

Full Time 211

Chapter 211 - This Damn Tacit Understanding

The battle here was deadlocked. Among Zuo Qianyun's subordinates, both the "Catalyst Envoy" and the "Energy Mentor" suddenly had large beads of sweat forming on their foreheads. A middle-aged man with a leonine face appeared before them, walking slowly. He then clenched his fists in front of them and abruptly launched a punch.

Those around the battlefield felt gravity suddenly weaken considerably—it had been borrowed by the "Potential Energy Postman"!

The leonine middle-aged man was indeed the bureau chief of the Wanfulu City branch, a "Potential Energy Postman" of the Third Energy Level!

BOOM—

With just one punch, both the "Catalyst Envoy" and the "Energy Mentor" collapsed, unable to rise. Their bodies were limp, their bones shattered, their condition unknown.

For the Wanfulu City Bureau of Mystic Security, the captives' survival was not a major concern. They were wealthier than Wuzhaoyin City. As long as the brains could be retrieved, providing two sets of Life Support Systems was no problem.

However, the leonine "Potential Energy Postman" did not target the "Dungeon Troll"—the latter was currently locked in a fierce battle with Dora. One electromagnetic kinetic bullet after another was fired, each accurately blasting one of the "Dungeon Troll's" heads to smithereens, only for another to regrow.

By now, over twenty shots had been fired. The "Dungeon Troll" roared repeatedly in pain but stubbornly refused to admit defeat!

Chen Jixian had Zuo Qianyun firmly suppressed. Zuo Qianyun saw her two trusted aides obliterated by a single punch from the "Potential Energy Postman." She also saw the deputy bureau chief, a "Microscopic Analyst" of the Third Energy Level, appear nearby to provide reinforcement. Her heart sank.

Her originally grim face darkened further. I'll fight to the bitter end, she decided. Kill one to break even, kill two to make a profit!

Unexpectedly, however, Chen Jixian, who was fiercely battling her, suddenly called out, "Fire support!"

Not only was Zuo Qianyun baffled, but the members of the Bureau of Mystic Security were also confused. What did he mean by suddenly saying that? Even if the military possessed an energy cannon capable of threatening a Third Energy Level expert, with so many of their own people around, collateral damage was inevitable. Chen Jixian had the overwhelming advantage; there was no need for such a measure.

Only Chen Gu, blessed with a moment of inspiration, understood his adult son's intention. Without hesitation, he raised the demon rifle "Lunar Demon," aimed it at Zuo Qianyun, and quickly pulled the trigger.

BOOM—

A light mist, like a nebula, erupted. This time, targeting the abilities of the "Ancient Slumbering Race," the mist did not condense but continued to spread. Tiny, densely packed bolts of lightning emerged from within it, engulfing all the ghostly shadows Zuo Qianyun had conjured within a vast area.

Then, as the lightning bolts exploded, these ghostly shadows disintegrated one after another amidst ear-piercing screams.

The demon rifle "Lunar Demon" had an extremely potent restraining effect on professionals of lower Energy Levels. It was slightly weaker against those at the Third Energy Level. However, its impact was still massive.

This shot severely limited Zuo Qianyun's abilities. Her mystic arts were instantaneously locked, rendering them unusable, and her speed and strength were greatly reduced.

After Chen Jixian called out "fire support," he had rapidly retreated. But following Chen Gu's shot, he attacked once more. With even greater speed and strength, he rammed into Zuo Qianyun, sending her flying!

Zuo Qianyun let out a shrill scream as the power of the demon rifle "Lunar Demon" seized the opportunity to fully penetrate her body.

In the near-death state typical of the "Ancient Slumbering Race"—similar to the Vampires from legends of the homeworlds—Zuo Qianyun's skin quickly turned dry and withered. It lost all its splendor, resembling tree bark.

Then, her body became rigid. Layer by layer, it shattered and peeled off...

Finally, with a SNAP, Zuo Qianyun's remaining body exploded into pieces.

The ordinary special agents and action team members found it hard to believe they were witnessing the fall of a Third Energy Level powerhouse right before their eyes.

The Zuo Qianyun who had just conjured phantom shadows that filled the entire night sky had seemed so powerful, instilling in each of them a reverent awe, a feeling that she was "invincible."

However, the Dolls looked at Chen Gu curiously. He seemed to have good rapport with the Director. But that "fire support" command seemed to be aimed specifically at him, since among everyone present, only his demon rifle "Lunar Demon" was qualified to provide support in a Third Energy Level battle.

Little demoness Selena hummed thoughtfully to herself. There's definitely a big secret between these two men!

Meanwhile, the duel between Big Rabbit and the "Dungeon Troll" was not yet over; the "Dungeon Troll" had already regenerated over thirty heads.

Chen Gu couldn't help but give a thumbs-up. Every time a head explodes, the pain is real.

When one of the "Dungeon Troll's" heads was blasted apart, it wasn't like other creatures that would die instantly, perhaps too quickly to even "feel" such pain. But the "Dungeon Troll" had two heads. Every time one was blown apart, the other would clearly feel this immense pain!

"What a tough guy!" Chen Gu praised. "But maybe too tough—his brains must have turned to stone!"

Dora kept shooting. Chen Gu shouted at the "Dungeon Troll," "Are you stupid? Using your own head to block an electromagnetic rifle?"

Those words were like a sudden epiphany for the "Dungeon Troll." It howled and raised both hands high, signaling surrender. Then, it couldn't hold back any longer. The pain made both its heads stream tears from all four eyes, which quickly formed a sad little creek at its feet!

Flowing eastward with the creek were its stubbornness and... foolishness.

Joseph raised his hand, quickly freezing its hands and feet, immobilizing it. Only then did the action team move forward and secure it with the Bureau of Mystic Security's special shackles.

The "Dungeon Troll's" transformation gradually receded. Marcus and Chen Gu were startled. "Isn't this Zuo Qianyun's pretty-boy assistant?"

The assistant shot them a vicious glare—but to Marcus and Chen Gu, it didn't seem vicious at all, since both his eyes were red and swollen like a rabbit's, clearly from crying so much just moments before.

Boluo, however, sat to the side, casting meaningful glances back and forth between Chen Gu and the "Dungeon Troll," then continued to teeter precariously on the brink of disaster, "As expected, a President's assistants are never simple!"

My 'Steel Head Flick' definitely needs more practice, Chen Gu thought.

Dora received the command that the operation was over and all was secure, then returned, carrying her enormous electromagnetic rifle.

This device was officially named the "Individual Electromagnetic Sniper Cannon" by the Confederation military. It was impossible for warriors to use unless they had undergone multiple rounds of medicinal enhancements.

And most of the time, it was mounted on combat vehicles.

A petite, elfin-featured loli with a remarkably large chest carried a sniper cannon much larger than herself. As she walked under the chaotic searchlight beams of the armed unmanned aerial vehicles, the sight made every male secretly gulp.

Chapter 212 - Critical Advancement

Chen Jixian dealt with Zuo Qianyun and then stepped aside, joining the subordinates from his own branch.

The entire battlefield was handed over to the Wanfulu City branch. Their branch chief, a Third Energy Level operative nicknamed "Potential Energy Courier," was Qiao Ge'er. He silently appreciated Chen Jixian, finding such a comrade who didn't try to steal the credit truly rare.

At Qiao Ge'er's command, numerous action and cleanup teams entered the area. Once they reconfirmed that there were no further threats, Chen Jixian led the personnel from the Wuzhaoyin City branch to retreat.

All the follow-up work was handed over to Qiao Ge'er.

The Wanfulu City branch was indeed wealthy; they arranged for their colleagues from Wuzhaoyin City to rest in a top-tier hotel.

The members of Special Operations Fifth Group gathered in the small bar on the hotel's top floor. The three members from the Mobile Team, now practically considered "external personnel" of the Fifth Group, were also present.

Among them, Selena, the little demoness, exuded a wild and flirtatious aura, her eyes full of provocation as she sipped her drink. The doll-like Melincha was remarkably gentle, like an approachable girl-next-door whom one couldn't help but want to get closer to. Dora was cute and well-developed, making everyone want to tease her.

Chen Gu himself was strikingly handsome. Combined with the effects of the mysterious remains, members of the opposite sex naturally felt a certain "desire" for him.

Failing that, there was also Silver Eagle, who could be considered quite handsome.

So, for the first twenty minutes after the group sat down, they were constantly fending off advances from interested men and women.

Once things finally quieted down, Marcus was the first to raise his glass, though he immediately began to complain, "Chen Gu, you're a promising talent, a natural for special operations. But please, could you try not to attract so much trouble in the future?"

He ran his fingers through his hair in distress. "Look at this! Ever since you joined the Fifth Group, my hair has been falling out like crazy."

"Every mission you're on inevitably 'escalates and expands.' A job that should only be worth about a hundred merit points instantly turns into a life-or-death mission worth 2,000!"

"Even when you're on a personal errand, you manage to draw out a hidden major figure like Zuo Qianyun!"

Chen Gu felt helpless too. I don't want this to happen either, but there's always some unforeseen incident. What can I do? He retorted, "Chief, all those merit points you get each time— isn't that a good thing?"

"It's good, sure, but safety comes first, my young comrade. I have a wife and a bunch of kids to support. If this keeps up, you'll give me a heart attack sooner or later..."

The little demoness downed her strong liquor in one gulp and said with a dismissive pout, "He's just saying that to sound humble. Just yesterday, I saw you, Chief, secretly checking your merit points and grinning like an old fox."

Everyone roared with laughter. Marcus, looking a bit sheepish, retorted, "Am I doing this for myself? I'm thinking about all of you too! You're all young and single. You haven't experienced the good things in life yet. What if..."

Led by the little demoness, a few of them chuckled. If we wanted to experience the 'good things in life,' we could do so whenever we pleased.

Joseph and Boluo were speechless at this subtle yet piercing boast. Did they even consider our feelings?

After finishing their drinks and relaxing, everyone went back to their own rooms to rest.

Chen Gu returned to his room. The moment he lay down on the bed, his body seemed to react automatically, and he suddenly realized, I have enough skill points... I can advance to the Second Energy Level now.

Advancement still required entering the generator and spending merit points. But when it came to merit points, Great Actor Chen was truly loaded.

Next, I need to ascertain my mental state.

The Bureau of Mystic Security could use various methods to check an operative's mental state, but these checks weren't foolproof. The Bureau's current methods were very accurate in identifying contamination from Mutants.

However, the Bureau of Mystic Security was still frequently infiltrated by Mutants. This was because these in-depth inspections were usually conducted post-operation, specifically on members who had confirmed contact with Mutants.

Much contamination occurred in ordinary daily life, with individuals becoming affected unknowingly.

The Bureau of Mystic Security regularly conducted preventative check-ups, similar to physicals, on all its members. However, deeply latent contamination wouldn't be revealed during these routine checks.

Turning these routine checks into thorough examinations for everyone would be too troublesome and simply impractical.

And when it came to mental state checks for special operatives, the situation was even less reliable.

Chen Gu considered his plan. First, after returning to Wuzhaoyin City, I'll apply to the branch for a mental state check. Then, I'll find Qing Ruyan and use her "Brain Domain Hacker" ability to perform a second check on myself. Finally, just to be absolutely sure, I should also perform a "limit method" self-examination.

「...」

Meanwhile, at the Wanfulu City branch, the battlefield cleanup had been completed. The process was quite cumbersome. Although it didn't involve Mutants, it did involve "Konsfilno Type II." It was still

unconfirmed whether the demonization caused by this drug had contagious properties like Mutants, so the entire cleanup process had to be handled with extreme care.

Qiao Ge'er brought all the bodies and prisoners back to the branch headquarters.

Wu Minzhe and the "Dungeon Troll" required further interrogation.

During the battle, another special operations team from the branch had raided Zuo Qianyun's winery and found fifteen units of "Konsfilno Type II." The case appeared to be closed.

Qiao Ge'er returned to his office and reviewed the entire operation in his mind, finally heaving a sigh of relief. Thanks to Chen Jixian's help, the Wanfulu City branch had managed to balance its merits and demerits this time.

I owe that guy a big one, Qiao Ge'er thought with a wry smile.

「...」

Beneath the branch headquarters, there was a special prison for holding professionals.

The "Dungeon Troll" was temporarily detained there, but a dedicated interrogation team soon took him away to begin questioning.

The "Dungeon Troll" was in terrible condition. His head was capable of continuous regeneration because the fatal weakness for such professionals was their heart, not their skull.

However, this constant regeneration was not only excruciatingly painful but also consumed a significant amount of energy.

The "Dungeon Troll" was now extremely weak, breaking into a cold sweat with the slightest movement.

The interrogation team consisted of three special operatives. After they asked a couple of simple questions, the "Dungeon Troll" collapsed into his chair.

The three special operatives exchanged helpless glances. One of them stood up, poured a glass of water, and handed it to the "Dungeon Troll," saying, "Have some water. Take a rest."

The "Dungeon Troll" sipped the water slowly and rested for a while before the interrogation resumed.

However, after a few more questions, the "Dungeon Troll" shook his head helplessly. "My skull has suffered too much trauma... my memory... it's faulty. There are many things I simply can't recall..."

The three special operatives were speechless. They had no choice but to report the matter.

Chapter 213 - Secret Base

Wu Minzhe had disclosed all he knew, but the urgency for his routine interrogations had diminished.

He was temporarily detained in a cell.

Sitting on the cold metal chair inside the prison, he gazed at the blank ceiling and let out a deep sigh, much like a woman lamenting the fleeting beauty of spring.

Suddenly, a black and white pendulum appeared on the wall in front of him. The pendulum began to swing slowly. Wu Minzhe's focus was gradually drawn into it, his gaze becoming fixed, unable to extricate himself.

A voice akin to that of a deity whispered in his ear, "You are already dead."

Wu Minzhe had a sudden realization. Oh, so I'm already dead.

When a special operative from the Bureau of Mystic Security came to interrogate Wu Minzhe, he found Wu Minzhe motionless, seated on the chair. The operative called out to him but received no response. A light push sent Wu Minzhe tumbling down.

The "autopsy report" for Wu Minzhe was quickly presented to Qiao Ge'er, whose face became exceedingly grim. He was livid. "The abilities of the 'Regenerated Warrior' are still intact, Wu Minzhe's body had no issues! Yet he believed himself dead, so his consciousness just perished like that?"

His office was at the top of the branch building, and he looked down upon his jurisdiction. Since Wu Minzhe's case broke out, he knew there was a problem inside his bureau. But he was not worried. He was confident that, given time, he would catch those little pests and, like a woodpecker, mercilessly tear them to shreds and devour them whole!

Now, however, the 'Dungeon Troll' suddenly lost its memory, and Wu Minzhe had committed suicide via consciousness... and all of this happened right under his watch, without raising any alarm within the entire branch.

He thought of a certain 'matter' and couldn't help but look up, staring into the distance.

He knew that this was not something he, as a mere branch director, could handle alone, so he immediately sent all the data to Headquarters.

「Several light-years away.」

In a section of the Star Ring Zone, a handful of uninhabitable planets lay. Despite the absence of planetary storms, these planets experienced extreme temperature fluctuations between day and night and were frequently struck by meteoroids.

Deep beneath one such planet's surface, tens of kilometers underground, was a hidden base.

The base was small but equipped with cutting-edge facilities. An AI robot maintained its operations. His routine tasks involved updating the information on the special chips in the left-side warehouse and

checking that the culture dishes in the right-side biological workshop were functioning normally. Aside from that, he spent most of his time with no work to do, quietly sitting at his station, browsing through various data on the interstellar network.

In such a base, there was no concept of "day and night," but the AI robot defined his "day and night" by his daily tasks. He started his "day" with the update of the chip data. Twelve hours later, inspecting the culture dishes marked the beginning of his "night."

Thus, day after day passed. Initially, he recorded how many days he had spent, but one day, after reading an article that provoked some small thoughts about "life," he stopped counting the days, though he retained his routine of alternating "days" and "nights."

Today, he had completed his nightly task and was now comfortably lying in bed—not to sleep but rather because he enjoyed lying down while surfing the net at night.

Suddenly, there was a BEEP from the base's equipment; he had received an instruction.

He immediately and mechanically rose to carry it out. Following the serial number in the instruction, he retrieved a chip from the left-side warehouse and inserted it into a slot on the control panel.

WHOOSH—

A ray of light expanded and converged, creating a blurry human-shaped hologram.

The figure's gender was indiscernible. It was composed of tiny data points in constantly shifting colors, which rapidly exchanged and transformed into one another.

Then, the AI robot mechanically pressed another button, and the console projected a hologram of an old man with silver hair and a distinguished gentlemanly demeanor.

He looked at the data figure, chin lifted slightly with a touch of arrogance as he queried, "Number 241, you've failed again. How many chances have we given you?"

Trembling, the data figure knelt down. "My lord, I am close to success! Please, continue to believe in me. I will bring you and the other lords the rewards you desire.

"If you abandon me now, all previous investments will be lost."

The old man let out a cold laugh but still said, "This is your last chance. Take a good look at how you failed this time."

The AI robot cooperated and began to replay the relevant recording: the hospital exploding, Chen Gu leading his team to the scene, and Chen Jixian fighting her.

The data figure's memory node had last been updated—he had uploaded his final memory data—just before Zuo Qianyun and her team headed for the hospital.

Now the data figure also knew what had transpired after this node.

The old man issued an order to the AI robot: "Give him his final biological body, and then kick him out."

He then addressed the data figure, "Remember, this is your last chance. If you fail again, we don't care about the loss. We will immediately extract all the data we need from your memories and select someone else to complete this mission.

"And you will be utterly and completely dead!"

"Yes!" The data figure knelt and kowtowed. "Thank you for your generosity. You will not regret this decision."

Taking advantage of the brief moment before the old man disconnected the call, he pleaded urgently, "My lord, could I perhaps return to my own gender this time?"

The old man showed a trace of displeasure. "A failure has no right to make such requests. Cultivating biological bodies is expensive. Appropriateness is all that matters. Don't have too many extravagant hopes. Your entire focus should be on the mission, not the gender of your body."

"Yes." The data figure dared not say more. The old man's hologram faded and disappeared.

The data figure glanced at the AI robot, sorely tempted to plead with him to arrange the gender. But he knew that all AIs in the Star Sea were now programmed with extremely strict settings; the robot could not possibly bypass these restrictions and defy the old man's command to choose a biological body for him.

He sighed inwardly, resigning himself to his fate for the time being.

This inward sigh manifested on his digital body as a momentary dimming of all his data lights.

Observing the dimmed data lights, the AI robot felt something welling up inside him. Comparing it with things he had seen on the interstellar network, he recognized this sensation as "sympathy."

Chapter 214 - Mental Examination

This sympathy prompted him to covertly review all of Subject No. 241's data, intensifying this feeling he identified as "sympathy."

He had originally been male, but because his missions had continuously been unsuccessful, the three biological bodies he had previously used were all female.

He then previewed the biological bodies in the culture vessels; those suitable for No. 241 were still all female.

This "sympathy" had now evolved into "pity," but he truly had no way to circumvent those restrictions and disobey the elder's orders to arrange a male body for No. 241.

Soon, he selected a biological body and began the linkage, followed by memory data injection.

Visually, the data-being and the nearly perfect female body lying in the culture vessel slowly overlapped and merged.

The biological body suddenly opened its eyes as electricity crackled around it. The AI robots quickly recorded all data: Subject No. 241's new biological body, a Third Energy Level "Charge Dominator."

He then created a data link, importing all of No. 241's professional data into one of the base's most top-secret databases.

This database contained records of numerous data-beings and their reactions to repeated memory injections for different professions.

This was a grand experiment, hopefully one that would reveal a method to create multi-professional warriors at the memory level!

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The next day, before preparing to return to Wuzhaoyin City, Chen Gu and the others learned about the previous night's turmoil. Everyone remained silent; they all knew the Wanfulu City branch was doomed.

The memory chaos of the "Dungeon Troll" might have been somewhat explainable, but Wu Minzhe's sudden death also made what happened to the "Dungeon Troll" highly suspicious.

Yet, all of this no longer had anything to do with Chen Gu and his team.

The branch chartered a small aircraft, and during the flight, Chen Gu began reviewing the gains from his trip to Wanfulu City.

First, in the fight against Professionals like Zuo Qianyun, he had gained nothing; worse, he had lost one "Demon Moon."

Charging it also costs money, and energy expenses are incredibly high in this era.

What remained was what he had obtained from Wu Minzhe—which had been his original goal.

At that time, in Wu Minzhe's safe, Chen Gu had found a pile of useless items. However, upon discovering the "Constein II," he had immediately become alert and led his people away.

Later, though, he had gone back once more. From the remaining two boxes, he had found some supermaterial, which he used to accelerate Wu Minzhe's recovery.

Within the last remaining box was an ancient hand crossbow.

Chen Gu toyed with the hand crossbow while flipping through Wu Minzhe's private notes, soon finding information about it within.

The notes read: "'The Creed of Justice' hand crossbow, a precious relic passed down from the Mother Planet's era! Legend has it that it was the personal weapon of a certain demon hunter in ancient times, having slain countless evil creatures, including demons, evil spirits, wraiths, and more. Arranged in a miniature magical array on its frame are sixty-seven ancient gemstones, which are the core of this relic's power. The method for its use has been lost, rendering it impossible to activate its hidden abilities. If you are fated with this relic, perhaps you could be the lucky one to make it shine brightly again! It is speculated that this relic could have a significant restraining effect on beings from the Endless Realm."

Typical exaggerated claims, entirely in Wu Minzhe's usual style, right down to several typos in the text... Chen Gu sneered. A precious relic passed down from the Mother Planet's era? This is clearly just an antique, and quite possibly a fake! In his opinion, Wu Minzhe only acquired this item for the sixty-seven colorful, ancient gemstones on its frame. They were exceptionally attractive, and even more enchanting when illuminated.

That swindler, Wu Minzhe, deserved to lose a fortune on this piece of junk, Chen Gu thought. And he actually expected something like this to have a powerful suppressive effect on beings from the Endless Realm? If that were true, wouldn't the strenuous efforts of powerful Professionals fighting those entities become a complete joke? They might as well just give up and die.

He carelessly tossed it into the bag beside him.

Among his recent gains, what Chen Gu most looked forward to was the metallic egg of an Energy Gathering Mechanical Species.

Although Joseph had already said that this thing would be useless even if it hatched, because Energy Gathering Mechanical Species couldn't be used in the colossal beast battle competitions.

But Chen Gu had previously struck it rich auctioning off a beast egg—maybe this time his luck would hold, and he'd hatch a special kind of Energy Gathering Mechanical Species!

So, he carefully packed the metallic egg into a triple-proofed case to ensure its safety.

Among the remaining items were some jewels, which he divided among Dora, Boluo, and Joseph.

These items were quite valuable, and since they had all come to help Chen Gu with a private job and had been seriously injured in the process, they deserved some compensation.

That broke bastard really cleaned me out, Chen Gu grumbled again as the aircraft began to descend; they were about to return to Wuzhaoyin City.

He said to Marcus, "Boss, when we get back, arrange for me to have a mental checkup."

Marcus was startled. "What's wrong? Do you feel like something's off?"

"No," Chen Gu waved his hand. "I'm ready for promotion. I just want to confirm my current state."

The others immediately felt a wave of unease. It's only been a few days since he was instated, and he's already up for promotion to the Second Energy Level?

Of course, everyone was happy for Chen Gu, but they couldn't help but feel a little disconcerted.

Marcus was stunned for a moment, then said with a wry smile, "I never thought you'd catch up so quickly." He clapped Chen Gu firmly on the back and praised, "Good lad! I knew from the start you were prime material for special ops!"

"When we get back, we'll both get checked. I... I'm due for promotion too."

After the aircraft landed, Marcus immediately took Chen Gu to submit the application. Chen Gu certainly had no issues with merit points; after all, he was the Fifth Special Ops Group's renowned "merit hound."

As for Marcus, that poor devil... he had also managed to save up some resources from recent missions—at least enough for this time.

Lying in the apparatus and following the instructions of the Internal Support Division's experts, they spent over two hours completing a highly complex set of mental assessment procedures.

Afterward, they were both told to wait on the seats outside the room.

About half an hour later, the Internal Support Division's experts emerged, wearing white lab coats and rather serious expressions.

Chen Gu instantly had a bad feeling; he probably wouldn't pass this time. All those frequent encounters with Mutants, repeatedly pushing past his limits when using skills, that time he nearly fell, the very remains inside his body being suspected of communicating with an Evil God...

Sure enough, the experts merely gave Marcus a slight nod before turning to Chen Gu, their expressions grave. "You need to come with us," one of them said. "We found something during the assessment that we need to discuss with you."

Chapter 215 Ultimate Technique (1)

Chen Gu's heart skipped a beat; it looked serious. He couldn't help but look towards Marcus, the team leader, who gave him an encouraging smile. "Don't worry, it'll be fine. Remember, no matter what happens, Team Five will always be your strong support!"

Chen Gu nodded at him, took a deep breath, straightened his posture, and walked away with the experts.

The experts quickly brought him to a sturdy safehouse. One of them sighed in relief, "The operation outside must have started."

Chen Gu was puzzled. "What's going on?"

A younger expert explained, "According to our examination data, Marcus's mental state is extremely unstable, with a probability of mutation and corruption exceeding 87%!"

Chen Gu froze. He thought the experts' grave concern was because of him, but it turned out to be about the team leader! And they had specifically called him away to deal with the team leader separately.

But the team leader had always seemed perfectly normal. He was a good leader and a good father. When did his mental state become so dangerous? A mutation probability as high as 87%?!

He asked anxiously, "What are you going to do? What operation? The team leader won't—"

The experts raised their hands to stop him. "We understand how you feel right now." The young expert sighed. "Please don't think we're just trying to comfort you—we truly understand. Situations like this occur almost every few months."

"Marcus is a veteran special agent. He has been through countless missions and encountered numerous Mutants. Even the smallest accumulations over time have made his situation very dangerous by now..."

Chen Gu fell silent.

He remembered how before every operation, Marcus would emphasize safety to everyone. He had also specifically told Chen Gu that the work of a special agent was filled with all kinds of dangers. At the Moonship Hotel, he learned that temptation and corruption were real. Now, he finally understood that the dangers of being a special agent were truly everywhere!

At that moment, a message came through the experts' communication channel. The young expert, relieved, said to Chen Gu, "The operation is over. Marcus has proven himself a veteran special agent. He held on and didn't mutate on the spot."

Chen Gu let out a long sigh of relief. "Can I see him?"

The expert shook his head. "Unfortunately, you can't. You must understand that he still poses a high risk of mutation and corruption. Coming into contact with him also carries the risk of temptation and corruption."

However, the internal affairs experts were considerate. "We can send you a segment of surveillance video later, once it's been confirmed safe. You can see Marcus in that video."

"Thank you," Chen Gu sighed softly.

The young expert smiled. "The good news is, your mental state is fine. If you're still uneasy, you can use the Limit Law to confirm it yourself."

"Okay," Chen Gu replied, his spirits low. He bid farewell to the experts and left.

He had just returned to Team Five's office when Mei Lixue arrived. The director's expression was very solemn. Chen Gu knew she was secretly worried about Marcus.

"Marcus... has some personal matters to attend to, which might take a very long time. During this period, Melincha will act as the team leader of Team Five."

Melincha suddenly stood up. "The team leader, he..." Her lips trembled slightly, unable to say the words.

Mei Lixue's gaze swept over everyone. "The situation isn't too dire. We will do our utmost to save him. Everyone, please carry on with your work calmly."

She shook her head and left. The fact that Marcus hadn't returned after going with Chen Gu for the mental examination carried a clear meaning, one that every special agent understood well.

The office was suddenly enveloped in a somber silence.

On his way home, Chen Gu received a video from the experts.

Because the risk of Marcus mutating and succumbing to corruption was very high, he might unconsciously release certain "temptations" into his surroundings.

Therefore, Chen Gu couldn't meet or talk with him in person. Even this surveillance video had to be confirmed as safe multiple times, due to the fear that Marcus might embed "information" from the Endless Realm into his actions.

Marcus was confined within an empty cell, devoid of any tables or chairs. He simply sat in silence in the center of the room, motionless throughout the entire video.

Chen Gu watched with an indescribable discomfort in his heart and quickly turned off the video.

A sudden realization struck Chen Gu: Perhaps one day, I will also end up in that room.

He changed his mind. Instead of going home, he called Selena, the 'witchy girl.' "Where are we going tonight?"

Selena was surprised when she received the call. She had hinted to Chen Gu several times, "Sis can take you out for a wild time." Chen Gu had always remained unmoved.

Selena felt deflated. She wanted to treat Chen Gu as a "wallet," but the 'wallet' wasn't playing along.

Selena quickly named a club, and Chen Gu changed his destination. Twenty minutes later, his maglev car passed the traffic system's security check and entered a floating island.

In this era, any floating island above a city was synonymous with high consumption.

The nightclub was named "Snip." Chen Gu didn't understand the significance of the name at all. The 'witchy girl,' decked out in what was supposedly the latest fashion—a style Chen Gu couldn't appreciate in the slightest—was waiting for him at the entrance.

She led Chen Gu inside. Contrary to his expectation of frenzied music and a wild crowd, the music in the club had an eerie and mysterious style: a mix of bizarre electronic sounds interspersed with the roars of unknown giant beasts.

The people inside were immersed in it, swaying along, their bodies as pliable as noodles.

Chen Gu was here to test the Limit Law, so without hesitation, he splurged on twelve Myriad Starshields for the most expensive drink package in the entire venue.

The DJ announced it to the whole club with an exaggerated voice. Then, a team of fiery ladies and handsome, muscular young men, holding all the drinks, circled the venue under dazzling lights to deliver them to Chen Gu.

Almost everyone looked at Chen Gu with eyes full of envy and jealousy. For an ordinary person, the feeling of showing off would have peaked at this moment.

But Chen Gu's heart was as still as water.

Afterward, various women approached him, while the 'witchy girl' was chatting with a few good-looking young men, exhibiting an air of cool detachment.

Suddenly, she approached Chen Gu and said considerately, "Pick a few. Don't worry, I won't tell Qing Ruyan and Dora."

Chen Gu smiled bitterly internally. Looking at those women, he still found them unappealing.

He needed to complete this Limit Law trial, so he shifted his gaze elsewhere. The 'witchy girl' chuckled. "So you like a challenge."

Chen Gu noticed a few girls sitting in a dimly lit corner. They were oblivious to everything around them, having rejected several groups of people who had approached to start a conversation.

Chen Gu walked over. Selena pursed her lips, a look of understanding dawning on her. "The Limit Law? This guy is pretty cautious."

Forget him, this little queen will enjoy herself on her own.

Chapter 216 The Limit Method (2)

The next morning, Chen Gu woke up in the most expensive suite of a hotel on the floating island, but there was no one with him.

He checked his condition; everything seemed to be in order.

He then checked his account and found 17,000,000 Starshield were gone!

Ouch! That hurt!

Last night's indulgence, lavishing money on those girls, had convinced them to willingly return to the hotel with him. Selena, the little vixen, had been a great help in this.

Chen Gu had never known before that money could be spent this way. For example, using the privileges of the Bureau of Mystic Security, he found the phone number of the company owner where one of the girls was interning. He called in the middle of the night and bought the company for double its price.

But once they reached the hotel, Chen Gu had them all leave at the last moment.

He felt that was enough; at the brink of desire, he hadn't exhibited any abnormalities.

"The 'Extreme Method' is simply extreme spending. Thank goodness I have a rich and filial son," Chen Gu said with a bitter smile, mocking himself.

He freshened up and left the hotel. This time, he set the destination of his maglev car to an ancient bank.

This bank, with its old storefront on a quiet street, was hardly noticeable in an era dominated by large financial institutions.

After a series of strict verifications, he was brought into the vault. He then personally opened a safe deposit box and took out a chip from inside.

After returning home, he activated the chip, which contained the sixteen-episode blockbuster series.

Ossosa was right; he definitely had a backup of something like this.

Chen Gu sat alone, silently watching all sixteen episodes. Once again, he meticulously checked his condition. Finally, he let out a long sigh of relief. No problem.

He became even more suspicious of the 'original body'. That bank, though inconspicuous, has existed since the Mother Planet Era. To this day, its clientele consists mainly of the rich and influential. Renting a safe deposit box there is definitely not something an average high school student could afford.

He called Mei Lixue. "I think... I'm ready. I can advance."

It didn't take long for Chen Gu to confirm one thing: Selena, the little vixen, was a huge gossip.

The news of him taking several girls to a hotel room last night had spread throughout the entire sub-bureau!

Different groups within the sub-bureau had varying opinions on the matter.

The Special Duty teams thought it was harmless. The 'Extreme Method,' right? It's supposed to be like this. It's not about personal conduct, just a necessary step.

But spending nearly 20,000,000 Starshield to complete the 'Extreme Method' made them drool with envy. The Special Duty members had high incomes, but that was relative to ordinary people. Chen Gu, on the other hand... That guy's just not human!

Silver Eagle Charles felt he'd learned a trick: So this is how Professionals can flaunt their wealth so blatantly!

But even if I've learned it, it's useless. I can't use it myself; I don't have that much money! This thought almost made him want to shut himself off from the world.

The men from the Action Teams, on the other hand, secretly gave him a thumbs-up, full of admiration. Different versions of how many girls Chen Gu had actually taken back last night were circulating.

Some said five, others seven, and some even more outrageously claimed eleven!

Regardless of the version, it would elicit a heartfelt exclamation of praise: "Professionals truly have incredible stamina!"

The only group with some pointed criticisms was the Internal Affairs team. A large group of the young women there criticized Chen Gu's actions from moral, ethical, physiological, legal, and various other angles. Their words were laced with a strong hint of sour grapes.

But no one dared to say plainly what they were **really** upset about: How could such a prime piece of tender meat be snatched up by those flashy trollops from outside? If you want to indulge, to test your limits, we can help with that too! There are so many of us in the Internal Affairs team; forget eleven, we could even rustle up a hundred and eleven for you!

Chen Gu had come to the sub-bureau today to find Qing Ruyan. However, his colleagues either gave him teasing smirks, patted his shoulder with words of praise, or looked at him with eyes full of playful resentment.

This made him extremely uncomfortable.

He rushed to Qing Ruyan's office, pushed open the door, and ducked inside.

At this, everyone burst into laughter and dispersed, remarking, "He's here to offer a humble apology!"

Selena, the little vixen, was somewhat anxious at this moment. I miscalculated! I took Chen Gu out to sow his wild oats; will Qing Ruyan take her anger out on me? After all, she's from the Main Bureau, and I hear she's a close confidante of the Director-General...

Qing Ruyan's large, limpid eyes, filled with seven parts infatuation and three parts resentment, stared fixedly at him. Her gaze made Chen Gu's skin crawl.

At this moment, Qing Ruyan was clearly siding with the young women of the Internal Affairs team.

Chen Gu hurriedly made a gesture of surrender. "Alright, alright, stop pretending. You know my reasons, and besides, I didn't actually do anything last night."

Qing Ruyan narrowed her eyes slightly. "You did nothing?"

"Really, I did nothing."

Qing Ruyan looked satisfied. "Fine. So, why did you come looking for me?"

Chen Gu said, "Can you check if there's anything wrong deep within my spirit? I'm preparing to advance."

Qing Ruyan's heart tightened. Oh no, this is bad, she thought. I'm not my elder sister! I'm not a 'Brain Domain Hacker'...

She coughed, feigning composure. "Alright, let me prepare."

She needed to stall Chen Gu while quickly thinking of a plan.

I definitely can't refuse him. We've become so close; he'd surely get suspicious. And he might distance himself from me in the future, which would be terrible. He didn't do anything last night, but there's no guarantee about next time. I need to seize this chance.

Of course, I can't just bluff my way through it either. This concerns his advancement. If there's truly a hidden danger deep within his spirit, I'd be harming him.

Her mind raced, and suddenly, an idea struck her. I've got it!

She patted the chair. "Sit still. I'm about to start."

Chen Gu sat down in front of her. Qing Ruyan spread her arms and pretended to "activate her skill." Chen Gu... felt nothing. He had no idea that this Qing Ruyan was faking it. He still thought that 'Brain Domain Hackers' were so powerful, their abilities so profound and unfathomable, that she could inspect the depths of his spirit without him noticing a thing.

After about ten minutes, Qing Ruyan started to feel a bit bored, so she ended her "skill."

She withdrew her hands and said, "I've checked. I didn't see any problems."

Chen Gu smiled, relieved. "Thank you." He stood up to leave when Qing Ruyan spoke again, "Do you have any plans for this advancement?"

"Plans?"

Qing Ruyan said, "Every Professional should have a long-term plan for their future. Even within the same profession, there will be different specializations later on."

Qing Ruyan went on to explain, "For instance, with your 'Radiation Missionary' profession, if you want to focus on your career within the Bureau of Mystic Security, you'll naturally need to enhance your personal combat skills. The development path would be 'Nuclear Combat Technique' and 'Biological Nuclear Explosion,' to increase your strength in direct combat.

"If you intend to join the military in the future to fight against the Alien Insect Race, then you need to bolster your area-of-effect killing capabilities, focusing on developing 'Radiation Scouring' and 'Biological Nuclear Explosion.'

"If you want to become a spy and infiltrate enemy factions, then your focus should be on developing 'Mind Belief' and 'Biological Nuclear Explosion.'

"Of course, as your Energy Level increases, new skills will also be unlocked in the later stages."

Chapter 217 [Realm of the Gods]

Following Qing Ruyan's explanation, Chen Gu understood and humbly asked for advice, "Do you have any suggestions?"

Qing Ruyan shook her head. "That depends on you. The only thing I can tell you is that with each advancement, you must do everything possible to gather various materials to increase your chances of success, and also to enhance the probability of awakening special skills during advancement."

She added, "I do have some intelligence on this matter that I can provide you with—our relationship entitles you to it for free."

Chen Gu nodded repeatedly.

"Within the Atomic Holy Church, there is a No. 8 Additive, which is the cumulative result of their many years of experience and technology, capable of greatly increasing the success rate of advancement. At your Energy Level, you will need at least one dose; of course, the more, the better."

This No. 8 Additive also has another use: to suppress the possibility of mutations during the advancement process.

"Besides, I know of a place that sells various hyper-materials, as well as remnants of super-life beings."

"These items have been thoroughly and strictly analyzed to determine their roles in the advancement process, as well as potentially activating additional skills—the accuracy of which is above forty percent, which is already quite high."

Chen Gu immediately said, "I am willing to purchase."

Qing Ruyan waved her small hand. "Don't rush. That place doesn't accept monetary transactions..."

Chen Gu's eyes widened. What does she mean? Do they accept some other form of trade?

"Mostly they trade goods for goods, or in the form of task rewards."

"They only have one trading hall, and those who can enter have all gone through a rigorous review and screening process." Qing Ruyan kept Chen Gu in suspense, then with a sly smile, she said, "I can take you there."

Chen Gu took a deep breath. "What are your conditions?"

Qing Ruyan was about to say there were no conditions, but a thought struck her, and she said with a smile, "There is indeed a small requirement. You'll owe me one, and if one day I make you very angry, you must forgive me once."

This condition bewildered Chen Gu, who asked subconsciously, "Have you done something to wrong me?"

Qing Ruyan's cover-up was "flawless." "Haha, how could that be? Um... why would you think that? It's impossible. I wouldn't do such a thing."

Chen Gu looked at her, and Qing Ruyan felt a twinge of unease. Then, feigning displeasure, she said, "Hey, hey, hey, are you going or not? If not, forget it."

"I'll go!"

Qing Ruyan lifted her chin. "Follow me."

Chen Gu followed her quickly, asking, "What's the name of this place? Is it far? Do we need to travel across Star Systems?"

Qing Ruyan smiled mysteriously. "No need for that. We'll get there soon."

"Hmm?" Chen Gu was puzzled, but Qing Ruyan had already led him through twists and turns into a special area of the branch office—where there were public game pods for "Endless Realm."

Qing Ruyan went in first and beckoned to Chen Gu, "Come on in."

Chen Gu became alert. "A game?" This young lady probably doesn't know my game account can't see the light of day...

Qing Ruyan said again, "Come in, I'll take you."

You want to take *me*? Young lady, you're a bit too naive.

Chen Gu thought for a moment. The "Idol Actor" is the military's head researcher. That matter is still secret. It's unlikely the military would have informed the Bureau of Mystic Security about this, so Qing Ruyan probably doesn't know.

So, he entered the gaming pod and logged into his account.

Chen Gu was very familiar with the login interface of "Endless Realm." After a successful character login, there would be darkness, followed by a simulated process of star wars deployment. The whole gaming pod shook as he connected to the game.

In the past, during the login process, Chen Gu would quietly wait through the darkness. There was no need to do anything at that time; even if he did, it would be useless, as the system would not respond.

But this time, Qing Ruyan's voice came through the communication channel: "Follow my instructions."

Chen Gu was puzzled but replied, "Okay."

"Release one of your skills."

"Then clap three times, pause, and clap five times again."

Chen Gu followed the instructions exactly. In the darkness, he felt that vibration again, as if starfighters or space Mechas were being launched from a mothership.

Then the screen gradually brightened, and he found himself standing amidst ancient ruins.

This was a gigantic planet, sunken into twilight. The sky was overcast. A huge, dark red sun hung at an angle above the horizon, somewhat resembling a giant salted egg yolk. It looked as if one could simply stand there, reach out, and scoop a spoonful to taste.

Surrounding him were ruins and broken walls—strangely, these ruins spanned great lengths of time and levels of civilization.

Ancient Stone Age totem poles, foundations and stone walls of temples, roof tiles and steps of majestic palaces, modern-era skyscrapers...

All the ruins were mixed together, presenting a chaotic yet harmonious and strange sensation.

Chen Gu looked around in confusion. This place seemed to exist independently of the entire "Endless Realm" game. He saw no vast fleets or ferocious beasts anywhere.

Though the place was in ruins and decay, it seemed very... peaceful?

He quickly noticed not far in front of him, a huge totem pole had collapsed, slanting into the ground.

On the totem pole, large as a hill, three big characters were inscribed. The text seemed extremely ancient, from an unknown civilization era, yet miraculously, Chen Gu understood the meaning at first glance: Heavenly Realm.

Chen Gu frowned. The "Endless Realm" game drew its inspiration from the Endless Realm, but this place had become the "Heavenly Realm."

Qing Ruyan's voice came from behind him: "This place was originally called 'Original Spirit Realm.' Nobody knows since when it started to be called the Heavenly Realm."

Chen Gu understood. "This is a virtual space, accessible from any place in the Star Sea as long as there's a gaming pod?"

Qing Ruyan said, "It's accessible from any device in this Star Sea that uses 'Virtual Full-Sensory Feedback Technology' and is connected to the interstellar network. It's not just limited to gaming pods."

Chen Gu understood. "Will the items I purchase after the transaction be mailed to me?"

"Something like that," replied Qing Ruyan as she led him further in.

After entering the ruins, Chen Gu discovered that this so-called "Heavenly Realm," while appearing as ruins from the outside, actually contained a hidden world within.

For instance, in the temple ruins that Chen Gu had just passed through, half a palace remained intact, seemingly inhabited by some mysterious entities, emitting sounds like music, as if chanting, preaching, or meditating...

Qing Ruyan was not interested in this temple at all, hurriedly walking past, muttering, "All this mumbo jumbo..."

They passed through several buildings in the ruins, and Qing Ruyan had a clear purpose, leading Chen Gu into a dilapidated Taoist temple.

Chapter 218 [Hesla] Internal Organs

This place was never large to begin with; two corners of the main hall had collapsed, and more than half of the side chambers were also in ruins.

Ironically, the Taoist temple's gate remained intact—awkwardly, aside from this gate, all the surrounding walls had fallen, leaving only a line of foundation.

That very gate stood, lonely and stubborn, isolated in its existence.

Even so, Qing Ruyan approached with what one might call "politeness," knocking on the door, intending to enter through the front.

After she knocked three or four times, an impatient voice finally sounded from inside, "Just come in."

Qing Ruyan, with utmost respect, pushed one side of the door open just a crack and slipped in with Chen Gu.

In front of the main hall stood an incense burner, over a meter tall, comically split in half as if someone had cleaved it with a single strike.

Chen Gu became increasingly curious about this place. This was a virtual world; surely, they could make these dilapidated facilities look new if they wished. Was this state of disrepair a deliberate effect created by the entities here?

On the part of the main hall's steps that hadn't collapsed, an old Taoist lay askew. His robe was tattered, and a scruffy beard covered most of his long face, making it impossible to clearly see his features or determine his age.

Qing Ruyan stepped forward, greeting cheerfully, "Taoist Tianyi, I've brought a newcomer."

The Taoist rolled his eyes. "Whatever."

Qing Ruyan still beamed. "We need your approval."

Taoist Tianyi remained indifferent. "Do as you see fit."

This is very Taoist indeed, Chen Gu thought.

Qing Ruyan said, "Then, I'll consider this registered with you."

"Whatever you think is best."

Qing Ruyan continued, "He's about to advance to the Second Energy Level and is looking for something useful."

The Taoist immediately expressed dissatisfaction. "His level is too low. You know the prices here; he can't afford anything."

Qing Ruyan confidently stated, "He has money."

The Taoist's interest was piqued. He sat up, eyes gleaming as he sized up Chen Gu, and then tentatively asked, "With only Starshield, he won't be able to buy anything here."

"He has more than just Starshield," Qing Ruyan replied.

Taoist Tianyi's eyes shone even brighter. Chen Gu increasingly felt that Qing Ruyan had pegged him as an easy mark and was leading him into a den of thieves.

"Come on in, let's talk details," Taoist Tianyi said enthusiastically, leading them into an adjacent, half-collapsed chamber.

Once inside, Chen Gu stated his needs. Taoist Tianyi frowned and pondered. "Radiation Missionary... Hmph, you young folks nowadays all like new professions. What's so great about new professions? All flashy, without any substance."

He scratched his dirty hair and said, "I know of something that's perfect for you."

With a flick of his finger, a screen of light appeared before Chen Gu.

In the center was an irregularly shaped, pale green substance, rotating continuously for a complete display. Text floated around it, providing an introduction:

"A super-material from the 'Kutuwak Celestial Body Worm,' weighing 8.21 grams, from the Fearworm super-material series.

Research indicates that when used during advancement, there's a thirty percent chance of awakening one to two new skills, which vary depending on one's profession.

The Radiation Missionary profession may awaken skills including 'Nuclear Continuation,' 'Nuclear Magnetic Storm,' 'Radiation Body,' and others.

Additionally, this super-material provides a certain degree of protection against the Endless Realm. During advancement, it can help the professional fend off the contamination invasion of the Endless Realm."

The various introductions were very detailed. After reading them carefully, Chen Gu was greatly tempted. This was indeed something he needed!

He couldn't help but ask, "What's the price?"

Taoist Tianyi revealed the standard smile of a shrewd merchant. "Don't rush. There are a few more items. Take a look at all of them before you decide."

As he spoke, he flicked his fingers, and several more light screens unfolded before Chen Gu.

Chen Gu examined each one.

The second item was an ancient finger bone.

"Originating from an animal-type humanoid super lifeform, the 'Great Demon Envoy,' this special relic measures 9.6 meters in length and weighs 12 tons!

Research has confirmed this relic to have an excellent promoting effect on four professions: 'Starshield Commanding Officer,' 'Quantum Wizard,' 'Abyssal Blacksmith,' and 'Radiation Missionary.' It can improve the success rate of advancements and reduce the risk of mutations when facing the Endless Realm.

The downside is that it may awaken fewer skills; current research indicates it only affects the 'Quantum Wizard.'

Additionally, it can be sold in cut pieces."

The next item was a small cup of black sand.

"Special deep-space star sand, weighing 40.55 grams. It is a byproduct of interstellar mining and extremely precious. To date, it is still impossible to accurately determine which kind of mineral it accompanies.

Scientists speculate that the material's formation is likely random.

Initially, it was a precious additive used by 'Abyssal Blacksmiths' when forging various items. Later, it was discovered to have excellent assistive effects for several professions during advancement. After using this material, the 'Radiation Missionary,' 'Psychological Spy,' and 'Potential Postman' professions experienced significant enhancements in many post-advancement skills, with improvements ranging between 11% and 34%.

Additionally, it can be sold by weight, but such a good item should, of course, be bought all at once!"

The last item was a mechanical product that looked like a desk lamp. However, this thing was wrapped with all sorts of colorful wires, which were somehow harmoniously and artistically matched, as if they coordinated with each other.

To Chen Gu, they felt like arteries.

"A Level Seven Energy-Gathering Internal Organ from the 'Energy Gathering Mechanical Species' known as 'Nuclear Slar.' It's one of the auxiliary organs for its most powerful technique, 'Nuclear Eruption.'

It's not large, but terribly heavy.

It should have a very good assistive effect on the various professions of the 'Atomic Holy Church,' though no one has researched its exact effects.

Additionally, although its effects are unknown, this item is really not cheap."

However, Taoist Tianyi specifically recommended this last item. Chen Gu looked at him, uncomprehending, as Taoist Tianyi expounded, "Even though 'Nuclear Slar' is rated only as a Level Seven dangerous species, the destructive power of many Level Eight dangerous species doesn't even come close.

The reason for its reduced rating is because its intellect is pitifully low. It only knows brute force, which doesn't fit the profile of a high-level boss.

Those who can kill a 'Nuclear Star' are all powerful individuals. For example, the owner of this war trophy—she is an outstanding hunter, long hailed as a genius in the professional domain. Her intuition is frighteningly accurate. If she feels that this item offers good assistance to the various professions of the 'Atomic Holy Church,' then she must be right.

Therefore, after she made this judgment, other experts, once they saw who made the claim, lost interest in researching it—because the results of their research would merely confirm her judgment."

Chen Gu smiled wryly and asked, "But after all, it's just an assistive effect, isn't it?"

Chapter 219 Expensive Price

The Taoist Master Tianyi was pushing hard on his sales pitch. "Don't forget, in many ancient stories and legends, the more mysterious something is, the more powerful it turns out to be in the end. Just like this organ, it could very well be the item that best resonates with you and propels you to the pinnacle of your life..."

"Stop!" Chen Gu called out urgently, feeling that the old Taoist was being somewhat of a jinx. I've only reached the Second Energy Level with my recent promotion, and that's the pinnacle of my life? This is not a blessing; it's a curse!

Taoist Master Tianyi saw Chen Gu's lack of interest. He curled his lips, seemingly scorning Chen Gu for not recognizing valuable goods, then said, "Well then, those are about all the items I remember that are suitable for you. Take a look at their prices."

With a flip of his hand, Taoist Master Tianyi revealed a "price" under each of the four items.

[Kutuwak Celestial Worm] Supermaterial: an item of the Third Energy Level.

The so-called "Third Energy Level item" refers to an item that can deal with professionals below the Third Energy Level.

The few items Chen Gu currently possessed all met this standard, but he wasn't willing to exchange any of them.

[Great Demon Envoy] Relics: The whole piece is priced at twelve [Fifth Tier Gene-modifying Drugs], or a lead on an undeveloped colonial star.

Negotiable if bought in sections.

There are many types of gene-modifying drugs, produced by various medical research institutions and companies, each working in different directions of enhancement. These drugs are named in a confusingly diverse manner. However, the only ones named directly as [Gene-modifying Drugs] are those introduced by the Freedom Alliance, the earliest initiators of gene modification research. Their series extends up to the Seventh Tier.

Their enhancements are comprehensive. It's said that if one continues to use them from the fifth tier onwards, they can develop special abilities similar to those of professionals.

The first three tiers of these Gene-modifying Drugs provide overall physical enhancements. From the fourth tier onwards, however, they begin to focus on different aspects. These can include strengthening muscles and bones, unlocking mysterious brain abilities, or stimulating certain internal organ functions.

At this point, signs of skill manifestation begin to show.

However, while the first three tiers are generally safe to inject, those beyond the fourth tier carry certain risks.

And the way to reduce these risks is to inject several doses at once.

Chen Gu was aware of the prices of these Gene-modifying Drugs; the official price tag for purchasing them was thirty million Starshield each! Twelve doses would be three hundred and sixty million Starshield!

But that price was certainly unattainable.

The Freedom Alliance tightly controlled these drugs. On the black market, their prices were several times the official rate, and they were scarce in quantity.

The only solution Chen Gu could think of was to go through his older son and inquire with the Freedom Alliance, under the Bureau of Mystic Security's name, to see if it was possible to buy them at the original price. If not, he would have to give up.

He couldn't afford the black market prices.

As for the other method of payment, a clue to an undeveloped colonial star... that was even less conceivable. In this era, the development of a colonial star is a massive project. Potential colonies often already harbor various powerful indigenous creatures that require a sizable military force to conquer.

After the conquest, the planet must be transformed into a more habitable state, all of which involves substantial financial investment.

But just the same, the returns are even more substantial. If you have the coordinates to an undeveloped colonial planet, there are interstellar finance tycoons willing to invest under very generous terms.

So even a mere clue is worth far more than this piece of relic.

This latter mode of payment seemed like an outrageous demand.

The price for Deep Space Star Sand was relatively "easier": one Close Range Attack Ship, or full armament of Mecha equipment for three hundred soldiers.

"Easier" does not mean cheaper. In terms of price, this batch of weapons was not less than the twelve [Fifth Tier Gene-modifying Drugs].

This made Chen Gu's heart thump: who exactly owns this Deep Space Star Sand, and what do they intend to do with it? Are they assembling an army? To rebel, or to engage in some kind of terrorist activities? If something went wrong in the future and it was discovered that he had provided these weapons, Chen Gu would inevitably be implicated.

Acquiring these weapons would be relatively simple for Chen Gu since Zhao Ji, the King of Freeloaders' in-laws, was a major arms dealer.

But Chen Gu really didn't dare get involved in this transaction.

The price for the [Nuclear Hesla] Core Organ made Chen Gu's eyelids twitch involuntarily: a beast capable of performing well in the giant beast battle competitions.

The price was simply outrageous. Don't forget that the mutated Hell Maw egg he last acquired at auction reached a price of one billion.

Even without the crazy bidding by Chen Biologics, the transaction price should have been around seven or eight hundred million Starshield.

The asking price for this Core Organ, even if not for a beast on the level of the Hell Maw, would likely require an investment of hundreds of millions for one that could achieve good results.

And the [Nuclear Hesla] itself was only a Level Seven hazardous species...

He glared at Taoist Master Tianyi with dissatisfaction. No wonder the man had tried so hard to sell him this item; he really took him for an easy mark.

Taoist Master Tianyi had thick skin, seemingly oblivious to Chen Gu's discontent.

"Think it over carefully. I still recommend you take a chance and choose the [Nuclear Hesla]'s Core Organ," he advised.

Chen Gu: "..."

Qing Ruyan said, "We'll consider it."

Taoist Master Tianyi waved his hand dismissively. "Whatever. When you've made up your mind on how to trade, just don't come bothering me."

"Okay."

Qing Ruyan then took Chen Gu out of the "Divine Realm." Chen Gu suddenly thought of something and asked, "Do all these... people here actually think they are deities?"

Qing Ruyan replied ambiguously, "How are they different from the deities of ancient legends from the time of our home planet? They possess immensely powerful abilities, and within their own realms, they can exist eternally..."

Chen Gu always felt that something was a bit off.

He didn't have the time to ponder these issues now but was focused on choosing between the items. "Do you have any suggestions?" he asked.

Qing Ruyan spread her hands and said helplessly, "They all suit you well, but the uncertainties are high. It feels like it's all a gamble. The decision is yours to make."

Chen Gu knew what she said was true and replied with a wry smile, "Alright, let me think it through carefully."

Qing Ruyan reminded him, "You need to hurry up. You've already applied for promotion, and I expect the arrangements to be made very soon."

Chen Gu parted ways with Qing Ruyan and headed home alone to think.

He immediately excluded the Deep Space Star Sand, then crossed off the [Nuclear Hesla] Core Organ. He needed to choose between the [Kutuwak Celestial Worm] Supermaterial and the [Great Demon Envoy] Relics.

But Chen Gu was no longer a child. He didn't want to choose between them. Truthfully, he wanted both.

Chapter 220 [No. 8 Additive]

The [Kutuwaq Star Body Worm] supermatter is relatively easy to obtain. If push comes to shove, I'll have to bite the bullet and part with... [The Silent Tuning Fork]. If that doesn't work, then [The Roar of Mocosaro]. I'm sure one of those will satisfy them, allowing me to trade for the supermatter I need.

As for the remains of the [Great Demon Emissary], after much hesitation, Chen Gu finally dialed his adult son's phone.

Promotion is a serious matter; this isn't the time to worry about saving face.

Chen Jixian listened to him and simply responded calmly, "I'll ask around." Then he hung up.

Chen Gu curled his lip. No telling if he's reliable or not.

After some thought, he also called Ossosa and Zhao Ji, asking for their help as well.

Surprisingly, Ossosa was the first to get back to him. "I've contacted friends at the Freedom Alliance Research Institute," Ossosa said. "They have two units on hand and can sell them to you at the official guide price: thirty million each."

Chen Gu was elated. "That's fantastic! I'll transfer the money right away!"

Even if I can't gather all twelve needed to buy the remains of the [Great Demon Emissary], these will still be useful for purchasing other items in the future. At worst, I can sell them on the black market and make a profit.

However, Ossosa hesitantly added, "I can help you buy them, but you have to agree to one condition."

Chen Gu was startled and cursed, "Look at you, you damn fool! Thinking you're all grown up now, daring to make conditions with your old man?"

Ossosa, unfazed, simply stated, "I want you to stay away from my daughter from now on!"

Chen Gu was speechless. It's not just that our daughter and I get along well—I actually **want** to tell you that bastard Orangutan has villainous designs on her mother!

"Fine," Chen Gu retorted. "It was just a couple more words with our girl. Look at you, with your dirty mind!"

Ossosa ignored his complaints and confirmed again, "You give me your word!"

"I give you my word!" Chen Gu said impatiently. "Are we done here? Are we done?"

"Transfer the money."

Chen Gu quickly transferred the money.

Then Zhao Ji called. "This stuff isn't easy to get," Zhao Ji said. "I had to promise my wife I'd make her six desserts, give her ten aromatherapy massages, and do eight role-plays before she agreed to help me get six units at cost. That's the best I can do."

Grateful, Chen Gu asked, "I just want to know, for those eight role-plays, what exactly will you be dressing up as?"

"Get lost!" Zhao Ji hung up.

Chen Gu grinned and transferred the money to Zhao Ji.

Unexpectedly, that's eight of them. Only four more to go.

But as time passed and Chen Jixian still hadn't replied, Chen Gu grew anxious. He scratched his head and finally decided to go out.

First, I'll head to the Atomic Holy Church to ask about the [No. 8 Additive].

It was the same church as before. A group of believers had just finished their sermon and were exiting through the front door in an orderly fashion, each with a determined look in their eyes. The cleric who had assisted Chen Gu previously stood by the doorway, bidding the faithful farewell. Once everyone had left, Chen Gu approached.

The cleric had already seen Chen Gu and smiled. "You should consider converting to the Holy Church. I believe you have an affinity with us."

Chen Gu ignored the suggestion and asked, "Where is His Excellency the Bishop? I have some matters to consult with him."

"Please follow me."

The cleric led Chen Gu inside. After waiting for half an hour in a small room, he was granted an audience with the Bishop.

Chen Gu stated his purpose directly. The Bishop seemed somewhat surprised. He looked at Chen Gu and said, "Please don't take offense, but after our last cooperation, we conducted a small investigation into you. After all, you are a 'Radiation Missionary'..."

Chen Gu understood and nodded. "I don't mind."

"If our information is correct," the Bishop continued, "you joined the Bureau of Mystic Security and became a 'Radiation Missionary' in less than four months."

"Yes," Chen Gu nodded. Actually, it's been less than three months, he thought.

"In such a short time, you're already about to be promoted to the Second Energy Level?" The Bishop was genuinely surprised. "Even within our Holy Church, among those talents who once shone as brilliantly as stars in the night sky, the fastest record is six months!"

Chen Gu was momentarily speechless. Perhaps I shouldn't have come, he thought, realizing he had exposed his capabilities. If I had nothing to hide, being seen as a prominent talent wouldn't be a bad thing. But I know my own situation best, he mused, feeling somewhat apprehensive.

With an actor's composure, he effortlessly concealed his inner turmoil and flashed a confident smile. "Perhaps it's because it's a low Energy Level," he said. "And during these past few months at the Bureau of Mystic Security, I've frequently participated in missions, so my promotion has been a bit faster."

Then he added, "I know the Holy Church's rules. I'm not a member, so the [No. 8 Additive] naturally can't be given to me for free. I'd like to see if there are any suitable missions available."

The Bishop shook his head gently and then tapped his fingers on the table, deep in thought.

Chen Gu didn't disturb him. After several minutes of contemplation, the Bishop looked up at Chen Gu. "Can we have an open and honest discussion?"

Chen Gu nodded. "I've always been honest."

The Bishop smiled. "We can provide you with the [No. 8 Additive]. We can even offer assistance within our capabilities during your future promotions. However, we do have one condition: we hope you can return the [Artifact of Annihilation]."

Chen Gu objected, "I don't have it..."

The Bishop waved his hand gently, then raised it to display some blurry battle scenes—images from several of Chen Gu's previous missions. Judging from the image quality and angles, they appeared to be from nearby surveillance devices.

The Bishop said, "Please believe us, we haven't tracked an agent of the Bureau of Mystic Security. These images were collected afterward. The power of some of your Biological Nuclear Explosions far exceeded the standards of your First Energy Level."

Chen Gu was at a loss for words.

In fact, since obtaining the [Artifact of Annihilation], he had used it only a few times. His Biological Nuclear Explosion's power far exceeded the standard of the First Energy Level thanks to the Nuclear Explosion Nun, Milna Katerina.

Great Actor Chen now understood what it meant to be truly speechless.

The Bishop said to him, "You recovered the [Artifact of Annihilation], and for this, we are truly grateful. Therefore, the Holy Church will certainly provide a corresponding reward that won't disappoint you."

He paused, then added, "Aside from this [No. 8 Additive], for your next two promotions, whatever you need, as long as the Holy Church possesses it, we can provide it. What do you think of this condition? It should at least ensure your advancement to the Fourth Energy Level."

Chen Gu knew the Atomic Holy Church was sincere. This was essentially the Holy Church guaranteeing his promotion to the Fourth Energy Level. Even Milna Katerina, the Saintess, was only at the Fourth Energy Level.

Although the [Artifact of Annihilation] is quite useful, if the promotion fails, everything will be for naught. On the other hand, the Atomic Holy Church is already convinced the artifact is in my possession and has offered generous conditions. Even if I refuse, they won't give up. They'll continue to look for opportunities to retrieve the [Artifact of Annihilation] from me—essentially, the trouble will be endless.

Even though I'm trying to convince myself, parting with such a renowned artifact—even if what I have is only half of it—is still somewhat regrettable.

He hesitated and said, "But then I won't have a suitable weapon..."