yet to discover; for instance, people in the ancient times of the Mother Planet did not know of the existence of "gravity."

As awkward as it sounded, this was the research finding of Derek Kun Shen Ken.

According to these findings, Derek Kun Shen Ken had discovered a key point: any entity in the Endless Realm wanting to tempt any being must "locate" the target.

If one were in an unlocatable state, it might be possible to evade the other's capabilities.

It seemed quite logical, but Derek Kun Shen Ken had died before he had the chance to test whether his theory was correct. This was just a conjecture, and with the Endless Realm being so strange, the theory was honestly not very reliable.

Now, Chen Gu could only take a gamble.

The moment his hand touched the box, the energy cage completely locked down, allowing neither entry nor exit. All the laser guns in the room aimed at him!

Outside, everyone's hearts were in their throats.

But inside the energy cage, all was calm. Chen Gu placed his hand on the remains, covertly prepared for various contingencies. After a while, the remains showed no reaction—no change other than the already intense radiation.

Chen Gu slowly took the remains out of the box. As if guided by an unseen force, he first examined the Antimatter Bomb placed at the bottom of the box. It looked ordinary, just a palm-sized black block.

Then, Chen Gu began to examine the remains and said to the people outside, "I'm ready to begin."

He mobilized the power within his body and channeled it into the remains.

However, when channeling the power, Chen Gu used his Radiation Missionary profession, then switched to Quantum Wizard immediately after.

The remains, having absorbed the energy, lit up slightly. A mercury-like substance flowed slowly and viscously over its surface.

It didn't seem to cause any strong reaction...

Chen Gu attentively sensed the process, staying vigilant. If he saw, heard, or detected anything utterly bizarre, he would immediately use his abilities to place himself in a state of Quantum Teleportation—activated but not yet teleporting.

This was a "quantum" state, interpretable as being between "existing" and "not existing" in that location—the very method Derek Kun Shen Ken had conceived for becoming unlocatable by entities of the Endless Realm.

This was the only method Chen Gu could think of.

He looked at the perfectly square energy cage: a honeycomb device in each of the four ceiling corners and sixty-four laser guns neatly arranged on the walls. Very satisfying, he thought, entirely in line with Derek Kun Shen Ken's aesthetics.

But then, he saw the four people outside the energy cage. You people! Can't you stand apart? Each of you in one direction, and you should stand man opposite man, woman opposite woman. Symmetry is beauty!

The way they're standing now... it's making me uncomfortable.

Chen Gu complained internally. High-Power Level professionals surely all have their quirks!

He forcefully suppressed the aesthetic eccentricity arising from the Quantum Wizard memories, focusing his attention on himself and the remains.

However, the "menace" he had been anticipating never appeared. Instead, the mercury-like light grew more abundant, rippling like water waves. It completely enveloped the remains and then slowly spread up Chen Gu's arm, covering half of his body.

Chen Jixian immediately said, "Don't be afraid. This is a normal reaction."

With his more extensive experience as a professional, he knew the current situation was akin to what happened inside the Generator.

Chen Gu had a similar feeling, much like the terrible pain he'd experienced when he was appointed at the Zhaojieze City branch.

Only this time, without the supplement of super-material, his body was likely incapable of repairing itself as it had before.

But this mercury-like light didn't possess the strong "transformative" power of the Generator.

Nevertheless, Chen Gu couldn't help but worry. If this light completely engulfs my body, wouldn't it be like being inside the Generator?

What would the final outcome be? Without the Generator, I certainly can't advance. Does that mean only self-destruction awaits?!

Chen Gu realized he had "miscalculated." Before volunteering to test these remains, everyone had worried about confronting the Evil God directly. It never crossed their minds that the remains themselves could be so dangerous. Perhaps I won't even make it to facing the Evil God, he thought. I might be finished already.

Indeed, I'm not cut out to be a hero.

A bitter thought crossed Chen Gu's mind.

The next instant, the mercury-like light that had enveloped half his body suddenly erupted, completely engulfing him.

"Chen Gu!" Gorilla became anxious, rushing to the side of the energy cage, only to be blasted away by a beam of energy.

Chen Jixian took a deep breath and gently restrained Gorilla, who was about to charge again. "Now, all we can do is trust him!"

Chen Gu found himself standing in a vast expanse of the Star Sea. Ahead, in the immense darkness, he saw something light up.

An Evil God?! Chen Gu immediately became vigilant, ready to activate Quantum Teleportation at any moment.

The light drew nearer and multiplied, becoming a cluster of butterfly-like specks, flying closer. But Chen Gu soon realized it wasn't the light approaching him; rather, he was being pulled by some mysterious force, continuously drawing closer to it.

Soon he saw it clearly: a colossal super-life form. It had the head of a mythical dragon from the legends of the Mother Planet's ancient era, though it was somewhat more monstrous.

Its body bore countless tails, like tendrils, constantly writhing and coiling around it, preventing Chen Gu from discerning its true form.

Its surface was patterned in black and white, interspersed with those specks of light. When still, and seen from a distance, it resembled a nebula.

The mysterious force kept pulling him steadily towards the super-life form, and Chen Gu watched, helpless, as he was about to collide with it.

Primal terror surged within him. He desperately tried to resist, but his efforts were futile; he continued to approach the super-life form at a constant speed.

Chapter 193: Myriad Forms Heavenly Dragon Source Structure

Suddenly, one of the super-life form's tails swung through the air toward Chen Gu. He instinctively raised his arm to block it, only to find that something had passed through his body without causing any harm.

He lowered his arm; the tail had already twisted behind him and continued flying elsewhere.

"Myriad Forms Heavenly Dragon," Chen Gu murmured to himself.

Then, the next moment, he was pulled completely into the body of the super-life form.

In an instant, the super-life form's incredibly complex structure flashed before his eyes like a fast-forwarded movie. His mind was rapidly flooded with a terrifyingly vast amount of knowledge, all pertaining to the super-life form.

Chen Gu was in excruciating pain, feeling as if his entire brain was about to explode.

But at this moment, he was in a state of memory possession by Derek Kun Shen Ken, the mad scientist, who was ecstatic about this "knowledge"!

The simultaneous occurrence of two such extreme states in Chen Gu truly made him experience what it meant to be 'torn between rapture and torment'!

In the future... I must never again try to play the hero!

My grown son is the real hero! These sorts of things... from now on, I must absolutely let him take the lead...

Chen Gu remained in this state, quickly becoming dazed and passively absorbing the knowledge.

...

Outside the energy cage, Man Suling's front paws were pressed to the ground, her entire body tensed as she stared at Chen Gu with extreme nervousness.

The mercury-like light grew thicker and larger.

The gorilla nearly ground his teeth to dust, sinking into deep self-blame. If it weren't for him, his buddy wouldn't have fallen into such a dangerous situation.

He muttered curses, "You stupid clown, who asked you to show off like this? You, you... you better not let anything happen to you, otherwise I'll feel guilty for the rest of my life..."

Mei Lixue stood at the very back of the group, her heart exceedingly complex, struggling to articulate her feelings.

Decades had passed since her student days, and the resentment she held had mostly dissipated.

Whether it was deliberately extorting Chen Gu or threatening to make things difficult for him, it was more like an "obsession." She had already taken her revenge on the other three; of course, she couldn't let Chen Gu go. Otherwise, her revenge wouldn't be "perfect," and she would be failing her younger self!

Those merit points... she always stubbornly believed they were rightfully hers, that Chen Gu owed her compensation!

Even if she genuinely wanted to make things difficult for him, it couldn't be considered petty—it was merely a case of "evil begets evil."

But at this moment, she wavered. Chen Gu was no longer the reckless bully, unaware of consequences, from all those years ago, and she was no longer that helpless, pitifully overweight girl.

She looked at Chen Gu inside the energy cage, understanding that certain qualities within him were now shining through, completely washing away his past blemishes.

Mei Lixue thought with a soft sigh in her heart, Perhaps it's time to let go... She also felt somewhat relieved that although she had wanted to make things difficult for him, her strong professional ethics had restrained her, preventing her from ever taking real action.

Those merit points... I'll find a chance to compensate him for them.

But if something really happened to Chen Gu this time... she would never have the chance to return them.

She silently pleaded in her heart, You absolutely must not let anything happen to you. I don't want to owe you, you little scoundrel, for the rest of my life.

Chen Jixian's eyes, unbeknownst to anyone, had been wide open for some time. His expression was stern, his face as if carved from marble, burying all emotion beneath a cold exterior.

Only, the power of the Professional within his body surged ceaselessly, like a tsunami.

"Look!" Man Suling suddenly shouted. Everyone noticed that the mercury-like glow was shrinking.

This glow had originally flowed from the remains. Thus, Chen Gu currently appeared as a large swath of mercury light, with a smaller concentration of light in front of his arms—within that light were the remains of the Myriad Forms Heavenly Dragon.

And now, that smaller patch of silver light in front of his arms was slowly beginning to merge with the light enveloping Chen Gu's body.

Before long, the mercury glow contracted until it only outlined Chen Gu's form.

Mei Lixue couldn't believe her eyes. "Did those remains... merge with Chen Gu?!"

Chen Jixian and Mei Lixue knew that Chen Gu had once merged with a piece of generator remains at the Zhaojieze City branch office—he had a history of this!

At the end of the last mission in the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, those remains had been forcibly cut out of Chen Gu's body by Qing Ruyan, nearly killing him.

This time... could it be that he had merged with another piece?

But these remains were no ordinary artifact; they could potentially communicate directly with the Evil God!

This is troubling! Mei Lixue thought grimly.

The mercury-like glow began to recede, bit by bit merging into Chen Gu's body. Before the four onlookers' astonished eyes, Chen Gu reappeared.

Chen Gu felt somewhat dazed, his mind crammed with vast knowledge. He felt as if his "consciousness" was about to be squeezed out of his own mind by all this information.

With the slightest movement, two streams of blood trickled from his nostrils.

Unable to contain herself, Man Suling asked, "Chen Gu, how are you feeling?"

Chen Gu gave no response; in fact, in his current state, he was completely unable to register any external information.

Chen Gu couldn't even figure out what had happened, only that the memories of Derek Kun Shen Ken grew more and more excited.

Even the discomfort brought on by the not-so-"aesthetically pleasing" positions of the four people outside seemed to be reduced to its absolute minimum.

Chen Gu's neck felt beyond his control, his head wobbling unsteadily. He slowly sat down, needing a moment to recover.

Outside the energy cage, Chen Jixian gritted his teeth and ordered, "Scan Chen Gu for any signs of anomalies!"

The branch's management AI accepted the command and began scanning Chen Gu.

This scan was merely a preliminary check. If an anomaly were well concealed, it could still evade such an examination. To be absolutely certain, a more thorough inspection would be necessary.

Three minutes later, the AI's voice sounded again, "Scan complete. Preliminary determination shows no anomalies."

Chen Jixian silently let out a sigh of relief. Mei Lixue said, "He's currently... let's just wait a while."

Chen Gu felt like someone who had overeaten. After an indeterminate amount of time, he finally began to recover. He stood up, looked around, and suddenly realized a problem: "Where are the remains?"

Outside the energy cage, the four people stared at him speechlessly. Man Suling finally chattered, "You absorbed them! What exactly is going on? Could there be any hidden dangers? Can those remains actually communicate directly with the Evil God?"

Absorbed them! Chen Gu himself immediately thought of the remains from the Zhaojieze City branch office. He was especially puzzled. The last time, headquarters had sent a large team of medical experts to study him; it was said they almost cut him open on the spot to extract the remains.

Historically, no Professional had ever absorbed generator remains; everyone absorbed supermatter.

What on earth is happening to me?!

He increasingly felt that there was something wrong with the body the Original Entity had left him...

Chapter 194: Digging a Pit at Death's Door

Regarding Man Suling's last question, Chen Gu was also somewhat puzzled: Evil God?

He recalled carefully. Although he had been in a dazed state throughout the latter half of the process, he was certain that, let alone an Evil God, no being from the Endless Realm had appeared at all.

Chen Gu shook his head. "It shouldn't be possible; there were no signs of contamination or temptation."

Man Suling trusted him greatly and immediately let out a cheer.

Chen Jixian's eyelids drooped again. After a moment of silence, he said, "We can't let you out yet. We still need to perform a thorough check on you."

Chen Gu understood. "I get it." Then he reached out his hand. "But, could I get something to eat first? I'm so hungry."

He felt even hungrier than when he had been severely depleted of energy from the previous intense battles.

"No problem."

Chen Jixian had Gao Mengjiu and Man Suling stay behind with Chen Gu while he and Mei Lixue left first.

Upon exiting, Chen Jixian ordered, "Prepare a report. Explain this matter to Headquarters."

"Yes!" Without needing further directions from Chen Jixian, Mei Lixue would prepare a flawless report. What Headquarters would see was that the Wuzhaoyin City branch had dispatched two special operations teams—one overt and one covert—into the Underground World. The covert team ultimately succeeded in retrieving the remains.

However, an accident occurred during the handling of the remains: Chen Gu inadvertently came into contact with them and bizarrely absorbed them.

The four people on site, Chen Jixian among them, exhausted all their efforts to stop the absorption. Chen Gu also resisted with all his might, but in the end, they were powerless to prevent it.

In this operation, they had wiped out a gang, killed two Professionals from the "Wuyue Association," and slain an Angel Envoy from the True Knowledge Sin, achieving a significant victory.

Although the remains were absorbed, it was an accident, not a deliberate mistake; at the very least, it could be considered a balance of merits and demerits.

As for beings from the Underground World like Juglans and the Night Demon King, they didn't even bother to count them as part of their victory; such was the current state of the Underground World.

As to why the covert team didn't use members from the Special Operations Team, but instead paired Gao Mengjiu and Man Suling with Chen Gu, Mei Lixue could provide ample reasons. First, of course, was for misdirection; the special agents might be under surveillance, so most of them were resting. Gao Mengjiu and Man Suling were new recruits and needed an experienced team member to guide them and prevent any "accidents." Therefore, this pairing was the optimal choice after careful consideration.

The second reason was that the covert team needed Man Suling's "Mountain Wolf Man" abilities to track the target, an advantage other special agents did not possess.

Mei Lixue, having navigated the Bureau of Mystic Security for decades, was intimately familiar with all sorts of official and unofficial protocols and knew exactly how to make a report flawless.

For instance, regarding Gao Mengjiu and Man Suling's defection, some details could be mentioned, while others needed to be kept secret.

Once the report was complete, it would still need to be discussed in detail with Chen Gu and the other two. The matter of the remains was of great importance, and Headquarters wouldn't be satisfied with just a report—they would definitely send someone to investigate.

In short, it was about getting their stories straight ahead of time.

Not long after Chen Jixian and Mei Lixue had left, a large amount of nutritious food was sent down. Chen Gu sat cross-legged inside the energy cage and began to eat heartily.

Man Suling watched from outside, her mouth watering, but she could only repeatedly suppress her instincts, constantly reminding herself, I can't snatch the Prince's food—that would be very unladylike...

Gao Mengjiu noticed that Chen Gu seemed to be alright and let out a long sigh of relief. "If anything had really happened to you, I would live in guilt for the rest of my life."

Chen Gu was indifferent. "Guilty my ass. Why think so much? It was my own choice. If I had died, it would only be because I was being foolish, trying to play the hero. You just live your life well, be her Music Godfather. My Qing Yu still needs your help for her debut."

Speaking of this, Gao Mengjiu perked up. "I've just written two songs recently. One was intended for Man Suling from the start. For the other... a few female singers' agents have contacted me. The price they offered was good, but I don't like those people. I might as well give it to our granddaughter—that makes three or four songs for her. We might as well compile an album and go big..."

Chen Gu knew he was trying to "compensate" him. Gao Mengjiu's songs were of varying quality, and this particular one, which several female singers were bidding for, must be a hit.

Chen Gu wouldn't stand on ceremony with his best friend; that would only create awkwardness.

"Sure," Chen Gu quickly agreed. "I don't know anything about these things anyway, so I'll leave it all to you."

Gascolin had been sitting quietly in his office for nearly two hours.

He, Mei Lixue, and Marcel were all Chiefs, with offices on the second floor of the branch's main hall. Through the glass windows, he could see the entire hall.

Suddenly, Bureau Chief Chen Jixian and Mei Lixue returned to the main hall from the basement via the elevator, then hurriedly transferred to the elevator leading to the top floor, where the Bureau Chief's office was located.

A trace of contempt and mockery flickered across Gascolin's face, growing more intense by the moment. He couldn't help but mutter to himself, "Incompetent fools..."

Two hours ago, a series of intermittent images had suddenly appeared before him.

In the images, the three individuals he had been covertly monitoring—Gao Mengjiu, Man Suling, and Chen Gu—were either falling into traps, getting injured and sent flying, or engaged in battle.

Chen Gu was the one fighting, but the intermittent images startled Gascolin, for the combat skills Chen Gu employed belonged to a "Quantum Wizard"!

Yet everyone in the branch knew that Chen Gu was a "Radiation Missionary"!

Whether Chen Gu was hiding the truth or possessed a "Quantum Wizard" artifact, it's all highly suspicious! How could a junior special agent like him possess such a powerful artifact?

He knew as soon as he saw these images that Juglans, the operative he had dispatched, was already dead. In his final moments, Juglans had pushed his limits, using his "Telecommunications Operator" ability to send some of the images he saw directly to Gascolin's retina.

However, due to the great distance, the images were somewhat blurry and fragmented.

Even so, it was enough. Juglans had achieved his goal: to alert Gascolin to the suspicious points about Chen Gu!

To be frank, for someone like Juglans, his death was insignificant to Gascolin; it merely meant one less card in his hand for the future.

But Gascolin was a veteran agent and couldn't fully trust even Juglans.

That guy was a "Telecommunications Operator," after all. Could those transmitted images be a deception?

A dying man's words are said to be true, but Juglans came from the Underground World—a place inhabited by demons, not men.

Gascolin conducted his own analysis and concluded that even with some knowledge of Chen Gu's "little secrets," he could do nothing for now but continue to monitor him covertly.

Because if such matters were raised, no one would believe them...

Besides, both the Branch Chief and Mei Lixue were protecting that kid.

"But..." He chuckled, a sinister and triumphant sound. "You don't know that, in my eyes, you're already riddled with flaws!"

He immediately approved a special budget for purchasing equipment and hiring more experienced personnel to intensify the surveillance on these three individuals.

Chapter 195 Someone Got a Bargain

Suddenly, the office hall outside erupted with activity. The doors burst open, and a group led by Marcel swiftly entered, followed by two other directors and a large contingent of special agents.

Every one of them wore a smile; clearly, the operation had been a resounding success.

...

Marcus and the other two had received the retreat signal just as Chen Gu and his team entered the building's deepest chamber.

However, they found themselves mired in a fierce battle. Initially, it was only the Mad King's men relentlessly pursuing them. Then, the Night King's forces joined the fray, escalating it into a three-way melee. Soon after, the underworld erupted in gunfire, transforming into a terrifying battlefield of slaughter.

All three were wounded and returned to the branch office in a wretched state, only to receive two pieces of news that left them even more dejected:

The first was that the "shadow team" led by Chen Gu, under the cover provided by their more conspicuous "overt team," had successfully completed the mission and secured the box.

Well, this was the plan laid out by the Branch Chief and Director Mei. The higher-ups had their reasons. Since the mission was a success anyway, Marcus and his team, despite their annoyance, could only

grumble to Mei Lixue. They didn't really harbor any ill will towards Chen Gu. After all, what could he have done? He was simply following orders.

The second piece of news was that while they were engaged in the "Gods' Poison" operation, the branch office had concentrated its forces. Three departments launched simultaneous operations, capturing a Secretary-General from the city government.

This was a big fish!

Recently, both the police force and the branch office had experienced several information leaks. Examples included Zhao Zhenhuai and Chen Jixian being simultaneously targeted for assassination by Mutants, and the ambush by Mutants during the attempt to capture Zhou Shenyu, the District Chief of the 64th police district.

A traitor had emerged within the city government's upper echelons, but previous leads had all gone cold. Nevertheless, the Bureau of Mystic Security had never given up.

This time, after a thorough investigation, the Secretary-General and his cronies were caught in one fell swoop!

Marcus immediately understood this was the true focus of the Bureau's operations. Their "Gods' Poison" mission, which had seemed so crucial, was merely a smokescreen deployed by the Bureau to lull the traitorous Secretary-General into a false sense of security.

This irritated Marcus to no end.

He had thought himself the lead character, only to discover after the play was over that he was just an insignificant extra!

He wanted to visit Chen Gu but was informed that his own team members were still in quarantine, awaiting confirmation that they hadn't been contaminated. Marcus stormed home in a huff.

This time, even the normally gentle Melincha was displeased. She watched as agents from the other three departments jovially discussed and boasted about their high-profile arrests. Frustrated, she put on her headphones, slung her large backpack over her shoulder, and left the building.

Her team had risked life and limb in the "Gods' Poison" operation and the underworld, yet these people had merely strolled through the city government offices and were now lauded for greater achievements.

Silver Eagle, who initially had reservations about the existence of the shadow team, felt even more aggrieved upon learning about the city government operation. What shadow team? What Chen Gu? They were insignificant! A classic case of internal conflict. The other three teams were the real enemy—despicable thieves, stealing the credit! How could such a high-profile operation, one ripe with glory and merit, exclude me, Silver Eagle, a paragon of looks and skill? Unforgivable!

...

Mei Lixue submitted her report to headquarters and immediately received an order: Qing Ruyan was to personally take over Chen Gu's monitoring.

The Bureau of Mystic Security, with its extensive experience combating the Endless Realm, possessed a comprehensive inspection process covering both physical and psychological aspects, ensuring no potential risks remained.

After Chen Gu completed the most stringent protocols, Qing Ruyan secretly breathed a sigh of relief. He was clear.

She was relieved for Chen Gu, and also for herself: there was no need for "her" to personally intervene and resolve any psychological issues for him. She wasn't a Brain Domain Hacker. Her sister was on a mission again, and it would be impossible for her to abandon it and return. She had almost blown her cover.

Chen Gu, on the other hand, had been quite comfortable these past few days. He only had to comply with some medical checks, his routine closely resembling an "eat-sleep, sleep-eat" lifestyle.

Qing Ruyan donned a pair of black-framed glasses, lending an intellectual charm to her beauty. As she reviewed Chen Gu's report, she inadvertently glanced at Chen Gu himself. Suddenly, that sensation she had experienced during their first encounter in Zhaojieze City returned.

There's always something inside his body that can unconsciously trigger my 'infatuation' trait! Could it be because of the remains? Qing Ruyan easily arrived at this conclusion. The first time we met, Chen Gu had just integrated the remains from the Zhaojieze City branch. I only managed not to embarrass myself thanks to sedatives. During our second meeting, the piece of remains within Chen Gu's body had been excised by my sister. Although I found this young man quite handsome, I didn't have that same befuddled state of mind anymore. And this time, he has integrated another piece of remains. That damned feeling is back! How bizarre! she thought.

Then, affecting a serious expression—as if the thought 'I wonder what we should name the baby?' had never crossed her mind—she said to Chen Gu, "Report to the Bureau anytime these next few days. Take a leave of absence for now; don't attend classes to avoid contact with too many people. The medical experts from headquarters will arrive tomorrow..."

"Again?" Chen Gu wailed, then waved his hand in resignation. "Forget it. I'm used to it."

He walked out, complaining as he went, "What does it have to do with me? I didn't want to absorb all those messy things; they just barged in on their own..."

Chen Gu returned to the Group Five office, which was now deserted.

During the days he was undergoing tests, the rewards for the major operation conducted by the other three divisions had already been distributed. Every special agent who participated received at least five hundred merit points!

The top earner received two thousand!

This drove the cash-strapped Captain Marcus into a severe fit of jealousy, and he hadn't shown up for work in days.

What had those guys even done? The city government operation was meticulously planned, and they were all equipped with specialized gear to restrain Mutants. A surprise raid, they deploy their gear—BAM! BAM!—and the lurking Mutants were subdued. They faced no real resistance and just raked in merit points like that?! Life is so unfair!

Chen Gu considered it. Maybe I should take a break too; otherwise, I'll seem too out of sync with everyone else.

He claimed his personal belongings, which had been held for safekeeping by the branch.

Among these were the "Silent Tuning Fork," "The Roar of Mokosaro," and the demonic spear "Monster Moon."

Neither Gorilla nor Man Suling had reported these three spoils of war, but it was obvious to anyone that they were extraordinary items.

Mei Lixue secretly inspected them, confirmed they posed no threat of contamination or corruption, and then feigned ignorance.

Everyone believed it was the compensation Chen Gu rightfully deserved.

Chapter 196 Special Pardon Order

Chen Gu got into his car and soon returned home.

He wanted to figure out exactly what was going on with the remnants inside his body, but like the last remnants, they only subtly changed his body without any other noticeable effects.

However, Chen Gu quickly discovered the benefits it brought him: his physical constitution had recovered, and he could now smoothly advance to the Second Energy Level!

Yet Chen Gu couldn't quite feel happy about it—being able to communicate directly with the Evil God! He always felt that this was a hidden danger. Even though he had personally verified that this thing didn't seem to have any connection with the Endless Realm, if the Evil God were so easy to deal with, it wouldn't be an Evil God!

"Sigh..."

He let out a long sigh. It felt as though he had gained a lot from this action, but in reality, it could very well lead him into an abyss from which there was no return!

Unable to figure out the remnants, Chen Gu could only set them aside for the time being and continue checking his spoils of war.

The [Silent Tuning Fork] was a prop. Perhaps calling a weapon of this level a prop wasn't quite right, since it was far from reaching the level of having a "number," but professionals habitually referred to such things as "props."

This item was indeed a level stronger than his previous [Sky Wings] and [Blazing Banner], and very suitable for stealth attacks, which Great Actor Chen loved.

Why should we engage head-on in a tough fight? That is what a wise person would avoid.

We advocate for winning through wits!

What is winning through wits? Of course, it means biding one's time and then sneaking in a silent stab!

This item came with a limitation: it required a professional's energy to activate, and the consumption was quite large. Chen Gu estimated that an ordinary First Energy Level professional could use it five consecutive times before running out of energy.

As for himself, he could use it seven or eight times.

This item was very effective against lower-Energy Level professionals. An ordinary First Energy Level professional, if suddenly attacked by the [Silent Tuning Fork], would almost certainly stiffen on the spot, losing most of their ability to resist.

But at the Second Energy Level, resistance would increase significantly, and it could only create an effect of "catching them off guard."

Against a Third Energy Level individual, it was basically useless.

The second spoil of war, [Morcasar's Roar], pained Chen Gu greatly. The item was incredibly useful, acting on its own to protect its owner, but it had already run out of energy and couldn't be used even once!

Chen Gu scratched his head and studied it for a long time. He roughly understood: this thing couldn't be simply recharged. It likely needed extra-dimensional material to be used again!

"Extra-dimensional material is as expensive as hell!" Chen Gu complained. This thing... it's literally spending money to buy my life.

Last was the demonic spear [Demon Moon], a treasure Chen Gu had been drooling over since it was in the hands of the Night Demon King. Now, Great Actor Chen gripped it tightly. The feeling... was simply the villainous pleasure of a character drooling and saying, "My dear, you have finally fallen into my hands!"

With this, below the Third Energy Level, I, the Great Actor, can strut about!

I'm not targeting anyone specifically. I'm saying everyone present is trash!

He examined it carefully, ensuring that the [Demon Moon] was intact. It looked quite ancient, however, and he didn't know how much longer it would last.

Underneath the grip was a charging port.

The demonic spear [Demon Moon] could restrain professionals but required a large amount of energy. Fully charged, it could fire three shots.

There were two shots left.

For Chen Gu, this wasn't a problem. It was more of a limitation for the Night Demon King, since the underworld was starved for energy—even electricity was stolen—and they never knew how long it would take to fully charge.

Chen Gu caressed the spear, contemplating his current equipment:

One Destructive Master Hand.

The [Silent Tuning Fork].

[Morcasar's Roar].

The demonic spear [Demon Moon].

And what was that other thing... Ah yes, the relic he bought from that swindler "Steam Locomotive"!

Thinking of the relic, Chen Gu's fury shot through the roof. He immediately took out the Secret Wand to furiously rant at "Steam Locomotive."

"Come out!"

"Is it that I, the President, can't lift a sword anymore, or has your little train gone off the rails? You dare deceive even me?"

"Return it! Return it! Return it!"

"Do you want me, the President, to come find you personally to discuss this matter?"

"Steam Locomotive," who used to be an exemplary model in the freelance merchandising world with instant message replies, was now playing dead, offering no response for a long time.

"Heh," Chen Gu scoffed coldly. Is he banking on me not being able to find him?

Chen Gu wasted no more words. He had made up his mind.

He shut down the Secret Wand, opened the gaming pod, and entered "Endless Realm." He would handle all the backlogged matters that night.

In the game, both "Adorning War Make-up before a Mirror" and Zhao Zhenhuai had sent messages.

Zhao Zhenhuai made his routine report and attached a list of problems that the researchers couldn't solve.

The two tactical studies had progressed quite deeply by now. Even with Griffin Wester's memories, Chen Gu could not provide answers at a glance as he used to.

Those researchers were, after all, the tactical geniuses of the Confederation.

Griffin Wester had been able to guide them easily before, not only because of his own extremely high capabilities but also because he had the advantage of "being first."

After studying for several hours, Chen Gu solved most of the difficult problems and provided research directions for the remaining few. He sent them back to Zhao Zhenhuai for the researchers to continue delving into.

Zhao Zhenhuai had been very "honest" lately. This wasn't the kind of honesty that comes from complete submission; rather, he felt he was "biding his time" and "enduring humiliation for a greater cause"—securing the position of vice-director first, then blowing his own "counteroffensive trumpet" when the time came!

Zhao Zhenhuai, the older drifter from the capital, had recently been comforting himself with daydreams about the happy life he would lead after turning the tables and trampling the "Idol Actor" beneath his feet.

After handling these matters, Chen Gu saw another message from "Adorning War Make-up before a Mirror." Upon opening it, however, he was somewhat surprised. It was a very formal and lengthy invitation.

After the research facility was upgraded to an institute, the Central Operations Room wanted him, the director, to let go of his concerns, have an honest talk with everyone, try to reach a consensus, and step from behind the scenes to the foreground.

Bai Xianya, with Bai Yunpeng's authorization, offered extremely generous conditions, stating that the "Idol Actor" could make any demands he wished.

Moreover, Bai Yunpeng had even obtained a "special pardon" from the military, which would absolve the "Idol Actor" no matter what trouble he was in.

This special pardon was a unique system within the Confederation. The military could bypass the Supreme Court and directly grant amnesty to anyone.

Of course, there were many restrictions, such as it had to be wartime, and there needed to be sufficiently compelling reasons.

Throughout the Confederation's history, the military had been very restrained, rarely invoking this special privilege.

Chapter 197 Boluo's Law

Chen Gu felt somewhat tempted. He initially hadn't wanted to reveal himself, worried his cover would be blown. A high school student suddenly turning into a "tactical master" would inevitably arouse suspicion from certain people. Moreover, given the "complicated" experiences of his original body, it would be difficult to avoid issues.

However, now the military had shown sufficient sincerity. The real reason Chen Gu began to seriously consider the offer was... his older son's dream of becoming a general.

Chen Gu only knew that Chen Jixian wanted to be a general from what his grandson, Chen Zili, had told him. He was merely "aware" of this dream and, subjectively, didn't place much importance on it. After all, if you're in the military, you can't exactly say to others, "I don't want to be a general," right?

When Chen Jixian was forced to retire, Chen Gu had worked behind the scenes to have him become the head of the Wuzhaoyin City Police Department and the director of the local Bureau of Mystic Security branch. In his view, such an outcome should have been very good, and Chen Jixian should have been quite satisfied.

But during this mission, Chen Jixian had sincerely talked to him about his ambition to become a general. He realized that his older son's dream wasn't just talk. If he were to further his relationship with the Central Operations Room, would there be a chance to help his older son achieve this dream?

But how can I explain to the Central Operations Room that a high school student, sentenced to 'Soul Imprisonment' for forty years, suddenly became a tactical master after getting out? Chen Gu sighed ruefully and decided to send a message back to "Mirror-Comb Warrior":

"Let me give it some serious thought."

It was already late at night, but "Mirror-Comb Warrior" quickly sent back a message: "Please believe that no matter your identity, we can accept it and will help you establish a clean, normal identity."

Chen Gu was moved. As a representative of the military, "Mirror-Comb Warrior" spoke so straightforwardly, indeed reflecting their sincerity.

Chen Gu hesitated, then, out of habit, sent a teasing message: "Staying up so late is bad for your skin."

"Mirror-Comb Warrior" did not reply.

Chen Gu didn't mind and logged off as well.

The next day, Chen Gu didn't go to school but headed straight for the branch office.

Marcus and the others had been somewhat lackadaisical at work lately, envious of others' merit points. Little Demon Girl had even stopped coming in for her daily check-ins. Since Marcus was the team leader, he had to make an appearance every day to clock in, then he would go home to spend time with his kids.

But today, Chen Gu stopped him. "Team Leader, shouldn't we get a handle on the wild Professionals within our jurisdiction? At the very least, we should have their real identities and addresses. If anything happens, we'll know who the prime suspects are."

Marcus was indifferent. "Do you know how difficult it is to hide in this era? There's something called big data. As long as we want, by inputting some search criteria, those wild Professionals can quickly be sorted out." He added, "To be precise, we filter out a range and then secretly monitor them for a while to determine who the real wild Professionals are."

Chen Gu understood. Indeed, because it wasn't easy to hide, wild Professionals preferred to flee to the relatively friendly Confederation and Freedom Alliance. It was also because of these "relatively friendly" policies that the Bureau of Mystic Security didn't proactively use big data to screen these Professionals, though this didn't mean they couldn't.

Marcus had barely finished speaking when he suddenly received a phone call. A babyish voice came through, calling out, "Daddy!" The team leader's listless face immediately brimmed with a smile. "Daddy will be right back! Daddy has a gift for our little princess! Oh, and for our little prince? He gets one too, yes he does!"

Then, without so much as glancing at Chen Gu, he waved his hand and left.

Chen Gu slyly called out from behind, "Boss, I'll take care of it myself then."

Marcus waved his hand again.

Chen Gu decided he had received the team leader's "authorization."

He thought about it. Among the entire team, Joseph was probably the only one he could order around. But two people didn't seem very reliable. Gorilla and Man Suling? Better not count on those two; they were too busy. I could call Dora and Boluo.

Soon, the three rookies were all present. Chen Gu explained what he wanted to do. To his surprise, Dora was the first to respond enthusiastically, "Let's get 'em!"

Big Rabbit struck a pose as if holding a grudge, figuratively gnashing her teeth. Chen Gu probed, "You've been scammed too?"

"Victims of swindlers are everywhere!"

That made things easy. With his good looks, Chen Gu effortlessly obtained "permission" from the young women in the administrative department to use the branch's big data and AI. Then, combining his hacking skills with Big Rabbit's high intelligence, the two quickly began the screening process.

However, the sheer volume of data required several hours of analysis, so Chen Gu first went to the training ground to earn his skill points for the day.

By the afternoon, when he emerged exhausted from the training ground, the analysis results were ready. There were four top suspects: two in Wuzhaoyin City, one in Wangxingjiao City, and another in Wanfulu City, a different city on Empire River Star.

Having used up all his skill points for the day, Chen Gu said, "Let's study the files on these four individuals tonight, formulate a plan, and then go find them tomorrow."

That evening, Chen Gu, being a rich second-generation kid, treated everyone to a lavish dinner, since they were helping him with a personal matter.

Big Rabbit was clearly an easily contented girl; she ate with great satisfaction throughout the entire meal.

Joseph had immense respect for Brother Chen and was happy to help. To him, whether he ate or not, or what he ate, didn't matter.

Boluo, however, who wasn't the sharpest, grumbled throughout dinner, being picky with his food. Yet, in the end, he ate more than anyone else...

The night passed uneventfully. The next day, Chen Gu gathered his "fault-finding" crew and headed straight for their targets.

Obviously, they'd start with the two targets in Wuzhaoyin City. On the ride over, Joseph casually asked, "Which of these four do you think is 'Steam Locomotive'?"

Chen Gu didn't respond. Dora, however, eagerly began to guess, her reasoning sounding quite plausible. But her final analysis was that all four were suspicious; she had succeeded only in confusing herself.

Boluo suddenly blurted out in a carefree manner, "If you ask me, there's no need to guess. No matter what order we set, it's bound to be the very last person we find who is the target." He continued, "I'm

telling you, it's a famous scientific principle. If we have four targets and split into four groups to search, then it's guaranteed to be the furthest one. It's a profound scientific rationale, you all might not understand..."

Chen Gu thought: Interesting!

He couldn't help but glance at Boluo. How can you be so confidently incorrect?

Chapter 198 The True Master

Soon they found their first target: a middle-aged elementary school teacher with a balding crown. Chen Gu's plan of action was simple and effective, involving him personally launching a surprise attack from the shadows.

If the man was a Professional, he would certainly fight back and reveal himself. If he was just an ordinary person, he wouldn't even realize he had been attacked, and Chen Gu would pull back at the last moment.

Facing the elementary school teacher, Chen Gu stealthily emerged from his hiding place and sharply aimed a finger-strike towards the back of the man's head.

The teacher was walking forward, still contemplating how to explain several difficult problems more clearly, when he suddenly felt a breeze from behind.

He touched the back of his head and felt an instant sense of loss akin to mourning—a handful of hair was in his hand!

Upon further examination, the entire back of his scalp was now smooth and bare...

After his crown had begun to bald, he had become even more protective of the remaining ring of hair. He tried all sorts of methods, hoping to achieve the "grand plan" of letting the surrounding hair encroach upon and eventually conquer the central bald spot.

He never expected this breeze would leave the back of his head bald as well!

Not only had the "encircling campaign" failed, but the central bald spot had successfully broken through...

The teacher felt like crying but had no tears. Of course, there were many ways to cure hair loss in this era, but without exception, they were all very expensive. Gene therapy, for example, was beyond the financial reach of an ordinary teacher.

The team hidden in the shadows all watched Chen Gu with an air of reproach.

Chen Gu was also embarrassed and explained in a low voice, "My mistake, my mistake... At least we can confirm that this is not the person we're looking for."

I didn't even realize my own strength was so formidable that a single finger-strike could sever the target's hair without even making contact...

But Chen Gu genuinely felt a heavy sense of guilt. He decided to use the branch office network to transfer a sum of money to the teacher, enough for him to undergo one round of gene therapy.

"That's a painful loss," Chen Gu lamented. This finger-strike was too expensive!

The second target was an ordinary worker. This time, before making his move, Chen Gu observed him repeatedly from the shadows. He made sure this person had no "delicate issues" to be concerned about before suddenly striking.

Yet this person also sensed nothing. He merely felt a cold draft behind him that made him shiver. Puzzled, he touched the back of his head and looked around, but discovered nothing.

"There's no other way. Let's head to Wangxingjiao City first," Chen Gu said, looking towards Boluo. "You jinx."

Boluo was smug. "It's not my fault; that's just a scientific law at work."

Joseph suggested, "How about we go directly to Wanfulu City?"

Boluo quickly replied, "You still don't grasp the essence of the scientific law I mentioned. If you go to Wangxingjiao City first, then the target will definitely be in Wanfulu City. But if you go to Wanfulu City first, then the target will definitely be in Wangxingjiao City..."

Chen Gu silently asked Big Rabbit, "Is there some kind of ammo that can make certain individuals shut up when they feel like talking?"

Big Rabbit nodded earnestly. "Of course! Just shoot them in a vital spot before they open their mouth. Any kind of ammo can achieve that effect!"

Boluo looked puzzled. "What are you two talking about? What do you mean?"

Chen Gu, resigned, waved his hand. "Forget it. Let's head to Wangxingjiao City first."

When special agents leave their station, they need to report to the branch office. Simultaneously, their current branch office will inform the one at their destination to prevent unnecessary misunderstandings.

Chen Gu smoothly completed the registration with the women in internal affairs and then took everyone on an intra-planetary flight to Wangxingjiao City.

No sooner had the aircraft landed than he received a call from Marcus. "What are you doing in Wangxingjiao City? Management there is very strict right now. Don't cause any trouble!"

Chen Gu was puzzled. "What's happened?"

Marcus said, "It's all because of the trouble you stirred up. During your last mission in the Yingudusi Devil's Pit, you found that mountain-sized pile of remains. The Confederation is organizing manpower to start excavation. I heard our Bureau of Mystic Security is also involved, so there are a lot of special agents around. Anyway, just be careful."

Chen Gu grew more cautious. After about half an hour, he found the third target: an old man who had retired. This man liked to raise birds and enjoyed chatting with elderly ladies.

Chen Gu secretly tested him and confirmed he wasn't their target...

However, as the four of them were retreating, they were nearly stopped by the enthusiastic old ladies. Fortunately, they were all exceptionally strong Professionals. Relying on their superior physical abilities, they finally managed to break free!

Boarding the aircraft to Wanfulu City, even Joseph couldn't help but complain, "Boluo, your mouth is toxic!"

Boluo, however, was smug. "I'm going to publish a paper and name this scientific law the Boluo Law!"

「Three hours later, they arrived in Wanfulu City.」

This was a large city on Empire River Star, slightly bigger than Wuzhaoyin City. It boasted rich nearby mineral deposits, and its economy was far ahead of Wuzhaoyin City's.

In the bustling city, the four reached their target's address.

Then, looking up at the artistic and fashionable building before them, they exchanged glances of disbelief. They all recognized the logo on the building—it was the insignia of a well-known fashion magazine on Empire River Star.

"'Steam Locomotive' is someone in the fashion world?" Dora was somewhat envious. Which girl doesn't want to dress up beautifully all the time?

Chen Gu pulled up the photo of target number four, and they staked out several exits of the building.

It wasn't until the evening rush hour that Joseph suddenly sent a message: "Target spotted! Target spotted!"

They quickly converged and saw a very chic, tall woman with long, straight, snow-white legs, stepping into a fashionable sports car, ready to leave.

Chen Gu and the other two looked at Joseph. "Are you sure you got this right?"

"The information clearly states that this 'Wu Minzhe' is a man..."

Joseph shrugged. "I'm using the Bureau's facial recognition equipment; it can't be wrong. As for why he looks like that... it's not that unusual, you know."

The three were speechless. Boluo glanced at the license plate, memorized it, and then entered it into the system. They quickly discovered Wu Minzhe's destination.

They raced ahead to the location, which turned out to be a restaurant, and lay in wait outside. Soon, they saw Wu Minzhe's car stop at the restaurant's entrance. A man with a handsome brown beard, who had been waiting there, greeted Wu Minzhe cheerfully. He gallantly opened the car door and took Wu Minzhe's hand as he stepped out.

Chen Gu and his companions stifled their laughter, but it was Boluo's malicious tongue that spoke up, "This gentleman is going to be very disappointed tonight, HA HA HA..."

Dora retorted, "How do you know this gentleman doesn't just happen to like this type?"

"Well..." Boluo wasn't sure and could only say, "Your rabbit is big, everything you say makes sense! OW!"

He had received a steel-rabbit elbow from Dora!

Chapter 199 [The Reborn Warrior]

After dinner, the man escorted Wu Minzhe out. He seemed to want to invite him for a drink at a bar or something similar, but Wu Minzhe rejected the offer with a coquettish smile. The man reluctantly kissed the back of Wu Minzhe's hand, and then the two waved goodbye.

Driving home, Wu Minzhe suddenly felt the hair on his body stand on end. With a speed unattainable by ordinary people, he dodged to the side just as a finger, shimmering with a cold light, appeared where his head had been moments before.

Wu Minzhe kicked out, sending his combat-unsuitable high heels flying. With a loud RIP, he tore away the restrictive bodycon dress himself.

With a low growl, his muscles began to bulge, but before he could activate his abilities, a punch smashed into his face, sending blood gushing. He was flung backward into a wall.

However, the injuries healed at a visibly rapid pace. Even his "beautiful features" quickly returned to normal, leaving no bruises.

"Huh!" Big Rabbit exclaimed, their voice thick with envy. Chen Gu flexed his own fist; it wasn't wearing the Apocalyptic Holy Hand.

He looked at Wu Minzhe, who was braced for an attack, and asked, "A Regenerator?"

This was a new profession whose members possessed cells with endless vitality, rendering them nearly immortal and extremely difficult to kill. High-Energy-Level Regenerators could continuously regenerate from even a single living cell, eventually recovering as a complete human being.

Dora and the other two emerged from the darkness, surrounding Wu Minzhe.

Wu Minzhe's expression changed. Against a single opponent, he was absolutely confident he could outlast them, but four against one meant certain defeat.

Once Regenerators fell into enemy hands, their fate was particularly miserable. They could withstand any torture and could not die even if they wished to.

"Who are you people? What do you want? I don't have any money..."

"Bullshit!" Chen Gu lost his temper and launched a fierce assault. Nuclear Combat Technique was the core fighting skill of the Atomic Holy Church's Radiation Missionaries. How could an unaffiliated professional like Wu Minzhe, with no significant backing, withstand it?

Even without Chen Gu using the power of the Apocalyptic Holy Hand, Wu Minzhe was pummeled relentlessly. After blocking the first three punches, he had no strength left to retaliate and was quickly covered in blood.

As Chen Gu pummeled him, he cursed, "You just swindled fifty million from me, and now you say you have no money?"

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP! Another round of heavy punches rained down.

Wu Minzhe healed even as new wounds appeared—a truly excruciatingly ambivalent sensation. Hearing Chen Gu's words, he suddenly realized, "You're the President?"

"Stop hitting me! Stop hitting me! I really have no money."

"I didn't mean to swindle you. I had no choice..."

Chen Gu grabbed his neck and signaled to Joseph. Joseph stepped forward with the Bureau of Mystic Security's custom-made shackles and restrained Wu Minzhe.

Wu Minzhe looked particularly wretched, but the wounds on his body disappeared quickly. Chen Gu, still unconvinced, raised his fist again. Wu Minzhe cowered, shrinking into a ball. "Don't hit me anymore! I really had no choice. I was scammed too! I spent sixty million on that relic, thinking I could make a profit. But after I got it, I realized it wasn't worth that much, and I couldn't find the original seller again. I had no other choice but to..."

He shrank back fearfully. "That sixty million included a ten-million loan from the bank, for which I put up all my assets as collateral. If I can't pay it back, I'm ruined..."

Chen Gu snorted coldly, not believing him. "You run such a large operation, even daring to trade in supermatter, yet you only have a net worth of a few tens of millions?"

Wu Minzhe was on the verge of tears. "I really have no money! It looks like I make a high commission, but you know, being a professional is expensive. And a large part of that commission has to go to the sellers. Take the last supermatter transaction, for example. Those kinds of goods practically sell themselves; why would the supplier let me handle the sale unless I gave them a significant cut?"

"In our line of work, it looks like we earn a lot, but in reality, much of it doesn't end up in our own pockets. BOO HOO HOO... I really had no choice, Mr. President! Please, have mercy on me... I will pay you back. Just give me some time..."

Chen Gu and his three companions stared, dumbfounded. This guy... he's actually crying because he got hit?

Is he even a man? No, that's not right. This guy probably never wanted to be one in the first place.

Chen Gu grabbed him and took him back to his apartment.

People in the fashion world always maintain a polished exterior, no matter what. Wu Minzhe drove a sports car and lived in a high-end, spacious, and lavishly decorated apartment.

Just as Chen Gu pointed at the apartment, about to erupt in anger, Wu Minzhe quickly explained, "It's rented, and the car is too! I can show you the lease agreements."

Chen Gu became furious. "What do you actually have that's valuable?"

Wu Minzhe stammered, and Chen Gu raised his fist. "Itching for another beating, are you?"

"I'll talk, I'll talk..." Wu Minzhe's eyes welled with tears. Boluo, watching from the side, was taken aback to find a strange pity stirring within her—he looked so pathetically endearing!

The thought shocked Boluo, and she quickly shook her head, trying to banish the unsettling idea.

"All my money is tied up in those goods."

"Where are the goods?"

Wu Minzhe gave a warehouse location. Chen Gu punched him in the stomach, and Wu Minzhe immediately doubled over like a shrimp.

"Still not being honest, are you?" Chen Gu berated him. "Don't try to fob me off with that junk! What about the items that professionals can use? Only those are valuable."

It took Wu Minzhe a moment to catch his breath. He could regenerate infinitely, but the pain from his injuries was very real.

"In... in the safe..." Wu Minzhe said, his face a mask of misery. "I really don't have much stock. Most of the items I listed on the Mystic Staff were just reposts from other sellers."

Chen Gu didn't believe him for a second. He marched Wu Minzhe to a walk-in closet in the apartment and forced him to open a hidden safe.

The safe's interior wasn't large, only about a cubic meter, and it held various boxes made of different materials, all neatly arranged.

Many precious materials have unique properties and require specific types of containers for storage.

Chen Gu unceremoniously pulled out all the boxes, making Wu Minzhe wince with each one. As Chen Gu began opening them for inspection, he said, "We're not bullies, you know..."

Really? Wu Minzhe wondered.

"You scammed me out of fifty million. Considering the relic, I'll take items worth another fifty million, and I won't touch anything else."

Wu Minzhe's head hung low. I'm just fish on the chopping block. He decides the price; what can I possibly say?

Chen Gu opened the first box. It looked exquisite, exuding an air of luxury, but inside was only a large, ornate gemstone ring.

"Tch!" Chen Gu tossed it aside carelessly. Such a trinket might be highly attractive to ordinary people, but it held little value for professionals.

Chapter 200: "Consephino Type II" Survival Potion

After opening several more boxes in a row, they all turned out to hold goods that weren't considered valuable, worth from tens of thousands to several million Starshields, and moreover, they were things Chen Gu didn't need.

He was becoming impatient. "Look at the goods you've purchased—all flash and no substance, a complete waste. With your sense of discernment, you still hope to make money?"

While chiding, he opened yet another box to find a fist-sized metal ball inside, its surface adorned with intermingling patterns of blue and red.

Chen Gu held it in his hand, sensing a special kind of power stirring within.

Moved by curiosity, he asked, "What is this?"

Wu Minzhe immediately replied, "This is an egg of the Energy Gathering Mechanical Species, valued at eighty million Starshields, already well beyond your price range..."

"Shut up," Chen Gu cursed, lifting the metallic egg to show Dora and Boluo. "Do you guys know the market for this?"

Boluo curled his lip. "What's the use of this piece of junk? It's not even as good as a chicken egg—at least a chicken egg tastes good."

Wu Minzhe hastily defended, "If hatched, it could be a strong contender in the Mech Beast battle tournaments. Since it's just an egg, I'm only asking for eighty million. For a mature one, it would cost several hundred million..."

"PFFT—" Joseph uttered a scoff from the side. "I'm an avid fan of the Mech Beast battles, and the Energy Gathering Mechanical Species has never had a good track record there. Whether it's the Steam Mechanical Species or the Energy Gathering Mechanical Species, their synchronization rates with their 'companions' during mental linking are very low. Despite their great power, they can't coordinate well. Indeed, not a single mechanical species has ever appeared on the stage of the Beast Emperor's Tournament—that's proof enough."

Unable to counter Joseph's well-founded argument, Wu Minzhe stuttered, speechless.

Dora was the most lethal. Taking out her secret wand, she quickly found another vendor and soon pulled up a piece of information:

Energy Gathering Mechanical Species egg, clearly priced at seven million Starshields.

Note: This item cannot participate in the Mech Beast battles but makes a decent mount for professionals.

Wu Minzhe was stunned. "That's impossible! How can it be so cheap? I spent nine million to acquire it..."

He had blurted out the truth.

Chen Gu looked at him with a menacing gaze. "You bought it for nine million, and you're telling me it's eighty million?"

Wu Minzhe looked at Chen Gu as he rubbed his hands together, pitifully pleading, "Can we talk about this? Can you not hit my face?"

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP!

Chen Gu retracted his fist, satisfied.

He set the metallic egg aside. "I won't cheat you, but don't try to cheat me. I'll pay the market price for it: seven million."

Wu Minzhe was on the verge of tears, while Joseph looked on with a pitying eye. "They're selling it for just seven million, and you dared to buy it for nine million. No wonder you're so broke."

In a pitiful tone, Wu Minzhe said, "The patterns on it are so pretty. I—I thought maybe this one would be different."

Chen Gu couldn't help but give him a glance, realizing that all his goods were indeed quite beautiful. He couldn't help but wonder if this guy's standard for purchasing was simply "looks good?"

He opened several more boxes in succession, all of which looked appealing but were of little value. As the number of boxes scavenged from the safe dwindled to three, Chen Gu was getting anxious. Could it be that he would have to pack up all these good-looking yet useless items and take them away to settle the account?

After all, these things were of no real use to him.

He opened another box. Within it was a triply sealed tube. Both ends of the tube were sealed with high-performance alloy, and inside swirled a light black, viscous liquid.

Chen Gu's expression changed. He remembered the contamination drug that Leder had given everyone in the Yingudusi Devil's Pit!

"What is this?" Chen Gu asked, holding up the tube, his voice already tinged with coldness.

Wu Minzhe's face instantly turned bitter. "This is my best-selling product, the 'Confino II Type' survival drug. Injected at a critical moment, it can instantly triple one's strength. Although the side effects are severe, for freelancers, most of the time the concern is about staying alive..."

Chen Gu was now seventy percent certain that this stuff was from the boss who had fled with Leder.

But at that moment, he calmed down. The actor quickly hid his emotions, feigning great interest as he inquired further, simultaneously nudging an angry Dora and Boluo subtly to one side with his body.

"Does this stuff work? You say it's your best seller. How many have you sold already? How much per tube?"

"It works. Of course, I verified its effectiveness before stocking it. The supplier sent me a video. I examined it with a professional's eye, and it's certainly not a fake. In the video, a professional who took this drug indeed experienced a dramatic increase in strength, although some mutations and growths appeared on his body afterward. With current medical technology, it's actually just a matter of undergoing a genetic treatment to cure these side effects but, of course, genetic treatments are very expensive."

Chen Gu asked, "A professional's eye?"

"I'm a photography journalist for a magazine," Wu Minzhe said with some pride, then continued, "I sell these for ten million Starshields each. They're expensive but they can save lives, so I quickly sold two. This one I planned to keep for my own use."

Faking curiosity, Chen Gu asked again, "If they sell so well, why don't you stock more?"

"There isn't much stock available!" Wu Minzhe complained repeatedly. "The supplier said they went through great lengths, and a few people died, to get this secret drug from the Empire. The quantity is limited. If it sells well, they will try to get more. I've already placed an order, but there hasn't been any response from the supplier's end, just an acknowledgment that they got the order."

Chen Gu then inquired, "Who did you sell the first two doses to? Did they use them? What were the results like?"

Wu Minzhe suddenly became guarded. "Why are you asking in such detail? I will not divulge customer information!"

Chen Gu said with a "nasty grin", "It seems you're itching for something. I'm just trying to understand the true effects of this drug!"

But Wu Minzhe had already become wary. With tears welling up, his voice pitifully trembling yet firm, he said, "No way! It's a fundamental bottom line for a businessman. Even if you rape me, I won't say anything!"

Joseph scoffed coldly, "Rape you? Wishful thinking."

Seeing that he could not get any more information, Chen Gu's demeanor turned cold as well. "If you refuse to talk to me, then go speak to the Bureau of Mystic Security!"

Wu Minzhe was stunned. "The Bureau of Mystic Security? Are you guys from the Bureau of Mystic Security?"

Chen Gu flashed his electronic credentials, and Wu Minzhe's face fell in despair. "It's all over. My days of freedom are gone forever. This is even more tragic than getting married..."