

Full Time 221

Chapter 221: Nuclear Wash

The Bishop furrowed his brows slightly and said with a hint of displeasure, "I originally thought you were not a greedy person."

Chen Gu remained silent. He was truly reluctant to part with the "World-Ending Sacred Hand." The Bishop shook his head. "Well, after all, the Holy Church cannot forcefully seize possessions. Please wait for me."

After saying that, the Bishop turned and left. About fifteen minutes later, he returned with a clergyman who held a long, narrow wooden box.

At the Bishop's prompting, the clergyman opened the wooden box in front of Chen Gu, revealing a special two-handed war sword inside.

When Chen Gu picked up the sword, its weight was substantial. It had a special affinity and quickly resonated with his "Radiation Missionary" profession.

With a gentle parting of his hands, Chen Gu drew the blade. An understated cold light shone forth. It gave the impression of a colossal beast lurking beneath the waters of a lake—a sense of imminent danger, not ostentatious yet sufficiently intimidating!

Chen Gu nodded in approval, carefully observing the sword. The blade was crafted into an eight-faceted shape and was well-proportioned. The fittings had an ancient and grand air. To be honest, Chen Gu was very satisfied.

The Bishop said, "This 'Riverwash Sword' is one of the personal swords passed down through several generations of the Holy Sons of the Holy Church. I believe any practitioner in this Star Sea will find it sufficient to use up to the Fourth Energy Level."

"The previous conditions remain unchanged, and we have added this 'Riverwash Sword.' I hope you understand that this is indeed our final offer.

"Besides, I can tell you explicitly that we have already found the other glove of the 'World-Ending Sacred Hand,' so no matter how hard you try, it's impossible for you to complete the Level 3-04 artifact set."

What more could Chen Gu say? His last demand had indeed been a bit excessive, but the Atomic Holy Church had still satisfied it.

He ran his hand over the scabbard and saw two ancient characters from an Eastern civilization carved in the middle: Riverwash.

Chen Gu smiled inwardly. What "Riverwash Sword"? It's clearly a "Nucleus-cleansing" Sword. Yes, that's very Atomic Holy Church indeed.

Without further hesitation, he took out the "World-Ending Sacred Hand," handed it to the Bishop, and then left the church, content with the "Riverwash Sword," the "No. 8 Additive," and the rest of the Holy Church's promises.

After Chen Gu left, the clergyman, still somewhat puzzled, asked the Bishop, "My Lord, we've paid too high a price. Although the 'World-Ending Sacred Hand' has extraordinary significance for the Holy Church, such terms are... too generous."

The Bishop smiled. "A Radiation Missionary who can advance to the Second Energy Level in less than four months is worth the Holy Church's investment. He will become a powerful ally to us in the future."

The clergyman suddenly understood.

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Playing with the "Riverwash Sword" in the car, Chen Gu felt increasingly embarrassed. He had made exorbitant demands this time, and he discovered that the "Riverwash Sword" seemed tailor-made for the "Nuclear Combat Technique."

Their combined power far exceeded that of the "World-Ending Sacred Hand" alone.

But this made Chen Gu think of another issue. After advancing, I'll still have to ask the Atomic Holy Church for the Second Energy Level 'Nuclear Combat Technique'... It seems I'm really inextricably entangled with them now.

As he neared home, his phone suddenly rang. This time, it was his adult son calling.

His message was succinct. "Go find Ouyang Guanghai. He has six 'Fifth Order Genetic Potions.'"

Chen Gu found it odd that Chen Ji had instructed him to go to Chen's Biotech, not the Bureau of Mystic Security. But his impolite adult son had bluntly hung up on him. With no recourse—since he was truly at a loss when it came to handling his son—Chen Gu had no choice but to call Ouyang Guanghai.

After making contact, Chen Gu rerouted his car. Half an hour later, he arrived at the Chen's Biotech Group headquarters in another district.

The area was an industrial one, lacking the bustling glamour of commercial zones. However, high-rise buildings were packed closely together, and a great number of people lived and worked there.

Ouyang Guanghai certainly remembered the "savior" of Chen's Biotech. He personally greeted Chen Gu at the main entrance, drawing sideways glances from many employees entering and exiting the building. They secretly wondered what kind of VIP warranted a personal reception from the boss.

Upon Chen Gu's arrival, Ouyang Guanghai greeted him warmly, smiling as he said, "The item you requested is ready. The price is indeed steep—forty-five million for one. Please, follow me."

Chen Gu was taken aback. Did his adult son instruct Ouyang Guanghai to purchase this from the black market, rather than acquiring it through the Bureau of Mystic Security at the original price?

He faintly understood why Chen Jixian hadn't replied to him yet.

The Freedom Alliance had likely turned down the Bureau of Mystic Security, and Chen Jixian had subsequently ordered Ouyang Guanghai to start making high-priced acquisitions.

He recalled the challenging situation Chen's Biotech currently faced. Those six doses of 'Fifth Order Genetic Potions' are worth two hundred and seventy million! For Chen's Biotech, with its tight operating capital, this is a massive burden.

Chen Gu said, "I'll pay for it."

Ouyang Guanghai immediately responded, "There's no need. President Chen said this amount will be deducted from his year-end bonus."

Seeing Chen Gu's expression, Ouyang Guanghai smiled. "Please rest assured. The group has already survived the toughest times, and we have you to thank for that. Ever since we purchased the mutated Abyssal Jiao-Li eggs, our outlook has improved significantly. Twenty days ago, we even successfully hatched the Abyssal Jiao-Li. Now, the group is functioning well in all aspects, with new medicines in development and ample funding."

Chen Gu breathed a sigh of relief. "That's good to hear."

Ouyang Guanghai suddenly asked, "Would you like to see the little one?"

A thought stirred in Chen Gu's mind. "Sure," he replied.

Ouyang Guanghai first took Chen Gu to collect the six 'Fifth Order Genetic Potions,' then led him to a breeding ground simulating a wild, natural environment.

There, through a glass window, Chen Gu saw the future behemoth playing in the sand.

It was still endearing and adorable, with a serpentine body, six tender little paws, pale blue skin with faint black stripes, a large head, and two small horns resembling little bumps.

Suddenly sensing something, it looked sharply in Chen Gu's direction, let out a cheerful, birdlike chirp, and then quickly ran over, hitting the glass with a THUD.

It tumbled back, whimpering, and spun in a circle a couple of times where it landed.

Ouyang Guanghai was pleasantly surprised. "It remembers you! This is truly wonderful. This mutated Abyssal Jiao-Li is astonishingly intelligent. I'm confident it will perform exceptionally in the beast combat competitions; it might even win the championship!"

The little one continued to call out, looking somewhat pitiful. It clearly saw Chen Gu but couldn't get close.

Chen Gu asked, "May I... hold it?"

Chapter 222 Battle Competition Draft

Ouyang Guanghai was somewhat troubled, but seeing the pitiful look on the little Minghuang Jiao's face, he gritted his teeth and said, "Of course, you can."

He ordered the breeders to open the main gate. Chen Gu walked in, and the little creature cheered and pounced on him. Chen Gu opened his arms to hold it; the little thing affectionately nuzzled him with its head, tickling Chen Gu, who burst into hearty laughter.

The little creature remembered its savior and had developed a strong sense of dependence on Chen Gu.

After playing with the creature for over half an hour, Chen Gu reluctantly left.

The little thing bit onto his trouser leg, whining pitifully, not wanting him to leave. Chen Gu could only promise to comfort it, "Don't worry, I'll come to see you often."

After Chen Gu came out, Ouyang Guanghai was discussing something with the researchers, who seemed very excited. Ouyang Guanghai approached Chen Gu and said, "You really should visit more often. According to our expert observation, it's like a small child now. Your frequent visits would greatly help develop its intelligence."

Chen Gu nodded. "I will."

He looked back at the little creature in the breeding enclosure. The little fellow was waving its small paws at him in farewell, and Chen Gu smiled again.

Before leaving, Chen Gu suddenly remembered, "I also have a beast egg here. Could you help me hatch it?"

Ouyang Guanghai's eyes lit up. "Of course!"

The last Minghuang Jiao egg pulled the corporation out of a difficult situation, he mused. If there's another one... this will be the beginning of the corporation soaring under my leadership!

The researchers behind him were also full of anticipation, but when they saw Chen Gu take out the metallic beast egg, their hopes were instantly dashed. "A mechanical species?"

This dangerous species was unlikely to yield any useful potions, nor could it achieve good results in giant beast battles.

Ouyang Guanghai forced a smile and took it, saying, "Leave it to us, don't worry."

After Chen Gu left Chen's Bio, he had fourteen "Fifth Stage Gene Potions" in his possession, two more than he needed to purchase the "Great Demonic Envoy" remains.

However, Chen Gu was still reluctant to use the items he possessed to exchange for the "Kutuwak Stellar Organism" supermatter.

Both the "Silent Tuning Fork" and "Morcosaro's Roar" were very useful.

"Morcosaro's Roar" could save his life at a critical moment, while the "Silent Tuning Fork" could often produce surprising effects in battle, proving immensely helpful.

「The next day」

Chen Gu, who had missed many classes, finally showed up at school.

His teachers and classmates had grown accustomed to this. Only his homeroom teacher, Mr. Dai, who was disappointed by his apparent lack of effort, called him into the office. Mr. Dai sternly lectured him, "You can't just give up like this! I believe in you. You can still become a person useful to society and to the Star Nation..."

However, Chen Gu's schoolwork hadn't fallen behind. Mr. Dai tested him and found his performance still excellent, which reassured the teacher slightly.

The high school curriculum was not difficult for Chen Gu. Although he hadn't been attending classes during this time, he studied his books whenever he had time and consulted Dora about any questions.

When Dora explained things to him, she often inadvertently delved deeper than the curriculum required, so Chen Gu's understanding of the subjects actually became more solid.

In the afternoon, when Darkray and the others saw Chen Gu, they excitedly swarmed him. Mao Yisheng was the most enthusiastic: "Brother Chen, Brother Chen, I've been selected!"

Chen Gu was puzzled. "Selected for what? Is it the kind where they line everyone up, you all bow and say, 'Good evening, boss,' and then they pick someone?"

Everyone: "..."

Darkray was also very excited. "It's for the giant beast battle draft! Brother Chen, you forgot. Last time, we participated in the college's internal exam, and then we also did the rookie physical tests. Only Mao was selected!"

Chen Gu suddenly realized he had been so busy with missions recently that he hadn't even known he'd missed the talent draft for the giant beast combat competitions.

He was also very happy for Mao Yisheng, as this was every young man's dream. "Which club? What was your draft pick?"

The Star Sea is vast, and the Star Nation is huge. The Confederation has over three thousand giant beast combat competition clubs, both large and small.

Among them, however, were only three hundred and sixty true professional clubs.

Normally, each professional club has only one draft spot per year. However, each year, hundreds of millions of hopefuls participate in the rookie physical tests to enter the draft!

Mao Yisheng being selected was truly fortunate.

Darkray answered for Mao Yisheng, "The Battle Fire Club, third round, thirtieth pick."

The draft each year is divided into four rounds, each with ninety spots. The ninety spots in the first round are all for the cream of the crop—often geniuses already proven in amateur clubs.

Their salaries are high; the top pick earns twelve million Starshields annually, and even the last pick of that round earns five million.

The ninety people in the second round earn significantly less, with annual salaries ranging between two million and four and a half million Starshields.

The third round's salaries are even lower, ranging from five hundred thousand to one point eight million Starshields.

Based on Mao Yisheng's draft position, he could earn an annual salary of about one million Starshields! For a recent high school graduate, that was an astronomical figure. Even after graduating from college, his annual salary likely wouldn't exceed one hundred thousand Starshields.

Chen Gu was genuinely happy for his friend, refraining from any boastful thoughts like, A million Starshields? Big deal. I myself have a billion! He asked, "What about your physical test data? Let me see."

After looking at Mao Yisheng's physical test data, Chen Gu understood why Mao Yisheng had been selected.

This kid, being a military-track student, already had a good physical foundation, but what truly caught the scouts' attention were his most important metrics:

Synchronization Rate with Other Species: 89

Thought Transmission Speed: 77

Adaptive Value: 90

These figures directly determine the cooperation between a partner and a giant beast; this is pure talent. The higher these values, the better. Mao Yisheng's figures were so impressive they would stand out even in the first round.

His only drawbacks were that he had never participated in lower-level giant beast combat competitions and lacked a strong foundation in combat skills.

Such numbers made him worth a gamble with the thirtieth pick in the third round.

The Battle Fire Club was an established club with a history spanning hundreds of years, but its performance had been mediocre in recent decades. However, for a rookie like Mao Yisheng, this was an opportunity. The club lacked truly outstanding players, giving him a better chance to make his mark.

Chen Gu thought for a moment and sent Mao Yisheng the "Ancient Martial Big Nine Forms." "Practice these," he advised. "Feel free to ask me anything you don't understand. Try to shore up your weaknesses in combat before you report to the club."

Mao Yisheng was touched. "Thank you, Brother Chen."

When school ended, Chen Gu was thinking of treating everyone to a meal to celebrate. However, he then received a call from Mei Lixue. "The Central Department has already arranged everything for you," she said. "In three days, you'll depart for Banjiangluo City on Witch Star. There's a generator there that can facilitate your promotion to 'Radiation Missionary.' Get ready as soon as you can."

Instantly, Chen Gu lost all inclination to treat anyone to a meal. After saying goodbye to everyone, he hurried home.

Chapter 223 Queen of Freedom

"It's time to make a decision." Chen Gu stretched lazily in the car and sighed. I have to obtain the extraordinary matter of the Ku-Tu-Wa-K Star Body Insect as soon as possible.

But when he got home, a call from Qing Ruyan came again. "I've discovered some very important information. The energy-gathering organ of the Hesla must be secured!"

Chen Gu wondered, "Why?"

Qing Ruyan huffed. "I went through a lot of trouble to dig up this information, you know."

"I'll treat you to a meal; you can choose the place."

"Really?" On the phone, Qing Ruyan's voice lit up with joy. "Okay, I'll send you the address in a moment."

Qing Ruyan sent the location of an out-of-the-way place named "Rivers and Lakes." Chen Gu drove there, expecting it to be some hidden, upscale establishment in the bustling city—after all, he was prepared to be thoroughly fleeced—only to be slightly taken aback upon arrival. It turned out to be a small, shabby restaurant; even Fairy Taste Residence behind Lubei Middle School was a couple of notches above this place.

Qing Ruyan was already waiting. Upon seeing him, she hopped up and down, waving her arms vivaciously. "Here, over here!"

Chen Gu looked doubtfully at the restaurant. It used a cooking method quite rare in this era: "traditional stir-fry." Several large stoves, stoked with coal, were fanned into life, emitting roaring flames.

Above the stoves were several large iron woks, where two plump cooks were energetically stir-frying food.

There were only eight tables in the restaurant, all filled with customers. Qing Ruyan was holding a hand-written paper ticket, something even rarer in this age, with their queue number: 37!

Chen Gu couldn't help but ask, "What number are they up to now?"

"29. Try to contain your drooling. It won't be long before it's our turn."

Hearing her muffled voice, Chen Gu thought to himself, You're the one who needs to hold back your drool, huh?

"Why choose this place? This here..." He gestured at the surroundings, to which Qing Ruyan replied matter-of-factly, "Because it's really delicious!"

Just then, from inside the restaurant, a whole tender steamed chicken was plunged into a wok of hot oil. The sound of SIZZLING AND CRACKLING arose, followed by a rich aroma of fat and meat. Qing Ruyan sniffed greedily, and even Chen Gu felt his appetite stir. "It does seem to have something special."

The two cooks and two waitstaff in the restaurant provided service that couldn't be described as enthusiastic, or even attentive, but the diners didn't mind and ate to their heart's content.

Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan sat patiently on the stone benches at the entrance, waiting for a full hour and a half before it was finally their turn.

As soon as they were seated, Qing Ruyan, clearly familiar with the menu, ordered with ease, reeling off a list of dishes that made Chen Gu hungry just by hearing their names.

Once the meal had been ordered, Chen Gu asked, "So, what's the news exactly?"

Qing Ruyan reluctantly tore her gaze away from the bustling woks, composed herself before the tableware, and began, "That Hesla is likely a dangerous mutant species. It once dominated an entire planet. It not only repelled numerous human fleet attacks but also engaged in a massive battle with the Alien Insect Race, ultimately driving away those despicable insects! Finally, the one who killed it was a very famous person."

Chen Gu's interest was piqued. "Who?"

"Mi Xiaoli!"

This time, Chen Gu was genuinely surprised. "The Queen of Freedom, Mi Xiaoli! The only woman in the Star Sea on par with Aviloya? The commander of the Rainbow Mercenary Corps and an invincible Ninth Power Level expert?"

For the general public, all they knew was Mi Xiaoli's public identity as the leader of the number one mercenary group in the Star Sea.

Due to the emergence of the Rainbow Mercenary Corps, some older mercenary groups, like the Blue Blood Thugs Mercenary Corps that Chen Gu was familiar with, gradually fell into decline.

The Rainbow Mercenary Corps had outstanding military achievements in the war against the Alien Insect Race. Their success even made the ace fleets of the four major Star Nations look inadequate in comparison.

And among professionals, confirmed Ninth Power Level individuals in the entire Star Sea were extremely rare; Mi Xiaoli was one of them.

There was also an interesting anecdote: Mi Xiaoli's original given name used characters that meant 'Little Grain.' As her strength and influence grew, everyone in the Star Sea felt this name was too 'cute' and didn't suit Her Majesty, the Queen of Freedom. Therefore, following a campaign by some enthusiastic media outlets, people began to write her name using different characters that sounded more imposing, resulting in the 'Mi Xiaoli' known today.

Eventually, even official records adopted this name.

It was unclear what her personal feelings about this were. One thing was certain, however: she greatly valued freedom. Otherwise, she wouldn't have earned the title Queen of Freedom.

With her strength, joining any Star Nation would have made her one of its most powerful figures. However, she couldn't stand such restraints. Instead, she decided to establish her own mercenary group, and it "accidentally" became the strongest in the Star Sea.

Qing Ruyan felt no envy, jealousy, or competitiveness toward such a woman. She said, "Very few people know that the Queen of Freedom has a terrifying intuition when it comes to judging rare materials. This may have something to do with her professional abilities. In any case, her judgments in this respect have hardly ever been wrong. If she specifically extracted the energy-gathering organ from that Hesla and

stated it was very useful for a Radiation Missionary, then it must be true. There might even be some unexpected benefits."

Hearing that it was a trophy from Mi Xiaoli, Chen Gu really wanted to acquire it, but he also felt troubled. "But what she wants is a dangerous species capable of competing in giant beast battles, and you should know how expensive that is. Moreover, I only have three days left. Even with the money, it's completely impossible to acquire a powerful dangerous species in time."

Chen Gu suddenly thought of another question. "Why does Mi Xiaoli want a giant beast? With her strength, couldn't she just easily capture one?"

Qing Ruyan gazed longingly as a waiter carried a dish past their table to another. She sighed softly before continuing to answer Chen Gu's question, "I inquired about this as well. It's said that the Queen of Freedom made a bet with a friend. Both bet on a different club, and the outcome will be determined by the clubs' year-end rankings. They both agreed not to interfere with their chosen club's operations. So, I think the buyer in this transaction will ultimately gift the giant beast to the club backed by the Queen of Freedom."

Chen Gu said, "Even so, the Queen of Freedom still broke the rules, right? She still meddled in the club's operations, just more indirectly. But a simple investigation would easily reveal it."

Qing Ruyan laughed merrily. "You really don't understand Her Highness, the Queen of Freedom. What is freedom, if not the ability to do as she pleases? This isn't the first time Her Majesty has done something like this. She has a famous saying: 'Why do I strive to be the most powerful person, if not so that you can't control me?'"

Chapter 224 - Everything is ready, but without a penny to one's name

Chen Gu fell silent. Fine, you have the bigger fists; whatever you say is right.

"But the problem is, I don't even have such a giant beast..."

Originally, Chen Gu had an idea. If the Queen of Freedom wasn't in a hurry, he could pull some strings and, in a few years, have Chen's Bio's Nether-Desolate Horned Wyrms represent the betting club in the giant beast battle competition. Chen's Bio had to make the Nether-Desolate Horned Wyrms famous in the giant beast battle competition to sell their medicine using that reputation. So, it didn't matter which club it was. But the Queen of Freedom's bet was for the next season, and the Nether-Desolate Horned Wyrms wouldn't make it in time.

The discussion came to a deadlock. Just as the dishes arrived, Qing Ruyan's thoughts immediately shifted, and she began eating happily.

From the perspective of the era, this "ancient cooking" method was very unhealthy, but it was delicious nonetheless.

Chen Gu had initially thought he was there to thank Qing Ruyan, and since he was a man, he should give her some leeway. But after a few bites, Gratitude? Manners? Please leave me be at once! Whoever dares to fight me for that last piece of spicy lamb blood, behold my "Biological Nuclear Explosion"!

Both being Professionals, they ordered over thirty dishes and ate everything, to the amazement of those around them!

They might have dined to their heart's content, but the diners waiting in line were in tears; the chefs were so taken up with their order that it greatly slowed down the serving speed for other tables.

Under the resentful gazes of the other customers, the two left, thoroughly satisfied. Chen Gu dropped Qing Ruyan off at her place. On the way, Qing Ruyan slapped her forehead as she remembered, "I know where you can find a suitable giant beast. You should be able to get it!"

「The next morning.」

Chen Gu took another day off from classes. He drove to pick up Qing Ruyan, and they left Empire River Star by spaceship.

By noon, they had landed on an agricultural colony planet called Green River Star.

A man in his forties came to greet them. Qing Ruyan introduced him to Chen Gu, "This is Lu Zhongtian."

Lu Zhongtian was somewhat surprised to see Chen Gu, "So young... Can you really come up with three thousand merit points?"

Chen Gu opened his Bureau of Mystic Security account, and the numbers on it made Lu Zhongtian's eyelids twitch. Chen Gu had become quite wealthy after the most recent rounds of mission rewards.

Lu Zhongtian gave a wry smile and said, "Young man, you're impressive. You make an old guy like me feel like I've lived for nothing."

Qing Ruyan smiled slightly. Such a young man is truly unique in the entire Bureau of Mystic Security.

"Well then, let's get going," Qing Ruyan said.

On the way, Lu Zhongtian explained to Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan, "The farms on both sides of this road belong to our family. We own nearly forty percent of the arable land on this planet."

Chen Gu was secretly impressed. This is what you call a real land tycoon!

"Everyone only knows about our Lu family's 'Big Head Paradise'," Lu Zhongtian continued, "but what really earns money are these simple plots of land. They provide us with a steady income every year. The success rate of cultivating those creatures at 'Big Head Paradise' isn't very high, and it's expensive."

'Big Head Paradise' was Chen Gu's destination this time. It was a facility specializing in raising giant beasts, well-known within the entire giant beast battle circuit. The beasts raised there had helped many clubs achieve recognition—though they had not won championships, they had placed in the top ten five times.

Lu Zhongtian was also a member of the Bureau of Mystic Security. He was currently planning to advance to the Fourth Energy Level but needed many items for preparation. Most of these had to be exchanged from the Bureau, and he was short on merit points.

Through Qing Ruyan's introduction, Chen Gu struck a deal with him. Chen Gu would pay three thousand merit points, and Lu Zhongtian would give him a decent giant beast.

In this trade, it was Lu Zhongtian who was more desperate than Chen Gu. This became evident when Lu Zhongtian, upon receiving the news, rushed back overnight and hurried to the spaceport early this morning to welcome them.

In the entire Bureau of Mystic Security, there weren't many who could readily produce three thousand merit points. The high-ranking special agents earned a lot of merit points but also had huge expenses, and Lu Zhongtian had nothing of value to trade with them. It also became clear that the merit points from the Bureau of Mystic Security were indeed very valuable.

Such a giant beast could be publicly sold for two hundred million Starshields, yet it could be acquired for three thousand merit points. Merit points couldn't be directly equated with money because, in Lu Zhongtian's situation, the giant beast and merit points had values different from those in the outside world.

Both were straightforward people. Chen Gu soon chose a giant beast and handed over three thousand merit points to Lu Zhongtian. Lu Zhongtian was overjoyed; he finally saw hope for his promotion. Relying on his own accumulation, he didn't know how long he would have had to wait.

On Green River Star, Chen Gu immediately entered the "God Realm" and, under Qing Ruyan's guidance, completed the trades.

He purchased the exotic substance of the "Kutuwak Star Body Worm" with twelve vials of the "Fifth-Tier Gene Potion."

With one giant beast, he purchased the energy-gathering internal organs of "Hesla."

For the trade involving the remains of the "Great Demon Envoy," Chen Gu offered the "Soundless Tuning Fork," but this trade was rejected by the other party. The reason given was that the "Soundless Tuning Fork" wasn't valuable enough for the entire remains. However, if Chen Gu was willing, the other party would trade about one-third of it.

Chen Gu, running out of time, clenched his teeth and exchanged the "Soundless Tuning Fork" for the "Roar of Mocosaro."

However, the other party again pointed out that the current value of the "Roar of Mocosaro" had to be discounted because it needed replenishment of exotic substances before it could be used.

This time, Chen Gu got angry. Offering the "Roar of Mocosaro" was already a huge sacrifice for him, done just to ensure his promotion would be foolproof. He told the other party directly: if they weren't satisfied, they should cancel the trade.

The other side was silent for over ten minutes before finally answering, "Deal."

Chen Gu let out a sigh of relief, though he felt somewhat empty. He had truly bled himself dry this time. He'd given away two precious items and an additional three thousand merit points, virtually rendering himself destitute overnight.

However, if I can advance to the Second Energy Level, it will all be worth it.

That very night, Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan returned together to Empire River Star. Both had the same thought: "We deserve to have a big meal at 'Rivers and Lakes'!"

"This time I'm ordering a hundred dishes!"

「Two days flew by.」

This time, Chen Gu went to Witch Star's Roaring River City alone. The moment he boarded the starship, he thought of Nagano Takesakura, and Marcus, the team leader still under "observation," feeling a sense of poignancy.

I hope I can succeed this time. Chen Gu silently prayed.

Even after spending most of his fortune and making all the preparations, no one could be completely sure about a Professional's promotion. Moreover, those restless beings within the Endless Realm were stirring. And within Chen Gu's body, the remains of the Myriad Forms Heavenly Dragon added to his anxiety.

Surely it won't cause trouble for me at a time like this, right?

Chapter 225 - A Minor Character Arrives at the Old, Young, Bordering Poor Area

Six hours later, the spaceship landed on Witch Star. Chen Gu then transferred to a planetary aircraft to reach Manjiang Luo City.

Just like last time, an administrative staff member from the local branch was at the spaceport to welcome him.

The staff member was a middle-aged woman with a proper appearance. Initially, her attitude was strictly business, but the moment she saw Chen Gu, it transformed into "enthusiastic hospitality." Deep down, she felt it was important to let their allies experience the renowned hospitality of the people of Witch Star.

"Little Brother Chen, your promotion ceremony is scheduled for tomorrow morning. Don't worry, I'll speak with those 'bookworms,' and I'll make sure everything is arranged perfectly for you.

"Look at you, handling such an important matter all by yourself. Don't you have any family? Oh dear, you poor thing, it really tugs at the heartstrings...

"You know, the accommodation arranged by the bureau is really uncomfortable. How about you come rest at my place for the night? I guarantee you'll be able to relax completely..."

Chen Gu shivered and quickly declined. "No, thank you! The place arranged by the bureau is perfectly fine." He wanted nothing more to do with this greeter; she was like a ravenous wolf. He hailed a cab and made a swift escape.

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Manjiang Luo City on Witch Star was considered a "remote area" within the Confederation. This differed from Empire River Star, which was simply a poor, undeveloped backwater. Manjiang Luo City, however, was not only poor but also extremely distant from Capital Star.

After settling into the hotel arranged by the Manjiang Luo City branch, Chen Gu decided against any further preparations. Everything that needed to be done was already complete; it was better to relax now.

Other branches typically arranged accommodation directly within their main buildings. However, the Manjiang Luo City branch likely lacked sufficient dormitory space, so they had arranged a hotel instead.

The hotel's accommodations were indeed very basic.

Although remote, the city had its own unique local culture and charm. Chen Gu went out for a solitary walk and soon discovered something intriguing: a food street!

Such places had become exceedingly rare throughout the Star Sea. Yet, this particular food street was not only bustling with a wide variety of options, but most vendors also still employed "ancient cooking" methods!

Since arriving in this era, apart from his visit to the "Jianghu" diner with Qing Ruyan, Chen Gu hadn't seen any open-flame cooking. Everything involved new-age food processing methods: safe, efficient, healthy, and supposedly delicious.

That last part was merely a marketing slogan.

Arriving there, Chen Gu heard the familiar cacophony—the clatter of pots and pans—and smelled the intermingling aromas of various foods. He felt as if he were soaking in a comfortable hot spring, every pore in his body relaxing in bliss.

He started at the first stall and ate his way down the street. Whenever he found something particularly delicious, he ordered an extra portion to take back for Qing Ruyan.

Still not satisfied, he made a video call to Qing Ruyan, giving her a virtual "tour" of the entire food street. This left Qing Ruyan practically drooling on the other end of the call. "Such an amazing place actually exists in the Star Sea?"

"AAAH, I can't take it anymore! I have to book a spaceship ticket and fly over right now!

"No, wait... I can't. I have a mountain of work waiting for me. I don't have time. This is tragic!"

Chen Gu glanced at her chest and thought, She has no idea. Those who are flat-chested are even more pitiful.

Chen Gu thoroughly enjoyed his outing, only returning to the hotel in the evening. He showed Qing Ruyan the delicious snacks he had packed for her. Qing Ruyan, her voice as soft as water and her eyes as alluring as silk, cooed, "I await my lord's return in our hometown."

After they ended the call, the smile slowly vanished from Qing Ruyan's face, replaced by a somewhat forlorn and hesitant expression.

Should I inform the Director-General that Chen Gu is about to be promoted?

Qing Ruyan wrestled with her conscience. She was torn between her guilt towards her friend, her reverence for the Director-General, and her responsibility for her "mission."

His promotion application was submitted to headquarters long ago. The Director-General probably already knows.

Finally, she found an excuse to convince herself and decided against reporting it.

「」

Relaxed from his day's outing, Chen Gu slept soundly that night, his breathing deep and even, his entire body relaxed.

The hotel room's lighting, controlled by an intelligent system, began to dim as he drifted off to sleep, eventually settling into the optimal level of darkness for slumber.

Around midnight, a shadowy bubble emerged from deep within Chen Gu's body, rising like a vesicle from beneath the water's surface.

Then the bubble burst, and the shadowy essence swiftly spread across the surface of Chen Gu's body, quickly suffusing his skin with its dusky color.

His long, sleeping breaths transformed into a low, guttural growl, like the sound of a monstrous creature from some unknown, terrifying abyss!

This state persisted for a full half hour before the dusky color on his body gradually faded, eventually returning to normal as if nothing had occurred.

In a distant corner of the cosmos, a supreme being, deep in slumber, gently opened one eye. Within that eye, it seemed the entire Star Sea swirled, reflecting the birth and death of countless civilizations.

After a moment, the profound eye closed again.

「」

The next morning, Chen Gu awoke feeling refreshed and in excellent spirits. He took a cab to the branch office himself.

The building could hardly be called a "skyscraper"; with only a little over thirty floors, it was considered a small structure in this era.

After his identity was verified, he was led deep underground beneath the small building, to where the generator was located.

While Chen Gu waited outside, the staff inside were methodically operating the machinery and making preparations.

A few researchers in white protective suits were chatting idly. "A promotion from the First Energy Level to the Second Energy Level? Just a minor procedure."

"So why did this guy come all the way to our facility for his promotion?"

"Who knows? He probably doesn't have much backing, so he got shunted over to us. Everywhere else, the generators are booked solid. Someone without connections might have to wait years for a slot."

"Once we're done with this, let's all go grab a drink."

"No problem."

Soon, all preparations were complete. The section chief said, "Alright, call the kid in. If we finish this quickly, we can call it a day."

Just then, a security guard reported over the comm channel, "Chief, the Head of the Substation is here."

The section chief was puzzled. What's the Head of the Substation doing here?

Soon, the Head of the Substation entered with several people. The section chief went to greet them and was surprised to see that the Head of the Substation had brought a large case—it was over ten meters long, extremely heavy, and being carried by a transport robot.

"What's this...?"

At a command from the Head of the Substation, the transport robot opened the case. Inside, sealed within a special transparent material, lay a massive segment of a finger bone.

"This is material the operative personally acquired for this promotion—the special remains of the Super Life Form, the Great Demon Envoy. Add it to the generator," the Head of the Substation instructed.

Chapter 226 - We Can't Take This Job

"This..." The director and the surrounding researchers were all dumbfounded. Wasn't it said that a minor special agent with no background was kicked to a remote area like ours for promotion? How does he have such great influence to obtain such a huge piece of remains? An utterly unconnected fellow managed to get hold of such a large piece of remains?!

The director and researchers all pulled long faces. This was no small matter. A piece of remains so large, their generator simply couldn't fit it. If it were a generator from another place, it could definitely be inserted whole. However, theirs was an outdated model, discarded from other places and sent to Witch Star. It had limited internal space and simply couldn't accommodate it.

The director and his researchers exchanged glances. We're done for. We're in for a busy time now—overtime today. It looks like the evening's get-together will have to be canceled.

"Everyone, prepare yourselves. We're going to start cutting the remains," the director ordered.

The Division Chief was still uneasy. "Be serious! This piece of remains is no small matter. If you damage it during cutting and the person doesn't achieve the desired effect during their promotion, they'll sue us for compensation. I'll hold every single one of you responsible!"

The director couldn't help but ask, "Chief, how much is this thing worth?"

"I hear it's twelve doses of "Tier 5 Genetic Potion." The cheapest black market price is 45,000,000. You do the math."

A young researcher breathed a sigh of relief. "Forty-five million? Although Witch Star is poor, surely the department can come up with 45,000,000?"

The Division Chief glared at him. "Forty-five million—per dose!"

The young researcher, who was operating the cutting equipment, felt his hands tremble. "Twelve doses... that's 540,000,000..."

The director panicked. "Steady your hands! If it's damaged, we can't afford to pay for it even if we sold ourselves!"

The researchers inwardly groaned. What kind of rotten job is this? No reward for doing it well, but if we mess up, it's utter ruin!

Cutting these remains required particular care. It wasn't a matter of simply choosing any position and hacking away based on weight, as doing so could likely ruin a precious piece of remains beyond recovery, rendering it worthless. It was necessary to use instruments to scan it first, then begin cutting from areas where the remains' energy signature was weak.

Chen Gu waited outside, bored to death, while inside, the researchers cut with trepidation.

Chen Gu checked the time. It was almost 11:00. What's going on? My promotion was scheduled for the morning, and now it's almost noon. Are they going to delay me until the afternoon? Is it because I'm not from Witch Star that I'm being looked down upon and given a hard time?

Chen Gu curled his lip. I really want to use my son's name to threaten them a bit, to let them know that I have backing too. But... considering the broader picture of family stability, I'd better not. If that unfilial son threw it back in my face, this old father would lose too much dignity.

Chen Gu waited until nearly 12:00. He was getting hungry, and still, no word had come from inside. He felt very frustrated outside, unaware that the director and his researchers inside were even more so.

This wasn't an ordinary piece of remains; it was from a humanoid super life-form, inherently one of the most difficult types to handle. This phalange was a prime example of that challenge! Even with Capital Star's generator, experts would have to rack their brains to cut it. Meanwhile, here on Witch Star, this "remote and impoverished" region, their equipment lagged a full two generations behind Capital Star's. Trying to section this remnant was proving incredibly difficult.

In fact, its pricing at twelve "Tier 5 Genetic Potions" was slightly undervalued, precisely because it was so hard to dissect. The seller had said it could be sold in sections, but in reality, they were also reluctant to undertake such a task.

The director and all the researchers were at their wits' end. Seeing it was almost noon, the director sighed helplessly. "Let's go. We'll take him out for a meal. If it really doesn't work out, we'll just have to bite the bullet, admit our incompetence, and acknowledge we can't handle this job."

The researchers murmured among themselves, asking in low voices, "Director, who's... paying for this meal?"

The director fumed, "I am!"

Chen Gu was really getting angry. Just then, SWOOSH! The door slid open, and the director, accompanied by several researchers, came out. He was all smiles as he went forward to shake Chen Gu's hand. "Comrade Chen Gu, right? Truly a young talent with great potential."

Chen Gu was baffled. What's this all about? Is this the proverbial 'smile that hides a dagger'?

"You're too kind. I am Chen Gu."

The director made a show of checking the time. "It's almost noon! Let's go have lunch first. I'll be the host. We'll all treat Comrade Chen Gu to the specialties of Witch Star."

"There's no need..." Chen Gu began to decline, but the other researchers chimed in.

"That's right! It's not every day we get visitors. We must offer our hospitality."

"It's only right. Witch Star's economy may not be advanced, but our food is definitely worth trying."

"Let's go, let's go! It's not often the director treats. I suggest Drunken Tiger Villa..."

Chen Gu, full of doubts, was ushered along. Only upon arrival did he discover that the restaurant was of an impressively high caliber.

The director was exceedingly polite, ordering expensive dishes. However, before eating, Chen Gu held back his chopsticks. "Director, you have to clarify what's going on first. Otherwise, I won't be able to eat this meal in peace."

The atmosphere became awkward. All the researchers were tech nerds, which was almost equivalent to being... cowards. At this point, they all turned to look at the director.

The director's old face reddened as he hemmed and hawed, "We just... think highly of Comrade Chen Gu and wanted to get to know you..."

A young researcher, unburdened by the pressures of leadership, sighed. "Director, just tell him the truth."

The director, irked, glared at him but finally said, "That remnant... we... can't cut it open..."

"Huh?" Chen Gu was puzzled. After the director explained everything in detail, Chen Gu was also stunned. I made such thorough preparations, yet I never expected to be stumped at this stage!

Chen Gu thought for a moment. "Take me to see it."

"Let's eat first..." the director began, but Chen Gu interrupted him. "Sorry, it's not that I'm unappreciative, but please understand. This concerns my future. If this can't be resolved, I won't be able to rest or eat in peace!"

The director and the researchers fell silent, embarrassed. They understood Chen Gu was being very considerate by not blaming them for their incompetence. However, the situation itself was the loudest slap in the face, hitting them hard.

The group quickly returned to the generator. Chen Gu observed the remnant placed in the center, surrounded by containment equipment to prevent any radiation leakage. The researchers got busy, scanning it with various instruments and explaining all the difficulties to Chen Gu.

Chapter 227 Facing the Endless Realm (Part 1)

Chen Gu had been listening the entire time, occasionally nodding, but not voicing any opinion.

Once they had finished speaking, Chen Gu thought for a moment, then approached the remains and activated his skill, "Mind Belief."

He silently sensed the entire remains. A researcher voiced his concern, "The radiation from the remains is extremely fearsome."

Chen Gu said indifferently, "My profession is 'Radiation Missionary'." Would I be afraid of radiation?

The researcher had no reply and fell silent.

About half an hour later, Chen Gu drew the "Riverwash Sword" he carried with him. The director flinched and hid behind the other researchers. "Wh-what are you going to do?"

Chen Gu merely fixed his gaze on the remains. "I am here to cut."

"Ah?" a researcher blurted out. "You need to be careful! If you mess it up, it's completely ruined. Over half a billion will have gone down the drain..."

The others either tugged at his sleeve, stopped him with their eyes, or directly placed a hand over his mouth. It's better for him to ruin it himself than for us, right?

Chen Gu ignored them. He invoked the "Nuclear Combat Technique" and, following the feeling in his heart, a flash of sword light suddenly streaked by!

WHOOSH—

The group of tech nerds didn't even catch his movement before Chen Gu had already sheathed his sword and said coolly, "It's done."

Curious, the researchers gently operated the lifting equipment and discovered that the remains had been cleanly bifurcated. Other researchers quickly began scanning with their instruments and then exclaimed in surprise, "No problems, a perfect cut!"

Their gazes towards Chen Gu had completely changed. They were highly skilled themselves and thus revered an even more advanced level of skill. To them, someone like Chen Gu was a truly mighty figure!

"You're amazing!" Even the young researcher, who was usually fearless, used honorifics and gave a thumbs-up.

Chen Gu asked matter-of-factly, "Can I start my promotion now?"

"We will prepare for you immediately," the director cooperated fully, but Chen Gu stopped him again. "Add this as well."

The director took it, saw its contents, and then lost his composure. "Fear-insect series supermatter, a full 8.21 grams!"

The amount of supermatter needed for promotion was relatively small. For someone like Chen Gu advancing to the Second Energy Level, 4 grams was usually enough; 6 grams would be more than sufficient if one wanted to be on the safe side. What a lavish spender!

Looking at the 'Great Demon Envoy' phalanx bone remains to the side... The director sighed internally. This must be the son of a magnate—the cost of this promotion alone has surpassed a billion Starshield!

My ordinary life may seem to have its achievements, but what he spends on a single promotion is more than I could earn in several lifetimes... The director suddenly felt everything around him grow dim.

He took the supermatter and personally added it to the generator. At the same time, several researchers operated machinery to hoist the bisected remains into the generator.

When the director came out, he found Chen Gu instructing the researchers responsible for the mechanical arms, "Bring this in as well."

Chen Gu had been carrying a metal case all along. Two researchers asked, "What's inside?"

"An organ from an Energy Gathering Mechanical Species."

A researcher eagerly ran over, reaching for the case. "I can carry it in."

Chen Gu, however, did not let go. "It's too heavy. Better use the mechanical arm."

The researcher was skeptical. "How heavy can such a small case be?"

"1.02 tons," Chen Gu answered truthfully.

The researcher sheepishly withdrew his hand. "Hahaha, better use the mechanical arm then."

Chen Gu's physical fitness was top-notch among Professionals. Just because he could lift it didn't mean an average person could.

The director asked in astonishment, "What Energy Gathering Mechanical Species has such a small organ weighing over a ton?"

After thinking for a moment, Chen Gu felt there was nothing to hide and said, "Khesla."

As soon as he said this, he felt the atmosphere around him suddenly become somewhat solemn. Glancing at the director and the researchers, he saw their expressions had also turned grave. A few from the research institute whispered among themselves:

"Could it be such a coincidence? Is it that Khesla from the Kamala Cluster 78?"

"It shouldn't be. There are many Kheslas; how could it be that particular one? Besides, the Queen of Freedom killed that Khesla purely for 'Freedom'. Given her wealth and status, she would have no need to sell it."

The director cautiously asked, "Excuse me... is it the one slain by the Queen of Freedom?"

Chen Gu was puzzled. "How did you know?"

An eerie silence fell over the room—it was indeed hers! That was a trophy of the Queen of Freedom; what a massive price must have been paid to obtain it!

The director felt the gloomy surroundings become even darker.

He explained to Chen Gu, "Because this Khesla was on a planet within the Kamala Cluster 78, not far from our Witch Star. The Queen of Freedom's hunt for the colossal beast caused a huge sensation on our Witch Star back then..."

Chen Gu murmured, "Such a coincidence..."

Two researchers operated the mechanical arms, hoisting the case inside. Then the director asked, "It's all set up. You can open the case once you're inside. Is there anything else we can do for you?"

Chen Gu shook his head. "No, give me a moment." He sat down and injected himself with No. 8 Additive.

Seeing this, the director exclaimed, "No. 8 Additive! That's a precious resource from the Atomic Holy Church, impossible to buy on the open market!"

The surrounding darkness... ah, it's completely engulfing me!

How foolish! Who said he was without backing? This might be the most influential figure our Barbarian Luo City branch has received in decades!

Chen Gu, now prepared, entered the generator at a signal from the staff.

HISS—

The airtight door descended, and the generator was completely sealed. The director spoke to Chen Gu over the communication channel, "Are you ready? We're going to start."

Chen Gu replied, "Begin."

The director slowly pushed the old-fashioned lever before him all the way up. A dedicated power line began to channel immense energy into the generator.

The aging equipment vibrated slightly, emitting clanking sounds. The light inside grew increasingly brighter, eventually becoming too dazzling to look at directly.

The director closely monitored the various readings. If any of them reached the red line, the process would have to be stopped immediately, and the promotion would fail.

Fortunately, all readings were still some distance from the red line. Seeing that everything was stable, the director breathed a small sigh of relief.

Suddenly, one of the readings spiked violently, shooting several times past the red line. The director was shocked. Just as he was about to terminate the promotion, the reading quickly dropped back into the safe range.

The director thought his eyes had played a trick on him and didn't pay it much mind.

"It seems I'm getting old, just like this generator," the director mused, his enthusiasm waning.

Inside the generator, Chen Gu once again experienced the agony he had felt during his initiation ceremony. It was as if every cell in his body was being utterly pulverized, only to be reformed anew. This process wrought profound changes within him, changes that even Chen Gu himself could not clearly define...

Chapter 228 Confronting the Endless Realm (Part 2)

The remains of the 'Archfiend's' phalanges, the supermatter of the 'Kutuwak Celestial Worm,' and the energy-collecting entrails of 'Hesla' underwent changes within the generator, slowly decomposing and merging into Chen Gu's body.

Time trickled by. When Chen Gu finally endured the agony, he suddenly felt an overwhelming darkness engulfing him. It's very similar to entering the 'Endless Realm' game!

Immediately after, his whole being shook, as if a space fighter or Star Armor were released from its mothership. Slowly, a unique Star Sea began to appear before his eyes.

In this vast space, a group of tiny, fragmented star clusters approached rapidly, enveloping Chen Gu in an instant. In that moment, Chen Gu felt as if he could see... everything!

Every temptation that could exist in this world presented itself before him, and he had no doubt that he could possess them all!

All the sins that existed in the world were within Chen Gu's control. He could bestow those sins upon any creature.

Anyone who had ever looked down on him, despised him, insulted him, or hurt him could, if he wished, bear the most terrifying pain caused by these sins!

The most powerful forces in the world, the abilities of various professionals, were all within Chen Gu's grasp. He could even obliterate a planet with a single thought.

If he desired, he could easily enslave a nation, and everyone would tremble at his feet!

But faced with all this, Chen Gu just smiled slightly and said, "Too primitive. You're just a demon form, aren't you?"

Chen Gu immediately heard a roar filled with immense anger and magnitude, seemingly demonstrating its power and temper to him. The entire space seemed to be responding to this anger.

The greatest benefit that 'Past Lives of the Four Hundred' brought to Chen Gu was not the abilities of the professionals but their vast memories.

Therefore, when facing certain problems, Chen Gu had a wealth of experience.

For instance, when confronting the 'Endless Realm,' Chen Gu had the ascension experience of three high Energy Level professionals. So, he saw through the demon form's 'little tricks' at a glance.

At this moment, Chen Gu remained calm and collected, saying, "Such low-level temptation can probably only lure ordinary people. But I understand; after all, you're just the lowest class of demon form. This is about your level, I suppose."

The roaring grew even louder, carrying a might that could shake the stars. Chen Gu laughed again, "What? If seduction doesn't work, you start threatening? It seems you really have run out of tricks!"

WHOOSH—

The tiny, fragmented star clusters rolled away, full of disdain and dissatisfaction. It didn't think its skills were inadequate. Instead, it felt that Chen Gu was some sort of freak and that his imperviousness to temptation was his problem, not a reflection of its own insufficient power.

Chen Gu quietly breathed a sigh of relief. Although he appeared composed, his heart was tense. After all, he was facing an entity from the 'Endless Realm'!

It was because this demon form was weak. If it had been stronger, capable of seeing through his heart, it would not have given up so easily.

The demon form left in anger and disdain. Chen Gu mused, I've cleared this challenge. It should be time to return to the real world...

But after waiting for a moment, he found himself still floating in this mystical space.

Hmm? He was beginning to feel uneasy when, sure enough, a pitch-black fruit appeared out of nowhere right beside him.

This fruit looked a bit like a hairy apple. Normal apples have shades of green, red, and yellow, but this one was deep blue.

Chen Gu was very fond of blue, but the shade of this apple was the most disgusting blue he had ever seen in his life.

On the outside, the apple was covered in dead-white hairs that writhed in the void like maggots. Suddenly, the apple turned to face Chen Gu, revealing a vertical slit resembling an eye. Then, the apple quickly rotted. Its core seemed to take root and sprout in this space, rapidly growing into a monstrous conglomerate of bizarre things!

Rotten fish heads, castrated sexual organs, broken ancient coffins, a pair of giant frog legs, blood-soaked soil, and countless diced eyeballs...

Chen Gu immediately felt a terrible contamination rushing towards him!

...

At the Manjiang Luo Sub-bureau, a monitoring device suddenly emitted a series of BEEPS.

There were only four levels on this device.

It was linked to a system monitoring invasions from the 'Endless Realm.' The first level indicated a demonic shape invasion, the second was for Strange Creatures, the third for carnal demons, and the fourth was for the Evil God!

The first level alarm had already sounded, and neither the director nor the researchers were surprised. During professional advancement, one would directly face entities from the 'Endless Realm,' and attracting a demon form was inevitable. Even when advancing to the Third Energy Level, it was common to attract two or even three demon forms.

So when the first level alarm rang, everyone was concerned for Chen Gu, but not surprised.

However, Chen Gu did not disappoint them. The first level alarm stopped soon after. Everyone nodded in approval. He had spent so much money and prepared so thoroughly that resisting the demon form's temptation and successfully advancing was expected.

With the first level alarm cleared, this advancement should have ended.

Below the Third Energy Level, professionals facing the 'Endless Realm' typically only attracted the attention of demon forms—after all, they were too weak for higher beings to deign to personally tempt and contaminate such minor individuals.

But following the first level alarm, the second level alarm sounded immediately!

The director and his research staff's faces paled. "A Strange Creature! A Strange Creature has appeared!"

"Just advancing to the Second Energy Level, how could he attract a Strange Creature?"

The continuous BEEPING of the alarm was particularly jarring, and everyone's heart sank. Second Energy Level facing a Strange Creature... that was an almost certain recipe for failure.

Even at the Third Energy Level, it would probably be impossible to withstand such dreadful temptation and contamination.

Chen Gu, by slashing the remains of the 'Archfiend's' phalanges, had already won the admiration of these technically-minded researchers, especially the younger ones, who held him in high regard.

At this moment, everyone was deeply pained. The young researchers clenched their teeth hard, still harboring a sliver of hope for a 'miracle.'

The older researchers, however, sighed and shook their heads. One said to the director, "Report it. If we delay, it will be too late, and this will lead to a disaster!"

The director's face was grave as he gently pressed a button, and a piercing alarm blared throughout the sub-bureau!

All special duty groups and action teams moved swiftly, evacuating non-combat personnel from the sub-bureau before assembling outside the generator.

Chapter 229

The Director burst in, his face stern, and loudly demanded, "Just for a promotion to the Second Energy Level, and there's already been a major blunder? Did you have to sound the war alarm because of this?"

The Chief helplessly pointed at the instrument. "We detected a Mutant invasion... He probably won't be able to hold on. We have no other choice!"

"A Mutant!" exclaimed the Director. The Chief's face turned pale as he said, "Director, Chen Gu prepared a large amount of resources for this promotion."

After the Chief explained what Chen Gu had prepared, even the Director took a sharp intake of breath. This kid is so rich...

The Chief shook his head. "He prepared so many good things. His level after promotion will far exceed those of his peers, but if he falls into mutation, the harm caused would also be very substantial. I suggest you immediately send out a distress signal and report to the General Bureau."

The Director was, of course, reluctant to do so, as it amounted to admitting the branch's incompetence. However, he was also very clear on the massive harm Chen Gu's mutation could cause. He felt extremely helpless. How could assisting with a simple promotion leave us in such a passive situation?

"Alright then," he sighed, sending out a distress signal to the other branches in the cities of Witch Star and also reporting the situation here to the General Bureau.

BEEP—

The phone rang. Qing Ruyan, seeing it was the Director-General, hastily answered, "Director-General."

Aviloya's voice had a stern and icy edge. "Chen Gu went to Witch Star for promotion to the Second Energy Level. Why didn't you report such an important matter to me?"

Qing Ruyan felt a jolt of anxiety and quickly defended herself, "Wuzhaoyin City sent Chen Gu's promotion application to the General Bureau. I thought you knew..."

Actually, she was well aware that applications of this level would never reach the Director-General. The departments below could handle them.

Aviloya snorted. Shortly after, a report came through, and Aviloya hung up the phone.

Qing Ruyan opened the report, and her complexion drastically changed. "This, this, this... It's just the Second Energy Level! Why would a Mutant come and interfere?"

Then her concern intensified. "That kid... It's highly unlikely he can withstand a Mutant's seductive corruption. He-he's in danger!"

In that mysterious space, Chen Gu faced the Mutant, an amalgamation of numerous evil entities. He felt every cell in his body being severely affected, undergoing uncontrollable transformations!

Damn it! he cursed silently. I'm just a minor character at the Second Energy Level, yet you, a formidable Mutant, a second-tier existence from the Endless Realm, personally come to mess with me. It's beneath you...

The Mutant floated closer, unhurriedly. Chen Gu wanted to dodge, but his body didn't respond; he was pinned in place by some mysterious force.

As the Mutant approached, the mutation on his body accelerated rapidly.

He watched his body being "assimilated" by the Mutant, grotesque and vile entities appearing on him.

Moreover, Chen Gu could feel that this Mutant could see through the fear in his heart, and it was using precisely this fear. The more intense his fear, the faster the mutation process!

The enemy emitted a special sort of radiation—not the nuclear kind that Chen Gu possessed, but an "energy radiation" filled with madness, evil, and mutagenic components.

Chen Gu continually resisted this fear, bolstering his own courage, but to little avail. His mutation continued unabated.

The Mutant had now approached to within tens of meters of him.

At this moment, Chen Gu could clearly see how immense the Mutant was: like a planet!

Next to it, Chen Gu seemed utterly insignificant, truly like a speck of dust.

The Mutant emitted a strange laugh that somehow burrowed into Chen Gu's mind, causing his brain to mutate rapidly as well.

This won't do, Chen Gu suddenly realized with clarity. Encouraging oneself and hoping to be brave cannot stop the Mutant. Bravery is bravery, fear is fear. It's not that bravery means the absence of fear; bravery simply enables you to confront fear.

On Witch Star, squads of special forces quickly arrived in Manjiangluo City; they were reinforcements from other cities.

The General Bureau was also troubled, temporarily reassigning a Third Energy Level professional from a nearby planet.

However, considering Chen Gu's past accomplishments, if he advanced to the Second Energy Level and then became corrupted and fell, a Third Energy Level professional might not be able to suppress him.

"No, we need at least a Fourth Energy Level professional!"

But Fourth Energy Level professionals weren't cabbages, to be simply plucked when needed.

In the end, they found a Fourth Energy Level professional capable of providing support two star systems away and ordered him to depart immediately, rushing to Witch Star at maximum speed!

Chen Gu stopped denying his fear. He faced the Mutant head-on and said, "I am very afraid."

"You come from the Endless Realm, the greatest threat to all professionals."

"The entire career of a professional is, in fact, a process of combating you."

"But I can face this fear—because my fear does not come from you, but from within myself."

"It stems from my fear of my own corruption and mutation."

"It is myself I fear, not you!"

"You've conflated these two fears. But now that I've distinguished them, I won't fear you. You can no longer draw strength from my fear!"

Chen Gu spoke these last words loudly, with resolute and powerful certainty. The Mutant in front of him quivered. Its approach towards Chen Gu halted, as if a colossal ship nearing the shore had suddenly stopped.

This created unique ripples and fluctuations in the surrounding space.

Chen Gu saw that the Mutant growths on his body were still developing; they seemed not to have improved. But he firmly believed, This is how it must be!

After a while, these mutations finally began to slow down and eventually stopped.

After halting, the mutated parts began to slowly revert to normal!

The Mutant seemed unwilling to give up the prize so nearly in its grasp. It stayed in place, reluctant to retreat, attempting to use its radiation to continue contaminating Chen Gu. However, Chen Gu remained unshaken. He was very knowledgeable about radiation and had many methods to resist or evade it.

The mutation did not continue, and Chen Gu steadily recovered. The Mutant let out a roar of frustration, causing the entire space to tremble as spatial ripples surged.

Despite being extremely reluctant and enraged, the Mutant knew it had failed this time. Its body, vast as a star, shrunk rapidly, eventually reverting to the appearance of an apple covered in long hair. Then it spun in place and disappeared.

After its departure, the Mutant growths on Chen Gu's body reverted even more swiftly.

Chen Gu quietly heaved a sigh of relief.

Chapter 230 - Bewitching Version Aviloya

At that moment, a wave of fluctuation suddenly emerged from the depths of the mysterious space, and Chen Gu let out a cry of despair, "No way, again?"

"I'm just a newbie professional ascending from the First to the Second Energy Level! You formidable entities of the Endless Realm, one after another, aim to corrupt and contaminate all human civilization. Why are you all picking on easy targets?"

"When others are at a lower Energy Level, they face a Demon Shape at most. Some, if lucky, just pass through the Endless Realm without encountering anything at all! Why, when it comes to me, have you started these tag-team battles?"

The wave, however, kept spreading steadily, not diverting despite Chen Gu's ranting.

An enchanting figure emerged from the wave, causing Chen Gu's vision to blur momentarily. He almost thought he had misseen. Aviloya!

But he soon realized that this figure was different from Aviloya. Her eyes were a bewitching dark red, like red wine, like a lover's fresh blood.

A buzz exploded in Chen Gu's head. This was... Lust and Sin incarnate!

There are only four levels of beings within the Endless Realm: Demon Shape, Weird, Lust and Sin, and Evil God. For such a minor ascension of mine, I've encountered three levels, each more powerful than the last. Is the entire Endless Realm focused on me? Am I, an actor, that popular in the Endless Realm?

Even after searching through all the memories of Milna Katerina, Griffin Wester, and Derek Kun Shen Ken, no such situation had ever occurred.

...

BEEP BEEP BEEP—

An even more urgent and intense alarm sounded outside the generator.

The two Third Energy Level professionals on Witch Star, one Fourth Energy Level professional called from elsewhere, plus more than ten Second Energy Level and over thirty First Energy Level professionals, together with the director and researchers, were all shocked!

This was a third-level alarm, meaning that what was invading now was Lust and Sin!

They were all too aware of how powerful Lust and Sin was. Once it entered the real world, Witch Star wouldn't stand a chance, let alone the entire Star System. It would be a cataclysmic disaster!

The strongest on the scene, a Fourth Energy Level powerhouse, had only faced a Weird when he ascended, and that Weird was the weakest of its kind.

But now, a minor Second Energy Level ascension ceremony had attracted an invasion by Lust and Sin. Even the Fourth Energy Level expert present felt the situation was so grave that he couldn't handle it alone.

He had been summoned here to be the supervising expert. However, when faced with Lust and Sin, he knew he couldn't suppress it. If he truly encountered one, he himself would become contaminated and begin to transform.

Without any hesitation, he dialed headquarters and blurted out quickly, "Need backup, need backup, need backup!"

"Lust and Sin are invading! Request immediate support from experts at the Sixth Energy Level or higher!"

"Request the main fleet to blockade this star sector!"

This request also greatly alarmed headquarters. They recalled an example: Six years ago, in a developed city of the Empire, a believer communicated with a "Weird" from the Endless Realm—a second-level entity—through means that to this day are still unknown.

The communication "link" was extremely unstable and maintained for only seven seconds—yet it led to a quarter of the city's population being contaminated. In that incident, the Empire deployed the Star Fleet, and the final death toll exceeded three million!

To this day, that city remains tightly sealed. An army division of the Empire is stationed on its surface; in the Star Sea, four Close Range Attack Ships and one main mothership are on long-term alert.

Moreover, a Third Energy Level professional is permanently stationed there.

And this invasion was by a Lust and Sin, more powerful than a Weird. Even if the connection lasted only seven seconds, it would likely destroy the entire planet, possibly even contaminating the surrounding colonial stars.

A Fourth Energy Level expert indeed lacked the power to deal with such a crisis.

When Aviloya received the report, she was utterly distressed. This damn kid... how can he cause such a huge commotion wherever he goes?

Is he some kind of trouble amplifier?

Aviloya wished she could draw her own sword and personally charge over there to eradicate both the trouble and the trouble amplifier once and for all...

She took a deep breath, suppressing the dissatisfaction and irritation in her heart, and quickly issued an order, "Detach twelve Third Energy Level executioners, led by Gong Shuxu, to go to Witch Star as reinforcements.

"Additionally, inform the Military Department and request them to dispatch a fleet and be prepared!"

...

In the mystical space, the enchanting version of "Aviloya" approached Chen Gu with graceful steps. The pollution and radiation she brought with her caused the surrounding space to undergo intense distortions. Visually, it was as if ripples on a water surface were encircling "Aviloya," continuously spreading outwards.

Chen Gu was unable to move. Among the three fragments of memory he had acquired, not even the most historically renowned Derek Kun Shen Ken, not even Griffin Wester with his extensive combat experience, had ever faced a Lust and Sin!

He was still just a minor character at the Second Energy Level, truly powerless before the Lust and Sin.

Chen Gu felt anger, resentment, and a desire to resist, but the chasm-like gap in their levels left him unable to find any effective means of resistance in his urgency.

Every part of his body was rapidly undergoing mutations.

He had just recovered from the mutations caused by the Weird, and now he was undergoing them again. The pain was simply indescribable. All sorts of thoughts—each wicked, mad, and terrifying—emerged in Chen Gu's mind, growing uncontrollably like weeds.

However, the enchanting version of "Aviloya" suddenly halted her steps. Those scarlet eyes shifted slightly, scanning over Chen Gu, then she surprisingly showed a very humanlike expression.

Chen Gu, now completely engaged in battling the mutations within himself, did not notice this abnormality. Of course, he also could not discern that this humanlike expression signified... hesitation.

Then, the enchanting version of "Aviloya" slowly turned around and quietly departed.

Waves of spatial ripples undulated and eventually completely subsided. The Lust and Sin had vanished.

However, the mutations on Chen Gu's body continued. Only after a long time, when the influence brought by the Lust and Sin had completely disappeared, did Chen Gu start gaining the upper hand in this struggle, finally managing to suppress the mutations in his body.

After another considerable amount of time, he finally managed to completely suppress the mutations.

HUFF—

Chen Gu let out a long breath, feeling as if he had endured a nightmare lasting centuries. When he fully recovered, he was even somewhat bewildered, struggling to remember exactly what he had experienced.

Gradually, memories returned, and a hint of doubt arose in his mind: Where was the Lust and Sin?

All my strength was focused on resisting the mutations. I didn't even have the spare capacity to consider how to deal with the Lust and Sin.

The entire void was empty; the Lust and Sin had long since disappeared without a trace.